

The relationship between lifelong learning and tertiary education and training



The notion of learning throughout life is hardly a new concept, the concept of Lifelong Learning (LLL) involves cumulative learning over time in a variety of circumstances, by placing value on flexible learning strategies, multidisciplinary and flexible approaches to curricula, by upgrading knowledge and skills to respond to demands of personal and professional environments, thus allowing individuals to evolve and adapt to the ongoing skills upgrades to remain relevant to their profession.

LLL encompasses both formal and informal types of education through development of knowledge and skills training. Formal education and learning includes, is based on the structured school system running from primary school through to university as well as organized school-based programs created by businesses for technical, professional and work-based training. Much literature defines informal learning as a lifelong process whereby individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educational influences and resources in his or her environment, from family, neighbours and workplace.

Furthermore, LLL is perceived to have vast benefits from helping learners adapt to changes around us, to allowing people to fully develop natural abilities and be active contributors to society. This essay will analyse and discuss the different conceptions of LLL as part of educational institutions, social, cultural and vocational learning. The relationship between vocation and working life and LLL, as well as the educational worth and purpose of LLL.

Conceptions of Lifelong Learning

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LLL is categorised into two dominant views the traditional view and the contemporary view.

The traditional view of LLL is expressed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Belanger, Borgir, Peltzer and Arnaud (1999) which encompasses the viewpoint that personal development is the main drive behind LLL, as well as stating that education throughout life is driven by an individual key goals of happiness and peace whereas the contemporary view is explored from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which proposes that purpose of LLL is due to the increase in industry, economic rationalism, government regulation and compliance, thus promoting the benefit of continuous skill development to individuals.

Davies (1993, p125) defines LLL as a ‘ continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments.’

Rojvithee (2005) further explains the process of acquiring the knowledge, skills and values of LLL as ‘ integration of formal, non-formal, and informal education so as to create ability for continuous lifelong development as well as improve quality of life. Rojvithee (2005, p. 1.) further emphasises that ‘ Learning is a part of life which takes place at all times and in all places. It is a continuous lifelong process, going on from womb to tomb, beginning with learning from families, communities, schools, religious institutions and

workplaces.’ Furthermore Medel- Añonuevo et al (2001, p. 2.) describes LLL as a ‘ right and necessity of each individual to learn for his/her social, economic, political and cultural development. While acknowledging the existence of lifelong education practices in diverse cultures all over the world’

Jarvis (2004) further explores that LLL can involve learning in an educational insituiton, the workplace, within communities, with family or independently.

Much of the literature on LLL and lifelong education proceeds from the standpoint that we know what education is and then carries onto discuss lifelong education in terms of formal education.

“ Learning to Be” was a report released by UNESCO in 1972, which was delivered by an international committee of experts. After the release of above report, there were many debates regarding it, as Dehmel (2006) emphasises throughout the report as ‘ It’s essential humanistic concern was with achieving the fulfilment of man through flexible organization of the different stages of education, through widening access to higher levels of education, through recognition of informal and non-formal as well as formal learning’

UNESCO perspective of LLL is based on the concept of an educational society thus narrowing the gap between skilled labour and unskilled labour, which is one of the basic causes of inequality in the world today.’ (Dehmel., 2006)

OECD (1973) emphasise its perspective of LLL as ‘ learning occurs during the entire course of a person’s life.’ “ Formal education contributes to learning as do the non-formal and informal settings of home, the workplace, the community and society at large”

Field (2012) explores the relationship between adult learning and an individual’s well-being, examining the effects of adult learning upon factors directly relevant to well-being, including but not limited to self-efficacy, confidence or the ability to create support and career networks. Field (2012) further expands the factors that are indirectly associated with LLL and a person’s well-being, such as earnings and employability, thus promoting positive associations between participation in LLL and an individual’s well-being, and mental health.

Vocations and their relationship to working lives

O’Doherty & Willmot (2001, p. 125) state that employment provides individuals with a sense of self which is associated with the quality of work performed by an individual, as well as the social interactions and relationships formed as part of an individuals’ working life.

Dewy (2011) questions the place vocational education has within working lives as well as ‘ the connection of thought with bodily activity; of individual conscious development with associated life; of theoretical culture with practical behaviour having definite results; of making a livelihood with the worthy enjoyment of leisure.’

The modern working life and the quick changing nature of society has changed the type of work, the places of employment and the amount of work employees undertake, thus forcing workers to think outside of the box and improve their work experience diversity and adapt to change to some extent and survive. Workplaces that focuses on continuous learning for its employees allows them to forge ahead and meet the challenges of tomorrow, these organisations will increasingly be viewed and managed as a productive asset. This diversity in job roles allows employees to participate in a variety of roles within their working lives, thus increasing continuously learning and knowledge within the workers profession. Billet (2006, p. 258) further emphasises this point that part-time, casual or contract jobs produce insecurity and unpredictability, however this

LLL can fortify and enhance skills and knowledge allowing individuals to excel in the working world. The nature of your work or place of employment may provide additional opportunities such as seminars, workshop or even relevant courses to help you perform better, network and advance in your field. Furthermore, if an individual is unemployed learning a new skill can improve your resume, as well as your chances of moving towards a more desired career.

Vocation as the basis of TET

The concept of vocation may be foundational to the ways individuals understand and construct our views on vocational education system.

Vocation can be seen through two main viewpoints, the first one is more specific towards career pathways and jobs thus incorporating training and

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the development of necessary skills to successfully enact those jobs. Viewing tertiary education and training (TET) through this context emphasises the importance of skills training and development thus having a strong employment focus through LLL. The second viewpoint on vocation is more about life fulfilment, thus viewing TET as finding one's individual preferences thus allowing the opportunity to practice them giving a strong personal focus and fulfilment. The contemporary view of LLL promotes that qualifications may get you an interview, whereas the traditional viewpoint of LLL involves that actually getting the job can take a lot more. Well-balanced employee with transferable skills, such as the ability to be able to demonstrate that you are keen to learn and develop both professionally and personally is what employees look for, as well as what sets candidates apart during job interview and selection process.

Lewis-Fitzgerald (2005) definition of LLL can seem dramatic but emphasises that LLL is about acquiring skills that enable us to survive and continue to live or exist. This context follows the first viewpoint on TET, however Lewis-Fitzgerald definition also incorporates the second viewpoint on TET thus enabling us to search for who we are and allows for new agendas to emerge for personal growth and development constantly emerge.

Meeting the requirements and desires of individuals and lifelong learners at various levels of competence throughout their lives is a vital component that TET institutions must offer facilities partaking in LLL must get hold of a new mindset; Learners are no longer passive receivers of knowledge, but need to be active researchers, constructors, and communicators of knowledge. The conception that knowledge is handed down from above either from <https://assignbuster.com/the-relationship-between-lifelong-learning-and-tertiary-education-and-training/>

specialists in design, from managers in organizations, or from teachers in courses, is no longer the norm of LLL but is constructed collaboratively in the context of employment, team-work or personal achievement. LLL facilities enables learners to upgrade their knowledge, skills and competence in a desired discipline, thus improving both personal and professional attributes, giving the employees abilities to contribute to the workplace community by sharing knowledge and supporting other learners. Fischer et al., (2002a) highlights that lifelong learners are not merely consumers of learning facilities but can be asked to actively contribute to the facilities themselves. Tovey & Lawlor (1997, p. 10) argue that training should always be done for a specific organisational reason, hence the two dominant viewpoints on LLL, which includes training and for that reason needs to have more than an immediate and economic use.

Providing services for employees with disabilities to improve knowledge, skills and professional development is critical to improving diversity within an organisation. The Disability and Equality Act (2010) is further actioned by the government to develop LLL, in particular by protecting individuals who would be considered more vulnerable

Educational worth of lifelong learning and the purposes of adult, vocational and continuing education

Within the field of naturopathy, continuing education is paramount in maintaining professional registration. With naturopathy we are required to sign up to an association which provides access to professional education seminars as well as discounted or free seminars for natural medicine

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clinicians to attend and promote lifelong learning within any clinician's expertise. Continuing professional development (CPD) is the terminology utilised within adult education to enhance a practitioner understanding and knowledge of concepts they may be unfamiliar with or to update knowledge which aligns with current research as well as develop personal growth. Craig and Smith (2002) state that CPD has an important impact on patients as all individuals has the right to access health care professionals who have the most up to date skills, knowledge and abilities to their clinical area.

Furthermore, Quinn and Hughes (2013) expand the definition of CPD learning stating that CPD learning can range from a formal type of learning, such as an academic type of learning through a tertiary institution or CPD learning can occur spontaneously in a individuals day to day working environment, Therefore a practitioner who recognises the importance and priority of LLL through the incorporation of utilising CPD brings its own rewards, by gaining more personal satisfaction as well as opening up opportunities to specialise in an area of interest as well as thriving on the ability to give the best to patient care. (Cowen and Maier and Price, 2009) Cowen., et al., (2009) states that the theory behind CPD is that individuals who engage with CPD gain skills, attributes and competences that are required in practice. Harrison (1993) hypothesised that when individuals learn new skills or attitudes this becomes a part of their regular behaviour or performance within their working career and stays with them throughout life, thus promoting further LLL. (RCN, 1998).

Bauman (1998, p23) emphasises the value of LLL by improving an individual's worth with the worth of vocational education as part of an

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economic system. “ Ours is a consumer society” (Bauman, 1998, p. 23)

Bauman (1998) further explores the concept of education being an out with the old, in with the new therefore stating that an individual’s work and personal circumstances change, new education, learning, development of skills and knowledge is then required. An individual’s skills and knowledge are continuously developing and evolving all the time throughout their working career due to the increasing requirement for recognised formal education to keep up with changes in society, technology and career progression and development.

Jarvis (2004, p. 19) further, recognises that that LLL is more than economic and that any learning or skills development that involves adults, needs to ensure that it meets more than just the criteria of vocational needs of that person. Billet (2006, p. 207)) states that a person’s own sense of identity and “ sense of self” needs to be catered by the interests of work and education, promoting and encouraging LLL. Bagnall (2000, p 25-28) continues to emphasise the traditional viewpoint of LLL stating that in some cases this will mean that education is not strictly work related, but will encourage social justice, equality, individual empowerment or liberation from deprivation and poverty.

Research shows that the more students that go to school the more likely they are to participate in adult education during their adult and working life (Bélanger, 1999, p. 22). However individuals who are unable to participate, or have had a participation difficulties within primary and secondary education are more likely to face barriers when participating in adult education (Bélanger, 1999, p. 23). Wells (2007, p. 66.) explains that barriers <https://assignbuster.com/the-relationship-between-lifelong-learning-and-tertiary-education-and-training/>

towards LLL are more focused on socio-economic disparity, the unequal distribution of opportunities to succeed in education and it is argued that “ income distribution and family circumstances still have a significant impact on access to education” Wells (2007, p. 66.) further argues that “ even with the concepts of lifelong, flexible and accessible learning being adopted it still appears the people who need the education most find it hardest to access it”. The claim that the widespread adoption of information and communication technology will automatically improve quality of life and allow more personal and vocational freedom is argued by Reynolds & Webber (2008, p. 51) stating that that control is still maintained through those that have access to technical expertise.

With industry controlling the skills being taught in the vocational education sector, the government’s current concept of lifelong learning seems to be focussing on retraining older workers with new skills, allowing them to work longer (Australian National Training Authority, p. 5). This seems to be one of many narrow views of LLL that devalues vocational education’s role. Meta cognitive skills, high order thinking and problem solving are hard to define as the behavioural style outcomes currently in use and are some of the most useful over time. While it is argued that training should always be done for a specific organisational reason (Tovey & Lawlor, 1997, p. 10) lifelong learning, includes training and therefore needs to have more than an immediate and economic use.

In Conclusion, LLL is a concept that learning, and opportunities go beyond that of compulsory education, as well as traditional routes both academic and vocational. With the ever-changing workforce and job roles the need for <https://assignbuster.com/the-relationship-between-lifelong-learning-and-tertiary-education-and-training/>

new skills and more prominent and much literature suggests that LLL and adult education is seen to have benefits for not only an individual but the development of society both nationally and internationally.

The integration of formal, non-formal, and informal learning shows a positive relationship to be able to create continuous lifelong development of quality of life. Much literature highlight that the context within which learning takes place, occurs at all times in each place, through one's life. People need to upgrade their skills throughout their adult lives to cope with modern life, both in their work and in their private lives. The issue will be achievable through learning.

The courses and learning activities taken on by the lifelong learner may culminate in obtaining a certificate, license or even a degree, however this is not necessarily the ultimate objective, as LLL goals and achievements vary greatly between lifelong learners and may incorporate both traditional and contemporary viewpoints of LLL. Lifelong learners have increased motivation and desire for more knowledge and self-improvement or improved career aspirations which benefit both professional and personal aspects.

LLL are individuals who become involved in learning throughout their lives for personal and professional accomplishments. In other words, it means that do not leave the education after graduation. Therefore, LLL puts the responsibility on individuals as it is excellent for professional and personal growth and development.

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