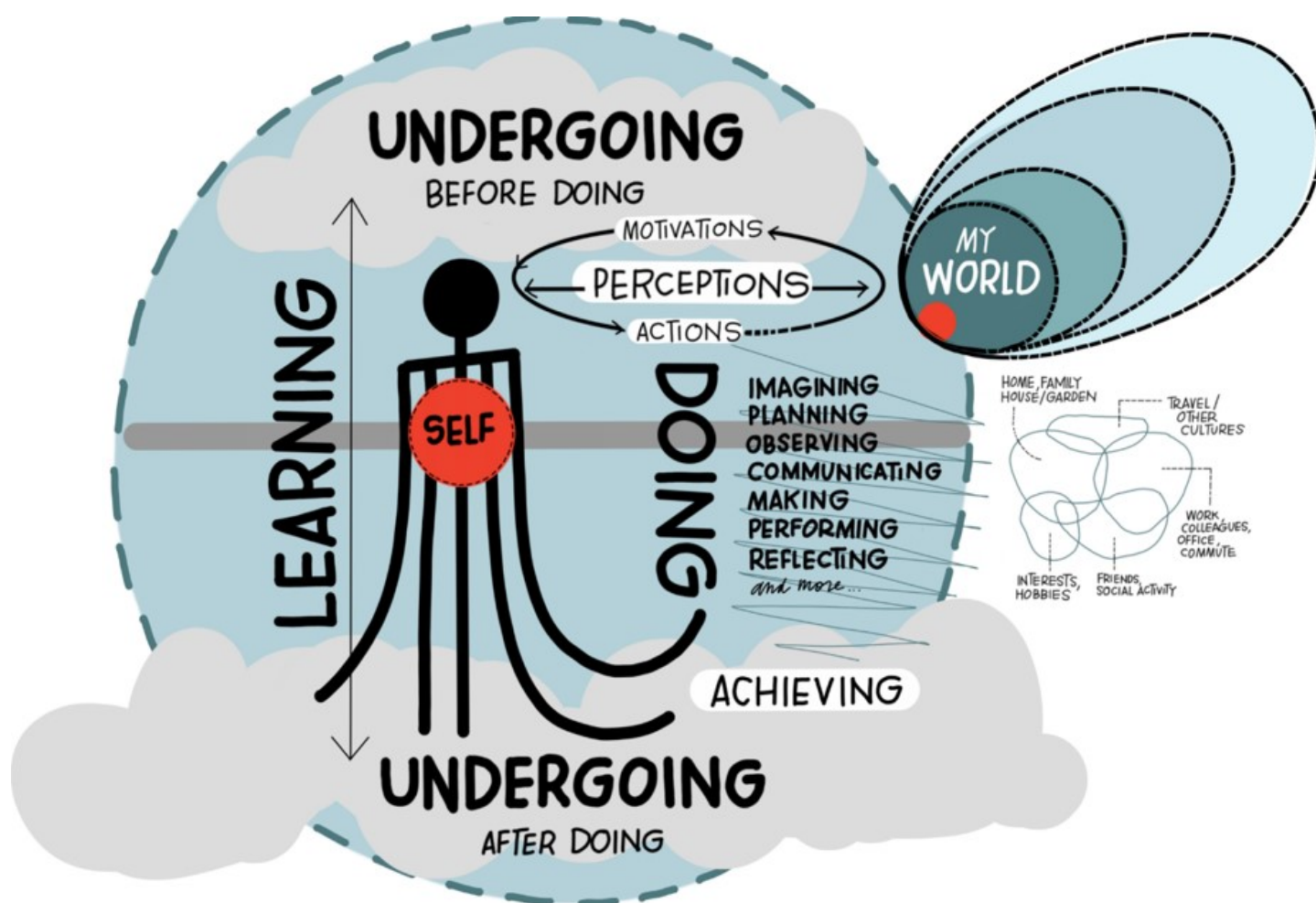




lifeworld magazine

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New Perspectives On Our Own Learning Lives



Edited by
Norman Jackson, Jenny Willis & Rob Ward

Magazine Editors & Facilitators of the Learning Lives Inquiry

Norman Jackson



Norman Jackson is the Founder of 'Lifewide Education' and Editor/Publisher of Lifewide Magazine. His career in education spans over 4 decades and he has worked in many roles teacher, researcher, inspector, researcher, policy maker, facilitator, educational developer, broker and curator for several universities and national agencies like Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Higher Education Quality Council, Quality Assurance Agency, University for Industry, Learning and Teaching Support Network, and the Higher Education Academy. As Director the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (SCEPTRE) at the University of Surrey, he developed and applied the idea of lifewide learning and education to give meaning and substance to the concept of lifelong learning. He is Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey and has author/editor for several books exploring lifewide learning and learning ecologies.

Jenny Willis



Jenny's career in education began as a languages teacher in London areas of social deprivation. This experience inspired her in roles in middle and senior management of schools and later teaching for the Open University. Whilst working as an Assistant Registrar in HE at the University of Surrey, she completed a PhD in socio-linguistics. She held a Fellowship in the Surrey Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (SCEPTRE), where she became interested in lifewide learning, conducting research into professional and personal development, creativity, wellbeing and lifewide learning. She is a founding member of Lifewide Education and was Executive Editor of Lifewide Magazine between 2012-2019. She continues to teach children and adults while pursuing her other interests, stigma related to mental illness and wellbeing.

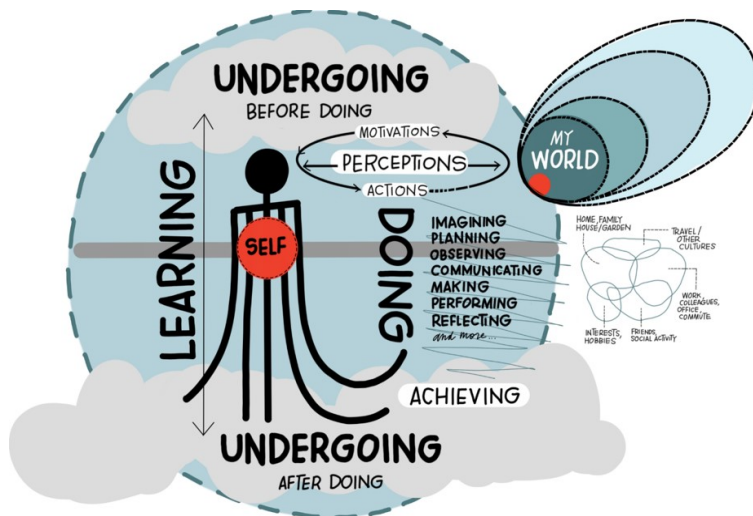
Rob Ward



Rob is the former Director, the Centre for Recording Achievement, rob@recordingachievement.ac.uk and a member of the Lifewide Education Team that worked to develop and facilitate this process of inquiry. Rob has worked to support a number of initiatives, including the Professional Development Award for City and Guilds and the exploration of the potential for a national student-led Award organised by NUS. He has supported development work and acted as External Assessor/Moderator for a number of University Award schemes, and was a member of the Working Group convened by QAA which led to the publication 'Recognising achievement beyond the curriculum'. Finally, CRA led work to develop and implement the Higher Education Achievement Report in the UK, which explicitly includes the opportunities for achievements and learning beyond the curriculum to be recognised. Rob joined the Lifewide Education Team of Supporters in 2020.

Sita Magnuson

The cover for this issue is a personal representation of John Dewey's interactional model of experience which emerged as an important conceptual framework in our learning lives inquiry. The image was created by Sita Magnuson who is a talented artist/graphic facilitator, entrepreneur, community catalyst, and self-proclaimed futurist with two decades experience in the fields of process design, facilitation and visualization. Her practice lives at the intersection of *Social Infrastructure* (how we connect and co-create), *Environment, Space & Place* (how we hold humanity and possibility in natural and built environments), and *Cognitive Evolution* (how we think and learn, elastically—individually and collectively). Sita is the lead designer of the Easthampton Futures Project, an initiative focused on citizen-driven community development in Easthampton, Massachusetts. She is the co-founder of Fort Future—a space for intergenerational curiosity, and co-founder of **Dpict**, an organization that employs visuals, environments, and collaborative processes to facilitate learning, socialize understanding, and enable action. She has supported and helped sustain Lifewide Education and Creative Academic through her gifts of illustrations for our magazines.



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Lifewide Education's 2030 Vision & Strategy

Introduction

In November 2021 Lifewide Education celebrates its 10th birthday and as we enter a new decade it is right for us to review our purpose, role and work and where appropriate to refresh our approach. In late 2020 the Lifewide Education team undertook a strategic review of the enterprise and this vision statement provides a strategic framework within which Lifewide Education can present and organise its work. It is intended for the community of people we try to serve who value the idea that *'the whole of life is learning therefore education can have no ending.'* It is also intended for organisations, educational practitioners and decision makers who are interested in lifewide learning and education in the context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal #4 'lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

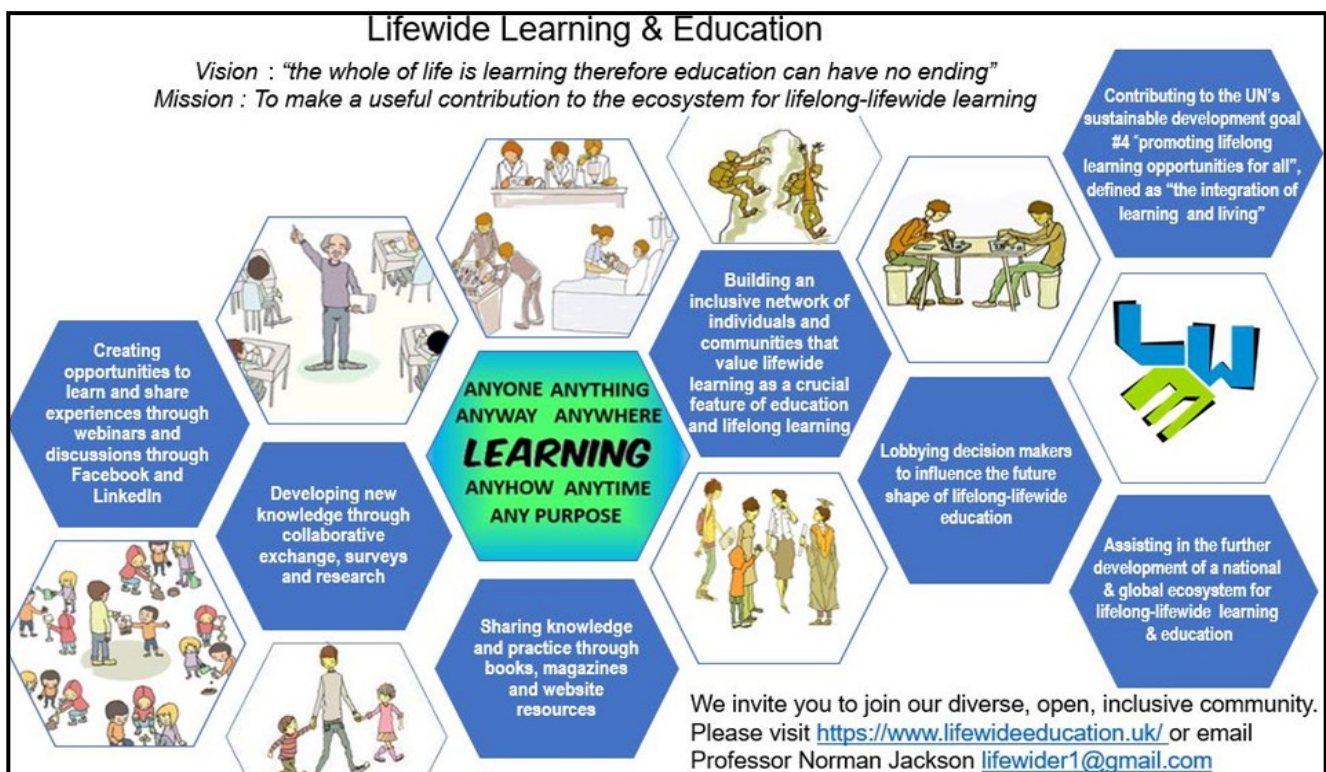
The lifelong – lifewide learning paradigm

Learning is a lifelong project for all humans and knowing how to learn in the ever more complex, hyperconnected and disruptive world we live in, is the core aptitude we need for our survival and prosperity. Education is the formal means by which societies prepare people for a lifetime of learning, but people also create their own opportunities for learning within the circumstances of their life. We need a paradigm for learning that integrates these two domains and recognises that "the whole of life is learning therefore education can have no ending" (Eduard Lindeman). Lifewide learning and education embrace this paradigm and better represent the dynamics, challenges and realities of a lifetime of living, working and learning in and for a complex and messy world.



The United Nations General Assembly recognised the importance of sustaining long, complex learning lives in a world that is in perpetual and rapid formation within its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The fourth SDG calls on Member States to,

"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", defining lifelong learning as: *"The **integration of learning and living**, covering learning activities for people of all ages (at home, at school, in the workplace, in the community, etc.) through formal, non-formal and informal modalities, which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands."*



The challenge is to encourage, guide and nurture at a global scale, a multitude of educational systems, cultures and societies to practically embrace the vision of lifelong learning for all within a paradigm of lifelong learning for the survival and flourishing of mankind and the planet.

“Lifelong learning for oneself, for others and for the planet.. it is about the sustained and sustainable freedom of individuals, linking social freedom to environmental responsibility”

“lifelong learning is lifelong and life-wide, from birth to death (any time) and exists in and out of the education system (anywhere). Learning is undertaken by people of all ages (anyone), takes place through a range of modalities, including face to face, at distance and, increasingly, online, and concerns all domains of knowledge (anything).”

The UK’s Centenary Commission Report on Adult Education recently set out a vision for lifewide adult education aligned to SDG #4. It provides a strategic vision and a rough map of the ecosystem for adult lifelong-lifewide learning within which to locate Lifewide Education’s role and work. In this way our advocacy for lifewide learning and education, our role in developing and sharing our understandings of what lifewide learning and education means, and our support for practitioners and practices, is connected to the global vision of future adult learning.

Lifewide Education’s role in a lifelong-lifewide learning ecosystem

Lifewide Education is a social learning enterprise inspired by Eduard Lindeman’s vision and led by a small band of learning and education activists at the heart of a community of interest that advocates a lifewide, ecological approach to learning, personal development, education and achievement.

We believe that ‘lifewide learning’ embraces the most comprehensive understanding and practice of learning, knowledge and knowing, personal development and achievement. It includes all contexts for learning – learning that is developed in both structured educational environments and informal settings, learning that is directed or self-managed, learning that is intentional or unintended, learning that is driven by our interests and it’s intrinsic value, as well as our needs, and learning which just emerges during the course of our daily activity.

Lifewide learning is connected to a number of ideas that are all important to future learning.:

- ✓ learning anything/anywhere/anytime/anyhow/for any purpose
- ✓ that learning involves interacting with our environments through a multiplicity of technological tools
- ✓ that we have to motivate, plan, manage and self-regulate our own learning, development and achievement.
- ✓ that learning is both personal and individual, yet also social and collaborative.
- ✓ that learning involves, perception, reasoning, imagination, emotion, embodied action and creativity.

Lifewide Education recognises the lifewide dimension of learning, development and achievement and enables the learner to view themselves as the designer of an integrated, meaningful life experience that incorporates formal education as one component of a richer set of experiences that embrace all forms of learning and achievement across and their life. Our aim is to support educational institutions and practitioners who would like to implement Lifewide Education.

Our Achievements

Since its formation in 2011 Lifewide Education has:

1. Established a reputation as an effective advocate for lifewide learning and education
2. Attracted and served a global community of interest with nearly 600 subscribers to our mail list
3. Created a HUB <https://www.lifewideeducation.uk> hosting a range of freely available open access resources
4. Conducted scholarly explorations of ideas relating to lifewide learning and education and published these through our open access Lifewide Magazine (now in its 24th issue and accessed online over 24,000 times)
5. Brought together practitioners in UK universities who are responsible for skills awards to share their practices through a conference and e-book
6. Developed an innovative award scheme to show how lifelong-lifewide learning could be supported and recognised <https://lifewideaward.uk> featured in an EU Foresight Study ‘Open Education 2030’

7. Developed an ecological perspective on learning and practice gaining international recognition for our scholarship through Harvard University's Learning Innovations Laboratory (LILA) inquiry into learning ecologies

Our Ambition - is to add value and understanding to the global lifelong-lifewide learning ecosystem. Working with others we aim to enhance the ecosystem for lifelong-lifewide learning and education by:

- A. Expanding and refreshing our team of supporters and activists, securing representation from diverse professional groups who have an interest and involvement in lifelong-lifewide learning and education
- B. Reaching out to practitioners in different fields and networks to expand our community
- C. Building understanding and practice through discussions and the sharing of ideas and resources through social media, webinars and collaborative inquiries other active learning projects.
- D. Encouraging practitioners to share their ideas, practices and scholarship through our publications
- E. Contributing our ideas to scholarly publications
- F. Reaching out to the political sphere and contributing to initiatives to influence policy that recognises and values the lifewide dimension of learning
- G. Supporting initiatives that value learning as an important aspect of our wellbeing
- H. Working nationally to support the Centenary Commission on Adult Education's vision for lifewide adult education and internationally with the International Association for Lifewide Learning and UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Our Invitation

We invite you to help us to build an inclusive global community that enables educators and practitioners from many different areas of professional interest to work together to create an adult learning ecosystem that is better able to support a lifewide approach to learning and education for anyone who would like to experience it. If our vision for lifelong-lifewide learning and education resonates with you, please get in touch with Norman Jackson, Director Lifewide Education lifewider1@gmail.co or join our community using the contact form on our website at <https://www.lifewideeducation.uk>.

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Learning Lives Inquiry

Norman Jackson, Rob Ward & Jenny Willis

Background to the collaborative inquiry

Following our Strategic Review in late 2020¹, one of the strategies we decided to develop was to try to involve the members of our community in collaborative projects that enabled us to explore the many manifestations and dimensions of lifewide learning and education. In January 2021, we developed a plan for a collaborative inquiry that would take place over 6 weeks between Feb 1st and March 15th. While realising that 6 weeks is a long time to seek the involvement of busy people, we felt that such a time scale afforded the best opportunity to create the sort of relationships necessary for deep collaboration in which we hoped that participants would share and comment on each other's personal lives in a culture of trust, respect, encouragement and empathy.

Our collaborative inquiry aimed to explore how learning emerged in the everyday lives of participants. More specifically – how, why, when, what and where did learning emerge. Over six weeks we invited participants to pay more attention to their learning in the different domains of their life, and to describe their experiences and insights in a series of vignettes – ideally 5 vignettes over the 6 weeks. Prior to the inquiry the three facilitators experimented by preparing their own vignettes and a selection were offered as concrete examples. As part of the advance information we produced to explain the process, we prepared a Guide which explained the elements of the collaborative inquiry in the following terms.

Guide to the process of collaborative inquiry

1 We will launch the project with a meeting on Microsoft TEAMS to introduce the process and provide opportunities for discussion on Monday Feb 1st 12.00-13.00. Link to be provided by email.

2 You are invited to prepare a map showing the different domains in your life in which you experience living, learning and developing yourself and achieving things that matter to you. The map should represent the current situation. It can be text-based or it can include photographs to enhance the contextual information (Figure 1). An optional template is provided. The map provides a reference point for experiences you will describe during the inquiry.

Figure 1 Examples of text- and -image based experiential domain maps



3 We hope that as each day unfolds you will be conscious of the situations in which you are learning and how the need to learn something emerges in whatever you are doing. We also hope that you will spend a few minutes reflecting on your experiences and, when something noteworthy emerges, you will create a short vignette describing what happened and its significance to you. We are not expecting stories of major transformative experiences. Rather, we are expecting stories about everyday situations and happenings that we don't often pay attention to.

Examples of vignettes are attached to these notes. Ideally your vignette will comprise a text-based narrative typically **400-500** words (no more than 1 A4 page). It can include photos or other images.

It would be helpful to include the following information:

- 1 Title : The substantive theme
- 2 Domain: Identifies the part of your life in which the experience occurred
- 3 Narrative: describing an experience that was meaningful/significant to you from any part /domain of your life including information on such things as context, situations, the environment and how, why and what learning emerged
- 4 Reflections on what was learnt & why it was meaningful/significant together with any insights, wisdom and principles relating to everyday learning

Please share your learning experience vignettes with other participants in the community of inquiry Linked In discussion space.

4 We want to encourage ongoing conversation and interactions between participants so we have set up a private conversation and learning space on **Linked in**. Please use this ‘safe’ space to share your experiences and the insights you gain from them and if possible your vignettes of learning. We encourage you to value other contributions and offer your own constructive commentary and questions aimed at promoting deeper reflection and understanding.

5 At the end of the whole process we will provide an opportunity for participants to come together in a final meeting to share what we have learnt about the way learning that we have not planned for, emerges in our life.

Figure 2 Outline of the inquiry process



Collaborative inquiry

The next article adds detail to this brief introduction but here we record that the facilitation team judged our first inquiry to be a success in terms of the number of participants (30 active participants), the way they respectfully and creatively engaged with the process over the 6 weeks, and the contributions that were made. A total of 152 vignettes were shared together with other artefacts and resources. It is fair to say that the outcomes exceeded our expectations and filled us with hope for future projects of this type.

Lifewide Magazine #24

We indicated in the Guide that after we had completed the inquiry we would curate some of the knowledge we gained for the benefit of the wider community of educators, but there was no obligation to participate in this additional process. At the end of the inquiry we invited all participants to share their insights and this magazine is based on their contributions together with the synthesis produced by the facilitation team.

Source

1 Lifewide Education’s 2030 Vision & Strategy (2021) Lifewide Magazine #24 p4-6 (this issue)

EDITOR

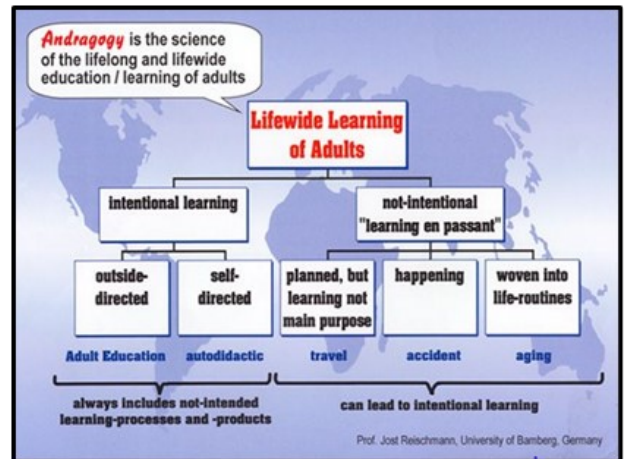
Learning en passant Jost Reischmann



Professor Jost Reischmann is known for his pioneering work in bridging theory and practice in Adult Education. Through the International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE), he partnered the international professional exchange between Adult Education research/practitioners and institutions in over thirty countries. He promoted an open flow of ideas and educational exchanges among people. He was the first educator to use the term 'lifewide learning' to capture the true scope of human learning.

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. To make [us] aware of this wide, "universe", the whole life embracing understanding of the learning of adults I will use the expression "lifewide learning"^{1 p3}.

Furthermore, within his conception of lifewide learning, he recognised the emergent nature of some of our learning and coined the term learning *en passant* to describe this learning. Little did he know that this term describes much of the learning we have described in our vignettes.



The self-directed learning movement certainly added significant perspectives to the perception and concept of learning. The learner is no longer seen as incompetent, as a person who missed something and should be treated. But also this type of learning cannot explain all of the knowledge and skills people have.

Besides these described types of learning in school-like settings and self-directed learning projects there exists another type of permanent, lifelong, daylong learning. I will tentatively call this "learning en passant"; it includes

- a) short learning situations,*
- b) situations where less than half of the person's total motivation is on learning,*
- c) contents that are not "clear" in the sense that the learner knows in advance what and how to use it or whether it will produce some lasting changes in himself.*

The French phrase "en passant" is used in German speaking and other countries as well; it means literally "by passing by". This phrase nicely pictures what the attention should be drawn on in this paper: By active passing through life people meet all sorts of learning challenges; these educate and transforms them as a way of "becoming a person". The usually used terms "informal, non-formal, non-traditional learning" - certainly necessary for various discriminations - describe with "in-" and "non-" what is not meant. "En passant" pictures positively, that for this learning people have to be active, and that important learning takes place interrelated to other activities, not only in classes, but in the "school of life."^{1p2}

Source

1 Reischmann, J. (1986) Learning "en passant": The Forgotten Dimension Paper presented at the Conference of the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, Hollywood, Florida, October 23, 1986 Available at: <http://www.reischmannfam.de/lit/1986-AAACE-Hollywood.pdf>

Our Social Ecology For Learning

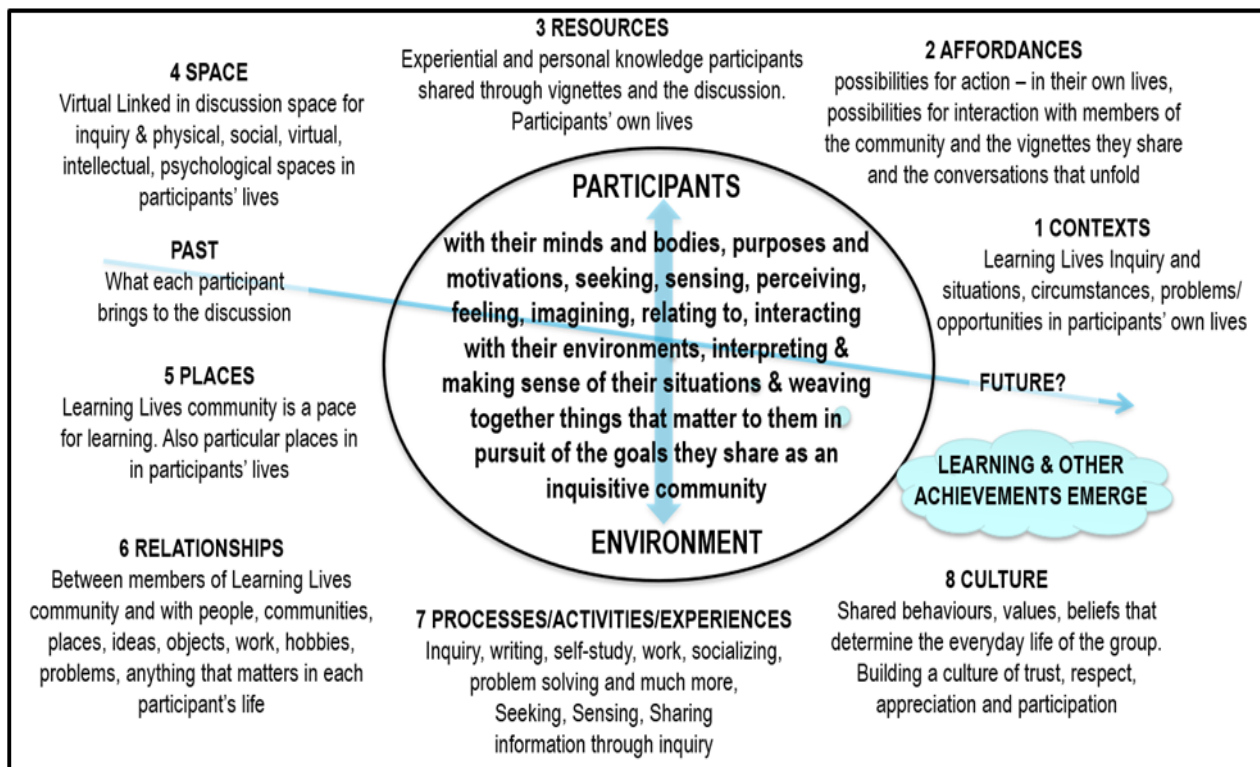
Norman Jackson, Rob Ward & Jenny Willis

A Social Ecology for Collaborative Inquiry & Learning

When a group of people, who care about something, come together to work collaboratively to share and develop new knowledge and understanding we have a social structure for learning. The idea that learning is an ecological phenomenon growing out of the relationships and interactions of an individual with their environment and the situations and things in it that matter to them is an underpinning idea for lifewide learning so we are applying the idea that our social structure for learning is also a social ecology for inquiry and learning.

Figure 1 provides a model for an ecology in which learning is the primary purpose. The heuristic has been adapted to for the context of the Learning Lives inquiry. It attempts to embrace the complex interactional, interdependent and continuously unfolding dynamic of individuals collaborating in a shared enterprise - collaborative inquiry. It relates whole, thinking, feeling, acting persons, to their circumstances and contexts, their needs, desires and purposes, and the situations they are engaged in – collaborative inquiry.

Figure 1 Model of an ecology for social learning adapted from a model of an ecology for practice in which learning is embedded¹



This model of an ecology for collaborative learning embedded embraces all three themes in the ecological world view of life - wholeness, relationships and continual formation. It *relates* a *whole* thinking, feeling, acting, caring person to their environment and the significant people in it: in this example it would include fellow participants in the inquiry. It also *relates* each person's needs, interests, desires, perplexities and curiosities to the particular problems they are working on and to what they are trying to achieve in the particular contexts and situations in which they are acting. In return the person relates to the world and their interests and problems, using the skilled actions they have learned with tools and resources they have also learnt to use or they are learning to use through their actions.

Infrastructure

We decided to use the Linked in platform and set up a 'private (invitation only) group'. This gave the facilitators more control over who was admitted to the group and meant that posts could only be viewed by members of the group. We also set up a public project webpage hosting a Guide to the process and a background paper. Later in the process we set up a private project webpage (only accessible by members of the group) to host the products of our inquiry – vignettes, domain maps and new perspectives articles.

Figure 2 (above) private Linked in Lifewide Learning & Education Research Group page, (below) public Project page on the Lifewide Education website

Participants

Two weeks before the start of the inquiry we advertised on social media platforms like Facebook, Linked in and twitter and through mail lists, including the Lifewide Education mail list. Over 50 people expressed an interest. We also invited a small number of people who we knew had an interest in lifewide learning. In total 60 participants with representatives from 17 countries joined the Linked in group at the start of the inquiry. We were mindful that some people were likely to be joining just to see what it was about, with little intention of engaging with the process.

Building a Participatory, Respectful & Appreciative Culture

Building a culture in a few weeks is a tall order but we realised it was important to try and develop a culture to support inquiry. We wanted to encourage active rather than passive participation and encourage behaviours that were encouraging, respectful, appreciative and where appropriate empathetic. We used 3 strategies to encourage these behaviours. Firstly, we set out our expectations in the Guide and in the Group Rules. Secondly, as facilitators, we tried to model these behaviours. Throughout the process we did our best to respond quickly and appreciatively to posts.

The issue of active participation in social media groups is significant. It is well known that there is a pervasive culture of lurking in online social networks that rely on users to contribute content.

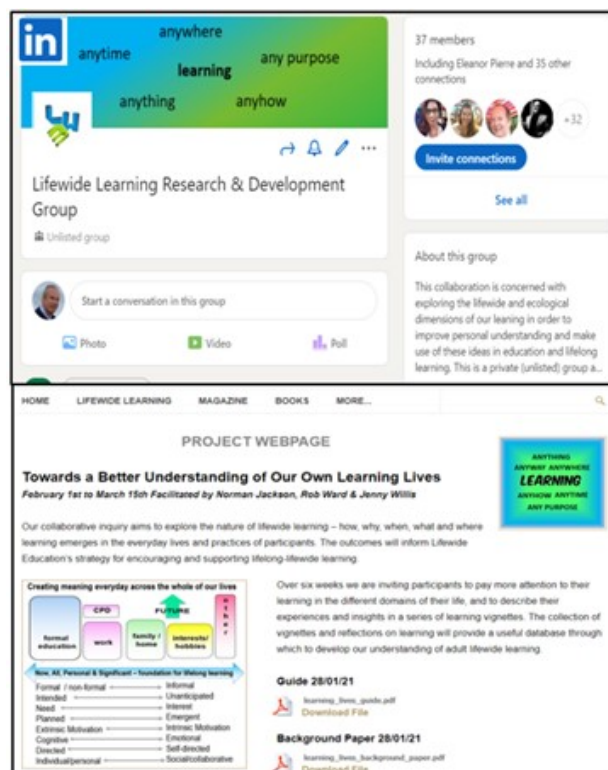
The 90–9–1 rule states:

90% of users are lurkers (i.e., read or observe, but don't contribute).

9% of users contribute from time to time, but other priorities dominate their time.

1% of users participate a lot and account for most contributions.

For a collaborative inquiry to work participants must feel that most people are contributing so encourage this we made it explicit that participants should share one vignette every week. It was also made clear that only the participants who contributed would be allowed to continue after the third week. One of the facilitators kept a log of who was contributing and at the end of week 2 a 'fair warning' message was sent to each participant who had not contributed. At the start of week 4, 28 participants who had not contributed were removed. We believe that this strategy honoured the participants who were contributing and sharing intimate



Group Rules: There is an expectation that members of the group will contribute their stories of learning experiences to the research process. There is an expectation that members of the group will be respectful and appreciative of the contributions made by other members and that they will help them gain deeper or different perspectives on their learning experiences through their encouraging and supportive comments and questions.

Message to individuals

We have now reached week 4 of our Learning Lives inquiry and as we indicated last week, only people who have contributed an experiential domain map and vignettes of their learning experiences will be able to remain in the group. If you have a reason for not being able to participate, please let us know. We apologise if this feels harsh but we want to be fair to the people who are sharing their lives. Thank you for joining the first stage of our inquiry we hope you found it interesting and useful.

Warm regards
Rob, Jenny & Norman

details of their lives and the result was a community that was fully engaged and fully participating in the way we had hoped it would.

Over the 6 weeks, the facilitators made a determined effort to build a sense of community where every posting was valued. For instance, as a new member arrived, they might be greeted with “Welcome to our band of adventurers.” Later, responses might begin with a word of appreciation, “I really liked...” or “Yes, I share...”. By addressing people by their name, they were respected as individuals. Feedback indicates that this was successful: “Every person mattered. Every contribution mattered.”

In addition to the verbal responses, members of the community also registered ‘likes’, sometimes in lieu of a narrative reply, sometimes in addition. This was a feature throughout the project, for example in week 4: 29 vignettes were posted accompanied by 84 ‘likes’. This represents a significant degree of active participation, even at this later stage of the project.

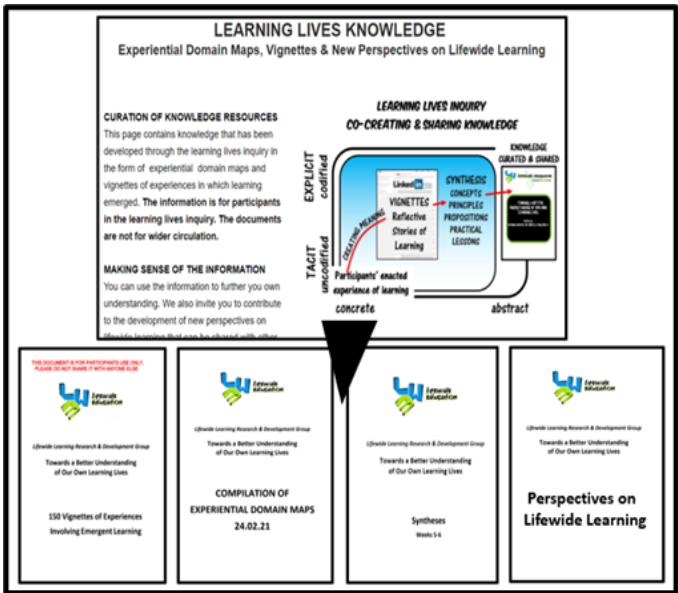
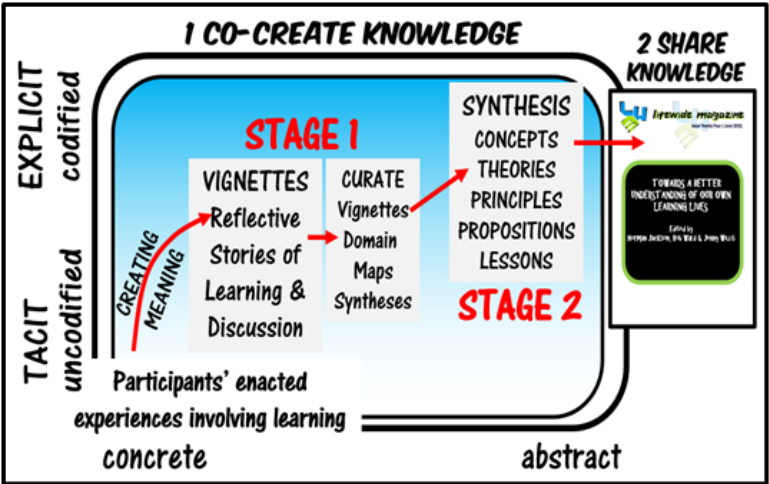
Other indicators testify to the success of the community that was nurtured: members shared not only photographs and personal artwork, but some very personal experiences in their posts. This was enhanced by the conversation being closed to members only, so that, in the words of one, “I felt safe to actively participate” though it also caused some discomfort for a few individuals, “at some point I started feeling vulnerable.”

During the 6 week inquiry, no situation arose where a posting required intervention. However, the feedback rightly drew attention to the need to be prepared for any unacceptable contributions: “How might the community be encouraged to manage any conflict or difficulties that might emerge? Would you rely on members’ prior experience of online discussion?”

Knowledge Development

The inquiry was concerned with exploring the lifewide and ecological dimensions of leaning in everyday situations in order to improve personal understanding and make use of these ideas in education and lifelong learning. We were creating a process for the development of new knowledge which can be represented graphically (Figure 3) using a framework that was originally developed by Max Boisot.

Figure 3 Our knowledge development process using a framework originally developed by Max Boisot



Our goal was to convert the embodied, enacted personal knowledge of participants acquired through an experience in which learning emerged, into knowledge that was accessible by the community through a reflective narrative or vignette. The idea of designing in a reflective process meant that individuals told a story but also reflected on and drew out meanings from their story. 152 vignettes were produced and these were collated in a synthesis document and curated on a Learning Lives Knowledge sharing page that was only accessible to the group (Figure 4). Sense making continues through the process of preparing articles for this issue of Lifewide Magazine.

Figure 4 Learning Lives web page hosting the products of our knowledge development process

In her article, 'Six Enablers of Emergent Learning'², Sahana Chattopadhyay highlights the importance of creating the conditions for social learning in organisations in order to thrive, in which learning emerges as a result of both organised and spontaneous interactions.

Emergent learning is always contextual, collaborative, and goes beyond the norms of intended learning. It cuts across formal organizational structures and siloes and connects the inherent tacit knowledge and the ongoing collective experience, building a shared awareness of moving toward a larger Evolutionary Purpose for all concerned.”^{2 p1}

**Sensing &
Sense Making**

Reflective Practices

*A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO CARE
ENOUGH ABOUT SOMETHING TO
WORK TOGETHER TO GROW NEW
KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING*

**Generative
Conversations**

**Collaborating
Across Diversity**

**Systems
Thinking**

**Comfort with
Uncertainty & Ambiguity**

Figure 5 'Six Enablers of Emergent Learning, Chattopadhyay²

1 Sense making is foundational to emergent learning. As individuals and teams begin to see the larger patterns, new insights and breakthroughs occur leading to transformative learning. When this kind of learning becomes the norm, an organization cannot stagnate. It stays in a state of constant communication with its ecosystem — adapting and evolving to its next level. Just like any other living system.²

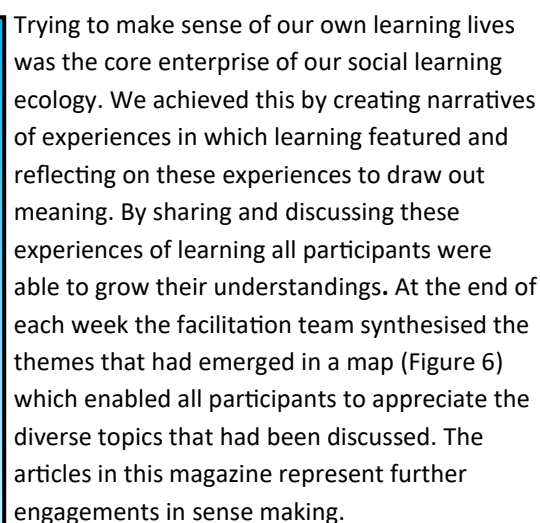


Figure 6 Example of a weekly synthesis map of discussion topics and domains

2 Generative Conversation: *Organizations need to build the capacity to have such conversations where individuals and teams “hold space for something new to be born.” This requires completely shifting away from all preconceived ideas, old solutions, yesterday’s logic, and past patterns. Suspending everything we thought we knew. Only from a place of listening to each other, to the context, and to the information flowing in the ecosystem with an open Mind, open Heart, and an open Will, can we learn what wants to emerge.*

Generative conversations will only take place in an environment where people feel their thoughts and words will be valued. Our Linked In space for discussion was founded on the idea that we needed a place/space for generative conversation. A space where people could share and talk about their experiences and interact with others who cared enough to offer non-judgmental perspectives and comments. We worked hard to encourage a culture of appreciation. Some concrete examples of generative conversations are detailed below.

3 Collaborating across Diversity: *Unfortunately, human beings have an affinity for homophily — a fancy word for the human equivalent of “birds of a feather flock together”. This has become increasingly easier with ubiquitous technology where we happily reside in our echo chambers and comfort bubbles. And this is also one of the biggest obstacles to emergent learning, sensemaking, and staying responsive, and resilient. While Diversity and Inclusion are on all orgs “must do” list, the kind of collaboration I am talking about is different. It is about deliberately and consciously bringing together different voices, diverse opinions, varied perspectives, and cross-cultural worldviews. It is about holding space for and welcoming paradoxes, embracing cognitive dissonance, discarding the notion of “one right solution,” and exploring the varied dimensions of any challenge or situation. It is about facilitative leadership that doesn’t get swayed by the loudest voice in the room or the majority opinion but pays equal heed to that one quiet voice expressing a different view.*

While we openly circulated our invitation to thousands of people via social media and made specific invitations to people from diverse cultural backgrounds, it is fair to say that the people who participated in the inquiry were self-selecting because they had an interest and or involvement in the topic being examined. We were, very much, “birds of a feather flocking together”. While the lack of diversity amongst our participant group will have limited the range of perspectives offered, the range of perspectives we accessed certainly allowed us to progress our understanding. We may well need to consider other strategies for engaging with diversity in lifewide learning.

4 Comfort with Uncertainty and Ambiguity: *as we grow up and crave predictability, plans, and processes. However, if we can learn to let go off our fears — even for a short while — and listen deeply to the context and each other (generative conversations), stay with the ambiguity and sense into it, gradually the next step will emerge from collective sensemaking, which will always be much more accurate than any pre-planned action could have been. We go off the rails when — in the face of uncertainty — we disregard all disconfirming information, cling to what we already know, and act from our old habits.*

When you embark on an inquiry it is an adventure. By its very nature we are entering a liminal space an unknown territory to be explored. The active participants in the group were all willing to explore and engage directly with uncertainty and ambiguity. This perhaps offsets the drawback of limited diversity for exploration depends on the willingness to explore and it might not be easy to combine diversity with the willingness to take risks and an orientation to be explorative in a space in which there is a lot of uncertainty and ambiguity. Culture that is supportive and appreciative is also important when grappling with uncertainty and ambiguity. A culture that encourages participants to share their deepest thoughts and experiences is more likely to succeed in traversing the liminal space.

5 Systems Thinking *is a must have skill in today’s complex, changing, non-linear world where everything is interconnected as well as interdependent.....systems thinking requires us to shift from a reductionist worldview focused on dissecting and analyzing to a holistic one where we step back to see the web of connecting patterns. One cannot understand a system by focusing on its individual elements because the whole will behave very differently. Hence, this is a skill that is closely related to sensemaking.*

The Learning Lives inquiry sought to engage participants in their everyday world but to conduct exploration within the lifewide learning systems framework whereby an individual constructs their own system of domains within which they engage in their

everyday experiences. We deliberately sought to open up the idea of domains in order to develop a deeper understanding of the systems view of lifewide learning.

6 Reflective Practices: Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. As individuals, most of us have some form of reflective practice — be it journaling, meditation, creative visualization, solitary walks in nature, or whatever works for us. At an organizational level, we often restrict reflective practices to “project retrospectives,” and haven't yet inculcated the deep practices of reflecting on the inner conditions as well. This would include not only looking back at past actions and what worked or didn't but also taking a conscious look at emotions, quality of experiences, the relationships, and the overall energy flow.

Reflective practice is deeply connected to sense making and to generative conversations. It was a fundamental and designed in feature of our inquiry and therefore our social learning ecology. Trying to make sense of our own learning lives and trying to make sense of our collection of learning lives was at the heart of our inquiry. We achieved this by creating narratives of experiences in which learning featured and reflecting on these experiences to draw out meaning. By sharing and discussing their experiences of learning, participants were able to gain further perspectives which prompted deeper reflection. Indeed, as we write this article we are fundamentally reflecting on and trying to make sense of our own practice as the creators and facilitators of our social learning ecology and inquiry.

Generative Conversation Within Our Social Learning Ecology

We have already introduced the idea that the social learning ecology contained affordance for generative conversations, triggered by the sharing of experiences, perspectives and reflective practice through the posting of vignettes. Participants were encouraged and expected to share their story then reflect on the events and circumstances and learning that had arisen. Each vignette posted constituted an opportunity for other participants to respond to the perspectives and issues raised in the vignette. Sometimes people responded with a new vignette of their own. No post went without response or acknowledgement; the average number of responses for weeks 2 to 4 were 5, 8 and 8, respectively but some vignettes attracted more than double these figures.

When participating in an active on-line forum with many strands of asynchronous conversation, while we may have a sense of the emerging ideas and themes, it is often difficult to appreciate the unfolding details of emergence. We were keen to gain a footing in the concrete ways in which participant interactions created generative conversations from which learning flowed. Two conversations following the posting of a vignette were selected for analysis.

Vignette VA

VA entitled her vignette ‘Imposter expert’, neatly summarising the feeling she experienced when finding herself thrust into the unexpected role of senior bid manager. She recounts how she had made a successful bid for a contract and, based on this, was invited to bid for another contract. When she explored the possibility, she discovered that there were already two other bidders. After discussion, they all agreed to make a joint submission, and VA was thrown out of her comfort zone as a curriculum designer into that of senior lead. The responsibility caused a sense of panic, but she rose to the occasion, rallied the team, and submitted on time. In her reflection on events, she concluded:

“I have always maintained the view that a dose of Imposter Syndrome if administered carefully is a healthy ingredient of my personal and professional growth. It's important to respect knowledge boundaries whilst remaining optimistic about being able to cross them.”

In order to analyse this vignette and the conversation it triggered, a key theme was identified: *panic*. A series of sub-themes explored this: *trust, respect, leadership, expertise, boundaries and motivation*. These were each represented in an arbitrarily colour-coded form, as shown in figure 6. The colour for each theme would enable tracking across subsequent exchanges e.g. every time ‘trust’ featured, it was shown in a pale blue circle.

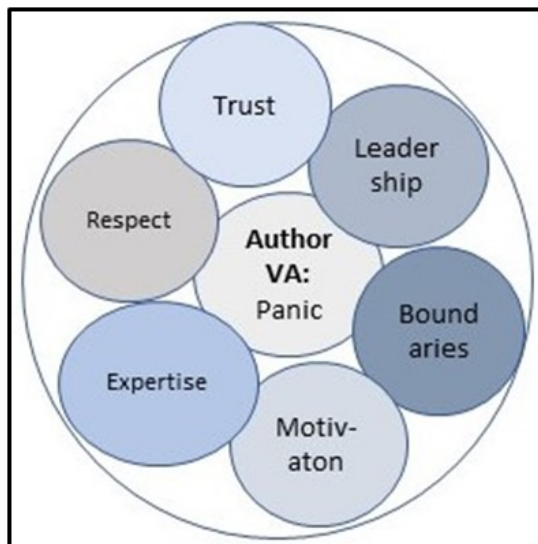


Figure 6 Vignette and conversation VA, stage 1

At the time of analysis, there were 4 respondents to VA, numbered R1 to R4 in figure 2. The themes picked up in each of their responses are shown, using the same colour coding as before.

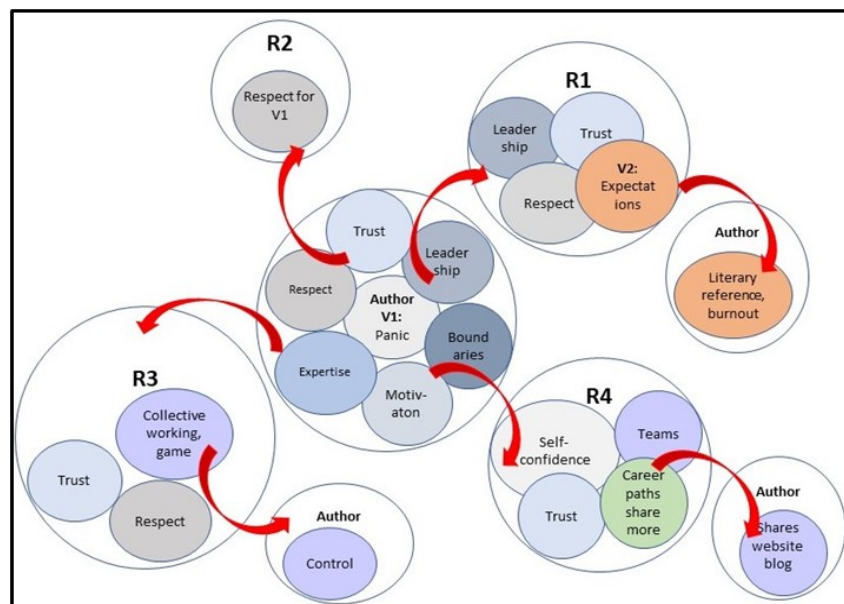
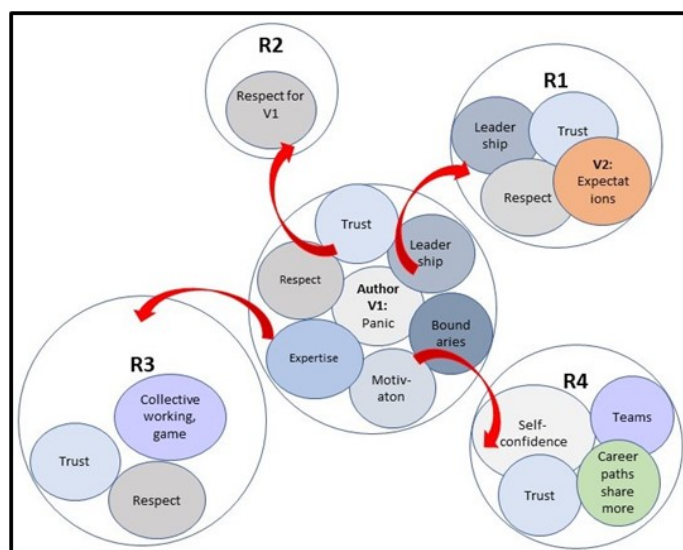
In the case of R2, he simply complimented VA on her “*ability to gain trust*”, reflecting the theme of leadership, but his reply was more social in its nature, and that was the end of this conversation. R1, R3 and R4 began more sustained interaction.

R1 also took up the question of leadership, as well as trust and respect. She developed the process by adding a vignette of her own, in which she recounted how the *expectations* of others enabled her to take on a senior role. This new theme appears in a contrasting colour (orange) in figure 7.

Figure 7 Vignette and conversation VA, stage 2

In her response, R3 also addressed trust and respect, and added another dimension: *working collaboratively through play*, again shown in a new colour (violet). Coincidentally, R4’s response raised this same issue and brought in a further new dimension, *career paths*, coloured green. So, after the first stage of responses, the strands and themes of VA’s conversation can be envisaged as figure 7.

The conversation continued to a third stage, illustrated in figure 8. VA replied to R1, this time focusing on expectations, and adding a literary reference to the dangers of burnout. This concluded R1’s strand.



R3’s conversation continued with VA responding on the theme of play, noting that she needed to “*keep a tight rein*” on herself, then ending the strand with some social comments and an emoji.

Figure 8 Vignette and conversation VA, stage 3

The fourth strand was stimulated by R4’s shared professional interest in career guidance. At this third stage, VA replied with a reference to a website where more could be read about a particular theoretical model.

Figure 8 brings together the different levels of these four separate conversations that arose from VA’s vignette. It traces the way in which some themes were taken up, others left aside and yet more

introduced through the interaction. Each strand was different, but all shared a combination of social and thematic exchange, and, as illustrated by the introduction of new colours, fresh learning and reflective opportunities emerged.

Vignette VB

The second vignette, VB, has been selected to highlight the difference between individual conversations, both in content and the nature of interaction. It should be noted that the conversations spanned weeks, and VB's is analysed at an interim stage – it would later be extended by further respondents.

Whilst the first vignette related to a professional situation, this second story is much more personal. On advice from her doctor, VB was sent immediately to A&E with a potentially life-threatening condition. On the way to hospital, she contacted loved ones and asked for their prayers. By the time she arrived at hospital, her pain had eased and she was able to return home. At this point, unusual events began to occur e.g. her mother told her for the first time that she loved her. In her reflection, VB described how she had lain with her forehead on the floor and felt as if she was releasing women's transgenerational trauma as the pain ebbed. She acknowledged that this was difficult to believe but concluded that,

"This might read as mind-blowing or airy fairy to some readers (...) Though I keep doubting it myself, my trust is deepening more and more. That was another learning from this experience"



In order to analyse this vignette and the conversation it triggered, the key theme was identified: pain, and sub-themes were 'intuition', 'relationships', 'time', 'spirituality', 'trust/doubt' and 'trauma'. These were again represented in an arbitrarily colour-coded form, as shown in figure 9, allowing each theme to be tracked across subsequent exchanges.

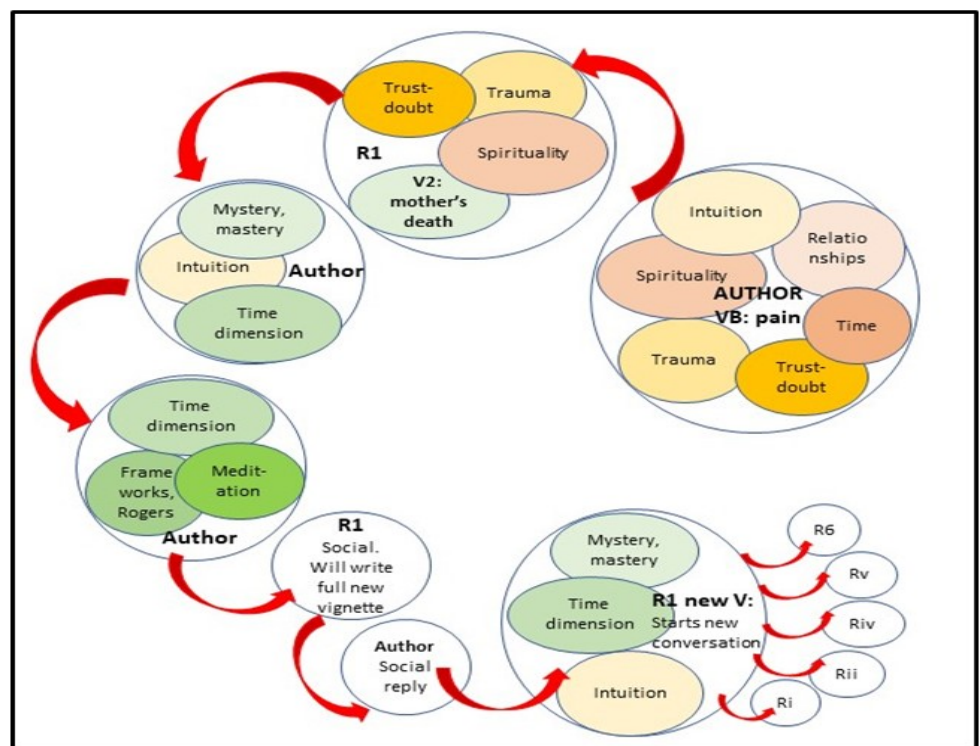
Figure 9 Vignette and conversation VB, stage 1

This vignette elicited two responses at this time, R1 and R2. Each of these is now analysed separately through subsequent stages.

Figure 10 follows R1's interaction with VB, showing that there was a ping-pong exchange. Initially, R1 took up the themes of trauma, spirituality, trust and doubt. In her first response, after some social exchange, she added a vignette of her own to illustrate how she, too had had an uncanny

experience when her mother had died. She ended the post with a question: *"How do you explain my pain and immediate awareness of her death?"* The question prompted VB to respond in turn, *"Such a great question."* Encouraged by their common interest, VB replied to the vignette (shaded light green) extrapolating the relationship between mystery and mastery, returning to intuition and introducing a new time dimension (mid-green).

Figure 10 Vignette and conversation VB, stage R1



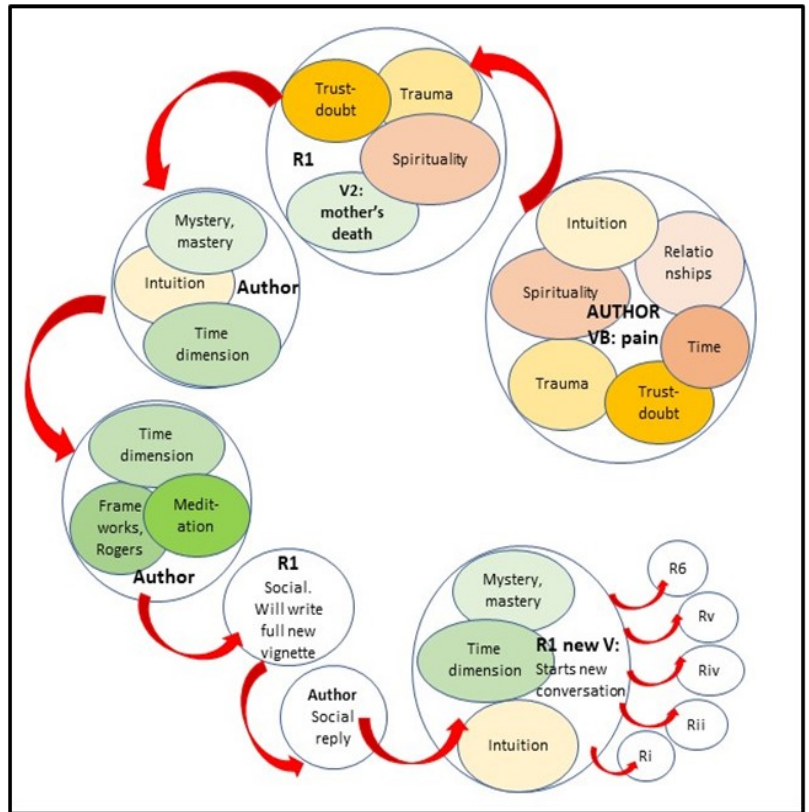
At this point, the technology did not facilitate the lengthy response VB wished to write, so she continued in a second response to R1. Here, she introduced a new dimension, *meditation*, and drew on the words of Carl Rogers to express her personal beliefs:

“the most personal is the most universal “ ... I resonate deeply with this ... (universal for me is also involving ancestors).

R1 replied that, also due to the limitations of the social platform, she would respond by starting a new conversation, which would support a longer story. This she did in a vignette that explored the issues intuition, mystery and time. Thus a new conversation began, taking forward some of the original themes, and adding to them as 6 respondents replied to her.

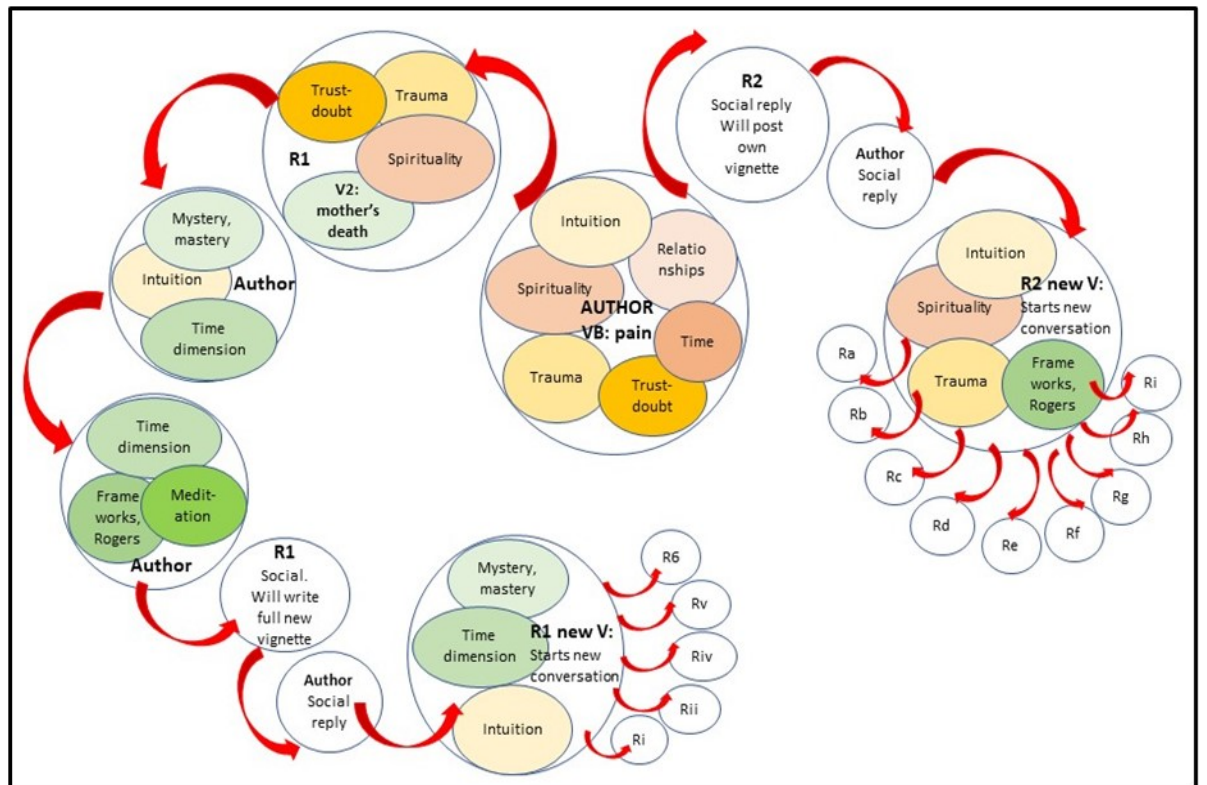
Figure 11 Vignette and conversation VB, stage R2

The second conversation sparked by VB was much shorter, but quite different (figure 11). R2 began socially, *“I have carried your post in my heart/head from early this morning”* before going straight in in her response to promise a reply in a separate vignette, thereby going directly to the stage reached by R1 at the end of her conversation. VB made a social response, saying that she was looking forward to reading R2’s vignette. As figure 11 shows, at the time of the analysis, there had been nine conversations triggered by this new vignette. Interestingly, the new vignette also took the conversation forward to include Rogers.



To conclude VB’s conversations, figure 12 brings together the two different responses to VB. The difference in pattern between this and VA (figure 3) is noteworthy: each conversation is unique, and even within VB’s, two quite distinct interactions emerged.

Figure 12 Vignette and conversation VB, stage 4



Reflections

From the perspective of our role as facilitators of this type of community of inquiry we learnt many things: things that we could only learn by trying to facilitate the process. In designing our process and supporting infrastructures and strategies we did not draw on Sahana Chattopadhyay's 'Six Enablers of Emergent Learning'²—we only discovered this framework as we were well into the process. Nevertheless, this framework seemed to fit our experience of trying to facilitate our process.

Perhaps the most important thing we learnt was the importance of developing a culture in which people felt free and safe to express themselves and share highly personal and meaningful aspects of their life. We also learnt what we, as facilitators had to do to nurture a culture that encouraged and supported the relationships and generative conversations that were necessary in order to create a living and evolving social ecology.



The model piloted for analysing the two examples has enabled us to visualise the process of interaction and to pinpoint the stages at which new themes are triggered. It has enabled us to see and appreciate the idea of 'generative conversations' in action within our community of inquiry, and to witness learning for participants as it emerges in the dynamic of an inquiring community. The conversations triggered by the two vignettes that were analysed reveal increased learning derived from everyday lifewide experiences. This has been supported by the conversations being closed, reassuring participants, while the social exchanges are essential to building this sense of trust and confidence.

The learning goes on, for as we revisit the material assembled during the 6 weeks of the lifewide learning project, we make individual interpretations which we develop further towards a new understanding of the process of social learning within the ecology we co-created. Elsewhere in the magazine we share other examples of what we have learnt through what for us has been a seminal learning experience.

Sources

Jackson, N.J. (2016/2019) Exploring Learning Ecologies Chalkmountain: LULU Available at: <https://www.lifewideeducation.uk/exploring-learning-ecologies.htm>

Chattopadhyay, S. (2019) Six Enablers of Emergent Learning: Creating the conditions to foster emergent learning in organization. Available at: <https://medium.com/activate-the-future/six-enablers-of-emergent-learning-a1b9390279a>

‘Why did I join? Why did I stay?’

Motivations for participating in the Learning Lives Inquiry

Rob Ward and Melissa Shaw



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Melissa is a career coach and mentor. She has a particular interest in the role of volunteering for purpose, employability and learning, with benefits for individuals and organisations. She has been a Volunteer Trainer for the National Trust since 2017. With a background of working in HE, she led organisational development, educational development and technology enhanced learning functions. She was an Institutional Correspondent, then Trustee and then Deputy Director of the CRA, with Rob Ward as Director. She is currently exploring life-writing.

“Fellow explorers realise that the purpose of our adventure is to share ourselves and what we understand about the ways in which learning emerges from our everyday lives and unlike academic learning, learning in this way is full of emotion. We are on a mission to turn our embodied experiences into meaningful stories that we can share with our fellow explorers.”

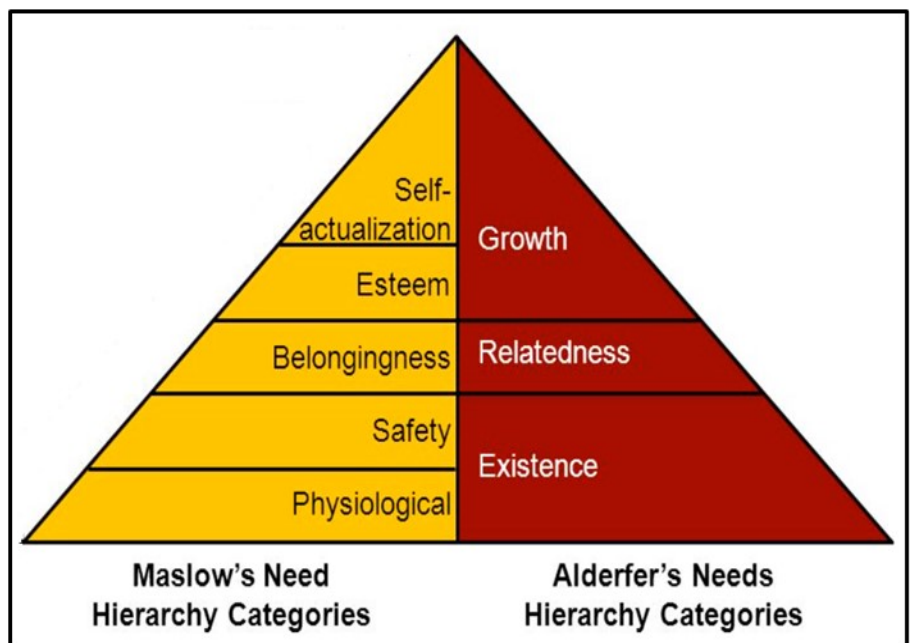
In the beginning... of our journey

The genesis of this contribution can be traced to the production of initial ‘learning domain’ⁱ maps at the start of this process of professional inquiry, conducted in 2021ⁱⁱ. Specifically, participants were offered the opportunity to make use of a template which in essence offered a menu of contextsⁱⁱⁱ, or to design and depict their approach in an alternative form of their choosing; and asked to post one vignette of their learning each week, for a period of 5 consecutive weeks. The results were many, varied and highly individual.

RW presented two versions of a ‘domain map’, utilising both the contextual categories suggested and the framework provided by Maslow’s hierarchy of needs^{1,2}, a theory of motivation which stated that five categories of human needs - physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs - dictate an individual’s behaviour. This is itself almost 70 years old, though it has been expanded to include cognitive and aesthetic needs³ and transcendence needs⁴. The approach has been criticised, though interestingly Maslow never meant his pyramid to be presented as a hierarchical pyramid, but rather as a ladder with scope to move up and down’ A recent investigation by Bridgemen, Cummings and Ballard,⁵ reported that the inventor of the iconic pyramid was Charles McDermid, a consulting psychologist. It appeared in his 1960 article in Business Horizons ‘How money motivates men’.

Figure 1 Representation of the motivational categories of Maslow and Alderfer.

Maslow’s formulation was not altogether supported empirically⁶, and it was reformulated by Alderfer⁷ and Schneider and Alderfer⁸. Alderfer’s ERG theory identified three groups of



‘core needs’: existence, relatedness, and growth. ERG theory shows that a person works on fulfilling these needs simultaneously or separately, depending on the difference of goals, status, and the environment, so is a conceptualisation which is more closely aligned with recent empirical research.

From the initial perspective which gave rise to this paper however, the use of the original hierarchy highlighted three aspects:

- The value – for one participant in the Inquiry at least - of having a framework or structure to ‘bounce off’
- The importance of this conceptualisation being rooted in the language of ‘self’ alongside reference to external contexts/ environments
- The potential centrality of psychological motivation to lifewide learning^{iv}

It is the second and third of these points we seek to explore further here.

Our approach to the task

All participants and members of the facilitation team contributed both domain maps and vignettes, with 152 of the latter in total. As both participants in the inquiry and observers/authors, we were aware of the potential to be influenced by our own experiences of the Inquiry exercise and sought to draw upon several data sources as a means of mitigating this. Specifically, we -

1. reviewed the initial domain maps, mostly written, but often with strong visual images, produced by participants, to seek to highlight where and how participant motivations might manifest themselves.
2. undertook a key word search of the complete (domain and vignette) data set produced as of 3rd March 2021, using the terms: self (30 refs), motivation (13), why {relating to questions asked of self}, (45) purpose (1), reason (14), pandemic (27) and lockdown (37).
3. reviewed comments from the final discussion of the closure meeting for the Inquiry, which involved seventeen participants.
4. commissioned a reflective responses exercise, after the process, completed by a self-selecting sub-set of participants, with three further questions^v to explore the significance of psychological motivations for Inquiry participants. Nine participants chose to offer these, and those who responded are acknowledged at the conclusion of this paper.

Drawing more fully and in detail upon these sources, we identify in turn contributions which may be categorised under one of three headings -

1. individual motivations for participation (whether from the outset or which were articulated through the Inquiry).
2. motivations which reflected the wider and highly unusual circumstances in which the process was conducted; and finally.
3. the ‘generated context’, i.e., that which was built through participation itself. We review evidence for the significance of each below, using a range of direct testimony and analytical commentary.

1. Focus upon the person: Individual motivations

Reviewing the quantity of vignettes posted over the duration of the online Inquiry, there are comments that highlight individual and personal motivations to decide to engage with the group and its activity. Colleagues emphasised the significance of the process as providing a **personal opportunity/motivational structure to implement an existing commitment or interest**: for example, a commitment to learning through reflection and particularly reflective writing.

“I had been thinking for some time about recording and reflecting more on the learning which happens in different areas of my life.”

“.... I realise that I am already learning in a way that feels faster and more urgent than ever before... but I need to “write it up” to deepen the learning and help it stick. I also need to use the writing as a reminder (at some point in the future) of what has been learnt, so it doesn’t get lost/forgotten as circumstances and situations change.”

“..... I have realised that writing (for me) is key to understanding things, on a deeper level.... But I struggle to motivate myself to write if it is not for any particular purpose, or it won’t be read/shared – I need an extrinsic motivation in order to “do the work” that I know is required, despite having a deeper intrinsic motivation (comparisons with exercise could be drawn here – and why we often need gym classes or personal trainer to keep on track!).”

Post-hoc questionnaire responses further highlighted this sense of personal motivation:

“was very interested in the concept of lifewide learning and the different domains of our lives where we learn and wanted to find out more and to be part of a collective research group where I could reflect with others...”

“Motivation to write my innermost thoughts and not be “ashamed” of stating my feelings and reflections about life-learnings.”

Others spoke of motivation rooted in a professional commitment to the field

“As a freelance consultant, building a network, sustaining, and developing relationships is key, and I have learned that these communities relating to my work have a significant influence on my motivation and subsequent productivity. Investing in developing relationships therefore is an increasing priority for me, one which I greatly enjoy and appreciate.”

“I was motivated by a curiosity to find out how Lifewide thinking has been developing since I do refer to it in my professional training.”

“I am interested in foregrounding informal learning. In my own writing I often talk about the value of informal learning spaces. This seemed like a lovely opportunity to share such moments with others.”

“Definitely benefitted professionally because I teach on adult education programs – and I learned about mapping/cartography of learning (more from doing than reading about it).”

and some recognised connections between the two:

“My motivation was strongest when I saw the connection between my personal and professional activities. I think that also informed the key learning point for me i.e. I realised the extent to which I naturally want to connect up learning experiences across informal and formal spaces.”

“...my intertwined personal/professional life loomed large in the vignettes. I knew this, orchestrated it, strategized so it could happen at this stage of my life. However, when it stared me in the face in the vignette, it solidified my intents for this very thing to happen and it was a very exhilarating moment.”

2. The impact of the external context

Multiple comments within the Inquiry referred to the concurrent context for the exercise of the pandemic and accompanying lockdown, in the early months of 2021, and the role of the Inquiry in that situation. Some contributors explicitly mentioned practical and emotional consequences for themselves of the pandemic and of lockdown. One acknowledged how they saw the Inquiry at the start as providing *“what I anticipated might be some gentle distraction from lockdown.”*

Others described negative reactions to the pandemic and/or lockdown:

“...during these isolated, lockdown days”

“...the general feeling of frustration and sadness at what was happening in the world around me”

“For me this encapsulates the reduction of contact and loss of ‘self in close community’ that the pandemic has brought into my life, and the associated sense of loss in terms of my – and others - ability to implement carefully crafted plans. My sense of personal agency has been challenged as never before.”

Some comments, while emphasising the impact of immediate circumstances, suggested more positive and even hopeful outcomes, emphasising the need to make sense of restricted circumstances and/or personal networks, coupled with a desire to make the most of opportunities in difficult circumstances:

“I think there is something for me around the fact that current (Covid-19) circumstances have meant that learning & adapting (in almost all of my domains) suddenly feels urgent – it feels (to me) like we really are at a potential turning point, and a lot is at stake (both individually and collectively) in terms of coming through this period and ensuring that we move towards a more positive future....to salvage something good from all of the grief, anger, and anxiety.”

“There is also something about the shared – but vastly different – lived experiences of the pandemic that feels quite unique, and is acting a driver to connect with others? I certainly feel that the majority of my learning at the moment is arising from (or consolidated by) conversations with those around me.”

Other comments proposed a way of being, as a result of their situation, that the contributor understood and shared with other participants:

"Now retired my physical adventures are more limited, this has been particularly noticeable during the pandemic, but I still take whatever opportunity presents for one. I am however able to adventure in my mind."

"I have a reputation as the research investigator in my team as I am always seeking out new information and am keen to learn from others to advance my knowledge and expertise. I also like to share this with others and enjoy coaching and nurturing others. Lockdown has given me the opportunity to do this so much more."

3. The context generated through the process

Alongside the context generated by external factors reported immediately above, we must also locate a third emerging and crucial perspective, namely the working of the participant group (social ecology) itself. Specifically, the development of motivation for engagement was facilitated through the perceived importance of the 'group culture' collectively generated in and through the process of the inquiry. Comments from vignettes illustrate how the act of sharing and reading the posts and comments itself shaped and contributed to a positive and even growing motivation to engage and continue:

"So – thinking catalyses other thinking, and disclosure begets more disclosure..."

"...the sharing of the vignettes by others enriches my appreciation of my own experience....."we all arrived on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now".

Words and phrases such as 'empathy', 'enjoyment', 'confident with each other' and 'a culture of generosity and kindness,' permeate the synthesis contributions. The reaction of one colleague in the post inquiry questionnaire perhaps encapsulates this most clearly:

"I connected in a safe place, showed up, and self-reflecting. I slowed down enough to witness life-long learning with others, learned from their wisdom and knowledge, and was present in an unfolding creative process. The honesty of others touched my heart reminding me how similar we are within our differences and that learning is available if I'm open in the moment to its presence."

A range of reflective comments provided by those participating in the final closure meeting also bears further witness to the striking importance of this for these participants:

"I really appreciated reading other people's vignettes..."

"I felt insecure... but I felt reassured..."

"but I probably went further... experienced a lovely generous spirit in this group..."

"I felt very nervous about writing... outside my comfort zone... but then others were so much more revealing.... The generative approach of people revealing meant I didn't feel worried... sense of security over the six weeks..."

"Professional persona and personal persona... people being nice about it gave me the confidence to share more..."

"idea of discomfort came up for me at times... very different from social media... you were responding to the person and their experience rather than the point they were making... I almost relished the discomfort, learning how to engage with people around challenging topics..."

(the importance of) *"developing the culture we want to be in... a terrific experience... a generative programme".*

This impacted upon the general sense of participants motivation to continue to participate and collaborate in a range of ways, specifically -

- colleagues' perceptions of themselves that came with the sharing of vignettes, including more confidence, greater freedom, a sense of empowerment, greater self-worth.
- the emerging sense of being in community, of connectedness and openness with others in the group *"I look across at others vignettes and thinking it's not just me" ... "I felt I was embraced by the community."*

Learning became over time both an individual/personal and a shared/social experience. Such a perspective can be connected to the recognition that vignettes served functions that were iterative and generative; they provoked further self-disclosure and new learning amongst those who responded with comments, and perhaps others who were silent too:

"There was something very special about reading, digesting, reflecting and responding to the work of others. It was a reflective process in itself... responding to the person".

What emerged: our own reflections

Placing the Inquiry in a theoretical framework, we noted at the outset that Alderfer and colleagues further developed and refined Maslow's hierarchy in terms of three categories: Existence, Relatedness and Growth, emphasising basic material requirements, the desire to maintain important interpersonal relationships and personal development respectively. The latter includes the intrinsic component from Maslow's 'esteem' category and the characteristics included under 'self-actualisation'. Interaction within the inquiry appears to illustrate and reinforce the key significance of motivation to participate connected to interpersonal relationships and personal development, (Alderfer's relatedness and growth categories of motivation) which were present both in participants initial reasons for participation and appeared to develop further over the lifetime of the Inquiry, being themselves fuelled by the dynamics of posting, responding and discussion. By way of example, in terms of relatedness¹:

"One of the reasons I joined Learning Lives Inquiry was to connect with professionals in my field, and this research, due to its participatory nature, aroused my interest in attending."

"To join a worldwide learning community, to share views and reflections to understand more about the research project and be part of a research community and learn more about this fascinating area."

"To be part of a community of people who are interested in Lifewide Learning."

Some responses in this category emphasised the importance of 'affiliation' with this community and its leadership:

"...to support Norman and the team."

"To connect with Norman Jackson, Jenny and Rob."

Comments which may be connected to the Alderfelder 'growth' (personal development) category included:

"Learning never stops. Having the opportunity to stop and reflect deepens knowledge and allows questioning which opens new visions."

"To create some motivation for myself to focus on reflection."

"The subject of life wide learning makes such sense to me because it's the way I see life and education: endless opportunities to grow."

These also sparked the composition and submission of additional vignettes¹⁰.

Inevitably a new initiative, even for an existing community, leaves unanswered questions that can inform planning for future exercises. In terms of participant motivation, to what extent did the particular circumstances of global pandemic particularly influence participants to join the Inquiry in a search for relatedness? Would this search be repeated in subsequent exercises and in different circumstance?

In terms of framing the inquiry, broad structural ground rules were stated from the outset and enforced. Individuals who registered but who, for instance, did not post by the midpoint, were removed, in line with these ground rules. Did the ground rules and their use enable and support the emergence of the group culture illustrated in this article? In addition, how far did psychological support, reinforced as the Inquiry got underway as recognised key members of the community work to provide supportive and appreciative responses to posts, enable the group culture to further develop, and spark conversation and the composition of further submissions?¹⁰ In the absence of a control group we can only speculate that these things were important to the experience and the outcome. But such questions might hold value for exploration within future initiatives and activities of the Lifewide Education community.

Acknowledgements

We are very pleased to acknowledge to contribution of the following participants who responded to our post-inquiry questions: Diana Gregory, Peter Hartley, Catherine Hodgson, Chris Piccone, Eleanor Pierre, Dory Reeves, Donna Rooney, Angela Shapiro and Victoria Wright.

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FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1 What were your motivations for wanting to take part in the Learning Lives Inquiry?

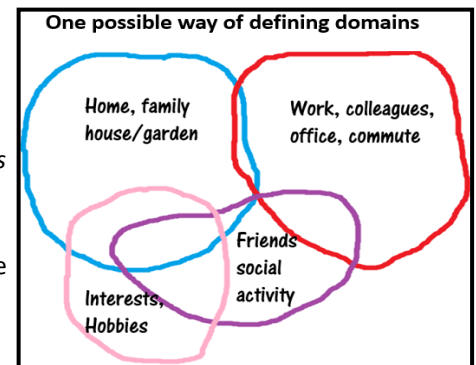
- **Make connections:** 'To connect with other participants from around the globe and learn from them'
- **To collaborate on inquiry:** 'To inquire with enthusiast of learning online'
- **Nature of the inquiry:** 'am very drawn to arts based, autoethnographic and reflective narratives'
- **To share common passion:** 'To be part of a community of people who are interested in Lifewide Learning'
- **For self-esteem:** 'To prove to myself that I am still learning'
- **Belief in lifewide learning:** '...life wide learning makes such sense to me because it's the way I see life and education : endless opportunities to grow'
- **Opportunity to reflect on pandemic:** 'Reflecting on my experience of the past months and years while living quite differently from before the pandemic and lockdowns'
- **Previous collaboration with Lifewide:** 'I had published in Lifewide magazine'

Experiential Domains: Personally constructed frameworks for making sense of lifewide learning

Norman Jackson

In our inquiry we tried to anticipate the idea that learning was relational, situational and contextual by encouraging participants to recognise the domains or environments within which they experienced their everyday life. We offered the following definition of an experiential domain - *a recognisable part of our life in which we spend time doing particular things, with particular people, often in particular places, using particular tools and other objects. Through these experiences we learn, develop and achieve in ways that are consistent with who we are and our past history of experiences in that domain.* We also provided an illustration of what a person's experiential domains might look like (Figure 1) emphasising that this was only one interpretation.

Figure 1 Example of an experiential domain map



We encouraged participants to create a representation of their experiential domains at the start of the process as this provided away of relating experiences to the environments in which they occurred. While some participants struggled with the idea of compartmentalising their life in this way— preferring amore holistic and fluid notion of how they experienced their life. Most

		vignettes
Inner Environment	Self	43
	beliefs, values, concerns, conscience, identities, confidence, agency, culture, spirituality, creativity, relatedness, belonging, loss, fortitude, resilience, growth & MUCH MORE	
	Work/professional life/practice	43
Outer Environment	Family, friends, community	32
	Home /garden / environs	28
	Hobbies/interests/leisure activities	15
	Virtual / technological	10
	Travel / other cultures	06
	Formal study	01

participants tried to use this idea and a synthesis of all the domains cited in the vignettes is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Synthesis of experiential domain categories cited in vignettes

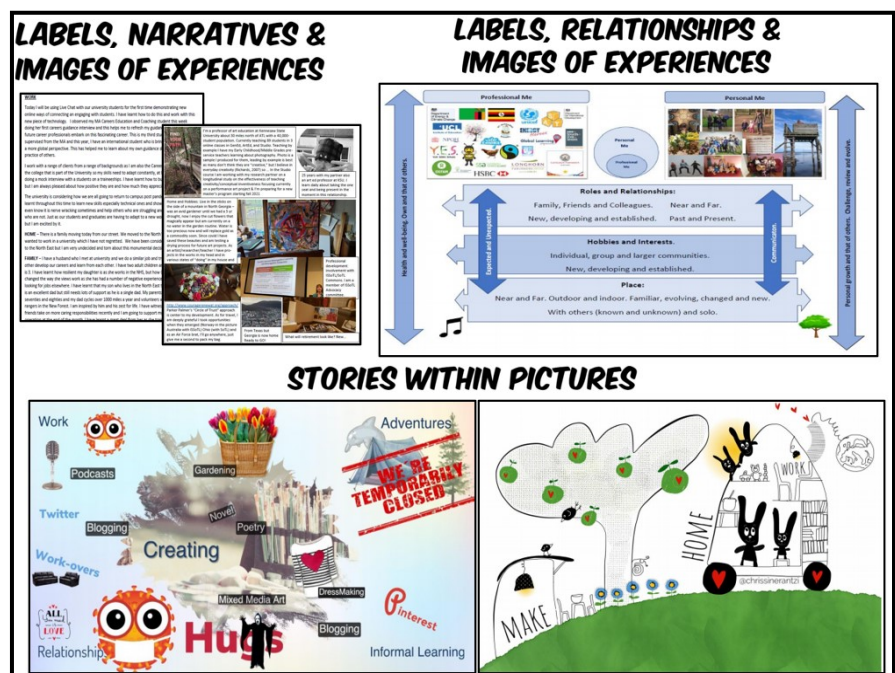
In addition to the physical, social and virtual environments recognised, the synthesis

reveals the category of a self-domain, which it might be argued, is the inner psychological and cognitive environment of an individual, incorporating their past histories of experiences and learning. The domain of self or selves is clearly present in all other domains whenever someone has an experience and it is the unique set of perceptions, thinkings and doings in a particular environment and situation that give rise to unique experiences.

Diversity of representation

One of the joys of social learning is the way individuals creatively engage with a problem to produce solutions that have meaning to them. Figure 3 shows some of the ways that individuals created their own frameworks to explain their everyday experiences within which learning emerged.

Figure 3 Different forms of representation used to represent the idea that our experiences can be related to our doings in different environments.



Finding a Path: Personal Reflections on the Lifewide Learning Research Process

Diana Gregory



Diana is an artist/researcher/teacher, Professor of Art Education, Kennesaw State University (KSU), School of Art and Design (USA). A former Fellow for Creativity and Innovation at KSU's Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, her focus is on creativity in higher education, faculty development, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

*It's not beginnings and endings that count, but middles.
Things and thoughts advance or grow out from the middle,
and that's where you have to get to work, that's where everything unfolds.*^{1 p161}

Jumping into the Learning Lives inquiry was very similar to the very first time I plunged into the cool blue and deep green water at Barton Springs in Austin, Texas - I learned something about myself. I'm intrigued by what will emerge in a process, like jumping into the Springs to find out what it really felt like, and I have a great deal of curiosity about the unknown, for example with the lifewide inquiry, I knew what was expected - the production of vignettes and a domain map, but I did not know anyone in the group. The quote by Deleuze above sums up the six-week process of self-reflection and attention I experienced while participating in this group. Working on the vignettes called for my attention. After I read the questions provided to keep in mind when reflecting on a learning experience, I found myself drawn to context: what was the context for my learning? For me to process new information or gain new knowledge, I need to connect what is happening in the now with my inner world of memories/dreams/thoughts by bringing attention to my response and employ a self-reflective process. Although the self-reflective process was important, the greater learning occurred when I read posts of other participants. It not only showed me how my learning was unfolding, it provided a window into the collected experiences and wisdom of the group. When I reviewed my contributions to the process, I'm struck by the amount of space allocated to images as opposed to text. As an artist/researcher/teacher, I realized I rely heavily on imagery to convey meaning.

At the start of the process, we were invited to create a map of the domains in which we have our everyday experiences. My domain map (left) was a series of seven images with short text explanations and of the five vignettes produced only one did not contain an image. What was this about and what have I learned in the process? I did a close read of my final products to find connections and to self-reflect on the journey itself. My domain map was anchored with an image "Find Your Path." I created this photograph as an example for an assignment created for the early childhood/middle grade pre-service student/teachers I taught during the six-weeks of the research process. The students had submitted their introductory exercise and were tackling their first major project in photography. I was struck by the sentiment "I'm not creative" that many expressed in their introduction which filtered into my consciousness as a need for "*leading by example*" and my belief in "*everyday creativity*" as noted by Ruth Richards² and others.

Looking back, I realize this image was not only an experiment in learning about the capabilities of my own phone, but it was also a metaphor for the journey I took while writing the vignettes. In the original photograph, I wanted to show the students that the assignment was doable, not impossible. It was as simple as taking a photo with their phones and adding text, a process available on most devices. Trying this myself for the first time and using it as an example for my students was part of finding my path. I began my first vignette by recounting the vivid imagery of a dream. When I awoke, I had a clear understanding that I needed to move my inside rambling thoughts of "I can't do this" into a conscious process. I paid attention that week to my dreams, feelings, and emotions and when I noted any internal dialog not related to the present moment I would consciously breath in and out until I was in tune with the present. My reflection on "Work, Family, Friends, and the Virtual World" amplified my context for learning where I noted paying attention to dreams is an important aspect of my artist self by stating:

I try to journal these thoughts collecting images/connections/the flow of the moment, as I go. I pay attention to where the dream may emerge and what connection might be happening in the present moment. I want to honour the many sources of understanding and creativity that occur in my dreams. My motivation for this type of learning emerged during graduate school. I found I had persistence to tackle hard tasks if I paid attention to my dreams and left behind the self-doubts and thoughts of failure. Instead, persistence furthers if I allow myself the 'benefit of the doubt' and adopt a 'can do' attitude and a belief in creative living fostered by a love of the language of art and design. This keeps me in the moment – still learning, still trying, honouring each emotion, being braver about sharing, and remembering to breath.

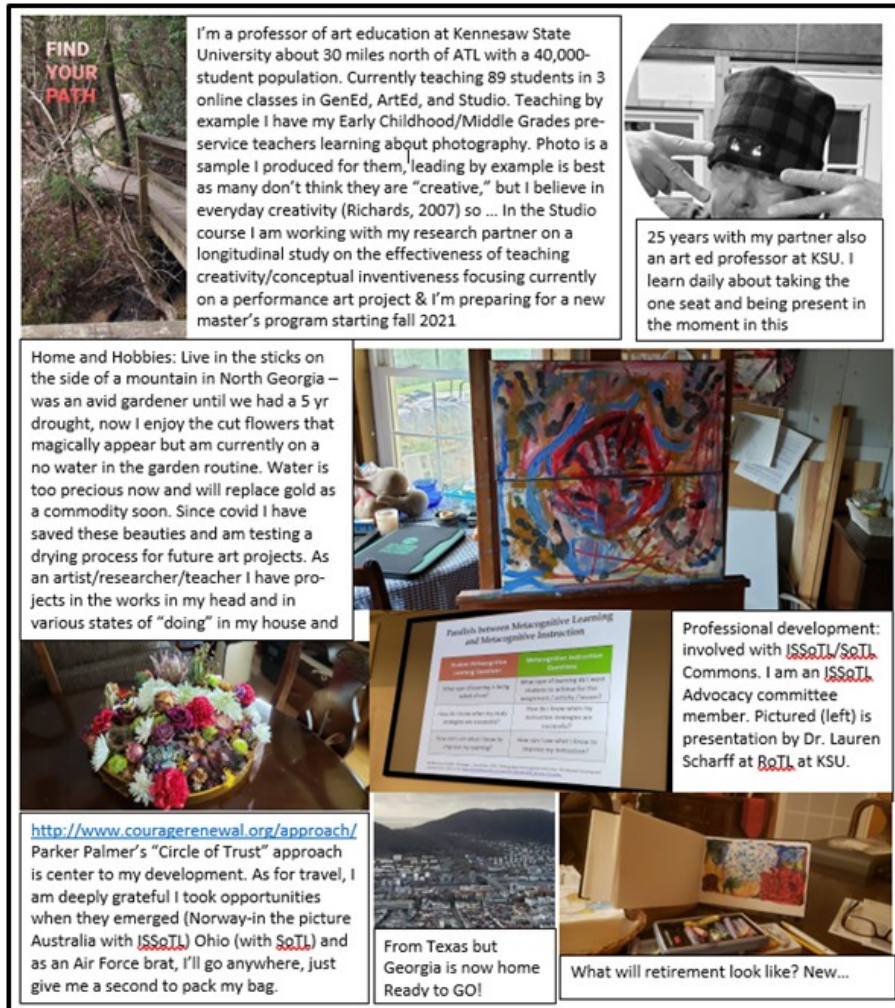


Figure 1 Map of my experiential domains

Paying attention to dreams, thinking of the possible, not labelling myself with restrictions, being open to new experiences – all of this is part of the path of discovery of lifewide, lifelong learning that I live. While completing the first vignette, I agreed to participate in two collaborative opportunities, one with my mandala mentor, and the other with a colleague in the School of Art and Design. Would I have agreed to these had I not been in the research group? It's clear to me now, that airing my feelings and recounting my experiences, mattered. I jumped into the research process, like diving into the pool, trusting that it was a safe place to show up and be reflective which brought me to my second vignette on water and a sense of place.

My second vignette on environments involved my interests, hobbies, and family. Because I love to swim, it began with a reflection on water and a sense of place anchored by two tales of natural springs –

Jacob's Well in Wimberly, Texas where my grandmother grew up which is now a state park, and Barton Springs in Austin, Texas, which struggles to stay open due to groundwater contamination. My grandmother grew tomatoes, beans, flowers even in her tiny suburban backyard. As a gardener I never thought about groundwater or how much water I used. Then in 2004 my focus changed when I took a deep dive searching for information about water for a faculty art show. I noted:

I found intelligence reports from West Point describing the decline of groundwater and the potential impact this could have on society, including military action. I learned that the Inuit elders are consultants to NASA on ice melting – they record where there is a new bird species for which they have no name as evidence of climate change, and I paid attention to what was happening to water on a global scale.

Groundwater is a global crisis³ which is captured by NASA's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) satellite mission. After a 5-year drought here in Georgia, I suspended watering my garden and now let the earth and plants take care of each other. Writing about water in this self-reflective way, again brought a focused attention to my habits. I am more conscious now than ever about my use of this resource and as I noted: *most importantly, I can change my habits*. Changing habits is a form of implementing new learning. The take-away from writing about water for me has been renewed awareness about buying local food, paying attention to running water, washing fewer loads of clothes, and keeping a water bottle handy. I can be the change.

This brings me to vignette three, the only vignette with no image, where change was the main theme of “Beyond Me/Benefiting Others” in the domain of Work/Family. Here an everyday event, recounting the disastrous dialogue between co-workers in an online meeting, became a learning moment. Having the time to reflect and write about what occurred deepened my understanding of my own actions and what I learned in the process. This understanding of the moment became clear when I reflected:

Trust the process. The group needed to storm to form. I needed to convey enough information individually so that compassion for and understanding of new roles could emerge. This was probably the first time I really didn't worry about the outcome. Whatever happened I knew I could provide a safe space for learning to occur, that the group would pull together, and we would be stronger as a group. I trusted in the group, I didn't fret or worry (this is a new one for me). I stayed calm in the storm which paid off in the next meeting.

I found myself trusting the process, worrying less about flare ups. I was looking beyond the now to the next step while really trying to stay present, push less, and ask questions instead of offering advice. An aspect of self-reflective learning also came from new learning about accepting thanks and gratitude when it was expressed, rather than push it off.

This idea of trusting in the process emerged in the vignette four when my frustration erupted over an article I had written, being rejected. I spent ego-time defending the model in the vignette only to realize once it was published in the research group, I had slighted a prominent author who informed my work. This was a valuable lesson in humility and reparation. By acknowledging my mistake in the group, I fortunately was able to repair the error. While some of what I wrote in this vignette resonates with me even now like:

I'm just going to keep trying. The more I learn about how I learn, the emergent nature of my own understanding of emotions, behaviour, and beliefs in my abilities, my self-motivation and ability to reflect and integrate as I go along...

I saw my frustration and determination in this reflection. Throughout this process I've witnessed a need to slow down, to breath, to reflect rather than respond. What did emerge is a nugget of self- understanding “*with the belief that something better will come out of taking what I know, pursuing with curiosity what I want to learn, and incorporating that through reflection and attention.*”

My final vignette was predominately an image of a chrysanthemum done years ago yet it symbolically represented what the entire process brought up for me:

the unfolding nature of my learning. The connections between the domains are strong. I can't pick apart one from the other. Learning to cope with health issues without stress; learning to work less compulsively on school work and recognize I'm good enough; taking time to celebrate life's moments like our 25th anniversary; working on maintenance issues when the internet and phone go out together; being present for family and friends; walking, cooking, preparing for a workshop; going to bed early because good sleep matters, noticing the little things more and fretting less about the big issues since they are going to work out one way or another.

That's what being in this process was about. It gave me a safe place to show up, reflect, and share with the knowledge that my thoughts would be treated with respect. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to slow down enough to witness and be with others on the path and to have the privilege to learn from their shared wisdom and knowledge. The honesty of responses in the space deeply touched my heart. I am reminded of how similar we are within our differences and how learning is available to me if I'm open to its unfolding.

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*My final vignette was predominately an image of a chrysanthemum
done years ago yet it symbolically represented what
the entire process brought up for me (Diana Gregory)*



Wee Stories from a Lifelong Lifewide Learner

John Cowan



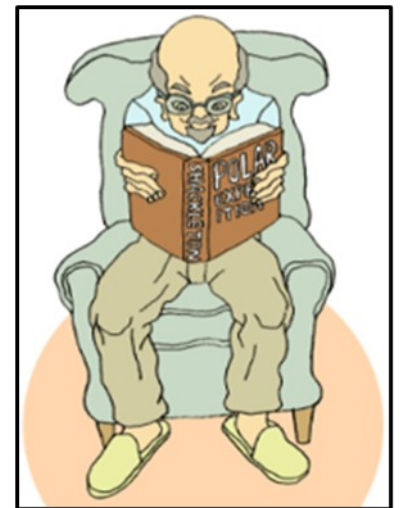
John is one year short of 90 and a passionate lifelong learner. While his first professional love is civil engineering, surely his mistress is student centred learning and helping other teachers develop themselves so that they can better support their students. John was a greatly valued Associate of the Surrey Centre for Education and Training at the University of Surrey where the concept of lifewide learning was developed and applied in HE, and a founding member and Honorary Fellow of Lifewide Education. He says, “I’m not very good nowadays at keeping a daily or weekly diary in which the tale of my bits of learning is told in readable and reflective form. Instead I have assembled a handful of wee stories which, for me at least, tell

my tale more effectively.” The illustrations in this piece are drawn by Kiboko Hachiyon for an earlier issue of the magazine but I think they deserve another outing.

Unexpected learning

Domain: Personal interests

For Christmas, my son gave me a book entitled *Map of a Nation*, written from work begun by the author as part of her PhD. This proved interesting reading. For, as a young civil engineer, I had early been inducted into the mysteries of land surveying. I had enjoyed many days in the field with ranging poles, chain and theodolite, engaged in triangulation and levelling.. This book’s account of the development of the Ordnance Survey also had strong historical content. I had not known that military surveys in the Highlands were hastily arranged because they were deemed necessary after the Jacobite Rebellion. For the English soldiers charged to trace and execute those rebels who had escaped from the massacre of the Battle of Culloden had been unable to find their way around the Highlands - because they had no maps. The researcher expanded on the sequence of historical events following the Rebellion, in detail that was new to me, and of interest. She also recounted how Lowland Scots contributed to the compiling of the first surveys originated by that military purpose.



I became immersed in the intriguing story that then unfolded, including the setting out and meticulous and precise measuring of the baseline on Hounslow Heath; the development and use of the Great Theodolite; and the Paris/Greenwich triangulation to link England and France – all before the Napoleonic Wars. I have now learned much detail about the history of an important period for my country; and about the way early land surveys coped with massive triangulation, before the days of trig points and today’s satellites.

Infectious enthusiasm

Domain: Extraneous and almost irrelevant learning

Without much interest or knowledge of the subject matter, I had noticed that my son has mentioned to me from time to time how much he was looking forward to a forthcoming America’s Cup. Neither he nor I would call ourselves sailors, although we have both sailed; in his case, by manning a week-long cruise on the West coast; in mine, crewing a catamaran owned by my best friend who was a keen competitor. Certainly I knew of the history of this event, the oldest sporting challenge in the modern world. It began with a sailing duel in which the Cup was lost by Britain to America. It has never been won back in return, despite repeated challenges in the ensuing 170 years. Recently other challengers, even from landlocked Switzerland, have been successful – notably and in the last event, New Zealand.

Short on conversation topics in the weekly lockdown phone call (when he usually mainly converses with his mother), my son talked to me one week about the ongoing preliminaries in Auckland. I expressed polite interest. He sent me a URL on YouTube; I felt I should at least give it some mild attention.

Immediately, I became completely hooked on this America's Cup business. I was soon enthralled by these so-called boats which spend most of their time up in the air, balanced on apparently slender hydrofoils, with their crews of frantically winding men some of whom rush from one side to the other every time the boat tacks. I struggled to master the speedy commentary, addressed to enthusiasts familiar, as I am not, with rather specialised vocabulary and concepts. I thrilled as the boats jostled for position at the start, avoiding as best possible a punishable early crossing of the line. I was baffled by the penalties frequently awarded thereafter. I didn't unravel how they featured in the scoring system, as the winner of each heat seemed to be the first one to cross the finishing line, regardless of their history of having been penalised. I had questions for my son during his next phone calls. We messaged in between; and I found and read up articles on the internet.

There was a round-robin process to select the challenger. I believe I actually did understand the process in principle, but will not try to summarise here. In the final stages, the American challenger capsized, punctured and spectacularly began to sink. The salvaged hull was taken away, and was a non-starter in its next scheduled races, while it was gutted and refitted. The sparse press accounts provided some detail of the damage and of the repairs, to which I gave the keen attention of a recent enthusiast.

As I was writing this, the drama continued. I missed out on my usual Sunday paper crossword to catch up with the post-mortem, and analysis of what Ineos Team UK needed to do to be successful in the next few days. I planned to be logging on for the report of every race. But, in the present context, I hope that my point is now adequately made. This was a short period of fairly intense and admittedly somewhat superficial learning about something engrossing that I would previously have dismissed as irrelevant to me.

I learned about the race rules, how hydrofoils work on sailing boats and dinghies and spectacularly on surfboards, and what designers and crews and tacticians do to enhance performance and win races. As I make that summary, I can reflect on the fact that my enjoyment in watching the next stages in this event was to be directly enhanced by my partial understanding of how the equipment, designs, tactics and skippers function. This knowledge makes me more aware and appreciative of the intriguing subtleties of what's going on. I find this rewarding – however short-term my enjoyment of watching this unique series of events may be.

Lockdown frustration

Domain: Thinking about my thinking

Living virtually in lockdown for 12 months has left my wife and I to our own devices. We soon found the attraction of multi-tasking between my wife's gardening (in the summer) and my tutoring (online), household tasks, TV, reading until our stock on the bookshelves and kindle began to run out – and of course the ubiquitous jig-saws.

For the last of these, we engulf the dining room table (unlikely to be used imminently for guests). We spread out the pieces, first finding the edges, of course – *and* the corners (though for our one circular jigsaw the absence of corners was more troublesome than we had anticipated). We have found a split in interests and abilities similar to the eating habits of Jack Sprat and his wife.

Once we have the framework established, my wife hunts through the assembled residue for pieces that share a common and interesting feature – contributing to the bonnet of a racing car or a large garden bush. Meantime I assemble the pieces likely to belong in an expanse of sea or sky, joining onto our established edging. She strives to match distinctive patterns; I battle to match shapes of undistinguished colour. I don't have an eye suited to finding and picking out parts of intriguing features. My wife finds no delight in assembling masses of sea or sky. Happily we thus avoid treading on each other's territory.



Until recently, my strategy centred very simply on matching shapes. I would identify the shape to search for, in order to match up with just one already established portion of sky or sea. I also rely on subtle differences in tone and colour, to whittle down my selection of pieces to be trying out. Interestingly, my brain knows the pattern I am seeking amongst pieces of a certain shade, and I 'describe' this shape to myself rather than picture it. But, interestingly, that description in my mind of a sought shape is not something I can put into words, even to myself.

I am taken back to memories of a visit to a conference in Vienna for which only the main sessions offered simultaneous translation from German, in which I have no ability. I did a lot of walking there. I had the intense and curious and ultimately rewarding experience of doing some profitable creative thinking about the potential of reflection-*for-action* – without putting it words until very much later. I didn't talk to myself. My "language" was thoughts and thinking. It was a strange wordless experience for one who often talks quietly to himself while walking, or even showering.

So what have I been learning from this rambling? Have I been learning anything? I've re-awakened my awareness of the importance of my thinking without words or images. I must try to find a way into internet items on this subject, if I can work out what it will be called. So I've opened up and activated my curiosity about what this reflection says of the way my brain works, and why or when and how it eschews words.

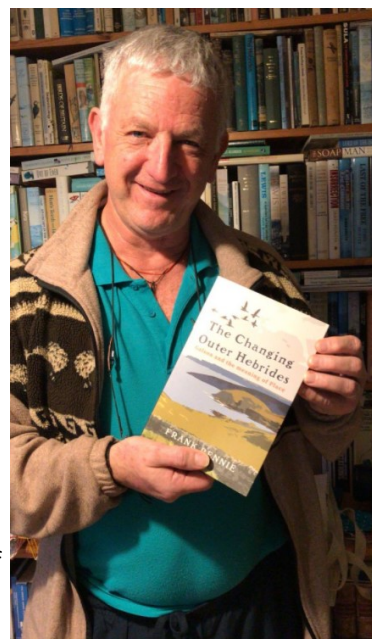
Serendipitous enrichment of learning

Domain: Scientific understanding

Twenty five years ago, when I was the Scottish Director of the Open University, I encountered a remarkable character, who was then one of our part-time tutors. Born in central Scotland, Frank Rennie had studied geology at Glasgow University. During this period, he developed an interest in Hebridean geology, and Hebridean culture - and an incidental commitment to learning to speak Gaelic. He settled as a Gaelic speaking crofter in the village of Gabhsann (pronounced "*Gow-sun*"), became an influential chair of the Crofting Commission, and bobbed up occasionally in my encounters with the nascent University of the Highlands and Islands, in whose Lews Castle College he appeared as a lecturer, then professor. I recall that, on a QAA visit to Lews Castle, I chatted with him about the Gaelic language. He told me that one of his daughters had been quizzed by a researcher asking her about the language of her home. Almost shyly for such a strong character, this immigrant islander recounted proudly that her response had been "*My mother is an island woman; and my father has a little English.*"

A few weeks ago, I encountered an interesting educational paper, and noted that Frank Rennie was one of the co-authors. Doubly interested, I looked it up, and serendipitously encountered mention of a book he had written and recently published: *The Changing Outer Hebrides*. My lockdown reading being restricted, I ordered a copy from Amazon, expecting an interesting autobiographical tale. My prediction was off-target; it was a fascinating text, but hardly autobiographical.

I find it a difficult text to describe what it covers. It concentrates on the tiny township of Gabhsann in the Western Isles. Frank studies it rather as if examining a very small part of this world under a powerful microscope. He explains the evidence of change and development which he finds and observes in his role as a resident of this small crofting township. He studies change in this location, from the change beginning when the world began, to change as tectonic plates moved and split, to change as the terrain eventually attained relative stability and was inhabited. He moves forward in time, to the advent of animals, birds and human beings, in ever-changing populations. He notes and overviews for his readers the evidence of changing occupation by all of these, over a period of more than five millennia. All such changes he locates to the tiny environment of Gabhsann, and what he sees and finds there.



As I read I had been Unconsciously recalling and building upon my undergraduate study of geology all those years ago. I went on to share with my wife, who is a keen observer of birds, the chapter on the changes in bird life that Frank has observed; and so we shared in new learning for each of us, at different levels. In all of this, I noted how the author was making constant reference to the

great depth of meaning contained for him in Gaelic names and words. He tellingly conveyed to this reader his enthusiasm for the richness of his second language.

What did I learn? Perhaps first of all, the joy of meeting a wonderful person, in the pages of his moving book. It would be simple to claim that I extended my undergraduate geology, and learned a little about the development of bird and animal life in more than Gabbhann, in more than the Western Isles, even in more than Scotland. It would be naïve to state that I renewed and considerably deepened my acquaintance with Frank Rennie. But has it been meaningful for me? It has certainly opened my eyes and my mind to think again and more of geological, biological and social history in terms of a process of explicable change that not only explains the world I live in, but which is continuing as change today, tomorrow and in my future.

What have I learned by thinking about this learning? I suppose I have sometimes doubted my researching preference for considering particular and distinct examples in an approach that the scholarly world can disdain, but from which I can so often actually find much particular learning that I value, for me and those in my situation. Frank's writing reassured me firmly of the value to be found in studying a particular context. I have also found food for thought in the deep, scholarly understanding of this changing world which Frank Rennie has accumulated and is still accumulating from his highly detailed scrutiny of the small rural township, to which he is utterly committed, and belongs.

Sitting uncomfortably on the horns of a (reviewing) dilemma

Domain: Interpersonal skills and integrity in their exercise.

There are five or six educational journals that fairly regularly approach me with requests to review. I frame my comments as far as possible around what needs to be done and can be done if the author is to make the submission which I am reviewing acceptable for publication. I leave it to the editor to decide on a judgement. Some editors and authors have kindly volunteered that they appreciate my style in so doing, which has been reassuring.

Recently, I was asked to review for a somewhat unusual journal. It is published bilingually in Kazan. When I was invited to review, I was told that the Board had it as a firm priority to enhance the quality of educational research papers published in Russia, and in their journal. The English editor explained to me that he was also anxious that reviews should be encouraging, supportive and facilitative. These two aspects of our reviewing remit have not always proved simple to reconcile.

Drafts are sent to me in English, with no indication of whether they have been translated from Russian by the services of the journal, or have been submitted in English by authors who may be writing in a second language. When the submitted research is of reasonable merit, I have no problem in following my usual style. I open with any major issues that I have identified as requiring attention. These could be the absence of detailed information likely to be of interest or use to readers, disregard of the Hawthorne effect in an account of innovation, or the all too common confusion of causation with correlation. I identify an issue, gently perhaps but still firmly explain briefly why it needs to be addressed, suggest how I believe the writer might do that in a revision. I avoid using judgemental and critical adjectives and adverbs and leave my frank description of weaknesses to speak for itself. I follow with my usual list of minor constructive suggestions.

It is with drafts of highly questionable quality that I find myself in a Catch-22 situation. I am charged to address those two different purposes and sets of criteria. I must firmly maintain high standards and I must facilitatively encourage the authors of strikingly weak research. I am learning a new type of multi-tasking, with the complication that I must satisfy both sets of criteria simultaneously, and not iteratively as in other multi-tasking. It is a personal development in progress.

Frustrated self-management

Domain: Basic IT skills

Apple regularly update my Mac; I have no option. Nowadays, each time they do so, they unkindly remove my printer driver. This was restored last time by a digital trip to Computer Solutions. Next time, I tried their approach for myself. I meticulously followed the driver manufacturer's instructions, step-by-step and precisely as listed. Each time this led me to a screen calling for entries that I was unable to provide; I just couldn't key them in. After over half-an-hour of frustration, I phoned Computer Solutions, who

solved my problem in two minutes. I learned that you cannot load a Kyocera printer driver to a Mac unless the printer is plugged in to the Mac. I wish the instructions had told me that. Simple but important learning!



In the very early days of IT in academia, I recall the late, great, Prof Jo Black, the original and pro-active evangelist for Ed Tech, telling how almost every self-teaching program on using the machines on which we produced the punch cards setting out our programming led to frustration and calls for assistance. Trainee users could not find out how to switch on; they did not discover the switch below the keyboard, in front of their right knee. They were told to begin by switching on. But they weren't told where and how to do that.

Similarly, when a youth club organiser entrusted me with his beloved Landrover to take my weekend group to the Cairngorms, I had problems when I followed his advice to top up. I sat stupidly in a garage forecourt, unable to find the filler to the fuel tank. I even crawled underneath seeking a clue. Fortunately a kindly fellow driver spotted my confusion, and told me to lift the driver's seat pad; the fuel intake was under there.

Reinforced learning after all those years? Ensure that learners who are to self-manage can get started effectively without the frustration and embarrassment which could lead them to give up.

Serendipity again

Domain: Metacognition

During the past few weeks, I have been unusually busy with many tasks that are not connected to each other. I need to prioritise. And then I need to get going! I still find it enormously helpful in this multi-tasking, especially on a busy day, to make a daily note of items in hand on a post-it. This simple system has taken me on purposefully from a rambling and disjointed wander around the assorted agenda items in my head. I note what's to be done, in preferred order. I follow my firm and ordered written agenda, item by item. I block them out when I have attended to them. I find this listing keeps me focussed, even if I deliberately switch between items when I am Pomodoroing (Editor—*breaking down work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length*).

I've noticed recently that, although my list is clearly printed, and the blocking out is solid, a heavily blocked-out list suddenly stops being useful and motivating. I feel that I need to rewrite the outstanding items in a fresh list, which then becomes functional for me. I didn't have this bother five years ago. Why does a partly blocked out list stop being motivating, become distracting, and encourage my mind to ramble over what's to be done, rather than getting on and doing it? I don't know yet, and I should try to find out. I'm not sure I want to explore it; perhaps what I learn will be unwelcome news. Meantime, I'm glad I've learned how to keep my post-it notes being effective for me.

Underpinning memory

Domain: Cognition

Like many older people, I have difficulty remembering names. Sometimes it's only either the first or the family name that eludes me; sometimes both. Often delayed action memory, unprompted, can suddenly present me, even days later, with the missing name. It then seems to stay for days or weeks in accessible, refreshed (?) memory.

Recently I chanced on a quirk in this process. We discovered that my journalistic grand-daughter uses her first name and then "Riley" as her surname on Facebook, of which my wife is a member. We wondered why. I asked my grand-daughter, who explained it was for security. By chance, social media security arose in conversation with a colleague as we prepared for a Fellowship Dialogue where that issue featured in her notes. She told me that, for security or privacy, she has two Facebook accounts, one in her married name which few contacts would know, and one in her poetry writing name.

In a few inconsequential conversations such as this one, I found that I kept forgetting the name "Riley". I asked my wife to remind me. She was not amused to be asked yet again. I explained why, then realised I had already forgotten the surname in the course of that brief conversation. Reminding me yet again, she said firmly "Write it down" – presumably assuming that I would refer to this

note next time instead of bothering her. I wrote it down. Now comes the point of this rambling story. I have had no difficulty whatsoever in remembering “Riley, without once referring to my written note. I have used this trick subsequently to remember the surname of an Asian neighbour. Again, I have found myself recalling readily without referring to my note.

I need to explore the link between writing notes and my memory’s hidden and effective use of that thinking without referring to the written notes.

Learning from adversity

Domain: Pig-headed conservatism

For many years, various educational journal editors have been sending me submissions, and asking me to review them. They seem to find my reviews helpful to them, and to the authors. A normal week can bring 2-3 requests. I welcome this workload. In my relative inactivity nowadays academically, reading some at least of the drafts enables me to keep up to date with current developments in my field. I have long established a way of handling such reviewing engagements; it works for me, and depends on my scribbled hand notes on a hard copy version of the submission.

Recently, though, I suddenly found myself with an unusually massive pile of such requests, while I was devoting time to mentoring a tricky application for Senior Fellowship of Advance HE. Additionally, the grass needed to be cut, in preparation for the spring visit of the lawn rejuvenators. I cut the front grass. Feeling quite pleased with how easily that had gone, I went down the side-slope to unplug the mower, stepped back, stumbled, and sat down. I couldn’t rise. My stiff old shoulders refused to push me into the vertical. My elderly wife’s assistance was insufficient. We called out my son and grandson from their home nearby; they easily lent sufficient gentle assistance with what Scots would call a “howk up”.

My shoulder problems burgeoned. Next I sagged onto the floor during a middle-of-the-night loo break. I could only lie on the carpet until the wonderful “Falls Team” quickly did the trick with their air-driven apparatus for raising me,. Social Care speedily provided devices to enable me to cope and to avoid trouble next time. A visit to the gp led to a diagnosis of inflammation of the major muscles linked to my trunk. These are only in mild discomfort unless I try to use them when they then complain strongly and go on strike until left alone. Steroids were prescribed. By lunchtime most days I have moderate use of my shoulder muscles.

It was around this time that, as I mentioned earlier, Apple decided to update something on my Mac overnight, as usual removing my printer driver. I have proved unable to restore it, even with assistance . More adversity. My usual mode of reviewing, to which I have been pig-headedly committed for years (knowing it to be “best for me”), limits me to the single small screen of my Mac, on my small occasional table. My preferred initial working is on a hard copy version. It’s old fashioned, but it works for me. And no-one but me knows how inefficient I am being, in this technological age. I print out a submission, read it several times (often before going to sleep or after morning coffee and toast in bed), and scribble notes on the hard copy as I go. I note the points to dwell upon in my review, and the constructive suggestions I can offer collegially. But I cannot do this without a printer; not with shoulders that refuse to support a laptop for reading in bed; and not with limited ability when I get up to move my cursor and click my mouse – yes, I’m old-fashioned about touch pads, too!

After my minor physical setback, I forlornly opened the next incoming submission; and then a new file to be the sandpit for my comments and suggestions. A skim read showed me that this was going to be a demanding review. It would entail thorough preparation and careful writing. I took a couple of inches off both the submission file and the comments sandpit. I shifted the sandpit down and back to the right. Then I could just click from one to the other. I retitled the submission as an edit and set up Track Changes for my minor edit suggestions.

The process went remarkably well. Instead of having scribbled and circled major issues dotted throughout a bundle of hard copy pages, I had points collected clearly and succinctly and conveniently together in the digital sandpit. Once the reviewing seemed complete in its coverage, I could look at my already assembled issues in the sandpit, shuffle them around, refine their wording appropriately, and gradually and almost effortlessly assemble the main part of my review in that file.

I wrongly expected my IT specialist to speedily restore conversations between my Mac and my printer. When or if the problem is solved, I don't then expect to be printing hard copies of the outstanding review requests any more. For adversity has obliged me to overcome pig-headed conservatism, and move comfortably to a more effective approach. I shall now be preferring paperless re-viewing – while contributing to saving the rain forests.

Experiential learning

Domain: Using IT

At this point in the academic year, I am a volunteering, unpaid, confidential tutor to first year students of engineering at the University of Limerick. If they wish, I offer them suggestions about how to enhance their reflective reviews. In these, they set out their first claims for their stewardship of their development of the core skills that are exercised in their demanding course, which centres on student-led experiential learning. In this pandemic year, most claims focus on online teamworking skills, and on mastering the assortment of apps which are on offer to the class.

I often have to remind them that the rubric for the review assignment stresses that claims should not be bland assertions of progress. They should assemble evidence-based reviews of tangible change, and how they brought that about. So a persuasive claim should be framed around verbs that describe what they did, and the changes that ensued.

My prompting can stimulate thoughtful reflection of the development of teamworking skills and communication with their groups within Teams. But, so far, it hasn't brought a similar yield in regard to using apps. I get the impression, perhaps wrongly, that this generation have already mastered as second nature an effective approach to becoming acquainted with a new app, however they do it and to harnessing its affordances quite naturally. This is in stark contrast to my own recent switch from reading books on my kindle to reading them on the clearer and more attractive iPad that I have acquired. I tapped firmly, to gain access to the settings. Sometimes I accessed them; more often, I did not. I learned slowly that there was no need to tap firmly. A touch sufficed. Then I discovered that *location* mattered. A gentle touch roughly mid-screen to bring me all that I needed.

I envy the young students for whom this discovery learning process seems to be a natural and unexceptional approach. Has trial and error experiential learning become a natural and engrained part of their use of new apps? Moving at least somewhat towards that should be an item on my aged learning agenda.

Video conferencing

Domain: Communication by video

Recently I was reviewing a draft paper about obtaining qualitative research data during the pandemic, when face-to-face interviews are impossible. The writers were particularly concerned with research subjects who have had an acquired brain injury. But the paper's contents and findings are equally useful and thought-provoking for anyone researching anything qualitative without using face-to-face interviews. This is a superb paper, which I hope will be published without delay. There wasn't much scope for me to comment, other than to say what I've just written here. I just had two wee questions for the authors, and me, to mull over.

The first was occasioned by several mentions in the paper of the importance of non-verbal cues as data. This prompted me to think again about my frustration when I am talking with someone on Teams or Zoom. Maybe it's because I was an engineer, but I have always needed to use my hands when I am explaining something. I wave around, indicating magnitudes and directions and movements. And it often frustrates me nowadays when I realise that the other person doesn't see this part of my communication, as they would if we were in a room together. All that's usually on the screen is a head and shoulders shot, that doesn't even go down to my shoulders. So I've taken to pushing my Mac as far away from me as reasonable, to get my hands in shot when I start gesticulating. I don't know yet if this change makes for better communication for the other persons. It certainly makes me feel happier about what I'm trying to convey. I need to find out from colleagues how they feel about having more of this speaker on shot

My second question is still somewhat woolly. When I'm in meetings on Teams, Skype, or Zoom, I can often be merely one of an audience. This leaves me free to detachedly observe this eye-contact business, which was also mentioned in the paper. The

an incidental pondering. I have been trying to get better eye contact by politely mentioning the problem to the offender. They don't always seem to get the point. Perhaps that's because they never have the opportunity to see themselves as I see them? The speakers that truly puzzle me at the moment are those few who are not *quite* looking at me, so that I don't feel that we have eye contact. If this was real life, I'd think their attention was addressed to a soup stain on my tie. Such misdirected eyes are maybe associated with laptops which sit rather too low for observation of, and by, the speaker, with the result that they are looking down at it. I must pinpoint one or two who exemplify this, and talk with them about it. It certainly matters to those of us who are interviewing or engaging in dialogue, that the need for direct eye contact by us is well established.

Bird life

Domain: Natural history

About 20 years ago, we had renovated our upstairs bathroom. This left a little hole, maybe a small and now unused waste-pipe, in the rear-facing house wall. When my wife and I relax over a cup of tea, we sit in the afternoon sunshine facing the not-visually-exciting rear wall of the house. Today, when we were doing so, my wife noticed a small bird popping into the hole/pipe. It did so again and again. We watched carefully. It seemed to be taking a long time to turn round in the restricted space, and to emerge. The hole is so small that this little bird was sometimes having to reverse to get in. We watched avidly, full of questions: Was it hoping to nest there? *Could* it nest there? Would it go on trying? We'll be watching every day in the hope of learning the answers.

Last wishes

Domain: Values

This week saw the death and funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh. I had always admired him, but was surprised to learn the great depth and width of his personality and of his activity, that emerged in the extensive and much maligned TV coverage. This man who so endeared himself to his staff and neighbours has had a powerful influence on the Queen, the institution of royalty, preserving nature, encouraging youth to develop lifewide qualities, and much more besides.

This week's reminiscences often stressed the Duke's desire to avoid fuss – a wish that featured in the funeral service which he planned for himself. I warmed to that. In my own minor way, I have always avoided any fuss over moving out or moving on. I treated the day I left school as simply the day when I moved on to become a university student. The Monday after I completed my university studies was simply the day I became an apprentice civil engineer. I made no fuss over the attendant and preceding departures. When I left engineering consultancy to become an academic, I settled for no farewell event, just a quiet packing up of my things and departure over the weekend. I repeated that pattern when I left Heriot-Watt, and again when I left the Open University to retire. No fuss; my own little version of what the Duke, I learned, had also regarded as important.

What a smug reflection! It suddenly dawned on me that I have tucked in my computer files a developing succession of two-page notes for my family, about how I would like my funeral to go – all admittedly incorporating options that would oblige them, not me, to make final choices, although admittedly from *my* suggestions. The underlying plan centres on what matters and has mattered to me in my life, and centres on readings and praise that have been meaningful for me. How presumptuous! Surely I should be consistent in departing without fuss? Surely any service should centre on what those who attend would wish to feature, not what I have decided for them?

I'm in my 90th year, and have no reason to suspect that death is imminent; neither have I reason to disregard the fact that it must come relatively soon. I learned this week from the promptings emerging from the death of the Duke that my anticipation of that time has led me to be utterly hypocritical about declaring to my wife and family my self-centred wishes anent my funeral. Of course it should be an event with no fuss, an event in accordance with their wishes, not mine. I



learned reflectively this week that I need to wipe those “funeral wishes” files promptly. And meantime get on with being a lifewide learner in my 90th year.

So what do these wee stories tell me about myself and the way my learning unfolds in my day to day life?

They tell me that:

- I am still learning, even if not very much; there’s maybe some life in the old dog yet.
- I learn in different ways – following pointers shared by friends and family. responding to something of passing interest or relevance; prompted by serendipitous events; responding to what I see as a new challenge, however trivial it may seem to others; worrying over questions I have chanced on, which puzzle me.
- The incidents that lead to learning often do so by raising questions whose answers I’d like to know.
- Motivation for many of the little tasks in which I still engage is stimulated when I have occasion incidentally to learn something new, interesting and useful in so doing.
- Some incidental lifewide learning that is not even related to tasks I have in hand can still open up attractive new avenues for me.
- Much lifelong learning entails sadly discovering the need to discard previous practices, beliefs and understandings.

It all seems in accordance with the five features of achieving wellbeing, analysed by Jenny Willis:

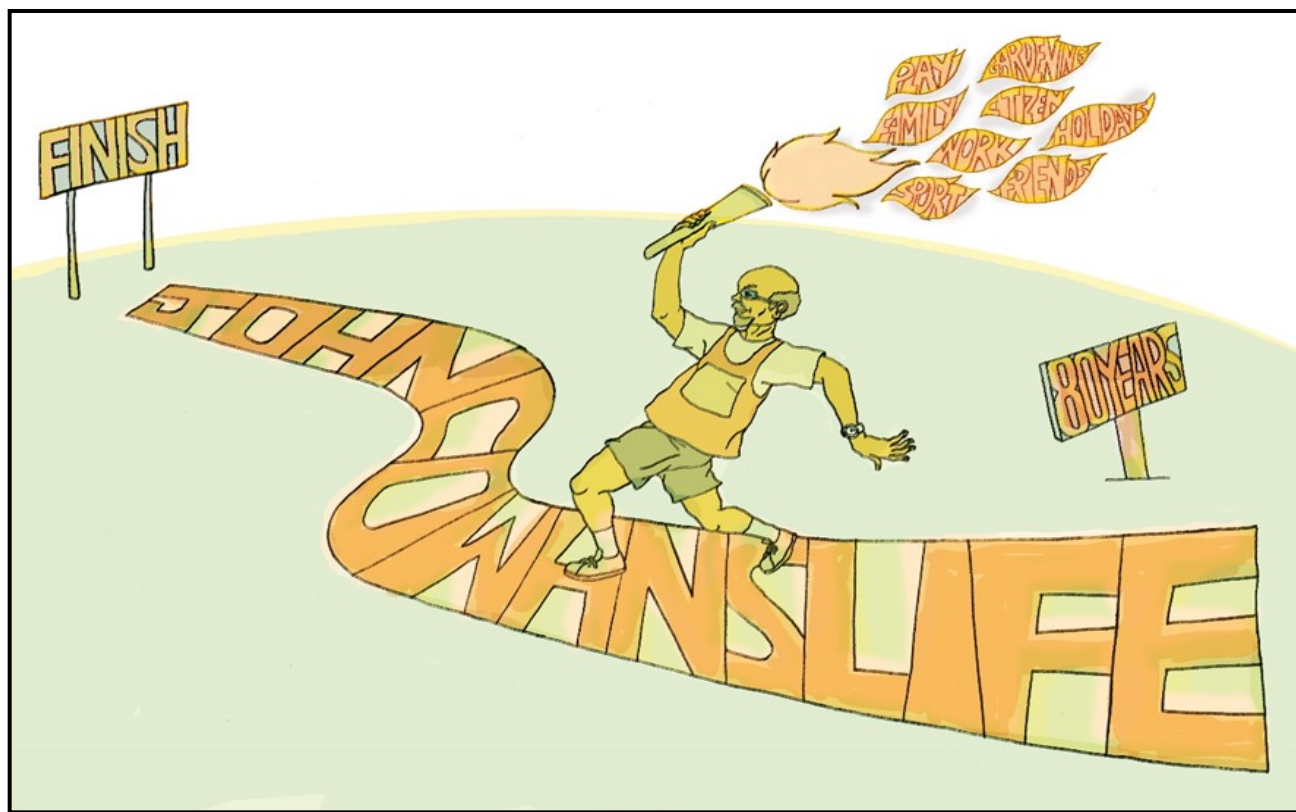
Connecting with the people around me;

Being active and identifying the items I have listed here during my plodding 2400 steps per day;

Taking notice of what I find unusual and interesting;

Keeping learning something new to me;

Giving by volunteering, helping, assisting, and facilitatively suggesting.



Towards a Deeper Understanding of My Own Lifewide Learning

Zahra Bahrami



Zahra is an elementary school teacher in Hamedan, Iran. She has a Bachelor in Educational Technology and is studying for an MA Educational Technology in preparation for doctoral study abroad.

Introduction

In 2015, I entered the master's program in the field of education technology, and in 2018, I defended my dissertation entitled "Critical components of the e-Learning ecosystem of children aged 3 to 10". In the last two years, the field of educational technology I research has tended towards adult learning. So most of the time I find myself researching and studying about learning spaces and improving learning in these spaces. I see the beginning of writing my dissertation in 2015 as a turning point in my lifelong learning. The journey I started and now my learning environment, including the spaces in which I learn, the relationships that inspire me to learn, the context in which I find myself, the reflections that occur to me about past and present, create my lifewide learning, and I accompany them on my learning journey, and with each new experience, my learning environment becomes richer and will help me embark on the new journey I have envisioned.

I consider myself a curious person in learning, especially about issues that I am interested in and have studied and research in that field. Concerning my joining this collaborative inquiry, I first read the guide and concluded that I could participate in this research. Sometimes collaborating in studies and research with non-Persian speakers is challenging for me, because we both have different languages, I need more mental effort than usual to communicate effectively. Although I have experienced that learning means accepting these challenges and trying to enter in learning spaces that are not well known to us. As a lifelong learner, embracing the lifewide dimension of my life, I put myself in such spaces in order to grow.

Vignette 1: Reflection

Domain: Hobbies

The experience of sharing and communicating with the Lifewide Learning Research & Development Group helped me to look deeper into the connection between different parts of my life in the first week. All this week I have been thinking about learning that I have never paid attention to and that has inspired me. As one of the hobbies and interests, I pursue learning a traditional Iranian instrument. When I attended a music class a few days ago, the teacher taught me the technique of vibrating on a piece of music. (This technique creates beautiful nuances in the produced sound and helps to make the piece of music Listenable). I asked my teacher: When do we use this technique? He paused and said: "It is sensory and you should feel when you need to use this technique; It is not written in this piece, I only used it to decorate the piece". I asked again: "I mean on which notes can I use this technique?" he paused again and said: "You are a Beginner; it is a little difficult for you to sense where to use the vibration technique. Let me play once and see in which notes I use it". He performed once more and found that he was using it on the "B". He smiled and said: "I had never thought that I would play it on a certain note; I learned something new and it is interesting for me to learn this with your view". (Some Iranian instruments have elements that allow the musician to create a technique in a



particular piece that may not have been considered for that piece. In this case, the vibration technique may not work in the other piece on B).

Reflection: For me, in simple terms, learning is about seeing things through the perspectives of the people we teach them. After that I started asking myself am I learn anything from my first-grade students? As a novice teacher, I realized that I had learned a lot from my students. By questioning very small issues that I may not have thought about before, they cause me to reconsider the issue and see why I have not thought about it before. Thinking about these little questions (perhaps for us as adults) helps me to see the world as a child, and to use child-friendly methods to improve my teaching, and to help my students understand the subject. This week, with the help of this experience, I asked my students to teach one of the letters of the alphabet virtually. This allowed me to find their views and opinions in teaching and to adopt the simplest and at the same time the most efficient way of teaching. I know I have a long way to go, but I started by Reflecting ...

Vignette 2: Was that tree a wish tree?

Domain: work

Since my classes continue virtually, I decided to use my time to gain tutoring experience and also put money aside. So I started teaching to a first-grader (Maeda) who is also studying virtually at home. Before going to her today, I had made a video to teach an alphabet sign that I had to present in my classroom today. In this video, I taught a lesson with a story. What occupied my mind about this story was what homework or questions should I ask my students to get them to look deeper into the story. (The story was about three animals who each achieved what they wanted with the help of a tree, and in the end, we realize that whose wish was fulfilled in the story depends on how we interpret the events in the story). In the middle of the class, Maeda asked me: How do you teach your students? I said: Like your teacher, with video and stories. she asked again, "Do you have a story now?" I said yes. I made one today. she asked me to play it for her. I remembered that in the morning I wished that a child was by my side and I would play the video for her and she would critique it. After watching the video, without asking her a question, she said: "I think it was a wish tree because everyone's wish was fulfilled. So all three achieved their wishes". When I got home, I edited the video and put this question in it: Was that tree a wish tree?



Reflection: This experience reminded me how much ideas come to my mind as I experience and increase communication. I realized that communication is an important part of my life, and since I live alone, I have to try to raise the level of my conversations and connections. I also realized that when a subject keeps my mind busy, it is enough to look for the signs and symptoms of those around me. With the help of this tree, I achieved my three wishes today. I reached out to a small consultant, wrote the appropriate story question, and the idea of writing this vignette crossed my mind. *Was that tree a wish tree?*

Vignette 3: Learning through curiosity and observing the other's behaviour

Domain: Technology and communication

Since this group discussion space was my first experience on LinkedIn, and I used other social media to connect and chat with friends, using this network was a bit new to me. At the time you were commenting on each other, I was very curious about how you reply to each other in the comments and that person's name also has a link in the replay, and if you click on that name, it will take you to that person's page (a great way to find people page on comments). Early in the comments, I tried different methods to find this affordance and use it, but I did not understand how? A few days ago, when I was commenting in this space, instead of clicking on the replay box, I clicked on the replay option under the name of the person and realized that I had discovered the affordance.

Reflection: This experience reminded me of research from several years ago that was about eLearning ecosystems, and I became somewhat familiar with the affordances by reading Norman Jackson's (2016) book on Exploring Learning Ecologies. I discovered a new affordance that was previously unknown to me, and the discussion environment of this group and observing the comments of others created a learning situation for me so that I could become aware of the existence of this affordance, discover it, and learn it.

Vignette 4: Learning to be kind

Domain: communication

Vignette 4: Learning to be kind

Domain: communication

Today, when I went to the florist to buy a flower, I found a groom with his sister and his sister's husband buying flowers for the bride. So I waited my turn and watched them. In Iran, after buying a beautiful bouquet, the groom goes to the bride to take her to the wedding venue where everyone is waiting. After buying the flower, the flower man told the lady's man to stay (she didn't notice). The man asked his wife to wait in the car for him to return. He helped the lady's man to prepare a rose branch for his wife. The man gave the rose to his wife. It was just like the movies and I couldn't believe it was real. That's why I say it was like the movies because, in a situation where everyone is in a hurry and no one thinks about anything but the wedding, it is romantic and beautiful to get flowers from someone you love.

Reflection: What happened today taught me something. I realized that we also learn kindness. Learning that I may not have thought of. today I learned to be kind even if I am a stranger (the flower man); A rose can do many things. I also did not think I might learn anything from a flower man one day. Learning is just as wonderful, as unexpected, and sometimes romantic.

Vignette 5: Reflecting on reflections

Domain: Self

My teacher always emphasizes that when you start new research, before going to bed think and write about all the things you have been dealing with that day and you may forget later. Write down any feelings or thoughts that came to your mind in the process of this research, strengthened you, or discouraged you. So over these few weeks, I devoted space to my writing and wrote down and reflected on the feelings and reflections that came to me in this group and in participating in it and reading the vignettes of others. Ever since I started participating in this project, it has been challenging for me to categorize my learning within domains, and the question has arisen for me: Do I learn in areas other than research and work? But over a few weeks, I began to write my vignettes in areas that made me wonder if this is learning? And when I read your comments and you helped me connect it to my life, I realized that yes..., this is learning. Also, sometimes when I read other people's vignettes, I had doubts about sending my vignette. I was a Master's student and some of the participants were university professors and had more knowledge and experience than me, and I was a little hesitant to send my vignettes. Sometimes I would take the time to write a vignette, but I would stop sending it. But after reading some comments and vignettes, I realized that some like me had written about the simple and everyday issues of life for reflection and learning, and I was hopeful to think and reflect on my learning again until next week. I later remembered that this is me and I am the one who chooses to be here; I enjoy challenges and I love being in these spaces and making international connections. Learning during these five weeks was sometimes unexpected and very simple for me. I find my learning sometimes unexpected, dynamic, and connected to my relationships. These learnings reminded me that learning always happens; from the 7-year-old students I deal with every day, from the flower man, from technology and learning spaces, and from others comments on my post, and finally from everyday issues that I did not think about before. It is enough to think and reflect on them. That's when learning emerges. Thank you, Norman, Jenny, Rob for the opportunity to meet new people and come up with different ideas. This group and participation in this group helped me to think more deeply about my learning and the connection between different domains of my life.

What I learnt about my own lifewide learning

The six weeks in which I participated in the Linked in discussion, were part of my lifewide, lifelong learning. Perhaps I can say that it was a conscious part of my informal learning. The fact that we spent six weeks trying to reflect on events, experiences, as well as domains of our lives and see what learning has emerged for us and what knowledge we have gained, has made me realize that sometimes learning is not just about experiencing and observing. Rather, it can also be said that learning is about reflecting on these experiences and observations. To describe learning and extract meaning from it, we referred to our experiences and reflected on them. So my learning means my reflection on the experiences and everything I came across that was meaningful.

My learning environments include my students, friends, hobbies, family, researchers from all over the world, my teacher, and social networks (like my experience in the Lifewide Learning research project). I have realized that learning is a communicative phenomenon for me, and sometimes learning occurs from these connections and relationships and sometimes these relationships initiate my learning. By reflecting on the learning that happens to me each week, I became more aware of my informal learning and realized that being aware of my daily learning makes the learning process more self-directed. I also think that by thinking about learning, the pleasure of learning is greater.

Postcards From My Learning Life

Andra Lavinia Ilie



Andra is a busy professional, amateur traveller and avid learner, she is one of those people that thrives on novelty and experiential learning. Originally from Romania, she has lived in Greece and England and she calls everywhere and nowhere home. After finishing her second degree at the University of Surrey, she decided to start a career in London and 4 jobs later, she is still here and contemplating a move to the countryside. She describes herself as “a typical millennial fuelled by a perpetual search for purpose”.

Introduction

I was one of the first student participants in the Lifewide Learning award at the University of Surrey a over a decade ago and I remember vividly the excitement that our work brought to my life. I was a fresher at a new university in a foreign country and looking to fit somewhere where I could improve and make a difference. And here I was – working on my own learning and helping others in similar positions better understand the opportunities that their environments offered for learning. I got involved in a myriad of projects ranging from hosting a radio show, to gaining softs skill certifications, entrepreneurial activities and cultural events and much, much more.

The concept of lifelong and lifewide learning is one that appealed to me from the outset. As a forever nomad (my father was a naval engineer and constantly sharing stories from faraway exotic lands), I have constantly stripped things and experiences to their bare essence in search for meaning; meaning for my life, meaning for my way of being, behaving and progressing in a social environment.

I truly enjoyed being part of the Learning Lives inquiry which helped me organise my thoughts and my approach at a rather challenging time for myself (and humankind!). Spending the time on introspection and diving deeper into several realms of life reminded me that there is so much beauty and meaning around us. Being part of the project helped me connect with others and re-connect with myself by using a wide range of inquiries into my very own learning and experience. My overarching piece of learning from the project has been that being kind to yourself and to others has to be the pathway to a better you.

My vignettes

I designed my five vignettes like a postcard, perhaps subconsciously viewing my experience as a journey.

Vignette: #1
Domain: Hobbies
Date: 11 Feb 2021

Your body is your temple

Narrative:

- After sulking and feeling like time stood still and all that once sparkled was now in limbo (I'm including here no travel, no family around and wedding plans falling to pieces), I dusted myself down and picked myself up and started thinking about how I could turn a global pandemic into a learning experience (a bit like the Japanese martial art of Aikido where you use your opponent's weight against them). One of the first things I decided to do is something I've always wanted to try – sign up for a nutrition course. Said and done!
- I have always believed in the importance of healthy living and good nutrition and with a few dear family members and friends having gone through some serious health issues, I have become very interested in learning about it – I just never had the time.
- Having gone through the training on a brilliant e-learning platform called Udemy, I started to religiously record my food and drink intake, opened some old cooking books that were gathering dust and allowed the healthy magic to happen! Two months later, I feel better and healthier (as does my fiancée) and I have managed to create a habit; you know how they say it takes c.21 days to create a new habit, well, here is one of mine and I love it!

Reflections:

- It felt great to do something for myself and for my other half, whilst acquiring a new skill around meal planning. Learning about nutrition and meal planning only made me want to learn more and interestingly, also made me want to share. With this in mind, I started drafting bite-sized chunks of learning notes to share with my team at work, in an attempt to get them interested and sharing knowledge about healthy living. The feedback has been great and got me to go deeper into my research. I am also seriously considering it for a second career 😊

Vignette: #2
Domain: Home life / Hobbies / Cross-domains
Date: 13 Feb 2021

A homemade eureka moment

Narrative:

- I have been living in the same flat for 7 years now and never before have I had the chance to properly enjoy one of its rooms (amongst other things!). I am talking about a cosy, tiny room that welcomes you with a big hanging map of the world showcasing my travels (colour-coded by year, naturally ☺) and a vinyl player that has been long-forgotten in a corner.
- Last weekend, I decided it was time to dust off some of the good old records and make myself comfortable on the fold-out sofa whilst sipping a cup of my favourite Roibos tea (if you haven't tried this decaffeinated goodness yet, now's the time!)...And then I was transported – transported to a world where everything was easy, where travel was a thing and going to concerts and theatre plays was an actual monthly occurrence. What changed you ask? The music started.
- I was listening to Scorpions, my favourite band of all times and one that I have been bringing into my home and sharing with my other half. It was wonderful to talk it through and see how he sees and understands it, compared to me, for whom it is a personal band with a strong emotional connection taking me back straight to my childhood, my parents and the good times.

Reflections:

- My first thoughts were quite how pleasant it is to let go and just let the music transport you to a time and place that bring you joy. After all, they don't say it's the little things in life for no reason! It made me appreciate the times when going to a gig in a foreign country with not many speaking a language I would understand whilst shouting from the top of their lungs and jumping with exaltation and think – how universal is music and how potent its ability to break barriers and bring us together!
- My second thought was even closer to home; I have been able to share some of the music I like with my partner and he could do the same; enter Counting Crows. And then we started talking about the history of the bands, the meanings and then it got late and we realised almost three hours had passed and we regretted nothing.
- It was wonderfully simple experience and my takeaway is that there are certain things in life that no matter where you're from, where you went to school, what you think or how you look, they are so universal that they can be translated through feelings and emotions. What will you be listening to tonight?



Vignette: #3
Domain: Virtual Life / Travel / Family & Friends – Cross domain
Date: 19 Feb 2021

To travel is to live and to document it is...therapeutic!

Narrative:

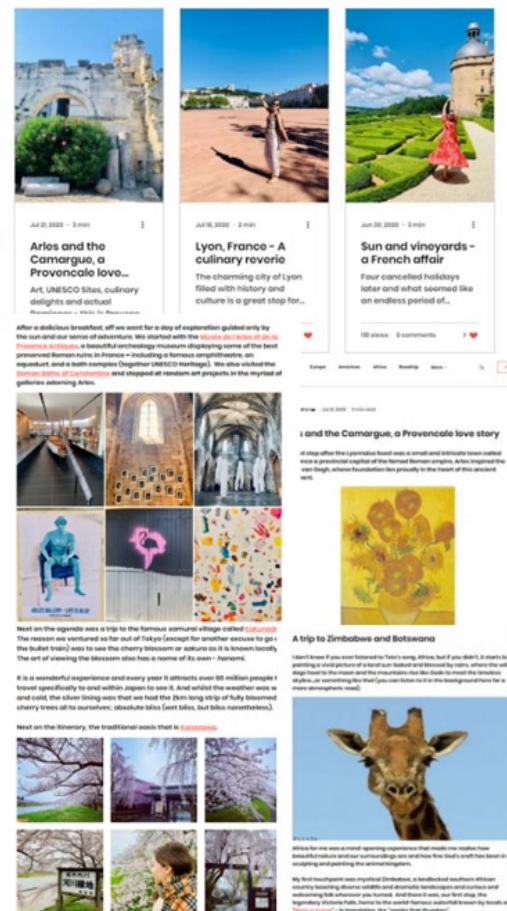
- A while back I had what some might call a 30% life crisis and asked myself "what will I leave behind?" And even more back to basics, what have I produced that can benefit my family and friends, if not society (separate story!)? So on the principle of if you want to change the world you should start with your room, I started contemplating what I could do. As I explained in my Domains Map, travel has been the centre of my life for the past decade – my fountain of youth, my purest, most inexplicable source of happiness (perhaps because my father was a naval engineer always sharing stories of far away lands??), so I knew it had to do with globetrotting.
- As I have been travelling extensively each year (c. 14 trips for leisure per year), my friends and family started asking me for tips on places and some suggested I start writing about it. Start writing about? What a crazy idea. But then I thought, why not? Why not relive my travels by writing about them and sharing with those dear to me; enter The Awayfarer.
- The problem is since lockdown, firstly, I haven't been traveling very much, nor have I had the impetus to actually document my last few trips before the world got taken by storm. Having joined the Lifewide Project however and seeing some of the inspiring stories out there (Chrissi's sea bonanza and Nathalie's micro-adventures to name a few), last weekend, I did it! I wrote a new post on my trip to Provence and this time it felt different! I wonder why...

Reflections:

- I have never taken more enjoyment from writing a piece as I have from writing about Arles and the Camargue ((for those of you who wish to read it – www.theawayfarer.com). I think that for the first time, I truly thought about it – how the place looked, how it felt, the food I ate, the galleries I've seen, the people I met, how it got engrained in my memory and how liberating it was letting it all out in writing (plus, I suspect the forbidden fruit element also contributed!). It's almost like having the best meal you've ever had and being able to close your eyes and taste it again! Harnessing the power of your mind to its fullest.
- I think that writing about experiences can be somewhat therapeutic whilst reinforcing experiences. It has challenged me to think deeper about what the experience meant for me, what I had learned from it and how it changed me. I look forward to writing a few more and mind-travelling to sunnier places with hospitable hosts and culinary delights.

Post scriptum:

- I also realised that part of my blog I had included a "Did you know section" where one of my facts is linked to my work and relates to the longevity of Japanese family businesses. Another cross-domain spillage that made me realise how interconnected the areas of our lives are.



Vignette: #4

Domain: Family & friends) and new domain - (traditions & roots)

Date: 21 Feb 2021

Keeping traditions alive

Narrative:

- Over the last few days I have diligently (and carefully!) been preparing a bunch of envelopes filled with lots of tiny and jolly spring symbols to send to my friends and family across the world.
- This is part of a Romanian custom where on the 1st of March we celebrate "Martisor" (literal translation – little March). What is it you ask? Well, it is a beautiful and ancient tradition related to the arrival of Spring and warm weather, also symbolizing love, respect, appreciation and friendship. On this day, women and girls typically receive a small trinket with a red and white string to be pinned to their jacket and worn for the first 8 days of March. You can read more about it [here](#).
- There are many legends and explanations for the symbolism and it precedes a few other March-related customs, all around the defeat of Winter by Spring. I have also recently learned that other cultures across Eastern Europe celebrate it too (or a similar version of it), which made me feel part of something broader, but also awoke by curiosity to learn more about differences and similarities.
- I cannot explain the joy and happiness it brings me to carefully assemble my envelopes, write a nice message and share my long-rooted traditions with those I hold dear. I specifically like receiving photos from my friends whose children love wearing the pins and sharing them at their schools!

Reflections:

- Every time I write a vignette, it makes me think more thoroughly about what it is that I'm sharing and why. On this occasion, I wanted to share the tradition with everyone in this group, as well as highlight one of my learnings which is around the nature vs nurture piece and how much of who I am today is due to customs and traditions and how much stronger they are when you live in a different country. And yet how nice to be able to share...



Vignette: #5

Domain: Work / Lifewide / Cross-domain

Date: 5 March 2021

Learning and developing - similar but different

Narrative:

- Over the last weeks, prompted by our project amongst others (!), I have been reflecting much more on my work, what I take out of it, what I give and what it teaches me about the field of family business consulting and myself.
- I love the area that I'm in, which is to do with advising families on complex dynamics in an attempt to help them move forward and hopefully keep the business in the family and pass it over to their next generations.
- Last week I had a family (virtual) meeting to discuss a particular family's attitude towards their shared purpose, to help us all understand whether there is enough "glue" to keep the family in business for the future or whether they should consider their options and maybe even part ways (selling, brining in external management, etc.) – I know it's sad but it sometimes happens.
- These are usually quite tricky conversations because there are always divergent opinions but not always open communication until an external adviser comes in to help the family articulate their thoughts and feelings in a safe space.
- During the virtual meeting (which by the way, most family members strongly dislike as they prefer human contact), I noticed for the first time one of the daughters (and CFO in the business) turning her camera off and being much more vocal about her views than in the past.
- Eureka! I said to myself. Could this be the one good thing coming out of the tech avalanche that has claimed global lives? (of course, except the efficiencies and many others). Could this be a way in which an introvert feels more comfortable as they would otherwise in a meeting with all their overpowering siblings around? And is this something she decided on the spot or developed recently?

Reflections:

- I thought about how every day I learn new things at work, I discover new methods and means for engaging with my clients and how me and work is like a ++symbiosis. And then I started to wonder about the boundaries between learning and developing in the context of work, but also outside – what have we learned through each domain of our life and what have we developed?
- I appreciate that learning is the acquisition on knowledge, skills and likely attitudes, whereas developing is the broadening of all of these. But where is the limit? When does one stop and another start? If I am empathetic with my client's daughter, how do I become better at it? Have I always been like this? Did I learn it? And if I do, how do I know that I am better? Bottom line, can you develop empathy?
- And then there's the resilience over the last year or so. This very particular skill - have we learned it since we didn't have it before (possibly) or have we developed it? Was it latent in some corner of our beings only to be awoken by multiple lockdowns and an acute lack of human contact, or is it nothing but a flower growing out of a stone?
- Whichever it is, I have most certainly learned over the course of this project to challenge myself, whilst developing my patience, sense of curiosity and domestic adventure. I have also learned that may other participants in different corners of the world have experienced similar situations to mine and reacted similarly, or was it responded? Interesting one. A debate for another time...



Personal revelations

During the Learning Lives inquiry, I “accessed” several life realms and the more I tried to compartmentalise, the more they came together. Here’s what I concluded; life is a matrix of different internal and external happenings and lessons. At different ages, coupled with different life circumstances, what makes you happy is dramatically different to even one year later when COVID-19 has taken over the world and you haven’t seen your family in what feels like centuries. The question then becomes what to do when you don’t know what to do? Breathe. Pause. Breathe again.

Being part of the project helped me cope with the “limbo” phase that I felt I could not shift and build a resilience mechanism by turning back to the little things. I briefly paused the futility of trying to change my environment and instead focused on myself and using the time constructively to become a better, healthier person.

I started by taking a nutrition course and looking at my health and wellbeing, moved on to dusting off my Greek language skills, writing stories for my travel blog and more importantly, sharing a daily dose of random kindness with friends, family and work colleagues. The feeling that gave me is inexplicable and truly elating (I continue to use that still!).

I soon learned that taking that half an hour of my day to think about somewhat mundane experiences like looking up a plant, gardening or cooking a meal can re-ignite curiosity for experiencing with learning and transferring some of those approaches into work and other domains. I found the time to listen to music on vinyl and I now get why my parents thought they simply don’t compare to digital versions. And more importantly, I paused. I thought about it, I meditated, and I paused again.

I enjoyed the free-flow of my mind in what I was going to do next and loved learning from others. I enjoyed the similarities and differences that I found in other vignettes and found it inspiring how connected I felt to some.

Whilst the last year and a half has been a real challenge to everyone, it has also taught me a lot and added a lot of perspective to my life and the way I see and approach things. I am hopeful that this grounding work has helped set the foundation for many more bricks of knowledge to come in what will be my learning temple one day...every day.



Unlocking the Affordances of a Global Pandemic through Lifewide Learning

Ellen Shobrook



Ellen is an Educational Development Coordinator for the Personal Skills Award at the University of Birmingham. She is also the co-founder of the Women's Network at her institution, and is interested in coalition-building for positive social change. Outside of the work domain, she is a mother to two young children. She recently joined Lifewide Education's team of core supporters.

Introduction

When reflecting on the invitation to submit this article for Lifewide Magazine, I initially felt somewhat paralysed by the sheer volume of potential themes that could be explored: such was the richness of the learning journey that participating in the Learning Lives inquiry entailed.

One "theme" proved inescapable though – and that is the shared context (but vastly different experiences) of the global pandemic – a unique (albeit unwanted - and for some, truly devastating) opportunity for collective experiential learning. I decided to explore what I felt to be the connections and parallels between the inquiry and this broader context, from a personal perspective – and stumbled across three main points/challenges:

- Reflection as a tool for sense-making beyond times of crisis
- Escaping the dominance of the work domain
- Learning through (and for) connection

Reflection as a tool for sense-making beyond times of crisis

Firstly, some thoughts on motivation. In my first vignette, I pondered my reasons for engaging with this project at a time when I felt I was already juggling more than was bearable in all domains of life, as a result of the pandemic; be it cognitively, physically and (in particular) emotionally. I suggested that; *"learning and adapting suddenly feels urgent.... It feels like we are at a potential turning point, and a lot is at stake (both individually and collectively) in terms of coming through this period and ensuring that we move towards a more positive future.... to salvage something good from the grief, anger, and anxiety"*.

There was an awareness that reflection (and reflective writing as sense-making) would be critical to the processing of this experience on an individual level – and I sensed that the Learning Lives inquiry would provide me with this opportunity, as well as provide an environment of extrinsic motivation and a community of support. I was not mistaken – and my own experience as part of the project reminded me of the power of reflection as a tool for personal development and growth.

Too often though, reflection is seen as a means to an end (e.g., a skill to enhance our employability) - or a tool only utilised when we reach a particular crisis point. The challenge then, is how can we better embed reflection as an ongoing practice in our personal and professional lives – and I think the framework of this inquiry provides a starting point for how we might do this.

Escaping the dominance of the work domain

One of the key things that has emerged for me throughout both the inquiry and the pandemic, is a reflection on the significance of work – in our individual lives, and as a society.

On an individual level, creating a Lifewide Learning "domain map" (such as the one I created Figure 1) is a valuable experience which allows us to see work as one part of a much bigger picture, and to identify all the other contexts in which rich learning experiences take place, and we construct our holistic identities (parent, partner, friend, gardener, etc.). However, it seems to me that we live in a society that prioritises the "work" domain above all else. We define ourselves by what we do, and measure our worth by our productivity, our job titles, and our achievements – to the detriment of all other lifewide learning domains. Our formal education systems are designed with work/career as the end goal, and we spend the majority of our lives at work. Many participants in the Learning Lives inquiry struggled to disentangle work from other domains – feeling that their professional identity overlapped with what could be classed as personal interests and passions. For those of us who are in work -work usually dominates and defines us.

Covid-19 forced many (if not all) of us to examine our relationship with our work domain. On March 23rd 2020 the government divided us into “essential” and “non-essential” workers¹, possibly to the detriment of all – with those in the former category required to risk their lives on the “front-line”, and many of those in the latter category left questioning the meaning and value of how they spend their working lives. For some, their participation in the work domain (and with it, their identity as “worker” in that particular context) ended abruptly – whether temporarily via the furlough scheme, or more permanently with job losses and redundancies. For many others still, work was subsumed into the “home” space, and/or was required to be undertaken simultaneously with parenting or caring responsibilities.

Through the pandemic, the ethos of lifewide learning was brought sharply into focus, as we collectively recognised *“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”*. The universal (but uniquely individual) experience of the Lockdowns forced us to take stock of all of those other parts of ourselves – besides work - that we were now either lacking (such as travel), or unable to escape from (such as parenting) ... and to reflect on their respective significance in our lives and how they combine to form our identities.

This experience will have taken a different shape for each of us; and is undoubtedly an ongoing (lifelong) process that was merely emphasized by current circumstance – at different stages of our lives, different lifewide domains will be perceived to have a greater or lesser importance, and/or take up more of our finite time, energy and attention.

As we emerge from the Covid-19 experience, I think another key challenge for us (both individually and collectively) is to escape the dominance of the work domain, and to figure out how we can place greater social value on the learning and experiences that take place in all others. The Lifewide Learning Team has of course been at the forefront of this work for the last decade; and continues to explore how we can do this effectively in a post-pandemic world.

Learning through connection (and Learning FOR connection)

In various ways, both the pandemic and the learning lives inquiry have raised my awareness of the importance of connectivity – of the way we are connected to the people and things we care about and of our need to maintain those connections and forge new connections. Enforced lack of physical connections during lockdowns encouraged us to find new and creative ways to connect with loved ones – and we connected anew with those in our communities who were isolated and vulnerable. We empathised with those around us (and around the world) who were suffering in such similar and such different ways, all as a result of the same deadly disease.

The centrality of connection struck me through the Learning Lives inquiry in two ways. Firstly, in drawing up the domain map at the start of the project, it was clear that connection to others was an inextricable aspect of every domain and integral to all. This was even the case for the domain of ‘self’ (which I conceptualised as undertaking solo activities such as mindfulness, yoga and walking), as on reflection I realised that any activities ostensibly undertaken purely for my own sake were also partly motivated by being of benefit to those around me. Learning is always, in part, *for* connection – we develop ourselves so that we can more effectively connect with each other, and the world around us, in the various domains we inhabit.

But it was through the process of reading and responding to the vignettes of other participants that connection really came to the fore. This was a reflective process in itself - after reading each piece, I had to stop and question “Which bits resonate for me?”

MY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING DOMAINS

ELLEN SHOBROOK

Born in Birmingham, 1983
Brought up with Catholic Schooling (Catholic Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form), but not a very religious household - now atheist/agnostic
BA Hons Humanities, University of Brighton, 2007
Lives in Birmingham (Selly Oak/Stirchley)

<h3>JOB / CAREER</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Development Coordinator, Personal Skills Award University of Birmingham (various roles, since 2007) Editor for sector publication (AGCAS Phoenix) Lots of career ideas.... Still learning in this role! 	<h3>PARENTHOOD</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A journey towards parenthood 2 children - both girls Evalina (b. 2016) and Rudi (b.2018) 
<h3>RELATIONSHIPS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heterosexual partner of 19 years Parents, sibling, brother and sister in law, mother in law, nieces and nephews Friendships - several very important to me Neighbours Colleagues 	<h3>ACTIVISM & CITIZENSHIP</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Network (Women's Network) Co-Founder & Co-Chair Sustainability Community Group Co-Founder (currently inactive) Director & Advisory Board member of a Social Enterprise (Grow Outside) Trying to be more politically engaged and actively anti-racist
<h3>HOME & GARDEN</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal Planning, and trying to reduce waste (both food and plastic) Gardening and vegetable growing (sporadic and not very successful!) Would love to adopt minimalism, but struggling to reconcile the theory with practicalities of parenting 	<h3>HOBBIES & INTERESTS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film & TV Books & audio books Music News & Podcasts Crochet & other craft 'fads' Art - doing and viewing (mainly with children these days - A-level and life-drawing in the past!) 
<h3>SELF</h3> <p>(HEALTH / EMOTION / WELLBEING / IDENTITY)</p> <p>This is perhaps the most important for me, as everything either leads into (or is dependent on) this domain. I began practicing mindfulness several years ago, and also use walking and yoga as tools for emotional and physical wellbeing. I still feel like I am learning how to inhabit my own body - managing hormones and emotions, and "staying well". I'm really interested in how we navigate this individual learning journey in social contexts and the other learning domains (especially work) - and how the deeply personal can be political (or politicised).</p>	

Which bits challenge me, and why? What am I responding to (connecting with) in this piece of writing?”. In commenting on each piece, I was connecting with the individual who wrote it, responding to their thoughts and their learning, and sharing my own - and sometimes relating to their experiences in an emotional way.

This ‘connection-building’ was very powerful – in part because it felt like a sharp contrast to the kind of communication that usually takes place using online tools. In most Social Media interactions for example, people approach a dialogue with pre-formed opinions, and are driven by making a specific point rather than building a connection with the person behind it. By contrast, participants in the learning lives inquiry came together through a shared willingness to learn (from our own experiences and from each other). This kind of collective and collaborative learning *through* connection feels like it could be very transformative in a wide range of settings.

Final Reflections

Whilst I feel some discomfort at the discourse around the ‘silver linings’ of the pandemic, I think the lifewide learning notion of ‘affordances,’: that our lives are full of opportunities for doing, achieving or experiencing, feels more appropriate and less insensitive to those who continue to struggle or suffer through this time. And one of the affordances of both the pandemic and this inquiry have for me been the reminder that our lives are rich, challenging and complex; and full of both joy and grief – but ultimately, we continue to grow and learn throughout it all. This is of course the very essence of what lifewide learning is all about - encouraging a wider recognition that our development and wellbeing (and even ‘success’; depending on how you wish to define it) is largely due to our ability to learn and develop in all the various domains of our lives. I for one, am very much hoping that Lifewide Learning becomes the “New Normal”, as our society picks up the post-pandemic pieces.

Source

1 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2020/dec/16/covid-chaos-a-timeline-of-the-uks-handling-of-the-coronavirus-crisi>

2 Covid image by illustrator Patrick Saunders drawn for SCEPTR



Learnitude: A Reflection on the Concept of Lifewide Learning and How a Learner May Promote an Ecolearning System

Josefina Ramirez



Josefina is Head Mistress and founder at [The Greenery House](#) in Chile. She is a Lecturer in Teacher Training at the University of Los Andes, Chile. She has an MA Education from Kingston University, UK. She is also a wife, mother of two adult children and 4 dogs

Introduction

The Learning Lives inquiry afforded participants to explore the idea of lifewide learning for themselves while surrounded by others who were also exploring the idea. In this article I share some of my own learning. An insight I gained through the inquiry, was a need to develop a new vocabulary to describe these forms of experience and learning. In particular, I would like to propose a new word - 'learnitude' to describe an orientation towards learning that embraces the whole of a person's life. A "learning attitude", that will characterise a person's way to "see" and "act" in life.

But let me start my exploration with a brief review of the concept of lifewide learning as it has been defined, as well as reviewing other related concepts. Lifewide has been related to lifelong education, so we can start reviewing both definitions.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO defines **lifelong learning** as:

*"The integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (at home, at school, in the workplace, in the community, etc.) through formal, non-formal and informal modalities, which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands."*¹

Lifewide learning adds to lifelong learning concept, the parallel areas in which learning is happening more or less contemporaneously, "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"^{2 p2}.

So, in specific moments of our lifelong education, we are living learning experiences in parallel domains, that influence one another and entangle, shaping who we are, and defining learning as a comprehensive action that happens in all parts of life where a person actively participates.

*"It includes learning and development 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".*³

During February 2021, the learning community of lifewide education, reflected on the idea of day-to-day learning, producing over 150 vignettes⁴ from around 30 participants, sharing their experience of everyday learning, from different situations in many areas of life.⁴ This gave me the chance to reflect on their experiences and my own, regarding how dynamic and connected learning may be, if we give the space and time for reflection and connection.

We each have a significant number of areas in life in which we may experience growth and learning, and you may try (daily, and the way our culture has organised learning, tends to force you to) to keep those experiences and their derived learning, in their own compartments. Regarding this, from the reflection on day-to-day learning, one of the images I could envision, was that learning is like cooking or knitting.

Just as in cooking or knitting: You start off with several ingredients or plain wool, that stand on their own or may be just "thrown" together. Just like ingredients or wool put together without the art of mixing and entangling them, will not achieve the flavour and results as when you mix and organize them together intentionally, learning also needs to be more of an intentional activity. Every isolated experience comes from a compartment, but it will not rise to its relevance if it is not put together with the experiences in the other areas.

The speed of teaching seems to be detached from the speed of learning. Teachers and teaching tend to be linear, and monotone, while learning is a spiral that involves many areas; it goes fast forward, slow back, reviewing while slow motioning the view again. If teaching does not consider this personal rhythm, it may prevent learners from connecting their different areas of life and learning.

When reading the learning vignettes, and we see people learning something new about a culture while travelling or using a new technology they need or acquire (phone, zoom meetings or other), we appreciate that learning can be a messy process. It does not happen linearly, following organised and structured lessons, in separated compartments. It looks more like a confrontation of all the old paths and well-known schemes, with new challenging, unknown situations or contexts emerge. Although what is learnt may look chaotic, disorganised and inconsequential to an observer, its meaning and significance makes sense and is part of an organised system for the learner.

Regarding this, the role of mistakes, may be the way a learner is building the new learning. If someone is promoting learning (teaching) this view of mistakes must be highlighted to the learner and see them or confront them as a highly enriching path for learning. When encountering a new technology, or a new technique (in cooking, building, or other area in a life wide view of education), the learning self is willing to learn despite mistakes, and motivated to do so. It develops in the person who learns a “learnitude” or learning attitude, that pushes and encourages self to go beyond failure and mistakes.

LEARNITUDE

This could be interesting concept to explore, and look at: how can a teacher promote this kind of “learnitude”, in a formal learning system, assuming the role of mistakes as part of “the ride”?

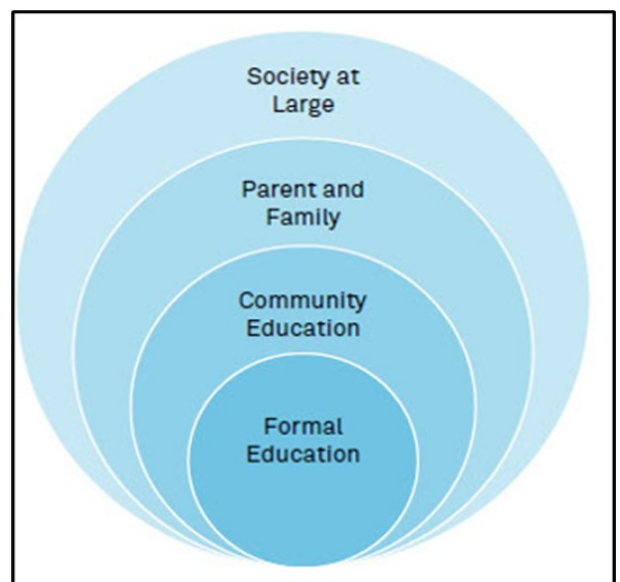
Let us consider error itself. It is necessary to admit that we all make errors; it is a reality of life so that admission in itself is a great step in our progress. If we are to walk on the path of truth and reality we must admit that we all make mistakes or else we would be perfect. So the best thing is to become friendly with the error and then it will not frighten us anymore. Rather, we will become comfortable with learning through our experiences of making mistakes. But to achieve this requires us also to develop self-awareness and an ability to critically reflect on our experiences in order to find a way to do things better in the future. To become “friends” with the uncertain, and adventure mistakes, being self-aware of both.

Many errors are corrected spontaneously through life....The fact that we can all make mistakes makes us more friendly, understanding of and sympathetic to others. “Brotherhood comes along the path of errors, not along the path of perfection.”⁵

Extrapolating what and how a learner experiences in lifewide learning, could positively affect formal learning in educational settings, especially when using the role of mistakes, and the promotion of “learnitude”.

Learning to help or guide others learning, is a challenge, for it may interfere the process, if it does not consider that it is interconnected with a whole system of other areas (personal, social, familiar, musical, cultural and others), that only the learner can make sense of. It seems then, that guiding learning (teaching) means promoting reflection and opportunities to explain the own process, as the whole group had during the vignette writing experience. The experience of reading and writing learning vignettes, also encouraged a deep shift on labelling or identifying domains of learning. It created a more harmonious, blended, new, blurred, intersected boundaries for the different surroundings, in which learning, across the whole of a life, happens. This experience encouraged a different perspective on formal education in which formal education is seen as part of a much larger learning ecosystem (Figure 1)

Figure 1 Holistic view of a learning ecosystem in which formal education is but one part of a much larger ecology



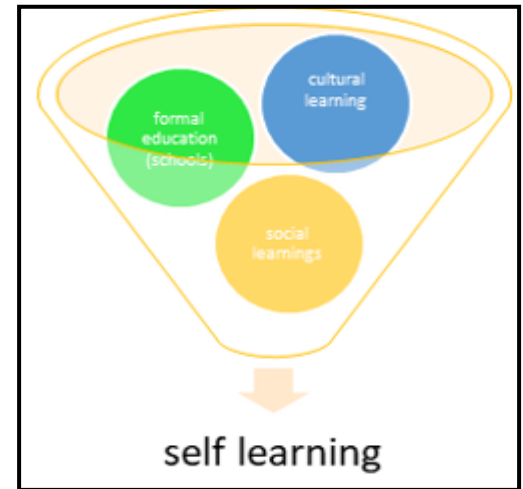
As learning domains are connected they become progressively more inclusive as shown in figure 1. Where once formal learning seemed to be central, we see different strands of learning becoming entangled in a funnel, that mixes and becomes new personalised learning, as represented schematically in figure 2.

Figure 2 Representation of personal learning acquired from different parts of life being mixed, related and connected

Do we need new words to describe lifewide learning?

During discussion in the Learning Lives inquiry, I began to see the domains or labels, became more inclusive and holistic, and new terms emerged to describe these forms of learning that seemed to fit better than more traditional terms.

Learning, if considered as lifewide, involves attitudes towards SEEING, AWARENESS, EMPATHY, NEED TIME, ATTENTION.



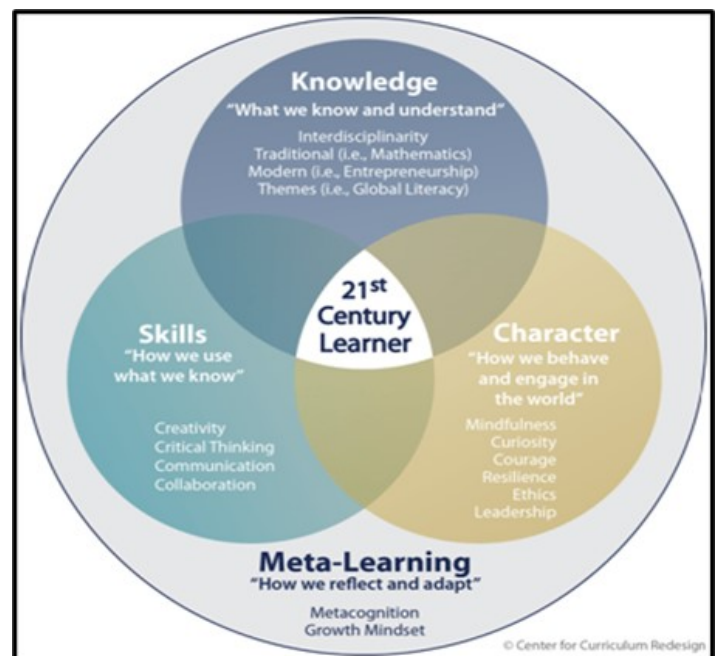
The TIME needed to develop AWARENESS implies that learning must take place over its own time scale and should not be rushed. We should encourage stopping in order to SEE and ATTEND to what surrounds the self, and how it relates to other things. We need to be able to pay ATTENTION to not only what is happening in different areas, but also to one's response and emotional effect to it. Learning involves EMPATHY to the process and practice of others who are learning in parallel and who have their own domains, timings and contexts.

As stated in The Promise of Social-Emotional Learning October 2018, *"empathy as the ability to understand others' feelings and needs—is also the foundation of a safe, caring, and inclusive learning climate. Students with high levels of empathy display more classroom engagement, higher academic achievement, and better communication skills"*.⁶ All these are foundation for lifewide learning. Sharing observations and learning experiences in a lifewide learning context, should promote our ability to empathise with others as a community of learners.

As I read the vignettes, new words unfolded in the map of possible domains; work, family, friends, hobbies, nature, were no longer suitable, or they didn't seem to describe how the domain interacted: worksonal, friendsonal and learnitude, appeared as possible new concepts, that could represent how domains work. The context of lockdown and home office made these new concepts more accurate to what seems to happen while learning is unfolding through the situations in our life. Work and personal life mix and makes all work contacts more personal although they may be online, for they entangle with the life of the family and with hobbies, and home in general, becoming "worksonal". Friends who are part of a domain, also participate in a closer way although online, becoming "friendsonal".

Instead of dividing learning activities in subject matters, (such as maths, language, arts, PE among others), learning is seen through new domain categories, such as skills, character (emotional and social aspects of learning) and knowledge (Figure 3). It seems that the way life unfolds in the 21st century, forces to rethink the way learning interconnects and happens for learners. This view is related to the same way of looking at learning domains, giving lifewide learning new impulse regarding the interconnectivity that enriches and gives new meaning to what was previously seen as isolated experiences.

Figure 3 A new way of viewing learning and configuring the curriculum proposed by the Centre for Curriculum Redesign



Lifelong learning is recognised as "an instrument for human capital development"⁷ Idowu Biao, invites us to see the role of society in a new view regarding learning:

"Many societal actors have a role to play in fostering new 21st-century education systems, including governments, parents and corporations. Fadel argued that governments should broaden how they measure and assess students' capabilities similar to how corporations judge potential job applicants or existing employees, whereby employers examine not just knowledge but also character and skills. He then noted that parents have a role to play by advocating for changing what gets taught in schools".⁷

After the experience of sharing learning situations through numerous vignettes written for the Learning Lives inquiry, which reflect a variety of personal and sometimes powerful learning experiences in interconnected domains, the need of enhancing the value of lifewide learning, seems to be essential in formal educational system, if it aspires to be meaningful and transforming. If learning happens in every aspect of life, and it is valued and perceived as essential by the learner, a formal educational system, that does not re-structure its own domains, and how it integrates the learning experience of their students in broader lifewide learning mode, will probably become obsolete.

Lifewide learning shows how formal educational systems for learning (pre-schools, schools, colleges and universities) could promote "learnitude" ([attitude in which the whole of life is viewed as an opportunity for learning](#)) in their learners, more than teaching and giving knowledge. Knowledge must be acquired, and integrated by the learner, enriching other areas of life. It should be a tool for human development *"defined as the process of enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities and improving their well-being... developed by economist Mahbub ul Haq at the World Bank in the 1970s"*⁸

According to the definition of Human Development, happiness should be embedded in the idea of education and the lifewide concept of learning, promotes the idea that we should appreciate and enjoy the opportunities and experiences we have for learning in every aspect of life, everyday. The idea of "learnitude" is proposed to promote human development through a central component to this approach: capabilities, seen as *"what people can do and what they can become... to pursue a life of value."*⁸. Being aware of the enormous possibilities of learning in the different areas or domains in life, should motivate schools and other learning systems to integrate a person's lifewide domains and experiences in this process.

I have had the experience of teaching in higher education, and through some activities for building learning communities in the students, I have witnessed how many of them have areas in which they thrive and excel, and that they could use to enhance their professional learning, but they see their other areas in life, as separated "rooms", with no connections. I have seen how those students that tend to have a variety of interests, which they pursue and develop, tend to give impulse to their academic learning, when they "weave" those together, using aspects of one to grow in the other.

The Learning Lives inquiry showed me that a complex net of learning may be weaved by a community with 'learnitude': a community in which individuals are willing to share their lifewide learning experiences and what their life has taught them. In this way a culture that adopts this attitude to learn together, learns so much more than individuals alone can learn. Human beings on their own, may see life as a learning journey, and affect others in such journey to join the adventure. As we have witness in recent world events, developing a community willing to adventure together in a learning journey, may build a better happy collaborative alternative. Enjoying new or old experiences, with a spirit of adventure and wonder, seems to be contagious. Learnitude, as a way of confronting life wide experiences, may invite others to keep the wonder of learning and join the ride.

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Five Perspectives on Lifewide Learning

Jenny Willis



Jenny's career in education began as a languages teacher in London areas of social deprivation and developed through middle and senior management of schools. Her interest in lifewide education was stimulated by a Fellowship in the Surrey Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (SCEPTre) at the University of Surrey, where she undertook research into professional and personal development, creativity, wellbeing and lifewide learning. She is a founding member of Lifewide Education and was Executive Editor of Lifewide Magazine between 2012-2019. She was one of the facilitators for the Learning Lives Inquiry.

Introduction

The vignettes generated through the Learning Lives Inquiry are so numerous and rich that it is not difficult to identify common themes: the challenge is to select from the multitude of possibilities. After much deliberation, I picked five themes to work with.

- Learning in a pandemic
- Learning through observation
- Learning to accept limitations
- Learning, language and culture
- Learning, self-esteem and self-discovery

As will become evident, these are not neatly discrete categories, rather, vignettes often simultaneously straddle several themes. In the interests of objectivity, I have tried to include examples from each week of the discussion and from different people, as well as stories that I have not analysed elsewhere. For a full appreciation of the nuances, readers are encouraged to compare the additional vignettes listed for each theme if they have access to the research data.

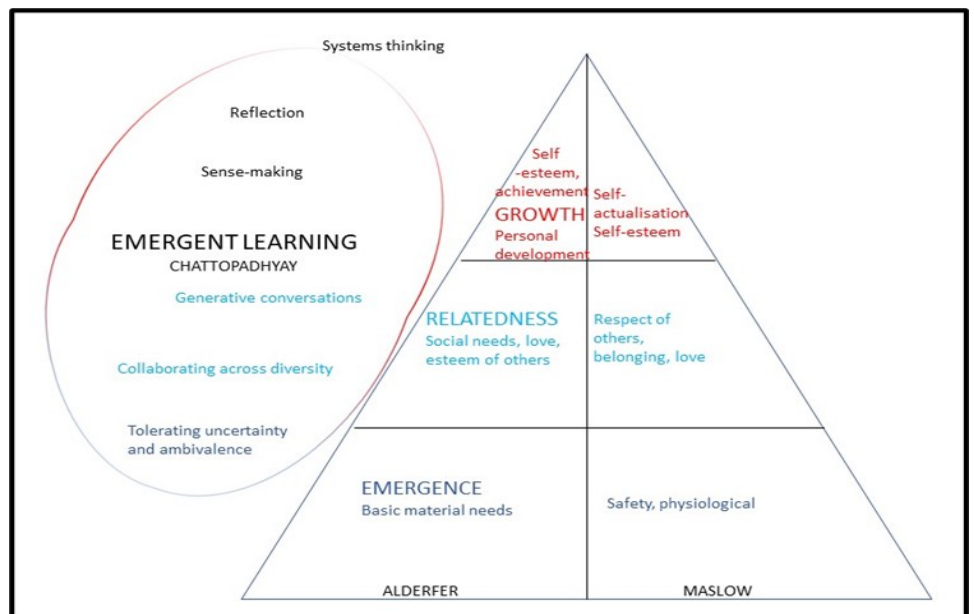
In this analysis, I draw on Sahana Chattopadhyay's¹ model of emergent learning, which identifies 6 enhancers:

- Reflection
- Sensing and sense-making
- Generative conversations
- Collaborating across diversity
- Being comfortable with uncertainty and ambivalence
- Systems thinking

I also make comparisons with Alderfer's² psychological model of self, a streamlined version of Maslow's³ human needs, comprising: Existence, Relatedness and Growth.

Figure 1 brings together the three models, to show their commonalities and distinctions. Colour-coding is used to indicate alignments. Whereas Maslow and Alderfer are closely aligned, showing both process and outcome, Chattopadhyay's model includes process elements, reflection, sense-making and systems thinking, which do not feature in the others. Every instance of emergent learning is mysterious, a unique combination of the enhancers to the specific context, hence the capsule is drawn opaquely.

Figure 1 Three models of personal growth



Learning In a pandemic

One of Sahana Chattopadhyay's 6 enablers of emergent learning is 'tolerating uncertainty and ambiguity'. I had anticipated that reference to the pandemic would feature in stories, since the project took place during lockdown when most people were working from home and cut off from loved ones, but not that it would be so prominent. Here are just some of the vignettes that focus on participants' learning in a period of lockdown (Table 1) when they had to deal with uncertainty about their present and future.

Table 1 Some vignettes focused on the pandemic

Vignette	Context of learning
#11	Learning from reminiscence
#12	Learning from reflections on my current lifestyle
#15	Attempting 'Virtual grandparenting'
#21	Google maps timeline
#22	From Lockdown to Lockin
#33	Learning through gardening during a global pandemic
#34	Paradise lost
#37	Untitled
#48	Cooking life
#55	Micro-adventures (the not temporarily closed domain)
#86	A glimpse into other people's lives
#104	The view from Mars
#110	The Tribe

Although they share the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, vignettes reveal a range of learning that has resulted from the period, from the purely personal, through that of the family to a wider cultural appreciation and application.

#86, A glimpse into other people's lives

I entitled this vignette 'A glimpse into other people's lives', but, in fact, the learning was less about those viewed than about myself, as expressed in the first sentence: *Lockdown and communication via Zoom and Teams have brought new self-awareness.* The story recounts how I have found myself making judgements about people such as journalists, based on the room from which they are broadcasting. I felt uncomfortable viewing the intimacy of their homes and was shocked to realise that this was affecting my perceptions of them. I wrote:

The more I reflected, the more contradictory I found my unwanted responses. I had always thought that I saw people in the round, was free from prejudice, yet here I was, having to acknowledge that I had expectations of them based on knowing just one dimension of their life.

My conclusion that

It has been a sobering experience, I have been forced to confront a prejudice I did not know I harboured. Lockdown has helped me learn a bit more about myself

This insight clearly reflects Alderfer's notion of personal growth and Chattopadhyay's learning emerging from a process of reflection and sense-making. In fact, I had to unlearn some things on the way.

#15, Attempting 'Virtual grandparenting' and #48, 'Cooking life'

As their titles suggest, these two vignettes move outwards to the impact of the pandemic on the family. Like vignette #86, the author of 'Virtual grandparenting' acknowledges that he has developed his technological skills in order to keep in touch with others, in his case, with two very young grandchildren who live on a different continent. Despite this intentional learning, he laments his loss of control to realise plans:

My sense of personal agency has been challenged as never before. Yet at the same time, I'm ever seeking to rise to the challenge. In this case of making sense and developing relationships and sharing meaning(s) with a four and a one-year-old with whom I can't have the kinds of contact I cherish.

He has had to learn

Imaginative ways to enter their thinking in a much-reduced range of 'clues' as to the richness of their developing lives, of finding contexts where we can meet, interact and grow together.

This author demonstrates growth in the context of relatedness, meeting the needs of others as well as his own, but his final sentence reveals unexpected personal growth, too, as he concludes

... for the first time in my life – I have attracted the label 'elderly'. That's a much wider challenge to my self-belief, but this experience has brought it into sharp relief.

He has had to endure uncertainty and found collaboration and generative conversations with his family enabled him to grow.

#Vignette 48 is also family-centred, though in another part of the world. The author describes how she and her husband, their two adult children and their partners have risen to the challenge of living in a pandemic and working separately from home by coming together through cooking. They take turns and have invented an 'eat ups' day when no new ingredients are used, only those that can be found in the fridge. This has produced some delicious, novel dishes, which provide a metaphor for life. The writer suggests:

I think we tend to see things in very fixed ways (...) this made me think on how you must look at things in different ways and seek new 'combinations' to make better use of our 'ingredients'. (...) Regarding teaching, or even interactions with students, you (I) may be overlooking the 'ingredients', and probably losing the possibility to produce a really 'gourmet' teaching moment!

So, whereas the author of #15 extended his interpersonal learning to personal growth, #48's author has applied her family learning to the professional context of teaching. She has thereby added Chattopadhyay's enabler, systems thinking, to her emergent learning.

#34, Paradise lost

In this vignette, the writer describes how the pandemic has marooned him and his wife in Zanzibar, where they had been staying as part of an extended holiday travelling, prior to the grounding of flights. This prolonged stay has enabled him to see his environment differently from the perspective of a tourist. He reflects on the behaviour of short-stay, package-tour visitors, who flout the customs and conventions of the local people. The locals are reliant on the tourist industry, but at what personal cost, he asks. *Where is this taking the next generation of Zanzibaris? They have one foot in their past and the other in suspension as they decide whether to remain faithful to their roots or taste the western honey.*

He contrasts the labours of the host community with the wastage of tourists, wondering

We now live in a global community but what is the associated global culture? Are we collectively being lifted upwards or sliding backwards?

In this first of a series of vignettes from Zanzibar, the author reflects on his emergent learning:

In the end, I am only a visitor here. For the locals, it is their home. Most of us are so much more mobile these days, certainly in comparison to earlier generations. As we move around, it is fantastic to take photos and circulate them, but let us respect, not diminish the richness of the local cultures.

This reflection could equally well demonstrate learning from observation, or learning about new cultures, but it fundamentally illustrates how the pandemic has afforded the context for this author's learning. As before, it reflects Alderfer's learning through relatedness leading to personal growth, or Maslow's love, belonging and esteem needs and Chattopadhyay's process of reflection and sense-making.

Taken together, these four vignettes have all been stimulated by the context of the pandemic and its restrictions, requiring the writers' ability to tolerate a state of ambiguity and uncertainty. Their emergent learning can be understood in terms of Chattopadhyay's model since it entails reflection, sense-making, generative conversations and collaboration. They each also demonstrate Alderfer's model of growth through relatedness, but they provide illustrations of how that growth can be personal, social and cultural, provided that the individual has motivation and openness to learn.

Learning through observation

As before, numerous vignettes illustrate the theme, and these could equally well be categorised under one or more of my other chosen perspectives. Table 2 lists some good examples of how learning has derived from observation.

Table 2 Some examples of learning through observation

Vignette	Context of learning
#3	Learning by observing others
#16	What happens when we are no longer able to learn?
#40	Hues of grey
#65	Cooking paella
#72	Walking
#79	Savouring the bud at the expense of the blossom
#82	Belonging to a place
#85	Connection ... catalyst ... or (external landscapes as a context for exploring internal ones)
#94	Garden domain
#97	Vegetable gardening
#105	Smell and learning
#114	Learning from observation
#138	Encounters of wonder with fellow humans
#149	Redemption

Observation is an implicit prerequisite for reflection and sense-making, two enablers of Chattopadhyay's notion of emergent learning. Do these examples sustain her model?

#3, Learning by observing others

Vignette #3 explicitly focuses on how watching builders working together taught me about both their culture and myself. The company constructing our house extension is comprised of Albanians, whose culture and language are new to me. As a linguist, I was fascinated by their conversation, writing.

I listen to their chatter and try to identify words: I hear traces of Russian and Italian, and want to know more about this fascinating tongue.

The extensive work began with the demolition of a crumbling garage, and devastated my cherished garden. I was reminded of the Somme, an era I have widely researched, and was transported back into history:

I find myself revisiting events in my mind.

I was inferring much about the workmen's culture, too, and observed:

The learning concerned was multi-dimensional and derived from an ordinary, mundane experience, leading me to conclude that learning occurs:

Everything appears to be shared, and they extend this lack of boundaries to our possessions. If they see a brush lying around, they feel free to use it, when they accidentally destroy a fence panel, they feel entitled to use our exposed neighbour's property as a throughway.

Sometimes despite ourselves, sometimes by design. I learnt, for instance, simply by observing the labourers, much as children learn by example. But further learning was also prompted out of interest: I want to know more about the Albanian language and culture. All this is informal, self-directed learning, but I was forced to engage in other forms as a matter of necessity. (...) Learning has been cognitive and emotional, intended and unanticipated.

I touch here on motivation, clearly reminiscent of Maslow and Alderfer's need for growth through self-actualisation, but the context of my learning was rooted in relatedness – mine to the builders and theirs to their culture and language. I was reflecting and sense-making at an inner level.

#105, Smell and learning ...

This second example of learning describes how the author's reflections and learning were sparked by an article on the sense of smell, and our human inability to understand this phenomenon. In a very Proustian piece, he allows his thoughts to wander through the deep-seated olfactory associations he has from different periods of his life.

The smell of camomile reminds me of blisters on the hands from raking hay. The smell of hay makes me think of the cows in the byre and scraps of wool stuffed into the wall to stop the wind. Then back along by the sea to the house...

One sensation and memory leads to another, in an unwinding chain. Then, in a twist, we are facing the impact of Covid:

What I like most is the smell of the sea, but having been in lockdown and hardly across the ferry for months, I cannot smell the sea because I have not been away from it.

Brought back to the present, the writer notices that his water is discoloured and he needs to fix the plumbing. He falls back on some unconscious learning from the past, recalling,

Once, I fiddled around with various pipes to animal roughs and the polytunnel (...) I realised I had learnt something using my nose. An earthy peat smell tells me it is time to check the water.

Thus, he discovers a practical knowledge through observing and reflecting on his unconscious associations. In his case, Alderfer's basic existence needs are invoked, whilst personal growth is achieved through the process of critical reflection and internal generative conversations.

#138, Encounters of wonder with fellow human beings

This vignette recounts the writer's interaction with another parent on the school run, and the reflections it sparked. Having seen a middle-aged woman struggle to park, despite there being 'abundant space for the car to manoeuvre and turn', she tactfully averts her eyes so as not to embarrass the woman. However, the lady gets out of her car and confides to the author how bad she is at driving, as her husband is always telling her. The writer's response is one of empathy and sadness:

I am now aware of a sinking feeling in my heart hearing those words. I too recognise them. I have uttered them to myself in the past many a time.

Observing the woman's distress reminds her of her own sense of inadequacy. She writes,

This incident took me on different reflecting paths ... where do I start ... My story goes back to a bully driving instructor (...) how a traumatised driving instructor (...) has influence me for many years.

Like many of the story tellers, the author's observations are then extended and applied to another domain of her life, here, teaching. She asks,

How much 'harmful teaching' goes a long way and what impact it can cause to the 'learner'. How much power plays a role in our efforts to 'teach' and how much attention do we pay on this matter in our academic roles?

The notion of power leads to another thought: spouse abuse. She realises,

Before I know it, here I was again recognising that I was connecting with women in my lineage who in different but similar ways have allowed disrespect in their lives by male figures.

Once again, a seemingly mundane event has led to personal growth: through empathy and respect for the driver, the author experiences a sense of valuable learning:

I find it fascinating that life throws at us various experiences so that we can appear to continue this ongoing learning that is forever unfolding.

The emergent learning has been informal, and patently relies on the openness and sensitivity of the author to recognise the affordance for learning. Similar to that of vignette #3, it is important to how we, as social beings, interact sensitively with others, and is a form of learning that we easily overlook. In effect, the story illustrates how a generative conversation and collaboration (sharing their perceived inadequacies) has led the writer to go beyond her personal situation to that of women in general, and the relationship between men and women.

#79, Savouring the bud at the expense of the bloom

The final example of learning through observation comes again from the author stranded in Zanzibar. This time, he recounts how, in their eagerness, the monkeys are in danger of killing a beautiful tree through devouring its young buds. His train of thought leads

to recollection that ‘when I was young, I was impatient to try everything’. He explains,

When I was a youngster in the 1950s and 1960s, I was like most young boys and shared an inquisitiveness and imagination about lots of things that were not discussed. In fact, I am still waiting for ‘the’ talk about the birds and the bees. Anyway, my 7 year old grandson won’t have to imagine anything. It is all there on a smart device if only he has a friend with access.

During his teaching career, he had witnessed students’ preoccupation with sex, and observing the monkeys is the launch for a more generalised reflection on ethical issues. He asks,

What happens to young girls or boys who find themselves in situations where their curiosity and perhaps naivety expose them to predicaments they are not ready for? In the internet age, how do parents and communities protect their young children from growing up too quick? (...) We as a community have to decide what are the boundaries. If there are no boundaries, then anything can, and does happen. We can talk about individual rights, but if it is negatively impacting others, then what about their rights? Whose rights prevail: the individual or the community?

This vignette encroaches on other themes, including the image of technology and globalisation, and progresses from simple observation to profound moral questions. It moves from the existential (survival of the tree) to social responsibility to personal respect and responsibility, demonstrating how a sensitised observer can learn and contribute to the learning of others. He is, then, encapsulating Chattopadhyay’s model of enablers to emergent learning, as he progresses from reflection, to sense-making and eventually to systems thinking.

These four examples of learning through observation confirm that relatedness to others and personal growth are intimately involved. They demonstrate how observation leads to reflection and then to further understanding or questioning. Each of the contexts for leaning is humdrum, but thanks to the disposition of the observer, both the individual and others are able to benefit from their experience. They have been found to confirm the enablers to emergent learning proposed by Chattopadhyay, as well as Alderfer’s model of psychological growth.

Learning to accept limitations

To illustrate this theme, five vignettes have been chosen from the sample shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Examples of learning to accept limitations

Vignette	Context of learning
#2	Be prepared for something going wrong
#14	Learning in planning/facilitating social learning
#28	Learning a new piano piece: Chopin Etude in E minor
#47	Self-imposed stress, motivation, time-tabling and blood pressure
#49	How do you ...
#57	The trinity: mind/body/spirituality domain
#60	Honouring the spiritual and the unconscious
#64	Beyond comprehension
#71	Imposter expert
#89	Learning to hold back and let go in supervision
#100	A virtual world experience
#109	Writing community
#127	Let’s be creative – together
#148	My personal feelings towards lifewide learning

Accepting and tolerating limitations is related to Chattopadhyay's 'tolerating uncertainty and ambiguity', and failure to achieve our expectations may undermine our sense of self-esteem, as in the models of Alderfer and Maslow. What do these vignettes demonstrate?

49, How do you ...

Limitations can relate to diverse aspects of life, but in #49, How do you ... , they are in respect of decision-making when access to information is impaired. The author writes about the moral dilemma of deciding what is best for a very elderly relative who is recovering from a fracture, in a care home, and who wants to go home despite dementia, blindness and physical incapacity. He recognises '... *technology may be necessary but it's somehow not sufficient*' because:

I can't touch, or smell, or taste, or really see these options through a screen. Nor can you hug someone through Microsoft teams. So many shortcomings to information gathering and decision taking.

The author is frustrated by the constraints resulting from the pandemic, which are impacting adversely on his ability to relate to his loved ones and hence his self-esteem. He writes,

... this is an unfolding emotional dilemma and challenge as much as a practical one ... if not more. Making decisions on the basis of incomplete information happens all the time of course, but this feels like a very special case ...

In other words, his difficulties in accepting uncertainty and ambiguity are obstructing his wellbeing as he is failing to live up to his expectations of himself.

#64, Beyond comprehension

In this vignette, I wrote about issues which defy our rationality and challenge belief, by recounting how a two-year old relative, A, visited her grandmother's ayah (nursemaid), in Sri Lanka. Her grandmother had died during her mother's pregnancy with A, and this was the first time the child had been to her mother's native country. The meeting took place in her deceased grandmother's room. The ayah was by then very elderly, and at the end of the visit, A spontaneously went over to the dressing table, picked up an ornate hair comb that, unbeknown to her, had been her grandmother's favourite, and gave it to the old lady. I asked,

What made the child give Lily the gift? How/did she know that the comb had a special significance? There is an old saying, 'one out, one in', meaning that as someone in the family dies, another is born, perhaps suggesting some kind of reincarnation. Was this an example of something beyond our ability to comprehend, or was it just a coincidence?

In this instance, I was forced to accept the limitations of human intelligence; however sceptical I might be about issues such as reincarnation, such examples remind us that there are things beyond our present understanding. I was experiencing discomfort because my desire for growth through knowledge was undermined, reflecting Chattopadhyay's need to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity.

#100, A virtual world experience, and #148, My personal feelings toward lifewide learning

The next two vignettes relate to a much more practical sphere of limitation, one familiar to many, that of technology. Vignette #100 describes how the author, an experienced conference speaker, was petrified by having to speak virtually. She admits,

... when it was my turn to speak I found the act of speaking to the screen, knowing that there were over 100 people from all over the world listening, was quite terrifying.

She attributed this to her age:

I am a baby boomer (generation X) and knew that most of the population were from the millennials (generation Y) or even generation Z (those born post 1995)

Her sense of inadequacy was exacerbated when all the audience questions addressed technical issues in the other presentations, none addressed the serious topic of hers, the Holocaust. Like me in the previous narrative, she tried to rationalise matters: she had taught for more than 30 years, had a relevant PhD – her nervousness must be due to diminishing self-confidence in retirement. However, she soon bounced back from this,

I am now trying to view this as a positive experience (...) I have heard back from people across the world which is a good thing in this time of isolation and we have chatted about the important things in our lives – family health and how well our coping strategies are working

In other words, she has achieved personal growth, despite her limitations technologically, by deploying what technological knowledge she does have to enhance her social needs. Alternatively, she demonstrates Chattopadhyay’s ability to reflect, make sense and, through generative conversations, has been able to tolerate her perceived inadequacies.

An ambivalent relationship with technology is evident in vignette #148, too. The same author writes about giving a presentation and rehearsing it with fellow speakers. She acknowledges the positive benefits of technology, but her self-confidence is dashed by criticism from others:

Three technical personnel decided, sadly, my microphone (purchased last week) was poor quality; my internet was unreliable; the videos and audio I was using, hmm, they would need to see it in advance to check the quality. And as for me following the instructions re changing levels of sound, vision etc on my laptop deplorable.

She admits,

The only reason I did not give up is that another speaker who has been asked to present at the last minute contacted me afterwards to ask about my presentation, so she could ensure she focused on a different aspect.

And that was the turning point; my learning is more about the topic than making sure the visuals are very pretty.

She has achieved growth through renewed self-esteem, thanks to her interaction with others, and now puts technology in its place:

We need human connections to make learning meaningful and the technical components are merely there to help not act as a barrier.

As before, emergent learning results from collaboration, enabling her to move on.

These five vignettes do, then, demonstrate how, in Alderfer’s terms, our need for personal growth, including self-esteem, is undermined when we are forced to accept limitations to our knowledge or competence. They also show, though, that through positive social interaction, we are able to overcome any sense of inadequacy and our frustration if we have the motivation or resilience. This takes us into Chattopadhyay’s model of emergent learning, and illustrates the validity of her 6 enablers.

Learning, language and culture

The fourth of my perspectives relates to learning in the context of culture and an important contributor to this, language. Some of the vignettes in which this is a feature are listed in Table 4.

Table 4 Some examples of learning, language and culture

Vignette	Context of learning
#10	Learning that insidiously contributes to our evolving identity
# 19	Musings from the balcony
#24	The comedy that connects us
#30	Patched
#34	Paradise lost
#35	Coffee
#38	Untitled
#62	Learning Maori in lockdown
#67	Untitled
#99	Choosing words carefully
#115	A tale of two online communities
#117	Keeping traditions alive
#125	Learned behaviour

The four selected illustrations for this perspective derive from the writers' interest in culture, and share their personal learning with readers. They implicitly touch on Chattopadhyay's enabler, 'collaborating across diversity'.

#10 Learning that insidiously contributes to our evolving identity

The title of this vignette suggests that it might belong better to perspective 10 (self-discovery) or 6 (pandemic), given that the events were filmed and sent via Zoom to relatives around the world. But it also describes different cultural practices and raises broader existential questions. In it, I recount the unexpected tragedy of attending a cousin's funeral only a month after he had led the mourning for his mother. The Hindu rites caused me to reflect:

I had been reminded of the difference between how I, a westerner, had been cushioned from death and never seen a body before the age of 53, and the ease felt by this Hindu community in the presence of the death of a loved one. There was no fear, only love...

I became aware of subtle sub-cultural differences, too, since this second funeral was conducted by an Indian iyer, who brought practices that varied from the Sri Lankan rites with which we were familiar. He instructed the deceased's elder son (and us) at every step, translating and gently explaining

The meaning of each action: placing the butter around the body was because death causes rigidity, making cremation difficult; the chanting was to release his father's spirit ...

Beyond difference, though, I also saw a commonality in our human resilience in the face of tragedy, observing first the innocence of youth:

The deceased's two sons, aged 7 and 4, innocently played paper, stone, scissors as we waited for the ceremony to begin. Later, the younger boy could be heard laughing beside his father's coffin, ignorant of the pain around him. How we might wish to return to such days of insouciance!

Later, the widow, hugging her two sons, spoke via Zoom to those unable to attend, beside her husband's open coffin:

Not once did she falter throughout the long hours. She was demonstrating humankind's amazing ability to cling to life and live each day to the full, however bitter our loss.

The story was, effectively, illustrating all three of Alderfer's dimensions: existence, relatedness and growth, whilst also passing on to the reader some insight into a different culture. At a personal level, I was passing through each of Chattopadhyay's enablers of emergent learning.

#62, Learning Maori in lockdown

This vignette's title, too, indicates the diversity of its potential perspectives, but here I focus on what it teaches us about the Maori language and culture. The author acknowledges that it might seem a 'pretty pointless pursuit' for someone living in Worcestershire to learn Maori, but he admits that he is 'Fascinated by the way Maori language is woven into a bi-cultural curriculum.'

In his account, he reveals his own learning, which he shares with the reader, and his joy of discovery is palpable. He explores the relationship between language and identity, and learns from an elder

The meaning of a colloquial expression peculiar to a certain iwi (tribe) or rohe (region). For me, this truly exemplified the connection between language and culture (...) the significance of language being personal and owned was apparent. Expressions, idioms and terms of endearment felt grounded in people's identity. These words and phrases had historical and geographical importance.

Once again, all three dimensions of Alderfer's model are validated, as individual identity is bound up with the identity of the group, resulting in a sense of personal self-esteem. He also reflects the importance of collaboration with diverse cultures.

#30, Patched

In this vignette, the author, a Scotsman, reflects on class and social difference prompted by learning what the vernacular expression 'patched' denotes. His daughter had previously told him 'That it is to ignore someone, so when you see someone has read the message, they don't reply.'

When he began to read a book, *The Young Team*, written phonetically in Scots, he found himself not relating to it, as, despite sharing the language, the social context differed from that of his youth. However, when he read the same book in English, he records,

I started to hear the voice and then someone 'got patched'. Somehow it helped me enjoy the book.

In this instance, language acts first as a barrier to empathy, then as a source of connection. The author's thoughts wander and the book takes him back to his young days when he, too, lived on a rough housing estate and was on the margin of society. From his position now in the middle class he muses,

I hadn't thought about it till I wrote this vignette. There is something about working- class literature, three white male voices (albeit one queer voice, but still) coming of age. We demand the voices are authentic, they need to establish their legitimacy as people who can speak for and from the people they write about.

The vignette turns to a political comment on class as he confesses

I cannot help feel that it is not the writers I worry about – it is the readers. These books are not being consumed by the people who they are about – nothing like it.

Then, in a neatly ambiguous return to the present, he alludes to the old T-shirt he is wearing, symbolic of his past self, hidden under his shirt at work, superficially because

It was cold in my office, and I kept it buttoned up so none of my clients would see it, anyway.

We are left wondering if he is ambivalent about his present status in middle class society. His growth has taken him away from his social roots, and his relatedness to two different communities is uncomfortable for him. He passes through Chattopadhyay's enablers to emergent learning, but is he ready yet to accept what he has learnt?

#125, Learned behaviour

The last vignette began to consider cultural/social differences in a broader sense; #125 expands still further. From his idyllic Zanzibar beach, the author has unwittingly changed wildlife behaviour by feeding the sparrows. They, in turn, have attracted crows, with the result that:

The crows invited all their relatives and friends and yesterday there were well over twenty of them actually waiting for us to come out in the morning as they knew our ritual. Learned behaviour. In the process, we created a monster for ourselves and now have to scale back the practice.

The author's process of association reminds him how young children would approach the tourists and greet them in the hope of receiving a dollar:

Learned behaviour. For better or worse, what impact is this having on their lifestyles now and into their future?

He recalls how, in his previous charity work, he would find generations of the same family seeking aid, having learnt from each other that it would be freely given. He then returns to the present, describing the behaviour of repeated sets of tourists in the dining room:

Far too often, while they are eating, we see the parents on their smart devices and kids, of all ages, on theirs. Even toddlers sit glued to cartoons on mum or dad's mobile. What message is this sending the next generation? What is their learned behaviour?

The vignette concludes with the author reminding us of our social responsibilities, and uses the context of the pandemic as a source of hope:

Educators and society leaders must strive to ensure that in the 'new normal', we nurture environments where our children grow up in real not virtual communities.

Once more, the author has reached an existential point by exploring social behaviour and our need for growth. He has sought to make sense through a process of reflection and taken the implications of his learning to an ethical level, relevant to us all.

The four illustrations of this perspective all revolve around culture and our identity as members of a wider group. Language, as in learning Maori, cultural practices such as Hindu rites, sub-cultural belonging as to a marginalised working class and questions of collective responsibility have all recognised the value of cultural diversity, albeit with awareness that things may go too far. They once again confirm the enablers of emergent learning proposed by Chattopadhyay, leading to the ultimate dimension, systems thinking.

The last of my perspectives homes in on the most personal level of growth, individual identity.

Learning, self-discovery and self-esteem

Arguably, since each of the vignettes examined demonstrates personal growth, they could all be classified within the perspective of self-discovery. To that extent, the tenth theme is potentially subsumed within the others. However, the vignettes listed in table 5, have a more explicit focus on this dimension than do the others.

Table 5 Some examples of learning, self-discovery and self-esteem

Vignette	Context of learning
#5	Identity work
#13	Back to university
#23	Identity and work
#27	Re-learning the value of my own ideas about integration
#36	Untitled
#51	Learning about myself
#69	Getting into the zone
#116	Untitled
#129	What makes me want to work?
#143	Self identity

Three of the four stories examined here share a common sense of inadequacy or rejection, the damage this does to their sense of self-esteem and a positive attitude towards rebuilding their self-confidence. This first, vignette #13, is the exception.

#13, Back to university

In this vignette, the 52 year-old author is in a *'phase of thrilled chaos'* as she returns to education. She recognises the value of learning, which is a

Narrative that wraps our lives. If we choose to learn we unfold our learning bit by bit layer by layer like an old-fashioned game of pass the parcel where at the end you were confronted with the present. This was either a pleasant surprise or a big disappointment.

Her positive attitude accepts that

Life with all its turns and bends had invited me to wait till then and now I have found my next learning opportunity in an iPGCE

She has an extrinsic motivation to learn, hoping to have a new direction to her career, but essentially she is excited to be taking her life into an unknown phase and has the confidence to be carried along by her faith, ending

May choice and sagacity guide my path and may I once again connect with the universal wisdom I have found when reaching out.

She is thus embracing Chattopadhyay's enabler, tolerating uncertainty and ambiguity, and impatient to face new experiences.

#27, Re-learning the value of my own ideas about integration

In contrast to the last author, the writer of vignette #27 is racked with self-doubt and low self-esteem, as he explains:

A series of recent personal stresses plus the state of international politics had led me to consider that the ideas and my pursuing them may be unrealistic (...) This self-doubt was worsened when a paper I had authored describing the approach was rejected (...) I was thinking seriously about abandoning my efforts.

Things changed, though, when a prestigious think-tank showed interest in his ideas. He writes:

I replaced my belief that the ideas are too difficult for others to use with the belief that my own energies are too low to personally pursue an attempt to disseminate them.

He realised that his frame of mind was the obstacle,

So I learned a new way to interpret my feelings that is now feeding to a different strategy for action – more supporting others to work with the ideas

rather than trying to realise them himself. This new self-awareness has gone beyond his ability to deal with his work:

It has also had a knock-on learning in other parts of my life, recognising that low energy is also reducing my performance in other domains.

This story illustrates well how, through positive interaction with others, an individual's self-confidence can be boosted, and the increase in self-esteem enhances his overall wellbeing. He has been able to reflect, make sense and come through uncertainty, becoming a more balanced individual.

#51, Learning about myself and #143, Self identity

These two vignettes are about coming to terms with changes in our identity as we age. The author of #51 appears to be driven to write before she becomes too old, but participation in this research project has given her the chance to stand back and reflect on her real values. She observes that she seems *'to be living more inside my head, my mind'* because she is now *'in that category that is considered "the third age", post retirement, whatever that is.'*

Having drawn her domains map for the project, she realises

I am fortunate enough to have amazing friends and work colleagues, and my conversations and encounters with them enliven my life, but it doesn't feature in much of my time despite being the domains of my life where I experience joy.

She explains,

... choosing to reflect on the domains in my life, how they intersect and their relative significance to me (...) spending time on it when I should be writing a chapter on wise practice in an ageing society has given me a chance to learn about myself.

Likening the process to one of decluttering a home, keeping only valued possessions, she has learnt

... learning is a change in behaviour. I think in this recent reflection I learnt that I need to do a bit of decluttering of tasks, recognising that we all need to do some things and keep some objects that don't give us joy, but at least I need to weigh up the essential roles, responsibilities and tasks against the optional ones and have the courage to let some options go and replace them with those that give me joy.

The author has again achieved unanticipated, emergent learning as a result of reflection and interaction with the research group, fundamentally changing her future lifestyle.

The final vignette of this section, #143, is by someone still in her active working life, but faced with the need to move from the role of child to parent in her relationship with her parents. From her professional work, she is familiar with theoretical models of self-identity, including that of Hubert Hermas' dialogical approach whereby

Our self-identity is not fixed and we have different I-positions that can be out of kilter and when we adapt to new roles we need to grow into them

Her parents' recent hospitalisation has forced her to recognise her own transition

From child, wife, parent and now carer although my mum and dad would hate that term.

Although she understands the theory, the reality of adopting new I-positions is uncomfortable, but events have led to the author's understanding regarding her role as *'the glue that keeps everyone together and connected'*:

These four vignettes have overtly focused on personal identity. Two of them demonstrate the negative impact of having to deal with a change in our social role, and one shows how self-doubt and low self-esteem reduces the writer's sense of worth. In all three cases, the process of reflection and interaction with others brings about emergent learning which ultimately sustains their self-esteem. The first vignette differs in that this author embraces the opportunity to return to university, re-assuming an identity she left behind many years ago, and relishing the opportunities this has for as yet unknown learning. She appears to thrive on uncertainty, accepting whatever may come partly through her religious belief.

How important this is to me and how my own family and my extended family is one of my anchors throughout my life that gives me my self-identity.

She is able to come through the uncertainty and ambivalence, and accept her new role.

Concluding thoughts

So, what have these 21 vignettes revealed about emergent learning? This discussion began by considering the processes and outcomes of learning, as in Alderfer's and Maslow's models, and compared these with Chattopadhyay's conceptualisation of emergent learning. The vignettes examined are diverse and each derives from a unique set of circumstances, nevertheless, they share a common pattern: observation of an event or reflection trigger further reflection. This can be uncomfortable but it is often interaction with others that enables the writer to tolerate the discomfort and reclaim their self-esteem. They thereby achieve personal growth and may go on to apply their learning to wider social issues, as in the tales from Zanzibar.

The context in which the vignettes were written, a year into a period of pandemic, with its consequent restrictions through lockdown, both gave participants time to engage with the project, and to illustrate the damaging effects of social isolation. They also reveal the resilience of the human spirit in finding meaning and positivity even in the most difficult of times.

The writers may not be typical of society, despite coming from different cultures and age groups. They are all self-selected participants and all are well-educated professionals. Would a less well-educated sample produce similar results? That is our next challenge!

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*“Instead of looking for how do you connect the dots,
so to speak, I always look at the space in between the
dots and, actually, everything's already connected.”*

Johnnie Freeland

Three Perspectives on Lifewide Learning

Norman Jackson



Norman is founder of Lifewide Education and one of the three facilitators for the Learning Lives inquiry.

Introduction

One of the purposes of the Learning Lives inquiry was to co-create knowledge about the way learning emerges in the everyday lives of participants and from this knowledge develop new perspectives on lifewide learning. Through our collaborative Learning Lives inquiry 152 vignettes were produced by 32 members of the Lifewide Learning Research & Development Group (LLRDG). The vignettes provide a wonderful narrative-based resource for gaining deeper understandings of the ways in which learning emerges in the different experiential domains of our lives in the multitude of situations we encounter or create. In this article I draw out three perspectives, from the multitude of possibilities that I found interesting.

Learning To Fix Something

The emergence of need

Much of our everyday learning is driven by need. Necessity is not only the mother of invention it's also the mother of learning. Having to fix something that is broken or not working properly is a typical scenario in which learning emerges in the experience of doing, when a person works with the broken object whose workings they have not seen before in the hope (not always confidently) that they can repair it. Similarly we may recognise something in ourselves or in a relationship that isn't working well and it needs to be repaired so we have a need to try and fix it and this involves learning new things and perhaps unlearning something that is getting in the way. In this way it is not the learning that emerges from our life but a need to learn in order to achieve (fix) something. It is only through the experience of trying to fix something and seeing if it works that we gain a better idea of what we need to learn and what needs to be done in order to fix the problem. In this way learning emerges as we try to resolve the need through the process of interaction with whatever needs to be fixed.

In **Vignette #1** the writer described an incident in his garden.

It's stopped working', my wife reported holding out the cordless branch cutter.... I recognise this as both a piece of information and a request..... I got the screwdrivers out and took the dead garden tool to bits, marvelling as I did so about how many, and how many different size screws were holding it together. With a bit of wiggling it came apart, and I found myself looking at a collection of mostly unrecognisable and mostly inaccessible bits. Will I ever get it back together again? So, with nothing to lose, I lifted the switches out, cleaned these and put them back together and – it worked. Hoorah.

By coincidence, **Vignette #6** also involved a husband and wife situation where something needed to be fixed. Here, in addition to checking and altering settings in the software the learning enterprise involved search for information that could guide the fixer in what he needed to do.

My wife has just bought a new laptop..There was no sound only loud static. She was not amused and soon proved to me that it wasn't the headset by plugging in mine. As far as she was concerned the laptop was broken. Mistakenly, I glibly said 'no problem', went to settings and discovered that everything that should be enabled was enabled. There followed the best part of a couple of hours asking google and dell what I had to do.. I followed up quite a few things but nothing ..worked

A few days later I had another go at fixing the audio on my wife's computer. After spending a bit of time searching YouTube I found a clip 'How to Fix Sound or Audio Problems on Windows 10....I dutifully followed the instructions and 4 mins into the video, having updated the driver I had sound working in the headphones. I realise that all I learnt was how to fix a particular problem by simply following a set of instructions.

The use of mobile/computer/internet technologies is ubiquitous in many people's lives. They use it for work, for everyday living e.g. shopping, banking and navigating to a destination, for social interaction (increased massively during the pandemic) and when pursuing their interests and hobbies. Because of this extensive use we often have needs that relate to getting a piece of technology to work for us. The virtual world and its technological tools (e.g. computers, phones and software) is an important environment for 'fixing' activities.

Vignette #17 illustrates this very well. It describes a scenario in which two musicians who, under normal circumstances play together in a rehearsal room have the desire to play together by connecting over the internet. With zoom and skype this might seem easy but there are real issues with latency (delays in timing of audio signals) that complicates matters and fixing this problem is not easy.

We started with Zoom and Facetime but the sound quality was poor. We knew that the problem would be latency (delays between the time we played and the time we heard each others sounds), and it was.

After checking YouTube we found Jam Kazam – free software that is designed to enable musicians to play together. I downloaded the ap and set up an account and my friend did the same. Then we both set about trying to get it work. I attached the audio interface which we had previously used to record music, using branded software and tried to get my computer to recognise it. One piece of audio software did but the other didn't and I could not hear myself through my headphones. Ideas about what to try next only came into my head as I fiddled with settings in the software.

I got fed up and wanted to give up, but my friend wanted to carry on. While we made progress with understanding the new software I could not resolve my problem of not getting a audio signal through my interface. I ran out of ideas and called another friend who is a trained sound engineer and a member of the band. He patiently talked me through all the things I needed to check but after half an hour he concluded that my interface was probably no longer compatible with my computer's operating system. Sadly, I concluded I couldn't solve my problem using the kit I had.

What this vignette demonstrates is the motivational forces around the need to fix something are not constant. For the writer of this vignette they ebbed and flowed. Several times he thought he'd had enough, but because his friend persisted he was carried along. Motivation also picked up when he was making progress, even if progress was miniscule. There is also a relationship with time spent on trying to fix the problem: the more time invested made it easier to invest even more time. And the more frustrated they become the more they knew they were going to keep trying. It demonstrates very well the push and pull of motivational forces when two or more people are involved in fixing something.

Although the vignette told a story that was incomplete, a postscript written the week after, reveals that after three more attempts at connecting computers to routers by ethernet cable, using an audio interface and adjusting settings in different pieces of software, they were successful in their attempts to get a fast (low latency) connection, via the Jam Kazam platform that enabled them to play together. Three weeks later they are meeting daily to play together for an hour. So the effort was worthwhile.

Needing to fix things is particularly important in the home domain of experiential learning

Not surprisingly, the need to fix things, to get things working when they have stopped working, is a common occurrence in the home domain of everyday experiences. **Vignette #52** provides another illustration of needing to fix something in the home that begins to impinge on the existence motive of need.

As I cleaned my teeth it dawned on me – the radiator hadn't come on. It had been a cold night around 4C and the house was chilly. I let out a groan knowing that my plans for the day were going to have to change....

The first job was to get some heating into the house so I went into the shed and dug out the old calor gas heater, dusted off the cobwebs and took it in the house noting how fortunate we were to have a full cylinder. Next I changed the batteries on the thermostat but that didn't make a difference. By now my wife and daughter were up and complaining about the cold.

Then I remembered a couple of years ago my wife and I had been away in early March and the boiler had stopped working so my daughter had called the boiler man and the problem had been caused by a frozen condensate pipe. Given it had been a cold night I thought that might be the problem again, so I went outside to check. Sure enough there was a large icicle protruding from the bottom of the condensate pipe.After half an hour of pouring warm water over cloths wrapped around different parts of the pipe I reset the boiler and it worked.

While having no direct experience of fixing the boiler the writer of this vignette was able to call on the past experience and learning of his daughter to try to solve the problem.

Learning to Belong

Belonging is a powerful motivation for social learning

During Week 3 I wrote a vignette on the theme of going for a walk to my local village. The experience provoked a lot of thoughts and feelings about my sense of attachment, relatedness and belonging to the place I live – my home and its environs. I asked myself, how is a sense of belonging developed? and I concluded that it must be an important part of our development as a person through our lifewide learning.

Edited extract from my vignette #82

A lot of learning must take place close to our home – our home environs - but what is the nature and purpose of this learning? After reading a vignette by someone who had taken a walk, I felt inspired to go for walk across the fields to Betchworth, my local village about a mile from my home. The sun was shining and it was the first mild day for a week so I was feeling 'the exercise will do me good'.

I adopted an 'explorative' approach, forcing myself to find a footpath I hadn't trodden before. The fact that it turned out to be a foot deep in mud didn't matter in my now muddy boots, and neither did the muscle I pulled in my thigh as I climbed over a fence to escape the mud, because, looking back I saw views of the hills behind my house that I had not seen before. Much to the annoyance of my unimaginative older children I call this hill Chalk Mountain because of the chalk quarry in its south facing face. When my first grandson was around 5 years old we used to walk up the hill and we used to make stories up as we walked. Because of this the hill became a magical place for me and I eventually turned it into a story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZ-SN5fWg_s&t=101 The steep white face is the most striking feature for miles around. I have lived here for nearly 16 years and I always look for this feature as I get close to home because it triggers in me a sense of 'I belong here and not somewhere else'.

In a Field Guide to Getting Lost¹ [which I was reading at the time] Rebecca Solnit wrote of the places in which one's life is lived: 'They become the tangible landscape of memory, the places that made you, and in some way you too become them. They are what you can possess and in the end what possesses you.' I am a Mancunian by birth but the twists and turns of my unfolding life brought me to this place. I know, at least for now, I belong here, sandwiched between Chalk Mountain and the River Mole.

Learning about a place and developing a sense of belonging is a complex thing. It takes time and it involves lots of experiences, and the development of a history of being in a place which is entangled with the history of the people we know and care about in that place. It is a mix of knowings and feelings that is not something that can be learned easily or quickly. It is something that has to be lived and experienced through the ups and downs of life and through particular people and events that make up our life in the landscape of a particular place.

Belonging to a community, a project, a cause and more.....

Thinking about belonging, made me think about how the idea of belonging might apply to the Learning Lives project, to the work we are undertaking and to the social ecology and virtual place we have co-created². I reasoned, for the learning lives collaborative inquiry to be successful participants have to feel *a sense of belonging* to a social enterprise that is worthy of their time, effort and public exposure as they share their most intimate experiences, thoughts, feelings. This is not a single moment of giving but a commitment extending over six or more weeks when individuals must keep on returning to the social space and interacting with participants and their stories. For some people who signed up, but did not share their lives, the commitment and sense of belonging was not there but for the 30 people contributed the sense of belonging and of wanting to contribute in order to learn was there. The sense of belonging is a powerful force, perhaps the most powerful motivation, for social learning.

But how is a sense of belonging acquired? How do we learn it? In the case of the learning lives inquiry it probably has a lot to do with the people who are participating. They are a self-selected group who recognised in the invitation, that the project held interest for them and there was value in participating. So the values and interests of the participants align to the values that underlie the collaborative inquiry. Next it is about a culture of giving and an appreciation demonstrated by the participants themselves as they contribute, so that others who are in the group also want to contribute. The process is one of telling stories about an emergent life and everyone has stories to tell and everyone can relate to the stories that other people tell so the everyone can meet the threshold for participating and therefore belonging. The culture of respect, trust and appreciation encourages participants to share their stories and to dig ever more deeper into the meaning of such stories to find the ways in which their lies connect. Connecting to the stories that people tell is a way of relating to another person and it triggers an emotional response. We go further and share a story about ourselves to reinforce and amplify what a person is saying and to offer emotional support.

Our presence in the forum and our active participation in the form of story writing, the reading of stories and making connections is the way we first learn to relate and then to belong because we keep on wanting to relate. Through this process we realise that what we gain from the process is proportional to what we give, and the more we give the more we want to belong. It is the force that binds us together in deep meaningful relationships. It's the force that creates new social movements and eventually brings about societal change.

During week 2 I learnt from vignette #31, about the 'survival of the friendliest'³ who argue that fittest is more about pro-social and collaborative endeavours 'winning strategies in nature are to increase friendliness, forming new co-operations that boost a sense of being part of a community. I like this idea and it seems to me to provide another dimension to belonging. Friendship is something we learn through our experiences of communicating and interacting and we know that if we are friendly to each other its easier to learn.

The need to belong

Maslow⁴ suggested that the need to belong is a major source of human motivation and identified it as one of five human needs in his hierarchy of needs, along with physiological needs, safety, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Alderfer⁵ refined Maslow's

categories and included the need to belong in his relatedness category. Relatedness refers to our need to relate to other people, that is, it refers to the relationships we have. People have an innate desire to develop social relationships. We want to belong with others by developing friendships and intimate relationships. Interpersonal belongingness is important to us need and want recognition for who we are.

The concept of belongingness is relevant to our learning lives social ecology while sharing personal knowledge and developing new conceptual knowledge is at the heart of the enterprise, and as we interact and conduct our conversations we become more familiar with each other, there has to be more, and the more is the 'giving and receiving attention to and from others.' It is in attending to someone that their story resonates with them, that they too can feel the suffering or joy in their life and the lessons that life has taught them.

The sense of belonging is often related to an attachment to place and time and also the happenings and doings in a particular place and a particular time. An attachment is defined as the cognitive and emotional connection of an individual to a particular scenario or environment^{7 p165}, or in a more general sense, as the experience of a long-term affective bond to a particular geographic area and the meanings ascribed to such a bond, changing overtime, which develop a sense of belonging in people that makes a particular place an anchor of their identity⁸.

In the Learning Lives inquiry we have created a place, our discussion space on Linked In, to which participants could become attached, but they will only feel attached by the pull and co-creation of a social life, as they interact with others who care about the things they also care about.

Lifewide learning proposition

Our need to relate to the people in our lives, to the work and other things we do, to the places we inhabit, and to our own identities and our pasts, means that relatedness, attachments and our senses of belonging are an important part of living a meaningful life. Indeed, our experiential domain maps will identify the significant areas of our life where attachments, relatedness and belonging are manifest. We might therefore expect that there will be abundant evidence of these phenomenon in the experiential learning vignettes. Most if not all the vignettes contain examples of relatedness and Table 1 provides some examples how belonging is manifest in a range of vignettes.

Sense of belonging, or belongingness, is the human emotional need to be an accepted member of a group to maintain close and safe ties that generate a sense of security, care and affection. People tend to have an "inherent" desire to belong and to be an important part of something greater than themselves. This implies a relationship that is greater than simple knowledge or familiarity. The need to belong is the need to give and receive attention to and from others^{6 p3}.

Table 1 Some examples of belonging described in vignettes

Vignette	Contexts for and manifestations of belonging
#5	School friends identifying with the music they listened to and how it encouraged a sense of belonging to a small social group
#10	Family funeral – bereavement and rituals creating a sense of belonging in a family
#15	Loss of sense of belonging and identity within a family due to the challenges of social interaction during the pandemic
#17	Using technology to try to maintain a sense of belonging related to musical identity and playing together
#22	Negative impacts on a family's sense of belonging as two family members unable to join in weekly family prayers due to restrictions on communication imposed by their Government
#28	Sense of belonging to a history through the classical music the author learnt as a child
#38	Sense of belonging amongst a group of friends who have known each other for 4 decades, who meet for lunch on Sundays
#52	Belonging in the context of the Learning Lives project
#53	Belonging in the context of a parent-child relationship
#59	Changes in relatedness and belonging as we pass through grief
#65	Two people (husband and his wife & mother's carer) deeply connected by belonging to a shared experience in their past, living in the moment

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Purpose

In psychological terms, “purpose is a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once personally meaningful and at the same time leads to productive engagement with some aspect of the world beyond the self.”¹

Everyday of our lives we are engaged in trying to achieve multiple purposes- like for example, being a husband, a father or grandfather, fulfilling a role at work like producing this magazine, or being a friend to someone. Purpose gives us a reason getting out of bed in the morning and doing something and encourages us to find new ways of fulfilling our purpose. Our purposes are distributed across our life and everyday we may engage with several different purposes as we live our life. Having a purpose, connects us to motivational needs and Alderfer’s² three categories of motivational needs - Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) can all be connected to our particular purposes.

For example, being a parent creates motivational forces that are beyond one’s own self-interests. It can involve existence-related motivations like having to work to earn enough to provide your family with the essentials to sustain their lives – like, food, clothing, security, accommodation. It must involve relational motivations – to do with love and sacrifice and it may also include growth motivations oriented towards being or becoming a better parent.

The database of 152 vignettes enable us to explore how purpose features in the experiences that contain our lifewide learning. Here I pull out just three examples to illustrate how purpose features in our experiences in which our learning is embedded.

In vignette #15 we witness a grandfather trying to fulfil his role through the pandemic being forced to adapt in order to sustain the relationships he cherishes through the medium of skype. In this example, his purpose as a caring grandparent drives his search for new ways of communicating in a way that his grandchildren will enjoy and find meaningful. His purpose drives needs that relate to relatedness, belonging and personal growth in order to satisfy his purpose.

My sense of personal agency has been challenged as never before. Yet at the same time I’m ever seeking to rise to the challenge, in this case of making sense and developing relationships and sharing meaning(s) with a four and a one-year-old with whom I can’t have the kinds of contact I cherish. For me that means finding imaginative ways to enter their thinking with a much-reduced range of ‘clues’ as to the richness of their developing lives, of finding contexts where we can meet, interact, share and grow together.

In vignette #47 the writer describes taking on a new voluntary role (a new purpose) in his community in which he will undertake to produce audio podcasts of readings from the newspaper for people whose sight is impaired. In trying to fulfil this role he had to learn how to do it.

Modern scientific research on human purpose has its origins in, of all places, a Holocaust survivor’s experiences in a series of Nazi concentration camps. While a prisoner at Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and two satellite camps of Dachau, Viennese psychologist Viktor Frankl noticed that fellow prisoners who had a sense of purpose showed greater resilience to the torture, slave labour, and starvation rations to which they were subjected. Writing of his experience later, he found a partial explanation in a quote from Friedrich Nietzsche, “Those who have a ‘why’ to live, can bear almost any ‘how.’¹

Preparing for my first reading for the paper has been organisationally and technically difficult. The microphone I bought hasn't arrived from China, so I've had to get a different one, after losing preparation time. The instructions I had from the people running the readings were about pre-lockdown systems, and the app for editing was virtually incomprehensible. However, I've worked hard to get the initial things in place, and have been practising setting-up, recording and saving. But where to save, what format to save recordings in, and what was the reference to a group meeting? I contacted the organiser and sorted out most of these things.

Perhaps the Learning Lives inquiry was really probing how we, as a collection of individuals, fulfil our purposes as unique living organisms trying to make sense of our world and create meaning from and through our existence. Vignette #105 seemed to embody this idea as the writer pondered and reflected on the idea of smell.

an article in the science periodical Nautilus on humans sense of smell got me thinking. It looked at the way the brain interprets smell. It drew on recent research into the brain areas triggered by a smell. It suggested that despite the simple and direct route between the organ and the brain, the dynamic nature of smells and the structurally diverse nature of the brain's receptors make it very complex. Thirty years after discovering the route and the receptor, people are no closer to understanding smell. The author suggests that this relates to thinking of smell as a map in the same way vision has been mapped when scent is a mosaic that fire off neurons all over the brain. The most straightforward thoughts on smell seemed to be to do with memory.

There followed a self-analysis of how smells triggered certain memories of the writers own experiences.

The smell of camomile reminds me of blisters on the hands from raking hay. The smell of the hay makes me think of the cows in the byre and scraps of wool stuffed into the wall to stop the wind. Then back along by the sea to the house, out to the shed, to the left the goat smell, to the right the dry dusty smell of grain for the hens and from under the next door smell of the toilet bucket. It makes me think of grandmothers house, about peat smoke, and the smell of the Tilly lamp.

From such deliberations, we develop a better sense of how one of our senses contributes to our unfolding as the unique human being we are, "I had learnt something using my nose. An earthy peat smell tells me it is time to check the water." In this way we grow a little more understanding of ourselves.

The Templeton Foundation literature review¹ concluded that having a purpose in life is associated with a tremendous number of benefits – clearly one of those benefits relate to the way purpose drives our need to be present and active in the world and through the things we do or try to do that are consistent with our purposes – we learn. In this way purpose is a major stimulus for our own lifewide learning.

Perhaps the Japanese concept of Ikigai³ - finding your purpose or "a reason for being" is also relevant to lifewide learning. The term combines two words: iki, which means "life" and kai (voiced out as gai), which means "worth". It pertains to the source of value in someone's life, something that gives a person a sense of direction and happiness. It would be an interesting exercise to map the experiences described in the vignettes to the dimensions of ikigai (Figure 1)

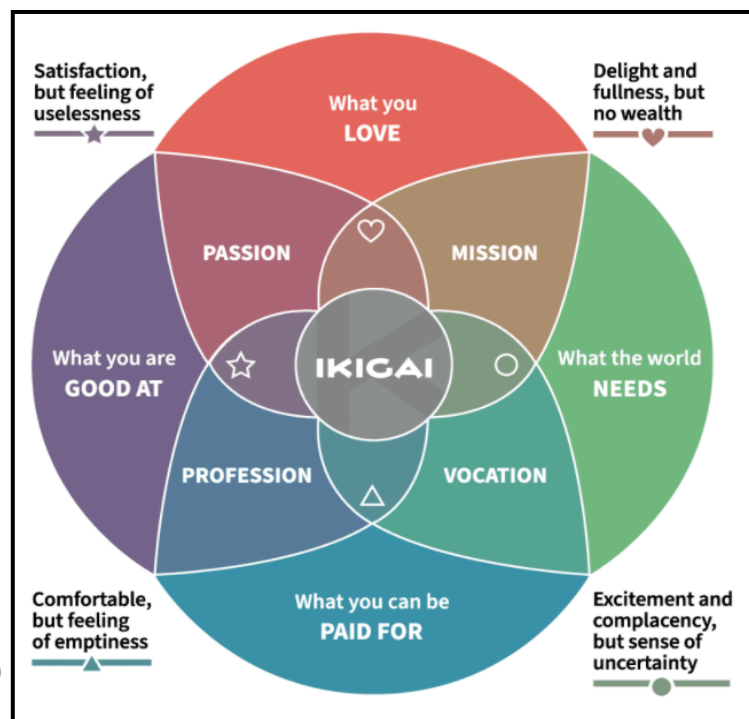


Figure 1 Four dimensions of ikigai. Image credit : <https://kanbanzone.com/2021/the-formula-to-finding-purpose-how-to-find-your-ikigai/>

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Grounding Self in the Act of Lifewide Learning

Victoria Wright



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What I mean by grounding

A moment to pause and reflect and a literal clearing of the space- both physical (the desk/ table, the notes put away) and mental; seeing this (the writing of this article) as the time for writing and thinking about lifewide learning. Grounding is a situating of self within an experience (of being, doing, learning). You turn up as you are in this moment with your past experiences, your future oriented thinking and your present reality. The metaphorical space you have cleared positions you in the here and now, wanting to learn/ do/ explore something. Grounded in the experience of lifewide learning, you explore new connections, make mistakes and try again, work out what it is that you want or need to learn and experience going forwards.

We make ourselves

I am about to write, I am writing – and I try to ground myself in the act of writing. I am reminded of a quotation I’ve used somewhere before, a quotation that focuses on Stevens, the butler in Ishiguro’s ‘The Remains of the Day’¹. He is setting out from the house, he who never sets out anywhere and hasn’t done so for years: *“The feeling swept over me that I had truly left Darlington Hall behind, and I must confess I did feel a slight sense of alarm- a sense aggravated by the feeling that I was perhaps not on the correct road at all, but speeding off in totally the wrong direction into a wilderness. It was only the feeling of a moment, but it caused me to slow down. And even when I had assured myself I was on the right road, I felt compelled to stop the car a moment to take stock, as it were”*^{1 p.24}.

I include the quotation deliberately. Not just to tell you that I have just ‘taken stock’ and returned to the Linked in space where, during the Learning Lives inquiry, a number of us submitted six vignettes reflecting on our own lifewide learning across a number of domains such as hobbies and interests, relationships, work. I also want to relinquish something of the power of the authorial voice, disrupt any certainty you may feel in relation to my ‘knowing’ as expressed in this article. It is not only I who writes this. I write through the experience of having engaged with other people’s vignettes. I also write having revisited the Learning Lives Working Paper² that sought new perspectives and concepts in relation to ‘lifewide learning’ and in the context of the vignettes. I write in the spirit of lifewide learning, where; no longer fearful of heading ‘in totally the wrong direction’, I understand that any connections I make are mine to make as personally interpreted and felt by me at this moment and in this space (physical and metaphorical). Your place as reader is to do likewise: to make (actively make) the connections you see to your learning and experiences and see where/ how/ if it starts to ripple out.

In reading the background paper, I was struck by a few things: *‘The everyday contexts and situations a person inhabits are merely the most recent situations in a lifetime of evolving contexts and situations.’*^{2 p.4}. Something I’ve told PGCE Post Compulsory students in the past when they are nervous about the identity of teacher, the enactment of self as teacher. I say *“You can only come as you are.”* You take yourself in to every situation you encounter, with your personality, your learnt perspectives as drawn by you from your life history. I write ‘as drawn by you’ very deliberately in recognition of comments that I’ve read (as shared through the vignette study) that ‘lifewide’ is agentic learning. It is learning that we do in order to do (make/ produce/ feel) something. It is learning that we foster and learning that we actively take from one ‘place’ (place of emergent learning) to another (place of more experienced learning, place where another connection is found, place where this learning is dropped in favour of another newer learning). It is apt here to start to use the word ‘experiential’ – we learn through our activities and interactions. It is also apt to introduce the phrase ‘ecological learning’- a note I now know (having read what I’ve written so far) that I will end on. Again I return to the Working Paper: *“Making something embodies what a person knows.”*^{2.p.9}

As someone who has created a module (and teaches on other modules) that uses multimodal artefacts as part of their assessment, I feel very strongly about what I call ‘serious play’. I think Bachelard³ referred to this aesthetic and knowing sensibility very well when; in relation to reading a poem, he reflected:

“In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own. The reverberations bring about a change of being. It is as though the poet’s being were our being. The multiplicity of resonances then issues from the reverberations’ unity of being.”^{3 p.7}

We 'made' our vignettes. We sifted through our experiences, we decided what to reveal and what to keep to ourselves, we played with words, we tuned in to our emotions, we created images and text. In our sharing, we heard reverberations. We sought (actively sought?) resonances with our lifewide learning and thereby enriched our own sense of knowing.

How to describe lifewide learning?

I have had a few descriptors in my mind as I've been writing this, some of which I have read in my own and other's vignettes and comments: inter-related, integrator, connections, ripples, ebb and flow... More fully now I think about skimming stones on a beach in Cornwall. Reminding myself of child Victoria – how do I do this now? Choose a flat pebble, examine its flatness, feel its weight, then pull the arm back, hold it lightly (consciously lightly) and fling it over the water's surf, count the skim and skim until it falls – two counts and down. I relive the feelings it evokes: of excitement, the planning, the reflection, the imagining of possible consequences, the adrenalin of the trying, the wish to try it again (do better/ differently this time). All of these sit, surely, within our lifewide learning. There is a trigger somewhere. We ground ourselves. We decide we want to do /experience learn something (skimming a stone). We want to learn or re-learn or learn differently –how to do it? how to be better at it? We start there. Or maybe we are already excited about the idea of learning it. We therefore envision having learnt it and we see what it now affords us and what new connections it might have to other domains of our life.

I am reminded how at one point, very early on, I clarified in a comment that I recognised all of my learning as informal professional learning (replacing the acronym CPD – continuous professional development). In my work I am both manager and teacher and I see connections all the time to my home, my hobbies and interests, my relationships and back to my work domain. I proactively choose to recognise a number of connections and this too; that sense of proactively choosing to make connections, has come through a number of people's vignettes and comments. I am conscious of making such choices in particular ways: i.e. I see where and how I might have struggled to learn something and some of that knowing is distilled in to other moments when I support a student who says they are struggling.

In working with students I also refer to what I call 'stop, pause moments' by which I wish to reflect that we all need time to stop, to see things differently or more fully, to make connections anew, perhaps also to challenge some of our habits and practices and to push ourselves to re-explore. Reflecting on the vignettes stimulated further lifewide learning for me. It led me to seek out other reading, such as returning to look at ecological learning. This article is another vignette in which I am exploring my perception of just what it is I/ we have been engaged in. Lifewide learning; for me, has to be a call/ a response to explore and to be open to: it's a call (to us/ by us) to our curiosity that sees us seeking, exploring, testing, discovering. In a number of ways, and at times explicitly, we have all (those who contributed their vignettes) shared our 'spaces'. I use that word with caution, the same degree of caution with which I am writing this article. I'm reminded of Lefebvre's ^{4 p.11} project: *"I shall show how space serves, and how hegemony makes use of it, in the establishment, on the basis of an underlying logic and with the help of knowledge and technical expertise, of a 'system'".* The fixing of a definition of lifewide learning could be unhelpful here if it narrows our gaze, identifies a system or way of working within which our lifewide learning should fit. This is not the intention here, nor was it the intention of the vignettes or the lifewide research project.

As I draw this article to a close, I think back to the temporal and physical and metaphorical spaces we all inhabited at the time of writing and posting and commenting on vignettes but even more than that I think back to the invitational gesture, the opening that said: come to this experience, come as you are, share with these domains in mind but see these as part of the ongoing experience of embodied making/ re-making/ re-shaping of self and others.

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Lifewide Learning and Identity

Catherine Hodgson



Catherine has worked as a Careers Consultant for the past thirty years and has extensive experience in a range of educational settings. She currently works at the University of Derby with FE, undergraduate and postgraduate students motivating them to achieve their career goals and be aspirational in their choices.

One of the fascinating features of the Learning Lives inquiry was to see, through the many vignettes that were posted, the way that identity was manifested in different experiences. Identity, and the way we encourage learners to develop their own identities, is something that I am particularly interested in.

In this article, I would like to reflect on our roles and identity and what we learn from the transitions we make throughout our lives as we embark on new roles periodically in our life. These experiences are mainly referenced in the work and family domains of vignettes as participants reflected on their experiences of learning over the six-weeks of the inquiry. By identity I mean the qualities, beliefs and values a person holds and is the compass that guides them in their lives.

As careers practitioners we use our guidance skills and creativity to help people to be their best and inspire and motivate them to see and understand their potential and live their lives authentically. I was therefore particularly drawn to the vignettes that focused on our identity through our work domain and the impact this has on our learning throughout our lives and the opportunities it gives us. This has been a particular concern during the pandemic when we had to quickly adapt and learn new digital skills.

Here is a good example from my own **Vignette#37**

Today I will be using Live Chat with our university students for the first time demonstrating new online ways of connecting and engaging with students

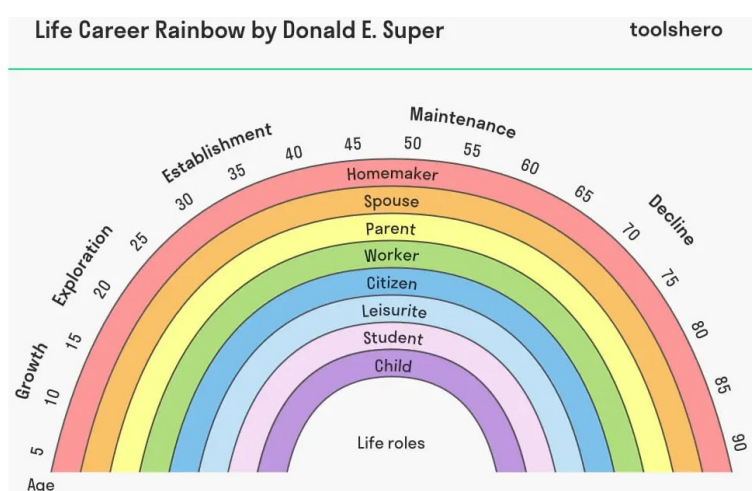
Another participant made this observation. **Vignette #26:** Not Quite Learning Yet

when digging deeper I think at the core of this week's learning is the negotiation of identities and professional identities. The spaces we inhabit and how we move between them.

The comment was in relation to the pandemic and without having the anchor of face to face activities on a physical campus how we remain connected digitally, and how we have had to quickly learn to use MS Teams and social media platforms. While we have been forced to use these digital tools, we have, in the process of acquiring new skills, become more interconnected globally by circumventing geographical divides.

The invisible threads keep us connected across the globe bound by our interests, research, activities and professions. **Vignette #26**

Being part of this inquiry has inspired me to learn more about learning and identity and how these two things are related and connected. As part of my career guidance qualification, I studied the work of psychologist Donald E. Super who identified eight life roles in his work based on 'The Life Career Rainbow' (1980) each of which may increase and diminish in importance for individuals over the life span. The Rainbow was presented as a means of helping conceptualize multidimensional careers, the temporal involvement in, and the emotional commitment to, each role. Unsurprisingly early life is likely to emphasise the child and student roles, though Super was careful to recognise that you can be a student and continue learning throughout your life.



This was evidenced in **Vignette #13 Back to University**

After obtaining a BA (Hons) in Fine Art a couple of years ago I had decided that learning never stops.... I was 52 when this happened and had waited more than 20 years to get back to uni. Life with all its turns and bends had invited me to wait till then and now I have found my next learning opportunity an iPGCE how much is this enjoyment and how much is this a sense of duty? How does it fit in with work and where does it take me? "

I like to learn from other esteemed colleagues in the careers field such as Liane Hambly and was struck by her recent post on LinkedIn that I read while taking part in this research project which made me want to explore learning and identity further. She referenced Hubert Hermans dialogical approach which recognises how our self-identity is not fixed and we have different I – positions that can be out of kilter and when we adapt to new roles, we need to learn to grow into them so moving from being a undergraduate or from a child to a carer for our parents. From being employed to being retired.

The research process helped me to reflect on my own life stages which I wrote about in Vignette 5 moving from my identity as a daughter to becoming a carer as my parents in their later lives begin to experience health problems, major operations, and hospital stays. I am also a grandmother and so understood the desire to learn new skills to be able to connect with our grandchildren especially during the pandemic and when they are so far away. Our identity our ability to demonstrate that we can continually learn new skills gives us meaning and purpose in our lives even when we are perceived as elderly.

This was evidenced in **Vignette #15 Attempting ‘Virtual Grandparenting ‘**

My sense of personal agency has been challenged as never before.... that recording Mr Men stories for sharing were popular. Perhaps most of all though, is the sense of striving for meaningful contact in a in a new context -where – for the first time in my life _ I have attracted the label elderly. That’s a much wider challenge to my self –belief, but this experience has bought it into sharp relief.

I found **Vignette#1** What happens when we are no longer able to learn? particularly poignant as what happens to our identity and ability to learn as we move through our life stages. The author reflected on his work with patients with dementia and commented *Learning at its most basic it seems to me, is taking the information you are told, retaining it and applying it to the world around. But patients with dementia are unable to do this middle step.....*

The author recognised through his observations of the patients *that despite being unable to retain the information, the questions kept flowing. It made me think that there is still an intrinsic human need to learn.* This made me question what happens to our identity and ability to learn if this is affected by an illness, but the author concludes that. *We are fortunate to be to learn and each day we do so in so many tiny intangible ways and this learning it seems to me is as intrinsic to being human as breathing is .*

I conclude that learning and identity are intrinsically linked and the vignettes shared through the Learning Lives inquiry clearly demonstrated this.

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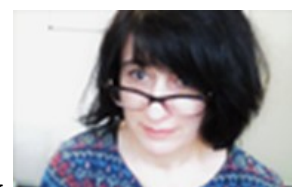
Image credit Life Career Rainbow <https://www.toolshero.com/psychology/life-career-rainbow/>

From Free-Range Eggs to Free-Range Learning

Ronald Macintyre and Chrissi Nerantzi



Ronald is a designer and management consultant specialising in the design of learning systems to support learning in applied disciplines. He lives with his partner and children on a small farm in the West Highlands of Scotland in the village where he grew up. Chrissi is an academic developer in the University Teaching Academy at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is the founder of the #creativeHE open community and co-founder of Creative Academic and loves experimenting with alternative learning and teaching approaches, crafting, writing stories and collaborating with others.



Not a new concept

Not in farming

Not in learning

Introduction

In this article, we reflect on our experiences of the Learning Lives inquiry and try to draw out things that are important to us about learning. The we in this paper is Chrissi and Ronald, and we met at an open education conference in Krakow many years ago and have been friends ever since. Our aim is, first of all, to provide readers with a sense of the collaborative inquiry participants that formed the Learning Lives inquiry and secondly to reflect on the process and how it might relate to our practice. The inquiry involved sharing personal learning stories, stories shadowed by the pandemic. We model the learning stories we wrote for the Learning Lives inquiry by providing a parallel narrative, two learning vignettes that take their inspiration from the title of the paper. Like the learning narratives in the Learning Lives inquiry, they are things we experienced and felt stayed with us a little longer. Things we grapple with, things we try to understand.

In the inquiry, many of us opened up and dared to share things about our lives that are very personal, and we replicate the spirit of sharing here. By things, we mean socio-technical and material assemblages that are often obscured in our everyday lives, and following work in participatory design, we want to make those “things” public¹. Alongside the parallel learning vignettes woven into the paper to model the experience is the second purpose of the paper which attempts to move beyond our personal, to use the act of making things public to explore how a concept like Lifewide Learning might be applied to our roles supporting educators. The two vignettes in the boxes are an oblique dialogue with each other and the themes, which emerged organically from spoken and text-based conversations about the inquiry and being free.

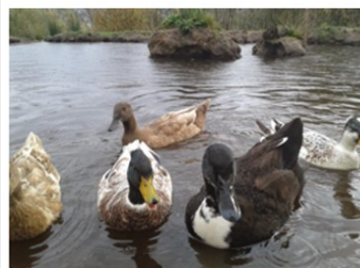
Is free-range what we call lifewide? Free, what does it mean?

Opening and Others

The article is part auto-ethnography, where our writing enacts lifewide learning and part a critical reflection of how we incorporate those experiences into our practice and develop our own personal theory of practice³. As such, the act of writing about the self and our experiences is part of our attempt at developing a critical perspective on those experiences⁴. Hooks⁵ notes that in learning and teaching the educator needs to model confessional practices, to open up and be vulnerable. We experienced this in the Learning Lives inquiry, and even in writing this paper, it can be scary, and we feel exposed. In a community of strangers, we are vulnerable. We are also vulnerable with people we know, like each other, but there is trust in the relationship we have. Often, we are

Are we talking free like Rousseau, freed like Sartre and the existentialists, free like the Freirean mix of the existential awakening coupled with European romanticism filtered through Marx. Or are we talking free like the libertarian right, or is it free like free-range eggs? When I look at the hens in their enclosure, they do not look so free, the caged area is large enough, and the cage is moved frequently over a new raised bed to scrape away the weeds and keep the ground clear for summer.

I picked up the idea from old friends who had a smallholding on the north end of Skye, she is a Gaelic singer, and he is an outdoor instructor, and together they run a small café and outdoor centre. They used small enclosures to strategically position their hens over their garden to keep the weeds down. My partner and I thought the most valuable lesson we learned from them was when you have kids buy an excellent fire guard, put it around your stereo system and CDs, etc.



When I was a teenager we had a cat. We called it Susie. She was tiny when my mum brought her home and had a problem with one of her eyes. I developed an allergy that never left me. A dog chased me when I was even younger and I fell, this was a traumatic experience for me; my schoolmates brought their hamsters to school. I found them very smelly and they reminded me of mice. Not something I would like to have in my room. Some of my classmates had guinea pigs and they smelled even worse and when I visited their houses they were running freely around. How free were they really? They could mingle with humans and I was scared of them.

I know that pets are really good for our well-being, health and are valuable companions. I just didn't have any luck with them (yet). But then, when I think about it a bit more, my own recent drawings come to mind. I have been writing stories, picture book stories, often with animals. Recently, I worked with colleagues from across the world on an open picture book project about the values of open education². We used a seed survey to brainstorm with the wider community and come up with an animal story. So yes, I have found, despite my fear, it seems, a way to bring animals into my life at least metaphorically, where they are truly free in the world of imagination and I can get closer to them and even be them, or be them even, if I wish without fear or anxiety.



wondering about the onlookers, those that just buy without selling as we say in Greek. In this paper, we attempt to balance both sides of the transaction, to connect our experiences with those of others.

From post-colonial theory to contemporary political discourses on the European project, from nations and nationalism to those we judge not to be keeping within the spirit of COVID-19 regulations within a given jurisdiction, othering is messy. However, otherness, our own and others, enrich our lives⁶. Before you object to our account, we ask you to reflect on two things we elaborate on at length below. First of all, the way learning leads us through otherness, and secondly, that otherness is not apart from them but we need to think of the otherness as part of a flow of events and that is *with* others.

Boundaries and Crossings

Learning is by default cross-boundary, porous, organic, lifewide, across activities and domains of life.^{7 p4} notes in a recent White Paper that lifewide education “*[needs to] recognises the lifewide dimension of learning, development and achievement and enables the learner to view themselves as the designer of an integrated, meaningful life experience that incorporates formal education as one component of a richer set of experiences that embrace all forms of learning and achievement across their life.*” Lifewide learning is about our coming to know that otherness.

We know that a lot of learning doesn’t need to be supported by an educator. Most of it happens actually without one⁸. Our curiosity about the world is fuelling our imagination to explore, discover, to create. To be, to immerse ourselves in the world, to experience, to learn and to become. But this doesn’t mean we don’t have companions on your journey. People have always been fascinated by other people. We want to feel their warmth, give our warmth to them and be together. Share stories. To act and interact. The more different we are, the more diverse ideas we will have, the more exciting the cocktail of ideas will become. And that cocktail boosts motivation and is empowering. Moon^{9 p96} wrote, “*People probably learn what their colleagues are doing often more through stories told socially than through formal information sessions.*”

Learning as borders and boundaries



Typically we keep our hens in two large pens a little away from the house. We tried them in a small field at the back, but they kept getting out and creeping into the garden and destroying the vegetable garden or wandering into the polytunnel, and one had an altercation with a pig. So we keep them in rotation in two high fenced enclosure near the duck pond. At the time of writing (29th of March to change on the 31st of March), they are caged because of bird flu, Avian Influenza is common enough, an email to livestock keepers or a post on one of the many smallholding Facebook groups alerts you to it. Like other zoonotic diseases, there have been some cases of it jumping the species barrier to humans and some fatalities associated with this, but so far, it has been rare.

I first read about zoonotic diseases in Jared Diamonds book *Guns Germs and Steel* in the late 90s. I picked it up because I knew Jared Diamond's name from my undergraduate days. I cannot remember what is in it, but it lodged in my mind the role that European proximity to cattle and sheep and the diseases that travelled between the species had on society and culture. For example, a book I read about the history of the North Sea suggests that the first passports and the notion that one might need permission to move around the countries around the North Sea arose to manage the spread of diseases.

Various studies on the impact that European diseases had on America's and its colonisation by Europeans. The high mortality rate (perhaps up to 90%) of local people moved faster than the European colonisers themselves. While there was more than accidental disease transmission going on, the decimation of the populations allowed the myth of the empty America's to emerge.

My dad used to have a garden where he grew vegetables and fruit and I enjoyed helping him. As a precision engineer, his tomatoes had to be in straight lines and the pepper and aubergine plants too. Everything. There didn't seem to be much freedom for them to just grow more freely. In wobbly lines or no lines at all. Nature vs nurture? The truth is that my dad looked after all his plants really well and helped them grow. He regularly removed any weeds and watered them. He spent a lot of time with and around them. The sun also sprinkled plenty of goodness over them.

My mum looked after the flowers. She loves roses. Especially red ones. She loves flowers in the house too. Sometimes when we speak on Skype these days, she shows me a little vase with flowers. They make her smile. I like that.

In my little patch here at home, things are different, there are no straight lines. Does this matter? I am still watering my plants but I often wonder if I should do more. Look after them more. Better soil? Speak to them? Recently I moved some young bean plants too early in our small greenhouse. No idea if they will survive as it was still too cold for them in there. They now look very pale and almost yellow...I can't bring more sunshine, unfortunately, but I should have brought them back insight to protect them better.

Gardening reminds me of my parents. A few years ago I started growing chillies using seeds from my mum's dried chillies. The small greenhouse becomes the home of tomato plants and this year cucumbers too. Unfortunately, it is too cold in the NW of England to grow them grow outdoors. Unfortunately.

On one of our walks when we arrived in Glossop we adopted forget-me-nots. They were growing almost in the road and I wanted to save them and sprinkle some colour around our garden.

Since then our borders become a blue carpet every May and June. The forget-me-nots are now growing freely in our garden. In the lawn, the flower beds, in pots. They don't seem to be demanding as plants and grow back from seed every year. Is this what resilience is?

I have shared some forget-me-not plants with friends and I suspect they have wandered in our neighbours' gardens too. Last year I started drying some in books and use them to make brooches and pendants, so I can enjoy them all year round.

Do boundaries protect us? My reflections on gardening and plants made me think about this.



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Blurring Boundaries

Do we forget the different learning domains and dimensions of learning too easily? The compartmentalisation of learning may have some advantages, they allow for specialisation and the deeper understanding that comes from a structured and narrow approach to learning. Compartmentalisation is built into the curriculum, and learning journeys become more specialised as people gain more qualifications. With the gateway to a life as an academic an exercise in exclusion.

Separating work from private life has been a target for many. For wellbeing. To bring peace of mind. Since the pandemic, it has become impossible for many. We now live at work. This is how it often feels. Earlier social media was often discussed as a mechanism through which the blurring of boundaries between our professional and personal self was happening. A trend that was occurring already, but reinforced by COVID-19. For us, the Learning Lives inquiry provided an opportunity to push back against our specialist work lives and narrowing home lives.

Rather than see the ways in which the social, material and technical assemblages invaded and constrained our domestic space, it gave us an opportunity to reflect on how our personal lives shape our work lives. To ask, to suggest that it is not the workplace that is invading the home, but the home that is colonising work. We are as motivated by work by critical feminists like Nancy Fraser^{10,11} who suggest that the commodification of our home, our personal lives, our bodies and our affective labour is the frontier of capitalism. We feel a need to push back against commodification.

Learning is like following recipes and or seeing it as a guide

The hens have scrapped the soil clear. Soon I will move them to under the fruit bushes, and then soon enough, they will be back in their pen. Avian Influenza's outbreak is easy to manage this time because our ducks and chickens are much diminished. Predation. You can tell what has taken your birds straight away. A fox tends to take one or two, like Roald Dahl the "Fantastic Mr Fox", they look for a regular supply. The Greek poet Archilochus wrote, "a fox knows many things, but a hedgehog knows but one thing", perhaps it should say, a fox knows where many food sources are.

A Pine Marten has a different approach; Pine Martens kills everything. Pine Martens are members of the mustelid (stoats and weasel family). They are cat size with a reddish coat and a white throat, handsome with their bushy tail and low gate. At a UK level, they are rare and a protected species. At a local level, they are abundant. The species distribution is uneven, only remaining in remote rural areas in Scotland. Here they invade sheds, destroy bins and attract tourists. As the reintroduction programme proceeds in other parts of the UK, I hope they know how successful they are at making a living around human habitations.

The truth is I did not know the fox and hedgehog quote directly but through a friend who is a systems researcher. At a conference, a keynote trundled out "his theory", over a drink later, my friend shared the quote and suggested that to be a successful academic, it was best to be a hedgehog. I suddenly realised I was a fox. It felt odd. My introduction to systems was through hedgehogs, radio-tracking them in urban and rural habitats. I became more interested in the sociology of urban wildlife, actor-network theory and engagement with non-human actors. When I got round to analysing the data on what were rudimentary computers in the mid-1990s, I became more interested in the computers than the data.

Instructions seem to get in the way, extensive lists of ingredients too. Do they limit our freedom? In cooking? They can be a valuable inspiration, however. As we know an idea most of the time comes from other ideas and from combining ideas in novel ways. This is how most often creativity works¹².

A complex meal, reminds me of a complex teaching session, in which things have been over-engineered and a jungle has been created in which light struggles to get through. There is something beautiful about simplicity and I think it is harder to achieve than we think. Maybe easier in cooking than in teaching?

As I experiment in my work as an academic developer, I do it also naturally in other parts of my life. That includes cooking. I regularly come up with dishes that are a fusion of ideas. Usually, they are simple, such as holiday pasta... Spaghetti with feta, mint (and butter but not always, could also be olive oil or nothing at all).

I find it disappointing when looking into a cookbook I realise that I don't have half of the ingredients... this is another reason why I often/most of the time start from what we have. In the case of holiday pasta, we literally didn't have much in the apartment when we were on Lesvos one year and the boys were hungry and we needed to come up fast with an idea for a meal. Holiday pasta has become an institution with my boys and created unique family memories

I love shopping and discovering new ingredients, markets especially. During the pandemic, shopping changed. At the beginning of the pandemic, I was scared to go into a shop and avoided them altogether. I still don't go that often. But shopping online is not the same. I miss the social aspect of it.

The pandemic led to more collaborative cooking with my boys. We have used some recipes as inspirations.

The boys have got used to and accept mummy's style of cooking and baking, even if it is not the best one around. I want them to learn to use their imagination, to improvise, to be resourceful and free themselves. To find ways forward when obstacles are in the way. Cooking is a valuable vehicle to achieve this...



Our inquiry into how we learn may have provided some evidence that the boundaries are not just blurred, but we are moving towards a more holistic picture of learning? We are not sure, there is a tension between the narrow specialism of our work lives and the variety of our personal ones, and we are keen to maintain the boundaries between the personal and the professional, at least until people are allowed to be a fox. However, despite our ability to recognise domains at a conceptual level, many of us during the inquiry seems to have struggled to frame our learnings into specific domains. The narratives wanted and did break free, to

weave together into the tapestry of life. However, it felt as if when we held a domain apart to examine it, to abstract it as any academic would, we robbed it of its context from experience and its meaning.

Otherness and Boundaries with

Negt and Kluge¹³ work on the working class discourses argues that in order for a narrative to be accepted within dominant discourse, the experience needs to be abstracted. They suggest the act of abstraction of that experience means the person is no longer speaking from that experience but is talking about it. The act of abstraction required to be heard within the bourgeois sphere makes it less authentic. While our present circumstances place us far away from oppressed status, it does not diminish the point about abstracting of experience¹⁴. In addition, as a Greek woman and a working-class Scottish man from an area classified by the Government indices as experiencing multiple deprivations, we still know a little about voices that are marginalised within dominant contemporary discourses.

We suggest that the reason we could not identify domains relates to otherness, to otherness with others. It is our sense that we cannot abstract learning into those domains because the experiences are social and situated, they happen within a series of temporal and spatial experiences that overlap and shift, that move at different rates and merge into a flow¹⁵. Rather than a series of moments, we need to think of this flow. Rather than separate ourselves from that flow through accounting for the interactions with others, we might understand our experiences in that flow as a series of intra-actions¹⁶. Hence our challenge, defining the domains abstracts the experience and requires us to hold an experience in our hands and categorise it as a way of knowing more about it. However, for us, the experience was not that kind of knowing.

Learning through experience

<p>My mum was around. We were sitting having a socially distanced coffee outdoors in the early summer of 2020. It was 10 am; we heard the noise from the chicken pen and went over. Pine Martens are nocturnal, and this late in the year, when food is abundant, they are not as bold as when the young are small. So we did not run. When we got there, some were bloody messes. Some only had small puncture marks on the neck. I got the wheelbarrow and, after a couple of trips, gathered all the hens. We had raised some from day-old chicks. My daughter took a feather from her favourite. I dug a big hole, deep and far away, so as not to attract other predators.</p> <p>Later we wondered why the Pine Martens were so bold. Even where we lived in a remote area, the wildlife was getting closer in. Walking back to the house one day, I watched a female red deer walk straight up the road towards me. Throughout lockdown, I saw the otters below the house more frequently as well. Radio 4 informs me that research into bird song suggests the males are on average five decibels quieter through not having to compete with human sounds. However, the other explanation was hunger.</p> <p>Pine Martens are a big draw for the tourists. If I travel between my house and the village, I pass five-holiday homes before reaching the first inhabited house – my aunts. The holiday providers advertise the presence of the Pine Martens, and in the past, the visitors would buy eggs from us to feed to the Martens. The extra food allows the population to grow and achieve a well above the area's carrying capacity. As a nationally rare species, they are rightly protected, and locals, keen to avoid stock predation and the destructive habits in barns and outhouses, do not feed them. Without the tourists and their easy food, they are hungry. Hungry enough to come out in the middle of the day. Lockdown killed the hens. It is the causes of the causes of the causes.</p>	<p>My life so far has been a journey through three countries. I was born in Germany which I left when I was 12 to go and live in Greece. For the last 21 years, I have been living in the UK.</p> <p>Always and everywhere a person from elsewhere. I have often felt like an outsider, a girl with dark eyes, a strange accent, and crazy ideas¹⁷.</p> <p>My parents' journey is no different. But much more dramatic and traumatic. They had to flee their homeland Greece during the civil war when they were children. Recently I captured their stories in a novelette I wrote. It was a painful experience, I have to admit but also an enlightening one. I haven't experienced war. Just the pandemic.</p> <p>Our journeys remind me of Odysseys, the king of Ithaca and how every Greek carries an Odysseys within them. We all want to go back to Ithaka, my parents did.</p> <p>I don't know where my Ithaka is.</p> <p>Beyond country moves, and often feeling nostalgia for the place I lived before the move and then feeling disappointed when going back as it was never the same... I have always enjoyed visiting places for a short while. For pleasure and work. I loved the freedom to explore without belonging perhaps? And moving on to a different place? Is it that diversity that I perhaps find attractive?</p> <p>I miss travelling. Visiting new places. The excitement of being lost and discovering new surroundings and cultures. Speaking with the locals even if I don't speak the language, tasting food, looking at the buildings, art and craft and just breathing air that is different and feeding my eyes and my mind with new experiences.</p> <p>During the pandemic I have explored places, nearby. No plane, no car, not even a bike as I don't have one at the moment. Maybe it would be a good time to get one. I still remember the red bike I had as a child and all the fun my boys and I had a few years ago on Kos when we rented bikes and went to explore the island and the beaches.</p>
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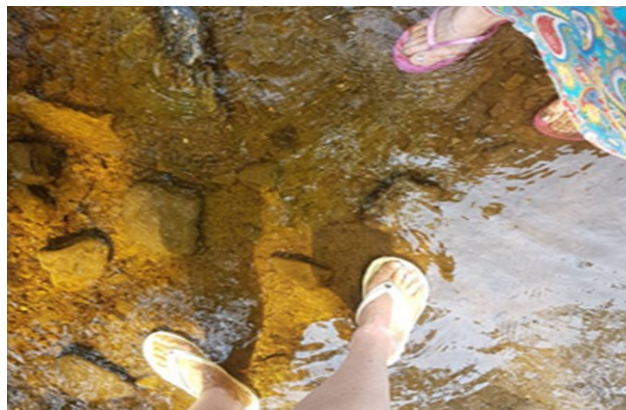
Ecology is from the Greek Oikos and was used by Aristotle to refer to people in a home, eco is also at the start of the economy, and what lockdown is doing to the local economy is not clear. Rural areas like this are dominated by tourism and the state. Many state employees are back to work, the hotels and cafes have been supported, and the holiday cottage operators who live locally and further afield have been compensated. The state's role in regulating and supporting economic activity has become visible even to people that might deny it. However, the role of volunteers supported by income from community-owned renewables has been vital. What will happen when the support stops? The EU support has already gone, and few here are confident it will be replaced. What happens when the volunteers start to weary. Perhaps nothing, here we have a generous local dividend from community-owned assets, but communities nearby without those assets may feel it sharply.



I live in the Peak District, so fortunate to have loads of green in the hilly landscape and water. I wish it would not rain that much, but would it be as green then? During the pandemics I spent a lot of time at home. Working and living. It is probably no longer working from home. More like living at work as a colleague said. I have tried to get out of the house and with a colleague who lives nearby we started organising meetings in the park, walked around and discussed work. We wanted to get away from our screens.

Some fresh air finally and seeing other people socially distanced of course and not through a flat screen. As we both got so much out of these we started scheduling them more regularly, also when the weather wasn't that good (nothing could stop us!) and I remember one day, my umbrella didn't hold up. It was so so windy. Can we have more meetings outdoors? What would this mean to how people feel about and contribute to meetings? Picnics I organised in my previous job come also to mind. How much fun they were and helped relationships to grow. While we were walking around we started noticing more the everyday, the ordinary and found pleasure in it. The pictures I took during the pandemic are more close-ups, and maybe that has to do with what I just described.

One day, in the summer my colleague took me to a place within the town we live, I haven't been before. It was a warm summer day and we said that we would dip our feet into water. Not the Med but we did. It was in one of the streams. The flip flops we had taken came in handy. The water was so cool and refreshing. They say that cold water helps you relax. I could feel it then and I can see it now maybe more than ever why I love the sea so much. It does help me be calm and enjoy the moment. Something else I discovered through this process.



Conclusion

The article suggests that lifewide learning does offer up possibilities for accounting for the rich learning experience our lives offer. Even if we suggest that for us at least, as two foxes, it is difficult to discern different domains. And what about continuous professional development? After all, this is the space in which we both work. Is there such a thing as lifewide professional development? Is all development professional development, can we separate personal and professional, do we have to? Is it unhealthy to do so, or unhealthy not to do it? Work, and our professional life, is leaking into the personal, and we seek to protect the domestic sphere. The personal is the new frontier of capitalism and commodification^{18, 11}, a trend amplified by COVID 19.

We think there are possibilities, ways of creating a seamless understanding of development and lifewide opportunities. Ways of travelling back and forth, of navigating the traverse between domains and blurring boundaries¹⁷. Understanding learning as life wide opens up a conversation about free-range development and free-range learning. As individuals we might realise that possibility, we are in a privileged position where our social status allows us to reject the lifelong learning model of the self as a commodity because we have already extracted value and status from commodifying our ability to collect and disseminate what we know, indeed this article and our critical perspective is part of that market.

However, our concern as educators is always for those who have not enjoyed the benefits of lifelong learning policies that focus on the self as product¹⁹. While we have been folded into the self as product lifelong learning approach, within and against the production of the neo-liberal learning model of always learning, always more employable, more economically active. We have

benefited in terms of our own learning, and in our work through supporting others who also want to engage in continuous professional development, development as a process. We are at a point where we can explore a broader approach to learning, there is no risk, and indeed there may be benefits to our professional practice and as human beings, active and empowered citizens to contribute in a positive way to local communities and society as a whole. Can we say the same for people who have not enjoyed the benefits of school or post compulsory education, would be happy for our children to forgo the linear path of school and further study to engage in the “University of Life”. No.

The reason is those structural barriers, vocational pathways occasionally do more than narrow experience, and attempts to formalise the accreditation of prior experiential learning which are always just about to happen seem to offer something on an ever retreating horizon. The family of participatory approaches that were influenced by Illich⁸ and Friere²⁰ in the 1970s, community theatre, community development, participatory design, participatory action research²¹ and associated assets based approaches that treat people as experts in their own lives seem to offer some inspiration. The recognition of lifewide learning will require a shift away from the neoliberal transactional value of the learning world we presently inhabit. It will require significant changes to social, cultural and structural relations.

We seem a long way from a radical re-ordering of learning at present despite the turbulence we experience during the pandemic and the multiple and rapid changes that have happened in education and the growing appetite for alternative ways to learn and teach not just in higher education. Inequality and exclusion are still very much present in our society today. The privileged are the ones that benefit from lifelong and lifewide learning opportunities more than those who perhaps need it most. What can we do about this? How can we as individuals, in our communities and as a society co-create just and inclusive opportunities for all, lifting those that need to be lifted and embrace everybody and what they bring. However, the Centenary Commission of Adult Education (a Letter in the Telegraph on 8th of March 2021)²² called for “skills for life, not just ‘skills for jobs’”. It followed it up with a report “A Permanent National Necessity”, with its careful nod to lifewide learning and clarion call for the return of many of the learning opportunities that have been lost may be a start. Or may it could, like many other initiatives, be another world that is always just about to happen.

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Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Relationship Between Lifewide Learning and Wellbeing

Jenny Willis



Jenny's career in education began as a languages teacher in inner London areas of social deprivation. This experience inspired her through middle and senior management of schools to teaching for the Open University and further research. Whilst working as an assistant registrar in HE, she completed a PhD in socio-linguistics. She held a fellowship in the Surrey Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (SCEPTRE), researching professional and personal development, also creativity and wellbeing. She is a founder member of Lifewide Education, joined Creative Academic at its formation and was executive editor of Lifewide Magazine and Creative Academic Magazine from their inception until 2019. She continues to teach children and adults while pursuing her other interests, stigma related to mental illness and wellbeing.

Introduction

As a researcher of both lifewide learning and wellbeing¹, it has long been apparent to me that there is a close synergy between the two subjects, but this has been purely speculative and subjective. The Lifewide Learning vignettes produced in 'Our Learning Lives' collaborative inquiry provided me with an opportunity to explore this idea more objectively.

A description of lifewide learning in a recent review paper² relates it to Eduard Lindeman's vision that '*the whole of life is learning therefore education can have no ending.*' Building on this, Lifewide Education conceives it to be: *a comprehensive, inclusive, ecological, lifewide and lifelong concept of learning and development embracing all the dimensions of our life that is the most relevant and appropriate concept of what learning means for the uncertain, turbulent and disruptive white water world we inhabit now and in our future.*

How does this compare with wellbeing?

The concept of wellbeing

Although the term wellbeing has become ubiquitous over recent years, the notion of wellbeing can be found as long ago as 500 BC when Alcmaeon of Croton posited an association between an individual's environment, diet and lifestyle. This may be the source of a common misconception that wellbeing is purely about health. Aristotle advanced the idea of *eudaimonia*, a state of self-fulfilment attained through avoidance of excess. This is taken up in modern times in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and self-actualisation³ and by writers such as Rogers⁴ and Frankl⁵. Wellbeing is therefore beginning to emerge as having something to do with health, but also as a more elusive state of feeling, being and aspiring.

In 2008, Ereaut and Whiting⁶ compared discourses of wellbeing across different disciplines and found that, whilst they each had their own focus e.g. medical, philosophical, they also shared common beliefs. They understand that wellbeing is a social construct derived from the values of a given time and place; they all aspire to 'a good life' and health may be one component of this.

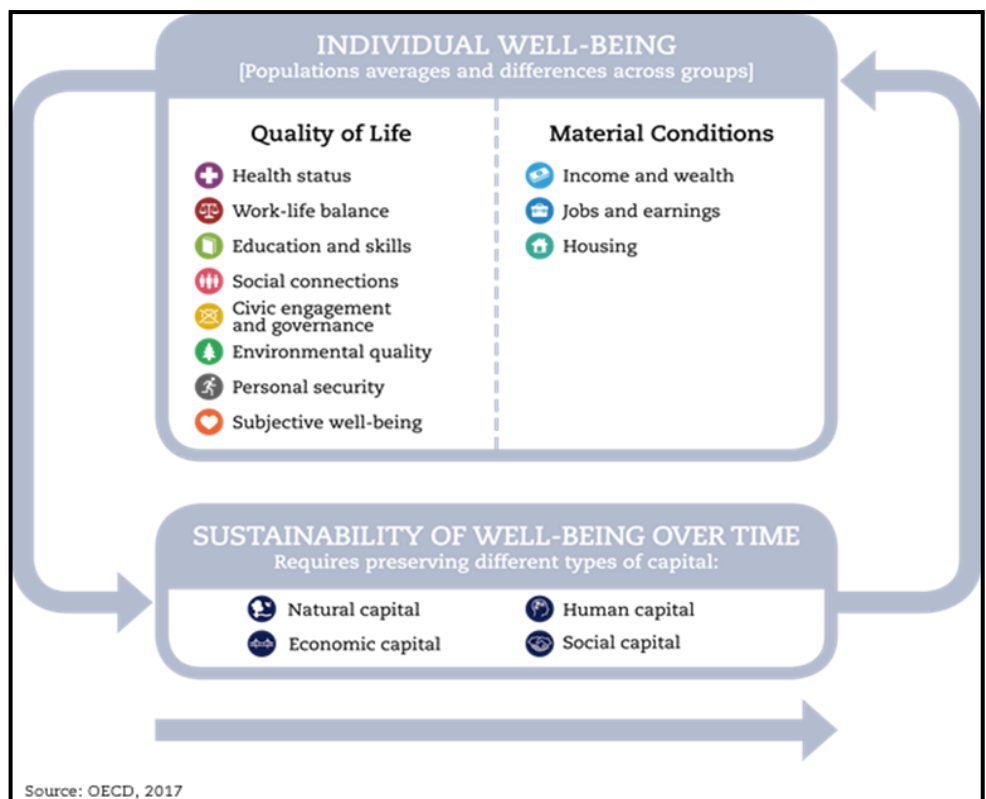


Figure 1 Individual and social wellbeing⁷

Wellbeing is recognised as having both personal and social dimensions; at either level, a balance must be struck between competing demands and desires. Wellbeing is therefore a highly political issue since a harmonious and productive society relies on the contribution made by every individual. For this reason, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed a model which assesses individual wellbeing according to indicators of quality of life (Figure 1⁷, health status, work-life balance etc) against material conditions such as income and housing and relates these in a two-way process to their social context.

Annual monitoring of individual wellbeing by the OECD provides an overview by country to inform policy makers. In order to optimise personal wellbeing, a 5-dimensional model was devised by the NEF⁸ in 2008 (Figure 2). Similar to eating a balanced diet, the principle is that by addressing each of the 5 proposed dimensions (connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, give) in the course of our everyday lives, we can achieve a relative harmony, conducive to wellbeing.

Figure 2 Five Ways to Wellbeing



Five Ways to Wellbeing

Connect... With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be active... Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Take notice... Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep learning... Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Give... Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

The role of lifewide learning in personal wellbeing

'Keep learning' clearly aligns with lifewide learning, but my hypothesis was that the other four dimensions (connect with people, be active, take notice and give) are all potential features of lifewide learning and hence important (albeit at one remove) for personal, and ultimately, social wellbeing. The Lifewide vignettes provide a resource through which to test this hypothesis. For the purpose of this article, two vignette writers were selected at random, one male, one female, and their respective series of four vignettes were examined.

Participant 1 (A1)

In the first of her vignettes, A1 writes a diary account of her week, describing the bad dreams she was having following her colleague's failure to support her application for an award. She became aware of '*an internal dialogue*' and felt the need to seek help from '*a "circle of friends" colleague for support and guidance*', then spoke with her partner. They '*went for a drive, bought groceries*', she made dinner and realised that '*his calm reflection on the moment released me from the pain and anger.*' In this short the account demonstrates how A1's **wellbeing was re-established through contact with others, noticing what was happening around her, becoming active and learning from the situation**. She concludes her vignette by showing how, towards the end of the week, she was being consulted and **able to 'give'** to younger faculty members.

A1's second vignette reflects on the pleasure she gains from being at one with nature, especially water. She again alludes to wellbeing when she says:

I'm happy as a duck when it rains/snows. No complaints about grey weather as long as rain is on the way.

In this vignette, she shows how **learning has resulted from her noticing nature, connecting with it and with the larger environment. She seeks to sustain the ecology through positive actions** to conserve water.

A1's third vignette focuses on the spiritual and supernatural, as A1 reflects retrospectively on the unconscious imagery in the artwork she created at the time of her father's death and of her own diagnosis with melanoma. She discovers unintentional representations in these pictures, leading her to conclude: *I stay open to knowledge from the spiritual realm. I think the unconscious is powerful.*

Once more, she has gained a sense of wellbeing through **noticing** how her art reflected her **relationships** with others as well as herself, how **she learnt** from this process and, through the **act** of painting or drawing, was potentially able to **give back** to others.

In her fourth vignette, A1 returns to a situation where her wellbeing has been disrupted. She is frustrated that, as leader of a creative faculty, her 'postmodern creativity model' has failed to get the appreciation she had hoped for. This account shows how she is **actively seeking** to achieve recognition, for her sense of self-esteem, and does this through **interacting with others, continuing to learn** in the belief that '*something better will come out of taking what I know*' (**giving to others**). She sums up her motivation and persistence:

The more I learn about how I learn, the emergent nature of my own understanding of emotions, my behaviour and belief in my abilities, my self-motivation and my ability to reflect and integrate as I go along – the more I believe in the value of the model and the work done by the group.

Wellbeing has been the implicit objective of these four stories, and this brief examination does, indeed, suggest that the 5 Ways to Wellbeing are strategies A1 employs for achieving her sense of personal wellbeing. Figure 3 summarises the strategies present in each of her vignettes, as indicated by shading.

Figure 3 A1's Vignettes and 5 Ways to Wellbeing

5 Ways to wellbeing	Connect	Take notice	Keep learning	Be active	Give to others
Vignette 1					
Vignette 2					
Vignette 3					
Vignette 4					

The figure shows evidence of all 5 ways to wellbeing in each of the vignettes except the third, supporting the hypothesis that lifewide learning represents more than just learning, and that through positive interaction with others and a personal disposition to take notice, wellbeing and lifewide learning have much in common.

Participant 2 (A2)

If the same process of analysis is applied to a second author, will it sustain this finding? Four quite different vignettes by A2 are now tested. His first vignette recounts a recent conversation he had with an elderly friend who lives in New Zealand. After a series of strokes, she is undergoing speech therapy and A2 tells us a humorous tale of how she shocked her therapist with her word association. Implicitly, he is **giving to others** (his time and friendship) as he **connects** with his friend, he is **noticing** her progress and shares with us his **learning** about Maori customs and language through this connection. He observes:

...learning is about making links; the more links we can make – the deeper the learning. Deep, conceptual understanding requires a myriad of connections.

For his second vignette, A2 takes up the theme of learning Maori. He acknowledges that this is of little practical value to him, living in England, but it is born of his interest in second language learning, and facilitated by the time afforded by the pandemic. Again, he talks about **connections**, here *‘the connection between language and culture’*. He **notices** the colloquial differences used according to tribe or region, and his formal language **learning** leads him to **discover** that *‘expressions, idioms and terms of endearment felt grounded in people’s identity.’* A2 speaks overtly of his motivation for learning, but in his conclusion to this vignette alludes to the sense of wellbeing it has brought him:

I would say that learning Te Reo Maori on-line – in lockdown – in Malvern, has been both fascinating and fulfilling.

He links it to the keep active dimension as he practises his speech whilst walking in the hills.

The theme of A2’s next vignette is learning by building on the ideas of others, and in partnership. He describes his nerves at presenting on-line to newly qualified teachers, and how he drew on the art of a friend to relate to his audience. His success is also attributed to his moderator, a long-standing, respected friend. Hence he is able to conclude that:

The partnership in the delivery was the key element. It was definitely not about me – it was about us!

Connecting is accompanied by A2’s sensitivity and ability to **notice** the responses of his audience: *‘there seemed to be a huge sense of relief’* when he explained how many professionals ‘build upon’ the ideas of others. He was implicitly **‘giving’** words of encouragement and reassurance. **Learning** is the purpose of his presentation and, whilst not physically active in the sense of 5 Ways to Wellbeing, he is verbally and socially active.

In A2’s final vignette, he brings together the themes of language, learning and connecting by recalling a national writing programme in which he had once participated. It fundamentally involved **connecting** (teachers with authors) and resulted in **learning** so extensive that he writes, *‘the experience was life-changing; the insights that I gained were revolutionary.’* He learnt that

The writer needs to anticipate the thoughts and feelings of their audience; the writer must select words for effect, or they are in danger of pushing the reader away.

In other words, he is talking of the ability to **take notice**, and **give to others** in a sensitive way. As a result of his work with trainee teachers and on the writing programme, A2 is able to go further than the contextual learning he gained, to a more lifewide observation on the considered use of language that does not ‘push’ others away.

All four of A2’s vignettes centre on formal teaching and **learning**. By definition, this is usually an **interactive** process; good teachers **notice** their learners’ responses, and tailor their words accordingly, **giving** to their students more than just factual knowledge. Figure 4 uses the same formula as before to envisage which of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing are evident, implicitly as well as explicitly, in his series of stories.

Figure 4 A2’s Vignettes and 5 Ways to Wellbeing

5 Ways to wellbeing	Connect	Take notice	Keep learning	Be active	Give to others
Vignette 1					
Vignette 2					
Vignette 3					
Vignette 4					

As with A1, the potential for ‘being active’ in the physical sense envisaged by 5 Ways to Wellbeing, has been constrained by the Covid pan-

dem. A2's profile differs slightly from that of A1, which would be expected since wellbeing is a highly subjective state, but once more corresponds significantly with the dimensions of wellbeing.

So, what next?

A sample of two is clearly too small to generalise any conclusions, but the comparison between these two randomly selected examples of lifewide learning and wellbeing suggests that there are most definitely aspects of learning which entail the other four dimensions of personal wellbeing. This preliminary analysis has proved the viability of the methodology and merits further application on a grander scale.

Meanwhile, in order to optimise these potential benefits for personal wellbeing, lifewide learning should make explicit the additional, personal gains to be derived from learning. Put another way, our involvement in lifewide learning appears to be a means to developing and sustaining our sense of fulfilment within the circumstances and affordances of our life.

Sources

Image credit 5 ways to wellbeing <https://networkofwellbeing.org/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

1 Alternative spellings are 'well-being' and 'well being'. This articles adopts the single word, 'wellbeing'.

2 Jackson, N. (2021) Lifewide Education Strategic Review and 2030 Vision <https://www.lifewideeducation.uk/2030-vision.htm>

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See also CAM #6 on the theme of wellbeing

<https://www.lifewideeducation.uk/magazine.html>



Conceptions of Lifewide Learning: Derived from a Sample of Experiential Learning Vignettes

Norman Jackson



Norman is the founder of Lifewide Education and one of the three facilitators for the Learning Lives inquiry. He is author of several books and publisher of the 'Lifewide' and 'Creative Academic' Magazines.

Introduction

The Learning Lives collaborative inquiry aimed to explore the nature of lifewide learning – how, why, when, what and where does our learning emerge in our everyday life and the everyday life of all participants. Our inquiry encouraged a particular focus on 'emergence', meaning that the situations in which learning was required or desired grew spontaneously out of the circumstances of a person's life rather than in more intentional, planned, deliberate and sustained situations for learning.

Over six weeks, participants undertook to pay more attention to their learning in the different domains of experience in their life, and to describe their experiences and insights of learning in a series of vignettes. The collection of 152 vignettes was available to all participants. The unpublished database¹ of personal experiences provides a substantial and perhaps unique database through which to develop better understandings of adult lifewide learning. This article draws on an analysis of 20 vignettes (13% of total) to try to gain some perspectives on what we learned about lifewide learning. The sample included the first 10 vignettes which constituted a pilot study, then an additional sample of 10 selected using Google's random number generator.

Questions I am seeking to address include:

- What is the nature of the lifewide learning described in the sample of vignettes
- What conceptions of learning might we draw upon? Are there new conceptions of learning waiting to be discovered within our own narratives of learning?
- What conceptions of knowledge are appropriate for the experiences being described?
- What concepts and frameworks will help us better understand and explain the nature of lifewide learning?

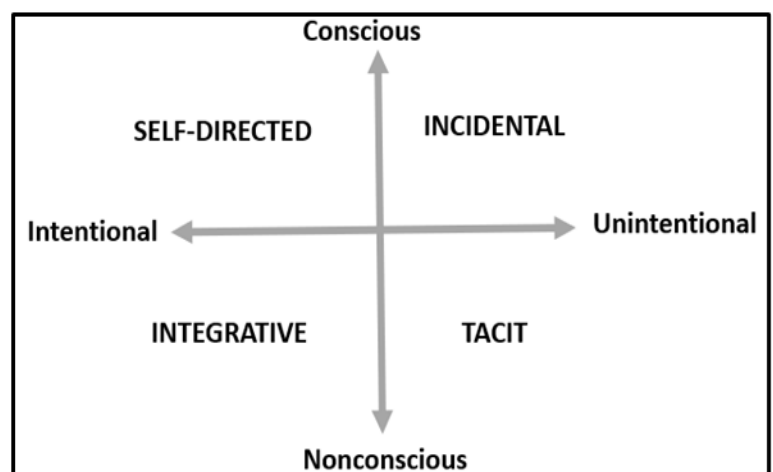
What is learning in everyday living?

The question at the heart of the learning lives inquiry is what does learning mean and what does it mean to learn in the everyday doings, happenings and contexts of our lives? From the sample of vignettes it is clear that learning means many different things. As a starting proposition we might consider that learning is, *"the process of acquiring new understanding, knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, attitudes, and preferences [including our biases]"*². Learning is demonstrated when the new understanding, knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, attitudes, and preferences have been applied or used to do or accomplish something. In everyday situations we often only recognise that we have learnt something after we have done something that we realise we couldn't do at some point in the past.

Figure 1 Four modes of informal learning Bennett³

Informal learning through experience

Vignettes mainly describe learning that is informal and experiential i.e. that accompanies an experience in an environment that is not formally organised and structured for learning. Bennett³, building on an earlier scheme proposed by Schugurenksky's⁴, identified four modes of informal learning: a) self-directed, which is conscious and intentional, b) incidental, which is conscious but



unintentional, c) tacit, which is both nonconscious and unintentional, and d) integrative, which is nonconscious and intentional (Figure 1). By placing a strong emphasis on reflection in the Learning Lives Inquiry we are trying to make ourselves more conscious of our own informal learning. In other words regardless of which mode of informal learning we are trying to pay more attention to it.

All the vignettes describe learning by doing⁵ and we will use Dewey's explanatory frameworks later to make sense of what we have learnt. We should also recognise that writing a vignette is also a process of learning by doing as new insights are gained by thinking about an experience and explaining and organising thoughts through writing. This process of thinking about an experience, involves remembering but it also includes reasoning and may involve imagination as 'what if' questions are posed, alternative scenarios are 'played with' and new perspectives are sought. The reflective process enables the author to re-experience an experience and extract new meaning from it. It also enables them to celebrate themselves and their own achievements. In the words of one participant.

"My four vignettes used the concept of 'learning' to describe experiences that helped me to appreciate my worth, build a relationship, re-learn something I once knew, and think positively in response to something that I could easily think negatively about. Some might think this to be an eccentric use of the word 'learning'. I quite like it." (synthesis #13¹).

I like it too because it elevates the benefits of what we have been doing beyond the intellectual into the domain of personal development and wellbeing. Feelings that are extended even further when we consider the whole environment within which the vignettes were being shared. In the insightful words of another participant.

"I think the well-being benefits might be the way to get other groups involved, and make it accessible"

Through the vignettes we have seen that learning is not an easy or unproblematic matter to understand and describe, and the achievement or outcomes language of education does not work. This was illuminated in a contribution to the discussion *"It's one thing to construct a raft out of oil drums and wire (a tangible achievement). It's quite another to describe what was learnt as the boy who made the raft steps gingerly onto it and experiences what it felt like to float on water that he did not want to fall into as he had yet to learn to swim. What was that learning and how did it become a part of his undergoing?"*

Knowledge – what is it and where does it come from?

Michael Eraut studied the way people learnt in professional settings for several decades. He talks about personal knowledge which incorporates and integrates⁶ p6:

Codified knowledge in the forms 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

Other aspects of personal expertise, practical wisdom and tacit knowledge

Self-knowledge, attitudes, values and emotions.

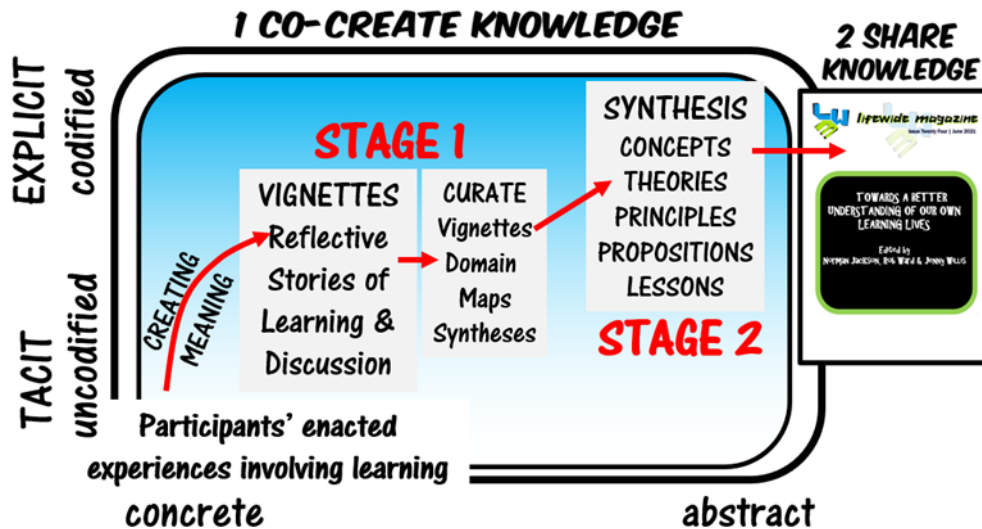
Learning usually involves acquiring or developing new knowledge that is meaningful because its significance is understood because there is already a foundation of personal knowledge. There are many definitions of knowledge. Davenport and Prusak⁷ p5 offer a definition that works well for the Learning Lives inquiry. They define knowledge as, *"a fluid mix of framed experience, contextual information, values and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information."* There are two parts to their definition. First, there is content: *"a fluid mix of framed experience, contextual information, values and expert insight."* This includes a number of things that we have within us, such as experiences, beliefs, values, how we feel, motivation, and information. The second part defines the function or purpose of knowledge, *"that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information."* We have within us a framework that we use for evaluating new experiences that enables us to extend our knowledge.

The Learning Lives inquiry brought people together and encouraged them to pool and share their knowledge and experiences through story-telling and generative conversations. It was a social knowledge development process which we framed what we were doing using a conceptual diagram developed by Max Boisot⁸ (Figure 1). It represents knowledge within a 2x2 matrix whose axes are Concrete-Abstract and Uncodified-Codified. The figure also includes Polanyi's⁹ concept of tacit and explicit knowledge. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi¹⁰ *"Explicit knowledge can be expressed in words and numbers and can be easily communicated and shared in the form of hard data, scientific formulae, codified procedures or universal principles."* 'Tacit' knowledge, on the other

hand, is described as: "something not easily visible and expressible. Tacit knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalise. Subjective insights, intuitions and hunches fall into this category of knowledge.

"It is hard to formalize... difficult to communicate...deeply rooted in action and in an individual's commitment to a specific context...captured in the term 'know-how'. It consists of mental models, beliefs, and perspectives so ingrained that we take them for granted, and therefore cannot easily articulate them."

Figure 2 The knowledge development framework we used in the Learning Lives inquiry (adapted from Boisot ⁸)



The Learning Lives inquiry was mainly concerned with self-knowledge (knowledge that participants developed about themselves and their involvement with their world). It was based on the premise that participants could codify and share their embodied personal knowledge derived through their enacted everyday experiences in their reflective written narratives. And that from this story form of codified knowledge we could derive and eventually share more abstract meanings – like concepts and theories within our community of interest. This way of visualising the growth of knowledge introduces the idea that knowledge is distributed between people who can work together to share their personal knowledge and co-create new knowledge and understanding.

Importance of context

The vignettes describe the relationships a person has with their world and the people, situations and objects in it in a way that has meaning and significance for them. The experience within which learning is located is bound up with this relationship. Perhaps the unique feature of lifewide learning is that the primary context for learning is the person themselves and the multitude of situations in a person's life that have meaning and are understood by the person. The everyday contexts and situations a person inhabits and participates in are merely the most recent situations in a lifetime of evolving contexts and situations. They are experts in learning in their own contexts and situations.

Context is hard to define in a general sense¹¹: it is something in the temporal/physical location, environment, situation or person that has a relationship with and influences cognition, emotions, actions and understandings. Contexts shape our perceptions and what things mean or might to us. In any situation involving learning there is rarely a single context. The vignettes provide abundant evidence of the importance of context (s) in relationship to understanding the significance of a particular experience together with the meaning of learning that emerged. The environmental domains cited in the vignettes provide important first order information about personal contexts – but this is only first order – more specific contexts are nested within more general contexts. When we participate in our own lifewide learning adventures we become contextual knowers.

"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." ^{12 p9}

We can characterise our contexts in terms of whether they are familiar or unfamiliar, simple/complicated or complex (Figure 3). Contexts with the highest potential for learning and transformation occur in contexts that are unfamiliar and complex. Unfortunately, these are often the most demanding and stressful situations.

Figure 3 Characterisation of contexts

Most of the 20 vignettes in the sample fall into the familiar contexts and simple situations quadrant – as this is the environment we were aiming to engage. V2 and V6 would fall in the complicated and unfamiliar quadrant. Interestingly, one of the vignettes (V55) describes the creation of a micro-adventure, where the goal is to create a new or unfamiliar experience in a world that is already largely known. In this way we can make the world of routines and habits more interesting and novel for ourselves. This is perhaps an under-researched area of human learning and experience. We know that artists are able to find wonder in the most mundane of scenes and perhaps we are also able to conjure wonder, interest and excitement by paying particular attentions to the everyday normal situations we are in and in this way enrich our experiences and gain new insights into our existence.

Environments for our experiences through which we learn

When we think of context we often embrace an environment like work or home – that contains all sorts of things like places, spaces, people and things and culture. Environment is more than context it is the physical, social, intellectual and emotional world we inhabit that has meaning for us. If we ask a more specific question like, what are the environments within which you have your everyday experiences through which you learn? Most people are able to readily identify several environments that over a period of about a week they inhabit and participate in activities that yield new experiences. Figure 4 illustrates the environments that are commonly recognised. Alongside the environments we inhabit everyday are environments we inhabit temporarily. For example,

once or twice a year we might travel into an environment that is new and unfamiliar as we take a holiday or perhaps attend a business meeting or a conference. The totality of the environments we inhabit, embraces the scope of our experiences and the learning that derives from those experiences. All these environments were described in the Learning Lives inquiry.

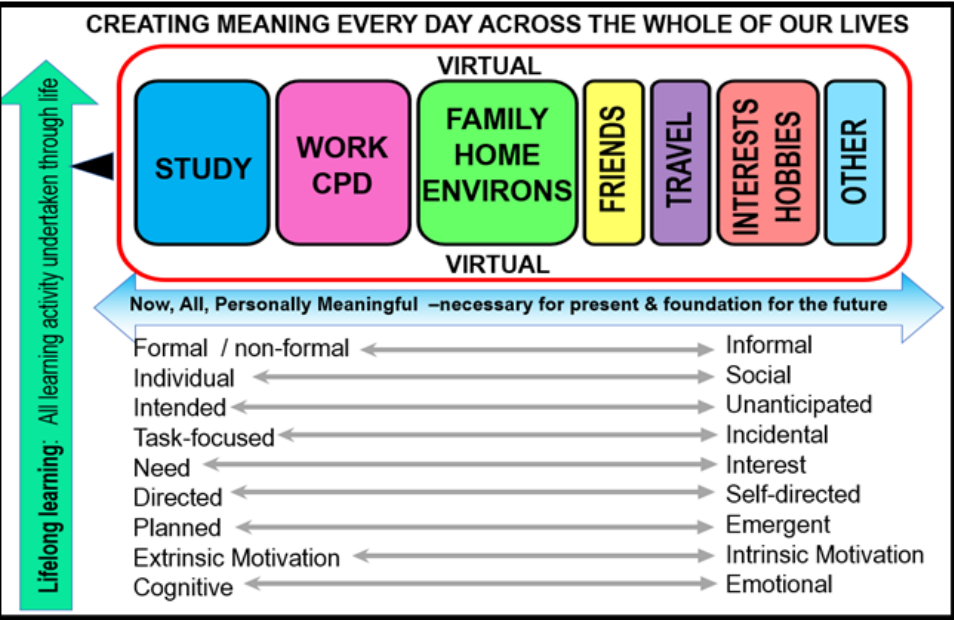


Figure 4 Common everyday environments in which we have experiences through which we learn. These are not meant to be binary propositions: rather they are complex mixes and blends that vary over time in any situation.

A Tool for Analysing Vignettes

In any knowledge work we need the right tools. For example, the posing of a question is a tool for inquiry that helps us develop understanding. The large amount of information contained in the vignettes requires a tool that will facilitate inquiry. 10 vignettes were selected for analysis and a tool was developed, piloted and refined (Table 1). The analysis was then extended to another 10 vignettes (Appendix 1) to see if the patterns of lifewide learning identified in the pilot sample were sustained. The broad patterns that emerge are probably typical of experiences involving learning that was not planned.

The tool includes a brief description of what learning meant and key information relating to contexts and situations, environmental domain, whether the activities involving learning were undertaken by an individual or in collaboration with others, whether learning was embedded in a task or project, or was incidental – a byproduct of everyday doings, the sources of knowledge, the time scale of activities within which learning is embedded, the motivations that encouraged involvement in the situation. It also includes an attempt to assign motivations to the existence, relatedness and growth categories of Alderfer's ERG psychological motivations model¹³ and an attempt to characterise in general terms the emotional environment for learning.

Table 1 Structure and content of the tool for analysing vignettes

CS – Context (s) & Situation (s) ED – Environmental Domain I/S – Individual or social activity T/P/I Task, Project or Incidental KS – Knowledge source TS – Time Scale M- Motivations ERG - Alderfer's ERG model EE -Emotional environment	What does learning mean? What does it mean to learn in the contexts being described?
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Key features of learning in a sample of 20 vignettes

Analysis of 20 vignettes (Appendix 1) reveals:

- Situations in five different environments (Home and /or Family n=9, Work n=8, Social interaction with friends n=3 Garden & environs close to home n=3 and Interests n=1).
- 9 of the vignettes involved activities undertaken by an individual and 11 involved a social dimension.
- 7 vignettes describe activities where a task or project was being undertaken and in 13 cases learning was incidental emerging from the situations people were in. (Nb the Learning Lives encouraged participants to focus on learning that emerged in the course of their daily lives which meant that learning was mainly unplanned and incidental).
- The time scales of the activities within which learning is embedded vary from a moment to a few minutes (n=9) to hours (n= 6), days or longer (n=6) reflecting the scale and complexity of the activities and the effects the activities were intended to have.
- Motivations that drove actions within which learning was embedded were diverse. In 10 cases need was dominant factor, in 4 cases curiosity and interest were involved. In two cases concerns for others were a significant factor and in 6 cases the desire to know and develop self in some way was important.
- The emotional environment described in the sample of vignettes is overwhelmingly positive (n=10) – they celebrate learning as an essential aspect of being a human being. A small number of vignettes do not indicate emotional states. A small number of vignettes intimated negative emotions relating to concerns as issues were engaged or dissatisfaction with a situation. One vignette described a stressful situation in which initial negative feelings give way to more positive feelings as the person learns to adapt and cope with the situation. Learning is a way out of a stressful situation.

What does learning mean?

In the sample of 20 vignettes learning means:

- V1 Having a rough idea of what to do building on previous but incomplete knowledge. Learning was the byproduct, and embodied in the act, of trying to fix the problem.
- V2 Being shown how to use technology by someone who is competent but not feeling confident or competent. Then being thrown in at the deep end trying to deliver a coaching session with things going wrong but being supported and eventually working out what has to be done and surviving. Learning was embodied in the act of engaging with and completing the task and reflecting upon it.
- V3 Watching and listening to a group of men at work and interpreting where they come from and their social order. Learning was embedded in the act of attending to the social interactions of the group of workmen and reflecting on and interpreting what was seen and heard.
- V4 Conducting background research on a topic that was not previously known and the preparation of a synthesising White Paper. Learning was embedded in the process of seeking out new codified knowledge and connecting and integrating it with existing personal knowledge. It is embodied in the artifact which others can read.

- V5 Discovering new facts in YouTube interview clips about musicians whose music was enjoyed as a teen. And codifying the facts in the emails and links sent to and discussed with former school friends.
- V6 Trying to fix problems relating to a computer and some software. Searching for 'how to do it' information on YouTube and applying the knowledge that had been found to the problem and after much trial and error discovering that the problems had been solved.
- V7 Finding and copying a recipe from a YouTube video. Learning was embodied in the act of searching for new information relevant to problem, connecting it to what was previously known and applying the knowledge to the problem, cooking the meal and discovering that the recipe worked.
- V8 Soliciting and gaining feedback from a family member to improve performance recognising the value in the advice and using the feedback. Learning was embedded in recognising the wisdom in the advice (reinforcing what was already known) and applying it to the artefact that had been these vignettes created.
- V9 Building a small team, planning and designing a process together and learning how to facilitate to gain the desired results. Learning was embodied in the numerous interactions, conversations and negotiations and creating the artefacts that were produced to develop and share ideas. The result of learning how to do it were displayed in the successful process of implementation.
- V10 Discovering more about the family member who had died and observing and marvelling at the resilience and fortitude of family members. Learning was embedded in the act of paying attention (observing and listening) to the family and interpreting what was seen and heard.
- V30 Making all sorts of connections through a family conversation at dinner about an expression that is in common use amongst younger people. The learning is in the way the conversation triggered connections to literature and reminiscences of growing up.
- V42 Paying attention to the body language of a friend over lunch with a group of friends in response to a comment made by another person present and making a mental note to alter seating arrangements next time the group meet
- V55 Paying more attention to the immediate everyday world and creating micro adventures, illustrated by a particular experience of the writer and her partner which generated thoughts about what an adventure constituted and how could such experiences be incorporated into other parts of life.
- V65 Improvising the preparation of a family meal with a friend who had been a carer for the family. Through this act appreciating the spontaneous process of co-creation and the feelings of wellbeing of what was both a practical and necessary act and also meaningful and symbolic act in the context of a profound shared experience.
- V89 The mental and emotional tussle of supervisor who cares about his research students and wants to help them but questioning whether the approach he uses is the right approach and becoming increasingly aware that he must resist telling students what to do. To let them discover for themselves by their own doing.
- V97 How observations of tomato plants growing and flourishing without the intervention of the gardener, can trigger thoughts about learning and the need to pay more attention to the opportunities we have right in front of us.
- V111 Recognising the importance of movement to the writer's art-making practices. In particular the act of walking and drawing through a local park inspired by both movement and the environment through which the artist is moving.
- V121 The writer was grappling with the challenge of creating a climate of trust within which participants could gain the true value of a new form of assessment that challenged their traditional experiences and understanding of assessment. Readers who were invited to share their expertise and experiences.
- V134 A lot of things happening in a life that draws attention to a need to think about finances and budgeting. Empathetic thoughts for others in more difficult situations triggered by panel discussion on breakfast TV and objects immediately to hand in the home environment.
- V145 Gaining an insight during a virtual business conversation that triggered thoughts about the writer's own development and how what is learned in one aspect of life can be applied in another. Pondering the question how are learning and developing related?

Knowledge and knowing in the context of lifewide learning

In academic contexts knowledge is mainly acquired through studying textbooks and journal articles. This is called explicit knowledge. It can be articulated into formal language, including grammatical statements (words and numbers), mathematical expressions, specifications, manuals, etc. More recently a combination of video and audio can be used as a medium to communicate explicit knowledge.

In lifewide learning the sources and nature of knowledge are more diverse and much of the knowledge that is used in learning is not derived from explicit sources, mostly it is tacit, personal and subjective knowledge embedded in individual experience and involving such things as personal beliefs, values, perspectives bias and prejudice. Before tacit knowledge can be communicated, it must be converted into words, models, or numbers that can be understood. The vignette is a tool for converting personal tacit knowledge gained through an experience into explicit knowledge in the form of narratives that can be shared and understood by others.

In the sample of vignettes all forms of knowledge described by Eraut & Hirsch⁶ are present but a combination of personal understandings of people and situations and self-knowledge are particularly important.

All the vignettes involved the acquisition of some form (s) of knowledge that is relevant to specific situations and circumstances and emerges in the course of the writer's interactions with their environments. Some of the vignettes describe the use of knowledge that was only accessible in the particular situation (V2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 42, 65, 97, 134, 145).

The vignettes reveal that although we might have enough knowledge to start acting in a situation where we are not certain what the outcome will be we engage in the situation in the belief that by doing something we will gain new knowledge and understanding - our participation will enable us to come to know (V1, 2 & 4 provide examples).

Only one vignette in the sample described the use of explicit text-based sources of knowledge (V4), two vignettes drew on explicit knowledge from YouTube video content (V6 & 7), one drew on the tacit knowledge of a musician talking about another musician in a YouTube video recording (V5), three gained tacit knowledge from family members (V8, 10, 30), two gained tacit/embodied knowledge from work colleagues (V2, 9) and several gained knowledge from observing situations (V3, 10, 42, 97, 145).

Types of Knowledge (Eraut & Hirsch⁶)

- 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
- Other aspects of personal expertise, practical wisdom and tacit knowledge

Figure 5 Conceptions of learning

Conceptions of learning

Säljö¹⁴ surveyed a group of mature students to understand what learning meant to them. He identified five conceptions of learning (Table 2 concepts 1 to 5). A sixth conception emerged from a six-year longitudinal study of adult students¹⁵ (Table 2 concept 6). The six conceptions of learning can be said to be part of a developmental hierarchy in the sense of "epistemological growth", that runs in increasing order from the first to the sixth. The first conception corresponds to the lowest developmental stage and views learning is a thing, while conceptions 2-6 view learning as a process. Conceptions 4, 5 and 6 look to the 'internal' suggest that learning is seen as something that you do to understand the world and the highest levels (5&6) bring the idea of transformation into play.

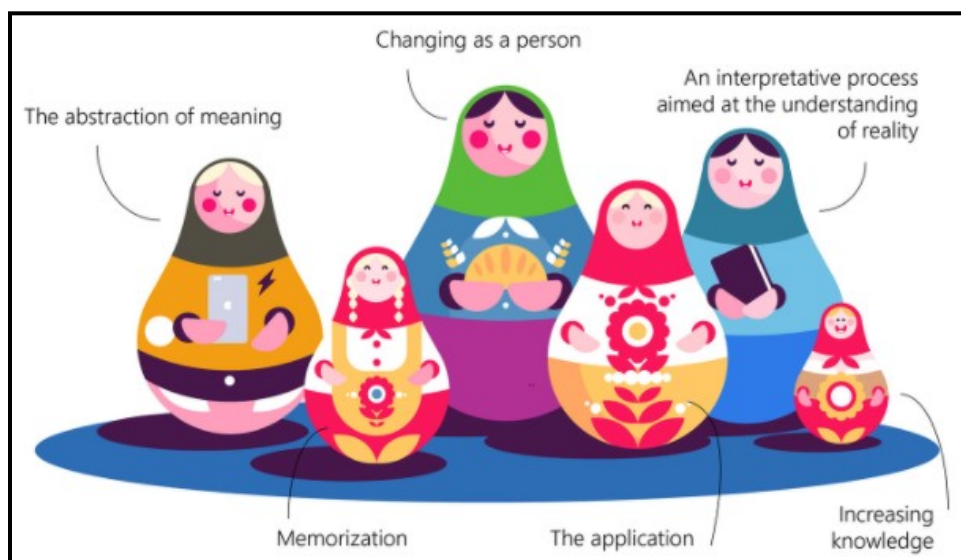


Table 2 attempts to relate possible conceptions of learning that are represented in the sample of vignettes with the conceptions of learning defined by Säljö¹⁴ and Marton and others¹⁵. All the vignettes involve a quantitative increase in knowledge. One involves learning to memorise and then embody procedures in action. Five of the vignettes describe the gathering of information in order to

use it to do and achieve something. Six of the vignettes seem to be extracting meaning from a situation. One involves reinterpreting existing knowledge to comprehend the world differently, and one is engaged in a process where the extraction of meaning is associated with changing self. Two vignettes do not seem to fit neatly into the conceptual categories V1 and V9.

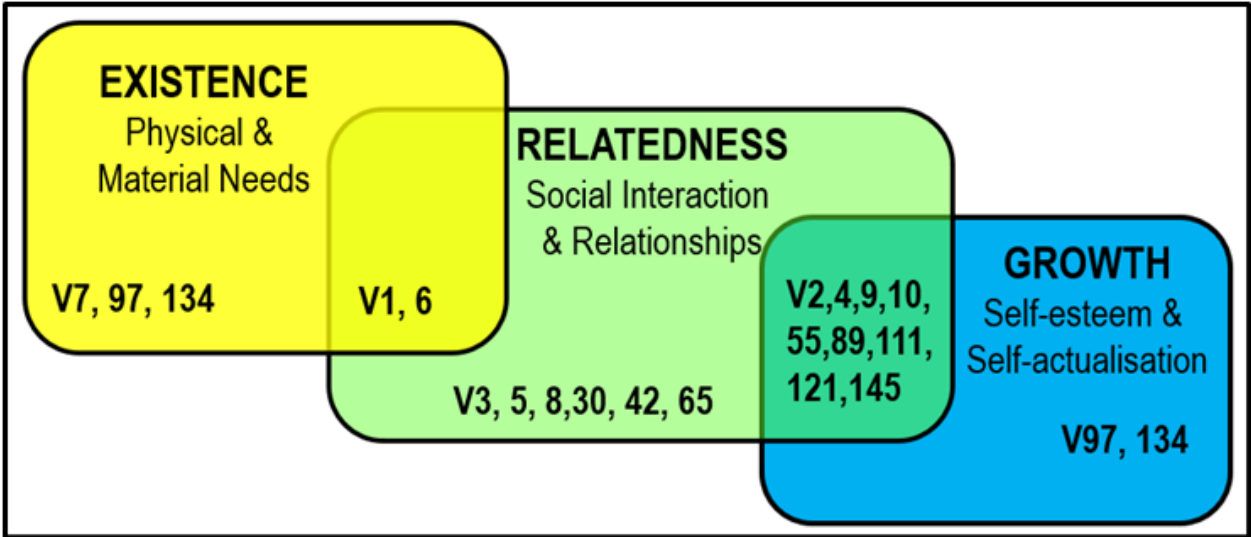
Table 2 Left column - conceptions of learning. 1 to 5 developed by Säljö¹⁴ conception 6 developed by Marton and others¹⁵. Right column - best fit of conception of learning to situations described in the sample of 20 vignettes. Experience refers to a concrete reality in relation to a specific situation or content, and conceptions corresponding more to a general idea of what we know about our experience¹⁶

CONCEPTS OF LEARNING	EXPERIENCES WITHIN WHICH LEARNING IS EMBEDDED
1 Learning as a quantitative increase in knowledge. Learning is acquiring information.	All vignettes involved acquiring various forms of knowledge
2 Learning as memorising. Learning is storing information that can be reproduced.	Perhaps the need to memorise procedures is apparent in V2
3 Learning as acquiring facts, skills, and methods that can be used as necessary.	V4, V5, V6, V7, V8, V42, V111 – acquired information that is relevant & useful to a specific situation
4 Learning as making sense or abstracting meaning. Learning involves relating parts of the subject matter to each other and to the real world. <i>It might involve connecting new situational knowledge to personal knowledge derived from past experiences.</i>	V3? V4, V5, V8, V9, V10, V30, V42, V65, V89, V97, V111, V121, V134, V145
5 Learning as interpreting and understanding reality in a different way. Learning involves comprehending the world by reinterpreting existing knowledge	V4, V89? V121?
6 Learning as personal development resulting from new understandings or appreciations, seeing the world differently.	V10, V55, V145 But perhaps all of the vignettes contribute in small ways to the development of the person in the sense that the person knew and or could do something that they couldn't before.

Alderfer’s motivational framework for interpreting lifewide learning

The Learning Lives inquiry demonstrated that Alderfer’s ERG framework¹³ provides a useful aid to reflecting on the motivational forces involved in lifewide learning. Alderfer refined Maslow’s hierarchy of needs¹⁷, into three categories of needs - Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Figure 6.

Figure 6 Subjective interpretation of needs expressed in the sample of vignettes across the three categories of Alderfer’s ERG model¹³



Yang and others¹⁸ summarise the ERG categories in these terms.

Existence needs

Existence needs include various forms of safety, physiological and material needs. Safety needs mainly refer to the prevention from fear, anxiety, threat, danger, tension, and so on. Physiological needs refer to an individual’s pursuit of satisfaction at the vitality level, such as leisure, exercise, sleep. Material needs refer to resources required for an individual’s living, including food and clothing [and the maintenance of tools they need for their day to day existence or wellbeing].

Relatedness needs

Relatedness needs include senses of security, belonging, and respect. Sense of security involves the mutual trust of humanity. Sense of belonging refers to prevention from all forms of suffering, such as isolation, loneliness and distance. People normally wish to be accepted and become members of a group. The needs for belongingness include love given to others or caring accepted from others. Sense of respect simply means feeling of respect from others, such as popularity, social status, superiority, importance and compliment. Such form of need gives people value to their existence.

Growth needs

Growth needs involve needs for self-esteem and self-actualization. The need for self-esteem refers to self-productive effects such as the ability to pursue, to seek knowledge, to achieve, to control, to build confidence, to be independent and to feel competent. Self-actualization refers to self-accomplishments including achieving an individual’s goals and developing his or her personality. The abilities to realize one’s potentials and to support the growth of others are also included. [Individuals’ creativity projects are often included in this category].

Appendix 1 and Figure 6 provide a subjective interpretation of the needs manifested in the sample of 20 vignettes with 4 vignettes reflecting existence needs, 14 reflecting relatedness needs and 9 reflecting growth needs. Over half the vignettes seem to straddle more than one category, suggesting that situations are often serving multiple needs.

Lifeworld domains - a personally constructed framework for experiential learning

In our inquiry we tried to anticipate the idea that learning was relational, situational and contextual by encouraging participants to recognise the domains (or environments) within which their experiences occurred and they try to make sense of their world. We envisaged that domains would approximate the physical, social and virtual environments shown in Figure 4 and in the Guidance we offered the following definition of an experiential domain.

Experiential domain - a recognisable part of our life in which we spend time doing particular things, with particular people, often in particular places, using particular tools and other objects. Through these experiences we learn, develop and achieve in ways that are consistent with who we are and our past history of experiences in that domain.

Most participants tried to use this idea and a synthesis of all the domains cited in all the vignettes is shown in Figure 6. In addition to the physical, social and virtual environments recognised the synthesis reveals the category of a self-domain, which it can be argued, is the inner psychological and cognitive environment of a person. This domain of self is clearly present in all other domains whenever someone has an experience. This pattern of interaction between self- and environment is consistent with Dewey’s transactional / interactional model of human experience within which learning emerges (to be discussed later).

Figure 7 Synthesis of domain categories cited in all the vignettes

		vignettes			vignettes
Inner Environment	Self	43	ENVIRONMENT	Work/professional life/practice	43
	beliefs, values, concerns, conscience, identities, confidence, agency, culture, spirituality, creativity, relatedness, belonging, loss, fortitude, resilience, growth & MUCH MORE			Family, friends, community	32
Outer Environment	Work/professional life/practice	43		Home /garden / environs	28
	Family, friends, community	32		Hobbies/interests/leisure activities	15
	Home /garden / environs	28		Virtual / technological	10
	Hobbies/interests/leisure activities	15		Travel / other cultures	06
	Virtual / technological	10		Formal study	01
	Travel / other cultures	06			
	Formal study	01			

The magical ability to transcend a physical environment and connect the present with the past

The vignettes reveal that we can be physically present in an experiential domain (for example taking a walk in the countryside) but be cognitively and psychologically engaged in thinking about experiences in an entirely different part of our life, either in the present, future or past. In other words our capacity to think and imagine is not constrained by a particular physical environment.

Several vignettes describe situations in which something happened to raise awareness and either in the moment, or in the process of thinking about the incident, memories of past experiences were triggered, sometimes many decades before (V5, V65, V134). Perhaps we need to keep revisiting our past because it is such an important part of who we are, and perhaps also that meanings emerging in a moment are relevant to meanings that emerged in our past. In this way perhaps, we can see that learning that appears (to an outsider) ephemeral, incidental and of little import, can carry meaning and significance to those who are embedded in the situation.

The magical ability to extend our minds and bodies into our environments using tools

The vignettes reveal that we are able to extend ourselves into and interact with our environment using tools and technologies we have made. This includes physical tools like screw drivers, technological tools like computers, internet and conceptual aids that enable us to think. Furthermore, the making of tools (like the tool being developed and piloted here) is an important site for learning.

The magical ability to extend our emotions into the emotional world of others

The sample of vignettes also draws attention to our ability to empathise with others and in imagining ourselves in the situations of others we experience feelings of empathy that are in themselves a type of knowledge for action. Vignette 134 illustrates this well.

Sitting down for breakfast, the news in the background, and flipping through a catalogue received in the mail this week I wonder how people can justify spending AU\$175 for salad servers or AU\$4990 for a gold phantom premier speaker. As I flick through this increasingly 'absurd' catalogue, in the background, the news has played, and a panel is speaking of the Government's decision to increase the unemployment Job Seeker rate to \$40 a day. COVID has brought this change.

Many years ago, I was unemployed, and I recall paying just over half my benefit in rent. A casual cleaning job once a week paid for my utilities. I managed to get by, and in fact [I] credit being unemployed with my decision to stop smoking.

Thinking of my current situation I wonder what I can do to help people when the COVID unemployment payments revert to the new general rate.....

The making of artefacts

When we make something we embody what we know and can do. The vignettes are an artefact that every participant made during the Learning Lives inquiry. Three of the vignettes describe the making of artefacts like a report (V4), a meal (V7, V65) or a drawing (V111).

The outcomes and means of learning are inseparable

Marton¹⁹ argues that what is learned (the outcome or the result) and how it is learned (the act or the process) are two inseparable aspects of learning. A person's ways of learning and understanding of what their learning means is bound up in the relationships between themselves and certain aspects of the world around them and any attempt to understand learning has to focus on these relationships as a whole and not on the individuals alone (see discussion on contexts). This relational view of learning opens up the possibilities of viewing learning as an ecological (relational, interactional and interdependent phenomenon) which will be considered later.

Our will to learn often grows out of the need and desire to respond to or interact with the world

While will is often considered to be essential to learning²⁰, the vignettes reveal that much of our incidental learning is not driven by intention or will. It simply emerges during the course of our interactions with our environment and the people and things in it that matter. And where there is a desire to learn, it often does not proceed action in the lifewide learning context. Rather, what emerges is a need to do or accomplish something, for example cook a meal, fix a broken electrical tool or a computer that isn't working, work out how to use a piece of software, or change something that we are not satisfied with.

Decisions are taken on how to act and learning is a consequence of actions that were motivated by the perception of need and recognition of opportunity, or perhaps expressed another way, by the realisation that there is affordance in a situation for learning.

The learning that is revealed in the vignette is bound up with the individual's relationships with aspects of their world and themselves, and their sense of what will or might change as a result of their interactions.

Learning by doing or trying to do

Clearly, these vignettes place us in the practical and conceptual territory of learning by doing, which connects us to educational theorist John Dewey. For Dewey experience is always a dynamic two-way process. He referred to this process as a 'transaction': 'An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between the individual and, what at the time, constitutes the environment' ^{21 p4}.

"When we experience something we act upon it, we do something; then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return: such is the peculiar combination. The connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness of experience. Mere activity does not constitute experience." ^{5 p104}.

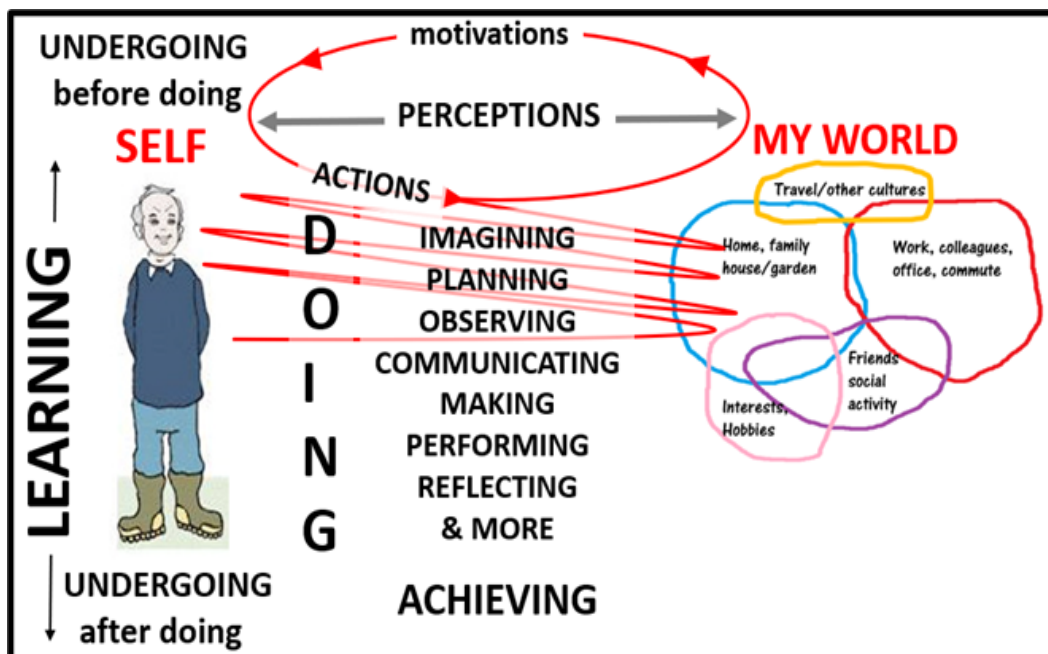
Dewey elaborates on this two-way process, suggesting that experience involves both 'trying' and 'undergoing'. 'Trying' refers to the outward expression of intention or action. It is the purposeful engagement of the individual with their environment or in Dewey's words, "doing becomes trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like" ^{5 p104}. Through action an attempt is made to have an impact on the world. 'Undergoing', the other aspect of the 'transaction' in experience, refers to the consequences of experience on the individual. In turn, in attempting to have an impact, the experience also impacts on us. 'Undergoing' refers to the consequences of the experience for us ^{22 p60}.

But what constitutes experience? Garforth²³ argues that Dewey comprehends experience in its most holistic way.

"He [Dewey] does not mean by this [experience] the stored up product of the past; nor does he mean simply the immediacy of the experienced present; nor the mere acceptance of environmental impact by a passive recipient; nor does he contrast experience with thought or reason. Experience is continuous from past through present to future; it is not static but dynamic, moving, in process." ^{23 p13}.

A visual representation of Dewey's transactional / interactional model of human experience is shown in Figure 7, using myself as the subject and the world that has meaning to me, the domains in which I have my everyday experiences. I have undergone over many years so when I perceive a situation in one aspect of my life I have a history of engaging with similar situations in the same of environment and my perceptions of what is happening and I how I might or should respond are almost programmed into me through what I have learnt. The people around me will probably think I am predictable – because I am for the most part. It is such predictability that creates a sense of stability in a world that is in continuous formation.

Figure 7 Summary of Dewey's transactional / interactional model of human experience within which learning emerges as we try to do something and undergo in the process.



Participants in a world in formation

It's not often that people all over the world share a context but all participants in the Learning Lives inquiry shared the context of the Covid 19 pandemic which revealed the fragility of our human constructed world, causing profound disturbance to social behaviour, catastrophic disruption to the global economy and causing the loss of jobs and businesses on a scale we have never witnessed before. The pandemic taught us not to assume that the world is a stable place and that we may, from time to time in our lives, have to contend with and adapt to, situations that we had never imagined. We knew that if we did something to the world it would definitely do something to us: it would make many of us sick, many people would die and our health care systems would be overwhelmed.

As our individual world's shrank, in response to the restrictions we imposed on ourselves to try to control the spread of the virus, we perhaps appreciated more than ever that we are part of a world in formation. That we were not simply bystanders watching this formational process but full engaged as participants in the process. Everyone felt this, but people who were more vulnerable suffered the greatest restrictions on their personal freedoms and way of life. Many vignettes provided a snapshot of this exceptional and universal context and set of social circumstances. And several participants noted that the inquiry itself provided something of an outlet for their sense of isolation.

But, three months on, and thanks to a combination of lockdown and an effective vaccination programme in the UK we are in a position to ease restrictions on social interaction. The battle with Covid 19 is not over yet but we are being told that we have to live with it – like all the other viruses we have to live with. So to end on a happier note, as I finish this article I am contemplating a holiday in a few weeks, in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. It will be an environment that will be entirely new to me but I know, from the photos and videos I have seen, that it will inspire me to play. I know that I will not be engaging in my usual everyday habits and routines and that my life will be full of opportunities (affordances) for doing and learning new things. I know that by travelling to this new place I will transform my world and by participating in this new world I will transform myself.

Figure 8 A representation of how I anticipate I will transform my world and my world will transform me during my forthcoming holiday to Scotland.



Acknowledgements

I am grateful to everyone who participated in the Learning Lives Inquiry who generously shared their narratives about learning in and through their everyday experiences. It was an amazing experience to be amongst such a supportive, respectful and committed community. It is only through such generous and sensitive collaboration that we can advance our understandings of what lifewide learning means.

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Conceptions of learning image credit <https://knowledgeone.ca/6-conceptions-of-learning-which-one-is-yours/>

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Appendix 1 Key features of lifewide learning in a sample of 24 vignettes.

Vignette	<p>CS - Context & Situation ED – Environmental Domain I/S – Individual or social activity T/P/I Task, Project or Incidental KS – Knowledge source TS – Time Scale M= Motivation concrete/obvious ERG = Alderfer's motivational model Existence, Relatedness, Growth EE – Emotional Effects</p>	What does learning mean? What does it mean to learn in the contexts being described
#1	<p>CS - Fixing something that isn't working. ED – Home/Garden I/S – Individual T/P/I – Incidental KS – Past experience & from tinkering with the object TS – A few minutes M - Need – I need the tool to work - Self-esteem – ERG - Existence & Relatedness EE – positive - feels good to be able to fix it</p>	Having a rough idea of what to do. Doing it and discovering it worked. Learning was the biproduct of trying to fix the problem and was embodied in the act.
#2	<p>CS – Pushing self to try new techniques ED – Work I/S – Individual & social T/P/I - Task KS –Coached by knowledgeable peers and in the act of trying to accomplish the task TS – A few hours M – Desire to develop self - Self-esteem – it feels good to use this environment effectively and add to my professional capability ERG – Growth & Relatedness EE – Initially strongly negative but becoming more positive</p>	Being shown how to use technology but not feeling confident or competent. Then being thrown in at the deep end with things going wrong but being supported and eventually surviving. Learning was embodied in the act of trying to use the technology in both preparing for and delivering an online coaching session and reflecting on the experience.
#3	<p>CS – Observing and interpreting the world ED – Home/Garden I/S – Individual T/P/I – Incidental KS – Observing others & connecting to personal knowledge TS – A few minutes M – Curiosity and interest ERG – Relatedness? EE – No strong emotions?</p>	Watching and listening to a group of men at work and interpreting where they come from and their social order. Learning was embedded in the act of paying attention to the social interactions of the group of workmen and reflecting on what was seen and heard.
#4	<p>CS – Advancing thinking through writing ED – Work I/S – Individual T/P/I – Project KS – Published UNESCO reports & book/journal articles TS - Several weeks M – Curiosity and desire to learn M – Desire to influence others & build relationships M – Esteem of self and organisation ERG – Growth & Relatedness (ideas) EE – no strong emotions but sense of satisfaction with results</p>	Background research and preparation of a White Paper on the theme of "Enriching and Vivifying the Concept of Lifelong Learning through lifewide learning and ecologies for learning & practice". Learning was embedded in the process of seeking out new codified knowledge and connecting and integrating it with existing personal knowledge. It is embodied in the artifact which others can read.
#5	<p>CS – Sustaining conversations with some school friends ED – Friends/technology assisted social interaction I/S – Individual T/P/I – Incidental KS – Video recording tacit knowledge of musician who played with a famous singer - interview on YouTube TS – An hour M – Desire to know more about own past ERG – Relatedness</p>	Discovering new facts about musicians we enjoyed listening to in my youth. What was learnt was codified in the emails and links sent to my friends.

#6	<p>CS – Fixing problems with computer software 1) for work context 2) in order to play music with friend</p> <p>ED – Home & Interests</p> <p>I/S – Individual / social (YouTube video by someone)</p> <p>T/P/I – Task</p> <p>KS – Videos showing how to solve problems YouTube</p> <p>TS – hours spread over days</p> <p>M – need to have a fully functioning computer and needing to connect to someone to play music together</p> <p>ERG- 1) Existence 2) Relatedness</p> <p>EE – Frustration caused by inability to solve problem becoming positive as problems solved</p>	<p>Internet searching for and eventually finding solutions. Learning was embodied in the act of searching for new information relevant to problem and applying the knowledge to the problem and eventually discovering that the problem was solved.</p>
#7	<p>CS – Making a meal</p> <p>ED – Home/kitchen</p> <p>I/S – Individual</p> <p>T/P/I – Task</p> <p>KS – YouTube video</p> <p>TS – Minutes</p> <p>M – Need to learn something quickly (just in time)</p> <p>ERG – Existence</p> <p>EE – Positive</p>	<p>Finding and copying a recipe. Learning was embodied in the act of searching for new information relevant to problem and applying the knowledge to the problem, cooking the meal and discovering that the recipe worked.</p>
#8	<p>CS – Writing a post for a prestigious organisational blog</p> <p>ED – Home / work</p> <p>I/S – Social</p> <p>T/P/I – Incidental</p> <p>KS – Perspective of a family member</p> <p>TS – minutes</p> <p>M – Need for another perspective</p> <p>ERG – Relatedness</p> <p>EE – Positive</p>	<p>Gaining feedback from a family member to improve performance recognising the value in the advice and using the feedback. Learning was embedded in recognising the wisdom in the advice and applying it to the artefact that had been created.</p>
#9	<p>CS – Designing and facilitating a learning process</p> <p>ED – Work</p> <p>I/S – Individual & Social</p> <p>T/P/I – Project</p> <p>KS – Knowledge distributed between 3 members of team</p> <p>TS – Several weeks</p> <p>M – Need/desire/ambition to engage/promote ideas Professional challenge (esteem)</p> <p>ERG – Relatedness & Growth</p> <p>EE – Positive</p>	<p>Interactions within a small team, planning and designing a process together and learning how to facilitate a process to gain the desired results. Learning was embodied in the numerous social interactions and the artefacts that were produced to develop and share ideas. The result of learning how to do it were displayed in successful implementation.</p>
#10	<p>CS – Attending a family funeral</p> <p>ED – Family / ceremony</p> <p>I/S – Individual & social</p> <p>T/P/I – Incidental</p> <p>KS – Observing family interactions during funeral ceremony</p> <p>TS – Hours</p> <p>M – Need/desire to belong to and support family</p> <p>ERG – Relatedness & Growth</p> <p>EE – Sadness, sympathy/empathy</p>	<p>Discovering more about the person who had died and marvelling at resilience and fortitude of the family. Learning was embedded in the act of paying attention (observing and listening) to the social interactions of the group and reflecting on and interpreting what was seen and heard.</p>
V30	<p>CS – Family discussion at dinner</p> <p>ED – Home</p> <p>I/S – Social</p> <p>T/P/I – Incidental</p> <p>KS – Family members and own memories</p> <p>TS – Minutes</p> <p>M – Interest and curiosity?</p> <p>ERG – Relatedness</p> <p>EE – ?</p>	<p>In the way a conversation involving family members around the dinner table triggered connections to literature and the experience of growing up.</p>

V42	<p>CS – Lunch with friends ED – Social I/S – Social T/P/I – Incidental KS – Observation of social interactions TS – Minutes M – Caring about others ERG – Relatedness EE – Empathy</p>	Paying attention to the body language of someone who reacted negatively to comments made over lunch with friends and making a mental note to alter seating arrangements next time the group meet
V55	<p>CS – Micro adventures ED – Environs around home I/S – S T/P/I – Incidental KS – Personal- knowledge of local environment TS – Hours M – Need for adventure ERG – Growth/relatedness EE – Positive</p>	Creating micro adventures in the familiar world to fulfil a need for adventure, illustrated by a particular experience of the writer and her partner which generated thoughts about what an adventure constituted and how micro adventures could be incorporated into other parts of life.
V65	<p>CS – Family meal ED – Home I/S – Social T/P/I – Incidental KS – Shared history of family-related events TS – Minutes/hours M – Need to prepare dinner ERG – Relatedness EE – Positive - happiness / healing</p>	Preparing a family meal with a friend who had been a carer for the family. Through this act appreciating the spontaneous process of co-creation and the feelings of wellbeing of what was both a practical and symbolic in the context of a profound shared experience.
V89	<p>CS – Questioning self – learning to hold back ED – Work/Professional practice I/S – Individual T/P/I – Incidental KS – Own practice and its effects TS – Reflections over a long period M – Inquiring into/questioning own practice. Desire to become a better supervisor ERG – Relatedness and Growth EE – Emotional turbulence caused by asking ‘am I doing the right thing?’</p>	Questioning and challenging one’s own professional practice.
V97	<p>CS – Reflecting on gardening experiences ED – Interest / home environment I/S – Individual T/P/I – Incidental arising through task (growing tomatoes) KS – Personal - based on experiences TS – A significant period of time M – Interest/curiosity ERG – Existence- need for food? Growth – using plant analogy EE – Positive lined to insights?</p>	How observations of tomato plants growing and flourishing without the intervention of the gardener, can trigger thoughts about learning and the need to pay more attention to the opportunities we have right in front of us.
V111	<p>CS – Artistic practice – drawing while out walking ED – Environs close to home I/S – Individual T/P/I – Task – creating artistic artefacts KS – Personal based on experiences of practice TS – Hours M – Need/desire to practice as an artist ERG – Growth and Relatedness EE- Positive emotions attuned to being in the landscape</p>	Self-awareness of the importance of movement to the writer’s art-making practices as she walks and draws on her journey through a park.

V121	<p>CS – A issue relating to educational practice ED – Work – professional practice I/S – Individual T/P/I – Task KS – Personal experience-based TS – Significant period of time M – Inquiry to improve own practice /solve problem ERG – Growth, Relatedness to work/students EE – Dissatisfaction with current situation</p>	<p>The writer was grappling with the challenge of creating a climate of trust within which participants could gain the true value of a new form of assessment that challenged their traditional experiences and understanding of assessment. Readers who were invited to share their expertise and experiences.</p>
V134	<p>CS – Economic life of an individual with empathy for others ED – Home/personal life I/S – Individual T/P/I – Incidental KS – Personal – TV news TS – Moments drawing on a lifetime M – Need - addressing a concern/feeling need to check finances ERG – Existence? EE – Concerns generate moments of anxiety? But also feelings of empathy for others who are less fortunate</p>	<p>A lot of things happening in a life that draws attention to a need to think about finances and budgeting. Empathetic thoughts for others in more difficult situations triggered by panel discussion on breakfast TV and objects immediately to hand in the home environment.</p>
V145	<p>CS – Conducting a conversation with clients ED – Work I/S – Social T/P/I – Incidental KS – Personal /insight TS – Moments M – Desire to develop self ERG – Relatedness and Growth EE – Positive</p>	<p>Gaining an insight during a virtual business conversation that triggered thoughts about the writer's own development and how what is learned in one aspect of life can be applied in another.</p>

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LIFEWIDE LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

An Open, Experiential & Experimental Inquiry Facilitated by Lifewide Education September - October 2021

Humans have always engaged in lifelong learning but it has meant different things at different points in our history and this will always be the case. The contemporary world is complex, hyperconnected, turbulent and increasingly disruptive. It's a world in rapid and continuous formation and rapid degradation driven to a large extent by human behaviour. It's also a fragile world that cannot be sustained if we carry on using it in the way we have. Perhaps also people have "under estimated" their potential to beneficially influence their world and 'under appreciated' the possibilities for their own renewal and growth that the whole of their life affords.

We have reached a turning point in our history and unlearning as well as learning, through and across our lives, is becoming critical in order to change behaviours in ways that will help sustain our life and our planet. The wicked problem of our future survival is framed by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which offers 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Education has its own goal - SDG#4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. This SDG gives education a new role – to educate the world in ways that will encourage behaviours that will support sustainable development. It also contains within it a new and important role for lifelong learning – to enable individuals and societies to learn how to sustain themselves and their world.



The recognition that education and learning for sustainable development is a whole of life commitment and practice means that any policy that is focused only on formal education will not deliver the SDGs. What is required is an expanded vision of learning and action as a lifewide (every part of life at any point in time) lifelong (every point in time along the journey of life) process, and a culture that values learning in every aspect of life, and values learning as the pathway to creating a better world. It's a vision and culture that reaches beyond the SDG#4 goal of promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, to the idea that "the whole of life is learning therefore education can have no ending" first proposed by Charles Lindeman nearly a century ago. Without learning we cannot sustain our futures - a deliberately ambiguous phrase to cover the multitude of futures that are possible for ourselves, our offspring and generations to come, our societies and future societies and the planet that sustains and nourishes all life.

Lifewide Education is responding to the UNESCO's 2030 call for 'learning for a more sustainable world' by facilitating inquiry and experimentation into the way lifewide learning and education might contribute to a paradigm of learning and action that embraces consciously and fully the lifewide dimensions of everyday life and its fundamentally ecological and formational character. The purpose of our experiential experimental inquiry is to engage with, and personalise SDGs in the context of our own lives, in order to individually and collectively discover what learning for a sustainable future might mean.

Our Programme of Work in 2021

- 1 We are a partner in the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning Futures of Education Initiative - contributing perspectives on lifewide learning and learning ecologies. See our post on the UILL BLOG
- 2 We prepared a WHITE PAPER for Futures of Education initiative "Enriching and Vivifying the Concept of Lifelong Learning through Lifewide Learning and Ecologies for Learning & Practice". The WP set out our initial ideas on a lifewide and ecological approach to learning could support the UNs developmental agenda. In the next phase of our work we will begin to apply some of these ideas to our learning lives. Read our White Paper
- 3 Experiential Experimental Inquiry - We are planning a 4 week long experimental inquiry in September/October 2021 in our 'Lifewide Learning Research and Development' group space on Linked In. The focus will be on how, we as individuals, might use our lifewide learning to change our thinking and behaviours in order to live more sustainable lives and contribute to a more sustainable world. We want to reach out to people all over the world to reflect the diversity of our planet and cultures. Further details about the inquiry will be posted here but if you would like to collaborate please contact the project lead, Professor Norman Jackson lifewider@gmail.com



Further details will be posted on our Lifewide Learning for Sustainable Futures webpage
<https://www.lifewideeducation.uk/sustainable-futures.html>

EXPLORING, EXPERIMENTING AND EXPERIENCING LIFEWIDE LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

A WORLD IN CONTINUOUS FORMATION

Sustainable DEVELOPMENT GOALS

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO SUSTAIN
THEMSELVES AND THEIR WORLD THROUGH
LIFELONG - LIFEWIDE LEARNING

WE AND OUR WORLD FORM TOGETHER

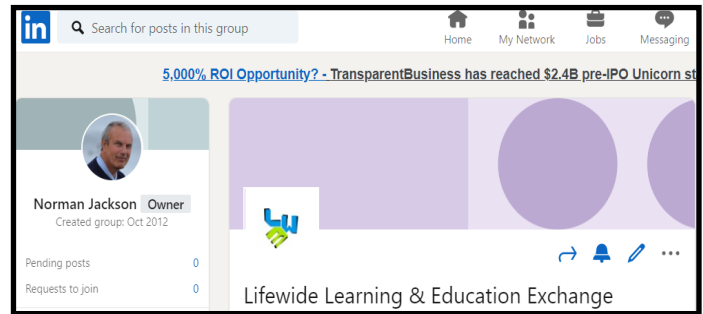
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JOIN OUR EXPERIENTIAL INQUIRY
OCTOBER 18 - NOVEMBER 15 2021



lifewide magazine

Lifewide Education is a not for profit, community-based, educational enterprise whose purpose is to encourage and support a lifewide and ecological approach to learning, education and personal and professional development .



<https://www.linkedin.com/>

Lifewide Magazine is the voice of the Lifewide Education community. Each issue examines a different aspect of lifewide learning, education, personal development & achievement.

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Commissioning Editor

Professor Norman Jackson

We welcome contributions from members of our community.

Please contact the Commissioning Editor
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