

# Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: implications for the adult learning workforce

Draft thinkpieces for an expert symposium

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## Introduction

This pack contains the working drafts of eight thinkpieces developed for the proposed publication *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: implications for the adult learning workforce* (2019).

The project, supported by the European Commission and the Further Education Trust for Leadership, aims to develop future models of workforce development for adult learning. The first step has been to commission the views of a range of thinkers in UK further and adult education on what should be done.

## Background

Drawing on a wide range of policy, research and practice from across the UK, our 2017 report *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise; the impact of adult learning across the UK (HWW)* presented evidence on the impact of adult learning on health, employment, and community life.

*HWW* identified a range of policy challenges confronting the four nations today and argued that adult learning could make an important contribution to addressing these and achieving a fairer and more inclusive society. In doing so, *HWW* called for innovative approaches to the funding, planning and delivery of learning, and for closer collaboration between the adult learning sector and other services.

Feedback to *HWW* from our partners across the UK highlighted the importance of developing new ways of thinking about and doing adult learning that would inevitably present challenges for the adult learning workforce. *HWW* asked practitioners and leaders to step outside what is familiar, to think differently about their role and to be receptive to exploring and trying different ways of doing things.

Further analysis of *HWW* suggested seven key themes on which action would be needed on workforce development to strengthen the role and contribution of adult learning to delivering health, work, and community outcomes. The papers here are based on those themes.

## Preparing for the symposium

Authors were invited to contribute from a diverse range of viewpoints and draw on perspectives from across the UK. The papers are informed directly by each

contributor's work 'in the field', as policymakers, researchers, and senior practitioners.

The purpose of the symposium is **not** to undertake a critique of each individual paper. Rather, we want to bring authors together because we believe that this will enable sharing and cross-fertilisation of ideas which will generate new knowledge and insights.

We want the project as a whole to be greater than the sum of its parts, and for the symposium to be an opportunity to add value to the work. By the end of the symposium, we shall have explored common themes and begun to identify possible models for future workforce development across the UK.

In preparation for the symposium, we ask you to read this suite of papers and think about the following questions:

- What cross-cutting themes emerge from the eight papers?
- What features of future workforce development models do the papers suggest?
- What's missing? (There must be *something!*)
- How could a new model or models be tested?
- Who else needs to be involved in taking this work forward?

After the symposium, we anticipate that authors may wish to make some final changes to their thinkpieces. Helen will write an introduction to the thinkpieces, and Mark will draft the conclusions.

We shall share a draft of the final document with you for comment. In early 2019, we hope to share a version of the document with each of the UK impact forums for comment, as well as the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe.

A final version will be published later in 2019 and will be launched at the UK National Coordinator summative conference.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the project. We look forward to seeing you on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

Mark Ravenhall

Helen Plant

Project Coordinators

# 1: Place, people and partnership – pathways to a better life for all

Paul Donaghy

## Introduction

*Healthy Wealthy and Wise* provides the evidence that when adult learning is recognised as an explicit enabler of social change—and forms the core element of a more integrated and joined-up approach across health, community safety and employability—then better social outcomes are achieved. What excited me most in the report however was the recognition that in order to deliver such social and economic progress a new model of system leadership and practitioner collaboration is required.

During the dark days of our troubled past in Northern Ireland and more recently, as we stagger towards self-government, I have had the opportunity to work on issues that have made a difference to ordinary people. I have had the privilege to work alongside other progressive forces to help build a fairer and more inclusive society, but we still leave too many behind. Within our disadvantaged communities, education spend is continually squeezed with siloed `activity` rather than `progress` targets. A hallmark of our shared future in Northern Ireland needs to be a fairer distribution of education spend across society and the life-course. This is unlikely to happen voluntarily. As a part of our peace stabilisation work, we need to ensure that learning becomes once again a ladder out of social and economic disadvantage, poor health and wellbeing, staying out of the criminal justice system and gaining fair employment. New system leadership and practitioner collaboration is required.

The devolution of adult learning and skills in Northern Ireland has created both opportunities and threats. On the one hand we are a small nation of 1.5 million people with a single Health/Wellbeing and Education/Skills economy. This should enable us to better join up services, but we also suffer from a legacy of siloed thinking and funding, alongside outdated governance and accountability mechanisms. Our draft *Programme for Government* (2016)<sup>1</sup> was seen by many as an opportunity to break out of traditional silos. Other initiatives including our Public Health<sup>2</sup> strategy, public service reform, the designation of Belfast as a UNESCO Learning City<sup>3,4</sup> and local authority

<sup>1</sup> NI Executive Office. (2018). Programme for Government – Working Draft Framework. Available at:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/pfg-framework-working%20draft.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Health Inequalities – Annual Report 2018. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety N. I. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-inequalities-annual-report-2018> (accessed October 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Belfast Strategic Partnership. (2015). Belfast a Learning City: A Learning City Charter. Available at:

<http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/wp-content/themes/makinglifebetter/resources/lifelong-learning/Belfast%20A%20Learning%20City%20A4%20WEB.pdf> (accessed October 2018).

<sup>4</sup>Pascal Observatory. (2014). Why learning is central to city futures - A policy briefing from PASCAL International Observatory.

community planning create the potential to commission for outcomes rather than activity alone.

These dynamics have profound implications for workforce development. Without a new model of system leadership and practitioner collaboration we will surely fail. A more collegiate system of civic, political and organisational leadership, operationalised in a way that liberates our skilled professionals and trusts our practitioners to lead and learn together is required, but my 20-plus years' experience leading workplace equality suggests strongly that voluntarism alone is unlikely to succeed.

Within our divided Northern Ireland society, equality of opportunity for all has become a cornerstone of our peace process. Seldom now, being a catholic or protestant is a determining factor in job success. I am convinced that mainstreaming adult learning has the potential to help cement our peace process. Many years have however been wasted trying to ensure that those in power take the bold decisions needed to deliver change. Often, well intentioned leaders struggle because the system and collaborative leadership has been absent. We struggle then to achieve a coherent response to the key social issues we face - such as those around Alcohol misuse or Mental health. Different agency planning cycles, funding and commissioning priorities/models and siloed accountability mechanisms disperse the potential for progress and often lead to duplication instead of coherence. Many front-line practitioners want to work in a more joined up way as they know this will deliver better outcomes, but they need to be given permission and provided with the leadership needed by their organisational and civic leaders.

### System Leadership based on vision and shared outcomes

People don't know what they don't know. There is little confidence that we make evidence-based decisions. Even so, an increasing body of evidence (including Bennington, Sunningdale Institute)<sup>5</sup> and a new cadre of leaders and frontline professionals who understand that the challenges around Health/Wellbeing, Education, Community Safety, Economic Prosperity and growing a Learning society are intertwined, not separate, however practitioners have difficulty breaking out of the silos they have been boxed into without the lead from above. Outdated governance mechanisms, as well as a reluctance to challenge the status quo, bound up as it is in politics (with both a small and big P), as well as the power dynamics which protect vested interests have prevented the more joined up approaches needed.

<sup>5</sup> Bennington, J. and Hartley, J (2009). *"Whole Systems Go!" Improving leadership across the whole public service system.* Sunningdale Institute. National School of Government: London.

Two key characteristics required to bring about change are; firstly, a new skillset for civic, organisation and system leaders built around shared vision, and secondly, the need for practitioners to learn and work together, supported through coaching approaches<sup>6</sup>.

The future is about coherent, integrated approaches. This must become the starting point (and core learning) for all leaders and practitioners (upon entering professional and leadership training, but crucially also, as a core part of CPD). Such training needs to move away from a ‘Bingo’ mentality (eyes down, look in) and understand that success is not to be found in any single profession, but rather in looking up and across, to those in other professions. System Leadership means working together and responding to the shared challenges within and across organisational boundaries, empowering all to exercise their collective lungs to breathe deeper and increase capacity to do more, together. Outcomes based commissioning has the potential to deliver just that. It will be scaffolded alongside service users, in a way that co-designs action plans to deliver shared outcomes. Peer learning, coaching and 360degree feedback loops with appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) will support this transition in a way that benefits those who are traditionally left behind.

As leaders and practitioners exhibit these behaviours and attitudes more it becomes normal; ‘the way we do things around here’ (the culture) and others will model these behaviours. The Leadership qualities required include skills of advocacy, long-term planning, shared vision, learning by doing together and an understanding of the transformational nature of collaborative gain. This moves many beyond their safety zones, but my experience is that when they are won over, they become champions for this approach, are passionate and resist any attempt to go back to old ways. This liberates practitioners to deliver the change they came into the profession for; to be open to share and learn (rather than blame), build confidence, show empathy, acknowledge success, and unlock the talent of people around them.

### Learning as the dynamic for change

Leaders and practitioners need to learn the evidence from the many place-based budget initiatives; that public purse costs reduce, and social benefit improves when tackling community safety, social and health care disadvantage and benefit dependency in a coherent, joined up way. Front-loading investment through early intervention works, turning off the ‘increasing demand’ tap. Transformational leaders

<sup>6</sup> Hambly, L. (2014). “Creative Career Coaching”. Accessed at <http://creativecareercoaching.org> (accessed October 2018). Health Inequalities – Annual Report 2018. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety N. I. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-inequalities-annual-report-2018> (accessed October 2018).

and practitioners combine passion and vision with endurance and managing expectation. They are skilled advocates and bring partners along and engage them to join in the transformation of systems, processes and organisational structures. Three key leadership skills are therefore to be focussed on the future, expert at engagement and continually deliver improvement.

Transformational leaders and practitioners understand that in this messy world `learning` is the only sustainable way to motivate and change behaviour, attitudes and mind-sets and so they explicitly value and promote learning in all its intertwined dimensions<sup>7</sup>. In this world of the learning rich and the learning poor many of those left behind had poor previous experiences of education and so make few demands for more<sup>8</sup>. Leaders mainstream effective models of learning that turn people on to learning and provide progression opportunities. They recognise learning as the ultimate continual improvement process that must become a lifelong activity.

### **Innovation and Creativity as transformational practitioner traits**

Our existing governance and accountability mechanisms so often strangle organisational and practitioner creativity and innovation. All too often practitioners are forced to deliver organisational activity targets when they know success is to be found through collaboration. Unlocking talent by treating partners as volunteers rather than outdated command and control approaches motivates all to be creative in the co-design and delivery of outcome based agreed action plans. Progress measures are then no longer consigned to the `too difficult` box and are measured on distance travelled rather than on activity alone. Instead of managers obsessing about the `number of bums on seats` they find ways to measure the more difficult and important issue of how an intervention has transformed the life chances of an individual and/or family. Place and pooled budgets/resources and jointly commissioned product and process from those players who can deliver the best individual and community outcomes at the best price to the public purse become normal. System leaders and practitioners drive collaboration and new robust cross cutting governance mechanisms with newly agreed Key Performance Indicators. Leaders exhibit courage and determination and give permission to practitioners and stakeholders to take calculated risks to deliver win/wins. Success comes through continual improvement. Setting appropriate management structures and effectively managing relationships

<sup>7</sup> Delors, J. (1996). "Learning: The treasure within". Unesco Publishing. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001095/109590eo.pdf> (accessed October 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Hyde, M. and Phillipson, C. (2014). *How can lifelong learning, including continuous training within the labour market, be enabled and who will pay for this? Looking forward to 2025 and 2040 how his might evolve?* Foresight, Government Office for Science: London.

become explicit leadership and practitioner traits. Managing the inevitable conflict with vested interests requires new skills and building alliances for positive change.

## Summary

Joined-up, evidence-based approaches are required to tackle the wicked social and economic challenges we face as a society. Making learning an explicit enabler and working together in a transformational way liberates all involved and empowers citizens and communities. My experience of leading change has taught me that collegiate leadership at all levels, aligned with empowered practitioners, working together on agreed outcomes, built around Place, People and Partnerships works. It also provides the best opportunity to grow 'communities of leaders'. This is the only sustainable way to tackle Obesity, Alcohol/Drugs misuse, Mental and Physical ill Health, Community safety, Educational underachievement and Joblessness. Transformational leaders create space to have challenging conversations and speak truth to power, despite the difficulties this entails in the current world of short termism and pursuit of overnight return on investment.

As with Equality and Fair Employment in Northern Ireland, voluntarism alone is unlikely to bring coherent, joined up working about. There may therefore be a need for a more supportive legislative backcloth to empower leaders and practitioners to deliver a Place, People and Partnership approach.

*Paul Donaghy is a member of the Northern Ireland Impact Forum. He has worked as a town planner, workforce representative, manager of NHS University (NI), and Head of the Health and Social Care Widening Participation Unit. He works as a consultant for the HSC Leadership Centre and is a Trustee Open College Network N.I.*

## 2: Careers Advancement

Deirdre Hughes

*Career is the evolving sequence of life and work experiences over time*<sup>9</sup>

### Introduction

We all need good careers advice. But, if the government continues to cut as savagely as it has been doing, fewer and fewer of us will get it. As an accelerating wave of economic, social and technological change inevitably impact on the economy and people's lives, new technical skills will be required, individuals and firms may need to specialise more to compete in global markets, and many adults will have to work longer than in the past (Grattan & Scott, 2016)<sup>10</sup> The consequences of the UK's exit from the European Union remain to be seen but are expected to be significant. We all need to continually replenish and renew our knowledge, skills and digital competencies. Therefore, careers advancement should be recognised as a public good as well as a private one.

In looking at challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*<sup>11</sup> proposes a "new Careers Advancement service should be established, which helps people to progress in work, building on lessons learned from initiatives from across the UK" <sup>12</sup>. This paper considers the concept, careers eco-system, key principles and skills needed by the workforce responsible for design and delivery.

### Careers advancement

Jobs, skills and personal growth are inextricably linked to the concept of careers advancement. This can range from setting personal goals to negotiating a job offer, with many steps in between. Work encompasses employment, self-employment, volunteering, employability programmes, and local labour markets. Supporting people to progress in work has a range of benefits including improved income, greater longevity, better physical health and improved mental well-being<sup>13</sup>. Under-utilised

<sup>9</sup> Adaptation from the original works of Arthur, M.B. & Rousseau, D. (Eds.) (1996). *The boundaryless career*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Grattan, L. and Scott, A. (2016) *The 100 Year Life: Living and Working in An Age of Longevity*. Bloomsbury Publishing, London. Retrieved from: <http://www.100yearlife.com/>

<sup>11</sup> Learning and Work Institute (2017) *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: The impact of adult learning across the UK* report, Leicester: Learning and Work Institute

<sup>12</sup> *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Hughes, D., Adriaanse, K., & Barnes, S-A., *Adult education: too important to be left to chance: Literature review*, Warwick Institute for Employment Research, October 2016. [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/adult\\_education/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/adult_education/)

employees are more likely to report their job “offers poor prospects for career advancement, training and skills development than individuals who are able to use their skills fully”<sup>14</sup>. For those trapped in poverty, low-paid or precarious work, returners to the workplace and/or those needing to reskill or upskill ‘careers advancement’ may seem nebulous or even unobtainable. In work poverty is a significant challenge for those in low paid occupations<sup>15</sup> and there is a need to raise the profile of level 2 jobs as a stepping stone into higher level work.

Three in five companies report that the UK’s skills shortage has worsened in the last year and more than half expect the situation to further deteriorate (Open University, 2018)<sup>16</sup>. There are concerns that skills gaps in sectoral areas which rely heavily on overseas workers will be hard hit, including teaching, construction, health<sup>17</sup> and social care<sup>18</sup>. The OECD suggests that if the UK could reduce skill mismatch to best practice levels, it could lead to a five per cent productivity gain<sup>19</sup>.

Careers advancement services should, on a lifelong basis:

- keep people switched on to learning;
- broaden horizons and raise aspirations;
- challenge inequalities and inaccurate assumptions;
- inspire and nurture talent; and
- increase levels of exposure to and experiences of work.

For practitioners, this requires expanding skills sets and an understanding of how career decisions connect with an individual’s identity, while acknowledging achievements and developing a personalised plan that supports progression. It means supporting people to develop levels of career resilience unmatched in the past.

<sup>14</sup> CIPD (2018). *Over-skilled and Under Used: Investigating the untapped potential of UK skills*, London

[https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/over-skilled-and-underused-investigating-the-untapped-potential-of-uk-skills\\_tcm18-48001.pdf](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/over-skilled-and-underused-investigating-the-untapped-potential-of-uk-skills_tcm18-48001.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Institute for Fiscal Studies (2018). *Poverty and low pay in the UK: the state of play and the challenges ahead*, London.

Retrieved from: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/11696>

<sup>16</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/brexit-uk-skills-shortage-business-problems-hiring-open-university-a8533876.html>

<sup>17</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.politico.eu/article/nhs-chiefs-sound-alarm-about-brexit-impact-on-health-workforce-nurses-doctors-migration/>

<sup>18</sup> Skills for Care (2018). *The State of the adult social care sector and workforce in England*, Leeds: Workforce Intelligence, September 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NMDS-SC-intelligence/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-2018.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> McGowan, A.M. and Andrews, D. (2015). *Skill mismatch and public policy in OECD countries*. OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 1210. Paris: OECD Publishing.

## A careers eco-system

England has a highly fragmented careers ecosystem system compared to other National Careers Service arrangements in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales. The £104.6m budget (2012-2013) was reduced to £75m for area-based services to adults (2014 - 2017)<sup>20</sup> and over the next three years funding is further reduced to circa £45m. Table 1 below provides an overview of how the focus has changed, particularly within the last year. A national telephone helpline service 0800 100 900 (8am to 10pm, 7 days a week) is also available and a National Careers Service website.

**Table 1: Overview of Priority Groups 2014-2019**

2014 Priority Target Group	2015-16 Priority Target Group <sup>1</sup>	2018-2019 Priority Target Group
Young adults below level 3	Low-skilled adults without a level 3 qualification, employment or training	Low skilled adults without a level 2 qualification
	Young adults aged 18-24 not in education, employment or training	Adults aged 18-24 not in education, employment or training
Redundancy/Distance from the labour market	Adults facing redundancy, newly redundant or distant from the labour market (that is the customer has not been in any type of work for two years or more)	Adults aged 50 and over who are unemployed or at demonstrable risk of redundancy
Low-skilled employed	Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and in the work-related activity group (WRAG) who are unemployed	Single parents
Black, Minority, Ethnic (BME)	Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	People with special educational needs and/or disabilities
Carers	Jobcentre Plus customers on DWP Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)	Adults unemployed for over 12 months
50-year olds +	People who are claiming Universal Credit who are looking for work and are at least 18 years old	
Offenders	Adults in custody aged 18 years or over, or an ex-offender	

Devolution brings the transfer of central government decision-making into the regions with greater emphasis on fair employment, social inclusion, and better health outcomes. Jobcentre Plus, Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs), local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), local authorities and a plethora of other providers in the 'marketplace' have a direct interest in adult learning and careers advancement<sup>21</sup>. In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, an all-age National Careers Service acts as a

<sup>20</sup> Desk review Invitation to Tender (ITT) document. Note: the Skills Funding Agency changed its name to the Education and Skills Funding Agency in March 2017

<sup>21</sup> The government has tasked the CBI and TUC with overseeing a new National Retraining Scheme

major conduit with ‘a careers offer’ free to anyone at the point of need. Also, three contrasting examples of up-skilling and re-skilling people in work include the:

- Scottish *Flexible Workforce Development Fund*<sup>22</sup> to support employers to better provide and support in-work training. This gives Further Education providers an opportunity to participate more in adult learning;
- Working Wales *Employment Advice Gateway*, led by Careers Wales, will provide an assessment and brokerage service involving individuals, employers and community partners; and
- Belfast partnership with 15 organisations coming together from health, housing, social care, education, sport, libraries, tourism and Invest NI, to develop a four-year plan including ‘*Conversations about learning and work*’.

### Key principles

**1. All-age coherent careers support services** – Recognisable and accessible to individuals on a lifelong basis with ‘blended’ online and offline careers information, advice, guidance/coaching activities.

**2. Clear governance and delivery arrangements** – Transparency within a national and regional/local **careers eco-system ‘free at the point of need’**, guided by **careers fora** that use intelligence on supply and demand and keep the spotlight on careers advancement.

**3. Starting early in primary schools** – Aspirations first develop from a young age in childhood<sup>23</sup>. Parents and carers transmit cultural capital, values, and gender-role attitudes to their children. By focusing on career-related learning in primary schools this can also support family and intergenerational learning.

**4. Inclusive and responsive career learning** – An entitlement for all citizens to have a career health check and “the right to access guidance services”<sup>24</sup> at any point in their lives. Simultaneously, employers targeted purposefully to make optimal skills utilisation and provide more inclusive access to the world of work.

<sup>22</sup>Retrieved from: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2017/september/employers-offered-training-support-as-10million-fund-is-launched/>

<sup>23</sup> Flouri, E., Joshi, H., Sullivan, A., & Moulton, V. (2017). The antecedents of children’s aspirations. In M. Watson & M. McMahon (Eds.), *Career exploration and development in childhood: Perspectives from theory, practice and research* (pp. 89-100). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

<sup>24</sup> European Social Charter (1996 Revision) Article 9. p.6. Retrieved from: <https://rm.coe.int/168007cf93>

**5. Skills utilisation awareness raising** – Employers can be encouraged to think creatively about harnessing people’s talents and skills. Embedded guidance through social partnerships<sup>25</sup>, career and peer coaching hubs (online and offline), particularly for small to medium-sized companies, can improve productivity, mental health, and well-being at work.

**6. Digital and labour market intelligence /information (LMI)** – Real-time data and artificial intelligence (AI) created by digitally innovative and creative individuals and businesses should be embedded within careers, education, health, and social inclusion plans to increase individuals’ access to the labour market and to enhance their digital literacy skills.

**7. Building the capacity of others** – Those responsible for delivery should have nationally recognised accredited competences and credentials to provide impartial and independent career guidance/coaching, working closely with highly skilled adult learning intermediaries and those from business.

### Summary: what skills are needed by the workforce who delivers the service?

To support adults to navigate successfully the changing and increasingly complex landscape of careers, a careers advancement service must encourage people to engage in *career conversations and co-construct narratives* about how careers, identities and roles can be shaped.

Training and development for those within the careers workforce must build skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to:

- the changing world of work and employer engagement
- relational, practical, emotional and cognitive development<sup>26</sup>
- digital literacy to support the learning of others and carry out functions using innovative digital applications
- guidance/coaching techniques
- local labour market information

<sup>25</sup> Social partnerships may include trade unions, employers, professional bodies, sector specific organisations, training providers, further and higher education providers

<sup>26</sup> <https://employid.eu/sites/default/files/y4book.pdf>

- guidance embedded in the workplace

Moreover, the focus must be not only on professional careers managers and practitioners, but also on understanding and addressing the development needs of para-professionals, volunteers and other trusted intermediaries who play a vital role in supporting adults to make decisions on learning and work throughout their lives.

To create an advancement service fit for our times we need to halt the serious erosion in government-funded careers support for adults, take stock and remember this is a public good as well as a private one.

*Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE is an international and national expert in career development policies, research and practice. Cedefop appointed her as a UK expert in lifelong guidance and she is an adviser to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). She is a prolific writer, researcher and policy adviser.*

## 3: Personalised learning for health and wellbeing: citizens as partners

Dragana Ramsden

### Introduction

With decreasing public budgets and the increasing needs of an aging population, there are a number of complex problems facing our communities and impacting on their health and wellbeing. There is no one single solution to these problems. The best solutions respond to individual choices and aspirations. What is more, on their own, neither the state nor citizens have all the necessary resources to provide the best solutions. Complex challenges call for a blend of professional expertise with citizens' informal networks, personal time, experience and agency. Learning of various kinds will be central to such innovative approaches.

As a potential solution which maximises the contribution of adult learning, *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*<sup>27</sup> suggests the adoption of 'person-centred curricula, using an asset-based approach, to enhance capabilities and existing knowledge.'

### What are asset-based approaches?

Asset-based approaches treat the skills, knowledge and lived experience of citizens as valuable resources for achieving positive change. This is a collective and community-orientated method of working, where "professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both partners have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities"<sup>28</sup>. The definition is underpinned by an expectation that this way of working can link assets across health, work and community life and that it can deliver more than the sum of the parts.

My extensive experience of delivering adult learning in the community, through collaboration with a wide range of organisations and local citizens, leads me to believe that effective collaboration between professionals and citizens improves outcomes. Research evidence points at this too.<sup>29</sup> The impact is multifaceted: services can be more relevant and provide better value for money; the demand on services can

<sup>27</sup> LWI (Learning and Work Institute). 2018. *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: the impact of adult learning across the UK*. Leicester, LWI. Available at: <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/healthy-wealthy-and-wise-the-impact-of-adult-learning-across-the-uk/>. [Accessed on 29 Sept 2018]. Page 28.

<sup>28</sup> Slay, N. and Stephens, L. (2013). *Co-production in mental health: A literature review*. London. new economics foundation (nef). Available at: [https://b3cdn.net/nefoundation/ca0975b7cd88125c3e\\_ywm6bp3l1.pdf](https://b3cdn.net/nefoundation/ca0975b7cd88125c3e_ywm6bp3l1.pdf). Page 3. [Accessed on 18 Oct 2018]

<sup>29</sup> Cabinet Office (2009). *Co-production in public services; a new partnership with citizens*. Available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/207033/public\\_services\\_co-production.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/207033/public_services_co-production.pdf). Page 17 [Accessed on 5 Oct 2018]

decrease; professionals working in them may be more fulfilled; communities can be stronger, and their health and wellbeing can be improved.<sup>30</sup> When learners are equal partners, they can feel greater ownership and take more responsibility for their learning. This in turn may result in improved impact and achievement<sup>31</sup>.

### Changing power dynamics

In co-production, power dynamics change, requiring new mind sets from both professionals and citizens. To share decisions and have equal power in planning, the knowledge that comes from the experience of citizens needs to be valued as a resource. At the same time, adult educators need to give up the role of sole subject experts and take on a new role of equal collaborative partners.

Of course, curricula which were entirely based on the personal experiences of learners would run the risk of not being widely accessible or grounded in evidence. To guard against this, adult educators' need to bring to bear their knowledge of what good teaching and learning looks like. And co-production does not stop when a curriculum is produced, otherwise it could become stifled and outdated. However, keeping the process active and sustainable may be a challenge in itself. Other challenges include: the need to suitably complement the expertise of adult educators with local knowledge; balancing external quality criteria and funding targets with local demands, and matching nationally approved qualification assessment criteria with local demands<sup>32</sup>. Creating new relationships may be a lengthy process, demanding additional time and resources.

While roles are being defined, the collaborative space can be uncertain and ambiguous. The task of facilitating these relationships is not easy as it involves developing learners to take on a new role, while negotiating new power dynamics with them as well as with other partners. At the same time, more empowered learners can become more demanding learners. Are adult educators ready for this?

### Background

In adult learning, co-productive working usually refers to curriculum co-design, in which partners, including learners, have a role in designing and delivering learning programmes, through reciprocal relationships. My research shows that the literature does not define a specific model of co-production and it does not usually focus on

<sup>30</sup> Dineen, R. (2015) 'Co-production... 'no more throw-away people'' [PowerPoint Presentation]. Available at: <https://www.cdhn.org/sites/default/files/Ruth%20Dineen%20-%20Co-Production%2027th%20May%202015.pdf> [Accessed on 3 Oct 2018]

<sup>31</sup> National Institute of Adult Continuing education (NIACE) (2014) *Curriculum Development – co-designing learning with disadvantaged groups*. Available at: <http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/gridhosted.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/curriculum-co-design-guide-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed on 3 Oct 2018]

<sup>32</sup> NIACE (2014) *ibid*

practice and processes where learners and partners exercise shared leadership over how the curriculum budget is spent. Neither does it cite examples where learners are involved in partners' and educators' performance management, or the recruitment and training of staff. The impact of co-production on educators is also not widely considered. However, some research within recovery-orientated curriculum in mental health implies that this model of work can positively impact on educators' use of language, collaborative practice or the design of their professional development programme<sup>33</sup>.

### Challenges for adult learning

Apart from a shared vision and clear rationale, there are three key curriculum design principles for co-producing adult learning<sup>34</sup>. Where does adult learning currently stand in relation to these principles?

#### 1. Organisational cultures which integrate co-design approaches

While grappling with Ofsted<sup>35</sup>, ESFA<sup>36</sup> or LEP<sup>37</sup> priorities, decreasing budgets and reduced learner participation, how brave are adult educators to take risks in order to develop and sustain organisational cultures that integrate co-design approaches? It is likely that the culture among many adult learning providers is not conducive to innovation, risk taking and building equal relationships with learners and other partners. The current education culture may also be too off-putting and unappealing for citizens and partners unaccustomed to the acronym-laden world of RARPAs, SARs, ILRs, ILPs and PR&QIs<sup>38</sup>.

#### 2. Measuring shared outcomes

Adult learning providers tend to use different outcome tools to measure the impact of their work on meeting different local needs. Using measures that capture the changes brought about by co-designed curricula may involve cross-organisational negotiation and agreement. This in itself requires whole-system thinking where citizens alongside voluntary, education and health sector professionals work together on sharing solutions, practices and outcome measures. Does the initiation of this process lie with adult educators or with everyone across local providers and communities?

<sup>33</sup> Dalgarno, M. and Oates, J. (2018) 'The meaning of co-production for clinicians: An exploratory case study of Practitioner Trainers in one Recovery College Recovery College'. DOI: 10.1111/jpm.12469 Available at: [https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/101890149/JOates\\_Recovery\\_College\\_2018\\_preprint.pdf](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/101890149/JOates_Recovery_College_2018_preprint.pdf) [Accessed on 20 Oct 2018]

<sup>34</sup> NIACE (2014) *ibid*

<sup>35</sup> Office for Standards in Education

<sup>36</sup> Education and Skills Funding Agency

<sup>37</sup> Local Enterprise Partnership

<sup>38</sup> Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement; Self-Assessment Reports; Individual Learner Records; Individual Learning Plans; and, Performance Review and Quality Indicators.

### 3. Inclusive practices that value different types of knowledge

Across different sectors and community groups, there is already a learning system with approaches that allow for different types of knowledge and experiences to co-exist. For example, the space includes both formal and informal learning activities offered by a range of providers from the health and voluntary sectors. There are also many non-formal learning activities taking place in libraries, gyms, cafés, people's houses and community centres. Citizens are already organising themselves to co-produce 'knit and natter' groups or create community gardens. Do they recognise that as learning? What role does adult learning occupy in this whole space? Could a process of co-design begin with the adult learning sector working with others to understand how it can complement the existing practice? What can we learn from colleagues in health and community services? What can other professionals learn about adult learning?

#### Workforce development needs

Developing curricula which are negotiated and driven by citizens, educators and other providers is a complex process. It requires each party to complement the assets of others and have clearly defined roles in the process. In order to facilitate a co-productive process, adult educators need to show competence and confidence in relation to four key areas of their professional practice.

#### Adult educators' professional identity and scope of the role

Adult educators need the ability to deal with challenges of shifting their role from educators to facilitators and collaborative partners. This also entails managing or changing the expectations of other stakeholders – such as local communities, partners or national regulatory bodies - about a traditional role of adult educators.

Recognising what their role should be at different stages of a co-productive process and sharing the responsibility for outcomes may be a significant challenge for the sector. This is because adult learning providers are accustomed to taking on the full responsibility for curriculum design. At the same time, they are not accustomed to regular reflection because of the pressures brought about by the pace of delivery.

#### Building and maintaining relationships across organisational boundaries

Co-production requires flexible administrative structures and a focus on nurturing relationships. Therefore, it becomes particularly important for adult educators to have the skills to build and maintain relationships with formal and informal groups, while managing expectations, and being able to articulate key messages in a way which makes sense to potential partners outside of the education sector. It also involves having the ability to

work with uncertainty and ambiguity across organisational boundaries. How can adult educators mobilise and facilitate the input from various partners ensuring that no one has a monopolistic role?

### **Agreeing, collating, analysing and using robust outcome measures**

Co-productive process involves scoping and building a shared vision. In order to recognise the impact of the learning that takes place, adult educators and their partners need to agree, collate, embed and analyse shared outcomes measures. They also need to recognise that some outcomes are about long-term achievements and may need to be monitored over a longer course of time.

### **Facilitating innovation and risk taking**

A truly co-produced curriculum involves a different mind-set and the ability to take and share risks. Adult educators need to be able to create a safe space, both within their own organisations and across partnerships, which is conducive to risk taking and innovative thinking. This approach will also imply the ability to embed the principles of progressive curricula across partnership boundaries.

### **Summary**

Health services, which have a long tradition of working closely with patients to co-design services, believe that the development of co-productive relationships is underpinned by reflection which needs to be purposefully built in<sup>39</sup>. Adult educators may be well-versed in self-assessment processes, but regular reflection may still seem like a big challenge. Deliberately putting the time aside to look, interpret and analyse your experiences and responses so that you can learn from them requires discipline, time and courage. This may be a difficult and painful process too, as it is not assisted by a pre-prepared framework to aid your thinking. No wonder regular reflection is a challenge for the sector.

Besides, in a culture driven by audits and reporting systems, accompanied by adult educators' concerns related to finance, sustainability and rates of participation, the appetite for innovation may be squashed. There is also a great pressure to demonstrate outcomes quickly. Perhaps one of the key things that educators need to work on is their confidence to invest in reflection, nurturing relationships and innovation, while exploring the extent to which they can embed co-productive principles in their organisational cultures and structures.

<sup>39</sup> King's Fund, The. (2018). *Patients as partners: Building collaborative relationships among professionals, patients, carers and communities*. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/patients-partners> . [Accessed on 1 Oct 2018]

*Dragana Ramsden is Head of the Centre for Community Learning and Engagement at Morley College, London. She has extensive experience of leading and managing adult community learning programmes. They are aimed at adults with barriers to engagement and delivered through multiple stakeholder partnerships. A passion for the social purpose of education drives her work. Her latest research focuses on the role of adult community learning leadership in improving mental health and wellbeing through collaboration.*



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## 4: Inclusive learning pathways

Alan Sherry

### Introduction

In my view, there were two key design principles of the proposed lifelong learning approach in *Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise*. Lifelong learning is *inclusive*; and it *enables progression*. As the report goes on to say adult learning is at the heart of the inclusive growth agenda.

Dirk Van Damme, Head of CERl at OECD, contends that society needs diverse systems of learning, skills development and innovation<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, Jeff Selingo envisages a future where “workers will likely consume this lifelong learning in short spurts when they need it rather than in lengthy blocks of time as they do now”<sup>41</sup>. In addition, Georgia Tech’s *The Deliberate Innovation Lifetime Education* report in April 2018 concluded that institutions will require to “provide educational opportunities that serve individuals needs throughout their entire career....”<sup>42</sup>.

In order to make this a reality it is essential that all adults have the opportunity to participate in a non-linear form of post-compulsory education not only those who have already benefited from Higher Education. Inclusive Learning Pathways require to be available to all learners based on the development of both vocational and transferable skills which prepare individuals both for employment and citizenship.

To meet these challenges as learning professionals we must consider how we address delivering effective 21<sup>st</sup> Century Lifelong Learning in a way that meets the needs of individuals, society and the economy.

### The challenges we face

In Scotland, the challenges facing adult learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are multi – dimensional. It ranges from engaging learners who have few skills and a poor schooling experience, through to employees who need to acquire new skills to sustain employment, particularly as digitalisation reshapes our workplaces. This is happening at a time of rapid demographic change. As the 16- 24-year-old cohort in Scotland declines by 9% over the next decade<sup>43</sup>, those aged 65-74 years will increase by approximately 17%<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Keynote speech Eurashe Conference, Tallin 2018 available at [www.eurasha](http://www.eurasha)

<sup>41</sup> Insider Higher *Higher Education in World Where Graduates Never Graduate*, Dellarocas, [www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/views/2018/08/01/role-university-world-where-students-never-graduate-opinion](http://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/views/2018/08/01/role-university-world-where-students-never-graduate-opinion) August 2018

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.provost.gatech.edu/commission-creating-next-education> 2018

<sup>43</sup> [www.gov.uk/national-records-of-scotland](http://www.gov.uk/national-records-of-scotland)

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*

The combination of technological and demographic change poses a series of complex challenges for both schools and post compulsory education providers. Lifelong learning will need to become a reality if societies are to ensure inclusive economic growth for the benefit of all. The nature of the learner journey will be substantially different from that which has underpinned existing approaches to the nature and provision of post- school education.

### Current approaches are not enough

In May 2018, the Scottish Government published '*The 15-24 Learner Journey Review*<sup>45</sup>. The report was intended to establish the Scotland's ambition for a world class education and skills system. However, it also created the sense that there was an end point to learning at 24 years. The Review focussed on linear progress from school to post- compulsory education. It sought to enable seamless learner journeys with the recognition of prior attainment as a means to create efficiencies by reducing the time spent acquiring degrees.

In addition, the *Review* focussed on the importance of creating parity of esteem between vocational and traditional qualifications based on the Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. Again, the emphasis was on young people in the 16 -24-year-old cohort. In both areas, the report reinforced the notion of linear, hierarchical progression with an implicit assumption that skills acquisition was linked prolonged periods of study.

The Scottish Government failed to consider the role of lifelong learning in supporting inclusive articulation and progression pathways. Nor did it place sufficient emphasis on the meta-cognitive skills needed by 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. In essence these are thinking about thinking skills which promote an understanding of how a task is performed spanning multiple and divergent subject areas. Learners who develop these skills 'monitor their behaviour in terms of goals and self-reflect on their increasing effectiveness. This enhances their self-satisfaction and motivation to improve their methods of learning.'<sup>46</sup>

To address the multitude of challenges and to support inclusive economic growth there is a need to create diverse systems of lifelong learning which develop key meta-cognitive skills, vocational skills and citizenship skills. Current approaches outlined in Government policy are not enough.

<sup>45</sup> [www.gov.scot/publications/2018/054774](http://www.gov.scot/publications/2018/054774)

<sup>46</sup> Zimmerman, BJ (2010) *Becoming a self-Regulated Learner: An Overview*, Theory into Practice 41

## A community-based approach

At Glasgow Kelvin College we have sought to develop a curriculum offer which addresses the needs of the communities and stakeholders which we serve within the existing statutory and financial frameworks for Scottish colleges providing the skills for life, learning and work<sup>7</sup>

The John Wheatley Learning Network<sup>47</sup> has forty-four community learning centres which are predominantly based in North East Glasgow. These centres are operated by partners with college supplied digital infrastructure to enable local residents to access its resources. Currently there are 8,000 users of Learning Network Services developing a range of digital and meta skills.

The college operates a Wider Access programme whereby it provides tutor support to requests from the community for the structured learning programmes. It adopts a Freirean approach to the design of these programmes seeking to develop the skills identified as needed by individuals for both the world of work and active citizenship. Where appropriate Scottish Qualification Authority units are used. If there is no such relevant qualification the college will deploy its Community Achievement Award framework which operates within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework at levels 4-7.

Our community-based approach is focussed on creating a positive learning environment which is designed to build the confidence and skills needed for Lifelong Learning. Accrediting achievement in a manner which highlights progress and celebrates success supports the transition to further study, with guaranteed articulation to college-based programmes, or employment.

## Project-based learning and co-creation

Project based learning is central to the delivery of the totality of the college's provision. Using this methodology teaching staff co-create with students learning activities which are based on the skills required by individuals for both the world of work and active citizenship. The approach enables 'chunks' of learning to be delivered at a pace appropriate for each learner and to build on the skills which they have previously developed working collaborative with peers to produce a specific outcome.

The flexibility of this approach supports adult returners to use a variety of modes of attendance to accommodate their personal circumstances (such as caring responsibilities, work or ill-health). Structuring curriculum provision in this manner is

<sup>47</sup> Curriculum for excellence, [www.education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)

intended to enable learners to study when they can rather than following a fixed timetable to suit the institution and to encourage teaching staff to utilise a wider range of pedagogically methods. In this way the College seeks to enable learners to progress successfully to employment or further study.

This approach is similar to the one which the Commission on Creating the Next in Education advocates should be adopted by The Georgia Institute of Technology. Therefore, the challenges in providing effective lifelong learning opportunities are similar no matter the level of study.

### Workforce challenges

As *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* acknowledges, working in new ways presents challenges for the adult learning workforce.

The college's ethos is focussed on developing effective partnerships within the communities which we serve and to 'bending' resources to meet the needs of partners in order to assist them in meeting their priorities. All staff, not only senior managers, are required to work collaborative within cross-curricular teams, with learners and stakeholders. As part of its strategic planning process the College produces annually a *Context Statement*<sup>48</sup> which provides all staff with a comprehensive overview of its operation environment. This document is designed to assist in ensuring that curriculum provision reflects the operational context.

To support our teaching staff, the college has a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy<sup>49</sup>. This document is consulted on annually and provides a framework which is intended to promote a learning environment which supports the individual to develop skills which meet current needs and the transferable skills required in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It encourages staff to use a blended learning approach promoting the importance of ensuring that learners experience and engage with a range of activities which support meta-cognitive skills development.

Greater emphasis is now being placed by the College on professional learning activities which develops the pedagogical skills of staff rather than greater subject knowledge.

But it is not just front-line staff who need skills developments. As the world changes rapidly, leaders and managers need to update their skills and knowledge too. An understanding and the ability to work collegiately both internally and externally is now an essential skill for all leading educational organisations. As a commitment to making

<sup>48</sup> [www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Context-Statement-2018-20.pdf](http://www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Context-Statement-2018-20.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy, [www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk](http://www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk)

best use of public funding by sharing resources in order to create the maximum benefit for the communities and stakeholders which we serve. The previous emphasis on command and control management approaches are no longer appropriate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### Summary

The focus by governments on linear progression has resulted in a failure to invest in post school provision which in turn has undermined attempts to promote inclusive growth. Furthermore, the emphasis on subject knowledge transfer as the main output of education fails to take account the pace of change brought about by digitalisation. Furthermore, it is evident that the existing structures for adult education does not provide an appropriate means of ensuring that all have the opportunity to develop the skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To meet the challenges we face there is a need to focus on creating an inclusive learning framework which supports non-linear progression, which places the learner at the centre and develops the meta-cognitive skills required for Lifelong Learning. Partnership working with stakeholders to co-create appropriate learning episodes will require a re-thinking of how attainment is accredited and how learning is delivered. However systemic change can only be achieved if staff have effective pedagogical skills in order to create effective and engaging learning activities which meet the needs of learners, society and the economy.

The need for Lifelong Learning is critical as digitisation transforms both the economy and society. In order to meet these radical changes post-school learning environments will require to support non-linear learning journeys, using subject based learning to develop the meta-cognitive skills which will enable individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The co-creation of learning episodes designed to meet the needs of learners, of employers and society will replace the current approach to provision of post-school learning as prolonged periods of study are no longer viable for individuals seeking to maintain sustainable employment.

As currently this is not the case, consideration requires to be given to developing post-school learning environments which support non-linear learning journeys, develop the skills required for life-long learning, provide appropriate accreditation for work-based learning and learning episodes based not institutional efficiencies but the needs of individuals.

Our college is taking steps to put this into place within the current structure of post-compulsory education in Scotland. However more radical change is required to create an inclusive education system fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*Alan Sherry became Principal of Glasgow Kelvin College on Vesting Day for the new College on 1 November 2013. He had been Principal Designate since June 2013 coordinating the final phase of the merger process. Previously he was Principal at John Wheatley College, located in East Glasgow. Alan was an original member of staff when that College was established in 1989, the only new FE college opened by the former Strathclyde Regional Council.*

*Alan has been involved actively in a range of national widening participation initiatives over a number of years and has recently stepped down from the Scottish Funding Council Access and Inclusion Committee having served his second and final term.*

*Alan is the current convenor of the Glasgow Colleges Group and represents Glasgow Colleges on the Executive Officers Group of the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership. Furthermore, he is a member of the North East Glasgow Community Planning Partnership Sector Board. He is also a member of the Glasgow Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership. In addition Alan is a board member of a number of community based organisations in North East Glasgow.*

*He is chair of the Colleges Partnership and is a board member of Eurasha a European association for colleges.*

*Alan started his career in education with Strathclyde Regional Council in community education before joining the former Central College of Commerce. He then moved to John Wheatley College in August 1989. In addition, Alan is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.*

## 5: Dual professionalism and boundary-spanning

Colin Forrest

### Introduction

Promoting ‘dual professionalism’ emerged from *Healthy Wealthy and Wise* as one of the twelve priorities for strengthening the impact of adult learning in the UK. In this report, ‘dual professionalism’ was seen as supporting the development needs of adult learning professionals in understanding the domains of health, community, and employment for their teaching. The context in which these professionals are operating also emerged as important and how leadership creates conditions that foster high quality professional development is likely to be a significant consideration. The term is also used in a reciprocal sense: to develop training for health and community professionals to explore the relevance of adult learning in their own contexts.

This contrasts with another definition of ‘dual professionalism’: one that is grounded in the need to address skills shortages in the four countries of the United Kingdom. In this context dual professionals are expert teachers who also have a high level of understanding of the demands of the workplace in their sector. The delivery of T-levels from 2020 as routes for 16-18-year olds cements this model of dual professionalism in the learning and skills sector.

I will explore the problematic aspects of this approach which is complemented by the examination of how a different positioning of ‘dual professionalism’ within *Healthy Wealthy and Wise*. I feel this could provide an effective resolution of any deficits within the model. In undertaking this exploration an attempt has been made to offer alternatives to a received concept of ‘dual professionalism’, ones that have potential to be empowering in a changing landscape for adult education.

### Dual Professionalism in adult learning across the UK

The idea of dualism is not new but was reinvigorated in an English learning and skills context through the Commission for Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning report (2013)<sup>50</sup> where ‘dual professionals’ were defined as *teachers and trainers with occupational expertise and experience, who can combine this with excellent teaching and learning practice*. This contains the explicit expectation that dual professionals will

<sup>50</sup> It's about work...Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning: the summary report of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning <https://api.excellencegateway.org.uk/resource/eg:5937> [accessed 24.9.18]

seek to continually improve their teaching practice but also keep abreast of contemporary developments in their subject areas. The latter has an explicit functional purpose: to ensure that learners are exposed to current industry practice and resources to maximise their chances of employability.

This positioning of the ‘dual professional’ aligns closely with the emergence with the rise of ‘localism’ in the UK where education providers and other locally facing stakeholders are directed by national government and regional groups to focus skills activity on meeting local shortages and priorities. This has significant momentum in England which is replicated, to some extent, in other parts of the UK.

A recent and wide-ranging analysis of the skills systems in Northern Ireland, has been undertaken by Gunson et al (2018)<sup>51</sup>. The study exposes many aspects unique to the province as well as others that are shared with other parts of the UK. In doing so the authors reveal many opportunities for the growth of dual professionals and how such roles may be reconfigured; for example: *‘there is a role for the leadership of employers, learners, third sector, and trades unions through social partnership to drive a new skills agenda’* (page 46).

The Welsh government wrote to college principals in late 2016 spelling out the priorities for the Further Education sector for 17/18<sup>52</sup>. This brief communication advocated that: *‘learners should be encouraged to become proactive and productive members of their communities, and by increasing your engagement with employers, and forging closer bonds with the communities you serve’*. The letter signposted the 2014 Skills Implementation Plan that highlighted regional and local skills delivery models. The plan is silent on the workforce development implications of this approach; however, it would seem impossible for providers to respond to the model without detailed consideration of how dual professionalism may be fostered.

Weingarten (2018)<sup>53</sup>, with a brief to consider how the Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) system in Wales could enhance its contribution to national goals, suggests collecting information at the organisational level. It is in the discussion document, in the appendix, that Weingarten begins to hint at the role that dual professionals might play in supporting PCET institutions in meeting the Welsh

<sup>51</sup> Gunson R, Murray C, and Williamson J. (2018). The Skills System in Northern Ireland: Challenges and Opportunities, IPPR <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/the-skills-system-in-northern-ireland> [accessed 3.10.18].

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/priorities-for-the-further-education-sector-2017-18.pdf> [accessed 6.Oct.18]

<sup>53</sup> Harvey P. Weingarten (2018) Maximising the Contribution of the Post-Compulsory Education and Training System to the Achievement of Welsh National Goals. A review of systems for monitoring and improving the effectiveness of post-compulsory education in Wales. <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/maximising-the-contribution-of-the-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system-to-the-achievement-of-welsh-national-goals.pdf> [accessed 4.10.18]

government's seven wellbeing goals<sup>54</sup>; many of which chime closely with those outlined within *'Healthy Wealthy and Wise'*.

Gunson and Thomas (2017)<sup>55</sup>, looking at developments in Scotland's Skills System, identify the role of the system is *'to equip learners with the skills they need to fulfil their potential; to get people into fulfilling work; and to meet the needs of the labour market and the wider economy'*. The analysis raises the notion of the significance of learning 'routes', echoed in the Sainsbury Review for England and goes on to highlight the role of the FE sector as fulfilling an 'adaptive' function in Scotland. This flexibility and adaptability in supporting learning in post-16 settings is likely to be grounded in an environment conducive to the development of the dual professional. This is reinforced by other priorities highlighted by Gunson and Thomas (2017 op.cit.), including the need to improve the flexibility and transferability of learning for adults.

*Healthy Wealthy and Wise* invokes the term dual professional in a subtly different way from that described in the above section. A sense develops that the concept is heavily grounded in the broadest needs of adult learners rather than the dual professionals themselves and their vocational expertise. In the report's context dual professionals are those who are and will become equipped with an understanding of, and contribute to meeting, the holistic needs of adult learners. Emphasis is less on vocational expertise but developing broader professional perspectives that will draw on an understanding of education for a social purpose.

### Dual Professionalism as problematic

*Healthy Wealthy and Wise* provides an opportunity to re-examine dual professionalism and its usefulness as a concept that will hold true in supporting the recommendations of the report. Assumptions and definitions need to be explored here and this discussion will include the influence of professional standards, personal reflection, ethical considerations and capacity for 'boundary spanning'.

Defining professionalism as having dual aspects may be too reductionist for supporting the implementation of many aspects of the report. Oliver (2013)<sup>56</sup> highlights the need for professionals to be effective 'boundary spanners' in a North American social work context. She promotes the idea of an 'interprofessional' – one that chimes closely with how dual professionalism is positioned in *Health Wealthy and Wise*.

<sup>54</sup>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 <https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en> [accessed 4.10.18]

<sup>55</sup> Gunson R and Thomas R (2016) Equipping Scotland for the future: Key challenges for the Scottish skills system, IPPR. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/equipping-scotland-for-the-future>

<sup>56</sup> Carolyn Oliver (2013) Social Workers as Boundary Spanners: Reframing our Professional Identity for Interprofessional Practice, *Social Work Education*, 32:6, 773-784, DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2013.765401

Other workforce development challenges include: professional identity, space and time for professional development and the hegemony of employer led curricula. Peel's (2005, published 2011) perspective may be a useful basis for more a detailed scrutiny of the dual professional concept. Although she is writing from a private/public facing land use context her analysis explores the notion of professionalism itself and this includes certain elements that relate well to '*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*', for example:

- An extensive training which comprises a significant intellectual component and involves theoretically as well as practically grounded expertise;
- The provision of an important public service;
- An organisation of members and a process of licensing and regulation of practice;
- A distinct ethical dimension which calls for expression in a code of practice;
- A high degree of professional autonomy in one's work.

Peel also highlights factors with potential to restrict the development of dual professionalism

- Limited change by integrating new competencies;
- Professional elitism;
- The culling of merging of professions or 'implosion' of local government as (elite level) professionals are lost to a general managerial profession; and
- Professional flight (where professionals shift career path to the service-providing organisations)

Again, these are cautionary messages relevant to the implementation of the dual professionalism recommendation from *Healthy Wealthy and Wise*. Others also signpost problematical aspects to the concept. Esmond and Wood (2017)<sup>57</sup> explore dual professionalism from a Further Education teacher's perspective and present a picture of a model that, like Peel's analysis, presents a constraining potential, through dual professionals experiencing a '*substantial diminution into transmitters of routine workplace competences*'.

<sup>57</sup> Bill Esmond & Hayley Wood (2017) More morphostasis than morphogenesis? The 'dual professionalism' of English Further Education workshop tutors, *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 69:2, 229-245, DOI: 10.1080/13636820.2017.1309568.

This danger has been recently been revisited by Simons and Mycroft (2018)<sup>58</sup> in a challenging exploration of professional identity. They examine the ‘nooks and crannies’ of Further Education and Adult Learning through a rich pedagogical lens and present a picture of multiple pressures negatively impacting on the self-esteem of practitioners in the sector.

### Implications for the adult learning workforce

‘Multi professionalism’ may be a useful construct that complements Oliver’s ‘interprofessional’. *Healthy Wealthy and Wise* includes many examples of settings where multi professionals will be located and these cases hint at the richness of such roles. In promoting the need for ‘triple professionalism’ Hodgson and Spours (2017)<sup>59</sup> advocate that an ‘ecosystem’ approach is central to resolving the systems problems touched on above. Hodgson (2016)<sup>60</sup> identifies such triple professionals as demonstrating the following attributes:

- Having an ethical concern for all young people and adults in the locality
- Understanding the role of the college within the community and the local area
- The capacity to research the community and local and regional needs in order to identify needs and bring about positive change
- The ability to undertake multi-agency working and to collaborate with other professionals
- Understanding of policy and how it translates in practice in the TVET (Technical, Vocational Education and Training) system
- Highly developed communication and people skills.

Although Hodgson here is exploring college settings there are many attributes that will be important in implementing the recommendations within the European Agenda report. The blurring of professional identity may become important in exploring implications for professional development. Oliver’s emphasis on the importance of ‘boundary spanning’ may again be helpful here. In incorporating this ability within a

<sup>58</sup> Sarah Simons and Lou Mycroft Tes FE Podcast(28<sup>th</sup> September 2018): Putting pedagogy centre stage <https://www.tes.com/news/tes-fe-podcast-putting-pedagogy-centre-stage> [accessed 10 October 2018]

<sup>59</sup> Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours FE and Skills across the UK: the case of England . UCL Institute of Education Seminar briefing paper September 2017 [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-centres/centres/centre-for-post14-education-and-work/projects/fe-skills-four-countries-uk/pdf/FE\\_and\\_Skills\\_-\\_the\\_case\\_of\\_England\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-centres/centres/centre-for-post14-education-and-work/projects/fe-skills-four-countries-uk/pdf/FE_and_Skills_-_the_case_of_England_Final.pdf) [accessed 20.9.18]

<sup>60</sup> Ann Hodgson (2016) Why triple professionalism may be a more helpful concept than dual professionalism <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news-events/events-pub/mar-2016/triple-professionalism-may-be-a-more-helpful-concept> [accessed 10.10.18]

professional identity, she supports the mediation aspect that underpins the definition of dual professionalism within *Healthy Wealthy and Wise*.

It is too simplistic to suggest that such an evolution of professionalism will be a given. Professionalism is often defined through a licence to practice or chartered status. Non-mandatory professional standards<sup>61</sup> exist for teachers and trainers in the learning and skills sector. These include the ethical aspects highlighted by Hodgson and reflect also the combination of vocational and pedagogical aspects that underpin one definition of a 'dual professional'. In the light of the above discussion such standards may seem somewhat limited when looking at developing professionalism in the multi-agency context in which the recommendations of *Health Wealthy and Wise* will flourish.

### Summary

In conclusion, it is important to recognise that the conditions that foster professional development and support professionalism in the broadest sense will need very careful consideration. Making these conditions explicit will expose the implications for organisational leaders, embracing the need for sense making highlighted by Hodgson. Middle leaders, the mediators between practitioners and the leadership narrative, are also a crucial audience as are those that lead local and regional collaborations in the UK with shared priorities for their workforce.

*Dr Colin Forrest is an honorary visiting research fellow at Leeds Trinity University where he also teaches on the Masters in Education course. He taught Science and mathematics in schools and further education for 25 years. He is currently working with the Education and Training Foundation in supporting TVET programmes. This has included all phases of Teach Too.*

<sup>61</sup> Education and Training Foundation Professional Standards for FE Teachers <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/professional-standards/> [accessed 10.10.18]

## 6: Learning in three dimensions: the impact, outcomes, and relevance of adult learning to transforming public services

Helen Chicot

### Introduction

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* drew attention to the importance of learning providers getting better at measuring the impact of their work in all domains: health, work, community life. My view, based on our experience in Rochdale, is that this probably doesn't go far enough. Adult learning impacts on all public services. When it's part of an offer which targets those who will benefit the most and that offer brings together the major local public services, it reduces demand at the crisis end of the system for services such as police and health and reduces the unnecessary and frustrating responses the public sector has to take when things go wrong. Things like arrears, enforcements and evictions; costly failures to "engage" with the system; care costs and waste in the health system. That is why, in Greater Manchester we have worked to integrate 'on the ground' the work of these services. This/such an approach requires us all to work in radically different ways and better capture the impact of what we do across the whole system.

### On the ground

The Integrated Place Teams in Rochdale borough work in the neighbourhoods with the highest level of vulnerability to crisis. For example, in two of the neighbourhoods in which we work, the spend is an average of £2,718 per head and £4,851 per head respectively, compared to a borough-wide average of £1,499 (source: New Economy). Within those neighbourhoods we target the work towards the ten per cent of people who are at most risk of crisis demand, which involves workforce (from across the public sector: police, housing, health, children's or adult's services) reaching out to the people by developing an individualised offer. This offer always has education at its heart, because we've learned that learning is usually key to success. It enables people to learn things they may have never learned before – the things that protect them from crisis which, along with the social and wellbeing outcomes of learning that are well documented, serve to produce the hope people need to move forward.

### Costs and benefits

It's clear that the crisis or failure demand which is so evident in the neighbourhoods we target results in huge costs for our public services. For example, the cost of a single call out for the emergency services has been costed at between £150 and £200.

For a child or a vulnerable adult in residential care the costs can be around £52,000 per year. Reducing the volume of this crisis demand by dealing with the underlying cause can save both money and capacity in the system.

Three times the last few years, in our teams, we've had the highest caller of the police across Greater Manchester referred to us. These individuals were not immediately obvious as candidates for an adult learning class. And yet they now hardly call the emergency services, if at all. These are complex cases that the system, for years, has been at a loss to deal with. What was the magic bullet? In all three cases it was about participation in something useful whilst someone trustworthy and practical helped them to work through the sheer complexity of their situation. This was less about teaching than enabling learning – developing insight, breaking down tasks, critical thinking and learning to feel safe.

Is it that adult learning is an important contributor to health because it supports the known 'wider determinants'? That's a little easier and the evidence is clear: in many cases we can show a direct impact on mental health or substance misuse. In others there's a clear attribution between our work and an early death prevented.

That adult learning impacts positively on housing and communities? Again, we can evidence this – reduced evictions and enforcements can clearly be attributed to the things people have learned in our programmes: whether that has been due to financial capabilities; improved ability to keep up rental payments or clear debts or social skills; learning how to disagree and get along with each other.

That adult learning impacts on the economy? In our first pilot, the economic impacts were, by far, the highest of all of the indicators we measured. We've continued to measure the impacts in that same neighbourhood and they're way higher than expected. In 25 years of working in the skills and work sector I've never seen anything as successful for getting the people with more complex challenges into employment.

That adult learning impacts on families and relationships? From the very first pilot of a Citizens' Curriculum in a neighbourhood in Rochdale, that's been obvious. One of the first things a participant will tell you is that they feel better about who they are and are able to be a better family member or friend as a result of that.

### Jacob's story

Not many months ago, Jacob (not his real name) was homeless and on the streets. The only bed available left him on the streets between 9am and 9pm. He looked rough and so didn't feel welcome in any of the places he might go to try and improve his prospects. By coming to a neighbourhood drop in, he was able to get help, connect with people and feel like a human being.

Jacob learned and explored things he would like to do and realised he had a lot to offer. He was able to volunteer in a safe environment, still getting the housing and other support he needed but feeling valued and not like a drain. Now he's moved on to volunteering for another organisation. He still comes to the drop ins, often helping others while he's there but he's also doing his own things and well on a journey to employment.

That adult learning isn't just a cost-effective way of making a difference but that it actually saves money? Yes indeed! When you incorporate it into an integrated local offer, put it through a rigorous Cost Benefit Analysis, (validate it externally, of course) and hit the calculate button it generates around £4.05 of fiscal benefits for every £1 spent, some of which are things you can actually cash back into the local system.

### **Integrate or fail**

We have achieved this through integrating adult learning so it can support the displacement of crisis demand. We must also integrate recognising that it means coming together with our communities who also cleave to what they know, using the methods they have tried and tested over the years. They may feel mistrust or scorn towards a system they see as having failed them and theirs. And we must integrate with a front-line workforce that is being asked to do more for less: increasing demand and decreasing resources. They may feel that this is just another way to squeeze them and if they're burned out, they may feel that there's no possibility for change and we're all doomed. So to succeed at this we need to speak with everyone, in their language, understanding how they may feel, addressing their priorities, assumptions and values. No wonder it's so difficult!

Add to that the dazzling array of different humans with different individual traits, ideologies and abilities: just thinking about this baffles me. It's a three-dimensional space full of themes and priorities, service areas and methods; different levels and hierarchies and different people to add to the mix. Achieving change has to speak and listen to all of that at once. The academic in our team, Dr Katy Goldstraw, describes this as our need for a Polyvocal Conversation.

### **Polyvocal conversations**

In terms of getting all people engaged with this work (whether they're potential participants, learners, citizens or volunteers, front line workers or system leaders), the need for the story to resonate with all the different parts of our spectrum is clear. It's obvious when it fails to do this. A member of the team might say "Oh them. They just don't get it!" That may well be true and, as such, it says much about our failure to communicate.

So what is it that we're trying to communicate? Through countless conversations and interactions over about four years, I think it's about learning. It's become very clear that our professional practice and development needs to mirror exactly the same approaches that work so well with our learners. Why? Because they generate hope and that's what motivates people.

Is the message that adult learning is crucial to achieving positive change? It's hard to do this because it's not always the most obvious solution: in a world of austerity it can feel like a "nice to have" unless it's directly causing a measurable change - a qualification that leads to a job, for example. When you can see it as part of an integrated offer however, it's clear that it's a huge part of the solution. It is the very thing that shores up people's progress.

### A diverse workforce

Our workforce includes front line workers, volunteers with an array of diverse skills and backgrounds. This training needs to be differentiated to enable people to feel confident as educators and enablers. We use a Citizens' Curriculum for this too: telling stories, working through problems methodically, seeking and sharing the learning along the way; calling out the barriers, positively reinforcing and looking for hope.

This method of working needs a different supervisory relationship – one based on understanding, at an individual level, the motivations and risks of working like this. What are the things most likely to cause this person to burn out? What's going to annoy them? How do they communicate? How do we capture and feedback what they do in a way that is meaningful to them?

When we stop and think about this stuff and talk to each other, it blows our minds. In our sessions with citizens, our workers and our system leaders we try to understand the work, the outcomes and evidence, the changes we need and our priorities. The facets of this work multiply with each "polyvocal" conversation we have. But they also bring out some very different priorities. Our challenge has started to shift from counting beans to measuring improving hope and trust through taking action together.

### Summary

We're working hard to keep hold of the important things as we go through monumental changes in Greater Manchester. It's important that the message that comes from our tiny neighbourhoods where we are making a difference by working together keeps coming through. We have a focus on the power of the voice of our citizens, which is all about a message of hope and trust. There is also power in the voice of a spreadsheet!

A huge (and sometimes baffling) cost-benefit analysis reminds us of the value of the work we do which is important both for decision makers and for the people on the ground doing the work: for the spreadsheet captures the hope too.

*Helen Chicot is Place Integration Lead, working in Rochdale Borough Council's neighbourhood teams. She works with a small multi-agency team in small neighbourhoods to develop and test ways of working that reduce vulnerability and crisis. A passionate advocate of the benefits of education, Helen considers access to learning to be a right.*

## 7: Promoting sustainable development education for adults

Vicky Duckworth and Rob Smith

### Introduction

Perhaps we need to start by turning the current situation on its head. It's certainly true that the skills-supply way of viewing adult education seems to have reached a critical point. The need is pressing as many of us who work within further and adult education have known for many years that it isn't working. Or rather, it does work *for some*, but that appears to be down to the herculean efforts of teachers battling against demoralising structures and funding-driven cultures that morph and twist in response to the policy whims of the latest government. Ever since (Labour) Prime Minister Jim Callaghan's Ruskin College speech of 1976<sup>62</sup> teachers and others, not least in adult and further education, have become habituated to marshalling energies and orientating our action to harness education to meet the needs of 'industry'. Alongside this has been a concern that in future there will be 'fewer jobs for those without skill' (Callaghan 1976). Economy now looms so large in our world view that it is no exaggeration to say that a background awareness of economic considerations is an integral aspect of modern western rational consciousness. But at the time of the Ruskin Hall speech, the formula was straightforward: supply the skills that industry needs and the economy will flourish.

Today though, in our post-lapsarian, post-Lehman Brothers era, that unquestionable relationship has to be re-thought. First, the idea that positioning education as some kind of production line for 'skills' that then benefits the national economy through increased productivity has been strongly contested<sup>63</sup>. Secondly, the financial collapse of 2008/9 provided irrefutable evidence that while education may or may not affect the economy, the economy does have a powerful (and negative) effect on educational provision. Nowhere has austerity been more keenly felt than in adult education with cut after cut and most recently the Institute of Fiscal Studies report<sup>64</sup> on education spending exposing a massive inadequacy of investment.

There is a third argument that undoes the idea of a seamless relationship between education and employment. The need for educational experiences to be orientated towards helping individuals become independent, critically minded and active shapers

<sup>62</sup> Callaghan, J. 1976. A rational Debate based on the facts. Available at:

<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html>, accessed: 6.10.18

<sup>63</sup> Wolf, A. 2004. Education Education and Economic Performance: Simplistic Theories and their Policy Consequences, *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 20(2): 315–333.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/13306>

of their lives is more pressing than ever in a world in which we can only guess roughly what future jobs will be.

### Transforming Lives

Research we have carried out over the last two years as part of the *Transforming Lives* project<sup>65</sup> reveals the power of further and adult education in: i) tapping into people's potential for personal and professional development in ways that lead them to improve their lives; ii) addressing the needs of adults who have felt marginalised and discarded to believe in themselves again and to take an active and successful role as learners; iii) helping people break out of cycles of despair and mental ill health enabling them to hope once more and move forward in their lives; iv) impacting on the families and communities of learners in a positive ripple effect that yields broader social benefits; v) facilitating a broadening of learners' perspectives on the world and their place in it – an aspect that connects to political consciousness but also and, importantly, to issues of the environment and global sustainability.

These are some of the positive effects of transformative teaching and learning (TTL) as we have conceptualised it; but they are currently realised by teachers despite a further education policy landscape that undermines their efforts through a systematic objectification of learners. Our research exposes how a common-sense economised consciousness in the current marketised system objectifies learners in three ways – a triple lock<sup>66</sup> of objectification. The first layer of objectification arises from the 'skills' discourse which provides a conceptual framework for understanding further education as (mainly or only) important for the purpose of human capital production. The second layer of objectification is structural and is reified by the current qualifications framework and the expectations, categorisations and student learning pathways that these give rise to. The current qualifications framework enforces a binary perception of young people as being either 'academic' or 'vocational'<sup>67</sup>. In this, adult and further education are viewed as primarily focused on vocational learning and in this way further and adult education is 'classed' and structurally disadvantages some learners.

The third layer of objectification in the current system is a direct consequence of tightened budgets and the consequent need for 'efficiency'. The problem that has dogged every funding model since incorporation, exacerbated by an annual funding

<sup>65</sup> <http://transforminglives.web.ucu.org.uk/>

<sup>66</sup> Duckworth, V and Smith, R. (2018) 'Breaking the triple lock: further education and transformative teaching and learning', *Education + Training*, 60 (6), pp.529-543

<sup>67</sup> <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.602.4761&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

cycle, is that the recruitment of students has become incentivized as a ‘bums on seats’ exercise.

### The impact of transformative teaching and learning

The impact of TTL resonates powerfully with the UNESCO agenda of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):

*Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity.*

ESD clearly extends on the transformative potential our research has identified but it also provides further insights into the inadequacy of current structures and systems. The *Transforming Lives* research project provided rich narrative evidence for the impact of holistic and transformative approaches to teaching and learning. Many of the ingredients are present but education for sustainable development suggests further enrichment and joined-up-ness is not only necessary but essential in rupturing, crossing and linking traditional disciplinary boundaries which position education in a silo.

Transformation for sustainable development in the classroom is a driver for *collective* awareness, the aim being for it to bring learners together to think, reflect and act. If adult education is to fulfil its potential for providing transformative educational experiences, to realize these priorities, then the triple lock of objectification that currently shackles adult education providers has to be broken.

What then is required to undermine this triple lock of objectification and thereby enable transformative teaching and learning to flourish? To address the layered objectification detailed above suggests that shifting the focus away from macro considerations to local provides a first step. Our research identified how local contexts: e.g. the decline of traditional industries and the history of local housing continue to have a huge impact on the educational achievement of learners and notions of *choice*. Those with compromised health may find their education interrupted and further educational opportunities limited due to physical, financial or mental health barriers, the timing of courses, or the relevance of provision to their needs. As identified in the Learning and Work Institute report<sup>68</sup> health and education are bound together.

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/LW-EU-Report-April-2018.pdf>

It's only by taking full account of the broader landscape that transformative teaching and learning can help bring about change. TTL is not about creating social mobility – in which learners can escape from who they, their communities and local and familial history. Instead it is about re-energising from the inside to re-stimulate hope, development and growth. Indeed, for this to connect to Education for Sustainable Development it would require a paradigm shift: the establishment of greater links between further and adult education and other local services: health, housing and social services.

A re-localised focus, a shift away from the centralised policy prescription that has created the conditions for the triple lock would be necessary to bring this about. Joined up approaches to teacher education that promote holistic models and transformation would also be necessary. Importantly, a re-think on how marketisation has undermined joined-up-thinking would be vital: education for sustainable development simply cannot be delivered by insulated, free-standing and self-interested institutions.

### Conclusion

The drive for Education for Sustainable Development needs to be thought out from a strategic position as a catalyst for systemic change in adult education and associated fields. There needs to be a holistic approach to engaging with questions of Sustainable Development that involves all stakeholders in educational systems: students, staff across colleges and the local communities they serve. Local pedagogy and praxis are well-positioned to respond to the lived experiences of these communities. Transformative teaching and learning can promote sustainable development because it is catalysed by self-reflection leading to different worldviews and a change in behaviour orientated towards social justice. To do dynamic curricula are necessary where students and teachers are actively engaged with the world around them, their life and communities and in doing so develop capacity, knowledge and skills to contribute to their own well-being, the well-being of others – including their local and wider community - and to promote an environment based on care that sustains and nourishes us all.

### Recommendations

- We need to uncouple economy from education in its existing form and re think the relationship.

- Joint training between health professionals, social workers and teachers is required to share expertise. The aim being to encourage students to foster holistic approaches to education, care and well-being in collaborative cross-disciplinary settings.
- Teacher Education curricula need to offer a way for new teachers (and more experienced in post qualifying programmes) to learn about and apply a meaningful approach to sustainable development in what and how they teach.
- Professional bodies need to take the lead in incorporating the issue of sustainability into professional standards – to feed through into teacher education.
- There needs to be a shift in education to address the numerous new contexts that result from historical and societal transformation.

*Dr Vicky Duckworth is Professor of Education at Edge Hill University. Vicky has developed considerable expertise as an educationalist and researcher in the field of Adult Literacy and Education. She is deeply committed to challenging inequality through critical and emancipatory approaches to education, widening participation, inclusion, community action and engaging in research with a strong social justice agenda.*

*Dr Rob Smith is a Reader in Education at Birmingham City University. His body of work explores the impact of funding and marketisation in education. Recent research with Vicky Duckworth focuses on further education as a space for transformative teaching and learning. Other research projects include Social Justice and Leadership in Further Education (funded by FETL).*

*Currently, both authors are also working on a UCU-funded research project which aims to understand and provide evidence of how the further education (FE) sector is vital in transforming lives and communities in 21st century Britain. <http://transforminglives.web.ucu.org.uk/about-this-project/> Recent papers include:*

*Duckworth, V and Smith, R. (2018) 'Breaking the triple lock: further education and transformative teaching and learning', Education + Training, 60 (6), pp.529-543.*

*Duckworth, V and Smith, R. (2018) 'Women, adult literacy education and transformative bonds of care'. Australian Journal of Adults Learning, 58 (2), pp 161 – 187.*

## 8: The ‘post-devolution democratic deficit’, ‘post-truth politics’ and the ‘Long Revolution’: the case for a new ‘Democratic Engagement Curriculum’ for adult learning

Dafydd Rhys

### Introduction

The *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* report on the impact of adult learning across the UK notes that, “There has been very little curriculum-based activity on sustainable development in adult learning”.<sup>69</sup> I would argue that, central to the sustainable development of communities, nations and the wider world and its environment is the empowerment of citizens to engage democratically. The report suggests that “It is difficult to demonstrate a direct causal link between continued learning and political engagement” but evidences many positive links between adult learning and community engagement, the building of social capital, an awareness of current affairs and the likelihood to vote. It concludes that “Adult learning certainly does appear to foster an increase in active citizenship”.

The aim of this paper is, firstly, to put in context why, in the ‘post-truth era’, a post-devolution, bilingual and diverse Wales desperately needs a new ‘Democratic Engagement Curriculum’ for adult learning; and secondly, to explore what the nature of this curriculum might be and outline its implications for the adult learning workforce and others who facilitate learning.

### Context

Having cut my teeth as a teacher in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni in the aftermath of the 1980’s demolition of the coal mining industry and its communities, the relevance of the ‘new geography’ I was aspiring to teach at the time was all too obvious.<sup>70</sup> The philosophy of this new radical geography was not just to “map man’s patent inhumanity to man” factually but to empower students to seek answers and solve problems.<sup>71</sup> These educational values travelled with me on my journey through Further Education institutions and their vocational courses and ultimately into Adult Community Learning.

<sup>69</sup> Learning and Work Institute (2017): *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: The impact of adult learning across the UK 2015-17*, p21-24.

<sup>70</sup> Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is a Welsh Medium Comprehensive School which in the 1980’s served the Rhymney Valley and Gwent.

<sup>71</sup> Harvey, David (1973): *Social Justice and the City*, p144-145. London: Edward Arnold.

However, they often clashed with centrally prescribed and funding driven curriculums, a narrowly defined skills agenda and stagnant teaching techniques.

Recently, my present employers, Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales, in conjunction with Co-operatives and Mutuals Wales, have organised a series of events to promote a democratic engagement and co-operative curriculum.<sup>72</sup> The intention was not only to persuade the Welsh Government to include such elements in the new school curriculum and its evolving Adult Learning policy but also to initiate collaboration on the ground.

It was, therefore, encouraging when Kirsty Williams proclaimed her radical plans and visions for education in Wales at the annual Raymond Williams memorial lecture on 10 October 2018.<sup>73</sup> Not often do you hear a Liberal Democrat Minister of Education, in a Welsh Labour Government administration, passionately embrace the concepts of a Marxist philosopher who, later in life, switched his political allegiance to Plaid Cymru. Raymond Williams, the most influential and internationally acclaimed Welsh philosopher of recent times, strongly advocated that life-long learning should be seen as conducive to creating a community democracy and developing the skills to challenge and shape culture.

During the lecture, the Education Secretary made the case that the Welsh Government's 'national mission of education reform' was "stepping forward in the spirit of Raymond Williams's long revolution".<sup>74</sup> From the new schools curriculum through to adult education, she calls for a common culture and a shared citizenship that questions and challenges the established way of thinking and organising, providing the knowledge and skills to enable people to become part of the process of social change. Kirsty Williams also argues that, in the age of populism, without such a role for education, Wales's fragile democracy could be under threat.

The democratic deficit within Wales's young and developing post-devolution democracy has also been highlighted by other politicians, academics and political commentators alike.<sup>75</sup> In most cases it is argued that confusion about the devolution settlement and the lack of a powerful Welsh press and media has led to a low level of political engagement. What has not been fully explored and defined is the potentially

<sup>72</sup> Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales is a National Community College and Movement for Adult Learning. It was established in 2016 following a series of mergers involving Coleg Harlech, the WEA's in Wales and YMCA Cymru Community College.

<sup>73</sup> Williams, Kirsty (2018): Raymond Williams Memorial Lecture, sponsored by the Learning and Work Institute and Open University in Wales

<sup>74</sup> Williams, Raymond (1961): The Long Revolution. London: Chatto & Windus.

<sup>75</sup> Andrews, Leighton (2017). Facebook, the media and democracy', RTS Annual Lecture, Y Senedd, Cardiff October 19, 2018.

critical role that our education system, including the Lifelong Learning sector, could have in oiling the wheels of democratic engagement.

Daniel Evans (2016) discusses what he calls the 'information deficit' in an article published on the Open Democracy website.<sup>76</sup> He sees a role for education:

*It is about political participation and the belief that the public can be a check against the state and abuses of power. This requires a politically educated public...facilitated by an accessible and open flow of information. ...The public sphere goes beyond just 'the media' but also depends on the contribution of universities, schools and civil society, and...ultimately, we all have a part to play in creating it.*

In the aftermath of the Brexit debate and the American presidential election, 'post-truth politics' has become a much debated phenomenon, where politicians, blatantly promote unfounded facts and promises to voters. The rise of social media and TV channels and radio stations defined by political hue, means voters get the entirety of their information from sources tailored to reflect their own views back to them (Jonathan Friedland 2016).<sup>77</sup>

What has taken hold according to Marty Barton (2016), editor of the Washington Post is "...an alternate reality, a virtual reality, where lies are accepted as truth and where conspiracy theories take root in the fertile soil of falsehoods".<sup>78</sup>

Youval Harari (2018), the Israeli historian notes that fake news is not a new phenomenon but warns that the merger of biotech and infotech with its algorithms could soon push billions of humans out of the job market and undermine free-will, liberty, equality and truth.<sup>79</sup>

### Practical steps and implications for the workforce

Empowering democratic engagement has always been enshrined in adult community education's vision as articulated by Graystone (2016):

*"The provision of learning, skills and prosperity... will... require a commitment to democratic citizenship, inclusiveness, cultural enrichment, health and wellbeing, equalities and social justice...giving us the cutting edge that we need for our*

<sup>76</sup> Evans, Daniel, Cardiff University (2017): *The BBC and Wales's Information Deficit*, Open Democracy <https://www.opendemocracy.net/daniel-evans/bbc-and-wales-information-deficit>.

<sup>77</sup> Friedland, Jonathan (2016): <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/13/boris-johnson-donald-trump-post-truth-politician?CMP>

<sup>78</sup> Barton, Marty (2016): Address to Temple University graduates [http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=marty+baron+speech+may+2016&d=4557245571537608&mkt=en-GB&setlang=en-GB&w=1w5xLsamej0YZUhQSKt84KZHfC\\_NGDPI](http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=marty+baron+speech+may+2016&d=4557245571537608&mkt=en-GB&setlang=en-GB&w=1w5xLsamej0YZUhQSKt84KZHfC_NGDPI)

<sup>79</sup> Harari, Youval (2018): *21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

*communities to be resilient, for our economy to adapt and for our democracy to thrive”.*<sup>80</sup>

The question arises to what extent the present workforce is fully in tune with the above vision and are equipped with the current contextual, pedagogic, linguistic and technological skill-set needed to deliver what is now needed? A skills audit could be considered, linked to a programme of staff development and revised employment and induction policies.

Before this takes place, the case needs to be made for a new ‘Democratic Engagement Curriculum’ and a strategy developed for its delivery. Tutors would ultimately deliver this new curriculum in the classroom, digitally or in the field. However, the involvement of others would be needed to make a strong case and support its development.

Not only curriculum leaders, quality managers and governors but community leaders, partner organisations senior educators and politicians etc. Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales’s ‘Democratic Engagement Curriculum’ was developed by its members including input from governors, learners, branches and partner organisations’.<sup>81</sup>

At a minimum this strategy suggested that groups could set up learner forums or branches, giving them a voice, votes and ownership of the organisation. To maximize its success, a new institutional or national strategy would benefit from the involvement of all concerned in its development. It would be ‘communicative’.<sup>82</sup> A ‘shared vision’ would need to be developed.<sup>83</sup>

Sharmer’s ‘Theory U’ (see Figure 1 below) could be a useful tool to secure total commitment and its brisk implementation.<sup>84</sup>

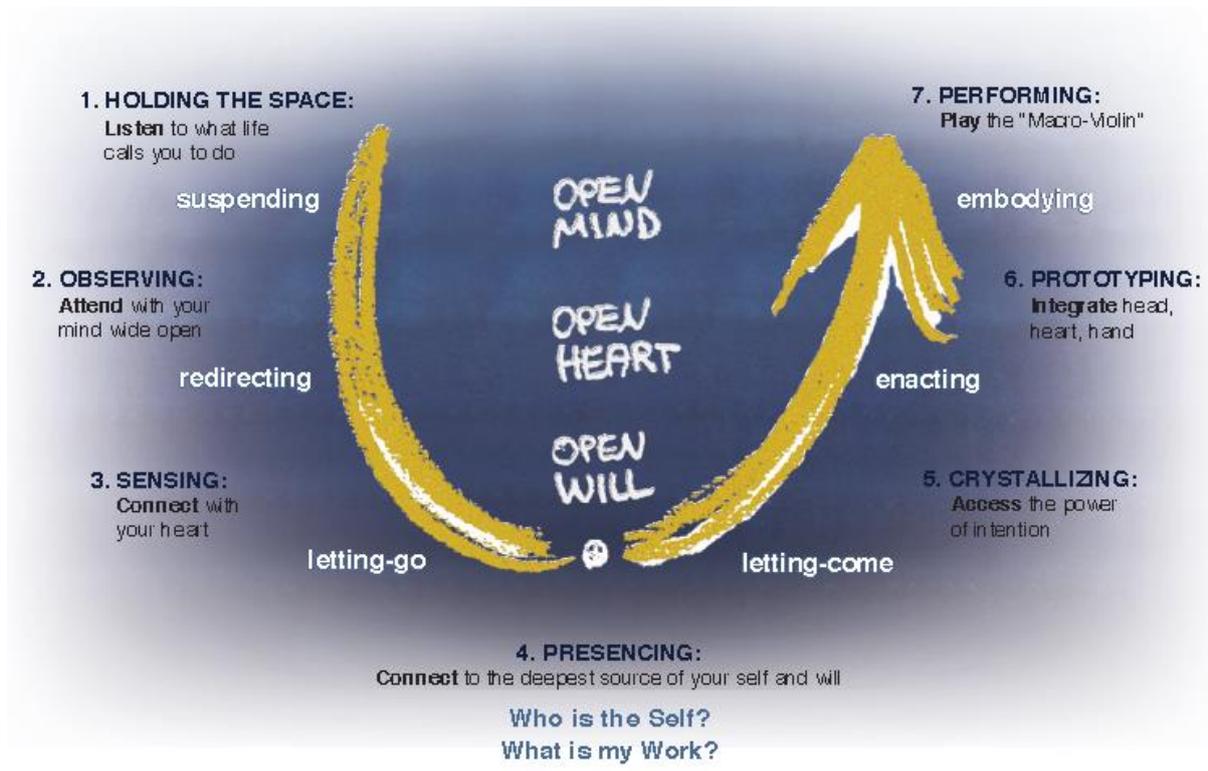
<sup>80</sup> Graystone, John (2016): Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales Strategic Plan

<sup>81</sup> Addysg Oedolion Cymru|Adult Learning Wales (2017): Democratic Engagement Curriculum.

<sup>82</sup> Habermas, Jürgen (1984) [1981], Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society (Book). Translated by Thomas A. McCarthy. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.

<sup>83</sup> Senge,P (1990). The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organisation. Random House.

<sup>84</sup> Scharmer, O (2007): Theory U. SoL, The Society for Organisational Learning.



**Figure 1: Sharmar's Theory U**

Our definition of democratic engagement, in the spirit of the above, must be much more than understanding new political structures and taking part in 'representative' democratic processes and official consultations. Ultimately, the success of a devolved Wales will depend on a foundation of 'participatory' democratic activity – individuals collaborating in their communities and taking control of their futures.

In the light of the democratic deficit and the challenges facing communities, there is a strong case not only to adequately fund a broader curriculum but to support all learners with an element of democratic engagement. All tutors, supporting staff and facilitators would therefore need to be familiar with the strategy and competent to deliver it. Is democratic literacy not as important as other skills, if we are to progress collectively? With the cuts to part-time adult learning, is it not the most underprivileged who have been most affected and effectively disenfranchised?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a framework that instructs public bodies to consult with communities, with the goal of improving their social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.<sup>85</sup> For this to work effectively,

<sup>85</sup> Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

public awareness needs to be increased, and the voices of the disadvantaged sharpened. Essential and vocational skills on their own will not secure sustainable communities – do they not also need context, wellbeing creativity and culture?

There should always be a place for specialist tutors and standalone political education classes, from community development and philosophy to feminism, the Welsh political tradition, black history and globalisation, etc. (see Figure 2 below).<sup>86</sup>

## Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales Rhaglen democratiaeth Democracy Programme

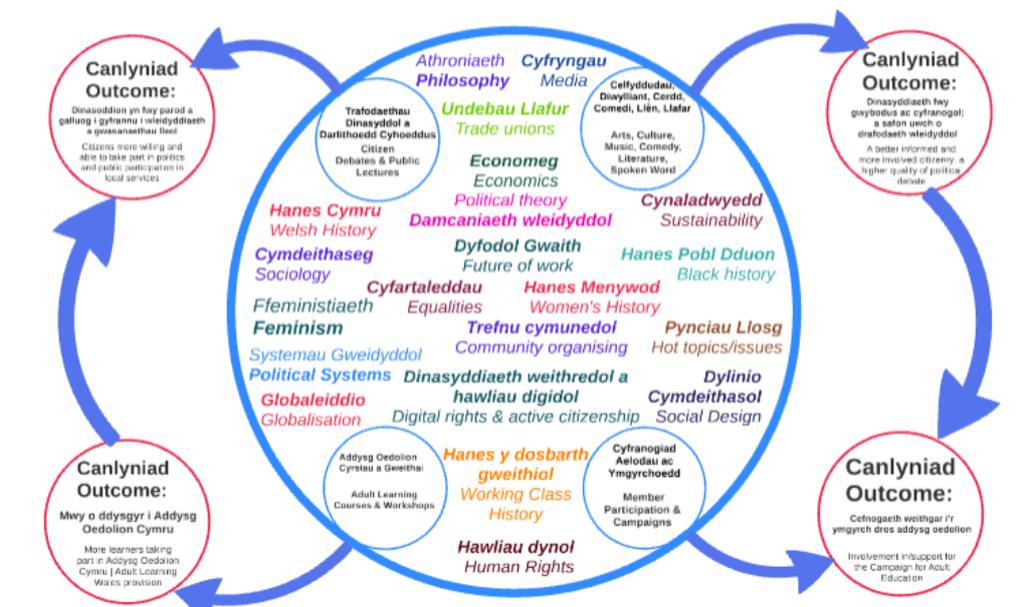


Figure 2: Adult Learning Wales Democracy Programme

### Integrating democratic engagement with other essential and vocational skills

However, with the changing face of Welsh, European and international politics and the influence of new media and technology new priorities and teaching methodologies are required. Adult learning practitioners need to be acquainted with the range of new technologies and software packages that can empower citizens to engage democratically and campaign. Also, there is a need for tutors to creatively and impartially integrate democratic engagement with other essential and vocational skills, from Information Technology to the Creative Arts. We need to give our learners the communication, organisational and scrutiny skills to question and verify facts,

<sup>86</sup> Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales (2017), *Democratic Engagement Curriculum*

challenge opinions, lobby, campaign, solve problems and engage in positive solutions. These non-partisan political courses and cross-cutting themes would encourage tolerance, exchange of views and co-operation. They would nurture the development and articulation of values and views along with an understanding of how to actively promote them locally, nationally or internationally to improve the learners' communities and environment.

Co-operative Education is a concept that many involved with education do not fully appreciate and would support the Welsh Government's ambitions to achieve a Co-operative Wales. Euros Lewis (2018) from Radio Beca, emphasises the power of local creative co-operative solutions and the inherent nature of the concept in the 'mind set' of the Welsh language and culture.<sup>87</sup> '...Decolonising yourself' from often subconscious historical, commercial and globalising influences is the first step in facilitating this. A positive, creative, compensating and forward-looking post-colonial framework could well be useful for education strategists.<sup>88</sup>

Educators, politicians and civil servants could learn a lot from international models such as the Native American model of Community Colleges whose nations are also re-discovering histories and traditions, reviving languages and developing new democracies. Their leaders, educators and learners also have a very strong awareness of their identity and purpose. They value research, have their own publication and celebrate their mission, culture and achievements collectively.<sup>89</sup> Developing leadership traits that are based on their traditions and culture is important to them.

Welsh medium education, Welsh for Adults and cultural and language awareness is not only key in securing the Welsh Government's target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 but can be seen in the same light as programmes such as ESOL in facilitating an inclusive bilingual democracy.<sup>90</sup>

In practical terms, implementing the above vision means directing and enabling all involved to prioritise democratic engagement as a cross-cutting theme for all provision with specialised stand-alone courses providing further support. Active engagement and the practical skills involved should feature as prominently as passive academic

<sup>87</sup> **Radio Beca** is a media channel for the voice and voices of the 400+ Welsh speaking communities in the three West Wales counties. They use FM Digital, social media and any other possible media. In practical terms, that means linking people and their communities and securing that the passion of their creativity and politics is widely diffused. The aim is to support and strengthen our ability to shape the future of our communities and also, to inspire us to turn our backs on an attitude of 'there is nothing to do' towards a dialogue on: 'What shall we do', 'When shall we do it?' and 'How shall we do it?'

<sup>88</sup> Rhys, D (2011): Arfarniad o Arweinyddiaeth a Rheolaeth Strategol Addysg Gymraeg a Brodorol gan Ddefnyddio'r Dull Rhwystro-cymell

<sup>89</sup> TCJ, 2007. Our Story, Our Way. Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education, Vol 19, No 2.

<sup>90</sup> Rhys, D (2011): Arfarniad o Arweinyddiaeth a Rheolaeth Strategol Addysg Gymraeg a Brodorol gan Ddefnyddio'r Dull Rhwystro-cymell

study. Utilising communication, campaigning and other technologies that facilitate engagement should be key. New resources need to be developed, effective teaching methodologies identified and good practice documented and shared. Relevant accreditation units and qualifications need to be identified and composed. Developing a model of accountable community curriculums was recently discussed at an event discussing learning for co-operative and associational development.<sup>91</sup>

It would also be timely to assess whether the mostly appointed governing bodies of Further Education institutions is the best model in terms of engagement, ownership and accountability. Membership models in the WEA tradition or even co-operative education organisations could be considered. Gerry Hassan (2015), the keynote speaker at the WEA Scotland AGM advocated that such organisations were also crucial ‘vessels’ in modern democracies to develop ‘values’ and channel ‘voices’ to avoid frustration and alienation from the democratic process.<sup>92</sup>

## Conclusion

We must challenge any movement towards the kind of politics practised by those such as Trump and Johnson and secure Wales as a ‘post-truth politics free zone’! We owe it not only to our citizens and the health of our democracy but also out of respect for our nation’s political tradition: from Hywel Dda’s pre-medieval egalitarian laws and Robert Owen’s Co-operative vision to our influential liberal non-conformist tradition, and Keir Hardy, Aneurin Bevan and Raymond Williams’s socialism, Gwynfor Evans’s pacifism and cultural nationalism and inspirational and principled groups and campaigns from the Chartists and Welsh suffragettes to Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg and women’s support groups during the 1980s Miners’ Strike.

It was Aneurin Bevan who advocated the vital importance of truth in politics and his famous quote ‘This is my truth – tell me yours’ was also the title of a Manic Street Preachers album.<sup>93</sup> What he encouraged was for politicians to speak passionately from their experiences and to avoid conceited and calculated politics. Learners from different backgrounds will also have many ‘truths’ of their own derived from their personal life experiences and communities. Our challenge is to give them the tools, encouragement and confidence to articulate their ‘truths’, shape our future and further unfold the ‘long revolution’.

<sup>91</sup> Adult and Community Learning for co-operative and associational development, 23 October 2018

<sup>92</sup> Hassan, Gerry (2015): *Caledonian Dreaming*

<sup>93</sup> Aneurin Bevan / Manic Street Preachers see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This\\_Is\\_My\\_Truth\\_Tell\\_Me\\_Yours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This_Is_My_Truth_Tell_Me_Yours)

*Dafydd Rhys has a background in Geography and Recreation and Parks, and has worked in the Schools, Further Education, Higher Education and Adult Community Learning sectors. He has also established community and co-operative enterprises in the creative, publishing and recreation industries. Currently, he works for Addysg Oedolion Cymru|Adult Learning Wales as its Democratic Engagement and Welsh Medium Co-ordinator.*



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For further information please contact:

Mark Ravenhall

Senior Research Fellow

Learning and Work Institute

[markravenhall@sky.com](mailto:markravenhall@sky.com)

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