

Learning for a Complex World

A lifewide concept of learning,
education and personal development

Edited by

Norman J Jackson



Chapter 1

The lifelong and lifewide dimensions of living, learning and developing

Norman Jackson

Synopsis

This Chapter introduces the idea of 'lifewideness' and explains why it is worthy of examination and why it is an important concept for student development. It tries to show how the idea complements and adds value to the well-known concept of lifelong learning and argues that a lifewide education could enhance a university's ability to recognise and value learning and personal development that is essential for survival, success and personal fulfilment in a complex modern world.

Introduction

Dellas and Gaier (1970) define personal creativity as the desire and ability to use imagination, insight and intellect, feeling and emotion, to move an idea from one state to an alternative, previously unexplored state. This book tries to move the idea of *lifewideness*, an idea that has so far received little conceptual or practical attention in education, to a more examined, meaningful and useful state. Our primary concern is to add value to the educational experiences and personal development of higher education students. Our aim is to influence the prevailing concepts of learning and personal development in higher education, by recognising and valuing what students do to make their own education more complete.

Why should the idea of lifewideness be examined? As we develop deeper understandings about the sorts of learning and development that are required for living a successful and fulfilled life in a complex modern world, it becomes more and more apparent that our educational institutions need to pay more

attention to developing learners as whole people. Focusing so much attention on the cognitive development of individuals misses the point of what well rounded education should be about. By examining the idea of lifewideness we are opening up the possibility for a more complete education: one that recognises that formal education is just one part of an individual's whole life: a life that is full of opportunity for learning and education.

To be successful and fulfilled in life we have to develop ourselves so that we are able 'to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others' (Mezirow 2000:8). Hodge *et al.* (2010) suggest that this requires 'a shift from uncritical acceptance of external authority to critical analysis of authority in order to establish one's own internal authority. This internal authority is what developmental theorists call self-authorship, or the capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations (Baxter Magolda 2001, 2004, 2009; Kegan 1994).' This book develops the argument that by adopting a lifewide concept for learning and education, our education institutions can facilitate learner progression towards such complex learning achievements as are embodied in the principles and practice of self-authorship.

How does lifewideness relate to lifelong learning? Most people are familiar with the idea of lifelong learning to represent an individual's learning and development throughout the whole of their life-span. But the complementary concept of lifewideness, the learning and development that occurs more or less contemporaneously in multiple and varied places and situations throughout an individual's life course, is less familiar. Yet for students who are studying in higher education (only one part of their lifelong learning journey), it is the lifewide dimension that they actually notice and participate in every day.

Lifewideness is a simple idea. It recognises that most people, no matter what their age or circumstances, simultaneously inhabit a number of different spaces – like work or education, running a home, being a member of a family, being involved in a club or society, travelling and taking holidays and looking after their own wellbeing mentally, physically and spiritually. We live out our lives in these different spaces and we have the freedom to choose which spaces we want to occupy. In these spaces we make decisions about what to be involved in, we meet and interact with different people, have different sorts of relationships, adopt different roles and identities, and think, behave and communicate in different ways. In these different spaces we encounter different sorts of challenges and problems, seize or miss opportunities, and aspire to live

a useful and productive life and achieve our ambitions. It is in these spaces that we create, with others, the meaning that is our life.

an experience we have in place A resonates at a deep level with something I am encountering in place B. The resonance makes me examine my experience in Place A more closely in search of profound answers to the deep quest of who I am and who I want to become.

(Paul Thomas; 10/12/10)

The potential for who we might become resides in the possibilities afforded by the spaces and opportunities in our lives, but we have to recognise these opportunities and act upon them. More than this, our lives are often shaped by others, and we have to create opportunities from the situations they create for us. Turning other people's projects into projects from which we draw meaning and benefit is an important talent for sustaining a self-fulfilled life.

Why is this important to higher education? By reframing our perception of what counts as learning and development, and developing the means of recognising and valuing the learning and development gained in a learner's lifewide experiences – learning that is not usually assessed within an academic programme – higher education could enable learners to develop a deeper appreciation of how, what, when and why they are learning in the different parts of their lives. Heightened self-awareness is likely to help learners become more effective at learning through their own experiences and this should be an essential outcome of a higher education experience that prepares people for the challenges of a complex, ever-changing world.

The book tries to show that the idea of lifewideness provides us with a powerful concept within which other ideas and accumulated wisdom can be integrated. In his book *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*, Stephen Covey examines and gives meaning to the idea of 'voice' – 'the unique personal significance we all possess – the voice of hope, intelligence, resilience and the limitless human potential to effect positive change'. According to Covey (2004:5) voice lies at the nexus of talent (your natural gifts and strengths); passion (those things that naturally energise, excite, motivate you); need (including what the world needs enough to pay you for [and the needs you identify and feel a need to fulfil¹]); and conscience (that still, small voice within that assures you of what is right and that prompts you to actually do it).

This set of ideas and meanings connects in a profound way an individual's identity and spirit with their capabilities, attitudes, needs, motivations and purposes so necessary for achieving, within an ethical framework that guides personal decisions and actions. This representation of voice seems to me to embody the essence of what underlies and gives expression to our unique personal significance. And the idea of lifewideness provides the context through which our unique voice is applied in everyday situations.

Furthermore, at a time of increasing instability and rapid change, lifewide learning and the practice of lifewide education hold the promise of engaging individuals more systematically and more deeply in the development of the capability and agency necessary for them to create and sustain a good quality of life (Alkire 2008). These ideas hold the promise of enabling individuals to both achieve a sense of personal fulfilment and social well-being and gain recognition for the learning and development that has been gained through leading the life we choose to lead.

Maslow (1943) developed a framework for analysing the motivational forces (needs and purposes) behind human behaviour (both reactive and proactive) and growth (personal development). His model contains five levels of need:

1. biological and physiological basic needs – air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
2. safety needs – protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.
3. belongingness and love needs – work group, family, affection, relationships, etc.
4. esteem needs – self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.
5. self-actualisation needs – realising personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.

Because the lifewide concept of learning and development embraces the whole of a person's life, lifewideness must engage with the full spectrum of a person's needs and the opportunities available to them to satisfy their needs and realise their potential. It provides a more holistic vehicle for encouraging and supporting self-actualisation than a traditional higher education approach that focuses primarily on disciplinary learning. Baxter Magolda (2004) highlights the significance of this process through the concept of self-authorship.

The complexities young adults face in trans-disciplinary contexts after college, as well as the complexities inherent in disciplinary learning during college, require something beyond skills acquisition and application. They require transformation from authority dependence to self-authorship, or the capacity to internally define one's beliefs, identity and social relations.

(Baxter Magolda 2004:145)

Hodge *et al.* (2010) are critical of traditional approaches to teaching and learning in higher education which do not prepare people for the demands and challenges of living and working in a trans-disciplinary world.

To discover new ideas, learners must possess an internal set of beliefs that guide decision making about knowledge claims, an internal identity that enables them to express themselves in socially constructing knowledge with others, and the capacity to engage in mutually interdependent relationships to assess others' expertise. These capacities cannot be cultivated solely by engaging actively with the raw materials and tools of the academy or by participating in a student-centred classroom, although these are essential. Instead, they emerge gradually when educators foster students' holistic growth through continuous self-reflection, seamless and authentic curricular and co-curricular experiences that steadily increase in challenge, and appropriate levels of support.

(Hodge *et al.* 2010:2)

A lifewide concept of education allows educators, and empowers learners, to address these concerns. Because it embraces the whole of a person's life, lifewideness includes all of a person's experiences in their cognitive, personal and social development. Lifewideness is fundamentally concerned with the way we create, engage with, sense, and make sense of our own experiences. Learning and developing through our experiences has been described by Beard and Wilson (2005:2) as 'a sense making process that actively engages the reflective inner world of the learner as a whole person (social, physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, etc) with the rich "outer world" of their learning environment (space & place, artefacts, people, cultural etc)'. Learning is both a sense-making and a meaning-making process. A lifewide concept of education values an individual's search for meanings and purposes and from in their life.

Inspiring student voices

This inspiring story, told by a final year undergraduate student, illustrates very well the wonderful interplay of life as a journey and life as a rich set of parallel

and interfering relationships and situations through which people are changed and come to understand themselves better. It captures her search for deeper meanings and purposes in her life and reveals her journey of self-realisation and self-authorship.

The volunteer trip I organised was to a small town in Uganda. This was something I had thought about for years and finally had the means to do. I approached the Students' Union and asked whether there was a programme already set up. I was referred to a local non-government organisation called Experience Culture and I was inspired by a visit to their website which informed me of the work they were doing in Uganda. I got in touch with them and they invited me to join them in their work. I emailed the entire university asking who wanted to come with me and soon realised just how much I had bitten off! The response was overwhelming and I tried to be as fair as possible while only being able to choose five other students. Once the group was assembled I started to organise the next steps and fundraising. I soon found that while students are generous to causes, it is difficult to stir up enthusiasm towards raising money without pitching the idea in an incendiary manner. It took a lot of planning and long hours often through the night to try to make our fundraisers enticing and fun, while maintaining the focus on the cause itself. Over the next 6 months, we came up with ideas such as the sale of sweets at student events, a decorated bake sale, a pub quiz, a giant dodgeball tournament and a music concert at the university. Any money raised was to be a donation towards the children's home and medical centre we would be working at....Being the organiser and perceived leader of a group was new to me and extremely daunting; this proved to be one of the most marked times of my life, during which I grew immensely as a person, and developed my confidence through a comforting sense of achievement.

We started work immediately upon our arrival in Uganda... Working so closely with the students, teachers, hospital workers and volunteers was a wonderful experience, and we soon came to view the world through their eyes, with emotional and profound results. At the children's home we taught lessons in and out of the classroom, sports and games, and sex education. This was probably where I was most at peace while in Uganda, as the love and simple kindnesses the children bestowed upon us were almost magical. Their excitement towards learning was contagious and I looked forward to spending time with them every day. It was a sharp realisation to see the stark differences between the culture and attitudes in Uganda and back home where complacency and over-indulgence are rife.

At the medical centre we helped out at AIDS clinics, helped with filing and went on 'field trips' out into rural communities to teach about HIV/ AIDS, sex education and health and nutrition. Our donations were spent on a library for the children's home, which we painted ourselves, shoes for the children and mosquito nets for those in the communities. I could not help but be moved by the experience of seeing families living in conditions of extreme poverty and illness. One particularly draining day of work involved us going out into a community far away to try to obtain support for Sarah, an eleven-year-old girl who was HIV-positive, and had walked forty-one kilometres barefoot to the medical centre to ask for help. We negotiated with her family for four hours to try to get them to provide shelter and food for her in order for her to receive drug treatment from the medical centre. It was entirely surreal to be sitting under a tree in the African sun, fighting for someone's chance of survival, with the desperation and urgency of the conversation all too apparent. This difficult, drawn out negotiation was absolutely worth it when they finally agreed, ultimately saving her life. The knowledge that we have helped at least one person in this way is something I cling to when it feels that we are just one drop in an ever-present ocean of suffering that often threatens to overwhelm us.

These experiences we had in Uganda changed me and spurred me on to try to make a bigger difference and try to sustain what we had started and in my second year we [me and my sister] set up a 'volunteering society' [to continue the work we had begun]. Pioneering this society was daunting to say the least, with every step unpaved, and layers of bureaucracy to manoeuvre past.

I cannot fully explain the feeling of wholeness that accompanies helping someone in a significant way. Every new experience adds to my person, and expands or alters my perspectives. I feel that it has helped me to grow in so many ways, especially in terms of confidence and my capabilities for dealing with unfamiliar situations and to create new opportunities for myself and others. I feel spurred on to continue what we started and more, and truly believe that I am now much better equipped to achieve these goals. Through the various activities I have undertaken while at university I have improved my understanding and insight into myself, and others. I have also realised that while an idea may start as just an idea, or may seem like just a drop in a vast ocean, it can manifest itself as a wonderful compilation of events; a tidal wave whose ripple effects extend continuously outwards.

This very personal story shows how an individual has created and connected her lifewide experiences to form her lifelong journey, and how these experiences create the foundation for future (lifelong) intentions and actions that unfold in a different time and place. This story also reveals an individual's resolve to act or change because she has witnessed or been part of something through which she has changed: new insights and beliefs have been gained and her will to do more has been stimulated. The power of this learning manifests itself in this person's preparedness to engage with complex uncertainty, making informed, insightful and sometimes emotionally engaged choices about what to do or try to do next. Her willingness to put herself into new and unfamiliar, even risky, situations where neither the contexts nor the challenges are known seems to have forged a stronger identity so that she becomes more complete in the way she aspires to be. The story also illuminates how an individual's will to persevere and her own agency can overcome the obstacles that are encountered when she wants to achieve something in a world that is organised with priorities that are different to her own. Above all, the story illustrates the powerful synergy between an individual's lifelong and lifewide journey and her development as the person she wants to be and become. This story of self-actualisation is the underlying story of lifewide learning and personal development.

The lifelong-lifewide paradigm

This story, told by a student in her third year at university, illustrates well the lifelong dimension of learning (over two years) and the lifewide dimension – some of the opportunities she took to develop herself in different parts of her life during this period. Lifelong learning is a well-established concept in the world of educational policy. It represents all the learning and development we gain through living.

Lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual. It occurs through experiences encountered in the course of a lifetime. These experiences could be formal (training, counselling, tutoring, mentorship, apprenticeship, higher education, etc.) or informal (experiences, situations, etc.) Lifelong learning is the 'lifelong, voluntary, and self-motivated' pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. As such, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability.

(Wikipedia 06/05/10)

Lifewide learning is a concept within the lifelong learning paradigm. It emerged in a report (NAES 2000) by the Swedish National Agency for Education.

The lifelong dimension represents what the individual learns throughout the whole life-span. Knowledge rapidly becomes obsolete and it is necessary for the individual to update knowledge and competence in a continuous process of learning. Education cannot be limited to the time spent in school, the individual must have a real opportunity to learn throughout life. The lifelong dimension is non-problematic, what is essential is that the individual learns throughout life. The lifewide dimension refers to the fact that learning takes place in a variety of different environments and situations, and is not only confined to the formal educational system. Lifewide learning covers formal, non-formal and informal learning.

(NAES 2000:18)

The idea quickly spread through the policy community and became incorporated into the thinking of economists concerned with measuring value in lifelong learning. A presentation entitled 'Measuring the Impact of the New Economy in Education Sector Outputs' dated 2002 on the UK Government Statistics Office website makes reference to 'measuring lifewide learning'. Richard Desjardins (2004), building on the work of Tuijnman (2003, cited by Desjardins 2004), utilised the idea of lifewide learning in his conceptual framework for the economic evaluation of lifelong learning and these ways of thinking were incorporated into a number of reports by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for example (OECD 2007:10)

Learning does not occur just in school – it is both 'lifewide' (i.e. it occurs in multiple contexts, such as work, at home and in our social lives) and 'lifelong' (from cradle to grave). These different types of learning affect each other in a wide variety of ways. Their impact in terms of the outcomes of learning is equally complex – whether it is in the economic and social spheres, the individual and collective, the monetary and the non-monetary. Further complicating the picture are substantial gaps in our knowledge base on a number of issues, including the following:

- The cumulative and interactive impacts of lifewide and lifelong learning
- The potential impacts of informal learning, later interventions in adulthood or even different types of formal education
- And the impacts of different curricula (general, academic, vocational) and impacts of different learning at different stages.

The OECD 'Report on the Social Outcomes of Learning' (OECD 2007) provides a useful conceptual framework with which to frame the issues relating to the social outcomes of learning. In this framework learning from formal education and from the diverse contexts that make up people's lives combines to create human and social capital.² 'The knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic wellbeing (OECD 2001:18), where competencies are defined in terms of the capability to perform in particular situations; or 'The ability to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context through the mobilisation of psychological pre-requisites including cognitive and non-cognitive aspects' (Rychen and Salganik 2003, OECD 2007:43).

The Hong Kong primary and secondary school system is the only education system to have adopted a lifewide concept of learning and education.

Life-wide Learning (LWL) refers to student learning in real contexts and authentic settings. Such experiential learning enables students to achieve certain learning goals that are more difficult to attain through classroom learning alone. It helps students to achieve the aims of whole-person development and enables them to develop the life-long learning capabilities that are needed in our ever-changing society.

(Government of Hong Kong Education Bureau website)

When viewed from these perspectives, our project to explore the potential role of lifewide learning in the UK higher education setting has the potential to encourage students to become more conscious of the importance of their lifewide learning enterprise while they are studying at university. In raising the awareness of learners of the importance of informal learning in their lifewide experiences, we advance the proposition that they are more likely to be prepared for their lifelong journey of learning and change, and be more conscious of the way in which they learn and develop themselves through the many opportunities and challenges that their life affords. In raising such awareness in individuals, a second proposition might be advanced namely, that lifewide education affords the opportunity to enhance economic, social and personal well-being outcomes from our educational system. This is the ultimate added educational value of the lifewide learning project.

The 'wicked problem' we share

How teachers prepare their students for a lifetime of uncertainty and change, and enable them to work with the ever-increasing complexity of the modern

world, is a challenge shared by higher education institutions and educationalists all over the world. How we prepare ourselves for our own unknown futures is a problem we all share.

The now famous 'Shift happens'³ YouTube video clip portrays, in a deliberately provocative way, the sort of globally connected, fast-changing and uncertain world in which our students' futures lie. While we might question some of the statistics in the film, the central message is clear. We live in a world where change is exponential and we are currently helping to prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that have not yet been invented in order to solve problems that we don't know are problems yet.

If we uphold the educational values of trying to make a positive difference to students' lives then we have a moral and professional responsibility to prepare them for the lifetime of uncertainty, change, challenge and emergent or self-created opportunity that lies ahead of them. It may sound dramatic but the reality is that the majority of our students will have not one but several careers; they will have to change organisations, roles and identities many times and be part of new organisations that they help to create or existing organisations that they help to transform. Many will have to invent their own businesses in order to earn an income or create and juggle a portfolio of jobs requiring them to maintain several identities simultaneously. Preparing our students for a lifetime of working, learning and living in uncertain and unpredictable worlds that have yet to be revealed is perhaps one of the greatest responsibilities and challenges confronting universities all over the world.

Preparing students for an increasingly complex and uncertain world is a 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webber 1973; Conklin 2006). What emerges from all the technical, informational, social, political and cultural complexity that we are immersed in are problems which cannot be solved through rational, linear problem working processes because the problem definition and our understanding of it evolve as new possible solutions are invented and implemented.

Douglas Thomas and John Seely Brown (2009) crystallise the educational challenge to living in a world of constant and rapid change.

The educational needs of the 21st century pose a number of serious problems for current educational practices. First and foremost, we see the 21st century as a time that is characterised by constant change. Educational

practices that focus on the transfer of static knowledge simply cannot keep up with the rapid rate of change. Practices that focus on adaptation or reaction to change fare better, but are still finding themselves outpaced by an environment that requires content to be updated almost as fast as it can be taught. What is required to succeed in education is a theory that is responsive to the context of constant flux, while at the same time is grounded in a theory of learning. Accordingly, understanding the processes of learning which underwrite the practices emerging from participation in digital networks may enable us to design learning environments that harness the power of digital participation for education in the 21st century.

(Thomas and Seely Brown 2009:1)

Barnett (2000), meanwhile, summarises the challenge of preparing students for a supercomplex world.

Higher education is faced with not just preparing students for a complex world, it is faced with preparing students for a supercomplex world. It is a world where nothing can be taken for granted, where no frame of understanding or of action can be entertained with any security. It is a world in which we are conceptually challenged and continually so. ...

This supercomplexity shows itself discursively in the world of work through terms such as 'flexibility', 'adaptability' and 'self-reliance'..... In such terminology, we find a sense of individuals having to take responsibility for continually reconstituting themselves through their life span.

(Barnett 2000:257-258)

That traditional forms of discipline-based higher education do prepare students for a complex changing world is undeniable, in so far as so many people are able to take on and be successful in roles that are far removed from their initial disciplinary training. That we recognise we can do better is also undeniable, as institutions and educational professionals continually strive to enhance the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing students for their world after they have graduated. This point in time is merely the point at which we take stock of the situation and think again about the most appropriate direction to travel.

The most powerful argument for a lifewide curriculum is that it contains more potential for learning than any other curriculum! Adopting the concept of a lifewide curriculum shifts us into a more experience-based view of learning (Andreason *et al.* 1995) when learners use their experiences as the resource

for learning by reflecting on, evaluating and reconstructing their experiences in order to draw deeper meaning and grow self-theories (Dweck 1999) from them in the light of prior or parallel experiences.

An experience-rich curriculum that engages with the full breadth of a learner's life provides an environment within which a more holistic conception of learning and individuals' sense of being in the world can be nurtured. We can appreciate much more fully the rich dimensions of learning through belonging, doing, sensing, feeling, thinking and being (Beard 2010; Beard and Wilson 2005; and Chapter 3).

Experience of working and learning in different environments is essential to developing a repertoire of 'ways of knowing' and 'being able to come to know'. Experiential knowing is part of action and it lies at the heart of the epistemology of practice. It complements but is different to explicit and tacit knowledge and can only be gained through acts of doing and being (Cook and Brown 1999).

At the heart of the lifewide learning idea is the deep moral purpose of fostering learners' will or the spirit to be and become (Barnett 2005). An individual's lifewide enterprise contains far more opportunity for her to exercise her will than that part of her life that is only associated with an academic programme. But will alone is not enough; alongside this intentionality learners must have the agency (the thinking capacity, skill, behaviours, qualities and self-awareness) to engage in ways that will enable them to act and adapt, to influence events, achieve their goals and learn through their experiences. They must be, or learn to be, agentic learners (Bandura 2001). The student narrative contributions to this book demonstrate unequivocally that learners' lifewide learning enterprises contain far more opportunity and potential for the development of human agency than a formal education programme alone.

Looking beyond higher education to the professional worlds to which most of our students aspire, we can see the sorts of qualities, skills, dispositions, agencies and ways of knowing and being that are required through the study of professionals doing what they do in their work (e.g. Eraut 2007, 2008 and 2009; Billett 2008, 2009a and b). While higher education has always sought to prepare learners for these professional worlds, the challenge is embedded in the question: 'Can we create even better educational designs that will enable learners to be better prepared for the sort of world we imagine in the future?'

The informational world has added its own complexity. Indeed one of the main reasons the world has become so complex is the volume, immediacy, availability, diversity and speed of producing and using this information. To participate fully in this world we need information handling and processing skills, and digital literacies that were just not necessary even a few years ago. Although formal education plays an important role, many of the skills required and ways of being in the web-enabled information world are gained from experiences of using technology in the social-networked world outside the classroom (Thomas and Seeley Brown 2011).

The utilisation of new media in a strong social context has given rise to what Jenkins *et al.* (2006) describe as a *participatory culture* with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A growing body of scholarship suggests potential benefits to personal development of these forms of participatory culture. Access to this participatory culture functions as a new form of the hidden curriculum, shaping which youth will succeed and which will be left behind as they enter school and the workplace (Jenkins *et al.* 2006). By embracing a lifewide concept of learning these forms of capability can be recognised and valued within a learner's self-determined development.

Tackling the wicked problem

Directly or indirectly, the problem of how we prepare people for a complex and unpredictable world is the main force driving change in tertiary education and it will always be so. But what we do in response to this challenge is only one part of the educational equation. Learners are busy preparing themselves through the many things they do and involve themselves in outside formal education every day of their lives. It is the recognition that personal education is both a partnership between learners and the providers of formal opportunities, and a self-motivated and self-determined project that makes the idea of lifewide education so appealing and valuable.

This book has been formed around the attempts of one university-based educational development centre to engage with this wicked problem. We defined our problem in terms of 'learning for a complex world' as this seemed to capture the essence of the challenge and the opportunity that we thought we were tackling. With the help of a talented facilitator (Julian Burton), we turned our initial thinking into a symbolic picture (Figure 1.1) that tells a story about people being in a world where day to day the things we need to think about and

involve ourselves in emerge through the situations in which we choose to engage or find ourselves.

Figure 1.1 SCEPTRe's metaphorical wall picture which helps to visualise the idea of learning in and for a complex world



At the heart of our concept is the notion of 'will' (Barnett 2005) – the willingness to learn through the whole of life's experiences, the willingness to see self-development as a necessary, holistic and integrated process which evolves through participation in the opportunities that life affords. It is the will to be and become a certain sort of person that drives people to create their enterprises for learning and self-development.

But will alone is insufficient to engage in the opportunities that life affords. It also requires agency: 'Between stimulus and response there is a space. In the space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In those choices lie our growth and our happiness' (Covey 2004: 4). In the space where we have the freedom to choose what we do, we make decisions that are based on our beliefs, values and what we know and don't know, and can or can't do, and how we feel. For example, we can choose to be positive or negative, to create or try

something new or replicate what we have done before, to behave ethically or do something we know is wrong, or to persevere with something difficult or abandon it.

In drawing on Stephen Covey's ideas we have identified a key building block in the lifewide idea: namely, that our lives are made up of multiple streams of situations that require us to make decisions and to act on these decisions, or not if we choose this course of action. A significant part of the complexity in our lives, and the way we ultimately learn to deal with complexity, comes from our experience of engaging with the multiplicity of situations we encounter within our daily lives. And in our family and wider social world, the way we help others deal with their situations is also part of our complexity.

A lifewide curriculum

Formal education, although very important, is only one part of the experiences that make up our lives: experiences that are generally not recognised as being relevant to a student's higher education learning enterprise which has been traditionally formed around either learning about one or more subjects which may or may not be directly related to a career pathway. Yet observation of what students actually do to develop themselves while they are at university shows that their development as a person involves far more than studying a subject (Chapters 9- 13). It involves them immersing themselves in a whole-of-life experience, the results of which shape their identity and destiny (for example story of one student's volunteering in Uganda described above).

As a generalisation, when designing an academic curriculum, designers typically begin with their purposes and imagined outcomes. They think about the content (knowledge), create a design around the content, encourage learning and the use of content through prescribed teaching and learning activities, provide some supporting resources (usually text based) and assess learning against criteria that reflect the answers they hope to get for the problems and challenges they set. There is a predictability and linearity in this form of formal learning that is quite different to the learning that emerges from doing things in the world outside formal education. There is little or no room for outcomes that are not desired or anticipated by the teacher or outcomes that learners individually recognise as being valuable to themselves if they are not also deemed valuable by the teacher.

But what if we were to begin with the learner and their life, and see the learner as the designer of an integrated meaningful life experience? An experience that

incorporates formal education as one component of a much richer set of experiences that embrace all the forms of learning and achievement that are necessary to sustain a meaningful life. These ways of thinking are both disturbing, because higher education seems to be neglecting important things, and exciting because of the potential to improve the current situation.

Turning ideas into new realities

But it is one thing to have ideas and another to create meaningful and useful educational practices that give concrete expression to the ideas. Anyone who has tried to innovate within a university knows that this is a 'messy business'. For any change agent, university organisations are a challenging mix of collegial, individualistic, managerial and bureaucratic entities that often combine to dismiss or stifle any emergent practice that challenges the status quo. Furthermore, nothing is static: the challenge is to bring about change in an environment that is already full of change - much of it that no one wants to make! Ewell is particularly helpful in explaining why universities are difficult organisations in which to accomplish innovation (Ewell 2005) and many of his insights and conclusions are directly applicable to our own experiences of trying to bring about change. Our project to persuade our university to adopt a lifewide concept of higher education was not successful. But neither did it fail, trying to innovate but not succeeding, especially in a climate of cost-cutting is the normal and acceptable risk of engaging in educational innovation. The seeds for fundamental change have been sown and have taken root in the hearts and minds of individuals who have been influenced by our work. These people are adapting their practices and innovating in ways that honour the idea of lifewide education. Beyond our university, this book attempts to spread our ideas and practices more widely and only time will tell whether we have been successful in influencing others.

I have always believed that significant change - like the changes accompanying the systematic introduction of Personal Development Planning (QAA 2000) in UK higher education, should be viewed at the scale of at least a decade or even a generation. Our attempts to bring about fundamental change in one institution should be judged on this time scale. More importantly, when considering educational change of the type we are advocating, it is the global not the local level that is important. Our research has shown that there are many institutions in the UK that have already embraced some of the ideas and practices advocated in this book. These institutions are the true pioneers for a new and more complete higher education.

About the book

This book is primarily for teachers and other educational practitioners who are interested and involved in helping students maximise the learning and development they gain from their higher education experience. The authors contributing to this book hope that their attempt to examine and give practical meaning to the idea of lifewideness makes sense to you and helps you to support and facilitate the development of students and / or staff in your professional context. We also hope that it might have meaning for you in your own life.

In recent years, universities in the UK have been encouraged to evaluate what they do through the lens of the student experience. This has resulted in an increasing institutional interest and awareness in the way in which students integrate higher education with their life across and beyond the campus. (NASPA and ACPA 2004). This book is also written for people who work in the Student Care Services who support students as they engage in and are shaped by their whole life experience while they are at university.

For the decision makers who are trying to bring about the cultural change necessary in adopting a lifewide approach to education, we hope the contributions in this book will reinforce your conviction that this is the right thing to do and provide useful conceptual and practical information that will help you achieve your educational ambitions.

The book is organised into four parts. The introduction to lifewide learning begins in John Cowan's Foreword. A self-proclaimed lifelong/lifewide learning enthusiast, John provides his personal interpretation of how the learning and personal development he gained in the lifewide dimension of his life have shaped him as a person.

Part 1 (Chapters 1-8) to introduce the key concepts of lifewideness: lifewide learning and personal development, lifewide education and lifewide curriculum. In Chapter 2 Ron Barnett proposes that lifewide education has the potential to transform our thinking about the purpose of higher education and proclaims that lifewide learning is already a reality. Any holistic model of education also requires a holistic view of learning and personal development and in Chapter 3 Colin Beard and Norman Jackson develop such a model. Lifewide education lends itself to a capability-based approach and the reasons for this and the nature of capability required for living a successful and fulfilled life are considered in Chapter 4. Lifewide learning is powerfully linked to the concept of

self-authorship developed by Marcia Baxter Magolda, and in Chapter 5 she draws attention to the importance of personal experiences in the world outside higher education that enable learners to encounter and develop the epistemological, intrapersonal and interpersonal complexity necessary for surviving and prospering in a complex and disruptive world. She also elaborates her ideas for Learning Partnerships that would support and enable learners' to develop the capabilities and dispositions necessary for self-authorship. The consequence of adopting a lifewide concept for education is that we also need a lifewide concept of curriculum and this theme is developed in Chapter 6. A lifewide curriculum embraces three curricular domains - the academic, co-curriculum and extra-curriculum and a more complete education involves exploiting the opportunities for learning and development in all three domains. But what role do teachers play in promoting and facilitating lifewide education? In Chapter 7 John Cowan sets out to answer this question, advocating that a new pedagogy is required to support and sustain lifewide learning and connect and integrate students' learning outside and inside formal education. Part 1 concludes with a contribution from Marat Staron (Chapter 8) relating the concept of lifewide learning and education to the 'life-based learning' concept developed for work-based learning situations in the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Australia.

Part 2 focuses on the lifewide learning experiences of students and is based on research undertaken at the University of Surrey using questionnaires, reflective essays and interview techniques. Through several on-line questionnaire surveys Jenny Willis and Norman Jackson (Chapter 9) show the wide range of experiences students have outside the formal curriculum and the significance of these experiences to their personal development. The stories told by students through a series of essay competitions and interviews reveal the deeper meanings and values in such experiences. The analysis of student narratives also forms the basis for Chapter 10 in which Sarah Campbell and Norman Jackson consider the educational importance of immersive experiences, concluding that such experiences provide important vehicles for self-actualisation and self-authorship.

Part 3 provides a practical example of a Lifewide Education Learning Partnership to encourage and support learning and personal development using the example of the Lifewide Learning Award Framework developed at the University of Surrey. In Chapter 11 Norman Jackson, Charlie Betts and Jenny Willis outline the Award Framework and describe the ways in which learning and personal development were achieved and represented by students and

validated by assessors. This is followed by examples of learning in two different contexts. The first case study (Chapter 12) focuses on the work environment. Norman Jackson, Jenny Willis, Sarah Campbell and Michael Eraut describe research into how people learn and develop through the process of work and relate this to student development in work placement and part-time work. The chapter describes a Learning Partnership that was developed to support learning through part-time work and it shows the type of learning achieved and represented by students in a pilot. The second case study focuses on the cultural environment and in Chapter 13 Novie Johan and Norman Jackson describe a Learning Partnership aimed at revealing the personal changes and development that occur when students make the difficult transition from living in one culture to another.

In *part four* (Chapter 14), Charlie Betts and Norman Jackson take a helicopter view of the UK higher education system to reveal what can only be described as an 'emergent movement' to embrace learning and personal development gained through co- and extra-curricular experiences. They offer a way in which institutions might compare, evaluate and quality assure their emergent practices through 'benchmarking' and offer an ecological perspective on an educational system that would promote, support and value lifewide learning,

This movement must be viewed in the context of a higher education system that has been in a state of flux and transformational change for over thirty years. In 2011 we are about to enter a new stage in this process as UK higher education becomes an essentially privately-funded affair. The consequences of such a profound change cannot be fully appreciated until it happens but one thing is certain, students and their parents are going to expect the maximum benefit from the significant financial investment that will be made.

One of the ways in which this might be achieved is by giving serious attention to the ideas outlined in this book and embracing the ideals and practices of a more complete lifewide education. Our hope is that the ideas in this book might usefully contribute to the enormous change and challenge that lies ahead. This is why we have chosen to frame our book with Eduard Lindeman's optimistic vision. This is also our vision for a more complete lifewide education.

'A fresh hope is astir. From many quarters comes the call to a new kind of education with its initial assumption affirming that *education is life* - not merely preparation for an unknown kind of future living.....The whole of life is learning, therefore education can have no endings' (Lindman 1926:6).

Endnotes

1 My addition.

2 It should also be noted that The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) adopted the same constructs in 2007 when it launched a 'Lifelong, life-wide learning: Commission of Inquiry' into an adult learning strategy for economic success, social justice and fulfilment: www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/default.htm. See also Schuller and Watson (2009).

3 At the time of writing the original YouTube clip posted three years ago (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljbl-363A2Q) has had over five million hits and subsequent versions have had another five million hits.