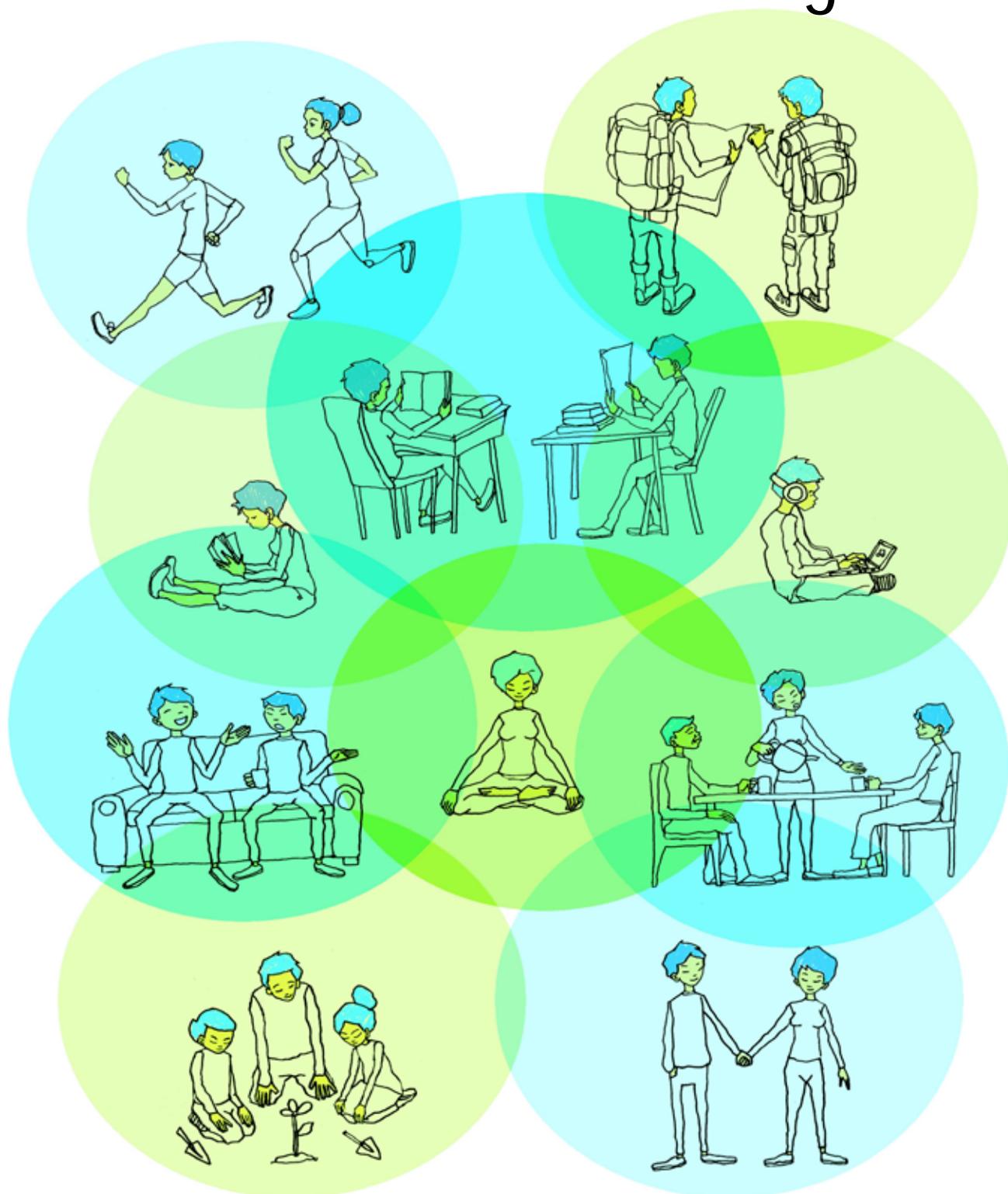


# Lifewide Learning & Education in Universities and Colleges



Edited by  
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# CHAPTER A1

## Lifewide Learning and Education in Universities & Colleges: Concepts and Conceptual Aids

*Norman J Jackson*

### SUMMARY

This chapter provides an introduction to the Lifewide Learning and Education in Universities and Colleges E-Book. It begins with a short commentary on the idea of lifewide learning and the core educational concepts underlying the idea. The value of an ecological perspective and relationship between lifewide learning and open education are also considered. Drawing on the contributions to the e-book, the chapter describes the characteristics and variations between different institutional approaches and provides some simple conceptual aids to enabling differences to be appreciated. Support for lifewide learning and development has grown rapidly in UK HE in the last few years. The speed of growth and diversity of approaches used by higher education institutions to recognise students' development and achievement beyond the academic curriculum appears to be unique to the UK suggesting that particular educational, economic and political reasons are causing this change. We might speculate that current developments in supporting lifewide learning in universities and colleges are developing learners in ways that will assist them in participating in open forms of learning in the future and build capacities for evaluating their own learning needs, designing and implementing their own pathways for development, and reflecting on the progress they are making. In short, UK HE is orienting itself towards a future where learning is lifelong, lifewide and open (Redecker 2014).

### BIOGRAPHY



Norman Jackson is Director of the Lifewide Education Community which he founded in 2011. Between 2005-11 he was Director of the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTrE) which developed and applied the idea of lifewide learning and education at the University of Surrey through the Surrey Lifewide Learning Award. The experiences and learning gained convinced him of the value and significance of a lifewide approach to learning and development in education. He is the commissioning editor for the

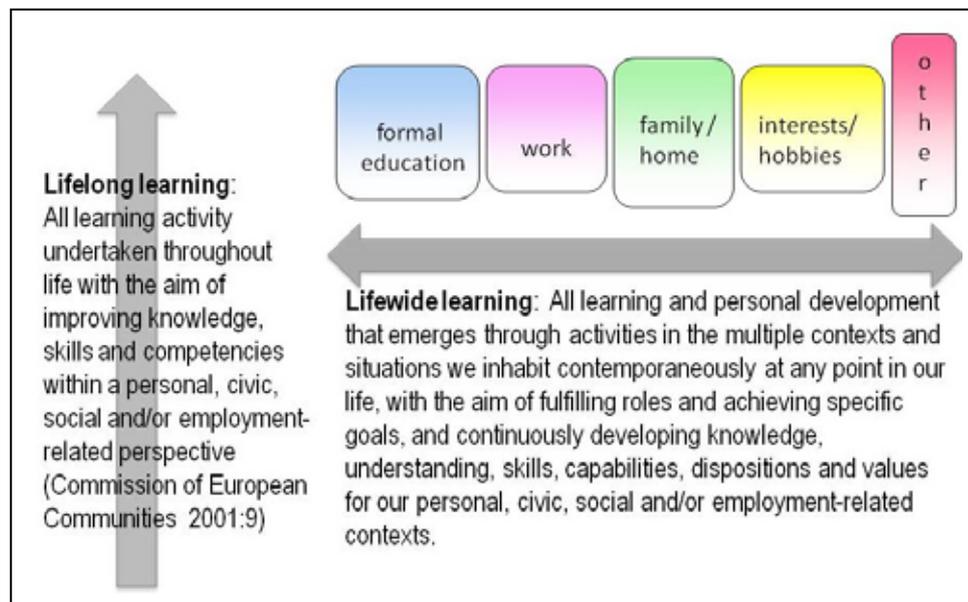
Lifewide Education in Universities and Colleges e-Book and has written/edited six other books.

## THE CONCEPT OF LEFWIDE

The purpose of this e-book is to recognise and celebrate the many different ways in which universities and colleges are providing their learners with opportunities for a more complete education by encouraging, supporting and recognising learning, personal development and achievements gained outside as well as inside the academic curriculum. We are using the terms lifewide education and lifewide learning and development to signify this more complete form of education that embraces the academic, co- and extra-curricular opportunities for learning and development (Jackson 2011, Barnett 2011).

Everyone who works in higher education is familiar with the concept of 'lifelongness', the journey we make through the sequential stages of our life beginning as a baby, progressing through childhood, teens to adulthood, middle and old age and eventually death. Viewed at this scale, for most people, formal education occupies only a relatively small part of their lifelong learning activity. The vast majority of their lifespan pre- and post school, college and university, is conducted in the domain of informal experiential learning and personal development (Banks et al 2007:9). This fact is something that until the present decade higher education has tended to ignore. It is ironic that one of the most important things higher education can do to prepare adult learners for learning in the rest of their lives is to pay greater attention to the informal dimension of their learning lives while they are involved in formal study in higher education. By equipping them with tools that enhance their self-awareness, by encouraging attitudes that view life experiences as opportunities for learning and development and by valuing and recognising learning and development gained through life experience, universities and colleges can greatly enhance individuals' preparedness for learning through the rest of their life.

**Figure 1** Lifelong and lifewide learning



## Lifewide gives everyday meaning to lifelong

'Lifewideness' adds value to 'lifelongness' by recognising 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 and or caring for others, 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 parallel spaces so the *timeframes* of our lifelong journey and the multiple *spaces and timeframes* of day to day existence across our lives intermingle and accumulate and who we are and who we are becoming are the consequences of this intermingling.

We are fortunate in the UK that most of us have the freedom to choose the spaces we want to inhabit and how we want to inhabit them. 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, create or miss opportunities, and aspire to live and achieve our purposes and our ambitions. It is in these spaces that we create the meaning that is our life.

The important characteristic of lifewide learning is that it embraces a comprehensive understanding and practice of learning, development, knowledge and knowing and achievement. Lifewide learning includes all types of learning - learning that is developed in formal educational environments which is directed or self managed, learning that is intentional or unintended, learning that is driven by our interests and its intrinsic value, as well as our needs, and learning which just emerges during the course of our daily activity. To be a competent lifewide learner requires not only the ability to recognise and take advantage of opportunities and the will and capability to get involved, it also requires self-awareness derived from consciously thinking about and extracting meaning and significance from the experiences that populate our lives. It is the understanding of what it means to be a lifewide learner that individuals use in future imaginings, decision making and activity and it is this consciousness that lifewide education seeks to develop: what Rogers calls learner conscious learning but within task or experience-oriented learning situations.

## A more complete education

Lifewide education embraces and recognises these forms of learning, development and achievement. It holds the promise for a more complete and holistic form of education in which people combine and integrate their learning (both formal and informal), their personal or professional development and their achievements. Every day of our life we experience a continuous stream of situations that intermingle in ways that only make sense to us, and sometimes only make sense when we look back on them. If we view our life as an unfolding story then we can 'author' our lives by choosing the experiences in which we want to participate and declining other opportunities, but also consciously determining the nature of our involvement in those experiences using criteria which we have developed through our own experiences (Baxter Magolda 1999, 2001, 2009, 2011). This also applies to situations that are not of our making.

## Pathway to a self-authored life

Despite considerable consensus on the desired outcomes of higher education, insufficient attention has been given to the cognitive, identity, and relational capacities that underlie learners' ability to achieve the most complex outcomes - particularly those requiring complex achievements in real world social contexts. How learners view knowledge, themselves, and their social relationships mediates how they decide what to believe, who to become, and how to relate to and achieve in the world around them.

Encouraging, supporting and recognizing lifewide learning in higher education is crucial because of the central role that personal development plays in learning. Learning is often misconstrued as limited to cognitive functions and the acquisition of knowledge, and thus the classroom. Yet we know, from an extensive body of research on human development and learning, that one's sense of self and social relations are key factors in how one comes to know (Baxter Magolda 2014).

Self-authorship, or the capacity to internally coordinate external influence to define beliefs, identity and social relations, is the developmental capacity necessary for critical thinking, intercultural maturity, effective leadership, and good citizenship (Baxter Magolda 2009). Dissolving the boundaries between learning and development and among the cognitive, identity and relational dimensions of development is crucial to promote the kind of complex learning outcomes required by 21<sup>st</sup> century life.

My longitudinal participants' stories support the notion that learning is a lifelong and lifewide project. Their journeys toward self-authorship took place in classrooms, co-curricular settings, community involvement, employment and in their personal and professional relationships. Growth that occurred in these spaces influenced growth in other spaces. The journeys also illustrate that growth in the epistemological, intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions is intertwined. This holistic view of learning and development in all of an individual's life spaces resonates with the lifewide concept (Baxter Magolda 2011:98).

Through this process we enact who we are and gradually become who we want to be. The simple truth is that our life is predominantly made up of this form of self-authorship and day to day micro-development. This is the way we actualise ourselves through the lives we choose to lead. While many of the contributions to this e-book are conceptually framed in terms of the development of skills, capability, attitudes and values for employment, the strategies that are being implemented by universities achieve significantly more than this in that they are promoting this greater sense of understanding and awareness of the importance of learning and developing through the opportunities afforded by life.

## ORIGINS OF LIFEWIDE LEARNING IDEA

The concept of 'lifewideness' in learning and education is not a new idea (Jackson 2012). Like all educational movements that are based on experiential learning, the idea can be traced back to the thinking of John Dewey. In the 1920s and 30s Dewey was critical of the

authoritarian, strict, pre-ordained content-based approach of traditional education which he believed was too concerned with delivering knowledge and not concerned enough with understanding students' actual experiences of learning. Dewey (1938) argued that to provide education that was effective in preparing people for life we must relate education much more closely to life. He argued that before educators designed educational experiences they must first understand the nature of human experience. Such experiences he maintained arose from the interaction of two principles - continuity and interaction. *Continuity* recognises that each experience a person has will influence his/her future life for better or for worse, while *interaction* refers to the situational influence on one's experience. In other words, one's present experience is a function of the interaction between one's past experiences and the present situation. The value of the experience must be judged by the effect that experience has on the individual's present, their future, and the extent to which the individual is able to contribute to society. Armed with this theory of the role of experience in learning, educators could set about organising subject matter in a way that took account of students' past experiences and provided them with new experiences to stimulate their development. We can see in these ideas the philosophical underpinning for lifewide learning and education.

Dewey influenced many educators and in the 1920s and 30s one educator in particular, Eduard Lindeman, did much to put his ideas into practice. His inspiring vision for an all embracing form of education set out in 'The Meaning of Adult Education' (Lindeman 1926, see also Smith 2004) was not bound by classrooms and formal curricula. Rather it involved a concern for the educational possibilities of everyday life; non-vocational ideals; situations not subjects; and people's experiences.

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. Consequently all static concepts of education which relegate the learning process to the period of youth are abandoned. The whole of life is learning, therefore education can have no endings. This new venture is called *adult education* not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity, defines its limits...

Secondly, education conceived as a process coterminous with life revolves about *non-vocational* ideals. In this world of specialists everyone will of necessity learn to do his work, and if education of any variety can assist in this and in the further end of helping the worker to see the meaning of his labor, it will be education of a high order. But adult education more accurately defined begins where vocational education leaves off. Its purpose is to put meaning into the whole of life.

Thirdly, the approach to adult education will be via the route of *situations*, not subjects. Our academic system has grown in reverse order; subjects and teachers constitute the starting-point, students are secondary. In conventional education the student is required to adjust himself to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the student's needs and interests. Every adult person finds himself in specific situations with respect to his work, his recreation, his family-life, his community-life et cetera - situations which call for adjustments. Adult education begins at this point. Subject matter is brought into the situation, is put to work, when needed. Texts and teachers play a new and secondary role in this type of education; they must give way to the primary

importance of the learner... The situation-approach to education means that the learning process is at the outset given a setting of reality. Intelligence performs its functions in relation to actualities, not abstractions.

In the fourth place, the resource of highest value in adult education is the *learner's experience*. If education is life, then life is also education. Too much of learning consists of vicarious substitution of someone else's experience and knowledge. Psychology is teaching us, however, that we learn what we do, and that therefore all genuine education will keep doing and thinking together.

Many of Lindeman's ideas and beliefs are as relevant today as they were in the rapidly changing world of the 1920s, and they provide foundation principles for contemporary views of lifewide and lifelong learning and education.

The first explicit use and elaboration of the term 'lifewide learning' was by Jost Reischmann in 1986 to represent the full scope of adult learning and development.

it seems important to me to point out, that "adult learning" and "lifelong learning" not only include intentional learning; it includes as well unintentional, hidden, small scale, incidental learning (see Figure 1). To make aware of this wide "universe", the whole life embracing understanding of the learning of adults I will use the expression "lifewide learning" (Reischmann 1986:3).

Reischmann's view of adult lifewide learning was comprehensive and it provides the foundation for contemporary concepts of lifewide learning and development.

all adults already have a universe of knowledge and strategies at their disposal that enables them to live their lives in a complex and changing world. No matter which field we take under consideration - profession, family, leisure, time, political, cultural, social behaviour, valuing - we will find wide fields of knowledge, abilities, attitudes that are available and clearly do not come from any form of outside organized education (Reischmann 1986:1).

His notion of lifewide learning included *intentional learning* both outside and self-directed and '*learning en passant*'. He recognised the incidental nature of much of adult learning and coined the term learning 'en passant' (learning in passing) to describe this type of learning and described its general characteristics in the following terms.

this learning is low compulsory and highly individualized: it can happen - or not, and different people learn different things from the same situation. This type of learning cannot be produced in advance; there is nothing like a prepared curriculum; it only can be identified by looking back. Often this learning is holistic; it includes not only knowledge, but also reality-handling, emotions, valuing. By being integrated into reasonable activities it is meaningful and useful in itself, which means that it is not only stored for later use. It is successful without much effort (with increasing explicit effort we move over by definition to self-directed or formal learning). It uses a wide variety of support (people, media, objects, institutions), educationally prepared as well as natural. Often it uses and continues and reactivates and builds on previous learning.

The level of threat, stress, and frustration is mostly low, or even a feeling of success, interest, thrill can be observed. This learning teaches answers as well as it opens questions when incorporating it into the set of experiences the person already has. All these situations can be used as a basis for further learning. And they can be a starting point for intentional learning (Reischmann, 1986:2).

In responding to criticisms that he had created unnatural boundaries between what he called 'fields of lifewide learning', Reischmann (2004, 2011) added the concept of 'compositional learning', whereby people compose their learning by bringing their knowledge together from different sources and connecting, combining and integrating it in ways that are meaningful to them.

in addition to "learning en passant" I use today the phrase "compositional learning" to make aware that learners themselves compose many sources together when going through a learning experience: Reading books, talking to friends, watching television, exchanging with experts in hardware shops or pharmacies, starting trial and error, participating in the local adult education offerings, google, talk to their children ... (Comment added to 1986 paper in 2004, Reischmann, 1986:7).

These ideas grown in the world of adult education began to impact on the world of schools, colleges and universities in the last ten years. For example, in developing the concepts for learning in and out of school Banks et al (2007) utilised the concept of lifewide learning as one of three broad categories of learning through life (Table 1).

**Table 1** Summary of characteristics of lifelong, lifewide and lifedeeep learning (Banks et al 2007:13)

#### LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Language and interactional strategies that determine orientations toward engaging one's body and mind in learning. This learning begins in our earliest experiences of play, physical activity, and opportunities to plan and carry out ideas and work projects alone and with others. This learning shapes our foundation for curiosity, eagerness, communication, and persistence in continuing to learn and to keep on learning.

#### LIFE-WIDE LEARNING

Experience in management of ourselves and others, of time and space, and of unexpected circumstances, turns of events, and crises. This learning brings skill and attitudinal frames for adaptation. Here we figure out how to adapt, to transport knowledge and skills gained in one situation to another, and to transform direct experience into strategies and tactics for future use.

#### LIFE-DEEP LEARNING

Beliefs, values, ideologies, and orientations to life. Life-deep learning scaffolds all our ways of approaching challenges and undergoing change. Religious, moral, ethical, and social learning bring life-deep learning that enables us to guide our actions, judge ourselves and others, and express to ourselves and others how we feel and what we believe.

## Lifewide in educational policy

The lifewide learning concept began to emerge as a serious idea in the policy world over a decade after Reischmann (1986) had defined its meaning. A report by the Swedish National

Agency for Education (Skolverket 2000) described the relationship between lifelong and lifewide learning in these terms.

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. (Skolverket 2000:18)

The idea was picked up by economists concerned with measuring value in lifelong learning. Richard 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' (ie 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 based 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.

We are now educating young people who will become the citizens and workers in the first half of the 21st century - a student graduating from university today might still be working in 2060. The historical perspectives above chart the progress of thinking about learning in a modern world. The speed and emergent nature of change in the modern world makes it difficult to anticipate the future but we need to have a vision if we are to design policies and strategies that will be effective in achieving the vision. In 2010 the EU commissioned a Foresight study drawing on leading thinkers in the world of education and informal learning. The report of this study, 'The Future of Learning: Preparing for Change' (Redecker et al 2011) incorporated the concept of lifewide learning into its central learning paradigm.

*The future of learning* : The overall vision is that personalisation, collaboration and informalisation (informal learning) will be at the core of learning in the future. These terms are not new in education and training but they will become the central guiding principle for

organising learning and teaching. The central learning paradigm is thus characterised by lifelong and lifewide learning and shaped by the ubiquity of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). At the same time, due to fast advances in technology and structural changes to European labour markets related to demographic change, globalisation and immigration, generic and transversal skills are becoming more important. These skills should help citizens to become lifelong learners who flexibly respond to change, are able to pro-actively develop their competences and thrive in collaborative learning and working environments.

It would appear that there has been a shift in the policy world from the idea that lifewide learning is implicit within the lifelong learning paradigm to seeing it as an explicit dimension, worthy of consideration and implementation in its own right.

## LIFEWIDE LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN UK HE

As will be seen in the contributions to this book, many universities and colleges have explicitly embraced the idea and practice of lifewide learning and development without using these terms in their concepts and descriptions of what they are doing. The first explicit use of the lifewide concept in UK HE was in 2008 when Jackson began to develop and apply the concepts of lifewide learning at the University of Surrey. Later Barnett (2011) introduced the concept of lifewide education to describe an educational approach adopted by an institution when it explicitly supported and recognised students' lifewide development and drawing attention to the potentially transformative nature of the concept. Jackson (ibid) describes this transformative potential in these terms.

When designing educational experiences curriculum designers usually begin with *their* purposes and the outcomes *they* want to promote, and then *they* think about the content, and process, and create and organise resources to support learning. *They* decide what counts as learning, and finally *they* evaluate the standards and quality of learning, as demonstrated through one or more assessment methods and tools that *they* have designed, guided by criteria *they* create to assist them in making judgements. This is the way teachers generally do things in higher education.

[But] what if we were to begin with the learner and his 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. (Jackson 2011:115)

This way of thinking resulted in the concept of a lifewide curriculum (Jackson 2011b) to embrace an educational design that seeks to empower and enable a learner to integrate their learning from any aspect of their life into their higher education experience.

the challenge [is] how to design a curriculum that enables learners to integrate their life experiences into their learning and developmental process to prepare themselves for the complexity and uncertainty of their future lives. Such a curriculum shifts the focus from a

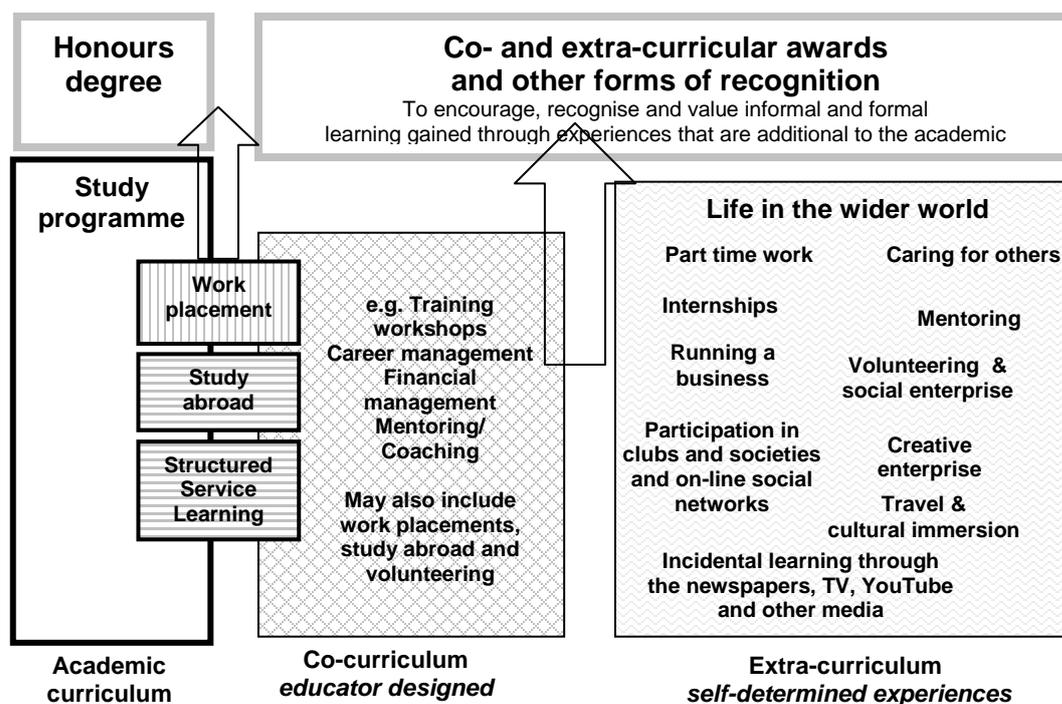
'skills, standards and outcomes model of curriculum [to] a reflexive, collective, developmental and process oriented model' (Barnett and Coate 2005:18). It focuses attention on the importance of developing capability, dispositions, knowledge, qualities and confidence for acting in the continuous stream of situations that make up learners lives ... and it shows them that higher education values the choices they are making about how they are choosing to live their lives. In framing the curriculum in this way we are championing the idea that capability is 'essentially one of freedom - the range of options a person has in deciding what kind of life to lead' (Dreze and Sen 1995:11). In revealing his lifewide curriculum a learner is choosing to reveal the life he has chosen to lead: he is revealing how he is authoring his life. (Jackson 2011b:113)

The concrete expression of a lifewide curriculum as depicted in Figure 2 contains three different curricular domains:

1. academic curriculum, which may by design integrate real-world work or community-based experiences;
2. co-curriculum: experiences provided by the university that may or may not be credit-bearing and for which learners may or may not receive formal recognition;
3. extra-curriculum: experiences that are determined by the learners themselves and constitute all the spaces that they inhabit outside of 1 and 2 above.

The distinction between co- and extra-curricular has been deliberately blurred in some universities as experiences that would be considered to be extra-curricular in Figure 2 have been incorporated into the co-curriculum. But regardless of the way institutions define their curricular domains this book is primarily concerned with the co-curricular and extra-curricular domains of student experience and achievement and the ways in which student learning and development is being supported and recognised in these domains.

**Figure 2** Lifewide curriculum map adapted from Jackson 2011b:116)



In their recent survey of institutional schemes Barnes and Burchell (2014) reveal the range of co- and extra-curricular experiences current schemes include (Table 2). While collectively it is clear that such schemes embrace a wide range of experience and activities it is also clear that many schemes do not recognise learning from potentially important domains of students' experiences.

**Table 2** Range of experiences/activities/achievements included in co- and extra-curricular award schemes (based on 68 responses - Barnes and Burchell (2014))

	Responses (n=68)
Volunteering	61
Work experience	49
Placements/Internships	44
Enterprise	49
Career Management Activity	46
Languages	30
Engagement in Student Groups & Societies	55
Participation in sport	39
Community engagement	56
Mentoring	49
Intercultural/international activity	36
Student representation	58
Music	34

## Characteristics of support and recognition

Institutional schemes to encourage, support and recognise student development through their experiences outside the formal curriculum have developed in a highly situated way so it is not surprisingly that there is great variability in their characteristics. Variations occur in:

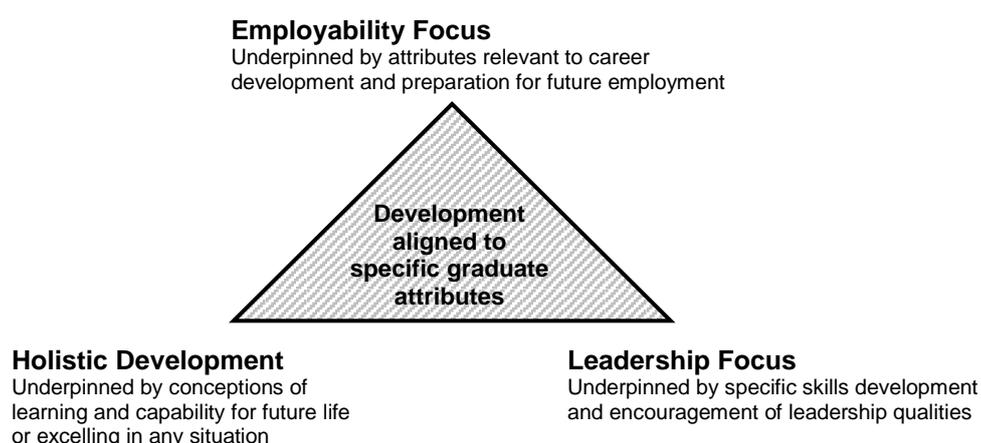
- their purpose and focus - personal development, professional development, employability skills, lifewide learning
- the qualities and attributes they choose to encourage in development - education, employability, leadership, transferable skills, abilities to adapt and excel
- expectations in the level of student commitment (time and effort involved) in order to achieve an award
- their inclusion criteria - who is included or not included
- scale and level of participation within the student population
- whether students opt in or opt out of the scheme
- types of experiences that qualify for the award - some are more limited than others
- whether the focus is co-curriculum, extra-curriculum or a combination
- whether there are specialist routes or pathways
- whether there are different levels of performance
- how they are assessed, by whom and the criteria used
- how learning is demonstrated - the extent to which critical reflection is encouraged or valued
- recognition: points, academic or general credit, certificates, badges, awards
- how they are organised and who organises and coordinates them
- how they are resourced and who is responsible for managing the scheme

- extent of staff involvement - academic staff, personal tutors, central service staff
- level and types of employer involvement - including sponsorships and endorsements
- extent to which the scheme is an explicit part of the university's concept of the student experience
- how schemes are presented and marketed to students
- how awards are made on completion
- whether such awards feature in transcripts
- the degree to which the institution's Students' Union is involved
- the degree to which devolved customisation is permitted within a scheme
- the extent to which awards are connected to an institution's student achievement transcripts and/or Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

There is strength in such diversity in so far as schemes can be tailor made to align with institutional needs and strategic goals. But such diversity also makes it more challenging to share understandings and practices between institutional schemes, because different schemes are trying to support different things. One of the purposes of this book is to enable the people who are involved in these schemes to share their contexts and purposes as well as their practices.

Institutional schemes to support and recognise students' lifewide development appear to be framed in one of three main orientations (Figure 3) according to whether the approach emphasises: 1) whole-person development 2) development for employability or 3) leadership qualities. Schemes are usually underpinned by statements of attributes - qualities, skills, capabilities, values and dispositions that are deemed to be appropriate and relevant which act as prompts for reflection, evidence gathering and the evaluation of achievement and fulfilment of requirements.

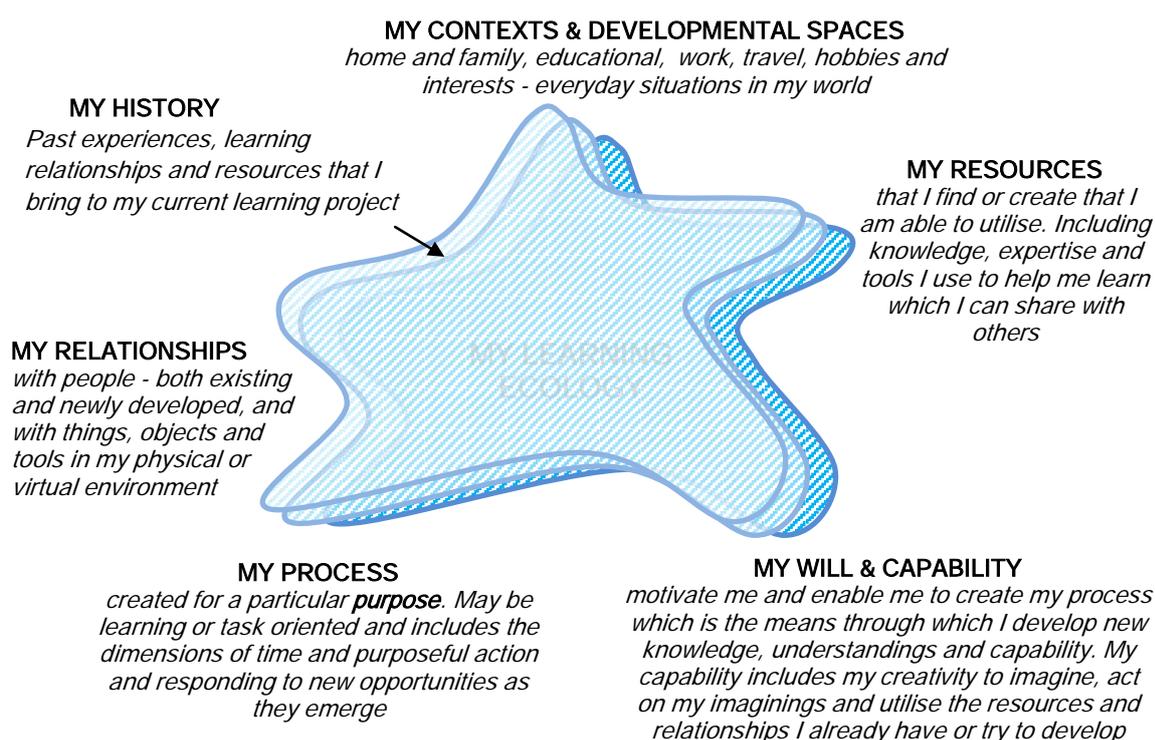
**Figure 3** Different foci and approaches that awards are based around. Many schemes combine these dimensions. Some examples of awards that can be categorised in this way are listed along with others that might be viewed as hybrid approaches.



## AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

A lifewide educational approach must take seriously the idea of learning ecologies (Jackson 2013a:14) 'the process(es) we create in a particular context for a particular purpose that provides us with opportunities, relationships and resources for learning, development and achievement'. This definition represents the integration and interdependence of the elements of learning and achievement which include the contexts and spaces we inhabit, including our history, relationships and resources, (the most important being knowledge and tools to aid thinking), and our will and capability to create a learning process or learning ecology for a particular purpose (Figure 4). Such actions may be directed explicitly to learning or mastering something but more likely they will be primarily concerned with performing a task, resolving an issue, solving a problem, or making the most of a new opportunity. Learning ecologies have temporal dimensions as well as spatial and contextual dimensions: they have the capability to connect different spaces and contexts existing simultaneously across a person's life-course, as well as different spaces and contexts existing in different time periods throughout their life-course.

**Figure 4** Key components of an individual's learning ecology (Jackson 2013b:2)



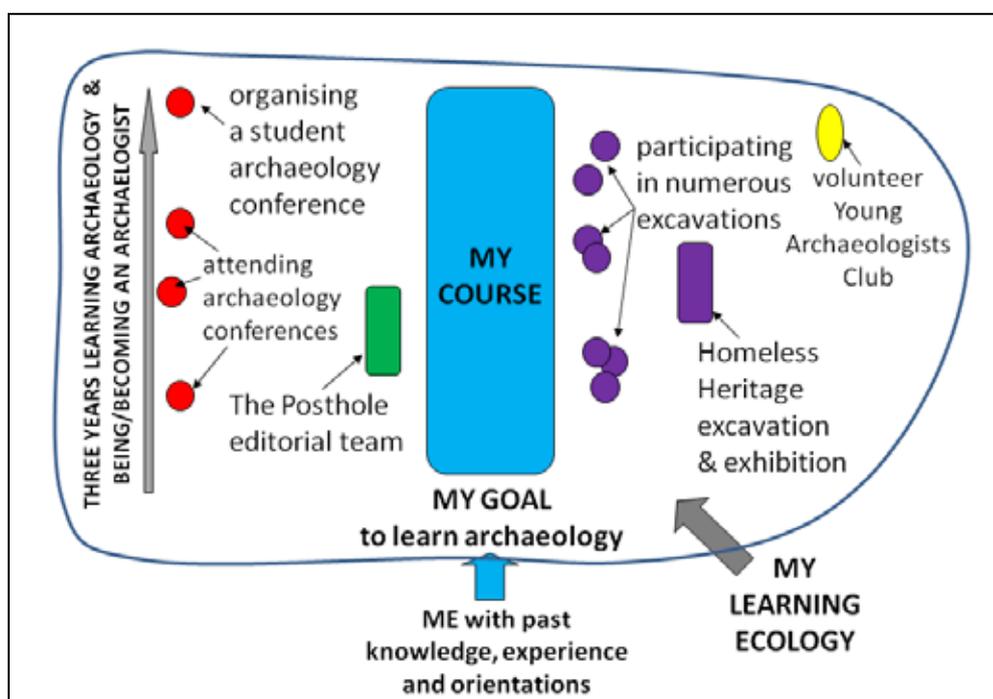
Self-created learning ecologies are the means by which experiences and learning are connected and integrated across the contexts and situations that constitute a person's life. They are the means through which we take abstract concepts learnt in formal education settings and apply them to real world situations. Knowing how to create and sustain a learning ecology is an essential part of 'knowing how to learn' in all the different contexts that

comprise an individual's life. Learning ecologies are therefore of significant conceptual and practical value to the theory and practice of lifewide learning and education.

But what does a learning ecology in higher education actually look like? Figure 5 illustrates the ecology developed by Michael an archaeology student who graduated from the University of York in 2013. The learning ecology map shows all the things he did while he was studying for his degree that enabled him to become the archaeologist he wanted to be.

My degree course formed the backbone to my learning about archaeology. It provided me with contacts with people who were also interested in my subject and enabled me to develop a mind-set that encouraged me to engage with [the subject] ....But some of the best opportunities for me to learn how to be an archaeologist lay outside my degree course. (Jackson 2013b:5)

**Figure 5** The learning ecology of an archaeology student while he was studying for his degree - learning to become the archaeologist he wanted to be (Jackson 2013b)



These archaeology-related activities that were *additional to his course*, included: joining the editorial team of the student archaeology magazine, participating in numerous archaeological digs organised by research students, academic staff or other organisations, joining the Homeless Heritage project organised by a post-graduate student, helping to organise an exhibition, participating in several conferences and, at the end of his course, leading and organising a national conference for archaeology students. At weekends he also volunteered at the Young Archaeologists Club working with school children. These experiences were highly influential in his overall development as an archaeologist.

Being an archaeologist involves 'digging' to expose artefacts through which we can interpret the past. Unfortunately, my course only provided a four week introductory fieldwork course so I joined a number of 'digs', six in total run by two different PhD students, a member of the academic staff, a commercial company, and an external public organisation. Overall I probably spent over three months on excavations which gave me valuable insights into how to organise and conduct a dig, how to conduct various types of surveys, how to prepare, identify and display artefacts and beyond this how to work as a member of a team. The commercial digs I undertook introduced me to the world of commercial archaeology and the different approaches and mindsets that are used in the commercial world. (Jackson 2013b:7)

And some of his extra-curricular experiences profoundly affected him as a person.

One of these projects had a particular significance for me. Homeless Heritage.....is dedicated to working with homeless communities in order to understand and value the spaces used by such communities using archaeological methods. But it is more than archaeologists just applying archaeological techniques to the study of spaces that a particular group of people use: it involves working *with* homeless people in order to understand the relevance of what is found. In this way I was able to form friendships with people I would never have come into contact with in my student life. I began to appreciate the problems of homeless people and to see the world through their eyes. The experience enabled me to understand the value of contemporary archaeology, but I also began to see a new relevance of what I was doing, through it I became interested in the ways archaeology can be used to engage communities. (Jackson 2013b:8)

He also used his opportunity at university to complete the extra-curricular York Award but this was a means of gaining recognition rather than the award itself providing encouragement and support for him while he was engaged in them.

This developmental narrative provides a useful demonstration of how the idea of learning ecologies can be applied to undergraduate higher education. It shows that the process of learning, being and becoming is not simply confined to the structure, content and assessment of a pre-determined course. Rather we see how his intrinsic motivations, his desire to become a *good* archaeologist, form the central purpose around which he creates his personal learning ecology. An unfolding and sustained process that embraces not only his course but also contains within it all the other opportunities for learning that he has accessed or created for himself. We can see that this process involved a multitude of *processes*, each with their own purpose connected by his overarching goal, a multitude of *relationships* involving people associated with the course and the university, and some people who are in the wider world, and a multitude of *contexts* within which learning, development and achievement are accomplished.

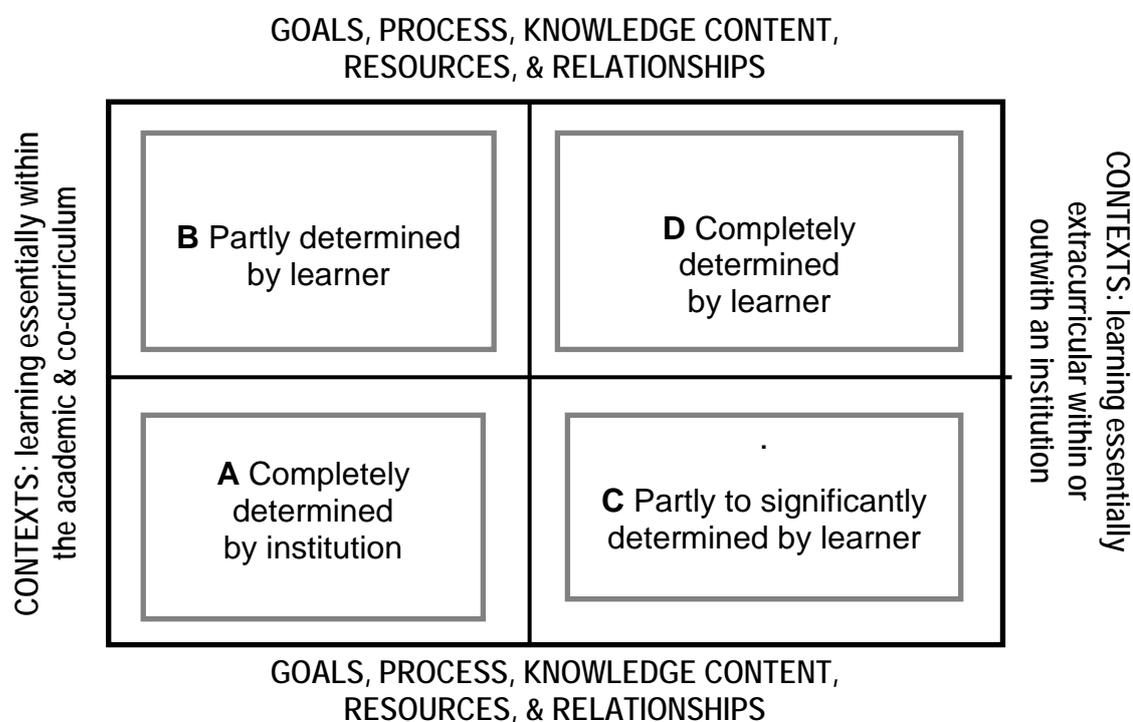
We see his learning ecology being used not just to learn about archaeology, or even to be an archaeologist but to become a certain type of archaeologist and beyond this we see Michael discovering that what he really enjoys doing is working with people. The narrative reveals how he discovered the particular aspects of being an archaeologist that he enjoyed and

valued, and in that process how he found a possible way of continuing the ways of being that he valued through employment after university.

## Learning ecologies and lifewide education

Learning ecologies are a feature both of formal educational settings, where the ecology is largely determined by institutions and teachers, and informal learning settings, where ecologies are largely determined by individuals and groups without the mediation of people whose business is the education or development of students. Jackson (2013) provides a framework (Figure 6) to help visualise the relationship between individuals' learning ecologies and educational practices that support and recognise the outcomes of learning from such ecologies.

**Figure 6** Categorisation of approaches used by contributors to this e-book to promote lifewide learning and development (adapted from Jackson 2013b)



The 2x2 matrix is defined by the *contexts for learning* i.e. whether the contexts are formally constituted within an academic programme or a co-curricular setting or whether they are from an educational viewpoint informal and unstructured opportunities for learning and development in extra-curricular spaces, and whether the *institution or the learner defines and creates* the goals, learning processes, knowledge content, resources and tools for learning and the relationships within the learning enterprise. Four different learning ecology scenarios are represented in Figure 6.

A) *Traditional learning ecology formed around a 'course'*

This is the classroom-based learning ecology where teachers working within a traditional teacher-student relationship with a pre-determined curriculum or syllabus containing specific knowledge and opportunities for skill development and supported by an appropriate set of resources, engage their students in a process for the explicit purpose of learning. Learning and achievement reflect mastering the content of the course, determined through teacher assessment. In this type of learning ecology the learner has little or no involvement in the design of the ecology they merely participate in one that has been designed for them. There are however ways in which programmes can incorporate lifewide learning and development into a learner's programme for example in the use of APEL or General Credit.

*B) Enquiry, problem, project- and field-based learning ecologies*

Pedagogies and contexts like problem-, project-, enquiry- and field-based learning actively encourage learners to define and explore problems, build and utilise relationships for learning, and discover resources and possible solutions for themselves sometimes in contexts that are unfamiliar. Such pedagogies and practices help learners develop the will, capability and confidence to create their own learning ecologies in the world outside formal education.

*C) Self-directed but supported learning ecologies*

There are educational contexts like for example Negotiated Work-Based Learning (NWBL) or Lifewide Education where the learner's contexts are essentially unstructured learning environments - like the work place, community settings, playing sport, travel scenarios, families and other social /cultural situations. In such situations the institutional role is to provide support and guidance that helps learners visualise, plan, record and gain recognition for learning and development. These forms of support and recognition vary in the extent to which they focus learners' attention on specific goals and outcomes or they encourage learners to define their own goals and achievements. Support may also be given to encourage and facilitate interaction between learners engaged in a similar process.

*D) Independent self-directed learning ecologies*

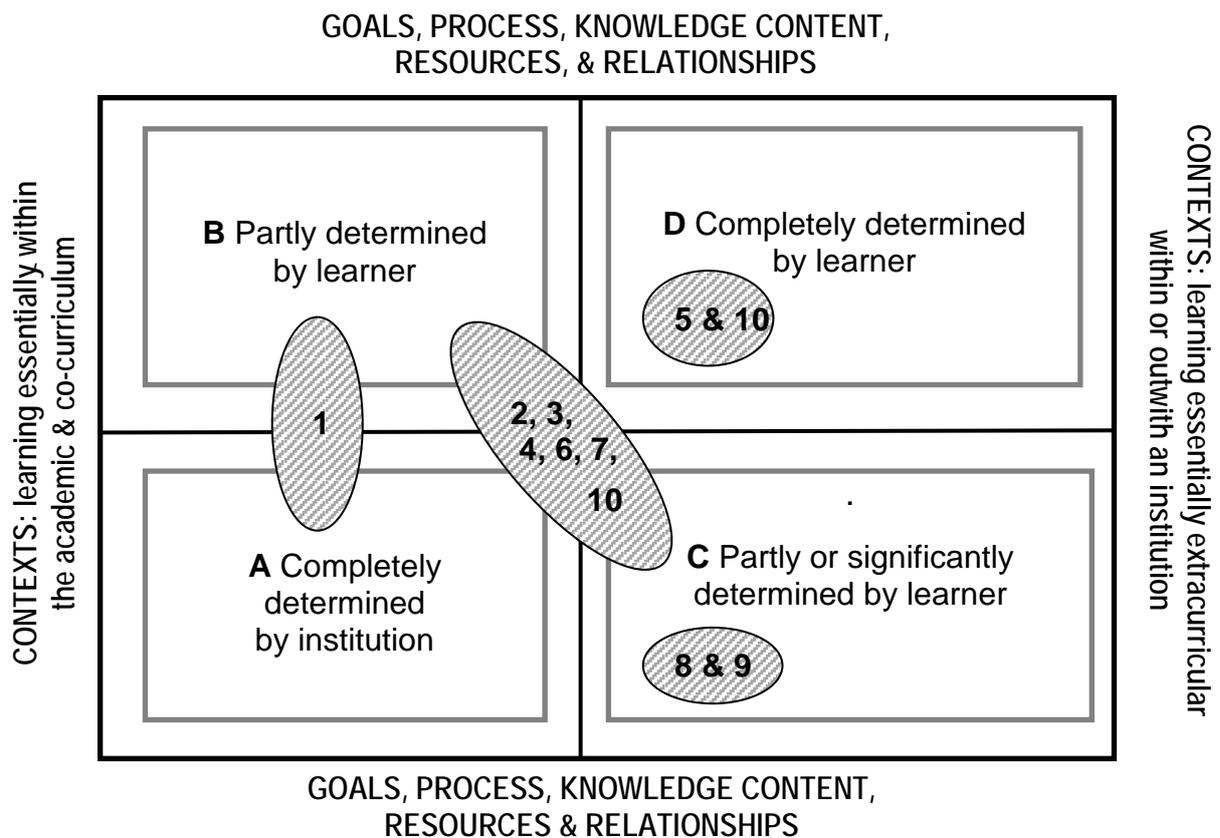
This conceptual space is where people create their own learning ecologies for their own purposes typically for their own learning projects in work and other contexts outside formal education. Their learning is not driven by the need or desire for formal recognition. They determine goals, contexts, content, process, resources and relationships. Learners may choose to incorporate Open Educational Resources and Open Educational Practices (like recording and reflective processes), offered by formal education providers, into their learning process.

An educational institution may support learners' learning ecologies in some or all of these conceptual spaces but all too often the bulk of a student's higher education experience is located in the space labelled *formal educational learning ecology*. However, even when a programme is not designed to encourage learners to create their own ecologies for learning, some learners may be inspired and motivated to create their own learning ecologies that enrich their formal experience through informal learning experiences that enable them to become the scientist, lawyer, historian or any other discipline-based practitioner they want to

be. Michael's narrative and learning ecology map (Figure 5) provides a good example of this process.

This framework embraces the spectrum of educational possibilities that might be included in an institution's approach to lifewide learning and education. Figure 7 shows how the framework might be used to illustrate the different approaches to lifewide learning and development used by contributors to this volume.

**Figure 7** Illustrative examples of approaches used by a selection of universities to encourage, support and recognise students' lifewide learning and development using the framework developed by Jackson 2013b)



**KEY**

- 1 Nottingham Advantage Award
- 2 The Edinburgh Award
- 3 Aberdeen Star Award
- 4 Ulster EDGE Award
- 5 Leeds for Life
- 6 The St Andrews Award
- 7 Hallam Award
- 8 Open University - Make your Experience Count (Level 1, 30 credits)
- 9 Middlesex University - General Credit
- 10 Manchester Metropolitan University BYOD4L Open Learning short courses

## AN OPEN EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

In September 2013 the EU Commission launched a major educational initiative on the theme of 'Opening up education' which is defined in terms of bringing the digital revolution into education. Digital technologies allow all individuals to learn, anywhere, anytime, through any device, with the support of anyone' (European Commission 2013). In her Foreword to this book Christine Redecker (this volume) describes the thinking that is emerging from this work.

The emphasis on learning anytime/anywhere clearly locates the initiative in the domain of individuals' lifewide learning and development. Furthermore, the use of personal mobile technologies has now become ubiquitous in individuals' everyday communication, learning and achievements.

Open Education is underlain by values and principles like freedom to participate, open access to resources and support which are free, meaning no or insignificant cost to the user. In a truly open system resources are provided through open licenses that give people permission to reuse and modify them so that they can be adapted to local circumstances. This allows people to make changes to learning materials or to combine them in new ways to build something new increases their value and utility. Open Education incorporates free and open learning communities, educational networks, teaching and learning materials, open textbooks, open data, open scholarship, open source educational tools and more. Open Education gives people access to knowledge, provides platforms for sharing, enables innovation, and connects communities of learners, educators and mentors.

New forms of technological-enabled openness are laying the foundation for Web 3.0 universities (Peter, Gietzen and Ondercin 2012) which utilise web technologies like social networking, blogs, wikis and user-created content and media to create new models of openness to promote 'radically decentralized, genuinely interactive, and collaborative form of knowledge sharing' that can usefully serve as the basis of 'knowledge cultures' and 'knowledge socialism'.

So how might lifewide learning and education relate to the important contemporaneous development of open education? First and foremost lifewide learning itself fosters a culture of openness and disclosure. Lifewide learning encourages learners to be open with their plans for their own development, and in P2P mode, to share these with learning partners (mentors) in order to gain feedback to open new possibilities (feed forward). Learners' embodiment of openness extends to their sharing of experiences, challenges and insights with other members of the lifewide learning community in order to seek help, progress or share their understandings. Lifewide learning encourages learners to become open in their learning stances, and be prepared to maximise learning opportunities whenever and wherever they are and in whatever modes they present themselves. Characteristically, lifewide learners display an openness to their experiences (openness to self) they are willing to explore new avenues and are willing to take risks - to be explorative (Law 2012) to venture into unfamiliar contexts and situations - a necessary condition for learning and creativity. They are open to all forms of knowledge and ways of knowing throughout life (epistemological openness). And

they are open to sharing their self-knowledge with others who act as partners in their learning (communal and collaborative openness).

Lifewide education when comprehensively developed and implemented, encourages learners to appreciate what, how and why they are learning in all the spaces of their life and to appreciate their own learning ecologies. It encourages them to treat their learning and development holistically (Beard and Jackson 2011) as an enterprise that occupies the whole of their life and to plan for their own development, to identify learning needs and interests and the ways and means of addressing them through the opportunities they have. It encourages them to be self-motivated, self-directing and self-managing, and to reflect on and evaluate the extent to which they have learnt and developed having implemented a course of action. Such self-regulatory attitudes and capabilities are essential in to exploit a world of infinite open education resources and practices.

For these reasons we might speculate that current developments in supporting lifewide learning in universities and colleges are developing learners in ways that will assist them in participating in open forms of learning in the future and build their capacities for evaluating their own learning needs, designing and implementing their own pathways for development, and reflecting on the progress they are making. Nerantzi and Beckingham (this volume) provide a contemporary example of open education in the service of individuals' lifewide learning.

## Open Badges

Open Badges are another manifestation of the open learning and recognition movement. Awarded by educational institutions, other organizations, communities, groups, or individuals. They signify accomplishments such as completion of a project, mastery of a skill, or gaining experience and developing through the process. Advocates and evangelists claim that these credentials herald a fundamental change in the way society recognizes learning and achievement—shifting from a traditional books-and-lecture pedagogy to a model with multiple knowledge streams, including new media, collaboration, interest- and needs-based learning, and experience or project-based learning (EDUCAUSE 2012).

As records of achievement, badges can recognize the completion of projects within a traditional educational programme or acknowledge personal experience, community interaction and contribution, online learning venues, or work-related projects in other life spaces. The idea that badges are 'open' is the fundamental principle on which the system is built. The infrastructure is open (anyone can become an issuer) and the technology is open (open source). Users control their own data and the system permits individuals to create their own badges which an issuer can endorse.

Mozilla offers a platform for badge creation and issuance called Open Badger<sup>1</sup> and the annual Digital Media and Learning Competition<sup>2</sup> provides a forum for sharing innovative designs and public recognition of open badge innovators in multiple categories. Other world class organisations involved in Open Badge development are MIT, Purdue (Indiana

University), Carnegie Mellon, Smithsonian, Intel, Microsoft and Disney-Pixar. In the UK the Open University has developed a portfolio of badges while Glover and Malone (this volume) describe the early stages of badge development at Sheffield Hallam University.

Details vary from one granting body to another, but one well known path for badges is provided by the Mozilla Open Badge Infrastructure (OBI) specification. Using this model, a learner fulfils the issuer- specific criteria to earn the badge by attending classes, passing an exam or review, or completing other activities and demonstrating learning and achievements gained through these experiences. A grantor verifies that the specifications have been met and awards the badge, maintaining a record of it with attendant metadata. This metadata includes the issuer's name, the recipient's e-mail address, a link to the criteria, and a short description of the badge. It may also specify other details, such as the issue date, the expiration date, or a link to the evidence that supports the granting of the badge. The earner pushes the badge into a "backpack," a portfolio-style server account, where this award is stored alongside badges from other grantors. This badge repository might be the Mozilla-hosted Badge Backpack, or it might be a backpack hosted by any provider using the OBI specifications. Badge recipients using the Mozilla Badge Backpack can choose to keep their awards private or display some or all of them on selected websites, social media tools, platforms, or networks.

Badges represent a different approach to the awarding of credentials by making the award relevant to individual students and their learning efforts and accomplishments (ie it reflects the personalisation of learning and achievement). Badges honour how individuals choose to develop themselves through the things they do in their day to day lives, and it provides them with a means of demonstrating and representing these forms of achievement to others. Individuals control their badges by choosing where to earn them and—depending on the privacy specifications of the backpack—they also determining who can see them. Often these badges reflect educational experiences beyond the classroom, calling attention to study abroad, student representation, or community service. A collection of badges can function as a distributed portfolio that may eventually be accessible from a variety of social media sites, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google Plus. When badges serve as part of a résumé or portfolio, they tell prospective employers a more detailed story about the projects and activities that define a student's learning, including both the hard and soft skills that were acquired. Badges are a symbolic and graphical representation of achievement and they can be accumulated throughout a significant learning and development process rather than only at the end. As such they provide a visual and easy to comprehend picture of a learners developmental trajectory as it emerges through the life experiences they choose to represent.

## THE CONTRIBUTION THIS BOOK AIMS TO MAKE

The *Lifewide Learning and Education in Universities and Colleges* e-Book is published by the Lifewide Education Community, a network of personal and professional interest formed in 2011. The book focuses on the way students' lifewide learning and personal development is being encouraged, supported and recognised in universities and colleges and it complements *The Lifewide Learning, Education and Personal Development E-book* launched in May 2012

whose purpose is to advance knowledge and understanding about how and why people learn, develop and achieve through their everyday experiences more generally.

The goal of the e-book is to support a growing community of professional interest in these forms of student development and to facilitate professional learning by:

- enabling practitioners to share their pedagogic, curricular and organisational practices that are both effective and inspiring in helping learners develop and actualise themselves through all aspects of their life while they are studying at university
- encouraging the scholarly examination of theory and practice in the field of lifewide learning and education
- facilitating the sharing of research findings and making these accessible to the community of educator practitioners who work in this field
- making effective use of multi-media - e.g. text combined with audio, video and animation, in communicating this knowledge.

By forming a conference around the launch of the e-book we are also providing opportunities for the community of practitioners involved in this important area of higher education practice to meet and interact. But the intention is to continue to develop the e-book beyond the conference so that it becomes an important way of curating and making accessible knowledge to inform and improve practice.

Contributions to the e-book are organised into one of four categories.

- A Concepts, Overviews & Syntheses
- B Awards, Schemes, Modules and Other Approaches
- C Developmental Activities
- D Research and Evaluation Studies

Establishing any new field of educational practice is challenging. Establishing standards for learning and development in co- and extra-curricular awards is especially difficult as there is no shared understanding of what 'standards of learning and achievement' means. Each institution is in effect inventing its own standards and operating without the support of an established peer network (like the External Examiner system or the codification of subject-based learning in benchmarking statements) to help validate the process and outcomes. The challenge for any field of emerging practice is to gather and distribute information about practice to those who are involved in practice so that they might learn about and gain deeper understandings to inform their own practice. By sharing their knowledge, practices, research and insights contributors are helping to establish a new field of study, support a community of interest and practice, and encouraging the development of more informed and more effective institutional practice.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The rapid growth of student development awards in the UK is an important educational phenomenon. A decade ago there were only a handful of awards, by 2010 there were about 50 awards (Betts and Jackson 2011), by 2012 this had jumped to nearly 80 awards (AGCAS

2011) and this has been confirmed by a recent survey conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency (Barnes and Burchell 2014 Chapter A2) which shows that there are more than 80 schemes currently operating in the UK.

The emergence of this interest and concern for students' development in a more complete sense is fundamentally about making higher education *more relevant* to the lives and future lives of learners and to recognise that there is much more to learning and personal development than studying a subject. With such a rapid growth in these award schemes there is likely to be a multiplicity of reasons some of which are outlined below.

- The nature of the traditional single honours course in UK higher education leaves little scope for broader educational considerations especially in research-intensive universities. Student development awards offer a way of embracing forms of development that are not catered for through the academic curriculum.
- The drive for efficiency has progressively reduced contact time: in some courses students spend significantly more time doing things other than studying and student development awards provide the means of recognising learning gained outside the academic programme.
- Many students have to undertake paid work in order to support themselves through university and there is a ready-made context for demonstrating students' employability skills by recognising that work is a valid context for learning.
- The rapid shift from public to privately financed tuition fees corresponds to parental and student concerns for best value for the tuition fee. Institutions that can offer such awards can claim more value for the fee income.
- The employability of graduates is now a universal and forceful driver for practice within universities and colleges and an important outcome of a university education. Many award schemes are used to raise awareness of employability and help students demonstrate their employability skills.
- The significant support being given by employers and graduate recruiters, as evidenced through sponsorship and direct involvement in institutional schemes, further reinforces the institutional, student and parental beliefs that these schemes are a worthwhile investment.
- There is fear that an institution might be competitively disadvantaged if their competitors offer such awards and they do not.
- There is a genuine desire to broaden and deepen the concept of what a higher education means and to embrace much richer representations of learning that truly embraces the real world beyond the classroom and makes higher education more relevant to students.
- The introduction of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) is encouraging/forcing universities and colleges to pay more attention to the ways in which they are supporting and recognising student development beyond the academic curriculum.
- The emergence of open educational resources and practices (OER & OEP) is adding a new dimension to the learning landscape that enhances opportunity for lifewide learners. Furthermore, the development of learners as capable self-managing and self-reflecting learners is building their capacity for engaging in open education in future.

In witnessing this shift from more traditional forms of higher education to a lifewide approach to higher education we are in the early stages of a transforming system: one that pays more

attention to individuals' learning ecologies. In achieving this transformation universities and colleges improve the opportunities for students to prepare themselves for the real world of lifelong lifewide learning beyond the classroom.

The added value of the lifewide concept and practice of education is that it gives more and deeper meaning to the fundamental ecology of the everyday learning and development enterprise of individuals. Furthermore, it honours and celebrates individuals' commitment to their own development, rather than simply seeing the higher education experience as a stage of life to progress through on an individual's lifelong journey. It is also likely that changing perceptions of what counts as learning and personal development will help people appreciate more the lifelong-lifewide nature of learning and personal development that is necessary to live a healthy, productive, creative and fulfilled life. Only time will tell us whether we are on the cusp of a change that will engage universities in a more fundamental way with ideals and necessities of lifelong learning.

Universities and colleges have the opportunity, power and capability to recognise the totality of an individual student's learning and development enterprise and the opportunity to encourage and support learners in this more comprehensive and ecological view of their own development while they are studying. It might be expected that an institution adopting a lifewide approach to learning and personal development would not only pay attention to the role of learning ecologies but also enable learners to understand and create their own learning ecologies. The contributors to this e-book are demonstrating how this is currently being achieved and we must recognise and celebrate this achievement while appreciating the opportunities we have to do more.

I find it ironic that foresight studies into the future of learning (Redecker et al 2011) identify a future that is not dissimilar to that envisioned 100 years ago by the great adult educator Eduard Lindeman who offers this inspiring vision for the future of learning in higher 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. (Lindeman 1926:6)

Or, in the words of one student contributor to this volume, 'learning is a part of life and life is a part of learning' (Taylor and Barnsley 2014:13).

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#### END NOTES

- 1 Open Badger <https://github.com/mozilla/OpenBadger/wiki>
- 2 DML Competition website <http://hastac.org/competitions>