FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

We're into our 49th year and the journal is still going strong. In this issue we highlight adult learning in the higher education and the community education settings in particular. The articles are diverse, the refereed papers focusing on the history of university continuing education, the thinking styles of university learners in northern and southern Italy, learning culture in the environmental movement and what makes for good youth mentoring practice. These are supported by other papers examining the potential of e-learning in adult and community education, the impact of environmental education on fishing communities along the Indian coast and the latest developments in intellectual property law relating to indigenous/traditional knowledge.

Darryl Dymock traces the provision of continuing education at the University of Sydney over more than 140 years. He summarises these years as 'sometimes tumultuous', especially the early period. What makes this provision significant is that it was, from the very first extension lectures in 1886, an important commitment on the part of the university to reach into the community early in its life and to establish

a pattern of adult education provision that persisted for more than a hundred years: well-qualified lecturers, an emphasis on liberal studies/humanities subjects, student fees for each course, oversight by a committee of the Senate, a set number of lectures, and a certificate of attendance or completion rather than an accredited award of the University.

The reasons for the introduction of these extension lectures, as in England, was to provide education courses that met the needs of the public, and to enhance the image of the university in the community. These are perhaps noble tasks that modern day universities are now only just re-discovering.

Francesco Sofo, **Michelle Berzins**, **Cinzia Colapinto** and **Salvatore Ammirato** analysed the thinking styles of learners at the University of Milan (n=263) in northern Italy and the University of Calabria (n=170) in southern Italy. The purpose was to gauge what part geography and socio-cultural conditions played in the ways these students learned, as measured by the Thinking Style Inventory. The study found more similarities than differences, which puzzled the authors. They reason that the convenience sampling was probably the key factor. In their unmatched samples, the southern group was comprised of far more postgraduates who would be expected to have been more mature and therefore to show less preference for a 'conditional' style of thinking; and that the northern group was heavily located in social science disciplines that could have been expected to have asked more questions and to have shown more preference for an 'inquiring' style of thinking. The authors conclude that, if economic and socio-cultural differences do impact on preferred ways of thinking of university learners, such impacts may well be mediated through various pedagogical or informational methods and communication technology.

Rick Flowers and **Andrew Chodkiewicz** highlight the different ways in which environmental groups employ educational and change practices in endeavouring to educate and change people. Their article is motivated by the fact that there has been little discussion and debate about the various theories and practices they use. The authors believe that adult educators have a helpful role to play in fostering more critical and participant-directed interrogation among environmental groups about aspects of their practices that focus on change and education. So in their paper, they report on focus groups, case studies and a literature review they undertook for a coalition of three environmental non-government organisations and a state government agency. They highlight a number of themes that emerged related to new ways of engaging people to become more involved in pro-environmental actions. The authors conclude that their article:

> points to an approach to theorising about adult learning that goes beyond training and information campaigns. We suggest that theorising about adult learning in the Australian environment movement would benefit from a more explicit, inter-disciplinary approach that draws on research findings and takes into account various sites of learning.

Following on from that theme, **Robyn Broadbent** and **Theo Papadopoulos** analyse good practice in youth mentoring initiatives. They focus on the integrated, coordinated and evidenced-based approach to improving the quality of community-based youth mentoring programs in Victoria under the Mentoring and Capacity Building Initiative Regional Coordination Projects. Their evaluative approach consisted of five stages: a literature review; interviews and focus groups with project coordinators, mentoring program coordinators and mentors; observational analysis of quarterly coordinator meetings and/or teleconferences of project coordinators and project reference group; case study analysis; and an online survey of mentoring program coordinators. The aim of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the Projects in achieving their objectives, including the monitoring of program outcomes and strategic partnerships supporting these projects. They conclude

that these Projects have been successful in guiding, advising and supporting both existing and new mentoring projects.

Jane Anderson examines latest developments in intellectual property law to protect indigenous/traditional knowledge, with particular reference to Australia and Indonesia. She writes that a more contextualised and localised approach to intellectual property and traditional knowledge issues has the potential to deliver outcomes and planning strategies that are meaningful and useful for local people and local communities seeking to secure their knowledge and knowledge practices. Her paper concludes with two exhortations: first, that there needs to be much more sustained and active engagement with Indigenous people and communities about what the problems are, and second, that we need to become imaginative and creative with how intellectual property as well as other strategies can be utilised.

Continuing the theme of community education, **Delia Bradshaw** claims that e-learning has provided new possibilities of connectedness, community, democracy, global citizenship, lifelong learning, transformational learning, learning to learn and critical literacy. She outlines what she labels 'an unfolding story' of the gradual development of e-learning in ACE, and provides 'a few snapshots of this vivacious and audacious story' through highlighting some key moments or milestones. She concludes from her research with those who have been involved in extending e-learning in ACE that three key themes emerge: leadership, action research projects, and professional development.

Moving the focus to the south-eastern coast of India, **Jamila Patterson and her colleagues** analyse the impact of environmental education programs on fishing villages – a follow-on article from their previous article in this journal one year ago. Ongoing adult education enlightened the villagers about the importance of marine environment, in particular corals, seagrasses and fisheries, and of the need for protection and conservation for sustainable utilisation. The women developed their confidence to propagate awareness initiatives on environmental conservation within their villages and are the key players to train their children in this direction. The afforestation efforts will also be more effective with support from the villagers, since the interest is developed within the families. What the project experience showed was that the success of any conservation initiative depends on how levels of literacy and awareness can be genuinely enhanced in the community.

This issue concludes with five reviews of books from a series of philosophical treatises on *The art of living*, edited by Mark Vernon and published by Acumen Publishing. Vernon himself is the author of one of the books reviewed here – the one on *Wellbeing*. Interestingly, they all have single word titles: Work, Deception, Illness, Wellbeing and Hunger. Some others in the series, not reviewed here, cover: Clothes, Fame, Sport, Death, Sex, and Middle Age.

On that note, it is time to go to publication!

Roger Harris
Editor

'A reservoir of learning': the beginnings of continuing education at the University of Sydney

Darryl Dymock
Griffith University

Adult education has often been on the margin of university offerings in Australia and elsewhere, sometimes regarded as 'non-core' business or at least as a financial drain on the institution. At the University of Sydney, however, adult education has managed to survive in one form or other for over 140 years, currently through the Centre for Continuing Education. Partly this has been due to the support of influential academics who have believed in the principle of 'extra-mural' studies', if not always agreeing with the way it has been delivered or funded. Research in the university's archives and through contemporary accounts shows that the pattern of provision was established in the 1890s and first 20 years of the twentieth century, particularly through the development of tutorial classes in a relationship with the Workers' Educational Association, following a model established in Britain at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. However, the research also reveals that the relationship between the first Director of Tutorial Classes and senior members of Sydney University was not always harmonious, especially against the background of the conscription debates of World War I.

Introduction

University continuing education exists in various forms in most developed countries, but in recent years has generally been in decline in Australia, as well as in Britain, although there are active units in a number of universities in both countries. It is sometimes known in universities as 'adult education', 'extra-mural education' or 'university extension', and typically operates outside the formal undergraduate and postgraduate offerings, although often involves academic staff as lecturers or study tour leaders. Mostly it is non-accredited learning, although more recently some university continuing education in Australia has included courses accredited through the vocational education training system or providing access to formal university studies, particularly through continuing professional education (CPE). Management of continuing education may be vested in a central agency in the university, or dispersed among the faculties, or may be a combination of both.

Arguably the longest-running and most successful university continuing education program in Australia is offered by the University of Sydney, currently through the Centre for Continuing Education. Sydney University has been providing some form of structured adult education, alongside its formal undergraduate and graduate programs, for more than 140 years. This paper charts the early, sometimes tumultuous, years of that development, to the end of the first world war, and discusses some of the features established in that period which enabled an adult education program to be sustained at the university through sometimes turbulent times into the present century.

In their discussion of historical research in education, Cohen, Manion and Morrison cited Borg's 1963 definition: 'the systematic and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events'.[1] The selection and interpretation of such events is influenced of course by the

researcher's intents, experience, values and biases, but the intention in this paper is to provide what Cohen *et al.* described as 'an act of reconstruction undertaken in a spirit of critical inquiry'.[2] Merriam and Simpson suggested that historical inquiry is of a greater service to a field, such as adult education, when it addresses assumptions, failures and feats, the impact on people's lives, and/or the total context of an event.[3] This paper particularly examines early 'failures and feats', within the university and political contexts of the time, and the intention of the initiatives to 'impact on people's lives'. It draws on primary sources from the Sydney University Archives (SUA), especially minutes of Senate meetings and annual reports of the Extension Board, as well as on other written sources.

University extension

At its meeting in July 1892, the University of Sydney Senate accepted a recommendation of the University Extension Lectures Committee that Miss Louisa Macdonald, MA, deliver a course of six lectures on 'Greek life and art'.[4] The Senate also approved the payment to Miss MacDonald of an honorarium of £30 ($60) for teaching the course, and agreed that the course participants should pay five shillings (50 cents) per ticket.

Extension lectures at the University of Sydney had been inaugurated in 1886 – 36 years after the University's founding.[5] At that 1892 meeting it was decreed that each course should comprise ten weekly lectures, delivered 'at some fixed hour, usually in the evening', but with provision for consecutive courses on connected branches of one subject and for short courses of six lectures 'by special arrangement'. The courses would be on literary, historical and other subjects, 'open to all comers', and the students would pay fees.[6] There were high expectations of the lecturer, as well as provision for responses afterwards:

At each lecture a printed paper shall be distributed, containing a syllabus of the lecture, and questions on the subjects treated. Those who attend the lecture shall be invited to write answers to these questions, and to send their written answers to the Lecturer, who shall look over and correct them.[7]

There was also a condition which some of today's undergraduates might find challenging: each person also had to satisfy the lecturer 'by means of written answers to questions set during the course, or otherwise, that he has followed the lectures with attention…'.[8] Students could also undertake an optional final examination and receive a certificate if successful.

This model of University 'extension' developed in English universities late in the nineteenth century, following some 20 years of university reform.[9] University Extension was a response to a demand for university education for working men and for improved provision of higher education for women.[10] In general terms, University Extension was interpreted in England as 'a system of lectures and classes for adults in towns away from the universities'.[11] Building on individual enthusiasm and the experience of colleges and associations, and pressured by influential members of their own faculties, the two ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge led the way.[12] Their concern was not only to extend their educational provision – one of the strongest proponents of the Extension 'movement' in England, James Stuart, was concerned about the potential for external criticism of the universities as they went through the reform process, and believed that 'their position would be greatly strengthened if they ministered to the needs of a wider area than they did'.[13]

The University of Sydney followed its English counterparts by establishing an Extension Board in 1892 (the same year as Cambridge), although the immediate focus was its own city rather than 'towns away from the universities'. The Senate approved a by-law for the annual election of between eight and twelve members,

to include at least four Senate members and at least four members of the teaching staff.[14] One of the Board's roles was to recommend to the Senate the names of persons to be authorised to be employed as extension lecturers. The Extension Board continued to function until abolished by the Senate in 1977.

Although funding was to come from fees, government grants and donations, there was also provision for university support, through 'such sums as may from time to time be assigned for the purpose by the Senate'.[15] The issue of university financial support for 'extension' or whether it should pay its own way continued to rear its head regularly over the next century or so.

At five shillings a head, in 1904–5 the Extension Board reported average attendances of 55 for a course of six lectures on 'Agriculture' by various Sydney University staff, to over 500 for a course of six lectures on 'Typical historical characters' by Professor Wood, in conjunction with the Public School Teachers' Association, the latter seemingly an early example of professional development. Provision was also made for country extension, with four lectures at Goulburn, on 'Hamlet', by Professor M W MacCallum, with an average attendance of 80, and at Newcastle two lectures on 'The Parthenon' and one lecture on 'The Moon', by Professor W J Woodhouse, with an average attendance of 90.[16] The Board reported average annual attendances expanded from around 700 in 1901 to more than 1,600 five years later[17], still very modest numbers at a time when Sydney itself had a population of around half a million.[18]

In 1905 there were several innovations: the use of lecturers from outside New South Wales, and the provision of illustrated 'popular scientific lectures' and of 'more practical, technical or professional instruction'.[19] The results according to the Extension Board were that:

> In each of these directions the success has been satisfactory to judge by the attendances; and the reports and comments of

the press would seem to show that these efforts meet with a general approval that cannot fail to strengthen the position of the University in the community at large.[20]

As the provision of extension education became more systematic, those responsible for its organisation over the ensuing decades found that they were treading a fine line in trying to convince the public and the university at large that they could address the needs of both at the same time. For example, the Extension Board's annual report of 1906–7 noted how difficult it was to conduct negotiations for lectures outside the university with businesspeople who did not understand that the 'Board's small charges are schemed so as only to keep it from losing more money than it has for the purpose'.[21] The Board's chairman said: 'It is unpleasant to hear the University blamed for neglect of a "duty" which is simply beyond its means'.

Sometimes the students criticised the course content or the lecturer's presentation, and in the 1910–11 Annual Report the Board struck back, explaining the purpose of extension lectures and their intended audience:

> …the 'public', in the sense of people who do their day's work and then only amuse themselves rather idly and without extension of mind, is not the public that the Board can serve. The Board's efforts are directed towards the satisfaction of that intellectual curiosity and longing for mental strength and mental wealth which cause the foundation of Universities and establish them in public sympathy and affection.[22]

This notion of 'public sympathy and affection' for universities is an intriguing one in considering the extent of public support for higher education generally in Australia over the years since. Sydney University's Extension Board had no doubts about that role in the early years of the twentieth century:

> It is conscious of an obligation on its own part to the community at large, of whose aspiration it is the symbol that makes a vigorous

university try to irrigate its whole land from the reservoir of learning it constitutes, and the new springs of knowledge it may succeed in opening.[23]

This vision of a 'reservoir of learning' was not always appreciated by those the Extension Board sought to serve, particularly in the country, where lectures were often organised in conjunction with the local School of Arts or Mechanics' Institute. These two institutions were the main providers of education for adults throughout the nineteenth century outside of the formal institutions.[24] Operating under the control of a local committee, and part-funded through government grants, Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes usually comprised a library, reading room and a lecture room. Intended as centres of culture and recreation, their most significant role was in rural areas, where the extent of their impact varied, often according to the vision, or lack of it, of the local committee.

The Sydney University Extension Board complained that, until the introduction of new government policies on subsidies in New South Wales, 'there was little to prevent a School of Arts from becoming what by no stretch of the imagination could be called a "School" or thought of in any connection with the "Arts", except those of billiards and sensational fiction'.[25] The Board said that, while most Schools of Arts were very cooperative, in one town the organisers 'constrained the [visiting] lecturer to speak in the open air because its hall had been let as a supper-room for a hall'.[26] In another town, the Honorary Secretary of the School of Arts made no arrangement for accommodating a visiting lecturer nor met him on arrival, and 'showed his personal interest in the lectures by staying away from them all'.[27]

Tutorial classes

At this time, just before World War I, formal education in Australia was provided mainly through primary schools (including evening schools for adults), technical schools and colleges, and the four universities: Tasmania, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, the latter three all having established extension boards. Peter Board, Director of Education for New South Wales 1905–22, introduced Evening Continuation Schools in 1911 to provide continuity of education between primary school and employment, a precursor to the development of high schools.[28] Board was also a member of the Senate of the University of Sydney, and from the time of his appointment as Director of Education had been critical of what he saw as the university's inaccessibility:[29]

> If a university is to be a living force in the state, … a power making for the prosperity of the state, and if it is really worthwhile for the highest knowledge to become available to all who are in a position to apply it for practical purposes, and who feel the need for it in their daily occupations, then it is not sufficient that the university should wait for those to climb to it who really need its help. It must come out to meet them.[30]

Board initially favoured the University of Wisconsin system of extension lectures accompanied by pre-arranged courses of reading, as well as its large correspondence program, with visiting lecturers, and regarded extension lectures based on the nineteenth century British model as 'mere dilettantism'.[31] However, through his involvement in the Imperial Education Conference in 1911 and the Congress of the Universities of the Empire in 1912, both held in London, Board was impressed by the concept of tutorial classes, developed by Oxford and Cambridge Universities through 'joint committees' with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

The WEA was the brainchild of Albert Mansbridge, who saw it as a means of utilising the knowledge of the universities to help 'the workers' develop political and industrial power. It was supported by the leading British universities, Oxford and Cambridge, as a way of better reaching into their communities (and being seen to do so) and supported by the British government as an alternative to some of the

more radical alternatives, such as Labour Colleges, which began to emerge in the early years of the twentieth century.[32] Underpinning the WEA's activities was a commitment to voluntarism and democracy, along with high academic standards and the pursuit of objectivity.[33] The organisation also claimed it was non-party-political and non-sectarian.

The tutorial class model was first launched at Oxford University in 1907, under a joint committee of WEA and university representatives. There was an expectation that at least three quarters of the students in these classes would be 'actual labouring men and women'[34] and all were expected to commit themselves to three years of serious study, producing on average an essay each month.[35] William Temple, the first national president of the British WEA, espoused the virtues of the Association's model on an Australian tour in 1910, and the extension boards at Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide Universities subsequently affiliated with the British WEA.[36]

With the groundwork laid, there were a number of confluences over the next few years which led to the development of tutorial classes at the University of Sydney and an ongoing relationship with the WEA. The first of these was the election in 1910 of a Labour Government in New South Wales which was supportive of Peter Board's belief in the need of reform of the university. Board drafted a University (Amendment) Bill for the government, which was passed in 1912, and which provided for 'the establishment and maintenance of evening tutorial classes in science, economics, ancient and modern history and sociology'.[37] The government grant to the University of Sydney was doubled.

About the same time, Albert Mansbridge wrote to a recent arrival in Sydney, David Stewart, a cabinetmaker by trade, inviting him to help establish a WEA branch in Sydney. Stewart had been an active unionist and supporter of workers' education in his native Scotland, and as a delegate to the New South Wales Labour Council in 1912,

he persuaded that body to investigate the possibility of sponsoring a scheme of worker education. Boughton has shown that there was already a 'vital, independent, working class and socialist movement flourishing in Australia' at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth but, as in Britain, its proponents were seen as more radical than those courted by the WEA movement.[38]

On receiving the invitation from Mansbridge, Stewart wrote to A.C. Carmichael, New South Wales Minister for Public Instruction, and to H.E. Barff, Registrar of the University of Sydney. The Minister referred Stewart to Peter Board, who showed him the provision for tutorial classes in the recently passed University (Amendment) Bill, and encouraged him in his approaches to the Labour Council and the University.[39]

However, Stewart had difficulty making inroads at the university. He claimed that neither the Vice-Chancellor, Judge Alfred Paxton Backhouse, nor the Chancellor, Sir Norman McLaurin, 'had any sympathy with the extension of University culture to working-class students', and that McLaurin had said: 'Teaching economics to washerwomen. Phew!'[40] Stewart found Barff 'coldly polite' and was told that, despite the increased government grant, the University had no funds set aside for tutorial classes. Board then intervened, convincing the government to earmark £1,000 ($2,000) of the State grant for this purpose.[41] Nevertheless, only one such class was held prior to 1914[42] and the University was unimpressed by the concept of the joint committee – W.J. Woodhouse, Professor of Greek and Chairman of the Extension Board, was in favour of the University directing and controlling the new 'movement'.[43]

Nevertheless, there was individual support from such leading academics such as R.F. Irvine, Professor of Economics, and Francis Anderson, Challis Professor of Logic and Mental Philosophy. Mungo MacCallum, foundation Professor of Modern Languages and Literature, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, advised the Chancellor

that although he was 'a little against having anything to do with such a movement', he thought Stewart should be invited to the University 'to find out precisely what he represents'.[44] The Extension Board itself claimed that it had been 'watching with interest the growth in England of the Tutorial Class movement associated so intimately with the name of Mr Mansbridge, and had been looking forward to the day when it should prove possible to inaugurate an analogous movement in this State.'[45] Its chance came when Mansbridge came to Australia in 1913, invited by representatives of Sydney and Melbourne Universities.

Mansbridge was an outstanding speaker, and managed to win over many influential people, including the Australian Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, and the New South Wales Premier, W.A. Holman. Board arranged for Mansbridge to address the Sydney University Senate on 23 August 1913, and the outcome, according to Stewart, was that:

> The Professorial Board of the University... after naming their earlier objection to the plan, examined the University (Amendment) Act as it affected tutorial classes, and having discussed the matter with Mr Mansbridge, recommended that the classes should be administered by three representatives of the University and three representatives of the WEA. This organisation was accepted by both the Senate and the WEA.[46]

The Extension Board reported that, before Mansbridge took his final departure in November 1913, 'he and the Board had the satisfaction of knowing that all was ready for the first Tutorial Class under the Act, to begin work early in 1914'.[47] Whitelock suggested that Mansbridge's message appealed to the universities and the establishment because

> ... it substituted definition for the muddle of extension, it might defuse industrial unrest, and it soothed sore consciences. It seemed democratic and it was certainly good works.[48]

The Department of Tutorial Classes, as it came to be known, endured for another 50 years at the University of Sydney, before it developed into the Department of Adult Education and was later transformed into the Centre for Continuing Education.

It might have been different – Higgins quotes a suggestion from historian Fred Alexander, that as a result of visits to the USA by Peter Board and James Barrett from Melbourne, 'Australia seems to have come within an ace of getting a marriage between the empirical groupings of the Sydney University (and to a less extent Melbourne University) extension boards and the experiences of Wisconsin'.[49] However, the British University influence, coupled with the persuasive voices of Mansbridge and Stewart, was just too strong. Whitelock said that Mansbridge carried the 'magic aura of Oxbridge approval', and that his close friend, A.L. Smith of Balliol College, Oxford, had influential contacts at Australian universities.[50]

First director

No doubt at the urging of Board and under the influence of Mansbridge's eloquence, the New South Wales government made a special annual grant to the University of Sydney for the employment of a 'Lecturer and Organiser of Tutorial Classes'. On the recommendation of Mansbridge, the university appointed Meredith Atkinson, an Oxford graduate and tutorial class lecturer at the University of Durham. Stewart claimed that Chancellor McLaurin was the only senate member to vote against the appointment.[51] However, the depth of support for the initiative from other senior university staff can be gauged by this recollection by Jane Clunies Ross of a dinner for Atkinson arranged in London in 1913 by Professor J.T. Wilson while on leave from Sydney University:

> To meet the Meredith Atkinsons came Professor Edgeworth David [Professor of Geology and Chair of the Professorial Board]... and Henry Barraclough [shortly to be appointed Professor of

Mechanical Engineering]… The three men from Sydney [i.e. with Wilson] were old friends and colleagues, and Wilson as Chairman of the Professorial Board for some years, and David as Dean of the Faculty of Science, had had a hand in planning the new Department of Tutorial Classes; these two had, since their arrival in the late 1880s, played a considerable part in the growth and expansion of University teaching and were enthusiastic about expanding its sphere outside its own scholarly walls and into the community in general.[52]

Atkinson arrived in Sydney in March 1914, taking over from Professor Irvine the first tutorial class, on Industrial History. On this occasion the class comprised mainly 'industrial workers' and from the beginning, the non-award nature of the classes was strongly set, the Extension Board reporting that 'the class followed the example of its English prototypes in definitely disclaiming the desire to receive a diploma as tangible reward for work done'.[53]

As ex-officio secretary, Atkinson called the first meeting of the Joint Committee in April 1914, with Holme, Irvine and Todd from the University of Sydney, and Stewart and two unionists representing the WEA. The latter three were frustrated when they learned that there were sufficient funds for only three tutorial classes instead of the eight they had envisaged. Atkinson took these three classes – one at the University, one in the suburb of Burwood and one south of Sydney at Wollongong. The Extension Board was delighted with the results:

> The spirit animating the students has left little to be desired. Mr Atkinson affirms that in keenness, earnestness, and application, they are at least equal to the best tutorial classes of which he had experience in England. The small select library attached to each class has been thoroughly well used…[54]

The Board also noted that the preliminary organisation of the classes had been undertaken by the WEA Secretary, David Stewart, and this was the pattern of the arrangement for many years – the WEA organising the courses and the University of Sydney delivering. In

its reporting, however, each body tended to identify itself as the key agency. It was several decades before the arrangement started to unravel as the University of Sydney began to go its own way and the WEA gradually became a provider as well as an organiser of courses. In other states, the WEA quickly disappeared in Western Australia, was banned by the Queensland government in the 1930s, lost its place in Victoria with the post-World War II creation of the Council of Adult Education, and was similarly ousted by the Board of Adult Education in Tasmania in the late 1940s. Only in South Australia did it maintain a strong university link before going its own way in more recent years.

The war years

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 immediately affected the university's extension activities. There was a decrease in the number of extension lectures, especially in rural areas, and an increased demand for classes to study the causes and other aspects of the war.[55] Consequently, ten 'Study Circles' were formed around those topics, an early break from the British model of tutorial classes, and an indication of the University's willingness to accommodate students' wishes. The next year the Extension Board decided to restrict extension lectures to topics related to the war, but also managed to offer in July 1916 a class on English literature at Wills Tobacco Factory in Sydney.[56] The aim of this series of studies was 'to interest the girls in the works of a few of the great English writers'. The response of the girls is not recorded.

In line with its focus on wartime matters, the Extension Board also attempted to show support for one of Britain's allies by offering a series of lectures that year on 'Some aspects of French literature, art and thought'. However, attendances were affected by reduced services of trams and trains as a result of 'a recurrence of industrial trouble.'[57]

Some university staff were also involved in a different form of adult education during the war. Towards the end of the conflict in Europe, the Australian Army introduced a scheme of education to help overcome boredom for those waiting for transport ships home and to prepare them for their return to civilian life. Among those prominent in the AIF Education Service were Professor R.S. Wallace who was Director of the Corps Central School in France, and Professor R.C. Mills.[58] Wallace later became Vice-Chancellor at Sydney University and both men were supporters of a similar but expanded Army education scheme during World War II, and of course took a keen interest in the University's provision of adult education.

By 1917 Atkinson's title at the university had changed from 'Organiser' to 'Director' of Tutorial Classes; he had also been elected President of the WEA of New South Wales. His successor as Director, Gerry Portus, described him as 'an excellent missionary, full of enthusiasm and energy', although Portus seemed to have reservations about Atkinson's activities:

> In season and out Atkinson preached that only widespread enlightenment would prevent war in future. All up and down the country he lectured on the economics of war, a subject we knew very little about, and in which, it is safe to say, he was only a couple of jumps ahead of his hearers. This impressed the Labour Government of the day and, with the help of Peter Board, the subsidy to the University for Tutorial Classes was bumped up until it had been quadrupled by the end of the war.[59]

Atkinson became heavily involved in the conscription debates that raged when Prime Minister William Hughes called two referenda on whether Australian men should be called up for compulsory military service. A Sydney-based, pro-conscription organisation, the Universal Service League, was formed, with Atkinson as secretary and Professor Mungo MacCallum as president. Atkinson's actions brought the WEA into strong conflict with the anti-conscriptionist trade unions, but Stewart managed to convince the Labour Council of the WEA's impartiality.[60]

Shortly afterwards, Atkinson fell out with MacCallum because the latter opposed giving the Director of Tutorial Classes professorial status.[61] Induced by the offer of professorial title and status, and an increase in salary, Atkinson took up a similar position at the University of Melbourne early in 1918.[62]

Hardly had he left when MacCallum proposed that the University Extension Board should take control of the Tutorial Classes, without any WEA involvement. The reasons given were that inadequately qualified tutors had been engaged by the WEA, that the financial administration was 'inadequate' and that 'Labour was not the only interest which should be catered for by the Tutorial Classes Department, and even if it was, the WEA was not sufficiently representative.'[63] This proposal created a stir, but MacCallum as Dean of Arts had considerable influence at the university, and a Committee of Inquiry was established to investigate the notion. As a result, Gerry Portus, who had been about to take up the position of Assistant Director to Atkinson before the latter resigned, was made Acting Director, and F.A. Bland was appointed Acting Assistant Director, both for one year while the Committee undertook its review.

Crane and Walker claimed that Peter Board felt an obligation to support the WEA, and that as the Chairman of the Joint Committee the redoubtable Professor Francis Anderson took MacCallum's criticism as a personal affront.[64] With support from Board, Anderson took the unusual step of arranging for himself, Portus and Stewart to address directly the Senate on the issue. The result was a compromise that saw MacCallum's proposal rejected in favour of a revamped Joint Committee comprising five University representatives and four from the WEA.[65] The principle of equal representation followed under the British model had thus disappeared in New South Wales within five years, but the relationship continued for decades.

Twelve months after Atkinson's departure, Portus replaced him as Director of Tutorial Classes and F.A. Bland became assistant director. Both were to go on to become prominent in Australian academic and public life.

Discussion and conclusion

The provision by the Senate for extension lectures from 1886 not only indicates the University's commitment to reach into the community early in its life but also set a pattern of adult education provision that persisted for more than a hundred years: well-qualified lecturers, an emphasis on liberal studies/humanities subjects, student fees for each course, oversight by a committee of the Senate, a set number of lectures, and a certificate of attendance or completion rather than an accredited award of the University.

The reasons for the introduction of extension lectures followed those of English universities – to provide education courses that met the needs of the public, and to enhance the image of the university in the community. Harrison later observed:

> The public relations function of adult education, of which farsighted university statesmen have always been aware, was thus present as a secondary consideration from the very beginning of the universities' entry into the field.[66]

As the first Director of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, Meredith Atkinson continued the pattern set by extension lectures, but also developed the relationship with the Workers' Educational Association, a relationship that extended into the early 1980s, although the balance of power changed shortly after his departure. He had a chequered career at the University of Sydney, and the conscription referenda furore dominated much of his time there.

Portus saw Atkinson's pro-conscription activities as a 'grave disservice' to the adult education movement, citing continual criticism

that the WEA was in opposition to the workers it was supposed to serve.[67] Colin Badger, a leading figure in Australian adult education post World War II, gave a none-too-complimentary picture of the foundation Director:

> It is impossible to avoid the impression that Atkinson, in his Sydney period, was a difficult, insecure, thrusting young man, adroit, quite skilled in manipulation of affairs to his own advantage and none too scrupulous. ... he managed to increase the original grant for his Department from £1000 to £5000 by 1917, secured his own appointment as a lecturer in Economic History at a salary of £160 a year in addition to his Director's salary, obtained a seat on the Faculty of Arts and by some very deft work had his protégé, Margaret Collisson, appointed in July 1917 as a full-time assistant to himself as organiser of study circles under Extension Board auspices.[68]

Nevertheless, despite the wartime constraints and disputes, Atkinson oversaw a steady if unspectacular growth in enrolments. Almost from the beginning, however, the participants were generally middle class and predominantly female, not the 'workers' that Mansbridge had envisaged.[69]

The imbroglio over conscription and later over the status of the position of Director of Tutorial Classes also underlines the role that individuals played in the direction of adult education at the university. One of the most significant was Peter Board, as a member of the Senate, who not only was behind the state government bill that led to the establishment of tutorial classes but also prominent in debates about the governance of the new agency. Many years later, the Secretary of the WEA in New South Wales, Douglas Stewart, described Board as 'the real parent of the WEA in the southern hemisphere'.[70]

Some of the most prominent professors at the University of Sydney at the time, including Mungo MacCallum and Francis Anderson, were also keen supporters of extending the university to the wider

community, even if they differed on how the initiative should be managed. It appears that they were genuine in their attitudes, although Boughton was sceptical:

> The university intellectuals who took their brand of liberal education to the workers initially in the Extension movement, then through the WEA, were part of this attempt to guide the newly emerging and rapidly mobilising industrial working class down an educational pathway which did not seriously challenge either privilege or property.[71]

There were certainly strong political beliefs among some of those involved with the establishment of extension lectures and then tutorial classes at the University of Sydney. The activities of MacCallum and Atkinson, outlined above, and the radical views of Professor Irvine[72] are testament to that. And it was a volatile period politically, economically and socially, with widespread radicalism, strikes, and the turbulence of World War I.

Nevertheless, while there may have been some paternalism in their approach, there does appear to be a commitment among senior academics to the principle of extension as an educational outreach, whatever their political beliefs. Many of these supporters saw the university as having a leadership role in the community which could not be achieved through its formal program of courses alone. As a result, from the late nineteenth century and especially in the first two decades of the twentieth, the University of Sydney developed a strong vision of adult education as a legitimate function of the university which it managed to sustain in one form or other through to the present time, thus apparently fulfilling what the Extension Board in 1911 called 'an obligation of its own part to the community at large'.

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North, south, least, best: geographical location and the thinking styles of Italian university students

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There are economic and socio-cultural differences that characterise the north and south of Italy. A stereotype is that university students from rural southern Italy are more disadvantaged and isolated than those from the urban north. Past research has hypothesised that differences in socio-economic status impact on student learning, which is a factor of thinking style. This study set out to explore if university students from a northern and a southern Italian university report markedly different thinking style preferences. Samples of 170 students from the University of Calabria and 263 students from the University of Milan were surveyed using Sofo's (2005) Thinking Style Inventory. If economic and

socio-cultural differences impact on preferred ways of thinking of
university students, the impacts may very well be mediated through
various pedagogical or informational methods and communication
technology. The results of the study did not produce all the expected
differences.

Aim

This study sought to understand more clearly the nature of thinking
styles as defined in the theory of reality construction (Sofo 2005)
through a comparison of thinking styles of northern and southern
Italian university students. We gained this understanding through
testing thinking styles against established different economic and
socio-cultural variables in two regions of Italy. There are significant
economic, social and political differences between the northern
and southern regions of Italy. Zhang & Postiglione (2001) called for
further investigation between the nature of thinking style and socio-
economic status. This study aims to confirm if university students
from two socio-economic regions of Italy (south and north) report
different preferences for thinking styles as measured by the Thinking
Style Inventory (TSI) underpinned by a theory of reality construction
(Sofo 2008). In this study, we hypothesise that university students in
southern Italy will report a higher preference for conditional thinking,
more bound to follow rules and authority than northern students,
and that they prefer to be less inquiring and less independent than
northern university students. In other words, low socio-economic
conditions tend to impact on thinking styles that are socialised so
that southern university students will prefer more dependence on
authority, less inquiring and less independence in thinking than
students from the north.

Context

If we consider the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)
per inhabitants (expressed in terms of purchasing power and the
mean value of the EU for 2005), the northern region of Lombardy
shows a value of 136.5 (€ 31,618 GDP per inhabitant) while the
southern region of Calabria is equal to 67.5 (€ 15,641 GDP per
inhabitant) (EUROSTAT 2008). There are also notable differences in
unemployment rates, with the north having an unemployment rate
of 2.4% for men and 4.3% for women, while the southern region of
Calabria has an unemployment rate of 12.2% for men and 18.2% for
women. Given these rates, it is not surprising that Calabria shows
the highest youth unemployment rate (46.1%) in the entire European
Union (Mlady 2006).

The two regions also demonstrate varying graduation rates for post-
graduate students. In Calabria, SVIMEZ (2007) conducted a survey
to explore the life experiences of graduates up to three years after
completion of their university degree. Of the 5,800 postgraduates,
60% were employed and 50% of these were found to have left
Calabria in order to work in northern Italy regions. In contrast, the
Lombardi region was found to attract its labour force from other
Italian regions (including Calabria) and from overseas. The survey
conducted by Bosetti (2008) showed that in Lombardy in 2007,
76,000 immigrants arrived from overseas of which more than 60%
were graduates and 16% had completed post-graduate studies. More
than 270,000 people are known to arrive every year in Lombardy
from other Italian regions, and these people are typically in search of
employment and better life opportunities.

The two areas from which the surveyed students live and interact are
also very different from the socio-cultural point of view, particularly
with regard to the metropolitan/rural contrast. According to Simmel
(1971), there are differences between metropolitan inhabitants
and citizens from small to medium sized towns. The first observed

difference relates to neuro-psychological features, as metropolis inhabitants tend to receive a rich set of stimuli that is rapidly evolving and changing and a plethora of impressions milling around in their minds. In response to the numerous stimuli, people learn to react with their intellect more than with their heart. The second observed difference relates to economics, as a metropolis is usually the centre of the monetary economy. Every trade consists of money or its forms, and workers or producers use money to work for a given market and for a consumer that they do not necessarily know. This leads people to relate everything to money to develop pragmatic behaviours and to use a formal and at times 'cold' manner for human relationships. Metropolitan citizens, continuously exposed to such stimuli, tend to be anoetic or less reactive than rural citizens so that most things are considered 'normal'. Even metropolitan youth shows this indifferent and sceptical behaviour compared to youth coming from more stable and quiet places (Pittamiglio 2003). The other difference is that the metropolis attracts economic, technological and cultural resources. It offers a multitude of answers for a multitude of human needs.

Given the differences between metropolitan and rural citizens, it is useful to identify and explore some of the specific differences that arise in this study, some of which can be explained by the socio-economic and cultural background of the territories where the universities are placed and the surveyed students live. The University of Milan has been labelled one of the greatest Italian public universities, and it is placed in a city that is known as the economic and cultural capital of Italy. Milan is also the administrative capital of the Lombardy region (northern Italy) that is one of the richest regions in the European Union. Milan is also a city at the centre of a region of almost 9.5 million people, with the main part of Lombardy territory being densely populated and gravitating towards Milan (ISTAT 2007). Students from the University of Milan live in one of the richest and most innovating areas of both Italy and the European Union with different job and life opportunities from those students living in

other parts of Italy. For University of Milan students, attendance at university is not the only possible choice to achieve a better life, and some choose to attend for other reasons including passion or fashion, thus giving University of Milan students a stronger motivation than the Calabrians.

In 2005, the University of Milan had 9,485 postgraduate students amongst a total student population of 62,658 students. Over half of these (55.4%) were from the province of Milan, with a further 31.4% from the other provinces of Lombardy, 12.9% from the other Italian regions and 0.7% from overseas. This indicates that almost 87% of University of Milan students were from Lombardy (Chamber of Commerce of Milan 2007). More current data show that 23% of bachelor-level students live in Milan, 32% in the province, 31% in the region and 14% outside of Lombardy, while 20% of masters-level students live in Milan, 29% are from the province, 32% from the region and 18% from outside Lombardy (Università degli studi di Milano 2008).

In contrast, the University of Calabria is the main public university in Calabria. Calabria is located in the southern part of Italy and is known as one of the poorest regions in the European Union. The region has more than two million people living in rural areas or in small to medium -sized towns, sometimes connected to urban areas. The University of Calabria is placed in the urban area of Cosenza with a population of almost 150,000 people. The majority of students (over 90%) come from Calabria, and these students tend to live in a poor context characterised by assisted economy and the highest youth unemployment rate in the European Union. Calabria contains a plethora of small and medium-sized towns that are predominantly rural, resulting in students arriving at the University of Calabria after a life spent in a quiet and rural environment characterised by strong *clan/family* culture that encourages or coerces in them a *closed-mind*. Anecdotally, students have been found to attend the University of Calabria in the hope of more opportunities for gaining employment

as post-graduate students, for passion and personal interest and in order to escape from the *boring countryside*. Students of the University of Calabria tend to know that, due to the socio-economic conditions of Calabria as a region, the opportunity of becoming an educated emigrant is very high, thus there is a high rate of graduate and post-graduate students emigrating from Calabria for genuine chances of employment due to the incapacity of the region to absorb the newly-qualified labour force.

It is possible to suggest points of contrast between students from the northern University of Milan and those from the southern University of Calabria. Generally, the University of Milan students reside in a metropolis that encourages in them an open mind compared with their Calabrian counterparts. Environmental stimuli are one of the factors that encourage an open mind. For example, students in Milan have continuous possibilities to meet and interact with people coming from the rest of Italy, Europe and also overseas, and thus live a comparatively 'fast' life with relationships that are generally informal. In summary, the students contained in the northern group and southern group are relatively homogeneous in relation to their geographical origin, whereby students within a group attend the same study path and tend to collaborate with like-minded people. Anecdotal evidence and personal experience of the authors suggests that, while the two groups are homogeneous within themselves, they are two heterogeneous groups.

In some international surveys considering younger students and their performance (including tests such as the **P**rogramme for **I**nternational **S**tudent **A**ssessment**, T**rends in **I**nternational **M**athematics and **S**cience **S**tudy and the **I**nternational **A**dult **L**iteracy **S**urvey), Italy always has been ranked at low levels, similar to many Mediterranean countries. Considering the average performance in the four skills tested by PISA (see Table 1), we notice that the median difference between North and South shows a difference (by construction) equal to about 100 points.

Table 1: Italy PISA Competency Test (2003)

	Mathematics literacy	Humanistic literacy	Scientific knowledge	Problem solving
North West	510,118	519,794	540,335	513,131
North East	526,749	535,206	543,785	528,959
Central	487,724	503,230	516,278	498,196
South and Islands	428,135	449,723	452,278	442,413
Italy	467,549	486,109	493,855	476,113

Looking at the students' performance in mathematics, it is evident that there is a difference based on geographic distribution: in the northern regions, only two provinces show low performances, whereas in the southern regions, no province has achieved the same level as the northern regions. Bratti, Checchi and Filippin (2006) try to shed light on these results by maintaining that individual capacities are normally distributed in the country. One interesting point is the importance of local labour market conditions as a cause of the North-South gap and they find that employment probability is highly correlated with individual student performance. The higher the occupation rates, the better level of performance that the students achieve. They link this variable to the students' aspirations and expectations. In their study, where there was a high unemployment rate (30%) for young people and widespread irregular work, students felt a sense of impotence and fatality, which affects individual learning processes. The authors showed a similar negative relationship between levels of crime and student achievement.

Leonardi (1995) showed that there are two different kinds of social systems in Italy, even if they do not always fully coincide with the geographic division between North and South. One system, based on social capital, is able to influence institutions in order to make them create pressures and structures for the collective good. The second system, based on the primacy of private interest, does not stimulate institutions to go beyond the failures of the collective action.

Literature review

IQ tests give us a measure of the power and potential of our mind, while inventories of styles of thinking give us a measure of preferences or alternative ways to use our minds. Thinking styles are preferred ways of using our mind and are useful to understand since they provide an alternative to ability and performance measures such as intelligence tests. Thinking styles have been shown to be better predictors of academic variables and employment variables (Zhang & Sternberg 1998). Preferences may also be easier to develop than our innate ability and as such provide a worthy alternative focus for improving our effectiveness and efficiency. As noted by Martinello and Cook (1994: 14), 'the more diverse the modes of thinking used by an inquirer, the greater the potential for discovery'.

Thinking style can be understood from many perspectives and five are briefly reviewed here: cognitive, personality, learning, reality construction and mental self-government. The cognitive perspective portrays style as intellectual choice using particular preferences and thinking abilities above others such as preferring to tolerate ambiguity rather than act impulsively (Harrison & Bramson 1982; Harvey, Hunt & Schroder 1961; Kagan, Joss & Sigel 1963; Kagan 1966; Pettigrew 1958; Shouksmith 1972). The personality perspective promotes style either as a fixed personality type (Myers & Myers 1980) or as an evolving preference (Gregorc 2006). The learning-centred perspective maintains that people prefer to adapt their behaviour in particular ways and learn best when encouraged to use their preferences (Dunn & Dunn 1978; Kolb 1976; Renzullil & Smith 1978). It is also possible to separate ways of thinking depending on the level of similarity or difference. For example, Vincenti (2001) provides a definition as to the difference between divergent and convergent thinkers:

> … divergent thinkers have a broad vision and use imagination to generate a variety of possible solutions to a problem, whereas convergent thinkers use logical reasoning to arrive at a single correct solution that is considered the best (p.45).

Sofo's (2005, 2008) theory of reality construction postulates that our style of thinking corresponds to how we prefer to perceive and interpret the world. Thinking style also includes the way a person uses the structure or elegance of their mind to respond effectively to information or a situation. Typically, people utilise a number of styles in combination and thus develop a thinking style profile that represents their preferences across a number of different life demands. Alternatively, Sternberg's (1997) theory of mental self-government postulates that our thinking styles are structured in a similar way to general government styles. This theory defines the concept of style as a preference rather than an ability and provides a unifying framework for integrating different thinking styles. The theory is an extension of Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence, since it asserts the primacy of understanding intelligence in action via thinking styles as the ability to adapt rather than simply appreciate intelligence as an individual quantity (Sternberg 1988).

The theories of thinking styles posed by Sofo (2005) and Sternberg (1997) bridge the gap between the various theoretical perspectives since they emphasise the need to comprehend thinking in action within context. People develop their thinking styles from among alternative preferences which comprise a blend of contextual demand and personal preference. Sternberg (1997) maintains that thinking styles vary across tasks, situation and personalities. It would appear that styles of thinking are socialised through significant others, are teachable through the education system and are internalised based on culture (Sternberg & Ruzgis 1994). Different styles have different values based on situations, context, culture and eras. Preferences and strength of such preferences vary across individuals and their life spans, including across age, sex, work and travel experience (Zhang 1999).

In this study, the idea of varying thinking styles based on geographical location and socio-cultural economic differences is explored. In order to do so, it is first necessary to set the scene further by analysing the

varying demographics that characterise the students attending the University of Milan (northern Italy) and the University of Calabria (southern Italy), which complements the context described earlier. It becomes apparent in doing so that there are a number of key socio-economic and cultural differences between the two surveyed groups.

Methodology

Samples of 263 students from the University of Milan and 170 students from the University of Calabria were surveyed using Sofo's (2008) Thinking Style Inventory. While it would have been desirable to match students perfectly in terms of level (graduate and undergraduate) and type of course, the researchers used samples of convenience. The important thing is that students were located in two distinct universities – Milan in one of the prosperous economic and fashion centres of northern Italy and Calabria located in the poor southern part of Italy.

Sample from the University of Milan

One sample involved 263 students enrolled in a variety of courses at the University of Milan in northern Italy. Three quarters (75%) of these students were enrolled in an undergraduate political science program (undertaking majors in economics and communication) which is designed for students interested in working in the business and financial industry. The remainder of the Milan sample included students undertaking a masters-level finance program or a masters-level communication major. These programs aim to develop in graduates a high level of economic knowledge including the ability to determine and tackle specific financial problems. Students are therefore expected to know the basic notions of mathematics, economics, law and management, as well as having a multidisciplinary knowledge of economics in order to operate directly in the various financial contexts.

Graduates of the courses are able to carry out autonomously the professional tasks that typify top managerial jobs – both within Italy and abroad – in organisations such as banks, insurance and management companies, pension funds, regulated markets, supervisory bodies and independent administrative authorities. The communication program is characterised by a rigorous approach encompassing the social sciences and humanities, and courses examine the research and theory of human interactions and relationships within varying contexts. Students completing the communication program typically work in areas including business leadership, entertainment and politics, though may also find employment in advertising or public relations firms. A small proportion of the sample included students completing a Masters in Nursing Management (featuring a special emphasis on professional development) in order to enhance the ability of nurses to enter organisations and engage in management and policy discussions, while the remainder were doctoral-level students in fields ranging from engineering to economics and Italian literature.

Sample from the University of Calabria

The other sample consisted of 170 students (enrolled at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels) from the University of Calabria in southern Italy. The undergraduate sample (60%) was enrolled in a Bachelor of Management Engineering degree which offers an overall view on theoretical, methodological and applicative aspects of planning, analysis, design and management of businesses information. Upon successful completion, students would be competent in mathematics, basic sciences, engineering sciences, systems and business design processes, data analysis, statistical modelling and problem solving. Graduates of the degree typically work in small and medium enterprises or public administration areas, fulfilling technical and administrative roles requiring political and/ or managerial decision making such as being an energy manager,

city manager, mobility manager, security manager or maintenance manager.

The postgraduate sample (40%) was enrolled in a Master of Management Engineering degree undertaken by coursework. The course explores the technological, economic and organisational aspects of knowledge management in both organisations and communities. Specific methodologies and techniques for developing knowledge management systems, and thus supporting business decision processes, are also introduced to students. Particular attention is devoted to students' emerging ability to use knowledge modelling as a means of formally representing knowledge through logic in order to achieve expert systems planning. Graduates of the program typically apply analysis, design, management and optimisation to retail, information, production, manufacture, services, telecommunications and transport systems. They may also seek employment within business administration, business process management, areas of technological innovation and/or analysis of financial systems. A key outcome of the program was the management engineer's ability to work in different contexts: from research to systems design, and from management to the control of high technologies. The management engineer can work in both manufacturing firms (such as in purchasing, material management, production systems or logistic systems) and in service firms and public administration (such as in areas of business organisation, management control, industrial marketing, investment evaluation and risk management).

Survey questionnaire
The Thinking Style Inventory (TSI) measures reported preferences for stylistic aspects of intellectual functioning and is based on Sofo's theory of reality construction (2005) whereby people create their own realities through their ways of thinking. According to Sofo (2005), the name of the theory emanates from a constructivist premise and the idea that people actively create their reality from their social interactions which are based on personally preferred ways of thinking. Interpersonal responses or interactions are based on how people like to think about issues. As shown in Table 2, people are thought to co-create their personal reality based on a profile of five different styles of thinking: conditional, inquiring, exploring, independent and creative.

Table 2: Summary of five thinking styles (Sofo 2005)

1. Conditional	Accepting what others think and say without questioning them
2. Inquiring	Asking questions to improve understanding of message or information
3. Exploring	Looking for alternatives and difference
4. Independent	Allocating priority to one's own thinking
5. Creative	Thinking in pictures to get a sense of the whole

The basic assumption of these styles is that people have preferences and different degrees of confidence and control in how they use their knowledge, attitudes and mental skills in building their reality and in dealing with information, people, tasks and daily situations through their thought processes. With regard to the first style, individuals are said to strongly rely on, and accept, what others think and say without questioning, which creates a personal reality based on a predominantly *conditional* style of thinking. When people prefer to ask questions and inquire about feelings and solutions, they are said to be co-constructing their reality through preferring to use an *inquiring* style of thinking. When people explore feelings and seek multiple perspectives, they are constructing their reality through an *exploring* style of thinking. Allocating priority to one's own thinking and relying on one's own feelings, solutions and opinions is said to be a preference for an *independent* style of thinking, whilst thinking in pictures, visualising and imagining to get a sense of reality is a preference for a *creative* style of thinking.

The styles shown in Table 2 reflect both convergent thinking (where people do not move beyond what is presented to them) and divergent thinking (where people move away from one-dimensional concrete analysis and actively synthesise information by questioning, exploring, evaluating and imagining different information as a basis for formulating and co-creating their own distinctive views about the world). Both convergent and divergent ways of thinking are necessary depending on the demands of different situations and what a person wants to make of them. For example, situations of safety or danger may be more efficiently handled through a convergence in thinking (such as following a fireman's instructions to exit a burning building swiftly), whereas city planners may best solve a city's traffic problems through using a divergent style of thinking and exploring alternatives.

An English-version of the TSI is provided in Appendix 1. Data provided by respondents are the end product of a thinking-reflecting process about their preferences for thinking in particular ways. The 50 items on the TSI require respondents to think about their ways of thinking. Without reflection about their own personal thinking processes, subjects would not be able to complete the inventory. The meta-thinking process required is structured for respondents since they need to reflect on their ways of thinking in a comparative mode. Respondents are asked to rank order their preferred ways of thinking, pitting five alternative thinking behaviours against each other on each of the ten items to determine their overall thinking style profile. Each item has five alternatives using a Likert-scale from 1 to 5, where 1 signifies thinking behaviour that is 'least like me' and 5 signifies 'most like me'. Each of the five alternatives on each of the ten items must be ranked in order of personal preference. A weakness of self-reporting is that respondents may report a particular profile of personal preferences which does not reflect their actual thinking behaviours. There is an assumption in the TSI as with other similar inventories that respondents are accurately self-aware.

Results and discussion

A Cronbach alpha is a coefficient of reliability or consistency, and thus it is desirable to achieve a score close to 1. A very high Cronbach alpha (e.g. 0.9) would indicate that the various items contained within a multi-item scale are indeed measuring the same underlying construct but in fact are too close to each other to be useful. Isomorphism is not desirable, but a modest level of correlation, such as a Cronbach alpha of 0.7 or 0.8, is typically regarded as acceptable in most social science research (UCLA 2008). Table 3 presents the data from this study.

Table 3: TSI subscale Cronbach α coefficients

Subscale	Items	Northern Italy (n=263)	Southern Italy (n=170)
Conditional	1a to 10a	0.61	0.53
Inquiring	1b to 10b	0.45	0.36
Exploring	1c to 10c	0.51	0.53
Independent	1d to 10d	0.61	0.48
Creative	1e to 10e	0.75	0.59
Means of α coefficients:		0.59	0.50

As shown in Table 3, the alpha levels were in the modest to moderate range for all subscales except the inquiring subscale which was in the low range (0.45 for northern Italy and 0.36 for southern Italy). This is a weakness of the Italian version of the TSI and a revision of the translation could be helpful. The results on these subscales therefore need to be interpreted with caution.

Table 4 indicates the two statistically significant differences that were found when analyses were conducted on the two samples. The southern Italian sample was found to have significantly lower scores than the northern Italian sample on both the conditional and inquiry subscales. Comparatively speaking, this means that southern Italian students' preferences for keeping the rules and taking instructions

was significantly lower than the preferences of northern Italian students (mean difference equals 1.07). The northern Italian students expressed a stronger desire for following policy and regulations than did southern Italian students. Likewise, southern Italian students had significantly lower preferences for asking questions than the preferences held by northern Italian students (mean difference equals 2.05). Hence, northern Italian students expressed a stronger preference for asking questions to improve understanding of a message or information. This difference points to a style of preferring to be more assertive than the southern counterparts.

Table 4: Means and significant values of measurement on the TSI

Thinking style	Mean for Northern Italy (n=263)	Mean for Southern Italy (n=170)	p-value
Conditional	21.08	20.01	<0.001*
Inquiry	33.59	31.54	<0.001*
Exploring	34.47	34.48	0.968
Independent	33.01	32.61	0.474
Creative	28.93	29.59	0.345

* a difference significant at the p=0.05 level

Two factors are discussed here in terms of their impact on the results, effect size and sampling. For the conditional style of thinking, the effect size is equal to 0.2 which is a small effect size, and for the inquiry style the effect size is small to medium, 0.42. The magnitude of differences of absolute figures is small overall which means that in spite of the statistical significance of the results in the conditional and inquiry styles across the two samples, the chances of rejecting the null hypotheses are small to medium at best. Given the small to medium effect sizes, the chances are that the research hypotheses are false, thus indicating the possibility of no significant differences in the two samples across the thinking styles.

Second, sampling may have had an effect on the results in terms of selecting samples of convenience which included unmatched samples of undergraduate and post graduate students in different disciplines. The southern group had more postgraduates (40%) who are more mature and may thus influence why this group shows less preference for the 'conditional' style of thinking than the northern group with less postgraduates (25%). The convenience sampling method may also have impacted on the results since the samples used in the two regions were those studying social science disciplines in northern Italy and technical disciplines in southern Italy. It may well be that because of the nature of social science disciplines, students in the northern Italian group are generally more inclined to ask questions in the learning process than the southern Italian group simply because the study of social science *per se* requires more discussion than the study of technical content, and further, teaching in the two disciplines is structured to promote different learning approaches through inquiry and discussion. This could have a potential effect on why the northern Italian group exhibited more preference for the 'inquiring' style of thinking.

The findings of this study indicate a number of interesting points of convergence and points of divergence in thinking style among the northern and southern samples of Italian university students. First, there is a notable absence of statistically significant difference among three of the five styles. The preferences for three of the styles (exploring, independent and creative) do not vary significantly across the samples, which indicates similarities and convergence at three particular points in the profiles. These three points of union indicate that there is similarly equal levels of preference (upon comparison) for looking for alternatives and differences – in other words, a high level of preference exists among both samples for multiple perspectives in comparison to two of the other thinking styles (conditional and inquiry).

Type 1 thinking style defined by Zhang and Postiglione (2001) refers to people who prefer to challenge norms and take risks which has relationship to low preference for conditional thinking and high preference for exploring and independent thinking. This in fact describes the general thinking style profile of the samples surveyed in this study. Type 2 thinking style refers to people who tend to favour norms and be authority-oriented which has relationship to high preference for conditional thinking. In this study, there was no high preference, comparatively, for conditional thinking even though northern Italian students had higher preference for the conditional style compared with southern Italian students.

The current study does not support studies from previous decades about the relationship between thinking styles and different socio-economic status (Adorno, Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford 1950; Kreml 1977; Scarr 1984).

Conclusion

The hypothesis at the outset of this paper stated that the numerous economic, socio-cultural and political differences between the north and south of Italy would impact upon the thinking styles of students from the two regions. This hypothesis was motivated by results of previous research on the impact of socio-cultural factors on learning and also by other stereotypical assumptions about the north and south. Some of these assumptions include the idea that students have more stimuli in urban living areas and their minds would be more reactive than those students from rural and poorer areas. Another stereotype is that thinking style results could be related to social and easy-going life-style in rural living where there would be pressure to follow rules since supervision would be stricter and a patriarchal culture would be likely to exist. A third stereotype arising from the knowledge that the north of Italy is rich and the south is poor is that urban students are more open-minded. This research has not supported any of these stereotypes.

The finding of interest in this exploratory study is that there are more similarities than differences among the two samples of students from northern and southern Italian universities. The statistical significance found in two of the five thinking styles was in part puzzling and opposite to what we expected. Students from the south did not express a preference for greater dependence on authority. Given the caution we have indicated on two of the reliabilities on two of the subscales of the TSI, there is still an overall firm and generally consistent result that indicates that known socio-cultural and economic factors do not impact on university students' thinking styles. This is consistent with some previous research which lent partial support for a link between SES and thinking styles (Zhang & Postiglione 2001). One argument used for a different thinking style between students from two different socio-economic levels is that students from a higher SES have more exposure to issues, discussions and evaluations through the family at home. We contend that the results of this study lend more support to the idea of the new global society which potentially exposes everyone more readily to visual stimuli and electronic means of building social capital where discussions and evaluations can occur more frequently through a system of information technology that has not been diffuse in the past.

This study has provided information on the relationship between thinking style and socio-economic differences. We found that reported ways of thinking are generally quite similar, but with two notable differences between the northern and the southern students' reported preferences for thinking. In such a case where there are differences in thinking styles based on socio-cultural differences, academics could be informed of the need to encourage in their students the development of more flexible thinking styles and to adapt their preferences in the best way possible to deal with the specific nature of problems in different situations. There is a general need to encourage students to increase their cognitive awareness and breadth of preferences for ways of thinking.

This study has involved exploratory research on the differences
and whether this line of inquiry is worth pursuing in further detail.
We suggest that the diffuse use of information and communication
technology (ICT) is a reason why thinking styles are not so different
among students from two markedly different regions of Italy. This
would make for an interesting line of further research to explore
the relationship between the use of ICT, as a tool for building social
capital, and thinking styles. Through this research there has been a
contribution to the literature on thinking styles in the following ways.
First, there has been empirical evidence presented on the relationship
between socio-cultural and economic differences of two regions
and university students' reported thinking styles that are defined
by a constructivist model of thinking styles. Second, it is not clear
if thinking styles are socialised or if there are forces more powerful
than socio-cultural and economic ones, such as communication and
information technology, which build social capital across geographical
regions and impact on thinking styles.

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Appendix 1

	COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C	COLUMN D	COLUMN E
1 When I think I like to:	be passive	ask questions	seek options	direct my own thinking	imagine
2 I think best when I:	keep my views to myself	ask about the issues	experiment	feel responsible for my own actions	use images
3 When I am thinking I:	want to be told	take initiative	challenge ideas	offer my own suggestions	tend to rehearse mentally
4 Thinking is best for me when I	accept the views of others	look for an explanation	implement different ideas	think for myself	think in pictures
5 When I think I:	am careful to think the right things	venture out from what I usually think	look at all sides of issues	think things out for myself	visualize new experiences
6 When I am thinking I am:	sticking to what I know	questioning what I know	trying new things out	expressing my opinions	inventing opinions
7 I think best by:	accepting views	doubting views	discovering views	deciding my own views	picturing issues
8 When I'm thinking I like:	relying on others' feelings	questioning feelings	exploring new feelings	relying on my own feelings	imagining new feelings
9 I think best when:	accepting solutions	questioning solutions	searching for new solutions	offering my own solutions	imagining solutions
10 I do my best thinking when I:	say what others think	ask questions to help me understand	try to explore all sides	say what I think	describe what I can visualise

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Developing a more research-oriented and participant-directed learning culture in the Australian environmental movement

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Environmental groups seek to educate and change people, yet there is little discussion and debate about the various theories and practices they use. One has only to think about the big, national environment groups like Australian Conservation Foundation, Wilderness Society, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and World Wildlife Foundation to note that they go about their educational and change practices in distinct ways. And then there are new groups like Climate Action, GetUp and Climate Camp who are seeking to educate and change people in more contemporary ways. We think that adult educators could play a helpful role in fostering more critical and participant-directed interrogation among environmental groups about aspects of their practices that focus on change and education. In this paper, we report on focus groups, case studies and a literature review we conducted for a coalition of three environmental non-government organisations and a state government agency to do just that.

Posing questions about new forms of change practice

There are four imperatives that drive us in this paper. The first is the need and desire to address climate change. The second is to pay more attention to the nature and form of strategies used by environmental groups to bring about changes in public policy, industry practices, lifestyle and consumer practices. The third is our assertion that there is an educational dimension to the actions of pro-environmental groups to bring about change. And the fourth is our interest in creating a learning culture where Australian environment groups are engaged in participant-directed analysis of their and each others' educational and change practices. And that is the purpose of this paper: to present ideas about the possible organising features to develop a more research-oriented, learning culture where this analysis will be continuous and participant-directed. In other words, how can environment groups, as they are the participants in this context, feel safe to analyse and learn from each other? To date, there has been little relevant empirical research about these aims. Hall and Taplin (2007) presented a useful framework for a 'big-picture' analysis of campaign strategies used by Australian environment groups, but they note that 'further research is required to compare the perceived achievements and political impacts of the campaigns... and to adequately assess campaign effectiveness' (p. 105). We agree that further research is required but argue there should be bottom-up or participant-directed, not just top-down, external expert-driven research.

Since 2005, climate change has emerged as the central environmental issue in rich countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Stern 2006, IPCC 2007, Flannery 2007, Gore 2006). There has been a significant increase in public interest in Australia about environmental issues (NSW DEC 2007). A survey by the Climate Institute (2008) showed that public awareness and understanding of the importance of environmental issues was and remained ahead of both political and bureaucratic action, even after the financial crisis of 2008 had taken hold.

To elaborate on the second imperative mentioned above, a reason to pay more attention now to change and educational practice in the Australian environment movement is to respond to new forms of practice. Jeff Angel is Director of the Total Environment Centre, a non-government organisation. He asserts that membership of environmental groups in Australia is declining or at least changing. While membership of the big national groups is steady, Angel asserts that local conservation groups are dwindling. Whether empirical evidence bears his assertion out in the stark terms he depicts is not that important.

What Angel's assertion does point to is that there is a change in the type of environment groups people are joining and the actions they are taking. But more important is the perception Angel, and other experienced environmentalists, have about the need to change. Local conservation groups, according to Angel, are no longer in vogue. Twenty years ago he was active in forest campaigns but is happy to have now moved on and be active on other fronts. Having said that membership in conservation groups is declining, Angel suggested that there is now a greater public awareness of environmental issues. This translates into people being more willing to persuade their peers about changing behaviour to foster sustainability. There is, according to Angel, less stigma in recent times associated with being 'green'. If Angel's assertions are correct, this throws up various challenges. And they are captured in the types of questions that were posed by members of the steering group that commissioned our research. In this paper, we will focus on the following three questions :

- What can environmental groups draw from research and different disciplinary traditions to inform their efforts to involve people in pro-environmental action?
- What are the new types of environmental actions and groups emerging?

- What are the ways that environmental groups can work together, share their knowledge of change, and enhance adult learning in the Australian environmental movement?

We are especially interested in ways that non-government environmental groups (NGOs) can collaborate with each other and with government agencies. This concern with strengthening the collaboration among environmental groups to support learning was a priority for the Mittagong Forum, a coalition of the main environmental NGOs formed in 1997, with the aim of broadening and strengthening the Australian environment movement. In 1999 they commissioned a study (Flowers & Parlane 2000) to improve the ways that environmental NGOs supported adult learning and training across the groups and the community.

Background

The study reported here (Flowers & Chodkiewicz 2008) resulted from collaboration between a state government agency and a number of key environmental groups in NSW, as part of a wider effort to encourage government agencies and environmental NGOs to work more effectively together by supporting research and learning about effective change practices. The NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), in partnership with the Total Environment Centre (TEC), Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) engaged us to investigate and make recommendations on how environmental organisations might identify the needs of and develop support mechanisms for individual grassroot *champions for sustainability* who provide information and encouragement to people in their local area or network. We were asked to research available literature and to conduct a number of focus groups.

This research was premised on the view that sustainable living could become a core concern for the community. Whilst there are signs

of positive change with the adoption of initiatives like *GreenPower,* rejection of plastic bags, curbside recycling, installing solar energy panels, rainwater tanks and water conservation, there is still a long way to go to make it a 'way of life'. The challenge continues to be about how to reduce consumption and one's environmental footprint, while maintaining the same (or better) standard of living. The increased awareness of global warming is adding an impetus to the campaign for sustainable living.

A feature of environmental advocacy NGOs is that they seek to bring about behavioural and social change for sustainability. They rely on people who are willing to plan and facilitate action for change. We understood that the consortium partners wanted this particular research to inform their ongoing efforts to support people engaged in action for change. They were especially interested in supporting people working for change in families, communities, with NGOs and in the public arena. This research therefore focused on what would inform and support 'change-practice.'

The literature reviewed was analysed in terms of what the research tells us about the new forms of environmental action and theories of change, across three distinct domains of pro-environmental behaviours: (a) public and community, (b) family and household and (c) consumer domains. We also explored current practices of change in focus group sessions with a sample of participants who were involved as activists in these three domains, and through a number of selected case studies of projects led by NGOs.

Analysing theories of change – insights from bodies of literature

In our review of recent literature to find answers to the questions mentioned above, it became clear that it would not be possible to identify single answers or even outstanding best practice examples because there is such a variety of commentators and researchers who have diverse starting points. We propose one way of helping to make

sense of the diverse ideas and arguments is to locate them in distinct disciplinary traditions. We reviewed four disciplinary traditions and bodies of literature: sociology; political science; behaviour change and psychology; and education. There are other disciplinary traditions that are relevant; for example, ecology and public communication or social marketing. However, there is not sufficient space to discuss them here.

It is possible to identify distinct starting points in each body of literature. For example some **sociologists**, rather than asking how information and education can produce champions for sustainability, ask how can habitus (celebrations, rituals, materialities, times and spaces) be devised that will encourage them. They examine what sort of cultural capital strengthens and encourages pro-environmental behaviour. They analyse discourses. Discourses exert enormous influence over beliefs about and action towards the environment. What are the various and dominant discourses (storylines, key metaphors and other rhetorical devices) that people draw on to understand society and the environment? To what extent and in what ways have these discourses contributed to more sustainable futures? What can be done to strengthen pro-environmental discourses? There is, of course, contestation between discourses and the terms of these debates are always changing. For example:

> … once areas of marshy land were called swamps. The only sensible thing to do was to drain them, so the land could be put to useful purpose. Today, we call these same areas wetlands, and governments have enacted legislation to protect their value in providing habitat for wildlife, stabilization of ecosystems and absorption of pollutants (Dryzek 2005: 3).

Political scientists pose broad-brushed questions such as: Why and when do environmentalists succeed or fail in environmental campaigns? Success is defined by influencing change in public opinion and government policies. This leads to analytical questions about the organisational structures and nature of NGOs. For example,

how will NGOs choose which battles to fight, how to differentiate themselves from one another in order to attract membership and funding, and how to decide when to form alliances and when to work separately?

A body of research devoted to **behaviour change**, largely undertaken by psychologists, focuses on how to change people's behaviours in household, community and workplace settings. A typical question that is posed in this tradition of research would be: what factors and practices lead to people reducing their energy consumption? Another challenge, once people have been involved in taking action for the environment, is how to keep them involved. This issue has been the focus of a number of environmental psychologists, such as De Young (1996) who researched durable pro-environmental changes and Geller (2002) who developed a 'flow of behavior change' model. It clearly set out three key elements in moving individuals along a spectrum – from 'environmentally unfriendly habits' to 'environmentally friendly behaviour' and then onto 'ongoing environmentally friendly habits'.

The three key elements of Geller's model of facilitating pro-environmental behaviour are providing information, feedback and social support. Providing information includes running events or expos. Providing positive feedback includes highlighting success stories, reporting back on numbers involved, successes, and recognising and rewarding effort and achievement. Social support includes making people feel they were supported, that they were part of a bigger effort by the local and global community (Staats, Harland & Wilke 2004: 343). Staats *et al.* (2004) also made the point that the most widely used way of promoting pro-environmental behaviours in household programs had been through using just one of these elements – providing information. Of the other two, providing feedback has been included less frequently, while social support has rarely been implemented in any household interventions.

Educational researchers focus on questions about learning. Part of the challenge for the environmental movement is to recognise the value of learning that takes place not just in formal settings, but also in social action and struggle (Foley 1999). An example of the richness and variety of such learning can be seen from Foley's study of learning in a green campaign (Terania Creek). This kind of analysis leads to thinking more about 'sites of learning'.

Identifying various 'sites of learning' helps focus on where, when and with whom learning happens. They are located along a continuum and can range from formal education and training (for example, courses with defined curricula), informal education (instruction that is built from and for particular events and projects such as non-violent direct action training during an environmental campaign, or an issue based seminar), informal learning (conscious and systematic efforts to learn from experience, involving individual or group reflection), to incidental learning (learning that is embedded in other activities, is often tacit, but which nevertheless continually informs action) (Flowers & Chodkiewicz 2008).

Another approach to consider is popular education. Whelan (2005) argued that taking a popular education approach provided a way of breaking out from the traditional and dominant modes of environmental communication and education. He suggested that many environmental programs in the community often focused just on raising public awareness. They provided information, featured didactic messages, and used only community-based social marketing approaches. In contrast, popular educators built their work from the daily lives of community members, addressed their social, political and structural change priorities, and emphasised collective rather than individual learning. Through a number of case studies, Whelan (2005) showed how a popular education approach created opportunities for education through social action.

We are suggesting there is a need to be more explicit about disciplinary lines of enquiry, and to consider how as adult educators it is possible to draw on these multiple lines of enquiry. And so, when examining what constitutes success of a change process, we propose it is useful first to identify what type of change is being facilitated. We take as a given that ultimately all efforts aim to change and improve the state of the environment. But there are various aspects that must change first in order for the state of the environment to improve. Table 1 summarises the areas of change and matches them to particular disciplinary traditions.

Table 1: Areas of change and disciplinary lenses

Areas of change	Disciplinary lenses
Organisational and social values, cultural norms, social movements and community aspirations	Sociology
Public policy and social movement strategies	Political science
Individual, household, organisational practices and behaviours	Behavioural change and psychology
Awareness, knowledge, values, attitudes, language, skills and competencies	Education

Participation in the Australian environment movement

The community-based environmental movement continues to involve significant numbers of people across Australia. According to Hutton and Connors (1999), by the late 1980s at the end of an intense period of campaigning and growing professionalism among environmental NGOs, there were more than 300,000 members of these groups Australia-wide. Indications are that overall membership numbers have grown since, but the available data is only partial, and it is difficult to provide a comparison between the older

established groups and the newly formed groups. Table 2 reports on the membership of a number of the larger, more established environmental groups.

Table 2: Membership of the more established groups

Group	1998	2006
Landcare/bushcare	164,600	130,000
Greenpeace	n.a.	130,000
National Trust	78,000	n.a.
ACF	60,000	n.a
Other	166,500	n.a.
Total number	**469,100**	**n.a.**

It shows that, in 1998, an estimated 469,100 people were members of environmental groups in Australia (Lennon 2001). A breakdown showed that 164,600 people belonged to a Landcare or catchment management group, 78,000 were with the National Trust, 60,000 in ACF, and a further 166,500 in a range of other smaller groups. Recent studies show that, by 2006, Landcare groups and Greenpeace each had about 130,000 members across Australia (Ragusa & Holden 2006), and there were well over a thousand environmental groups in NSW (Herriman *et al.* 2007: 3), with the NSW Nature Conservation Council (NSW NCC) representing 114 of the more established environment groups. In NSW in 2007, among the 1,863 Landcare groups across the state, the membership totalled 47,780 (Landcare NSW 2007).

Table 3: New groups – members, groups, participants

Group	2007
GetUp	230,000 members
Climate Action Movement	130 groups
Climate Action network	67 organisations
Climate Camp	1,200 participants

Among the new groups (Table 3) is *GetUp,* which includes among its campaigns a significant number addressing environmental and climate change issues. From 2006 the membership grew quickly so that, by the end of 2007, *Get Up* had more than 230,000 members registered online across Australia (Flowers & Chodkiewicz 2008). Also important is the new climate action movement, which in 2007 had more than 130 *Climate Action Movement* groups set up across Australia, with 57 of them in NSW (NCC 2008) and more than 67 affiliated organisations were part of the *Climate Action Network Australia* (CANA 2008). Another new important form to emerge was the community-based *Climate Camp*. Organised by a coalition of groups, it brought together more than 1,200 participants in a mix of discussion, learning and action over four days in Newcastle in July 2008 (Climate Camp 2008).

Analysing practices of change

In the focus groups we organised and the case studies we researched, we studied change practices in a number of domains – including the public policy and community action domain, the family and household domain, and the consumer and market domain. Here we will highlight a number of the themes that emerged across these domains related to new ways of engaging people to become more involved in pro-environmental actions.

Overall we found in our study that NGOs were continually struggling with change and with finding a balance between staying with the 'old' and developing the 'new'. Among the main aspects they were struggling with were:

- language
- organisational structures
- ways of defining issues
- membership and participation opportunities
- ways of communicating and educating
- measuring the impact of their work
- priority-setting about whom they seek to work with.

Adult education in the public policy and community action domain

A strong feeling emerged in our discussions of a real divide between new and old forms of organising, and between what appealed to younger people (16–35 year olds) and older people (50 years and over). These views seemed to leave out families with older children and the middle aged (35 to 50 year olds). Asked about membership of environmental groups, focus group participants who were experienced activists felt that membership of established, community-based environmental groups had fallen over the last decade. Another said that there continued to be significant differences among community-based environmental groups in their focus and appeal. The older more established ones, like the ACF, appealed to older people and the newer ones, like Greenpeace, to younger people.

New ways of engaging people were discussed, including an example of the new internet-based groups like *GetUp*. One activist felt that these groups were successful because they reached people in new ways and enabled people to choose more easily in which issues they would get actively involved. One focus group participant was concerned about the kinds of involvement that occurred in these new groups and what getting involved online with *GetUp* really meant. He suggested that

the level of involvement it achieved, such as having people joining online or signing a petition online, was a superficial action.

There was also scepticism about the value of participation in events that specifically focused on bringing in young people like the *Live Earth* concert in Sydney in June 2007. A union activist disagreed and said that their earlier *Rockin' for Rights* concert, organised by the union movement, was a successful event, involving and recruiting young people into the campaign against the federal government's *Work Choices* legislation. Not only did younger people get involved but many joined up as union members. It was suggested that younger people were more likely to respond if approached on the street or in a shopping centre, and they were willing to sign up as a member or to make a donation to a group like the World Wildlife Fund. An experienced activist suggested that while people would get involved in programs, new groups or new initiatives, at the same time they could be easily turned off from taking any further actions. This suggested the level of commitment to taking environmental action was weak.

GetUp

One of the largest of the new, online-based, independent, community campaigning groups in Australia is *GetUp*. It was formed in 2006 with the specific aim of building a more progressive Australia, bringing together like-minded people who wanted to increase the level of active participation in our society, and to focus specifically on political change. Set up as a non-profit organisation, it has been supported by individual donations and various non-government organisations, unions and community groups. It has a more targeted focus on the political process than the other online-based groups, and with more than 230,000 members nationwide in 2007, *Get Up* has been able to mobilise between 20,000 and 100,000 people to take actions on specific issues.

While the group generally appeals to a younger generation, its membership is drawn from other age groups as well. Most of its members join up online, and can get involved in a range of issues and campaigns. The environmental campaigns have included a *Save Our Heritage* and a *Climate Action Now* campaign. The ways that individual members generally have been involved have been by: signing up online as members and receiving a regular email bulletin; joining campaign actions by signing online petitions, and/or making donations; proposing ideas for action – such as putting up billboard advertisements to bring David Hicks home, skywriting messages above Parliament House, Canberra, on the day crucial votes were to be taken on the Migration Bill; or turning the most popular suggested ideas on election issues into funded 30-second television advertisements. In the lead up to the 2007 federal election *GetUp* members were asked to create, rate and help fund the production and airing of 30 second television ads to achieve a better, fairer Australia. Members uploaded more than 150 advertisements onto the *GetUp site*, including ones on climate change.

In November 2008, *GetUp* was involved in partnership with Nature Conservation Councils in each state in *Walk Against Warming* rallies in Australian capital cities, leading up to the government's announcement of its carbon trading scheme. Earlier in the year, it staged a *Climate Torch Relay* to focus attention on climate change issues. *GetUp* has also arranged some face-to-face meetings for members as a way of bringing people together locally. But these kinds of meetings have not been a central part of their activities.

Climate Action groups

In response to the issues of climate change, new coalitions of groups have been formed as a way of mobilising large numbers of groups and members. Various climate action groups across Australia have been brought together as members of the *Climate Action Network Australia,* which together has more than a thousand organisations.

This coalition includes environmental and climate, national environmental, environment, human rights and youth, aid and development, faith-based, renewable energy and energy efficiency, state-based and regional environmental organisations as members (CANA 2008).

As a key state-based organization, the NSW NCC set up in 2007 one of its major climate change initiatives the *Climate Movement,* which is an online hub that brings together almost 130 climate action groups around the country, with 57 of them located in NSW (NCC 2008). The website provides a space for groups to register and be part of actions on climate change that include traditional forms like media releases, submissions and mass actions. The site includes tips, resources, a 'what's on' section, and an online way to make donations. Significantly, many of the groups have only a few registered members, but they are able to reach out into their local community and involve many more people when either online or mass actions are called like the *Walk against Warming* in Sydney in 2006 that attracted over 40,000 people.

Climate Camp
One of the new forms of environmental mass activism and learning is *Climate Camp*, which began in the United Kingdom in 2006 and has inspired events in Australia, New Zealand, United States of America and Germany. A coalition of groups including Rising Tide, Australian Students for the Environment Network, Friends of the Earth and the Change Agency organised the first Australian Climate Camp in Newcastle in 2008. Climate Camp takes a consensus-based education and training approach to social action for environment. Taking place over six days, the camp not only brought together more than 1,200 people, but featured a major focus on discussion and learning as part of the camp.

All the climate camps that have taken place in various countries are conceived as week-long, intensive, action-oriented education events. In the case of the Newcastle camp, there was a combination of on-site workshops, forums and discussions about climate change, social change and mass action. It also featured a number of sessions providing specific training in non-violent direct action, as a lead-up to a number of direct actions by participants against the export of coal, as well as a debrief after the actions.

As a way of bringing people together and helping them to develop stronger social and motivational connections at the camp, participants were able to join together in both *affinity groups* and *neighbourhood groups*. A feature of Climate Camps in the UK has been the organisation in regions across the UK of *neighbourhood groups*, which were set up to bring people together *before* each camp.

Adult education in the household domain

ACF's GreenHome
The success of the ACF's *GreenHome* project was seen as a good example of the new ways of involving people in changing their behaviour in the home. It was the brainchild of a younger staff member at ACF and started in 2005 before the recent upsurge of public interest in climate change issues.

A feature of the program has been that people were involved through a mix of online and face-to-face activities involving three key strategies – providing information, feedback and support – as suggested by the Geller model. **Information** was important and was made available online through the website via a set of information booklets. The website also had a *GreenHome* guidebook that took people through six key areas of action – energy, water, waste, travel, food and shopping – and asked them to take part in a home challenge called the *GreenHome Challenge*. There was also an

online *Eco-Calculator* to help people work out their eco-footprint and a *Consumption Atlas* to help locate their actions within a bigger context.

The program also built in **feedback** for participants. On the website, participants received updates on the achievements of the program, reports and stories about 'successful participants', *GreenHome* workshops and events. There was also a *Green Grapevine* space on the website, where people were able to post their tips, hints and questions. There were also rewards and giveaways of various eco-products through a competition on the website. The prizes included rainwater tanks, compost bins, carbon offsets and other rewards which were handed out at workshops. *GreenHome* giveaways at workshops included four-minute shower timers, toilet flush restrictors, energy efficient light globes and No Junk Mail stickers, to help them reduce water and energy use and waste, and free home energy audits.

ACF used a government grant to organise a series of face-to-face workshops to further **support** involvement. The workshops helped to involve people by being able to talk to an ACF organiser about sustainability issues and receive information and their experiences. Of the six types of workshops run by ACF, the one focusing on transport was the hardest one to involve people in and the least well attended. Also, as part of its efforts to provide further support, local groups were set up in areas where workshops and expos had been run and where they had generated enough interest in pro environmental actions to be able to form a local group.

Adult education in the consumer domain

In discussing the ways people could be involved in changing their consumption patterns, participants in the focus groups felt there was a real difference between the 'old style' and the 'new style' of involvement. Among the new styles of activism mentioned were

some of those recent groups set up on the internet, like *GetUp*. At the same time, at a local level other new environmental groups were also emerging. A council officer said that in their local area people were getting involved in environmental courses and new environmental community groups, such as local climate action groups that were springing up across Australia.

Another new concept mentioned was re-localisation and the setting up of re-localisation groups. Re-localisation was described as a strategy to build societies based on the local production of food, energy and goods. It involved the development of local currency, governance and culture. Among the main goals of re-localisation were to increase community energy security, to strengthen local economies, and to dramatically improve environmental conditions and social equity. The new groups were described as being much broader than the old environment movement, as re-localisation groups were not only about the natural environment but also about building up the local economy in the context of the rest of society.

A representative from a national community gardens network said that community gardens are one of the important new ways for people to get involved. Community gardens are seen as new venues that are 'miles away from the old environmental group model'. This is because even small community food gardens are not just about accessing fresh food, they are also about building a sense of place and community. Community gardens had become 'platforms for education for sustainability' and were venues where a lot of education about sustainability was occurring.

At the same time, according to an experienced transport activist, the membership of their long-standing, transport action group had fallen away significantly since 2000. As a result the group had to re-focus its efforts. It had changed how it worked so that it relied on only a small group of three people, who worked mainly on gaining mainstream media coverage of transport issues. As a result of adapting and

changing their strategy, the group had succeeded in greatly increasing its media impact.

One person felt that established environmental groups were not being supported because they had an old-fashioned structure that stopped people from being actively involved in the decision-making. He felt their time had passed and that many people were putting their activism into new forms and new structures.

New eco small businesses were being established to encourage and support changes in home consumption. The founder of a sustainability business that worked both online and through a number of retail outlets suggested that many of the green consumers they met were moving away from taking big actions or joining established environmental groups. Instead, they were taking on smaller, but local, consumer actions and becoming more *green* as consumers. So instead of giving to a major group like *Greenpeace*, they were prepared to spend money on installing energy efficient lights, getting a rainwater tank or putting solar panels on their roof. He suggested that acting in this way people felt that they were able to make a difference. He also emphasised how important it was to help people to take small steps at first and to always give people positive feedback about any actions they had taken. This encouraged them to keep on going and to take on more actions for the environment.

The attraction of new environmental events was also mentioned, as was the need for activists and groups to come up with new ideas and innovative ways of bringing people together in actions for the environment. This was not easy to do, but when it worked, large numbers of people were willing to get involved. Events like *Earth Hour* and the *Live Earth* concert in Sydney were mentioned. *Earth Hour* in March 2007 had managed to involve almost a million people at a local community level across the city, much more than the numbers that organisers had expected or hoped.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, we posed three questions and we would like to draw together a number of key points in conclusion. Before we do that, we should reiterate that the purpose of this paper has not been to present an analysis of the relative efficacy of the theories and strategies of change that we have described and discussed – that would be a large-scale and continuous project that requires development. And adult educators with a bent for continuous learning and action research are well-placed to do that development work. In this paper, we have pointed to both research studies and community-based initiatives that can assist with that process.

What can environmental groups draw from research and different disciplinary traditions to inform their efforts to involve people in pro-environmental action?

There is little discussion and debate between environmental NGOs about the best ways to involve and support change-agents for environmental sustainability. And so, we think the answer to the question is that Australian environment groups should engage in discussions and debates with each other about theories and practices of learning and change, drawing on the various bodies of literature and not just relying on one kind of research or approach.

What are the new types of environmental actions and groups emerging?

There is a new generation of social change groups such as *GetUp*, the *Climate Action Network* and *Climate Camp*. There are new forms of action in household and consumer domains like ACF's *GreenHome* project, the NSW NCC's *Climate Challenge* or the new eco-businesses that are involving and supporting people. In some cases, they argue for new forms of change theories and practices. This is providing rich opportunities for robust discussions and debates between older and newer groups. Our study has confirmed that environmental change-

actions are no longer confined to activism in the public policy domain. There is a new focus on facilitating learning and change in household and consumer domains. Likewise, 'activism' is no longer confined to campaigning and petitioning. Environmental groups are devising projects, often using new technologies that include participant-directed activities featuring both online and face-to-face involvement. There is more direct engagement with people who are non-aligned to major environmental groups in a variety of ways that include simple petition signing, e-participation in discussion and ideas forums, donations, and participant-directed devising of various materials – for example, television or internet-based advertisements. There is a wider use of distributed as distinct from centralised leadership models. This can be seen, for example, in the support of the local climate action groups and networks that have been established.

What are the ways that environmental groups can work together, share their knowledge of change, and enhance adult learning in the Australian environment movement?

There are two broad points to be made here. The first is that NGOs in Australia represent a substantial part of the total effort to facilitate behavioural and social change for more environmental sustainability and yet there is little support and adult education available that is dedicated to this part of civil society. The second point is that our paper points to an approach to theorising about adult learning that goes beyond training and information campaigns. We suggest that theorising about adult learning in the Australian environment movement would benefit from a more explicit, inter-disciplinary approach that draws on research findings and takes into account various sites of learning.

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Community education and youth mentoring: how to build good practice?

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In 2008, the Helen Macpherson Smith (HMS) Trust commissioned Victoria University to conduct an evaluation of the Mentoring and Capacity Building Initiative's Regional Coordination Projects (RCPs). The RCPs are founded on a model of community education and collaboration that aims to enhance cross-sectoral and whole-of-community approaches to mentoring and community building. Their specific objectives are to:

- *coordinate effective regional delivery of new and existing mentoring programs and related activities*
- *identify, document and share best practice mentoring models*
- *strengthen community partnerships and collaboration, and the capacity and skills delivery of mentoring programs*
- *develop cross-sectoral and whole-of-community approaches to mentoring.*

The aim of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the RCPs in achieving these objectives, including the monitoring of program outcomes and strategic partnerships supporting these projects. This paper reports on some of the key findings of that evaluation.

Introduction

In 2008, the Helen Macpherson Smith (HMS) Trust commissioned Victoria University to conduct an evaluation of the Mentoring and Capacity Building Initiative (MCBI) Regional Coordination Projects (RCPs). The MCBI is an initiative of the Office for Youth (OFY), Department for Planning and Community Development, aimed at young people between the ages of 12 to 25. It has two key elements – MCBI Targeted Projects and MCBI Regional Coordination. The purpose of the MCBI is to provide an integrated, coordinated and evidenced-based approach to improving the quality of community-based youth mentoring programs in Victoria.

There are 12 area-based Targeted Projects which aim to increase the number and capacity of youth mentoring projects in communities with high levels of disadvantage and to build on existing models, practices and networks in communities. In addition, there are six RCPs managed by community organisations to build greater coordination and linkages within communities and across mentoring projects, agencies and related service activities. The 12 Targeted Projects are funded by OFY, while the six RCPs are jointly funded by OFY and the HMS Trust.

The youth mentoring programs that operate at a community level are commonly focused on individuals being matched to adult mentors and subsequent role models. These programs have been built around the knowledge from the adult learning sector; they are underpinned by notions of being practical and experiential, and filtered through Mezirow's work on transformative learning that challenges young

people to walk alongside their mentor, consider their previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values and perspectives, and question them so as they may become more open, permeable and better validated (Mezirow 2000).

The RCPs are founded on a model of community collaboration and support, and aim to develop and enhance cross-sectoral and whole-of-community approaches to mentoring and community building. Their specific objectives are to:

• coordinate effective regional delivery of new and existing mentoring programs and related activities
• identify, document and share best practice mentoring models
• strengthen community partnerships and collaboration, and the capacity and skills delivery of mentoring programs
• develop cross-sectoral and whole-of-community approaches to mentoring.

Policy at both a state and federal level has seen a renewed emphasis on community-based approaches to promoting community and social change as well as economic development. The MCBI capacity-building initiative has relevance to this environment. This nexus is highlighted by the recent release of the Australian Government's National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability which mentions many of the key elements of this initiative. The plan refers to the principles and practical application of 'education for sustainability' as being recognised internationally and fundamentally important to addressing the critical global challenges we all face. Through information and awareness, but more importantly by building people's capacity to innovate and implement solutions, education for sustainability is essential to re-orienting the way we live and work and to Australia becoming a sustainable society (Australian Government 2008).

Chaskin (2001), in his paper on establishing a definitional framework for community capacity building, states that the notion of community

capacity building is both explicit and pervasive in the rhetoric that describes the missions that guide and, to a greater or lesser extent, the activities that embody these efforts. He suggests that there is a commonality in the key elements of the term capacity building as it used in the MCBI. They include the existence of resources (ranging from the skills of individuals to the strength of organisations to access financial capital), networks of relationships, leadership and support for mechanisms or processes of participation by community members in collective action and problem-solving (Chaskin 2001).

The aim of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the MCBI Regional Coordination Projects in achieving these objectives, including the monitoring of program outcomes and strategic partnerships supporting these projects.

About the MCBI Regional Coordination Projects

The RCPs were established to build communities of practice using youth mentoring as the focal point. In effect, through the provision of professional development, quality assurance and building networks, the HMS Trust in partnership with the Victorian Government aimed to strengthen the capacity of communities to deliver local youth mentoring programs.

The RCPs cover all eight Victorian Government regions[1] depicted in Figure 1 and encompass all 79 Local Government Areas. The HMS Trust and Office for Youth partnership provides financial support for six RCPs. The HMS Trust funds RCPs in Barwon South West, Hume and Loddon Mallee. The OFY funds RCPs in Gippsland, Grampians and metropolitan Melbourne.

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1   Metropolitan Melbourne is covered by one of the six RCPs, and incorporates the three government regions of North West, Eastern and Southern Metropolitan Melbourne.

Figure 1: Victorian Government Regions

The RCPs provide direct and ongoing assistance to youth mentoring organisations by providing:

- direct one-to-one phone advice and face-to-face support when required
- information and resources to improve practice
- referrals to appropriate agencies and departments
- practice-based forums (such as Child/Youth Safe Organisations, Youth Participation)
- youth sector consultations (such as Training, the National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks)
- peer networking
- professional development.

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the number of programs supported by the six RCPs as at December 2008, and the number of mentees and mentors supported by these programs. This provides a sense of the breadth of support provided by each of the RCPs (noting that the Metropolitan Melbourne Youth Mentoring Implementation and Coordination Project incorporates three metropolitan government regions).

Table 1: Details on the six Regional Coordination Projects

MCBI RCP (Region)	Number of mentoring programs supported	Number of young people in programs	Number of mentors in programs
Grampians Regional Mentoring Network (GRMN) (Grampians)	25	226	158
Gippsland Mentoring Alliance (Gippsland)	16	180	167
Loddon Mallee Youth Mentoring Coordination Project (Loddon Mallee)	11	114	80
Barwon South West Mentoring Regional Coordination Project (Barwon South West)	13	162	167
Make Mentoring Matter Project (Hume)	16 (+9)	137	98
Metropolitan Melbourne Youth Mentoring Implementation and Coordination Project (MMYMIC) (Melbourne)	69	3714*	3550
Totals	159	4533	4220

Source: December 2008 progress reports *1300 from one program

A snapshot of relevant literature

This section provides a review of current literature offering a context for this study that looks beyond local experience to include national and international research. From the outset, the work of Freire and Mezirow set the context for mentoring that frames the learning principles by which young people can gain benefit. The intention of the review was to consider briefly the literature on the link between

the learning that can be gained through mentoring and increasing protective factors and improving social capital in young people.

The literature review assisted in identifying good practice principles for youth mentoring programs. It was the identification of good practice that located this study within the body of work linking coordination of program resources to the delivery of quality youth mentoring programs. This snapshot of literature scans across those key themes to assist in the development of a strong framework of practice for the future development of regional coordination that aims to better support community workers, projects and volunteers across metropolitan Melbourne and regional and rural Victoria.

Youth mentoring and adult learning theory

Mentoring works to encourage the mentee to consider their current course of action, reflect on the information to hand and transform that learning into alternative courses of action. It is a practice that is framed by adult learning principles. According to Dirkx, 1998, Freire theory of adult learning aims at fostering critical consciousness among individuals. Critical consciousness refers to a process in which learners develop the ability to analyse, pose questions, and take action on the social, political, cultural and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives. Learning helps adults develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which social structures shape and influence how they think about themselves and the world. This process consists of action and reflection in transactional or dialectical relationships with others (praxis). Dirkx outlines that Freire argues education, through *praxis*, should foster freedom among learners by enabling them to reflect on their world and thereby change it. For Freire, transformative learning is emancipatory and liberating at both a personal and social level. It provides us with a voice, with the ability to name the world and, in so doing, construct for ourselves meaning.

Similarly, Jackson discusses transformative learning as a process in which we question assumptions about the world and ourselves that make up our worldview, visualise alternative assumptions, and then test them in practice (Jackson 2008). Mezirow outlines transformative learning as the process whereby we transform problematic frames of reference; mindsets, habits of minds, meanings and perspectives, sets of assumptions and expectations – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally open to change. Such frames are better because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

The impact of good practice

The rising interest in mentoring owes much to research findings over the past two decades highlighting the positive contributions non-parental adults can make in the lives of young people (Walker 2005, Baker & Maguire 2005). More broadly, the research focuses on the link between mentoring and the health and well-being of young people.

The importance of programs facilitating the bonding of children and adolescents with pro-social groups that encourage self-acceptance, healthy self-esteem, positive self-standards and expectations has been demonstrated by Glantz (1995). Resnick, Harris and Blum (1993) and Fuller (1998) have discussed the importance of consistent community connections and inter-agency linkages as central to increasing the protective factors for young people in any community. In their synthesis of almost 800 research studies, Scales and Leffert (1999) concluded that young people's connection with caring adults accounted for a range of developmental benefits, including higher self-esteem, greater engagement and performance in school, reduced delinquency and substance abuse and better mental health. Similarly, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, involving adolescents who were first assessed when in grades 7–12, found those

who reported having experienced a mentoring relationship since the age of 14 exhibited better outcomes in mental health, problem behaviour and connection to general health outcomes (DuBois & Silverthorn 2005).

The mentoring concept has particular appeal in working with young people, particularly those for whom opportunities for positive interaction with adults may be limited. Bellamy *et al.* (2004) states that their research has validated the importance of even one positive adult relationship as a protective influence in the lives of children vulnerable to problem behaviours and bad outcomes, such as alcohol and other drug abuse.

In Australia, MacCallum and Beltman (1999) note that mentoring is a strategy with the potential to meet the individual learning needs of a wide range of students. It can provide regular individual attention to a student or group of students that is not always possible in the standard classroom. MacCallum and Beltman (1999) and Bean (2002) agree mentoring can lead to a range of enhanced learning outcomes for students – academic, motivational, social and personal – at the same time providing benefits to the mentors, the school and the community. It is this diversity that also challenges the notion of what is mentoring.

Shiner, Young, Newburn & Groben (2004) also focus on diversity in recognising that mentoring programs have multiplied and diversified and are designed to suit a range of purposes for an equally diverse group of young people. Mentoring is being used to describe many different types of relationships, and there is no simple definition. They classified different forms of mentoring according to their:

- origin: whether they occur 'naturally' within families or communities as distinct from 'artificial' or professionally promoted relationships

- relationship type and program structure: one-to-one; one-to-group mentoring; peer mentoring
- location and context: whether the mentoring program takes place in a school, workplace or local community setting (Shiner *et al.* 2004).

It is this diversity in the structure and context that partly accounts for the inconsistency of the evaluation results of mentoring intervention programs (Shiner *et al.* 2004) and complicates researchers' attempts to discern which models work and why, and to design and implement practical interventions that incorporate the essential principles of effective mentoring.

Good practice youth mentoring
Notwithstanding the limited research, existing evidence does suggest a set of good practice benchmarks that could inform the development of an evaluation framework. Research indicates that there are a number of critical factors that are reasonable predictors of success. Hollin (1995) and McGuire (1995) linked process to a program's integrity. The processes underpinning implementation, according to both these researchers, have recently been identified as a key influence on the development of successful interventions. This notion covers a range of distinct but related issues, including program design, management and staffing. In essence, according to Hollin, program integrity is less concerned with program content than with the process by which it is implemented, delivered and managed. Rohrbach, Graham & Hansen (1993) utilised a framework of strength and fidelity when undertaking evaluations of youth mentoring programs. Summerfeldt (2003) identified program fidelity as the processes by which the intervention is actually implemented as planned, also described as program adherence (CSAP 2002).

Mentoring Australia (2000) listed the following core program elements as benchmarks of good practice:

- a well-defined mission statement and established operating principles
- regular, consistent contact between mentor and mentee
- establishment under the auspices of a recognised organisation
- paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills
- written role statements for all staff and volunteer positions
- adherence to Equal Opportunity requirements
- inclusiveness in relation to ethnicity, culture, socio-economic background, gender and sexuality as appropriate to the program
- adequate ongoing financial and in-kind resources
- a program plan that has input from stakeholders
- a rationale for staffing arrangements based on the needs of all parties
- program evaluation and ongoing assessment.

Rhodes (2002), Keller (2005) and Sipe (2005) identify a wide range of conditions and processes that should be important in mediating and moderating the impact of mentoring relationships on youth outcomes. They include the following:

- attributes that the mentor and youth each take to the relationship, such as the mentor's skills and confidence and the youth's relationship history and current level of functioning
- characteristics of the relationship, such as the extent to which mentor and youth form an emotional bond characterised by feelings of trust, empathy and positive regard
- contextual factors, such as pre-existing network linkages to other important persons and relationships in the lives of both the youth and mentor, and the characteristics of the program or other settings in which mentoring takes place.

Similarly, DuBois, Doolittle, Yates, Silverthorn and Tebes (2006) conclude that, although largely neglected to date, the types and value of resources used to provide mentoring are also important determinants of success and must be elucidated in order to conduct cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses and accurately gauge the potential cost-saving benefits of mentoring to social and health service.

Linking good practice with regional coordination

Regional coordination is an innovative approach to supporting mentoring by building mentoring capability within communities and thereby the capacity to maintain effective programs. As a recent innovation, there is limited research on the prevalence and therefore effectiveness of this regional approach. There is nonetheless a range of literature that reviews related elements of project coordination. It is to this literature that we now turn. The current literature explores the importance of resource coordination that builds skills of workers and volunteers and improves the capacity of communities to respond to the issues as they arise. More importantly for many, the inclusion of volunteers in a community has been identified as an important community networking strategy for those individuals, improving their own health and well-being and connection to their community.

The National Crime Prevention report, *Pathways to Prevention*, outlined the need to link protective factors for young people with community capacity building. No one agency or program can be expected to deliver all the services required which influence the full range of risk and protective factors identified in the community appraisal process. The report concluded that partnerships and coordination will be essential, involving service deliverers already involved in the community and perhaps new kinds of services (Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department 1999: 40–41).

Prilleltensky, Nelson and Peirson's (2001: 136 & 269) concept of partnership implies that no one individual, group or agency has the knowledge, skills and resources to provide the breadth of support necessary to promote wellness in young people. Rather, the collaboration of multiple and diverse stakeholder groups is necessary for a coordinated and comprehensive approach.

A review of the Local Learning and Employment Networks in Victoria concluded that:

> The data shows that social partnerships develop and are sustained because participants engage in partnership work. Effective partnership work embraces and harnesses the contributions of local partners and external agencies, their interactions and the changes they make in the collective work of realising shared goals. The processes of working together allow:
>
> - communities to identify and represent their needs and to secure quality partners and partnership arrangements that will enable them to achieve their objectives, and
> - government and non-government agencies to understand and respond to local needs, to utilise local resources and to enhance capacity for local governance (Billett, Clemans & Seddon 2005, quoted in Office for Education Policy and Innovation 2007: 3).

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2007), in their report on local youth services, also noted the importance of building networks. Currently, many services within the youth sector have established very effective models of collaboration. This collaboration can be extended and strengthened to better support young people and improve service responses. Building networks and improving collaboration between agencies to enable improved service linkages and integration is dependant on both resources and cultural change.

The importance of community and project coordination that is focused on building the skills of workers and other community members is highlighted in an initiative such as mentoring that is highly dependent on volunteers. According to Volunteering Australia (2007), traditionally there has been an artificial distinction between working with volunteers and community development. This distinction has been based on the perception of volunteers as being managed and working for the 'less fortunate' while community development was perceived as engaging with people to build their communities. However, many volunteer programs have indeed been

informed by and reflect effective community development practice and many volunteer programs have grown out of endeavours by people to build their communities.

The Manager of Education and Research at Volunteering Queensland, Mark Creyton, suggests that, in programs that aim to build capacity of individuals and communities, working with volunteers is an important part of community building. It is perhaps more appropriate to see all those who contribute to our work as community members rather than differentiate between the roles of volunteers, staff and community workers (Creyton 2008).

The Department of Planning and Community Development (2004) in Victoria outlines in its community building strategy that government helps build stronger communities by investing in a more linked-up, integrated approach to planning, funding and delivery of services at the local level. Strong communities understand and work with their most disadvantaged populations to ensure good quality service provision for all. To do these things, members of a strong community need to be engaged, involved, feel capable of working through issues and be supported through external partnerships.

Volunteering Queensland, through its connection to the peak body Volunteering Australia (2007), also argues that government has a significant role to play. Beyond mentoring there are a range of programs that use volunteers to work with people and likewise must be supported to develop quality benchmarks. The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2007) argues that, to promote capacity building, collaboration and coordination at community-based level, organisations need to have access to resources about their region and about innovation and programs in other regions.

The literature established elements from government policy, community practice and program management that contribute to the delivery of good quality youth mentoring programs. The review

demonstrated the links between good practice youth mentoring programs and enhancing the health and well-being of young people. Noted was the importance of effective cross-sectoral and whole of community approaches. It was evident that, within this context, the use of resources to coordinate program development, community partnerships, build the capacity of volunteers and professional development resources was essential.

This literature has informed the RCP model and the evaluation. The model has focused on being pro-active, building the capacity of programs and establishing partnerships in communities and across regions. The evaluation framework utilised in this research sought to explore the effectiveness of the contribution of RCPs to strengthening the elements identified in the literature – in particular, informing communities and programs of good practice and building on those elements that are acknowledged as critical to the success of sustainable youth mentoring programs.

Methodology

The evaluation approach consisted of five stages: a literature review; interviews and focus groups with RCP coordinators, mentoring program coordinators and mentors; observational analysis of all quarterly coordinator meetings and/or teleconferences of the RCP coordinators and Project Reference Group; case study analysis; and finally, an online survey of mentoring program coordinators supported by the MCBI RCP.

A summary of the evaluation method and the sample size for each element is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the evaluation method and sample sizes

Method	Participants
Online survey of mentoring program coordinators	43
Focus groups – mentoring program coordinators	28 (12, 8 and 8 in each focus group)
Mentoring program coordinator interviews (one-on-one)	7
Mentor interviews	8 (one-on-one)
	20 (informal conversations at mentoring celebration day)
Observational analysis of MCBI RCP coordinator quarterly meetings	8 (inclusive of OFY and HMS Trust representatives)

Impact of regional coordination

The importance of embedding quality principles into programs cannot be underestimated. The very fact that mentoring now attracts large numbers of volunteers who develop close relationships with young people means that overall program quality assurance should be the focus of every community.

Each regional coordinator evidenced their understanding of the range of essential ingredients to establishing quality youth mentoring initiatives including: organisational capability and capacity, including financial and human resources, an effective model, sufficient lead-time to develop and launch a program, and the importance of establishing community partnerships.

The range of strategies and activities identified to best support programs are typically those already undertaken by MCBI RCP coordinators. The feedback serves to crystallise our focus and inform a coordinated and systematic approach to supporting mentoring programs and building collaboration across the

community service sector. The following list provides a checklist of support valued by mentoring program coordinators:

- Mentor training and matching
- Program coordinator training
- Resources, including information on maximising benefits from collaboration
- One-on-one support, including site visits for observation and feedback
- Email and telephone advice
- Moral support
- Advice on funding and other support
- Liaison between mentoring programs to provide more targeting referral for young people (e.g. location, target group)
- Facilitation of practice-based network meetings
- Organisation of networking events
- Organisation of community forums
- Liaison with local schools
- Primary advocate for mentoring in the region
- Promotion of the benefits of mentoring and local programs to key stakeholders
- Organisation of local events to showcase the benefits of mentoring – to promote support and involvement
- Building of community and business partnerships
- Production and maintenance of a list of regional youth service providers
- Being a conduit for engagement with other regional youth service providers, and facilitating regular forums to explore cross-sectoral collaboration to support existing and fund new initiatives.

Mentoring program coordinator responses reveal that regional coordination has facilitated linkages between mentoring programs within regions and between mentoring programs and local business,

government service providers, schools, business, community-based services and other services (including training and professional development providers).

Regional coordination has delivered benefits for local mentoring programs by supporting program coordinators via strategies and activities that include networking, resources, trainers, knowledge transfer, advice, moral support, sounding board for new ideas, and targeted referrals.

The following from a mentoring program coordinator highlights these dynamics:

> We have been liaising with the regional coordinators in Melbourne, Loddon Mallee and Gippsland. Each has been extremely helpful and proactive in organising forums and seminars and identifying program-specific linkages and/ or valuable resources. The regional coordinators have also provided guidance in implementing new programs and best practice mentoring. Involvement in the RCP has proved a great networking opportunity and, while probably not directly resulting in the development of linkages with other community groups, has helped to facilitate this process. Given this is a new initiative, it will probably take time for the coordinators to directly identify linkages and notify the relevant organisations for the purposes of collaboration. [Name of program] fully supports the initiative, especially for isolated communities.

This support for and satisfaction with the MCBI RCP initiative was typical of many coordinator responses. Coordinators also provided several examples of linkages developed with a local business as an important source of both mentors and funding.

> Many local businesses have become aware of the work that we do with young people and have decided to partially fund our programs within their local communities.

Regional coordination has facilitated regional networks that bring together commencing and established programs alike and enables the sharing of knowledge and good practice among mentoring program coordinators. This peer support structure is seen as a major strength of regional coordination:

> Following conversations at a meeting, I contacted another organisation to follow-up on advertising opportunities in Melbourne for recruiting volunteers. I also was able to firm up links with [the] Shire Council during a workshop on partnerships in October. This may lead to cooperation between their developing mentoring service and our established service in [name of suburb/town]. There are also talks about a council initiative where staff are encouraged to become mentors in our program.

The online survey provided an opportunity to explore the key guiding questions for the evaluation as perceived by mentoring program coordinators who were being supported, including: the development of linkages between mentoring programs and other community organisations, including strengthening collaboration and partnerships with other service providers; the nature of support services provided by regional coordination, including strategies to better support and enhance the effectiveness of mentoring; perceived barriers to success and strategies for their mitigation; and enablers that enhance program delivery and success.

Table 3 presents a list of activities and services actually accessed by these coordinators to date. These are ranked in order of frequency with the percentage of respondents utilising these support services presented in the last column.

Table 3: MCBI RCP activities or services utilised (n=35)

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Information through regular emails, newsletters and events	29	83
Access to resources on mentoring	28	80
Forum for networking and sharing practice with other mentoring coordinators in your region	26	74
Web resources	23	66
Professional development or training	22	63
One-one-one support or advice via telephone or email	19	54
Needs-based support or advice as required	17	49
Referral to other youth services and support	16	46
Site visit by MCBI RCP coordinator	14	40
Recognition or celebration events	13	37
Partnership opportunities	11	31
Funding opportunities	9	26
Mentor induction or training	9	26

Clearly the most common activities/services utilised are the provision of information through regular emails, newsletters and events (83%), followed by access to resources on mentoring (80%). Around three quarters (74%) of respondents indicated that they had participated in a forum for networking and sharing practice with other mentoring coordinators in their region, and two thirds had used web resources. Sixty-three percent had received professional development support and/or training, while 54% had received one-on-one support or advice and 40% had received a site visit from a MCBI RCP coordinator. Importantly, around half (49%) of the respondents reported that they received needs-based support or advice as required.

Critical success factors

A critical success factor in the development of the MCBI RCP was the establishment of a community of practice among the six regional coordinators. The regular quarterly meetings and teleconferences provided an opportunity to share knowledge, experience and resources and to seek timely advice from peers. An important supporting role was played by the project sponsors (OFY and the HMS Trust) to coordinate the community of practice and facilitate quarterly meetings and teleconferences. This has been particularly valuable in developing ideas and strategies to better support regional mentoring. The following quotes from two regional coordinators are instructive:

> I regard the RCP (coordinators) as my team.

> If there was an occasion where I didn't know the answer to something or where to find a particular resource, I could discuss this with one of the other (RCP) coordinators.

Likewise, the breadth of experience of RCP coordinators is seen as a critical enabling factor – including knowledge of education, health, community development, adolescent health and welfare, publicity and communication.

The development of training and resources has been a key focus of regional coordinators during the establishment phase of the MCBI RCP, a task made easier by the partnership between the HMS Trust and OFY. As previously noted, it is this partnership that has contributed to the growth of key program resources. The good practice guide, the guide to engaging business in youth mentoring, celebrations such as youth mentoring week and the establishment of the Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance, have all been part of a systematic approach and strategy to build mentoring capacity across Victoria. This is the platform from which regional coordinators could launch more localised and customised responses.

Enablers: factors that enhance program delivery and success

Mentoring program coordinators were asked to identify three factors that have enabled them to run a successful mentoring program and to briefly explain how these factors enhance their practice. What follows is a summary of the key themes emerging from the survey, including related sub-themes or enabling factors:

- A supportive and active steering committee or reference group
  - utilise contacts, networks, expertise

- Organisational support
  - management commitment, supportive staff, source of mentors

- Program coordinator skills, attributes and experience
  - knowledge of service sector, professional development, succession planning, perseverance

- Strong relationship with mentee referring organisation
  - cooperative partnerships, program champion
- Networking
  - Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance, regional coordination, practice forums, peer support, training, workshops

- Funding
  - certainty, independent of government, corporate support

- Committed and supported mentors
  - effective recruitment, screening and selection, timely training, careful matching, ongoing support, peer network

- Program model
  - established, clear procedures, evaluated, high profile, reputable

Barriers to success and strategies to remove impediments

Respondents were asked to list up to three barriers to running a successful mentoring program. They were asked to explain briefly why these factors impede good practice and, for each barrier identified, to specify what they believe is required to remove or reduce that barrier. Table 4 presents edited responses to provide a clearer connection between the barrier, its cause and possible mitigation strategy. The barriers and mitigation strategies have been organised around several themes or categories emerging from the responses.

Table 4:   *Reported barriers, perceived causes and mitigation strategies*

Funding and resources

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Funding is our biggest barrier	Program cannot run without a coordinator. Presently part-time (19 hours per week) and often not available for school liaison staff and mentors	This position should be full-time; ideally with two coordinators for it to be run at its full potential
Short-term funding		Seek sustained commitments from various funding sources
Lack of staffing		Build an understanding in government and business about the value of mentoring and the need for sustainability
Funding for activities, research and extension of the program	Knowing what funding is available and how to go about applying	
One mentor coordinator in the state, who supports over 200 mentors	Although our wider team of staff supports the students, this is a very large quantity of people to be responsible for and places a great deal of pressure on the mentor coordinator	A greater number of staff dedicated specifically to supporting the mentoring programs within our organisation

Funding and resources

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Isolation	I am one program coordinator in a service which runs other non-mentoring programs	Resources
Lack of resources to enable coordinator to have sufficient contact with mentees in program	Difficult when providing training and managing all the demands of a program–administrative and face-to-face practice	Collaborate with another mentoring program to combine training and mentor support groups. Additional 0.2 position to enable someone else to do admin. tasks
Lack of time to do run all aspects of the program	Time to manage promotion, training, assessment, accreditation, mentor matching and supporting the match	Resources

Organisational support and commitment

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Lack of commitment from the High School	Program is not valued for the benefits it can provide to young people Committed school welfare officer has moved on	Continue to build the relationship between the High School and the Youth Centre through dialogue
Accessing schools	Identifying key people and capturing their interest	Planning a school staff breakfast for early 2009
Continued organisational support (often discuss discontinuing the program)	Lack of mentor interest, lack of community support and referral to the program Making schools aware of the students' need for this service	An increase in community awareness Discussion with teachers and principals has helped to alleviate this
Support from organisation	Some areas have found it hard to obtain manpower, time and resources	

Funding and resources

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Support from local council/agencies/ community		

Mentor recruitment, matching and ongoing support/retention

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Mentor attrition	Difficulty in their life's circumstances	No solution
Limited time	Impossible to get everyone matched up at the start of the semester	Need more staff on the mentoring program
Mentor availability	Mentor attrition	Better screening of mentors
Delay in screening volunteers	Can only process a number at a time	Delay in screening volunteers
Misunderstanding roles; communicating expectations, boundaries and what we are trying to achieve	Lack of skill in communicating need	More targeted and specific pre-training
Mentors not responding to catch-up requests; getting mentors to provide feedback		Can be overcome with regular contact and support
Mentor recruitment, lack of suitable mentors	Small population to draw from	
Mentor training	Cost and expertise to deliver training	Training organised and paid for by an external organisation

Mentor recruitment, matching and ongoing support/retention

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Professional development: there needs to be more offered on youth issues and the impact on the family	Constant focus on young people while ignoring role and impact on family	
Mentors and mentees not communicating with program manager		Need more time to follow up
Generation gap	Challenging to ensure one recruits appropriate community members, employees to participate in the program as they do not often have an understanding of how schools operate and sometimes find it challenging to work with students from today's generation	Reduce this barrier by spending more time during training to improve volunteers' understanding of schools and the cohort of students they will be working with
Volunteers need to commit to the entire length of the program	Disappointing when mentors let the student down as they could not attend the session	Consideration for a possible MOU between our organisation and the volunteer, or a signed agreement might be an option
Recruiting more male mentors	Notion that mentoring is demanding and more of a fitting role for females	Communication strategy to dispel the notion
Recruitment for both mentees and mentors	Mentoring is uncommon in the Arabic community	A lot of work was conducted to educate parents on the concept of mentoring

Geography

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Limited opportunities for staff training and development	Geographic dispersion of program	Bundle mentor training with other training being delivered
Large number of referrals	Sometimes waiting lists are closed	
Rural isolation can create difficulties for both mentor and mentee	Daily bus services and mentors without private transport: limits access to mentees	Cannot be readily addressed
Distance, distance, distance!	It is a big ask for a volunteer mentor to maintain regular, fortnightly contact with a young person for a minimum of twelve months	When the young person moves from their placement, it is sometimes to another placement or independent living further away which makes contact more difficult
Finding mentors for young people in other regions is an enormous challenge	Working on a program which covers the entire state of Victoria	This barrier may be removed if I was able to learn extra skills in accessing networks in an area. I don't know anything about learning about advertising and recruiting mentors in different areas of Victoria, and about targeted recruiting and getting the mentors I want rather than the mentors I don't need

Evaluation and research on the benefits of mentoring

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Lack of information about the effectiveness of mentoring Lack of (or lack of my awareness of) Australian-based research into mentoring and its short-term and long-term outcomes for young people	Absence of evaluation processes in our program Lack of awareness of latest research on mentoring more broadly	Would be great to receive some readable and volunteer-friendly up-to-date information to assist in recruitment, training and regular communication with mentors
Evaluation	Developing efficient and effective techniques for data collection tailored to meet the needs of the target groups	Consultations and relationship development

Miscellaneous

Barrier	Perceived cause	Mitigation strategy
Early mentee attrition and disengagement resulting in wasted resources and time	Having young people engage in our programs without fully understanding program purpose or genuine interest	Looking internally at how best to prepare students for the program, to ensure we are limiting it to only those who are very willing and truly wanting the assistance of a mentor
Expectation that mentor programs will eventually be owned by the community	Nice in theory. In reality, they cost money, need a facilitator and, with the necessity to have mentors police-checked (as they should be), I cannot see how a mentor program could be successfully community owned	Ongoing funding

Conclusion

The HMS Trust and the OFY have made a serious commitment to supporting and developing the provision of quality mentoring programs to young people around the state. The establishment of the MCBI RCPs has been an effective element in a strategy aimed at improving the practice of youth mentoring. The RCPs have evidenced their effectiveness at improving the quality of youth mentoring programs and increasing the capacity of communities to deliver them.

The funding of the MCBI RCPs was in broad terms a 'line in the sand' that identified the importance of delivering quality youth mentoring programs in communities. Currently, community programs are delivered by a wide range of organisations with relatively small amounts of funding whilst achieving some very significant outcomes for young people. Government has developed a strategic initiative – the MCBI – to build on this fervour for youth mentoring and harness the energy, resources and community commitment to improve quality, better connect and coordinate service provision, and adopt a holistic approach to supporting young people.

Ensuring that volunteers are equipped to deliver the programs for young people to have access to them, ongoing funding for programs, setting benchmarks through the good practice guides, celebrating mentoring through Youth Mentoring Week and establishing a policy framework for youth mentoring were all elements of the strategy of maximising those outcomes. The narratives contained in the previous section demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategic approach.

However, youth mentoring is fraught with challenges which also mean there is still room to respond to new opportunities. Youth mentoring programs currently have large numbers of volunteers who are encouraged to develop relationships with vulnerable young people. It is heartening to acknowledge the large numbers of people who want to contribute to their communities and to young people.

However, it is imperative that we, government and community ensure that all of the right guideposts are in place.

Volunteers need training and on-going support, and program coordinators need to ensure mentors are aware of good practice principles so that young people, volunteers and communities can optimise program outcomes. The MCBI RCPs, as evidenced in this study, have made an impact on that quality assurance, however, it is also up to government and private funders to demand quality benchmarks are embedded within programs as a condition of monies. Such elements as the training of volunteers, program management of matching mentors with mentees and evaluation of programs are essential. Currently this occurs both implicitly and in some instances explicitly.

This evaluation found that the MCBI RCPs have been successful in guiding, advising and supporting both existing and new mentoring projects. Regional coordination has delivered benefits for local mentoring programs by supporting program coordinators via strategies and activities that include networking, resources, trainers, knowledge transfer, advice, moral support, sounding board for new ideas, and targeted referrals. It has facilitated regional networks that bring together commencing and established programs alike and enable the sharing of knowledge and good practice among mentoring program coordinators.

Regional coordination has likewise enhanced links across projects, related agencies and community groups. The benefits for regional programs are pronounced and extend beyond regional coordination to state-based activities that are seen as a vehicle for providing a more holistic approach to supporting young people in their local communities. Linkages across the community service sector are proving to be critical to facilitating greater integration and maximising service access for young people. In one example, regional networks have enabled a better coordination of mentoring demand

and supply, with new referrals forwarded to other programs when capacity constraints prohibit additional matches.

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Developments in intellectual property and traditional knowledge protection[1]

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In order to protect indigenous/traditional knowledge, intellectual property law must be leveraged in a way that is responsive to the dynamic inter-relationships between law, society and culture. Over the last decade, increased attention to Indigenous concerns has produced a wealth of literature and prompted recognition of the diverse needs of Indigenous peoples in relation to law, legal access and knowledge protection. There is much more that needs to be done, especially in closely considering what the consequences of legal protection are for the ways in which traditional/indigenous culture is understood and experienced by Indigenous communities and others. This paper considers the latest developments within this field and discusses what possibilities for further legal action exist within both international and local contexts.

[1] The text of this paper was delivered at the 60th Annual Conference for NGO/ Director of Public Information United Nations, New York, 6 September 2007. This paper is reconstructed from speaking notes. It has references where possible. Any mistakes or oversights are my responsibility. My sincere thanks to Ulia Gosart and LIENIP.

Introduction

This paper derives from research I have been conducting for the last six years in the field of intellectual property (IP) and indigenous/ traditional knowledge protection. In general, my work focuses on the social impacts of law. This approach considers the consequences of legal protection for the ways in which traditional/indigenous culture is understood and experienced by Indigenous communities and others. It acknowledges that framing Indigenous and/or traditional cultural practices as IP may have unintended effects on the very processes of transmission and reproduction that communities need to maintain. Correspondingly, it recognises that there are circumstances where IP can advance and secure ownership in traditional communities that are facing external threats in the use of community-specific knowledges.

This work has been both theoretical and practical in scope. In particular, I have worked with numerous Indigenous artists, cultural practitioners and communities in Australia and Indonesia. This work has involved long periods of talking with artists and community leaders about what problems are facing their traditions and cultural practices, where the greatest threats are coming from, and what specific ideas they have for strengthening both community control over traditional knowledge and ensuring the future for traditional practices.

Practically, my work has focused on moving beyond the abstracted characterisations of problems that appear only to be remedied by developing more intellectual property protections. For example, there are often a range of inter-connected issues that make the 'problem' in the first place, and most often law cannot, or indeed, may be inappropriate, to address these additional issues. In this sense my work has been about broadening both the legal and non-legal possibilities for managing the social relationships around knowledge access and use in changing cultural contexts.

In this paper, I want to discuss some of the recent work on IP and traditional knowledge conducted in Australia and Indonesia. Recent developments in this area within Indonesia and Australia suggest that a more contextualised and localised approach to IP and traditional knowledge issues can deliver outcomes and planning strategies that are meaningful and useful for local people and local communities seeking to secure their knowledge and knowledge practices.

The story so far

As many would be aware, the discussion of IP protection has increased steadily over the last 30 years. There are many reasons for this. One key reason relates to the united voice that Indigenous people have been able to build within the international system. Indigenous participation in forums such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues makes visible Indigenous concerns. Indigenous perspectives can no longer be ignored or sidelined.

National governments are also taking the issue seriously. For instance, Indonesia is in the process of developing three new pieces of legislation specifically designed to protect traditional knowledge. Whilst there are a few concerns that need closer attention within these new legislative developments, Indonesia is also influencing other countries within South-East Asia to make the issue more of a priority.

Indigenous interests in intellectual property are valid and important, yet crucial questions remain as to how we are to develop workable strategies that Indigenous people are actually are able to access and activate. It is not enough that discussion occurs in international organisations or within national governments or bureaucracies. It is important that Indigenous people are provided with the advice and

the tools to choose how to control and protect cultural resources and traditional practices.

Of course, there are vast differences within and between Indigenous communities. Not every Indigenous community is the same or is faced with exactly the same problem. This means that solutions need to be flexible, and have the capacity to change over time as the community and the issues will also change.

There is also another fundamental point here – traditional knowledge and traditional cultural practices can only survive when the communities themselves are supported. There is no use protecting art or traditional knowledge unless the community from which that knowledge derives is also provided with support to develop into the future as that community chooses.

Unfortunately this is not the job of IP alone. This means that IP needs to be used strategically. There needs to also be concerted attention given to the development of other potential non-legal solutions that might also be useful in advancing Indigenous interests.

Intellectual property is a specific cultural tool that favours western individualistic modes of expression and art. This is its history and it will be very hard to disrupt its current social, cultural and economic trajectory (this is especially the case after IP became heavily tied to trade through the 1994 Agreement on the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property – TRIPS).

That said, the power of IP is that it permeates so many parts of our social worlds, and this is what makes it useful and possible to harness strategically. But we need to remember that IP is not a panacea. There are too many examples of this body of law reducing cultural practices and freezing them in time so that no-one, not even members of the community, can put those cultural practices to use. IP has significant

dangers associated with it and I will give an example of that a little later in relation to plans to patent batik in Indonesia.

My approach – and this comes from talking with hundreds of artists and community leaders – is to develop strategies that address specific concerns, to utilise already existing laws and legislation, and to provide better access to law and legal advice to Indigenous communities. If there is a role for IP in supporting Indigenous people's cultural practices, it is to enhance and encourage the very conditions in which the everyday processes through which those arts have flourished in the past, and continue to exist today, can be maintained and strengthened.

In short, we need to become creative with intellectual property law.

What the problems are

So now I want to outline briefly some of the concerns that traditional knowledge holders in Indonesia have raised to a team of researchers, of which I was a member.[2] Then I will briefly discuss some of the strategies that have been developed or are in the process of being developed to deal with some of these problems.

Before I begin, it is worth remembering that these concerns, which were specific to artists and traditional knowledge holders across the Indonesian archipelago, also have parallels with issues that have been raised in Australia. A key point remains that while international

2   This research project was conducted between 2005 and 2007 with funding from the Social Science Research Council, Ford Foundation and American University. The research report upon which this brief summary draws is: Jaszi, P. (ed.), *Traditional arts: A move toward protection in Indonesia*, 2007. Members of the research team and authors of the research report included: Jane Anderson (New York University), Lorraine Aragon (University of North Carolina), Ignatius Haryanto (Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan), Peter Jaszi (American University), Abdon Nababan (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara), Hinca Panjaitan (Indonesia Law and Policy Centre), Agus Sardjono (University of Indonesia), Rizaldi Siagian (Yayasan Karya Cipta Indonesia) and Ranggalawe Suryasaladin (University of Indonesia).

dialogue around these issues is an important pre-cursor to developing solutions, they can only be enhanced by discussions with artists, traditional knowledge holders and community leaders themselves.

Importantly, many concerns expressed by artists and community leaders were about the life of the traditional knowledges and arts and how they might be passed on. The concern was not just about outsiders coming and 'stealing' or 'taking' the cultural knowledge but significantly about how this knowledge will be successfully transmitted within the community into the future. In general, it was clear that as the problems were explained they mirrored a more fundamental anxiety: namely, that the traditional arts and traditional knowledges are a living, embedded part of everyday existence, drawing meaning from and infusing meaning into social life. The individuals with whom we spoke were centrally concerned about the survival of the social institutions and practices in which the knowledge, knowledge practices and arts are based, maintained and transmitted within and between communities.

Generally, the concerns can be summarised in the following way, and here I draw directly from the research report.

In the context of traditional arts and cultural practices, the most frequent concern identified by Indonesian traditional artists and community leaders was the problem of audience; specifically, how to maintain and increase the number of people who are interested in seeing, hearing or using the work that artists produce. The problem of audience has several more components, the most immediate of which relates to local interest in the traditional arts. Artists repeatedly expressed anxiety that their practices were at risk of becoming detached from the day-to-day social life of the community. Thus, weavers who have successfully maintained or even revived old textile arts traditions told the research team that fewer and fewer local people actually wore these locally produced cloths, either because of shifts in taste or for straightforward economic reasons. Likewise,

musicians reported that they were now in less demand for local ceremonial and social occasions. On occasions when, in the past, a full traditional ensemble would have been expected to perform, recorded music or a small ensemble playing electronic instruments might be employed instead. This decrease in community support for the cultural arts was disturbing to many of the artists and the community leaders. This lack of support and the need to find new ways to invigorate the traditions so that they were part of the broader community fabric were immediately raised with the research team.

The struggle to maintain inter-generational transfer of knowledge was the issue next most commonly identified by the artists and community leaders with whom we spoke. Regular recruitment of new artists, musicians and performers is a necessary precondition for the continued health of Indonesian traditional arts and traditional knowledge. Concern was raised about how this was possible if there was no economic value associated with the arts. For instance, children were not being encouraged to become community artists because there was little financial gain, and the family required the younger members of the family to contribute to the family's subsistence in very specific financial ways. These communities were generally disenfranchised and impoverished – people tended to work in very difficult conditions, with little pay and for long hours. This economic reality was affecting the extent to which the next generation could become responsible for learning and mastering the traditional artistic practices. This was of great concern to community leaders.

This concern about commensurate economic reward for maintaining community traditions was paralleled by concerns about the lack of appropriate recognition for the artists and for their local traditions and products derived from these. This issue was so substantial that it surfaced, in some way, in practically every conversation that the research team had with traditional artists and community leaders. Many arts communities believe that their particular local practices

and products receive insufficient recognition. Further, many of the artists were concerned that when local traditional artistic productions entered the national or international market, little or no credit is given to the community in which these traditions have been maintained, nor is any information provided about the stories that lie behind the material. This meant that there was little reverse flow in terms of recognition, attribution or even economic reward. This loss of acknowledgement was a real problem as it meant the local artists became featureless, and indistinguishable, even sometimes within their own or neighbouring community. This disrupted hierarchies of authority and the sense of pride that communities have because of their distinctiveness from others. As a response to this we encountered a number of traditional communities, especially cooperatives of traditional weavers, who were experimenting with various kinds of 'branding' to identify their hand-made productions in the local, regional and national markets.

Many artists also saw issues around the type of acknowledgement provided when local visual motifs or musical figures were used as source material for mass-produced decorative products or new works of popular culture. If any acknowledgement was given, it tended to be general and uninformative, such as 'traditional design' or 'traditional song'. Here the desire is for specific acknowledgement, both because the artists reasonably believe that the acknowledgement is legitimate for themselves and the communities, and because they believe that in making more people aware of the living sources of Indonesian traditional knowledge and arts, acknowledgement may work, sometimes indirectly, to the benefit of the communities.

Additional concerns about counterfeiting were also raised. Weavers, for example, were concerned that reasonable copies of cloths that require weeks or months of their time might be produced in hours in factories using semi-mechanised looms. These same cloths then were available at reduced prices. This was seen as unfair competition that

discriminated against traditional methods, materials and techniques. The concern, incidentally, was most frequently articulated in terms of 'knock-offs' that might potentially be made and sold within Indonesia itself.

Many artists, musicians and dancers also raised the problems of misappropriation of works by unauthorised recordings, reproduction and/or distribution. Many of these artists were concerned that the new technologies which make high-quality audio and video recording easy, inexpensive and inconspicuous would lead to an increase in cases where individuals who attend traditional performances were able to make good quality recordings and later commercialise them for their own benefit. There were many examples of these available for sale in markets in Jakarta, hundreds of kilometres away from the source community and with no attribution.

These were some of the issues that local traditional and indigenous communities remain concerned about in relation to their knowledge and artistic practices.

Some solutions that utilise legal and non-legal approaches

Protocols, which work as agreements on appropriate uses of works, seek to embolden community capacity to respond to infringements and to encourage the development of new contexts where knowledge and arts can be shared within communities and with external parties. Protocols are actually about setting codes of conduct or establishing behavioural norms. If we recognise that legislation alone cannot solve all these problems, then we need to consider what other options could be developed that are useful, easy to utilise and effective.

While Australia has developed a range of strategies, one of the most useful is the development of protocols, agreements and, more recently, community-based protocols. The utility here is that they can be changed and augmented over time as the issues within the

community change. This is not something that is easy to do within a legislative regime. Indigenous communities need law, but they also require flexible strategies that can therefore avoid the 'one size fits all' paradigm of law and legal intervention.

Another strategy that was utilised in Australia with moderate success was the development of Labels of Authenticity, which functioned as labels of origination, designating where the work was made and by whom. These can function in similar ways to trademarks. While the problem of registration persists, especially for communities who have trouble accessing legal advice, there are other forms of branding in use. These are being adopted in Indonesia and Australia. In short, these aim to address the problem of attribution mentioned above, as they recognise the community, family and/or clan responsible for the artistic or cultural product.

I want to finish with a story from Indonesia about patenting batik in order to illustrate why we must be careful about advocating that IP alone can solve some of these problems.

In Indonesia, the batik community mostly resides in Java in a town called Solo. There are numerous batik producers – some still practise the batik in the traditional way, and some prefer the quicker, more mechanised process. Most batik artists consider their art to be a traditional art form, and this is also how the Indonesian government views the artistic practice. Motifs that are used in batik contain stories and histories. Many also contain family designs that have been passed down from generation to generation and adapted along the way to suit changing markets. In order to protect the traditional batik designs from misuse and misappropriation, local government in Solo has decided to develop a program for patenting the traditional designs. This means that thousands of batik motifs need to be registered and permission will be required for their use.

As an abstract strategy, this seems like a good idea. Indeed, an Indonesian representative at the United National Development Program has praised the efforts of the Solo government. However, there is a catch and it is significant. To register the traditional designs, there is a fee charged. Ownership of the traditional design is then assigned to the company or family of producers who have registered the motif – that is, the ones who can afford it. Many of the smaller producers cannot afford this initial fee, or the accompanying fee for using the registered design. These smaller producers are usually the families or communities who employ the traditional process and designs. But with this registration process, they are being further marginalised from the industry that enables their livelihood.

The point is that IP can be a double-edged sword. It can enable at the same time as it can restrict. IP creates hierarchies and privilege. It is also about fostering exclusions and monopolies. It can be very useful. It can be completely inappropriate. Accessing as much information as possible is the only way a community can make an informed decision about what the appropriate course of action is or could be.

In summary, then, there are two final points to be made.

Firstly, there needs to be much more sustained and active engagement with Indigenous people and communities about what the problems are. This will help in finding solutions that are appropriate to the problems that are experienced and presented. There is no longer time to work in abstract universalisms, generalisations or binaries – there is too much at stake.

Secondly, we need to become imaginative and creative with how IP as well as other strategies can be utilised. Only by extending ourselves beyond what seems self-evident and normative can real possibilities for protecting and enhancing indigenous rights and interests in protecting knowledge – and thus enabling it to be transferred to future generations – be achieved.

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The power of 'e': extending the 'E' in ACE

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Over the past decade or so, an educational evolution has been redefining our understanding and practices of adult community education (ACE) in profound and comprehensive ways. The name of this transformation is e-learning. A bountiful interpretation and practice of 'e-learning' in ACE results inevitably in extending our educational work; its presence automatically extends the WHY (our purpose), the WHO (our community), the WHEN (the timing), the WHERE (the learning spaces), the WHAT (the scope), the WHAT FOR (the learning achievements) and the HOW (the modes, methods and media). In other words, the power of 'e' as a multidimensional force in 'e-learning', and the way it extends meanings, values, ideals, purposes, practices and participants in ACE, means it redefines our understanding of education itself. As a consequence, e-learning has given us new possibilities of connectedness, community, democracy, global citizenship, lifelong learning, transformational learning, learning to learn, critical literacy and much else.

Introduction

I want to begin by affirming ACE and what it stands for. ACE. Adult. Community. Education. These are the three lighthouse words that guide our lives. Adult. Community. Education. This powerful trio unites all of us in the ACE tribe as we celebrate the contribution of e-learning to the grand tradition of Adult Community Education.

As with all tribes, it is important to celebrate our cultural heritage – to cherish our stories, to admire our grand feats and to sing the praises of our heroes, women and men. Everyone working in ACE has made her or his contribution to our story. Every single ACE story matters.

The gradual development of e-learning in ACE is an unfolding story that has taken place over many years. The collective wisdom of this story is our legacy. In this paper, I provide a few snapshots of this vivacious and audacious story. It is far from the whole story, but it is enough to see it is an inspiring story. In telling this story, I hope to do justice to the individual and collective endeavours of those who paved the way for us, to those who, in the process, showed us how to extend the 'E' in ACE.

Extending the 'E' in ACE

What do I mean by this? Before embarking on the story, I want to draw attention to the title of this paper: *The power of 'e': extending the 'E' in ACE.* As a start, I'd like to muse briefly on the little 'e' before moving on to what extending the big 'E' might mean.

Not everyone is familiar with the term 'e-learning'. If we say the little 'e' is short for 'electronic', and no more, this usually stifles discussion prematurely. In that case, with all the emphasis on the 'electronic' bit, equipment such as computers, digital cameras and (more often these days) mobile phones and mp3 players take prominence as the key factor in e-learning.

It is a rather impoverished view of 'e'. The 'e' in 'e-learning' means so much more to me. It means emerging, emotional and exhilarating learning, exemplary, essential and effective learning; it means sometimes exotic, regularly exhausting, but always exciting learning. For me, as well, 'e-learning' means everyday and everywhere and everyone learning and, possibly most important of all in ACE, it means egalitarian and ethical learning.

So, when I refer to extending the 'E' in ACE, I mean the effect of infusing the little 'e', and all the richness named above, into our ACE ideals and activities. From this point of view, incorporating 'e-learning' is not simply a matter of buying new equipment or adding the odd computer-assisted learning task or attending an obligatory professional development session on blended learning. It means giving extra breadth and depth to all aspects of the 'Education' in ACE – in what we do and how we think about it.

Putting it another way, to incorporate 'e-learning' in the ways just named is to automatically extend the 'E' in ACE. A bountiful interpretation and practice of 'e-learning' in ACE results inevitably in extending our educational work; its presence automatically extends the WHY (our purpose), the WHO (our community), the WHEN (the timing), the WHERE (the learning spaces), the WHAT (the scope), the WHAT FOR (the learning achievements) and the HOW

(the modes, methods and media). In other words, the power of 'e' as a multidimensional force in 'e-learning', and the way it extends meanings, values, ideals, purposes, practices and participants in ACE, means it redefines our understanding of education itself .

That is the gift of 'e-learning' to ACE. When recognising its power to make education richer in so many ways, it is clear that this small 'e' is not so small at all.

Key milestones

To put our current situation in context, it is time for a little history. To do this, I have chosen to highlight some key moments or milestones, ones that have brought us to where we are today. I asked a number of e-learning pioneers and innovators to complete this sentence, '*A memorable moment or milestone in e-learning for me has been …*'. Commemorating these moments means revisiting those who have travelled this path before us, role models who know (and knew) the breadth, depth and significance of their explorations into e-learning.

Here are the responses I received.

Michael Gwyther:
> Well, seeing the link between the emerging web and possibilities for learner publication in ALBE and ESL classes. I was very much inspired by the work of Dale Pobega at Duke Street Neighbourhood House which inspired a few of us … at Ballarat East Neighbourhood House to learn html for the sole purpose of uploading our student writing to the web! I have been involved in a few projects since then, but none were as exciting and 'Frontierlandish' as those few weeks in '96 when we taught ourselves those skills and published our work together.

Clint Smith:
> I'd name the two 1996 documents, *Convergent technologies in adult and community education*, both the report and the kit that we did for ACFE.

Josie Rose:
> For me, a key experience was management of my first LearnScope project in 1999. It set all who participated at Narre Community Learning Centre on a technology path that they still follow to this day. As well, it catapulted me into a very different, more national sphere. I was working as an ESL teacher at Narre at the time. We were invited to present at the 'Spotlight on the Provider' conference in Sydney that year. We were so nervous, but I remember standing in our presentation room at the conference centre in Darling Harbour thinking: 'I think we have arrived.'

Gillian Ryan:
> Using common and popular forms of online communication, for example:
> - using 'My connected community' with adult literacy students
> - my first time using Elluminate
> - using the internet to engage reluctant learners in learning
> - my first online meeting using Skype.

Michael Chalk:
> [It was] when Libby Barker decided in 2001 that PRACE needed a flexible learning co-ordinator and encouraged the strengths of a sessional adult literacy teacher by appointing me to the role.

Glenda McPherson:
> Josie as a Flexible Learning Leader in 2000 and Michael Chalk in 2004 were significant in terms of lifting the e-learning profile within, but more importantly, outside the ACFE sector in Victoria and nationally.
>
> As well, the TAFE Frontiers initial Flexible ACE research and report in 2004 and the opportunity to revisit it with the AccessACE research in 2007 and report in 2008 was a rare opportunity for follow-up research!

Mary Schooneveldt:
> Personally, it was the ACMI 2004 digital storytelling course and then the process of creating an ACE friendly (free!) way of introducing the concept to people in the region.

It is important to put these memorable moments in a wider historical perspective. One result of my research into the evolution of e-learning in ACE in Victoria is a timeline of key initiatives, projects, publications and funding sources that can be found on the conference wiki at: <http://eshowcase.acfe.vic.edu.au/Bradshaw>. The scope of research and experimentation over nearly twenty years is truly remarkable. As well, a slideshow on Flickr at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/biddyb/sets/72157612809077443/> displays some of the texts that mark key milestones along the way. Some might call them foundation texts.

Pioneers and visionaries

Another outcome of my research is a collection of *Fine Print* journal excerpts spanning the years 1996 to 2001; the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council (VALBEC) journal has long documented and promoted e-learning in ACE. The voices of our pioneers and visionaries that we hear in these excerpts allow us to follow in the footsteps of our hardy ACE explorers. Their words evoke so powerfully the new educational horizons they glimpsed, a vision of e-learning that they recognised (long before many others) would refresh ways of conceptualising and enacting adult education. Their words are as fresh today as when first uttered quite some years ago. I have organised their contributions chronologically.

In 1996, Alan Wayman, ALBE co-ordinator at Yarraville Community Centre, wrote:
> With a little skill and a lot of patience, you can retrieve information, images, programs and sounds. Make friends, get ripped off, become involved in political activities, study at a college on the other side of the world, find work, play games, listen to poets, watch the weather change in Hawaii – it's endless, and the possibilities are increasing by the minute. ('From out-of-date to "classic": making use of older technology', *Fine Print*, vol. 18, no. 2, June 1996, pp. 24–25)

Here, Alan points to the magnitude or multiplicity of educational purposes.

In 1997, Mexie Butler, Multimedia Project Officer at Flemington Reading and Writing Program, wrote:
> One day when I was browsing on the web, I found this thing called 'chat'. It meant that I could talk to people anywhere in the world in real time... Amazing, to think that somewhere on the other side of the world there was someone sitting in front of their computer, doing the same as I was doing. ('Look @ this!', *Fine Print*, vol. 20, no. 3, Spring 1997, p. 20)

In this excerpt, Mexie points to the ease and excitement of global reach.

In 1998, Dale Pobega, language teacher and Online Literacies Worker at Duke Street Community House, Sunshine, wrote:
> The 1998 Central Western Metropolitan ACFE student conference is currently being organised by three groups of adult learners as part of their CGEA... The students are increasing general knowledge while improving their screen literacy skills, establishing friendships through Moo and e-mail, and feeling part of a community of learners on the Net without losing their 'real life' sense of connectedness as they work on the student conference project with its practical orientation. ('Language knowledge and e-literacies for ALBE', *Fine Print*, vol. 21, no. 2, Winter 1998, pp. 12–13)

In this case, Dale points to the community development potential of participating in online communities.

In 1999, Josie Rose, educational technology manager at Narre Community Learning Centre and New Learning Technologies project worker for Southern WesternPort ACFE, wrote:
> There are two crucial factors to the success of a New Learning Technology in the language and literacy classroom – teacher confidence and a sense of enjoyment and fun. ('Hard fun: using computer in the language classroom', *Fine Print*, vol. 22, no. 1, Autumn 1999, p. 15)

Here, Josie points to the role of 'serious' play in professional development.

In 2001, Michael Chalk, project officer at PRACE, wrote:
> Term one, Y2K, and PRACE is entering the trial stage of an exciting ACFE project to examine NLT in ESL provision. Other providers on the project are Olympic, Meadow Heights and Lalor Living and Learning... on day one of the inter-class communication trial, the learners at Olympic are writing their first introductory letters to the learners at Preston... 'I'm finding this very demoralising', said student M, genuinely frustrated, as she wrestled with the e-mail sign-up procedure. I sat with her knowing how important it was to find some success at that point... When she finally got herself an e-mail account, the letter M sent her partner in the other group was very inspiring, urging the other woman to believe in herself and not give up. ('Open forum: email as a second language', *Fine Print*, vol. 23, no. 1, Autumn 2000, p. 30)

Michael here points to a new and vital version of learner empowerment for lifelong learning.

In 2001, Dale Pobega, manager of ACEWEB, wrote:
> Twenty seven online workshops were held across the four days of the e-conference with morning, afternoon and evening sessions attended by 300 conference participants and presenters logged in from Israel, the USA and Thailand. Transcripts of all e-conference sessions can be found online. ('Community and connectedness: a review of the inaugural ACEWEB e-conference, 2001', *Fine Print*, vol. 24, no. 4, Summer 2001, p. 19)

In this excerpt, Dale points to the wonder of transcending the boundaries and limitations imposed by time, space and distance.

What comes through these words so strongly are the very same features of e-learning in ACE that we cherish so much today – the diversity of educational purposes, access in all its forms, capacity for lifelong learning, personal and community development, democratic participation both locally and globally, the role of play in professional

development, freedom from the limitations of time and distance. And these educational virtues were first sighted and trialled by our ACE explorers as early as a decade ago.

The time it takes

But, as we all know, significant and sustainable change does not happen in an instant. As Glenda indicated in her response to me:

> E-learning does not happen overnight. It is a slow process before it can be embedded. TAFE Frontiers research showed how long and hard it was for TAFEs – it is much longer and harder for ACFE ... Infrastructure – hardware, software, professional development and personnel – is very sparse... and that means ...it is much more down to individuals within providers.

Two timeline documents, put together by Mary Schooneveldt, trace highlights of the e-learning story of Southern Western Port Learning Communities in the Southern Western Port ACFE region from 1998 to 2007 (Schooneveldt, 2003–7).
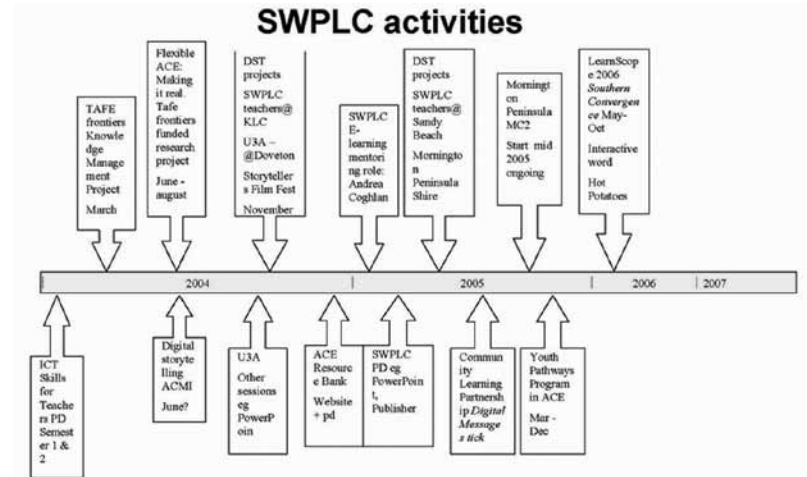
Taken together and studied closely, they portray succinctly the time it takes for change to happen and endure. Other ACFE regions now also boast a similar track record in e-learning, displaying maturity in both breadth and depth. Now, over ten years on, what are the 'lessons learnt' from all this commitment and activity?

Key themes

Three themes recur when listening to those who have been involved in extending e-learning in ACE. These three themes are:

- Leadership
- Action research projects
- Professional development in all its forms

Leadership

When they take a leading role, government agencies make a huge difference. Consider the vast amount of good generated by the array of projects and activities funded and fostered by the Australian Flexible Learning Framework over many years.
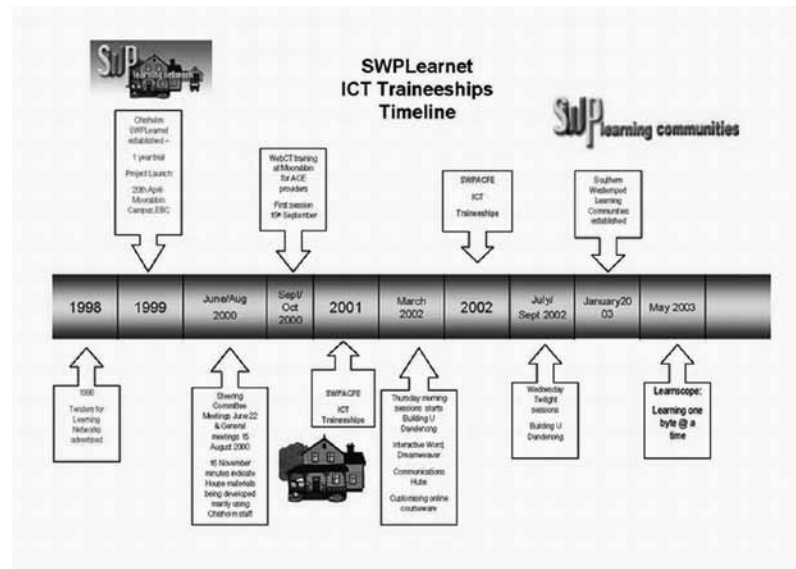
Many ACE managers and teachers have also commented on the key role played, before it was disbanded, by *TAFE Frontiers* – citing it as a powerful source of knowledge, support, professional development and networking that was particularly supportive of ACE.

A number of ACFE regional councils have long affirmed e-learning initiatives and, more recently, the ACFE Board has consolidated past successes by supporting the 2007 *AccessACE* and 2008 *E-Mentor* projects.

Individual leaders are also very influential. Mary Schooneveldt remarked in her response to me: 'A key moment is a very recent one: the realization that we now have tech savvy managers and teachers in ACE willing to enthusiastically travel down the e-learning path.'

Perhaps the most effective local leadership comes from the combination of organisational commitment *and* willing, dedicated individuals. In other words, individual passion *plus* organisational backing are an irresistible, dynamic duo.

In her contribution to the *AccessACE* wiki in the section called 'E-learning around the regions', Lynne Gibb, e-learning mentor at Coonara Community House in Upper Ferntree Gully, reinforces this idea:

> Despite quite a deal of interest in the use of technologies in adult learning within the Eastern Metro Region, the uptake was slow until the recent emergence of organisations and individuals keen to take a leadership role. The partnering between Morrison House and Coonara Community House in 2005 for a New Practices Project explored the use of podcasting... This project lead to the identification of a couple of key individuals within the local ACE sector who had the necessary passion and drive to set new learning technologies firmly on the agenda.

Action research projects

The second recurrent theme highlighted by those who have been involved in extending e-learning in ACE is action research projects. Never underestimate the power of community-based action research. Michael Chalk singles out the following e-learning examples for particular mention:

- Australian Flexible Learning Framework projects and resources with their strengthening of networks of people and communities.
- The national Community Engagement projects' vital role for gaining a national perspective.
- The Victorian ACFE Board's full support for the 2007 Access ACE research and built on with the 2008 regional e-mentor project.

Also, let's not forget the marvellous and popular educational e-resources that have emerged from community-based action research projects. The following examples spring to mind: *World Wide Water, Online Banking, Snakes Alive!* and *English at the Beach*, (produced by NMRACFE Online Resources, a consortium consisting of TAFE Frontiers, the ANTA Adult Literacy National Project and LearnLinks, an RMIT/NMRACFE partnership), *The Learning House* (produced by SMRACFE) and *Dream Holiday* (produced by the ACENet Learning Network and Flemington Reading and Writing Program).

Professional development in all its forms

The third theme, professional development, is the one, time and time again, named as the *number one* priority in 'lessons learnt'. This theme includes networks and mentoring.

Two recent ACFE-funded reports – *AccessACE: clever uses of ICT in ACE* (2007), subtitled 'Lessons learnt in blended learning – a guide for managing and teaching', and *E-mentor final report* (2008) –

illustrate this well. In the latter of these two reports, Josie Rose, the author of both, sums up the present situation this way:

It often takes a three year period to make deep and broad change. The regions were asked to provide feedback on what the next step should be. Three recommended next steps, all to do with professional development, are:

1. Providing professional development opportunities for organisations to 'try out' different technologies in non-threatening settings.
2. Extending the e-mentor project to assist providers with the implementation of identified projects.
3. Developing a community of practice in the region … to broaden and deepen their skills and knowled

Year after year, the evidence is the same. A judicious combination of leadership, action research and professional development makes a world of difference, no matter what the size or stage of the organisation. ACE has never been in a better position to say 'Yes, e-learning is for everyone'.

Conclusion

I began with ACE and I want to end with ACE. Above all, I want to return to that all-important big 'E' in ACE. How has the arrival of e-learning extended our understanding of 'education' in Adult Community Education? What difference has it made to our ACE policies and practices?

Over the years, we have seen 'e' moving from the exceptional and exotic to the everywhere and everyday and everybody, from being a novelty to being intrinsic, from 'acting locally and thinking globally' to 'thinking locally and acting globally'. In the process, this educational evolution has been redefining our understanding and practices of ACE in profound and comprehensive ways. E-learning has given us

new possibilities of connectedness, community, democracy, global citizenship, lifelong learning, transformational learning, learning to learn, critical literacy and much else.

Putting it another way, incorporating the little 'e' in 'e-learning' into ACE means extending the big 'E' in far-reaching and significant ways. Consider, for example, as we have heard in today's stories, how it changes:
IDEAS and IDEALS
MEANINGS and MEANS
PRINCIPLES, PURPOSES, PRACTICES and PARTICIPATION.

This deepening, broadening and enriching of education is not another 'thing to do'; it's an automatic bonus when 'e' is there. And this will continue to happen wherever and whenever 'e-learning in ACE' is alive and well – as it is today.
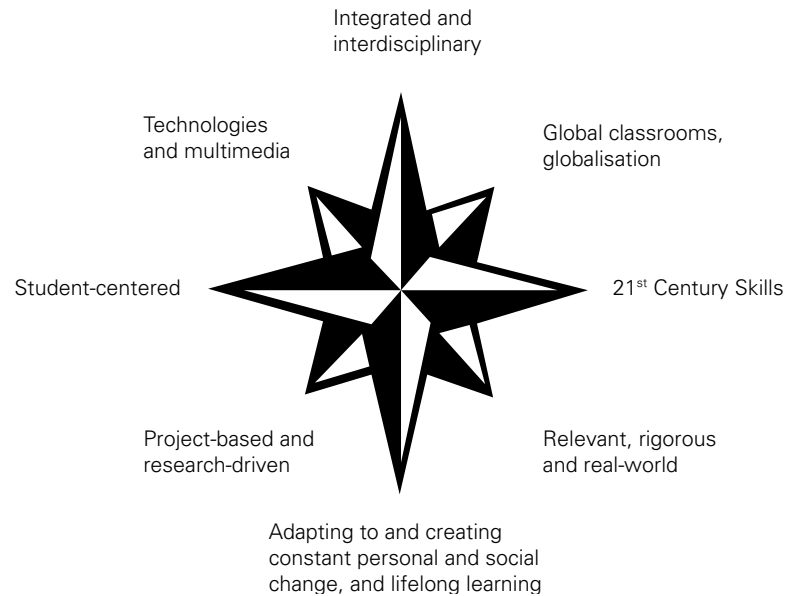
As I draw to a close, I have two final questions:
- What potential 'goods' beckon us in ACE?
- What work – both thinking work and educational work related to 'e-learning in ACE' – is still to be done?

My response to these two questions is determined by reflecting on what constitutes critical attributes and literacies for twenty-first century education. This reflection prompts us to name ACE purposes and priorities precisely and proudly.

To the twenty-first century attributes, first. 'E-learning' is not simply about 'technologies and media'. It is about all the attributes featured on the *Possibilities for 21st century education* website, that is, 'e-learning' is about lifelong learning, global classrooms and globalisation, adapting to and creating constant personal and social change.
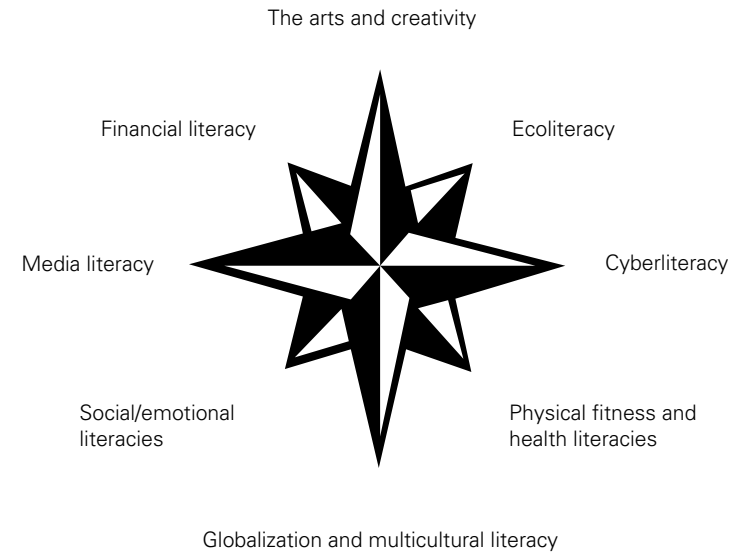
Critical attributes of 21st century education

Integrated and
interdisciplinary

Technologies
and multimedia

Global classrooms,
globalisation

Student-centered

21st Century Skills

Project-based and
research-driven

Relevant, rigorous
and real-world

Adapting to and creating
constant personal and social
change, and lifelong learning

(Source: http://www.21stcenturyschools.com/What_is_21st_Century_Education.htm)

And to the 21st century literacies. E-learning cannot be reduced
to 'cyberliteracy', important as that is. It is also ecoliteracy and
multicultural literacy and creativity and all the other literacies
foregrounded on the same site.

Multiple Literacies for the 21st Century

The arts and creativity

Financial literacy

Ecoliteracy

Media literacy

Cyberliteracy

Social/emotional
literacies

Physical fitness and
health literacies

Globalization and multicultural literacy

So, for me, 'e-learning in ACE' is about aiming for and achieving these
attributes and literacies, ones that are necessities and not luxuries in
our twenty-first century world. Our ACE history tells us 'Yes, we can'.
Our vocation as twenty-first century adult community e-educators
declares we must, and will, continue to explore the power of 'e'. In
this way, we will continue the long and proud tradition of extending
the 'E' in ACE.

Glossary

ACE	Adult Community Education
ACEWEB	Cluster Project – ACE 'collectives' promoting collaborative educational provision and professional development
ACFE	Adult Community and Further Education
ACMI	Australian Centre for the Moving Image
ALBE	Adult Literacy and Basic Education
CGEA	Certificates in General Education for Adults
ESL	English as a Second Language
NLT	New Learning Technologies
NMRACFE	Northern Metropolitan Region Adult Community and Further Education
PRACE	Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
VALBEC	Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council

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RESEARCH REPORT

Community-based environmental education in the fishing villages of Tuticorin and its role in conservation of the environment

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The coastal town of Tuticorin is situated in the southern part of the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park on the Southeastern Indian coast. The four islands off the Tuticorin coast are fringed by corals reefs and seagrass beds. Destructive fishing methods including blast fishing, near-shore trawling, coral mining, sedimentation and pollution have, however, caused considerable damage to the coral reefs and seagrass beds, threatening the reef fisheries of the region. A significant portion of the fisher folk in the 23 coastal villages along the Tuticorin coast, due to low literacy levels and lack of other employment, is dependent on the dwindling fish catches in and around these reefs and seagrass beds. Crowded fishing grounds, increasing demand for fisheries' products and declining catches compel fishers to increase the use of more effective and destructive fishing methods. Adult education was introduced in five coastal villages (Rajapalayam, Siluvaipatti, Arockiyapuram, Tirespuram and Inigo Nagar) on the Tuticorin coast in 2007. Included in this adult education, environmental education practices, including conservation of natural resources, particularly coral reefs and seagrass habitats, its importance and role, the need for conservation and management, eco-friendly fishing practices and sustainable use of fishery resources, were taught to the fisher folk in all five coastal villages. The trained fisher folk play key roles in their respective villages in awareness creation about the conservation of natural resources. The campaign during International Year of the Reef in 2008 helped to make aware many people in the villages about the importance of corals and associated seagrass and other resources. As a part of mitigating climate change impacts and income generation, family members of the five villages were also taught and helped to increase plantation.

Introduction

The Gulf of Mannar (GoM) is one of the four major reef areas in India. The GoM is located at the southeastern coastal tip of India in the Tamil Nadu State, extending from Rameswaram in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. The 140 km GoM stretch, extending from Rameswaram to Tuticorin located between latitude 8°47' N and 9°15 N and longitude 78°12' E and 79°14' E, includes 21 uninhabited islands which are surrounded by coral reefs and seagrasses.

In September 1986, the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park was declared, including all the 21 islands and the surrounding shallow coastal waters, covering an area of 560 square kilometers. The islands are grouped into four for management purposes, namely, Mandapam, Keezhakkarai, Vambar and Tuticorin groups. In 1989, the GoM was declared by the Government of India as a 'Marine Biosphere Reserve', covering an area of 10,500 square kilometers from Rameswaram to Kanyakumari. The GoM is influenced by seasonal monsoonal patterns – a southwest monsoon and a northeast monsoon. Narrow fringe reefs are located mostly at a distance of 100–350 meters from the islands at a depth between 0.5–4 meters, and patch reefs rise from depths of 2 to 9 meters and extend up to 1–2 kilometers in length, with width as much as 50 meters. The luxuriant seagrass beds are seen between the islands and mainland, mainly towards the shoreward side of the islands. There are 117 coral species (Patterson *et al.* 2008) and 13 seagrass species so far identified. The large areas of reefs along the GoM are generally in poor condition due to a number of destructive activities such as coral mining, dynamite fishing, near-shore trawling, push net and shore seine operations, and trap fishing, by several hundreds of people who live along the coast and depend on reef resources for their livelihood.

The Tuticorin coast is situated in the southern part of the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park and is the most environmentally stressed coastal area as a result of various developmental activities and destructive fishing practices. Population increases, lack of other employment opportunities and low literacy levels have forced local villagers to depend mainly on the marine resources that can be harvested around the four coral, reef-fringed islands of the coast (Shantini *et al.* 2002, Patterson *et al.* 2008). Over-fishing and the use of destructive fishing methods have been prevalent for many years. Crowded fishing grounds, increasing demand for fisheries' products and declining catches compel fishers to increase the use of more effective and destructive fishing methods

(Samuel *et al.* 2002). Coral mining has been practised for the past several decades and many poor fisher folk are involved in this illegal practice for their daily livelihood (Patterson 2005). The subsequent reduction in the function of the reefs as natural barriers has led to increased beach erosion and transformation of the coast (Qazim 1999, Ramanujam & Sudarsan 2003). The industrial development along the coast, destruction of mangroves for saltpans and disposal of domestic sewage also pose considerable threats to the ecosystem functions of the reefs and the dependent coastal folk (Easterson 1998). Though the corals are protected under a scheduled list – under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 – the coral mining continued until the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. As a result of the enforcement, along with various conservation initiatives and lessons learned through the tsunami, the mining has been completely stopped since 2005, but other destructive fishing practices near the reef areas are still continuing.

Self-help groups in the coastal villages

The fisherwomen in the villages are organised in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) that play a major role in saving and wise use of financial resources. The government is encouraging the formation of SHGs in order to create confidence and income opportunities among the women. In addition, women belonging to SHGs are empowered in social and economical domains and actively participate in decision making and planning processes, linking them with micro-enterprises and banking institutions (Patterson 2003). Community-based adult education has been introduced to the SHG women in five fishing villages (Rajapalayam, Siluvaipatti, Arockiyapuram, Tirespuram and Inigo Nagar) on the Tuticorin coast (see Figure 1) and the women's literacy levels have been enhanced due to this adult education (Patterson *et al.* 2008). Included in this adult education, environmental education was introduced in all the five target villages on the Tuticorin coast.
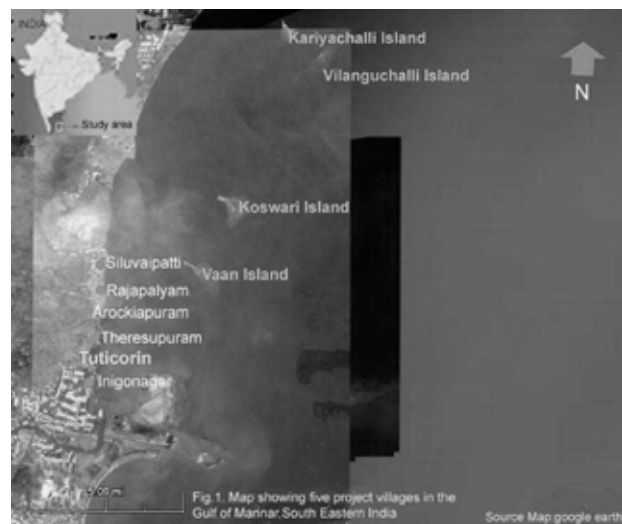
Fig. 1. Map showing five project villages in the Gulf of Mannar, South Eastern India   Source Map google earth

Figure 1

Adult and environment education
The Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI), in collaboration with the Coastal Ocean Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO), East Africa and Nyköpings Folkhögskola in Sweden, initiated the information and communication technologies based activities among fisherwomen Self Help Groups in India, focusing on three major components – adult education, environmental education and computer education. The adult education concept has also been tried in other parts of the world as a contributor to national development in Southern Africa (Oduaran & Okukpon 2005), for healthy participative democracy in Scotland (Hammond 2006), and in adult education and training in Ireland (Morrissey & McNamara 2004). However, the aim of introducing the present adult education along with the provision of information and communication technologies in the five coastal villages on the Tuticorin coast of the Gulf of Mannar in the southeastern India was to empower the local fisherwomen Self-Help Groups in terms

of enhancing literacy and livelihood and to reduce pressure on the marine environment, in particular, the coral reef resources and economic vulnerability of these coastal communities.

Two coordinators (SHG members) from each village were selected and were given training in adult and environmental education and computer applications. After the training, each village was provided with information and communication technologies components (include computer, printer, mobile phone and internet). The coordinators have started training in their respective villages in adult and environmental education, and in computer training. Baseline information on literacy, occupation, awareness of natural resources and so on was collected before the start of the activities.

The beneficiaries from October 2007 to January 2009 in adult and environmental education numbered 240 fisherwomen and 44 fishermen in the five coastal villages. Through adult education, participants learned to use their signature by writing their names instead of by thumb impression, and started to read Tamil (the local language) and English words. Those who already knew how to write their names in Tamil learned to write them in English; they learned to read bus boards and started to travel alone; they learned simple mathematical calculations during their classes; and women participants are helping their children in their studies. After witnessing such improvements, more coastal women are becoming willing to participate in adult education activities.

Impact of environmental education on conservation and management
The environmental education component for the participants in the adult education program helped them to understand the need for cleanliness in their environment and conservation of natural resources, in particular corals, seagrasses and associated fishery resources. Level of awareness has been increased. Participants are well informed about the importance of corals, their ecological and

economic role and need for conservation; about global warming and its effects in particular on rising sea levels, impacts to marine resources such as corals and fisheries; and about effects of industrial and domestic pollution on the marine environment.

The general lack of knowledge among fisher folk about coastal ecosystems, their ecology and productivity makes them insensitive to the fragile balance in the ecosystem and unknowingly they are using destructive fishing methods to save time and effort (Patterson *et al.* 2002). A survey conducted in five other coastal villages on the Tuticorin coast during 2001, studying knowledge among fisher folk about the ecological significance of coral reefs, found that awareness was very poor. Twenty nine percent of the men and only three percent of the women were aware of the ecological importance of corals (Patterson *et al.* 2002). To address this, a series of awareness programs was conducted, primarily targeting the fisherwomen in view of their comparatively low awareness but also because they are often in a position to influence both active male fishers and children within their households. A survey in 2004 in the same villages indicated that there was considerable improvement in the awareness level among the fisher folk (Patterson *et al.* 2005), and in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, there was a tremendous change in people's attitudes. The present approach through adult education is producing effective results and, in local awareness workshops, the villagers are able to speak about environmental protection and conservation.

When the present program started, some villagers believed that corals were stones of the sea. In the local language (Tamil), they are called 'pearly rocks', and in nearby Kerala State they are locally known as 'beach rocks'. During the environmental education component, the adults were informed that corals are live animals and that they play an important role in protecting coasts and in sheltering a variety of marine organisms, especially fish. They became more aware of

the significance of functional coral reefs for their livelihood. The coordinators informed the adults that 2008 was declared as the International Year of Reefs in order to increase focus on awareness efforts relating to coral reefs and the ecosystem services they provide.

The coordinators and trainees have become involved in the organisation of awareness campaigns and local workshops in their respective villages in conjunction with the International Year of Reefs 2008. The program includes group discussions and entertainment (songs, folk dances, drama, quizzes). The quiz program was conducted before and after awareness creation to assess villagers' knowledge and eagerness about corals. School children in the villages also participated along with their parents in the awareness campaign. The coordinators of the targeted five villages also participated in the awareness campaign through the National Broadcasting Corporation, such as narrating their experiences and roles in conservation through adult education and conservation related songs.

The threats posed by global warming to the reefs globally and locally were also highlighted, and the importance of afforestation to mitigate global warming was stressed. The trainees were encouraged to plant various saplings in their villages as a family initiative. In each village, more than 50 families have been involved in this venture and the number of families is increasing. Saplings of coconut, neem and other fruit-bearing saplings were distributed to the families in all five villages to mitigate the impacts of global warming, to help the fisher families to make additional income, and to make villagers aware of the importance of afforestation and green environment.

Conclusion

Environmental conservation is one of the priority areas for all governments, but the concept and program will impact locally only when there is sufficient education, awareness, understanding and interest among the people. The ongoing adult education

program on the Tuticorin coast enlightened the villagers about the importance of marine environment, in particular corals, seagrasses and fisheries, and of the need for protection and conservation for sustainable utilisation. The educated adult women have developed their confidence to propagate awareness initiatives on environmental conservation within their villages and also they are the key players to train their children in this direction. The afforestation efforts will also be more effective with support from the villagers, since the interest is developed within the families. We have learned through the project experience that the success of any conservation initiative depends on how we genuinely enhance levels of literacy and awareness among the community. More ongoing focus needs to be given on education and awareness for each member of the community which would bring tremendous success in all environmental conservation and management efforts.

Acknowledgement

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BOOK REVIEW

Work

Lars Svendsen
Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing, September 2008
ISBN: 978-18-4465-154-2, 144 pages, RRP A$29.95

What is work? For one thing, it is the title of a compact treatise by Norwegian Associate-Professor of Philosophy, Lars Svendsen, who rose to prominence as author of *A philosophy of boredom* (2005). *Work* is an entertaining book. It is highly accessible, is written in a casual style, and doesn't burden the reader with a thesis. But I think this last point poses a problem. On the one hand, by not developing a thesis – that is, a sustained scholarly argument – the book is in danger of becoming trivial. Work is surely a significant issue, fraught with pressing problems of exploitation, alienation and inequality. It is the source of so much meaning and misery in the world that it surely deserves to be approached with moral wariness and intellectual subtlety. What *Work* gives us, however, is a jumble of thoughts spiced with quotes from a diverse range of sources from Aristotle and Herodotus to Neil Young and *The Office*. I found it difficult to

suppress the admittedly facetious notion that the book reads more like a narrated Google search than a philosophical treatment.

On the other hand, it can be argued that Svendsen *does* develop a thesis which goes something like 'Marx was wrong' and 'capitalism isn't all that bad'. The critique of Marx is perhaps the only motif that exhibits any kind of development in the book, although the redemption of Adam Smith, often reviled as an early proponent of the division of labour who paved the way for Taylorism and Fordism, may be another candidate. After opening with the sort of strategy one would expect from a philosopher influenced by the analytical tradition, namely, a clearly-expressed treatment of common definitions, Svendsen introduces the reader to some of the more heavy-duty analyses of work. Marx is central here as the thinker who argued that work under the capitalist system alienates workers from their own substance. Marx believed that labouring to produce a livelihood is fundamental to the formation of human identity and that by appropriating a good portion of what workers produce, capitalism acts to diminish them. This is a serious charge which cannot be skirted in a contemporary analysis of work, and Svendsen doesn't try to avoid it. But apart from taking a few swipes at Marx, pointing up some inconsistencies between his early and later thinking, Svendsen's critique consists of an attempt to demonstrate that capitalism hasn't turned out to be as insidious as Marx feared. On the contrary, Svendsen suggests that capitalism holds greater promise for 'self-realisation' than any alternative imagined by Marx.

Although modern work is characterised by insecurity and little opportunity to develop 'skill depth', we learn that workers have never had more leisure or enjoyed more material wealth. Yet although we work less than ever, the curious perception prevails that we are actually working more. Svendsen proves that this is only a perception with reference to United Kingdom research that found that, when workers were asked to estimate the amount of work they did and

compared this with objective measurements of the actual time they spent working, it was found that the subjects systematically over-estimated. Why they consistently *over*-estimated is surely worth careful consideration. Is the nature of modern work perhaps such that people find it takes more out of them in less time? Svendsen pauses to ask if the intensity and pace of work has increased, but concludes that there is 'little evidence for this'. An interesting theme presented by Svendsen is that leisure has become more busy, more structured and demanding, and that this may be a factor in our confused sense of being too busy. Anyway, regardless of perceptions, Svendsen cites evidence to show that not only do we work less, but that work is good for our health, and that since leisure is apparently so exhausting, many people regard work as a welcome refuge.

Marx thought that in the end capitalism would lead to a real reduction in workers' wages. Svendsen produces statistics which indicate that the average worker is indeed deriving more and more wealth from their employment. He concedes that the capitalists have done even better, but doesn't make much of this poignant datum. The fact is that, compared with the slaves, serfs and even workers of only a few decades ago, today's employee is revelling in such wealth that they can partake with gusto in the frenzy of consumerism that would make the aristocrats of old choke on their cake. There is, of course, the problem of unemployment which stalks the transience of modern work, but Svendsen chooses to understand this as a structural phenomenon and a necessary evil. He presents some United States evidence to suggest that very few people remain unemployed for long. There is also the issue of the working poor, subsisting on minimum wages, but here again, poverty can be shown to be a temporary state mainly experienced by younger workers. The reality is, at least in America, that 'Most people who start with very poorly paid jobs climb the economic ladder quite quickly, often within months'. Svendsen is not without sympathy, confiding that 'I certainly will not dispute

that living on minimum wage must be very hard, but it is usually a temporary condition'.

On the other hand, in a discussion of the expectation that prevailed earlier in the modern era that technology would lead to the end of work, we are assured that, overall, the proportion of people in employment has remained stable or increased over time. But it is also true that there has been a shift in the kinds of work done by the employed. Svendsen talks about the loss of industrial jobs in Norway and the rise of the website designer. This, in turn, has been followed by a drastic fall in the number of website design jobs, but a rise in the number of positions for 'baristas' – those jobs once held by out-of-work actors and BA graduates. I don't know whether this is an appealing trend, and I racked my brains to see how the average Gloria Jean's worker manages to climb the economic ladder 'quite quickly, often within months'.

Work does contain some acute and critical observations. Svendsen injects dark humour into the topic of being managed with a tour of management guru doctrines, such as that developed in Kunde's *Corporate religion* (2000). Some of Svendsen's revelations on this topic made my hair stand up, the idea of capitalism investing the very soul of its workers. He also alerts us to a disturbing new criterion of employability: 'zero drag'. The zero-drag employee is someone who has none of those distractions such as partner, children, hobby etc. that can divide a worker's commitments. The zero-drag employee, in contrast, is open to a commitment to the employer's brand that can be cultivated to all-consuming proportions. These workers are granted perks such as access to workplace gymnasiums and employer-funded meals which, on Svendsen's assessment, only serve to create conditions by which workers can function longer and harder each day in the workplace.

I think *Work* needed a thesis to be a serious contribution to contemporary life, although Svendsen's strategy may make the book

more palatable to people who may otherwise be too busy enjoying their wealth and leisure. I have outlined a few ways in which I think *Work* goes astray. In addition, it definitely lacks an 'international perspective', because the idea of the wealth and leisure of the modern worker is something that can only apply in a few countries. Work in many corners of the world simply doesn't bear thinking about. Finally, I suspect that the economic downturn that has taken hold in the months since the book was published will make some of Svendsen's musings tend to appear blithe rather than savvy.

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BOOK REVIEW

Deception

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Ziyad Marar
Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2008
ISBN-10: 1844651517; ISBN-13: 978-1844651511
165 pages

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This is the book for malcontents, those of uneasy minds. The contented might not appreciate it. In my field of religion studies, it is for the enquirer who is very unsure that there is any such thing as a god but feels the personal need to construct one and the social need to cover embarrassment about his/her stance (Q: 'Do you believe in God?' A: 'Yes and No, but don't tell anyone').

It would appeal to those who have come across the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (who strangely does not get a mention) and his idea of the human as a meaning-seeking animal and who have toyed with Buddhism and its attempt to extinguish human desire or *tanha* (and Buddhism does not get any specific reference either).

The book is one of a series of philosophical treatises in *The art of living* series. Other topics in other books cover Clothes, Illness, Sport, Death, Sex. This one focuses on Deception. The basic premise is that deception (whether it means deceiving others or deceiving ourselves) is intrinsic to being human. We deceive others (white lies, perhaps something more serious) and we deceive ourselves (I am more attractive and more clever than I really am). Why? Human beings must deny the complexity of the world and the contradictory nature of human beliefs and desires if they are to survive. However, there is a rider. Deception offers deep and necessary comfort to the human but the price is high and there are benefits in resistance. Inability to live without deception and the need to resist in a qualified sense are the theses of the book.

Marar begins with human nature. We humans are story-tellers and we have been formed by evolution in such a way that we explain the world and our fellow humans by clever narratives. If we are bemused by the facts then we make them up. Thus we are in the terminology of Jerome Bruner *homo credens*, the Believing Human or the Storytelling Animal. Despite what we might want to think, we have not been designed to seek the ultimate truth about the world and about ourselves. We have been designed to create meaning and to persuade ourselves and others of our particular version.

The author then exploits his opening gambit to show how we humans con ourselves to believe our own narratives. This is a collection of examples in the subtleties of self-deception. We desperately need our narratives and our mental processes protect them by very clever deceptions. The way in which this occurs is usually hidden from public view and protected by a primitive ethic ("what is out of my control is not my fault!"). This disconcerting fact about our species is then elaborated in the book by material that shows that we deceive ourselves and others to maintain our good reputation and we learn how expert we can become in explaining the deviousness of our ways.

Finally, we come to the core of the thesis: how can we walk the crooked path to sincerity, given that we are endowed with such a nature? There are three steps, Marar tells us. The first is the self-binding of an Odysseus when we situate ourselves so that there is no choice but to plough on regardless. That can be superseded by gaining personal control and using will power. This second step is an internal self-binding. But the third step is to reshape our tastes into a nobler pattern so that we actually prefer the finer things of life.

Yet Marar ends with the warning about this third step that the human cannot live with non-deception. To live with absolute honesty is a utopian impossibility. We can never be the truly honest person fantasised by the virtue ethicist and retain our sanity. We cannot function without our illusions and, in fact, even detecting them is a dangerous enough sport. All that we can do is to rid ourselves of some of the anxieties about being *homo credens* and being an inveterate deceiver. In this way we would live better.

For anyone involved in the narrative business (historians, ethicists, students of ideologies, religionists), this could be a very enlightening book, written with reference to a host of interesting references from the literature and the arts and leading the reader to be disturbed – a very good thing.

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BOOK REVIEW

Illness: the cry of the flesh

Havi Carel
Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing, September 2008
ISBN: 978 1 84465 152 8, 147 pages, A$29-95

This book is one in a series called 'The art of living', edited by Mark Vernon. This volume is entitled, *Illness: the cry of the flesh* by Havi Carel. Carel is a United Kingdom based academic who writes a philosophical exploration of illness drawing on her own first-person account of her experience/s following the unexpected discovery at the age of 35 that she is suffering from a rare lung disease with a 10-year prognosis. What makes Carel's situation particularly compelling is the progressive nature of the disease, so that each day her body seems to deteriorate just a little more, producing greater and greater limitations on her ability to lead the life she has always envisaged. Carel writes from the perspective of someone who suddenly is forced to come to terms with unimaginable loss and life changing disruption. Tracing the multiple adjustments she has had to make to her existence, Carel describes the physical, psychological

and social aspects of what it means to be chronically ill. To frame her experience so that it may be better understood, her work draws on philosophical thought and in particular phenomenology. Carel uses the phenomenological approach particularly of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to move past a biological framing of the human body as an organic entity, which she calls the 'biological body', to a phenomenological framing, the 'lived body', which she sees as the body as it is actually experienced by people in everyday life. Her task has been to examine the lived body in illness to complement the naturalistic approach of science and the normative approach of sociology.

Much of what she writes centres around the existential concepts of lived space, body, other and time. As the chapters in the book move across her life, Carel explores what it is like to be embodied as ill; within a social world as ill; dis-abled and potentially happy as ill; looking towards death and finally living in the present. It is here in the final chapters that she makes sense of the turmoil and pain she has experienced, finding peace in the 'being' of being ill by positioning herself firmly in the present.

Through this book Carel accomplishes what she set out to do. In telling it like it is, she has produced a powerful 'collage' of illness presented from the perspective of the thinking, feeling, acting, living ill person herself. The text is well crafted with agonisingly believable accounts of anguish, sorrow and joy made scholarly through her interaction with philosophical hermeneutics: a combination that makes for compelling reading.

Her phenomenological explorations are enriched by her first-person descriptions. In these descriptions, we can see things from Carel's frame of reference – her subjective experience in its physical, psychic, social and political dimensions. Her writing is a powerful testimony to the helpfulness of the approach in bringing to light the human condition, starkly. Reading her frank accounts, the reader comes

to understand such a predicament and develops awareness of how greater sensitivity on the part of others can make such a life more bearable and that ultimately over time a human being adjusts and can even find a kind of accepting happiness in illness.

This book offers wisdom and illumination for people who are ill and to people working with ill people: carers, health care practitioners, academics and students in the health disciplines. The book is published by Acumen and well priced at $29.95.

Havi, thank you for sharing your life and your intellect in this book. From you, I have learnt much about how a person with a debilitating chronic illness might think and feel at different points in their life and how others might be helpful. Your work has the potential to inform human practice/behaviour and make a real difference.

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BOOK REVIEW

Wellbeing

Mark Vernon
Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2008
ISBN: 978-1-84465-153-5, 144 pages, $29.00

The late pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty coined the term 'edifying philosophy', meaning a renewed emphasis on imaginative and engaging conversations on how we in the West might shape our lives within a culture no longer framed by an overarching religious viewpoint. In the 30 years since the publication of Rorty's iconoclastic 'Philosophy and the mirror of nature', there has been a growing trend of philosophers, among them Mark Vernon, who are reflecting on the questions that might inform learning for living. Many like him are reappraising ancient Greek and Roman philosophers for whom every philosophical question had practical implications for the shaping of personal character and the conduct of daily living within the 'polis' or community.

Mark Vernon, the author of *Wellbeing*, is also the series editor of the Acumen 'Art of Living Series' which engages with such topics as Clothes, Fame, Hunger and Middle Age. The picture of the builder's spirit level on the front cover of *Wellbeing* is a metaphor for Vernon's focus on spirituality. Transcendence bears fruit in lives perceived as significant and meaningful, able to live with paradox, mystery and suffering.

Mark Vernon is British, a journalist and the author of a number of philosophical books including *After atheism: science, religion and the meaning of life* and *What not to say: philosophy for life's tricky moments*. He trained for the Anglican priesthood but resigned, after serving in an industrial parish, to become an atheist but, finding this position as untenable, has explored the concept of an agnostic way of living, wrestling with the big questions of life, inspired by the example and teaching of Socrates as portrayed by his disciple, the genius Plato. With some other philosophers such as Alain de Botton, Vernon teaches in the 'School of Life', a remarkable centre of learning located in London. He is also an Honorary Research Fellow of Birbeck College, London.

Wellbeing is a book of six interrelated essays. The first of these, a sizeable introduction, explores the concept of happiness and the tensions and difficulties inherent in the search for happiness. He concludes: '... if a good life were that transparent, then we would follow the formula and the self-help industry would effectively cease, which it clearly has not' (p.5). Our problem, says Vernon, is with the idea of happiness that is so dominant within our culture. We would do much better than to consider the classic religious and philosophical traditions as they explore the search for the good that leads in Aristotle to the life of contemplation.

Further chapters investigate the problems of pleasure, pain and suffering, the meaning dimension, the urgency of reassessing the dimension of the transcendent, embracing mystery where life is a mystery to be lived, rather than a problem requiring a solution, and love as the key to awakening to transformation which bears fruit in courageous, compassionate living. 'Wellbeing' is Vernon's term for what Aristotle called 'flourishing', which requires the author to redefine the popular understanding of wellbeing as care for the body, diet, fitness, health and work/life balance which might, he suggests, be more properly be defined as welfare, in favour of a life which sets the quest for love, beauty and goodness as our ultimate concern.

> 'It brings innate meaning not completion; it shows good ends not brings to an end; it enables someone to say that life makes sense and be confident that they can lead their life aright – if they are prepared to put in the effort' (p.130).

In my view, the work is given coherence by the author's commitment to agnosticism as a spiritual path, explored in much greater detail and depth in his other book, *After atheism*. *After atheism* is a building with windows, some created by story, personal experience and some by visual illustrations. In that structure, there is a 'workshop', a how to do it section with practical suggestions on how to design and create the Socratic life. *Wellbeing* could do with many more pointers on how to translate theory into practice.

In the introduction we meet Thomas in his shack in Hong Kong: 'There was something of wellbeing in the air'(p.15), Vernon tells us, as well as mosquitoes. As the book progresses and we encounter Hume, whose philosophy had no practical outcomes, we might expect either some outlines of practices designed to grow our sense of transcendence or some suggestions of books to read. After all, in *What not to say*, Vernon does give a whole series of examples of how philosophical thinking might translate into the intricacies of everyday life. There are no references to seminal writers such as Hadot or Foucault who explore in detail the spiritual exercises which were practised in the ancient world to cultivate wellbeing. There are no references to the significant work of Wilber whose Integral

practice seeks to unite Eastern and Western perspectives. Vernon's exploration of Buddhist practice is very unsatisfactory – Alan Watts is hardly a reliable or contemporary teacher and Mindfulness meditation practice is a well-researched phenomenon with a wide literature.

This is a beautifully written book that takes me up a metaphorical mountain. From the lookout, I can see the pathways that give out half way and I feel inspired by the wonderful views. However, in *Wellbeing*, the art of living remains more mysterious, individualistic and misty than it needs to be. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle might also object that there is no exploration of what kind of community cultivates transcendence.

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BOOK REVIEW

Hunger

Raymond Tallis
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Is hunger a physiological, emotional, or even a spiritual human experience? Undoubtedly hunger has accompanied us since we crawled out of the swamp – even before, if the seeking out of sustenance is regarded to be a motivation for all living things – and will surely continue to be an abiding force. But in terms of the actual experience, what is it? This is the backdrop to Raymond Tallis' book, *Hunger*, one book in a series called *The art of living* which explores numerous dimensions of human experience. The book has five chapters each exploring different kinds of hunger.

Starting with the basis of hunger in our physiology – what he calls our First Hunger – Tallis works his way through the ways in which hunger shapes our appetite for food and therefore our food cultures. Then, craftily linking hunger with yearning, he argues his way through a

number of other appetites, desires and pleasures, or rather a lack thereof. For example, the passions humans have for other humans, be they social or sexual, or both, and the need for further spiritual fulfilment are all, Tallis says, linked to a human hungering for things we currently do not yet enjoy.

Sexual desire is the most obvious of these. According to Freud, the hunger or appetite to possess someone through his or her body lurks at the heart of all other human motivation, and Tallis unpacks this expertly. The need to be needed, wanted and even longed for drives so many human traits. As Tallis states, few of us have lived entirely free of longing for others. Similarly, who has never experienced pangs of jealousy or the corrosion of envy? These are human emotions that have hunger at their heart. It is this yearning for others which is satiated through the security and warmth of the relationships which we have with others that lies at the heart of so many human emotions and complications. Reading this, I was reminded of the importance of tender loving care and its effects on our physiology which were made clear in nutrition experiments in post-World War II orphanages (Paul & Black 2000). Researchers showed that those orphans who were shown love and warmth rehabilitated much faster than those where the 'milk of human kindness' was in short supply, even though food and nutrient intakes of both groups were the same. So, unrequited emotional hunger can impact on our very physiology. Even the words we use to describe emotional deprivation are revealing: for example, 'pangs' or 'starved'.

Dwelling on the difference between appetite and desire, Tallis argues for a distinction between animal and human self-consciousness (the latter having lots, the former having little). All animals – and as biochemists will tell you, all living cells – have appetites; it's what creates the drive to seek out food. But desire is something more calculated, more discriminating. I have to admit that Tallis' examination of the work on Hegel and Sartre at this point left me

behind, and the arguments seemed to become somewhat opaque. But the examples become clearer in the next section which deals with carnal experience and sex. Tallis notes that evidence of an uneven spread of sexual activity across society became stark during the AID epidemic where it was revealed that individuals in some gay communities have a multitude of partners even over one weekend. A hunger for sex turns someone into a sex addict, and the sex industry does very nicely out of sexual addictions. Indeed, according to Tallis, sex drives can convert desires into mere appetites, and in so doing, bring out the animal in us all.

In what Tallis calls the Fourth Hunger, we are in another world – that where we continue to dedicate ourselves to a higher purpose. The idea that virtue is a hunger for doing good, is, I have to say, an idea that appeals to me. The crux of this encounter is what is called anticipated satisfaction; that is, the experience of forsaking the now with an expectation of satisfaction in the future. This is something that is arguably at the heart of a number of human emotions, and is often a driving force of pleasure. In other words, the experience of the idea of something and its eventual realisation is a sensation that we easily respond to. While art and music are forms where the idea and the content are often at odds or are displaced, it is in the realms of religion, Tallis tells us, where we hunger for a coherence of a wider significance. At this point, Tallis closes the loop and shows how a hunger for religion intersects with a hunger for food. The alimentary appetite is often used to address a hunger for connecting with a wider experience. Special foods, fasting, orthodox eating practices, are all part of the religious experience for many. The role of food in Christianity is a good point. I was reminded of the belief by some that it was the desire for food, not for each other's flesh, that resulted in the downfall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Bynum 1987: 36). The subordination of one's life to God as a result may be one way of satisfying a particular kind of hunger resulting from original sin.

In the last chapter, Tallis dwells on the most immediate and in my view the most serious forms of hunger: the hunger of those who do not have enough food in today's world. Hunger is a permanent condition for an eighth of the world's population, mostly women and children. The often rationalised indifference that we, the well fed, have towards those experiencing starvation is explored by Tallis in a number of ways. Firstly, our feelings of hopelessness at the shear scale of the problem overwhelm us. Sometimes our cynicism at the way the problem is being addressed, or because the funding to assist does not get to those who need it most, gets in the way. Or, as Tallis points out, perhaps we are merely rehearsing a relict of earlier views of hunger in history where it was seen as a sign of an individual's lack of motivation and even low morals. The invisibility of hunger today – unless Bono or Geldof thrusts it in our faces – makes us immune to the needs of others.

Lastly, Tallis looks at the ways in which we slake our appetites through consumption. Whether this is through the West's obsession for material goods or for celebrity culture – a hunger for fame – hunger of sorts has fuelled turbo-capitalism. Tallis reminds us that wellbeing and happiness are not necessarily a consequence of purchasing power. Rather, the happiest societies appear to be those with the lowest discrepancies in spending power – that is, a smaller gap between the rich and the poor. But clearly consumption does drive something within us. It grows an economy which allows us to live the good life. But our greed for more than we need is, Tallis reminds us, what has caused problems of environmental sustainability. Returning to our stomachs, Tallis refers to the slow food movement as a way of satisfying a hunger for foods which celebrate the local, the seasonal and the sustainable.

There is a lot to like about this book. Tallis' ability to roam over such a wide landscape is breathtaking, as is his inclusion of so many aspects of hunger. As said before, the linking of hunger with appetite and desire allows Tallis to explore a plethora of human emotions and conditions. Occasional the book, even for one so small, does get a bit bloated. The discussions of Schopenhauser, for example, left me bewildered, ditto, as previously mentioned, the work of Hegel and Sartre. Perhaps these need time to digest, so to speak. However, the criticisms are small and frankly, in my view, it is always better to be over- rather than underwhelmed by a text.

The book would be useful for anyone wanting to get examples of the ways in which human conditions, whether of the material or the spiritual kind, are driven by basic instincts of hunger. Highly recommended.

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