

# Learning for a Complex World

A lifewide concept of learning,  
education and personal development

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# Chapter 3

## A holistic model for learning and personal development

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#### **Synopsis**

Learning is a rich and complex phenomenon but higher education often tends to view and value learning as essentially cognitive. The value of a lifewide concept of higher education lies in its capacity to embrace and celebrate a richer and more holistic view of learning and personal development and in its ability to enable learners to see that their own development is accomplished through what they do in the many spaces and places that make up their lives. A lifewide concept of education values and recognises learners' attempts to develop and use all their senses and embraces all their physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional experience. Lifewide education encourages learners to experience themselves as developers and users of knowledge in all its varied forms to become more aware of who they are and the person they want to become. In other words, it enables and empowers them 'to formulate a personal strategy to address the most important quest human beings face - the need for their lives to have enduring meaning'<sup>1</sup>. This chapter examines and commends a holistic model of learning and development to take advantage of the opportunities that lifewide education affords.

#### **Learning and developing as a person**

Learning, and the effects of learning on our personal development, is a complex phenomenon. It emerges through our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual engagement with experiences involving the human, natural and material worlds. As Kegan points out, learning is fundamentally a meaning-making process.

The activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making. There is no feeling, no experience, no thought, no perception, independent of a

meaning-making context in which it *becomes* a feeling, an experience, a thought, a perception, because we are the meaning-making context.

(Kegan 1982:11)

Rogers (1983) captures the essence of this meaning-making process very well.

I want to talk.....about LEARNING – the insatiable curiosity that drives the adolescent boy to absorb everything he can see or hear or read about gasoline engines in order to improve the efficiency and speed of his ‘cruiser’. I am talking about the student who says, ‘I am discovering, drawing in from the outside, and making that which is drawn in a real part of me.’ I am talking about any learning in which the experience of the learner progresses along this line: ‘No, no, that’s not what I want’; ‘Wait! This is closer to what I am interested in, what I need’; ‘Ah, here it is! Now I’m grasping and comprehending what I need and what I want to know!’

(Rogers 1983:18–19)

Any comprehensive view of learning as a meaning-making process must involve consideration of all the things that influence the way we create meaning, namely the social (other people/society), psychological (inner psyche/self), emotional (feelings), sensorial/bodily (kinaesthetic/senses) and cognitive (thinking) dimensions of being.

Learning involves personal change – it involves acquiring new or modifying existing personal knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, beliefs, attitudes and qualities that are the inner and outer manifestations of who we are. While thinking and doing are important dimensions of learning, sense awareness and feeling awareness should also be considered to be fundamental to the development of the self, and our sense of who we are, our *being*. If the sensorial-bodily world is central to human communication and self-awareness, we might usefully ask difficult yet fundamental questions about the experience of learning:

- Where and when does the learning take place and what is the significance of the contextual environment?
- What kind of learning activities do learners engage with?
- In what form is the learning experience initially received and perceived in its immediate sensorial form?
- How are the emotional dimensions of learning experienced and what effect do they have?
- How are so-called intelligence and knowledge developed and applied?



his inner world, his outer world and the sensory interface between these worlds. Learning is represented in six dimensions: sensing, belonging, doing, feeling, thinking and being/becoming, and each of these dimensions is now considered in turn.

## **Sensing**

In order for learning to emerge through experience, it is said that ‘the learner must be actively present and be self-aware of his or her interaction with the social and/or material environment’ (Illeris 2002:157). What is it, then, to be present and self-aware? Gergen (1999) provides an example of his own early self-awareness, articulating the pleasure of his writing and learning.

I grew up with fountain pens. As a child they were as ‘natural’ to me as my family. My father’s pen seemed to produce an endless stream of mathematical scribbles that somehow transformed themselves into papers in journals. Meanwhile my mother’s musings gave way to bursts of inspirational writing – short stories, travelogues, and the best letters a boy away from home could ever receive. The pen was destined to become my life. And so it did, as I slowly worked my way toward a professorship in psychology. I loved to ponder and to write; the sound of the pen on paper, the flowing of the ink, the mounting columns of ‘my thoughts’ – all produced a special thrill.

(Gergen 1999:1)

The rich sensory awareness described by Gergen is part of a wider sensory intelligence (SI), and like other intelligences (Gardner, 1983; Goleman, 1995, 2006) it can be developed through mindful effort and through engagement with diverse situations and experiences. Self-awareness requires a high state of self-knowledge of our internal state and our connectivity to the external world.

All of our experiences of our life-world begin with bodily sensations which occur at the intersection of the person and the lifeworld. These sensations initially have no meaning for us as this is the beginning of the learning process. Experience begins with disjuncture (the gap between our biography and our perception of our experience) or a sense of not-knowing, but in the first instance experience is a matter of the body receiving sensations, e.g. sound, sight, smell and so on, which appear to have no meaning. Thereafter we transform these sensations into the language of our brains and minds and learn to make them meaningful to ourselves – this is the first stage in human learning.

(Jarvis 2009:25)

Sensory awareness involves an integrative (re)connection of the perceptual–conceptual relationship. Sheets-Johnstone (2009) refers to the problem of languaging experience and learning. Language, she suggests, is clumsy and inadequate in describing, for example, affective states and bodily movement. Abram (1997) highlights how the sensorial world has been affected by speech and written text, both linear communication forms. He points to the lineage of the alphabet and shows how the direct sensorial connectedness to the outer world was initially through pictographic and rebus-like meanings within written form, still clearly present in Chinese writing. Abram argues that the human senses, intercepted by the written word, are no longer gripped and fascinated by the expressive shapes and sounds of particular places, and calls for a return to our senses in order to be more present and aware. Similarly, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) challenge the dominant Western views of philosophy, and argue that thought is mostly unconscious and that reason is not dispassionate, but emotionally engaged. Reason, they argue, is not purely literal, but largely metaphorical and imaginative. We use terms like ‘higher’ education, ‘grasping’ the subject, ‘step-by-step’ reasoning, and ‘supporting’ evidence: everyday speech contains a milieu of kinaesthetic-spatial metaphors that highlight a corporeal lineage. These writers further encourage an embracing of the whole of a learner’s life, as a lifewide education optimises the opportunity for learners to engage in experiences that utilise all their senses and connect these to their meaning-making processes.

## **Belonging**

The ‘where’ is the environment, place or space, the location, the social and more than human context providing the external stimuli and ambience for the learning experience to wholly or partly occur. In the lifewide learning paradigm these are the everyday spaces and places where we encounter or create situations and have our experiences. There are, of course, social, political, and cultural dynamics operating in these spaces. The ‘where’ of learning relates to the wider sense of being-in-the-world, and to our sense of ‘belonging’ and so we refer to this dimension as the ‘belonging’ dimension.

Belonging in the world has considerable theoretical complexity (Cannatella 2007) and it is increasingly recognised as a key element in student transition and transformation. Learning to belong is an experience that is common to all students as they begin their university or college career. Belonging forms the basis of much wider philosophical debate. Palmer and Owens (2009), for example, refer to ‘not belonging’ as a prevalent theme within accounts of higher education first-year student learning experiences at university. Their work

suggests that the transition between one place (homeland) and another (university and beyond as studentland) can result in an 'in-between-ness' – a betwixt space. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced when a student comes from another country to study in the UK and enters a culture that is very different to their own (see Chapter 13). Turning point experiences for students in the process of belonging have revealed a cast of people and evolving relationships, symbolic objects and contrasting motivations that both liberate and constrain the students' transition into university life. The significance of lifewide education is that learners' journeys of learning to belong can be recognised and validated. Such journeys happen over and over again during students' time at university. By honouring the different places and spaces that make up learners' lives we can help them recognise the important learning that emerges from the process of learning to belong. Chapter 6 gives further consideration to the where of learning through the examination of the life spaces/places that learners inhabit.

## Doing

The 'what', in Beard's model, is concerned with what people are doing or going to do through which learning will or might occur. Learning involves an active dimension: expressing and receiving information (e.g. symbolic/language) that is used to represent and communicate our world by various means such as reading, writing, drawing, building, playing, performing, enquiring, solving, listening and talking. Learning by doing is a central tenet of experiential learning, as signified in the Western interpretation of the popular Confucian aphorism *I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand*. In the real world outside formal education, we often say that learning by doing is the best form of learning, because by this act we can witness directly whether someone is capable of doing and achieving something. In the higher education learning context of 'doing', teachers seek to actively involve students in purposeful learning activities that might involve lectures, seminars and real or simulated experiences within or outside the university, involving practical work or concept building. Learning might involve a wider mathematical challenge or the solving of a significant problem, yet all such activities will nevertheless be part of a wider and longer multidimensional journey of learning within an educational design called a course or programme. This dimension of learning and development is thus referred to as the 'doing' dimension, and in higher education it involves a pedagogy that facilitates individual examination of the sequence, shape and form of the learning experiences to embrace complex conceptual areas such as constructing and deconstructing something, solving

abstract or concrete problems or engaging in purposeful enquiry and developing knowledge that is relevant to the task.

The significance of lifewide education is that the entirety of a person's life spaces and places for learning contains far more potential for 'doing' than only the formal educational spaces they inhabit. And the sort of doing that students do in some of their life spaces outside formal education is highly relevant to becoming who they want to be – for example, a particular sort of professional practising in a particular field. The significance of lifewide education is that it can embrace all of a learner's spaces and places for doing things, and encourage her to be more aware of what she is doing and of what she is learning in the process. By embracing lifewide education the promise is that learners can be encouraged to be more mindful of the freedoms and opportunities available to develop themselves in ways that they believe will enable them to become who they want to become.

### **Feeling**

The fourth dimension of learning concerns the emotions through which we perceive, interpret and emotionally respond to the stimuli from the external environment; we internalise the external learning experience. This is the 'feeling' dimension, concerning 'affect', a general term often used to include emotions, feelings and moods. The way we feel about an experience will have a strong impact on what we learn from it. Our feelings about a situation often emerge again as we recall the situation. Emotions are part of our social and cognitive self. They are pervasive, interwoven into facets of our inner and outer world. They are also linked to the roots of our identity. While emotional experiences and emotional intelligence underpin learning, many educators have only recently given more attention to emotional literacy, emotional intelligence and emotional competency (Goleman 1995; Mortiboys 2002). Our lives are always experienced as waves of differing emotions as the 'ups' and 'downs' of life. Different emotions, in size and frequency, create the essential rollercoaster form of the emotional self in student life (Beard *et al.* 2007). The role of positive emotions in learning seems to be a neglected area: we tend to focus on stress and fear and anxiety and deficit models of learning. Rarely is space provided to discuss and celebrate the pleasures associated with learning. While negative states can be destructive, they can also be positively harnessed. They can also be changed, and simply changing an emotional state from negative to positive can be the outcome of learning. Chapters 10 and 13 highlight the importance of this process in the context of students' immersive experiences.

Emotional blocks to learning can include fear and risk aversion, as well as the need for perfection and control. 'Reframing' emotions can alter the inner emotional scripts in our minds, helping us to access the positive potential in negative scenarios. Students who show anxiety before giving presentations can reframe their fear. Students who hold their hands up on white-knuckle rollercoaster rides do this to increase their feelings of fear: fear is fun! If a presentation in front of peers is seen as scary then it too can be reframed, in a similar vein. It can be seen as okay or even fun to 'feel the fear', the dry lips and shaky knees. Negative experiences have potential to be transformed, in the mind. Helping people to be conscious of their emotional experience can allow them to better manage and self-support their own learning. Helping learners to sense, surface and express both positive and negative feelings rather than deny or censor them requires skill and care. It enables the colour and richness of the feelings of learners to surface and be expressed and (re)considered. The significance of lifewide education is that because it embraces all of learners' life spaces, including those spaces where they have their white-knuckle rides, fall in and out of love and experience feelings of success and failure, it embraces the whole of their emotional experience as well. How they learn to cope with, manage and make the most of their emotional self can be acknowledged, recognised and valued.

### **Knowledge and knowing**

The fifth dimension of the model focuses on the scope and form of cognition (mind) and forms of knowing and knowledge. The significance of lifewide education lies in its potential to embrace all of learners' life spaces: their spaces for thinking, knowing, developing and using different forms of knowledge.

By talking of 'knowledge', rather than of 'knowledges' or 'knowings', we take, albeit implicitly, a stance on the basic metaphysical question, 'What is?'. By extension, our stance favours some epistemologies over others. The metaphysics are not trivial: if knowledge is plural, then intentions, curricula and pedagogies need to afford the development of knowledges; if we prefer to speak of 'knowings', we may be trying to suggest provisionality and situatedness, each of which implies rather different intentions, curricula and pedagogies than does 'knowledge'.

(Knight 2006:1)

How learners understand what knowledge is and the way they develop the knowledge and knowings necessary for being in the world is of fundamental importance as we plan our strategies to enable them to prepare for their future.

Questions of learner epistemology – such as *what is knowledge? how is it acquired? what do we know? how do we come to know what we know? how do we use our knowledges and ways of knowing to develop more knowledge?* – are of higher order significance than questions about pedagogy (the method and practice of teaching and support for learning), which should follow. But all too often, higher education takes a narrow view of what thinking, knowledge and knowing are. Disciplinary education tends to value codified and theoretical knowledge and its utilisation by learners in abstract problem solving. This is not to say that handling complex information in this way is not useful – far from it: it is an essential process for enabling learners to develop the cognitive maturity required to function effectively in a modern world. Cognitive maturity (Baxter Magolda 2004a:6-10) is characterised by the ability to reason and think critically and creatively, analyse situations and consider the range of perspectives necessary to make good decisions on how to act, and metacognitive and reflective capacity to create deeper meanings and enduring understandings. Cognitive maturity requires knowledge to be viewed as contextual recognising that multiple perspectives exist.

Contextual knowers construct knowledge claims internally, critically analysing external perspectives rather than adopting them uncritically. Increasing maturity in knowledge construction yields an internal belief system that guides thinking and behaviour yet is open to re-construction given relevant evidence. Cognitive outcomes such as intellectual power, reflective judgement, mature decision making and problem solving depend on these epistemological capacities.

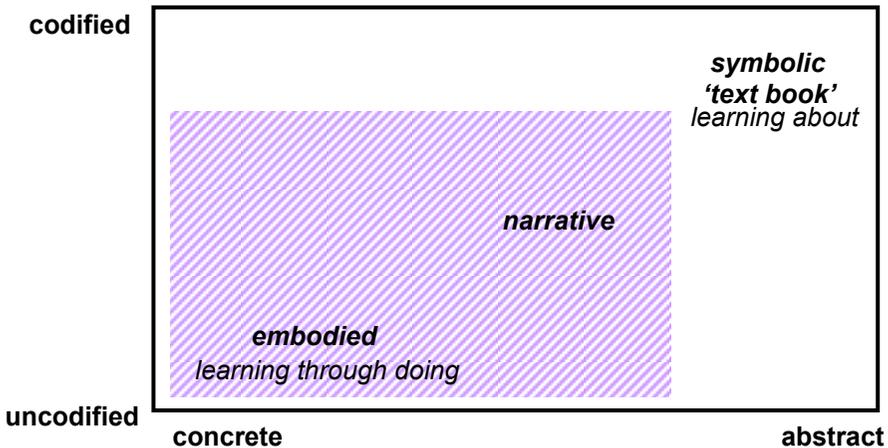
(Baxter Magolda 2004a:9)

By adopting a lifewide concept of higher education learners can engage with the rich complexity and messiness of the knowledges and knowings that they encounter in their everyday 'doings'. In other words in all the contexts that form their lives. They do this anyway and the central educational proposition of this book is that by encouraging and supporting them in this enterprise they will gain more benefit from and recognition for their own learning and development.

Boisot (1998) provides a useful conceptual aid for viewing these different sorts of knowledge (Figure 3.2). Using the two-by-two matrix of codified/abstract and uncoded/concrete knowledges he shows schematically the relationship between the knowledge that is embodied in everyday thinking and practices – our personalised working knowledge that we use to deal with situations – and

more abstract/symbolic and codified knowledge such as that which we find in books, reports and working papers.

**Figure 3.2** Conceptual framework for viewing knowledge. Adapted from Boisot (1998)



Our personal embodied knowledge mainly populates the shaded area. It has been created or co-created with others through our participation in the things we do and the extraction of meaning through our reflections on the situations we have encountered. It includes knowledge that we have gained from codified sources and from every other source (including what we have sensed and felt). Thomas and Seeley Brown (2009 2011) help us understand the nature of this embodiment.

*Homo Faber* no longer divorces knowledge from knowing, or explicit from tacit understanding. Instead, *Homo Faber* invites us to think about the ways in which the two are inherently connected and supplemental to one another. Through creating we come to understand and comprehend the world, not merely as a set of objects, artefacts, or creations, but as coherent entities which we come to dwell in and which we make sense of the “jointness” and interconnection of the parts that constitute the whole, both at the explicit level of the object itself and at the tacit level in terms of its social context and relations. It is this level of tacit knowledge, that which is known, embodied and most importantly *felt* that begins to constitute a basis for a new understanding of learning.

(Thomas and Seeley Brown 2009:8)

Narrative or storytelling provides a communication medium, often rich in metaphor, that links these two domains the embodied and codified knowledge domains. Bauman (1986) argues that oral narrative is constitutive of social life itself.

When one looks at the social practices by which social life is accomplished one finds – with surprising frequency – people telling stories to each other, as a means of giving cognitive and emotional coherence to experience; constructing and negotiating social identity; investing the experiential landscape with moral significance in a way that can be brought to bear on human behaviour; generating, interpreting and transforming the work experience; and a host of other reasons. Narrative here is not merely the reflection of human culture, or the external charter of social institutions, or the cognitive arena for sorting out the logic of cultural codes, but is constitutive of social life in the act of story telling.

(Bauman 1986:113–14)

It is to be expected that a lifewide concept of education will be rich in individuals' embodied knowledge and that the way such embodiments will be communicated is through the stories they tell about their experiences and the illustrations they give of their embodied practices. Michael Eraut has developed a rich conception of personal knowledge based on his observations of the knowledge people develop and use in work situations (2009, 2010a, 2011 and Chapter 12). This type of representation is also relevant for lifewide education.

I argue that personal knowledge incorporates all of the following:

- *Codified knowledge* in the form(s) in which the person uses it
- *Know-how* in the form of *skills and practices*
- *Personal understandings of people and situations*
- *Accumulated memories of cases and episodic events* (Eraut 2000, 2004)
- Other aspects of personal *expertise, practical wisdom and tacit knowledge*
- *Self-knowledge, attitudes, values and emotions.*

The evidence of personal knowledge comes mainly from observations of performance, and this implies a *holistic* rather than *fragmented* approach; because, unless one stops to deliberate, the knowledge one uses is already available in an *integrated form* and ready for action.

(Eraut 2010:2)

For lifewide education to have any meaning our educational practices must:

- value and respect these forms of knowledge and embodied knowing
- enable learners to represent their embodied learning and to communicate it through the telling of stories about their experiences and embodied practices
- and be able to recognise and value such learning within these experiences and embodied practices.

Thomas and Seeley Brown (2009) argue that the traditional model of learning in formal education, which is focused on codified knowledge has been grounded in the concept of *thinking and learning about* i.e. knowledge is something to be studied and accumulated. But the real world outside formal education is more concerned with *learning through doing* and putting the things we learn into action, often within the context of an epistemic community. They describe (Thomas and Seeley Brown 2011) the emergence of a *new culture of learning* and summarise the development and use of knowledge thus:

*Homo Sapiens*: '(hu)man as knower' is a fundamental statement about what it means to be human. It is also an ontological statement about learning. There are three senses in which learning happens in relation to change. The most basic sense is 'learning about' which corresponds to contexts in which information is stable. We learn about things which are stable and consistent and not likely to change over time. The second sense is 'learning to be,' which requires engagement with an epistemic community and provides a sense of enculturation in practices which allow one to participate and learn how to learn and even shape practices within that community. The third sense, which emerges out of a context of rapid and continual change, is a sense of *becoming*. This sense of learning is itself always in a state of flux, characterised by a sense of acting, participating, and knowing. This sense of knowing requires us to be reflectively aware and reflexively responsive to our learning and to the continuing changes we need to make in order to adapt.

(Thomas and Seeley Brown 2009:5)

*Homo Faber* : '(hu)man as maker)' no longer divorces knowledge from knowing, or explicit from tacit understanding. Instead, *Homo Faber* invites us to think about the ways in which the two are inherently connected and supplemental to one another. Through creating we come to understand and comprehend the world, not merely as a set of objects, artefacts, or creations, but as coherent entities which we come to dwell in.

[This] is more than simply making; it is making within a social context that values participation. It is akin to what Polanyi (1967, 1974) has described as “indwelling,” the process by which we begin to comprehend and understand something by connecting to it and, literally, living and dwelling in it. In that way, making also taps into the richness of becoming.....In fact, we may go so far as to say, there can be no sense of becoming, particularly as it relates to learning, without the dimension of....indwelling.

(Thomas and Seeley Brown 2009:7-8)

These are not just abstract ideas; they are the reality of learning, being and becoming in the real world outside formal education. Although people may not be able to articulate their understandings in these ways, they will come to realise these things in their own way, through their own experiences. It is, however, a moral responsibility of any education system that purports to help people prepare themselves for a lifetime of learning to help them develop and appreciate these perspectives in ways that make sense to themselves. The value of a lifewide concept of learning is in the opportunity it provides to encourage learners to see and experience knowledge and knowing in all its forms and to appreciate and value themselves as the developers and integrators of their own knowledge. Because it can embrace the social dimensions of a learner’s life, it can also enable learners to appreciate their role in the co-creation and validation of knowledge in the different parts of their lives. And because it embraces a rich conception of knowledge and learning, a lifewide conception of education can support the learning partnerships that enable these forms of learning and complex achievement to be validated.

### **Being and becoming**

The sixth dimension of Beard's holistic integrated model of learning concerns the ‘being-becoming’ dimension. Here we are dealing with the underlying psychoanalytic theories of identity which attempt to explore the inner self, and the influences that affect our ability and willingness to be and become a different person. Carl Rogers, drawing on his professional experience as a psychotherapist, has much to say about what it means to become a person: meanings that he believes can be applied to the process of becoming beyond the therapeutic context (Rogers, 1961:123).

the goal the individual most wishes to achieve, the end which he knowingly and unknowingly pursues, is to become himself.

When a person comes to me, troubled by his unique combination of difficulties, I have found it most worthwhile to try to create a relationship with him in which he is safe and free. It is my purpose to understand the way he feels in his own inner world, to accept him as he is, to create an atmosphere of freedom in which he can move in his thinking and feeling and being, in any direction he desires. It is my experience that he uses it to become more and more himself....

(Rogers, 1961:108-109)

According to Rogers the process of becoming involves the following processes:

- examining the various aspects of his own experience to recognise and face up to the deep contradictions he often discovers (ibid:109)
- the experiencing of feelings - the discovery of unknown elements of self (ibid 111)
- the discovery of self- in experience - to find the patterns, the underlying order, which exists in the ever changing flow of experience (ibid 114)

What Rogers' analysis of becoming reveals is the need to understand our inner self but it is easy to neglect or disown our inner self because it is hard to experience or describe. Gardner (1993), whose work challenged the old monolithic notion of a single intelligence quota (IQ), commented that the 'sense of self' placed most strain on his multiple intelligence theory: the self goes beyond intelligence. Cell (1984:9) remarked that: 'In learning to live with less self-awareness, we also diminish those distinctively human possibilities for freedom, creativity, caring, and ethical insight which are based on that awareness'. Cell devoted a whole chapter to 'Learning and the struggle to be'. He noted (ibid. 9) that: 'Our sense of worth becomes less and less tied to having approval from others and more and more grounded in knowing ourselves to be the creators of meaning and value.' The experience of learning should ideally intensify our sense of freedom and liberate our creative potential in order that we might usefully make a contribution to society.

According to Rogers (1961) what emerges from this process is a different person, one who is:

- more open to his experience - the individual is more openly aware of his own feelings and attitudes and more aware of reality as it exists outside of himself (ibid 115)
- more trusting of himself (ibid 118)

- more confident in his own choices, decisions and evaluative judgements - less and less does he look to others for approval or disapproval; for standards to live by; for decisions and choices (ibid 119)
- more content to be a process (for ongoing self-discovery) rather than a finished product

It means that a person is a fluid process, not a fixed and static entity; a flowing river of change, not a block of solid material; a continually changing constellation of potentialities, not a fixed quantity of traits.

(Rogers 1961:122).

Here then is the essence of becoming: an essence that is echoed over and over again in the narratives of students engaged in their lifewide learning experiences.

### **Holistic model of personal action**

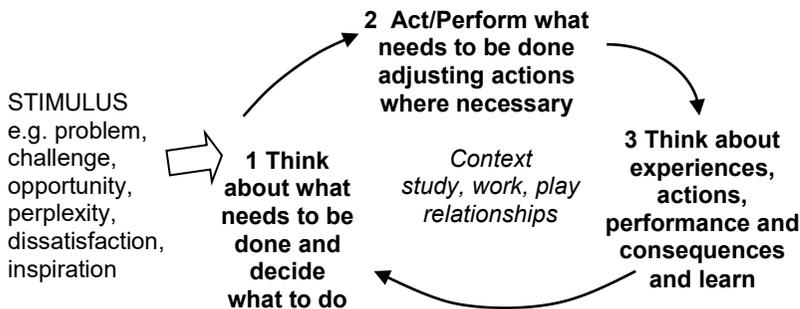
Beard's (2010) holistic model of learning helps us appreciate the dimensions of learning but they can only be realised through an individual's decisions and actions. It therefore makes sense to connect this holistic model of learning to a holistic model for personal decision making and action. The essence of this process is described by Stephen Covey.

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)

This process of creating and dealing with situations is fundamentally a process of self-regulation as described by Schunk and Zimmerman (1998) and Zimmerman (2000). Self-regulation can be represented as a continuous process involving forethought (planning and decision making), action/performance and self-reflection on action/performance (Figure 3.3). Concepts of self-regulation developed through empirical studies of students engaged in learning can be directly related to the processes through which professionals develop knowledge and learn through work (see Chapter 12). The dispositions and capability for self-regulation are integral to the concept of being an effective learner and to the concept of lifewide learning and education. In the UK Personal Development Planning (PDP) has been introduced to encourage the systematic development of practice (QAA 2000). The dimensions of PDP can be related to the construct of self-regulation (Jackson, 2010a).

**Figure 3.3** Capability modelled as a process of self-regulation. Based on Zimmerman (2000:26)



The model of self-regulated learning provides a scientific explanation of the processes that underlie the actions through which learning and personal development occur. The integrated model of self-regulation (Figure 3.3) has three components.

### Forethought

People don't engage in tasks or set goals and plan and work strategically if they are not motivated by strong personal agency. In particular, self-efficacy (personal beliefs about having the means to learn or perform effectively) and outcome expectations (personal beliefs that the outcomes will be worthwhile) are key features of personal agency.

This is where decisions are made to engage with a situation. Where they are assessed, ideas are born and decisions are made about how to approach and work with a particular situation. Ideas on how to tackle a situation may be born from rational or intuitive thought processes. The more analytical/rational brain analyses tasks, sets goals and develops strategies. The intuitive brain may provide an idea or insight to a way of thinking about a problem. What is planned is influenced by contexts, self-efficacy, expectation of immediate and longer-term outcomes, levels of intrinsic interest and goal orientation (e.g. learning for assessment or mastery of a process or skill). For example, for some people the opportunity to be creative is a major stimulus and source of energy and motivation to thinking and subsequent actions. The way they will experience the situation and the potential for learning in the situation will be strongly influenced by this orientation to thinking and doing.

It is important to have knowledge that is relevant to the job in hand. In a new situation we often lack the knowledge we need to solve a problem or meet a challenge so knowing how to acquire knowledge or seek help are important aspects of dealing with a situation. The ability and motivation to be curious, to problematise and to imagine/find and explore perceived problems through questioning are important features of creative thinking at this stage. Asking the right questions and not being afraid to ask questions is essential. So is 'seeing' the potential of situations to provide many possible right answers. The ability to generate ideas (generative thinking) and to critically evaluate ideas to distinguish those that are most useful and motivating is important. This way of thinking draws on memory of past experience and also imagination stimulated by things outside of our own experiences. It is a creative as well as an analytical process.

### **Action and performance**

In the process of acting on our thinking we are integrating our knowledge and applying it within a situation and creating our knowing: knowing that is relevant to the particular situation, and also more generally which might we utilise in future situations. This knowing relates to the holistic model of learning proposed by Beard (2010) and described earlier in this chapter. The doing (acting and performing) part of the self-regulation model distinguishes many sub-processes e.g. notions of self-instruction, help-seeking and using the environment to create resources for learning. These are all crucial to dealing with situations. 'Doing' is the process of engaging with emergent problems in real time, the structuring of the environment to create resources for learning, the adaptation and transfer of ideas to new contexts, the use of a repertoire of communication and inter- and intra-personal skills to achieve a goal, the juggling and prioritising of numerous tasks and the nurturing of relationships are all manifestations of the integrated actions we employ. These things all rely on self-efficacy and personal motivation to sustain them. We must also be aware of the consequences of our actions and adjust them if necessary.

### **Reflection and meaning making**

The third element of the self-regulation model relates to the thinking we do after an event, after we have performed. This process allows us to stand back, to see the bigger picture and make more sense of what happened than when we were implementing our actions. Comparing our own performance and attributing causal significance to results requires evaluation against criteria, standards or previous performance - what is good/poor performance attributed to?

### **Value of the self-regulatory model of being and becoming**

The self-regulatory model provides a comprehensive explanation for our being in the world. By integrating prospective and retrospective thinking processes with our actions and experiences it engages with our becoming. The strength of the model is in its ability to integrate our critical (analytical) and creative (imaginative and intuitive) cognitive process, our emotional, sensorial and physical worlds. Emotions like *anger* (resentment, annoyance, hostility and even outrage), *sadness* (dejection/depression, flatness, energyless, loneliness), *fear* (anxiety, misgiving, apprehension) and *enjoyment* (contentment, satisfaction, pride and even pleasure) are all part and parcel of our engagement in the situations that make up our lives. How we feel about or sense something has a major effect on whether we want to pursue something or abandon it. The interplay of emotions, beliefs, actions and contexts is complex and unpredictable but we need to be conscious of them as they will impact on our decision making processes. The roots of self-efficacy, our senses of personal and professional satisfaction with what we have done and our willingness to adapt and become a different person, lie in these attitudes of mind. The model of self-regulation acknowledges all of these things and helps us see how we engage in situations and learn from and through our experiences of 'doing'.

### **Self-regulation in an unpredictable changing world**

We might usefully add one further dimension to this explanation of how a person is actively engaged in learning and developing themselves through their self-determined life experiences. The model of the autodidactic (self-instructed) learner (Tremblay, 2000) incorporates the self-regulating model of learning but sets it in a context of emergence (Figure 3.4).

An autodidactic process is heuristic, iterative and contextual. Situations may be orchestrated but they might equally be conditions of coincidence. An individual's learning project does not develop in a linear way and the actions necessary for the realisation of a task are not presented in a sequential and predictable manner. Knowledge and knowing emerge through action. The process is a continuous experiment in which action and reflection share the same space. Theory (self-theory) develops from action and the knowing that emerges through action. This is an appropriate conception of the way that people approach learning as a sustained experiment in which action and reflection on action and the shaping of future actions share the same space. Autodidactic learners are dependent on the resources for learning that are available in their immediate environment and learning projects are shaped through taking this into account. Autodidactic learners often do not plan to use particular resources

but see and exploit opportunities as they arise; they seize every opportunity that chance offers them to learn.

**Figure 3.4** The autodidactic model of learning (Tremblay 2000)

- The process develops without prior condition
- Knowledge emerges through action and the individual is open to recognising and exploiting its value
- The individual works with the process heuristically



- The individual creates her own rules and vocabulary for learning
- The individual is strongly self-regulating
- The individual and the environment are reciprocal determinants
- The individual gains knowledge through a complex, diversified and expanding web of resources

It might be argued that the ultimate objective of lifewide education is to support learners as they develop and implement the dispositions, qualities and capabilities that enable them to be self-regulating/ autodidactic learners. This conception of people engaging in learning is quite different from conceptions of learners and learning held by most HE teachers yet, if they pause to reflect, it is the world that they themselves inhabit and the concept of behaviour and learning that most closely approximates their own professional life.

### **Value of a lifewide education**

Who we are and who we become is the result of our being (of being and becoming ourselves) in all the spaces and places we choose to inhabit or are chosen for us engaging with all the dimensions of learning that are considered in Beard's holistic model of learning (Figure 3.1). The value of a lifewide concept of education is in its capacity to embrace and celebrate this richer and more holistic view of learning and personal development than has traditionally been the case in higher education. By embracing the holistic model for a self-

regulating/autodidactic learner (Figures 3.3 and 3.4) we can appreciate the complexity of our thinking and actions when we engage with situations and see how the holistic model of learning advocated in this chapter is a necessary part of this complexity.

By helping learners to become more aware of their being in the world, we have the potential for them to gain deeper understandings of how the parts of their lives connect and how the development they gain from these different experiences is integrated to enable them to become who they want to become. This second year student shows us that she has learnt this valuable lesson while she was studying for her law degree and holding down a fulltime job! Implicit in what she is saying is that by drawing from her lifewide experiences of learning and development she is becoming the person (the barrister) that she would like to be.

When I first started, I saw the separate sections of my life – my study, my work, my social life and my personal life – when in fact they are not separate. They are an integrated and connected whole. By taking elements of each of these areas, I can get somewhere near that formula that is going to get me a great pupillage and a tenancy.

Becoming different by being willing and able to adapt and change, is a necessity in a world that is full of both evolutionary and radical, often disruptive, change. There are particular points in our lives where this process dominates our being. These points are the transition points where we move from situations and environments with which are familiar into territories that are unfamiliar for example, leaving school and home and going to university or college, and starting a job. These life-changing experiences engage us physically, intellectually and emotionally and they require us to learn and develop in a holistic way. They are particularly important as people make the transition from youth to adulthood.

there is so much to be learned..... academically, emotionally, socially, societally and most of all in terms of identity  
(Illeris 2009:404).

The significance of a lifewide concept of education is that we can utilise the educational value in becoming a different person embedded in the life-changing event that involves leaving home, going to university or college and learning to live more independently. Chapter 10 reveals that immersive experiences that

students consider to be transformative, occur throughout and across their life course. The promise of a lifewide education is that transformative experiences that shape our lives provide a source of deep personal meaning making.

The work of Carl Rogers (1961) reveals the detail in the significant process of becoming a different person. A lifewide concept of education enables people to examine the various aspects of their own experience to recognise and appreciate the opportunities they have to learn and develop, resolve contradictions, experience feelings, discover unknown elements of themselves and create more meaningful lives.

Closely, allied to the above is the fact that an individual's lifewide experiences require them to learn holistically and integratively as they grapple with the opportunities, uncertainties and risks that emerge through the things they do everyday of their life. This set of conditions provides an ideal and natural context for the development of cognitive maturity - the ability to think with sufficient complexity to deal with complex indeterminate situations - and what Baxter Magolda (2004a&b, 2009) calls becoming authors of our lives. Baxter Magolda (1999, 2001, 2004, 2009) demonstrates the importance of developing students' conceptions of knowledge, and their understanding of their own and others' role in its co-creation and utilisation and how such conceptions shape an individual's identity and sense of being in the world.

Despite diversity across contexts, environments that promoted self-authorship consistently operated on three key assumptions ... Learners were exposed to epistemological, intrapersonal and interpersonal complexity via three assumptions. First, these environments conveyed *knowledge as complex and socially constructed* ... [this way of thinking] gave rise to the second assumption – that *self is central to knowledge construction*. Encouragement to define themselves and bring this to their way of learning, work and relationships emphasised the intrapersonal growth, the internal sense of self, needed for self-authorship. The third assumption evident in these environments was that *authority and expertise were shared in the mutual construction of knowledge among peers* ... These three assumptions were closely linked in environments that promote self-authorship.

(Baxter Magolda 2004:41–2)

Adopting a lifewide concept of education enables us to take advantage of the full range of opportunities that students have for developing epistemological,

intrapersonal and interpersonal complexity, a theme which Marcia Baxter Magolda addresses in Chapter 5.

**Endnotes**

- 1 Willimon and Naylor (1995)