SELF-CONSTRUCTION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Lifelong, Lifewide and Life-Deep Learning

Paul Bélanger

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is a non-profit international institute of UNESCO. The Institute undertakes research, capacity-building, networking and publication on lifelong learning with a focus on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education. Its publications are a valuable resource for educational researchers, planners, policymakers and practitioners.

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For Heidi and our grandchildren

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FOREWORD

The twenty-first century is calling for major transformation, both personal and societal, in the ways we work, learn and develop. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development speaks directly to the need to facilitate and enact this transformation at local and global levels so that we can 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (Sustainable Development Goal 4) and 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' (Sustainable Development Goal 5). Transformation through lifelong learning and education is very much needed at this time.

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is pleased to publish this English translation of *Parcours éducatifs : Construction de soi et transformation sociale*, because it derives from a strong intellectual heritage with a focus on lifelong learning. The transformation that is aspired to in this book necessitates improved social conditions to enable personal and intrinsically social demands and aspirations to be met. The intersection of personal and social demands represents a perennial challenge for UIL: to find creative ways to negotiate the tension between constituencies that are local and global, personal and social, male and female, young and old.

In his discussion of transformation as a goal in education and learning, Paul Bélanger draws on a vast array of sources and ideas – philosophical, sociological, educational and cultural – to make his argument that all aspects of life and learning need to be viewed as intricately connected. He insightfully engages with the literature on work, health, aging, popular education, literacy and gender to advance the notion that the integration of a learning agenda

into all aspects of experience and life is non-negotiable if transformation is to be achieved. Readers will find here provocative ideas about why and how we must intensify our learning and education efforts to create change.

UIL views this publication as a vital complement to its existing publishing, research, advocacy, networking and capacity-building activities. As a longtime UNESCO director and collaborator, Bélanger brings years of experience in global and intersectoral discussions on learning to this text. He furthers our thinking about how we might go about generating new knowledge in a time that is troubled and complicated. Most importantly, he helps us think about the global agenda for education and sustainability and its need for a continued emphasis on lifelong learning and gender equality for all.

In closing, I wish to thank Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal for giving UIL permission to translate this book into English in order to make it available to a wider audience. I hope that this translation will prove fruitful and challenging reading for those who are striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to create transformation on a global scale.

Arne Carlsen
Director
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INTRODUCTION

Readers may wonder how I came to be interested in the intimacy of learning, and especially how I came to regard it as a social and even societal issue, which may seem paradoxical.

I first grasped the importance of the intimacy of learning when I realized that this theme was absent, if not actively excluded, from educational policy and discourse, except in transformative and gender learning literature (English and Irving, 2012; Horsman, 2012, 2013). And yet I could point, including and beyond gender examples, to endless cases of individuals whose inner beings have been damaged by traumatic educational experiences suffered in silence at every stage of their lives. Such experiences include child abuse and repression of curiosity in early childhood; academic failure later in school (failure experienced solely as a personal responsibility, thus leading to self-blame); workplace education and training failing to take individual aspirations and expectations into account; societal denial of non-work-related learning demands; and the exclusion of people from the learning society as they grow older. As I realized how much misery individuals were quietly and intimately enduring because of this loss of control over their learning biography, I began to wonder about the broader social implications of the phenomenon of too many individuals becoming too scared to learn. However, the consequences of such hidden obstacles to individuals' quests for autonomy and cognitive development are never definitive. The intimate injuries experienced at one moment of the life course can lead to a myriad of different scenarios in the future. It is precisely this ambiguity and the many different biographical outcomes associated with it that aroused my interest in studying the complex, reciprocal relationships between the public and the

private. That is, between external demands for socialization and for acquisition of new skills on the one hand, and, on the other, individuals' prerogatives to construct their own identities, to protect their integrity and to steer the course of their own lives. This includes their learning biographies, which are, at the very least, negotiated individually and collectively.

In terms of extreme intimate injuries, society now knows more about and has begun to publicly recognize the impact that sexual assault can have on victims' personal and social futures. There is more and more discussion of these acts of intimate violence committed in private and sometimes disclosed by the victims, often women and children, years later. Such public disclosure can become a means of defence and prevention and even, for some, a way of reasserting ownership of themselves. The question, then, is whether the same holds true for people who suffer intimate educational and symbolic violence that silently deprives them of control over their plans for their own lives. How can they transcend this negation of their right to reconstruct themselves and to enjoy human dignity? How can they rise above this denial of their entitlement to gratifying learning experiences?

At first, my explorations focused on abuse as an alienating experience, but then I started trying to understand not just the attacks on individuals' autonomy and cognitive aspirations, but also their subsequent successful resolve to develop autonomy despite their experiences. The efforts of women's groups to defend their right to control their own bodies and their own intimate lives inspired me to better understand individuals' new demands and persistent quests for autonomy in their own learning biographies. These same efforts likewise inspired the second major goal of this book: to investigate the social issues involved in recognizing the intimate nature of people's learning and educational lives.

Once I had set these goals, I had to address a number of questions. Is the emergence of new societal attitudes regarding intimacy

being reflected in the various educational paths that people pursue? Do the new expectations regarding people's private lives and the new issues in the fight against sexual aggression have their counterparts in the realm of learning and education? In what ways have people's educational experiences been marked by the more general transformation of public/private relations and by the growing priority that people give to quality in their interpersonal relationships and a sense of personal meaning throughout their lives? In the learning experiences that contribute to individuals' life stories, is there not a constant tension between constructing one's identity for others and constructing one's identity for oneself?

And then a whole other set of questions arose, questions of a more immediately educational nature. How can we explain the intimacy and the subjective dimension of any experience of educational violence, and especially of its opposite: the significant learning that the individual could and should experience? How is the growing recognition of the intimate dimension of any learning experience being expressed in people's educational aspirations and society's educational demands? In what ways, within what groups, and in what social contexts are people denouncing acts of educational or symbolic violence and demanding that the intimacy of learning and of its consequences be recognized? As people's educational life paths are being transformed, how is the aspiration to construct the self and the need to acquire and master constructed knowledge being articulated? How do the various theories of learning address or fail to address the individual's quest for identity and the demand for knowledge and knowledge appropriation? What are the impacts of the uneven recognition of the intimacy of learning and education at work, in social life, and in the political sphere? How are the evolution and growing complexity of learning demands reflected in public debate on education and lifelong learning? What conditions and practices are associated with true consideration of the intimacy of learning?

In examining these issues, one cannot overlook attempts to manipulate people's private lives for commercial or other purposes, thus throughout this book, it will be essential to consider the reciprocal relationship between the private and the public and to underscore the difference between individuality and individualism.

In summary, we are currently witnessing a transformation not only in our vision of education, but also in people's learning biographies. And this transformation brings to the fore three closely related issues: firstly, a requirement for the empowerment of individuals in today's society; secondly, the necessity of social conditions that can enable these new, both profoundly personal and intrinsically social, demands and aspirations to be met; and thirdly, the as yet unclear reconciliation between recognition of the interiority of learning experience and the objective quest for external knowledge.

These, then, are the questions I was curious to explore and that made me want to write this book and thereby begin a dialogue and debate with you, my readers.[1] We will proceed in three steps. After elucidating the inherently intimate dimension of learning experience and its social impact (Part 1), we will examine its uneven recognition in various educational spheres (Part 2) and, then, in Part 3, explore the policy implications of such recognition.

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[1] I wish to thank the following researchers who helped to develop this new line of inquiry at a seminar we held on this subject at the University of Duisburg-Essen in summer 2007: Albert Alheit, Regina Egetenmeyer, Heide Von Felden, Mathilde Grunage-Monetti, Bob Hill, Gunther Holzapfel, Dirk Koob, Werner Mauch, Elena Mickunaite, Sigrid Nolda, Reddy Prasad and André Schlaefli. I wish also to thank Leona English for her contribution in updating the references, especially on gender and adult learning.

PART ONE

RECOGNITION OF THE INTIMACY OF LEARNING

CHAPTER 1
THE INTIMACY OF LEARNING

Interest in the intimacy of learning has grown over the past few years but is not an entirely new phenomenon. Several relatively recent trends highlight the subjective dimension of learning events and experience. Examples include the increasing re-centering of educational practices on the learner, the growing number of learner-empowerment initiatives, the transformative learning literature and the recognition that educational rights interact with all other human rights.

1.1 CHANGING VISIONS OF EDUCATION

The demand on individuals to co-determine their increasingly non-linear educational life paths is one of such trends reflecting the growing emphasis on the intimacy of learning.

1.1.1 INDIVIDUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND DIVERSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

One defining trend in educational systems in recent years has unquestionably been the growing number of options and specializations that students may pursue, the growing variety of settings they may engage in, and the resultant individualization of students' initial educational pathways. Until the 1980s, reformers tried to correct inequities in education by standardizing structures and curricula so as to enact a sort of formal equality. But since then, the trend is instead to diversify educational institutions and pathways so as to serve increasingly diverse student populations and provide a wider variety of educational alternatives or educational paths, while trying to ensure transferability between them.

On a more global scale, this trend has been seen in the creation of new bridges between vocational programmes and higher education, as well as in the division of programmes into modules that can be offered to students in various configurations. In Quebec's school system, for example, this diversifying trend has been seen in the creation of public schools that offer international programmes or combine academics with specialties such as sports or music, as well as in the adaptation of content to reflect local culture and conditions and to reach groups that have little experience with formal education.

Such initiatives strive to strike a delicate balance between promoting equality and recognizing differences. There is always the risk that equal opportunity will be compromised, and hence such programmes are the subject of some debate (Combaz, 1999; Portelance et al., 2006). But recognizing differences does not mean allowing inequalities in the name of some neo-liberal conception of freedom of education (for example, by establishing an elite system of private schools supported by public funds). Instead, it means that the public system recognizes differing ways of achieving the common objective of quality education for all.

Thus, from the earliest stage of their formal education, learners are now expected to make some choices about the subjects they study and the programmes they enrol in. Their educational pathways are no longer linear and sequential; instead individuals are afforded new opportunities to change direction, to choose a different route. Hence young people have more and more choices and an increasing number of decisions to make throughout the early years of their schooling. They have more space in which to differentiate and individualize their trajectories. They are expected to become actors who can make their own choices (Étienne et al., 1992). But for these individuals to be able to make these choices, certain socio-cultural conditions must also be present.

In addition to this individualization of students' educational choices, another, relatively new trend is the individualization of

pedagogical practices, whereby learners are given personal coaching and mentoring, both at school and in the workplace. The goal is to take individual wants and needs into account and to adapt the pace of learning to the specific learners and their distinctive backgrounds and experiences. A wider variety of cultural referents are also being used (for example, new reference books that document contributions from diverse backgrounds and traditions), precisely so that individuals can recognize themselves in their school exercises and thus learn from them in an authentic, meaningful way. Paradoxically, such acknowledgment of differences may be a way to promote equal opportunity.

This diversification and differentiation of educational pathways, learning environments and ways of learning intensifies throughout learners' adult lives, leading them to make transitory syntheses from these various sources of knowledge.

1.1.2   BROADER REDEFINITION OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING NOW EXTENDED TO PEOPLE'S LIFE COURSE

From this temporal standpoint, the reality of education and learning is no longer limited to the institutionalized, preparatory phase of people's lives (in fact, it never really was). Even before school begins, intensive learning occurs in early childhood—a phase of each person's biography that was long poorly understood but that profoundly influences his or her subsequent life course (see Chapter 10). And the educational biography naturally continues after individuals leave the institutionalized pathways of school, college and university behind.

Once they have completed what is now defined as their initial education, many people continue participating in various types of education, but many others cease to do so, in accordance with their personal and social circumstances and the opportunities available to them (Crossan et al., 2003). And to the extent that these individuals want to continue learning and nourishing their curiosity, and,

of course, have the spaces and resources to do so, these various learning experiences throughout their lifetimes will enable them to construct increasingly distinctive selves.

The narrative biographical approach to research on adult learning, which first emerged in the 1980s, is contributing greatly to the rediscovery of the intimacy of learning. In this approach, individuals' life stories are reconstructed in order to understand how they build and rebuild their identities throughout their lives, and more intensively during major life transitions (Bertaux, 1980). For instance, Pierre Dominicé (1990, 2001) has observed the ways that, during such transitions, individuals succeed or fail in steering a new course, in giving shape to what experience has taught them and to what may make sense for the future. Life stories, such as those of women who broke with the oppressive traditions of 19th century rural society (English and Irving, 2012; Zeldin, 1973, 1995) and those of unemployed teenagers who organize their resistance and thus discover their identities (Alheit, 1994), enable us to understand the complex relationships between the weight of social structures and the relative ability of individuals to react and to carve out a place for themselves.

Such stories show us how and in what contexts these individuals position themselves with regard to the 'potential of their yet unlived life' and how they succeed or fail in reconstructing their identities by using their personal networks, improvising creatively, or setting a motivating personal project for themselves that keeps them going (Alheit, 1995, 2005; Pineau, 2000, 2009). We will return in Chapter 4 to this topic by referring to what Alheit calls *biographicity*, a competence required in late modernity and through the rediscovery of individual actors in any collective action.

1.1.3 REDISCOVERY OF INFORMAL LEARNING

Throughout their lives, individuals learn in a variety of ways, not only in organized learning situations, but also through all

kinds of opportunities and by all kinds of methods. Our vision of education and learning is changing. We are rediscovering that formal, credentialing education is only the visible part of the educational iceberg (Livingstone, 1999, 2012). First observed by Coombs and his team in rural settings (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974) and theorized by La Belle (1982), informal learning has now become an indispensable feature of the educational landscape not only in the workplace (Marsick et al., 2009) but in all areas of activity (Schugurensky, 2000; Egentenmeyer, 2008). Moreover, even 'formal' education always has an informal dimension. Formality and informality are two components that are always present, albeit in varying degrees, in any educational activity (Billett, 2004; Colley, 2003).

Recognizing this fact simply means acknowledging that, besides participating in organized educational activities, the vast majority of men and women also participate in unstructured learning experiences at some time or other in their lives, either intentionally or incidentally. This enhanced recognition of the informal learning that people engage in at every age and in every sphere of activity helps to highlight the individual's role in determining their educational pathways. It reveals the subjective dimension of learning and education throughout the human lifespan. It is also expressed in the recent trend toward recognizing and validating knowledge and skills acquired outside the formal school context.

1.1.4 DEMAND FOR RECOGNITION OF EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING

Inevitably, the rediscovery of the variety of modes of learning has led to what is now a typical feature of lifelong-learning policy: recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of learning from experience and self-organized learning. The development and implementation of a set of tools for this purpose in various countries (Colardyn, 2000; Conseil Supérieur de l'éducation (Superior

Council on Education), Quebec, 2000; Andersson and Harris, 2006; Livingstone and Myers, 2007) and internationally (UNESCO 2010: CONFINTEA VI, *Belém Framework for Action*, 12e) clearly show how important the recognition of learning done outside of structured frameworks has become.

This formal validation of informal learning and the issuing of 'passports' enabling individuals to pursue their educational project represent a revealing trend. They effectively express the emergence of a broader vision of the reality of lifelong learning. The 'education' section of a traditional résumé or curriculum vitae actually provides a very narrow account of the education and learning that the individual has experienced over his or her lifetime. In reality, people achieve their education through a wide range of formative events and experiences and thus are now demanding official recognition for all of them. More and more educational institutions now have policies on recognition of prior learning, and regardless of how these may vary (Andersson and Harris, 2006). They acknowledge that every individual, throughout his or her life history, learns in a variety of ways (McGivney, 1999), including self-directed learning (Merriam and Bierema, 2013).

1.1.5 THE TREND TOWARD SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

In the 1970s, reacting against the prevailing formal education model, researchers began to identify and codify the various forms and practices of what came to be known as self-directed learning (Tough, 1971; Knowles, 1975). Authors such as Brookfield (1985), Long (1989), Candy (1991), Carré (1993, 2002), Pineau (2000) and Merriam (2013) developed a body of theory regarding self-directed learning practices, documented the self-development plans or projects that individuals pursue; they examined the conditions that enable adults to control their own learning. Thus, various forms of self-directed learning were identified and the processes involved in

it systematized. Some authors represented them with linear models (Knowles, 1975), others with more interactive ones (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991). Authors such as Carré *et al.* (2002) specified the methods and practices used to support self-directed learners, and ideas such as assisted or guided self-learning ('accompagnement') entered the literature.

Philippe Carré (2006) proposes the concept of *apprenance* (the learning propensity) to designate the affective, cognitive, and conative dispositions of individuals who are able to learn in more autonomous way. He refers to Bandura's concept of 'agency' and underscores the role of the self in strengthening the desire and ability to learn and the knowledge of how to do so, reinforcing *'le vouloir, pouvoir et savoir apprendre'* (the desire, power and knowledge of how to learn).

Other concepts developed by the above authors are highly revealing. They include self-determination, self-regulation, self-effectiveness, accountability, self-steering, personal initiative, and *'pédagogie du projet'* (project-based pedagogy) (Boutinet, 2005, pp. 187ff). According to these authors, such perspective should make it possible not to ignore the pedagogical relationships, but to reconsider the prevailing models.

Unfortunately, some of these authors have even gone so far as to treat self-learning and formal education as diametrically opposed. But the main contribution of recent thinking and discussion on self-directed learning has been to focus less on how education is organized and more on how learning is being achieved by the learners themselves, with, certainly, the often needed support of teachers, mentors and facilitating environments (Merriam and Bierema, 2013).

This expanded vision of education as extending across one's entire lifetime and including informal learning tends to spotlight the individualization of educational life stories. It puts the focus on the learners, who continually face new experiences and new kinds of knowledge that they must integrate, negotiate or reject.

1.1.6 EMPOWERMENT

This renewed focus on the 'actor' has also been reflected in the emergence of the concept of 'empowerment' over the past few decades. This concept originated, in part, in the women's social movements, which in the 1970s began to make empowerment a crucial underpinning of their goals and practices. Empowerment meant women securing the ability to act autonomously so that they could exercise control over their own situation, especially in response to various forms of discrimination, and thus transform underlying social relationships.

The perspective and approach associated with empowerment are both individual and collective. A good example can be seen in the African American feminist movement of the 1980s and 1990s (Collins, 2000). In response to sexual discrimination and the resulting forms of repression that women endured, this movement based its programme both on building the capacity for active resistance in every individual and on horizontally organizing collective action so as to achieve concrete changes in the immediate oppressive situation, to alter women's living conditions, and to transform the patriarchal society both structurally and culturally.

This reciprocal relationship between individual emancipation and collective action characterizes this new social movement and contrasts with the mobilization methods often used in the past by historical social movements. Autonomization is not only a means of taking action but is also one of the objectives of action and what gives action its meaning (Ninacs, 2003). In such social movements, the process becomes as important as the result. Each individual's voluntary participation and personal re-analysis of the issues are preconditions for effective action, both individual and collective. The resulting solidarity thus goes beyond a mere adhesion to a common cause.

Thus conceived, empowerment requires all individuals to master skills, to recognize their own ability to take initiative (a form of self-esteem), and to develop critical awareness. It involves a form of development that is not only social but also deeply personal. The intimacy of learning as a social issue is then implicitly recognized.

The concept of empowerment has moved beyond feminist circles and is cited in a variety of discussions on organizational management, adult education and training, and even on the role of civil society in international co-operation. In these contexts, the concept is often revisited and reconstructed from a more instrumental and technocratic perspective (Damant, 2001; Fortin-Pellerin, 2006).

It is thus important to differentiate the various understandings of the concept of empowerment. The concept as it is used here underscores the importance of learners' involvement in their own learning. It refers to the development of individuals' ability to act independently in new, less hierarchical organizations (Chaize, 1995). It describes the qualities that individuals must have for local communities to participate actively in development projects (Malhotra, Schuler and Boender, 2005) and pilot their life course (Le Bossé, 2003). Here the emphasis is placed on individual initiative and individual accountability, and, on the capacity for autonomous action.

In summary, over the past few decades, visions of education and learning have been transformed as individuals have increasingly come to be seen as agents who can, under certain conditions, build their own capacity to act individually and collectively so as to change the conditions of their lives.

1.2 A RENEWED VISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

These many avenues in which the demand for greater individual autonomy in learning has been recognized no doubt have some relationship to the emergence of a renewed vision of the right to

education. This right was first recognized in Article 26 of the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in 1948, and in Article 13 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which was adopted in 1966 and came into force in 1976. This covenant guarantees access to primary and post-primary education, that is to the level of schooling recognized as compulsory and universal in each member country and makes such education freely available to all without discrimination. But according to UNESCO's 2011 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, some 60 million children are still being denied their right to education, while some 770 million adults still lack basic literacy skills; the consequences are well known, and they are enormous (Delors, 1996; Schuller et al., 2004). Despite some real progress in the primary education of children, even as of 2008, over half of all countries had not yet realized the key objective of *Education for All*: free primary education for all children. As for basic education for adults, according to UNESCO, the majority of states continue to neglect this fundamental right (UNESCO, 2011).

The right to education of course implies universal access to formal education, but its implications extend much further. The right to go to school also involves what happens there to people who manage to attend. It involves education itself and equal opportunities to truly learn, to take ownership of the knowledge conveyed in school and to embed it into one's own experience. It includes the right to broaden the range of opportunities to express oneself and to take effective action and to continue to do so throughout one's life. It is the right to an education that has meaning not only for individuals and for their communities, but also for individuals as members of their communities.

Just as the right to peace means more than just freedom from war and violence, the right to education means more than just equal access. It also includes the right, as certain learning theorists put it, to develop a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989), the right to the joy of learning, the right to master new knowledge and

the right to live in dignity as a homo sapiens sapiens. The right to learn also includes, for example, the youngest children's right to an environment where people listen to and answer their questions, an environment that stimulates their intellect at this critical stage of their development (Bauer, 2007).

Furthermore, once students have completed their initial, common, compulsory education, the right to education is also their right to choose, negotiate, and steer their own course through the variety of opportunities offered to them in the higher levels of the educational system. In the workplace, it is the workers' right to continue to develop themselves and to ensure that their personal experiences and concerns are recognized and taken into account when they participate in formal education and training.

This right to learn, and to truly learn, this right to equality of opportunities, has another component: the recognition of differences. It implies more than the absence of discrimination. It demands positive steps to accommodate the cultural plurality of today's societies and hence the diversity of individual pathways. Equality and difference (Taylor, 1992) are two complementary requirements of this right. More specifically, the right to education entails not only the obvious right to textbooks that are free of racist and sexist stereotypes, but also the right to learn about differences, the right to question, and the right to propose and explore inferences different from the ones proposed by teachers and textbooks.

This multi-facetted right to education cannot be isolated from other human rights. People who endure discrimination may have a variety of identities and characteristics, any one of which may make them targets of rejection and harassment—gender, ethnicity, physical appearance, disabilities, religious beliefs, economic status, sexual orientation, and so on. These vectors combine to constitute the 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 1991) of discrimination, as well as of empowerment. This concept of intersectionality is sometimes limited to its external, organizational dimension—the need for co-operation

among the government agencies and support networks specializing in each of these vectors of discrimination. But everyone who experiences multiple forms of discrimination on a social and personal level is a unique individual who embodies the various sources of his or her exclusion in a unique configuration. It is this individual who stands at the point where the various factors that organizations attempt to correct or control intersect. It is also this individual who joins forces with others to resist, to break free of this multidimensional discrimination, and to publicly reveal the harassment that he or she has often suffered in private. From this perspective, discrimination in educational settings and the right to education are inseparable from other human rights—not only civil, but social, economic, and cultural—each of which is a condition for freely availing of other human rights.

In this sense, the right to education is fundamental in two ways. It is fundamental in and of itself and is publically recognized as such. But it is also an 'enabling right'—a basic prerequisite for the exercise of all other human rights. People's right to lifelong learning means their right to enhance their ability to act individually and collectively, their right to acquire new ways of seeing their environment so as to understand and alter it, and their right to attain qualifications in order to protect their right to work. The fundamental nature of the right to learn is eloquently expressed in the following excerpt from the Declaration of the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education (UNESCO, 1985):

> The right to learn is:
> – the right to read and write;
> – the right to question and analyse;
> – the right to imagine and create;
> – the right to read one's own world and to write history; (…)
> – the right to develop individual and collective skills. (…)
> If we want the peoples of the world to be self-sufficient in food production and other essential human needs, they must have the right to learn.

If women and men are to enjoy better health, they must have the right to learn.
If we are to avoid war, we must learn to live in peace, and learn to understand one another.
'Learn' is the key word.
There can be no human development without the right to learn.
There will be no breakthroughs in agriculture and industry (...) without the right to learn.
Without this right there will be no improvements in the standard of living for workers in our cities and villages. (...)

But the right to learn is not only an instrument of economic development; it must be recognised as one of the fundamental rights. The act of learning, lying as it does at the heart of all educational activity, changes human beings from objects at the mercy of events to subjects who create their own history.

Some neo-liberal thinkers try to circumscribe rights by holding individuals solely responsible for their own conditions. Rights and responsibilities are thus treated as conflicting concepts, and the notion of individual empowerment is distorted into one where only the individual is held accountable. But if individuals are to be accountable for their place in society, then the rights that they need to develop so that they can truly participate in it must be recognized (Sen, 2000). Moreover, the call for individual empowerment and the space that citizens are demanding for this purpose are more than necessary conditions for true development. They are also, as Sen puts it, fundamental constituents of its very purpose. Paradoxically, this less individualistic view of human rights leads directly to the recognition of the individual as subject and actor, and therefore of every individual's right to enhance their inner capacity in order to exercise all other rights, both personally and as a member of a community.

1.3 CONCLUSION

A variety of studies in a number of countries show that people's life paths are becoming more diverse and more individualized. As a result, a broader view of education is emerging, one that recognizes the various ways that people learn—ways that, depending on people's personal situations, may vary in relative importance over their lifetimes. These findings, while recognizing the importance of teaching and mentoring functions, compel us to recognize the self-directed dimension of any sustainable learning. We cannot develop the capacity for individual initiative unless we make space for such initiative in the learning process itself and hence in the appropriation of knowledge.

The recognition of the intimacy of learning and its social implications is a logical extension of this renewed focus on the learner, but goes two steps further. First, it means not only recognizing the active role of learners in any sustainable learning process, but also designing and supporting this educational process so that learners can continuously construct their own identities. Thus they will be enabled both to express their learning demands and to take ownership of the knowledge and skills that they acquire and mobilize. None of this will be possible unless current social and educational conditions are modified.

Second, in the new contexts in which people live today, learning does not mean teaching them to play their roles in predictable situations. It means that all persons, while acquiring necessary knowledge and skills, must also continuously strengthen their freedom of individual and collective action. This ability has become essential in today's society, where risks and uncertainties abound, where the settings in which people live and work are being rapidly renewed and transformed, where cultural diversity characterizes our daily environment and where the threat of diminished public services becomes ever present.

But these observations raise many other questions. What is actually being done today to take this intimate dimension of learning into account in work-related education and training, in educational institutions, and in other educational settings? In what way is the recognition of the intimacy of learning transforming the social demand for education? How is this demand being expressed in the world of work, and in the fields of health, literacy and popular education? From this standpoint, how should educational policies and practices concerning early childhood education and education of older adults be interpreted?

Before examining these various issues and explore their concrete implications (see Part 2), we must first address in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 certain fundamental questions. How can we recognize and analyze the intimate dimension of the act of learning? What about formal knowledge, the acquisition of proven modes of action, the appropriation of the universal heritage of humanity and the intellectual methods needed to renew it continuously? How do learning theories deal with this dimension? What are the relationships between individuals' autonomy and their participation in the collective, between the intimate and the social aspects of education and learning? Can a person's quest for autonomy be individual without also being collective (Newman, 2012) and vice versa? How can this new focus on the intimacy of learning be explained sociologically? And lastly (see Part 3), which policies and programmes could be introduced or reinforced in order to fully recognize the intimacy of learning and thus strengthen in a diffuse way the individual and collective creativity of citizens in late modernity?

CHAPTER 2
CONSTRUCTING THE SELF AND MASTERING KNOWLEDGE: TWO POLES OF THE EDUCATIONAL DIALECTIC

Developing individuals' autonomy and increasing their ability to take initiative are more than just conditions for learning: they are central to the learning process and among its fundamental purposes. But what about the fundamental need to learn about the cultural heritage of humanity? Or the need to continue developing the skills and knowledge required for one's work? Or first of all, the need to stir and nourish one's intellectual curiosity?

There is sometimes a tendency to treat constructing the self and mastering knowledge as two conflicting goals, but this opposition is actually false, or rather, incorrectly framed. Whatever renewed emphasis we may place on the intimacy of learning, we cannot disguise its cognitive dimension, which is just as necessary for developing individuals' autonomy. Conversely, learning does not mean simply receiving and understanding transmitted knowledge; it also means mobilizing the inner resources of individuals who are in the process of constructing their selves.

Before we examine these two dimensions of learning, we need a better understanding of its subjective aspect. Sometimes ignored, sometimes glorified, this aspect of the educational interaction has been analyzed in various ways and thus been assigned various, sometimes contradictory meanings.

2.1 VARIOUS EXPLORATIONS OF THE INTIMACY OF LEARNING

2.1.1 EMOTIONAL VERSUS RATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Despite the anecdotal nature of Goleman's book on emotional intelligence (1996), its success does reflect a new trend in the world of education. In the past, educators tended to talk about emotions only when stressing the need for learners to control their feelings and their non-rational behaviours. Today, space is being demanded for the expression of emotions, which have acquired a positive connotation. In advanced modern societies, the ability to mobilize and manage one's internal emotional energy has become an asset: what Neckel (2005) calls 'emotion by design'.

Emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, and pleasure are universal. They are conveyed by the similar facial expressions in all cultures. Emotions are also an integral part of the things that people learn, and the frustrations that they experience when they fail to learn. For example, if we do not consider people's emotional lives, how can we understand a phenomenon such as ego resiliency (Block, cited by Goleman, 1996), which enables learners to cope with the initial confusion and lack of understanding that initially characterize most new cognitive experience? The slow process by which learners build their self-confidence is critical for successfully managing the anxiety that comes with facing questions to which they do not yet know the answers or which challenge their current vision.

Braving the voyage into the unknown is one of the ways that people learn and acquire knowledge, but lack of self-confidence undermines their ability to learn. It makes them hesitate to take new risks, fearing the uncertainty caused by cognitive dissonance and by new knowledge and new perspectives that call their old habits, beliefs and traditions into question (Arnold and Holzapfel, 2008). Without self-confidence, people tend to fall back into their routine, 'a normality

that becomes normative' (Bourgeault, 2003, p.96; author's translation). But on a more positive note, no one is ever completely passive or completely incapable of looking back and examining his or her past experiences. The gradual development of a personal identity, including self-esteem, is also a matter of emotions, as well as changing the social networks to which one belongs or making them more diversified (Field and Malcolm, 2006). Empathy is a necessary skill for learning from other people, for understanding their feelings and perspectives from the inside, and for learning through dialogue and conversation (Zeldin, 1998).

But emotional intelligence is not the only dimension of the intimacy of learning. Rational intelligence, too, emerges only gradually, as individuals acquire more experience with deductive and inductive reasoning and gradually develop and organize a more complex body of knowledge in their long-term memory. Individuals' ability to analyze and judge depends on the knowledge that they have grasped and on the reference schemas they have developed, as well as on the experience that they have acquired in exercising their critical faculties.

Mastering knowledge also means organizing it in one's head and relating it to other knowledge that is already there, so that one can then bring it to bear on something or mobilize it at the appropriate time. Learning means, for example, mastering the logic of syllogism so that one can then use it and also detect sophisms. The architecture of memory is an intimate reality that every individual must gradually construct, just like the capacity for rational analysis. Like emotional processes, these cognitive processes are also an integral part of constructing the self and developing the ability to act autonomously.

The polarization between emotion and cognition that so long tended to characterize our view of learning and education no longer holds true (Umbriaco et al., 2001). The relationships between the two have a reciprocal instrumental component. Individuals

can use their reason to control their emotions; at the same time, their ability to participate actively in a learning process will be non-existent, or at least severely compromised, if they are not emotionally involved.

In this last regard, we should also note an equally reciprocal relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Individuals are motivated by the extrinsic, social demand to learn only when they see it as making sense and embrace it personally. Conversely, the intrinsic, subjective motivation to learn does not arise out of nowhere. It is also fed by the social needs that the individual experiences. Even when the purpose of learning is extrinsic—to socialize children, for example, or to meet new requirements at the workplace—it does not lose its intimate dimension. On the contrary, it requires this dimension in order for such learning to be significant and relevant.

Motivation and emotion can also be learned. The goal of some educational and even some cultural programmes is precisely to optimize emotional experiences and enhance individual initiative. Emotion is not just an internal disturbance to be controlled. It is also an energy that needs to be awakened, a force that needs to be developed. Believing that one can learn and having the courage to venture into the unknown are also matters of emotion and subjects of learning (Neckel, 2005). The joy of learning is something that can be nurtured and developed. The more gratifying and relevant my learning process is, the more motivated I am to learn. And the more motivated I become, the more I will continue to learn and the more I will cultivate the desire to do so. Lifelong learning is practically impossible if I experience it only as a necessary burden.

The internal resources that drive learners to act are not predetermined for once and for all, except in the case of serious disabilities that affect less than 5 per cent of the population. Autonomy, a major objective of education, requires individuals to continue building their inner strengths. Neither the individual's ability to learn and to act nor the individual's identity are set in stone by any

kind of quotient. The ability to satisfy one's curiosity, to gradually organize one's internal knowledge architecture, to set goals, and to take steps to reach them is a skill that people master gradually over the course of their lifetime. But they still need to be given favourable conditions and the environment for such learning processes, and both they and the people who teach and coach them must be given the right tools and methods for the job. In Chapter 10, we will talk more about required policies, practices, and systems, and on the educational impact of the environments in which people operate; will operate; or can and do decide to operate.

Symbolic violence and educational misery
The intimate side of learning can also be seen in the suffering that children feel when they fail at school—a traumatic experience that can follow them and even torment them for the rest of their lives. Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) have done a fine analysis of the general mechanisms of symbolic violence. The reproduction of inequalities produced by school is arbitrarily legitimized and thus rendered acceptable both to the victims and to society only to the extent that differences in success at school are reinterpreted as the result of a natural distribution of individual 'gifts'. In this way, inequalities in education are disguised, justified, and legitimized, and can hence be perpetuated without disturbing the social peace.

But we cannot grasp the full meaning and impact of failure at school unless we first analyze the internalization that makes it acceptable and the arbitrary, subjective way in which it is interpreted. The meaning that individuals ascribe to the experience of being personally regarded as the main reason for their own failure will strongly influence their future. This organized alienation, this internalized social construct, this cultural fiat, will weigh heavily on the rest of their lives—not just their educational lives, but their work and social lives as well.

Indeed, one cannot really understand the social significance of this symbolic violence and the mechanisms by which it works unless one considers its intimate, personal dimension. The current sociology of education partially recognizes this reality by invoking the concept of 'cultural dispositions'. This analysis does identify the factor at play, but ignores the process that creates this negative subjective perception and subtly undermines the learner's self-esteem. A closer examination of this phenomenon is important, because with certain kinds of support and the presence of 'significant others' (Cheng and Starks, 2002), students can resist this arbitrary socialization and successfully alter these learned cultural dispositions. This emotional and cognitive construction and deconstruction of the individual lie at the heart of learning and educational life, and an analysis of these processes is essential to ensure the full right to education (see Chapter 1).

There are many examples of this symbolic violence in education. Too many children are quietly stifled, stymied in their development by systematic indifference and the repeated refusal to hear and answer their persistent questions. Some students are condemned to spend every day in educational settings that are dry and boring—a situation too often ignored. Employees suffer in silent frustration as their employers force them into training that takes neither their expectations nor their experience into account. In various educational settings where harassment and bullying are tolerated, their victims become gradually isolated and defeated by the psychological blows that they constantly absorb. As the women's movement has so often shown, raising awareness about the various forms of psychological violence that are experienced in private and publicly exposing them can make all the difference.

Paradoxically, it is often through examples of people whose educational paths have been thus blocked, and who have suffered such hidden misery as a result, possibly repressing it into their

subconscious, that we discover the intimacy of the educational life course and the social issue that it represents both for individuals and for society. We will return to this subject in Chapter 9.

2.2 THEORIES OF LEARNING AND THE INTIMACY OF LEARNING

It will now be instructive to examine how the various schools of learning theory deal with the intimacy of learning (Bélanger, 2011).

Obviously, *behaviourist* theories must be treated as a separate category, since their assumptions preclude any analysis of the intimate dimension of learning. The behaviourists' positivist perspective led them to consider only that which they regarded as empirically observable. According to their theory of *operant conditioning*, by responding to a repeated stimulus that promises a reward, individuals eventually adopt an expected behaviour; they learn. Reacting to the then-prevailing tendency to reject any scientific empirical analysis of education, the behaviourists embraced objectivity and empiricism so radically that they excluded from their analysis anything that they could not observe and prove from the outside. They refused to acknowledge any reality that was hard to observe with the naked eye, and therefore consigned all internal processes into a metaphorical 'black box'. This epistemological decision led the behaviourists to ignore the subjective but nonetheless real dimension of learning. They thus overlooked that individuals can also react from the inside and that, under certain conditions, they can mobilize themselves or resist subjectively. Their acquired knowledge and their thoughts about their past experiences may make them curious and inclined to respond to external stimuli, or conversely, may make them hesitate to try new experiences, or set conditions for doing so. Learners are not just laboratory animals with simple reflexes. They are strong, thinking beings, with their own personal, intellectual, and experiential baggage.

The behaviourists do observe that an individual can delay his or her response to an immediate stimulus to obtain greater gratification later on. But they say nothing about how the personal capacity to react in this way develops. If individuals can resist a stimulus in such an autonomous way, it is because, through their life experience, they have a conception of self, and even more importantly, of other possible selves, that leads them to interpret the demands of their environment in different ways (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Yet, with behaviorists, especially with Skinner (1969, 1977), we have learned through their scientific posture, the importance of the environment to stimulate or anaesthetize people's curiosity. Without stimuli, without support from the environment, subjects cannot construct themselves intellectually and emotionally. We will return to this issue in Chapter 10 (10.3).

The two other major schools of learning theory—cognitivist and constructivist or social constructivist—have attempted to understand the learning process from the inside, by focusing their analysis not on the environment and its conditioning effects, but rather on the individuals in their learning context.

The *cognitivists* (Bruner, 1996; Gagné, 1985; Tardif, 1999) attempt to explain how people record, select, process, organize, and encode various forms of knowledge and store it in memory, so that they can retrieve and act on it later. The interiority of this process is thus explicitly recognized, as is the learner as an active agent who is mastering and mobilizing knowledge and skills. The cognitivists observe and analyze what is going on in the heads of an individual while he or she is acquiring skills and knowledge. They describe the mechanisms and processes by which learners succeed in mastering objective knowledge and developing an active personal culture (literary, historical technical, etc.). They observe and propose the best strategies for teaching such knowledge effectively. What is more, the cognitivists use the concept of meta-knowledge to underscore the individual's reflexive ability—the ability to learn

how to learn—and hence his or her potential freedom of intellectual action. While theorizing about the mental activities of receiving, reorganizing, and transferring knowledge and skills—in other words, while articulating the abstract and concrete dimensions of learning—the cognitivists do, however, tend to limit people's educational lives to this cognitive dimension alone.

Like the cognitivists, the *constructivists* shift the focus back onto the learner and recognize the inner dimension of educational life. In fact, they go even further, unfortunately often neglecting the cognitive dimension of learning in such a process. These theorists conceive of learning as the gradual construction of the learner himself or herself. Step by step, but always within a 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1986) to make the challenge achievable, learners develop their capacity for independent thought and action. They build a body of knowledge that they can then mobilize for action.

The *social constructivists* adopt this same analytical approach, but also place learners back in their social context. For example, Lave (1988) and Wenger (1998) do so by examining traditional forms of trade apprenticeship from an anthropological standpoint so as to better understand how learners build their skills. These authors study how apprentices are trained in tailors' shops and in traditional African markets, how the midwife's profession is transmitted from mother to daughter in Mayan communities of the Yucatan, and how butcher's apprentices are trained in supermarkets. In this way, the authors rediscover the processes of 'situated cognition' and, then, critically review more formal learning processes in light of these findings.

Lave and Wenger (1991) thus come to redefine learning and education as an action taken by the learner—a gradual, decreasingly peripheral, increasingly intensive and complex participation in a community of practice. The apprentices whom the authors studied in African tailor shops gradually assume a larger role as they master various tasks in turn, from the easier to the more difficult. Throughout this process,

the apprentices must apply in their practices not only skills, but also knowledge (cognitive resources) and a professional interest in and curiosity about their field (conative resources). They come to share a passion for their trade so that they ultimately truly identify with it. Observing butcher's apprentices in supermarkets, Lave and Wenger see their theory demonstrated, this time, by a case of the opposite: the journeymen butchers keep the more skilled tasks for themselves, while allowing the apprentices only to stock meat on the shelves, so that they cannot develop the complex knowledge and skills of the trade and gradually come to identify with it.

Lave (1991) then theoretically reconstructs the apprenticeship learning process as one in which observing, receiving instruction, attempting tasks under supervision, having one's errors corrected, and gradually identifying with the trade and its members, are all so intermingled that in this practice setting, it is no longer possible to distinguish what is formal, non-formal, and informal education.

Thus, for Lave and the social constructivists, the learning process is characterized first and foremost by individuals' increasingly competent participation in their community of practice and their gradually increasing ability to act independently. For Lave, learning is a social process through which learners, situated in contexts appropriate for the purpose, gradually construct themselves.

In a sense, Lave (1991) is simply bringing us back to the basic history of education that began long before the institution of formal schooling. Since the dawn of human time, people have been acquiring, accumulating and transferring knowledge and skills. Both curiosity and necessity have always driven people to learn continuously. The new development—one or two centuries ago or less, depending on the country—was the universalization and institutionalization of the work of education. And paradoxically, the new development today is the renewed societal recognition of the informal modes of learning that, since the 19th century, had become a forgotten if not hidden part of the educational scene. In this book, we shall see how, in pursuing

their educational pathways, individuals combine these three dimensions of education—formal, non-formal, and informal.

However, in their insistence on demonstrating the construction of the self as a central activity of learning, the constructivists and social constructivists unfortunately tend to underestimate the direct cognitive process, the acquisition and transfer of knowledge, which are key elements in the development of individual autonomy, especially in today's knowledge-intensive society.

Most of the more recent analyses and essays on adult learning tend to be developed within the constructivist/self-constructivist framework (Illeris, 2009; Tusting and Barton, 2006; Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). The andragogy theorists (Knowles, 1990, 1989, 1980; Jarvis 1987b; Kidd, 1978), whose ideas predominated in the 1970s and 1980s, stressed experience as a specific component of adult learning and an important reference base for any learning activity. According to Knowles (1980), for example, in order to learn, adults need to know how and why they are going to engage in the learning process; their increasingly refined *self-concept* thus enables them to be self-directed learners.

During the same period, Kolb (1984) and Schön (1983) developed their theory of *experiential learning*, in which they demonstrate the central role that past experiences and self-analysis play in people's educational lives. The learning cycle begins with an experience, which the learner transforms by reflecting about it; this leads to acquisition of new concepts and knowledge that the learner must test and apply in order to assimilate them (MacKeracher, 2004). Learning is thus seen as a process in which reflection and action are constantly combined in various ways (Jarvis, 1987a).

Lifelong learning has also been examined from another entirely different perspective: that of the neurosciences and their contribution to the study of learning (OECD-CERI, 2007). In attempting to understand the neurological bases of human thought, memory, emotions, and planning of complex actions, neurobiology is

shedding new light on the development of the brain and its functioning at various stages of people's educational biographies (Ward, 2006). Consider, for example, research on the role of neurotransmitting chemicals such as dopamine which, by sending a signal in anticipation of an enjoyable experience, stimulate the individual and move him or her to action (Bauer, 2007). Thus, as individuals acquire memories of gratifying learning experiences, these memories increase their enjoyment of learning and strengthen their confidence in their ability to learn.

Sometime earlier, education specialists had already pointed out that the highlights of people's educational biographies—the moments of ecstasy, of experienced pleasures—create and nurture their lust for learning, their educational libidos (Leonard, 1968). What these theorists did not know about at the time was the biological processes involved and, more generally, the cognitive health factors, meaning the conditions for the development of individuals' neuro-capability and, conversely, for neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's. Relevant to our earlier discussion about emotion and cognition, other neuroscientific studies have shown a connection between the neural networks associated with perceiving and expressing emotions and those where reasoning takes place (Ledoux, 1998; Damasio, 1999; Umbriaco, 2001).

2.3 THE LEARNING DIALECTIC

2.3.1 TWO OBSERVATIONS AND A NEW SET OF QUESTIONS

In light of the preceding necessarily brief review of the literature on learning theories, two observations must be made, and a new set of questions arises. First, the prevailing trend is to refocus the analysis on the learner in order to better understand the learning process. The door is thus opened to considering the interiority and subjectivity of learning processes. Second—and this is the contribution of

social constructivism—learning is seen as the gradual construction of the self by the learner, who mobilizes various internal and external resources for this purpose. When the path to constructing the self is blocked, the learner experiences the pain of being denied the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential. But this experience can also cause the learner to react by resisting, by refusing to internalize this denial of his or her personal capabilities.

However, these learner-centered perspectives frequently underestimate the central role that the cognitive imperative plays in any learning process. In paying greater attention to the interiority and subjectivity of learning and the individuality of every learner, this perspective often treats the affective and cognitive components of any learning process as if they were in opposition.

Some other analyses recognize the affective component only as an external precondition for the learning process itself—nothing more than a willingness or predisposition to learn. They analyze motivation as an independent variable external to the cognitive act of learning. Of course, as noted earlier, individuals have to be motivated in order to learn. But motivation, initiative, and acceptance of responsibility are more than mere preconditions: they are themselves features to be learned. This can be seen in the development of the zest for learning, in the crucial role of curiosity, in the learning of empathy, in the forming of identity, and in the key role of past experiences and reflective self-analysis – a process that is sometimes emotionally difficult but is also necessary to transform experiences into learning. In any learning activity, cognitive and affective processes continuously interact.

The idea that the cognitivist and social constructivist theories of learning necessarily conflict is then outdated. If we continue to treat these two perspectives as diametrically opposed and hence to isolate them from each other, we risk oversimplifying reality – either by recognizing only the rational, cognitive dimension of learning or by failing to connect the endogenous dynamics of any

learning process with the cognitive imperative that the social partners in learning must satisfy, that is, that the learners need to master required knowledge and educators need to develop pedagogical and andragogical approaches to facilitate such learning. We thus prevent ourselves from seeing the ongoing dialectical and creative tension between the acquisition of knowledge and skills and the construction of the self.

Transcending the often acrimonious debate between cognitivists and social constructivists, Bandura (1989, 1990; Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons, 1992), who may be described as a social cognitivist, clearly shows that introducing the emotional aspect into an analysis of learning does not mean ignoring its rationality or neglecting the acquisition of knowledge. On the contrary, it shows how important it is for learners to develop non-cognitive skills, such as self-esteem, so that they can mobilize their inner resources to acquire and master knowledge, or to develop their curiosity, so that they can draw new connections in their memory between concepts that they have learned separately. Differentiating his own stance from what he calls austere cognitivism, Bandura (1990) underscores the importance of the sense of *self-efficacy* which, once incorporated by individuals into their experience and expertise using self-reflection (metacognition), gives them self-confidence and strengthens their self-esteem. Wenden (1991), who studied this dimension in second-language learning, remarked that it is by reflecting on their own successes and difficulties that individuals become autonomous learners and that, as Tennant (2012) explains, they know and control themselves. Indeed, it is by looking back at their perceptions of reality and their day-to-day discoveries, by reflecting on the experience of learning—in short, through metacognition—that individuals construct themselves. And through this gradual process of self-construction, individuals become increasingly capable of steering their own course through life. But throughout their lives, as we

shall note again, they must enjoy the conditions needed to go on doing so.

Successful learning experiences and sequences produce the inner energy needed to overcome future challenges. Bandura explains the act of learning by focusing on the learner's awareness of what is going on and his or her internal predilections or inhibitions with regard to certain content. Learners' self-evaluation of their past educational experiences produces a psychic effect that, in turn, influences the continuing pursuit of their educational life course (Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons, 1992).

2.3.2 A DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS

It is precisely the refusal to engage in a dialectical analysis that causes problems on both sides of the debate. In describing learning processes and educational pathways, there has been too much of a tendency to ignore the intimacy of learning. But that does not mean that the remedy is to focus solely on the subjective dimension and the construction of the self while neglecting the other side of the equation: constituted knowledge, rational process, and reason.

The critique of the one-way transmission of knowledge leads us not to deny knowledge, but to grasp how important it is for learners to integrate what they learn and mobilize it in action. The process of constructing the self requires the personal appropriation of transferred knowledge. The process of integrating a new piece of knowledge raises questions about the learner's cognitive constructs, which are always transitory, and forces the learner to develop a new synthesis which is bound to be transitory (Lengrand, 1994). However important experiential learning may be, the tacit knowledge that it produces must be rendered explicit before it can be related to previously acquired knowledge and passed on to other people (Polanyi, 1983).

Learning is a continuous, dynamic process, in creative tension between the need for interiority and the objective necessity of constituted knowledge that is itself constantly evolving. Before Lave, Vygotsky (1985) had already recognized this dialectic. Presented with new schemas for interpreting reality, individuals attempt to capture them in their own words so as to assess their relevance and value. Learners then have to discard some aspects of their already acquired body of knowledge, retain others, take the newly learned propositions into account, and reorganize and re-encode all of this information—in short, develop a new synthesis of all their knowledge of the subject at hand. And this synthesis will be equally transitory, called into question by the learner's next experience of cognitive dissonance. We thus recognize not only the singularity of educational pathways, but also the various styles of learning (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation) that every individual re-invents in his or her own way (Heffler, 2001).

Learning is an iterative, internal process of questioning and self-reorganization. When individuals are tempted to recoil from the tension between their current ways of doing things and the risks of the unknown, between their previously acquired knowledge and their new knowledge, they are actually in a unique position to learn (Jarvis, 1987a) and thus to continue constructing themselves. In this regard, Lave (1988) speaks of the dialectical nature of the learning activities of the individual who, in his or her life context, is always caught between the need to meet the new demands of the situation (to 'close the gap') and the need to make sense of these changes.

From the same perspective, Carl Rogers (1983), through his concept of *significant learning*, has shown that learning is real and lasting only when the learner finds a subjective significance in it and can not only draw connections between the unknown and the known, but also find elements in it that pique his or her curiosity, or when he or she perceives a necessity or relevance in this learning. In short,

to use Lave's terminology, only when the learner finds that it has a use value or at the very least an exchange value will the learning be retained. Rogers then stresses the importance of analyzing the act of learning from the standpoint of learners' self-actualization and self-regulation of their personal development, and hence of extending the analysis across their entire lifetimes. Like Bandura, Rogers stresses that how people learn is just as important as what they learn, because it is through this process that people develop their ability to learn and their thirst for learning.

2.3.3 A BRIEF PHILOSOPHICAL DIGRESSION

This dialectical view of learning, focused on the tension between subjective experience and the acquisition of constituted knowledge, has been echoed and explicated by certain philosophers of education who are concerned with individuals' autonomy and ownership of their actions, including the act of learning.

For Nietzsche (Cooper, 1983), as for Peters (1973) and Callan (1994), one of the major objectives of education is to strengthen the Self, to construct one's identity, to develop a reflective personality—in short, to achieve individual autonomy. This is not a matter of individualism, but rather of individuality (Piotte, 2001), of the conditions for non-alienation and authentic citizenship. With the death of the gods, as Nietzsche put it, society and individuals must rely on themselves. The individual's capacity for self-determination is real, even if his or her choices are often limited. Peters (1973) identifies three components of the individual's capacity for self-determination: *ownership* of his actions and of his education, *rational reflection* and *strength of will*. Thus both the conative and the cognitive components of the learner's autonomy are constructed. Experiencing the joy to learn creates an inner desire to go on learning; through ongoing evaluation of his own performance, the reflexive learner increases his capacity for self-learning (Benson, 1997).

Personal commitments, writes Callan (1994), are authentic only to the extent that they are both passionate and reflective. Autonomy is made up of both passion and reason. To be considered autonomous, it is not enough for an action to express the actor; it must also be rationally controlled by the actor (Frankena, 1973). The development of critical thinking and rational analysis is just as important as the strengthening of self-esteem (Callan, 1994). Referring to Nietzsche, Cooper (1983) explains that it is only when our passions are informed by rational appreciation of their objects, and when rational pursuits are fired by passions for truth and clarity that either emotional or intellectual fulfillment is feasible.

From this perspective, authenticity and autonomy cannot be taught and cannot be imposed; they can only be stimulated (Peters, 1973). We can create the space or the environment that lets individuals discover them, experiment with them, and ultimate make them life goals. Although the achievement of the goals of autonomy and self-rule are circumscribed by the social structure that limits choices (Callan, 1994), these restrictive conditions can be altered through collective action and solidarity. It is in the setting of life in society, with all its contradictions, that the individual quest for autonomy is carried out. The Self is never constructed or reconstructed in isolation. As Callan (1994) puts it, the Self 'is a ship always repaired at sea' (p. 36).

2.4 CONCLUSION

Our task in this chapter has been to reinstate the intimacy of learning into the immediate educational dialectic so that we can consider learning in all its complexity, and the dual, subjective and rational, dimension of the learner's construction of the self.

The need for learners to come to grips with the universal heritage of cultures, with scientific thought and knowledge, and with the skills specific to their chosen professions and social activity

does not conflict with recognition of the intimacy of learning. On the contrary, such a recognition enables learners to take ownership of new knowledge. Likewise, the development of an individual's autonomy does not conflict with that individual's mastery of knowledge and skills, but rather requires it. Knowledge is a strategic asset, but individuals must still integrate it in order to increase what Paul Ricoeur (1978) calls the personal capacity to act.

The intimacy of learning is cognitive and affective, rational and subjective. This dialectic is intrinsic to any learning process. But there is another dialectic that creates a constant tension between the individual's demand to construct the self and educational demands from society in general and work environments. The act of learning is both intimate and social.

The recognition of the intimacy of learning is not only or even primarily pedagogical. It is part of the transformation now under way in today's societies. Thus, having recognized and examined the intimacy of learning, we must now explore its social implications.

CHAPTER 3
INTIMACY AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Driven by the social transformations now under way, autonomy has become both a condition for people's quality of life and a source of social change. This chapter describes the reciprocal relationships between the growing recognition of the intimacy of lifelong learning as an individual experience and the societal changes that are now requiring individuals to become more autonomous.

Individuals' growing determination to take control of their own educational life course is part of a broader quest for self-determination in their personal and collective lives. This trend can be observed through the increasing aspiration towards a fulfilling intimate life, the growing public outcry against crimes against the person and the recognition of bullying as a problem in schools as well as in the workplace. The source of this demand for self-determination is not a rising tide of individualism, but rather a growing aspiration for a wider range of personal choices and for more spaces where individuals can engage in self-reflection and enhance their own capacity for action and self-expression.

This enhanced individuality has become an inevitable condition of life in society today. But in analyzing these new relationships with intimacy, we cannot deny the ambiguities between individuality and individualism, as well as the possible instrumentalization of intimacy, which we will discuss in section 3.3. Indeed, such contradictions make it all the more important to analyze intimacy as a social issue.

3.1 THE NEW RELATIONSHIPS TO INTIMACY

The transformation in discourses and practices with regard to personal life is redefining the 'I' or the Self so that it is no longer a predetermined essence ('become what you are') but rather an unavoidable process in which the individual goes on constructing his self-identity. What is real is not just what I am now and what society defines me to be, but also what I am looking forward to be, what I and the other people with whom I tend to identify want to become. The social reality that truly characterizes the individual in society today is the continuing tension between the 'I' that is socially determined and the 'I' that is under construction. The desire of individuals to construct themselves is an on-going reflexive process (Giddens, 1992). The individual is always in tension between the 'immediate self' and the 'potential self'. What space must I demand in my relations with other people in order to achieve this? (Probyn, 1993)

The forming of my identity as an individual plays out in this tension between, on the one hand, what I am and what I become, and, on the other, what people say I am or what they demand that I be in my personal life, at work, and in society. The recognition of this creative tension and the space in which to live it out become a social issue. The individual becomes one of the agents of his identity. The density of the self has become a condition for full citizenship. The effective recognition of individuality is increasingly becoming the subject of collective demands.

An individual's identity is not etched in stone. It may have some elements that will not change, but its definition can also, to some extent, be refined gradually by the individual in the search for self-actualization. Dubar (1991) analyzes this dynamic, underscoring the tension that every individual experiences between forming a subjective identity for oneself through one's experiences and internalizing the structural identity attributed by others—by society. In

this inevitable dialectic between the determinable and the determined, the individual—under certain conditions, of course—seeks to identify, organize, and reorganize the various internal and external components of his or her identity.

The feminist movement, in its struggle against physical and sexual assaults on women and to secure their freedom to control their own bodies, was the first to formulate social demands for a personal life free from all forms of violence. Such violence embodies an exploitative relationship that strikes at the most intimate part of an individual's being and so undermines his/her inner resilience and sense of personal dignity. Thanks to the feminists' collective actions, intimacy and private life can no longer be exempt from the universal demand for human rights. Now that such violence, suffered in private, and its denunciation are going public, this silent suffering has become a social issue. And, by recognizing this publicly, we affirm the right to an expressive function for sexuality, and not only an instrumental one. We demand the right to a certain quality of intimate life and the right to social conditions that make it possible.

This movement, like current efforts to fight psychological harassment in the workplace (see Chapter 9), is making us recognize the legitimacy of an intimate life not only free of terror, but also capable of expressing itself positively in all its dimensions. This recognition of the issues associated with intimacy is also being seen in the changing discourse regarding motherhood, now redefined as a free and responsible choice, as well as in the collective efforts by sexual minorities to fight the social, political, and economic exclusion to which they are still subject.

We are seeing a similar transformation in practices and discourse regarding the intimate realities of conjugal relationships. As Singly (2003) writes, 'We are witnessing a general process in which the position of individuals relative to the group to which they belong is gradually becoming stronger, in which the right of

men and women, and children too, to decide for themselves and to remain owners of themselves (in particular, their own bodies) is being recognized.' (p. 80; author's translation).

The increasingly varied forms of primary relationships, and more especially of conjugal relationships, are becoming the subject of ongoing negotiation and construction. The quality of the interpersonal relationship and the deepening of the interpersonal experience are becoming the principle that drives the actions of people living in couples—just as much as, if not even more than, the expectations of their social milieu or of society in general (Giddens, 1992, Illouz, 2007a; Lemieux 2003; Widmer et al., 2004). The individualization of this relational unit, a negotiated unit whose duration is voluntary, produces a 'little democracy' (Beck, 2001; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

In all of these various manifestations of the quest for a space for intimate life—for deeper relationships between the self and others, for the ongoing construction of one's own identity, for an idiosyncratic mixture not only of the affective and the sexual, but also of the cognitive and the rational (Bawin and Dandurand, 2003)—the same phenomenon is at work: individuals are aspiring to choose their own lives and their own life partners. Similarly, individuals must negotiate the path of their working lives. The recognition of the intimacy of learning is a response to this social demand for individual autonomy in all areas of life. Indeed, without this recognition, individuals can never take control of their own development.

3.2 SOCIAL CHANGES AND THE RECOGNITION OF INTIMACY

This transformation of our relationships to intimacy coincides with major social changes that have occurred over the past few decades. Individuals today face a generalized ambiguity and a biographical uncertainty that constantly force them to make choices and change

directions. At the same time, more and more individuals enjoy a far wider range of choices and greater freedom to make them. Life situations and life models are changing and proliferating. Hence, whether people like it or not, they must become the agents of their own identities, even though the conditions that facilitate this process are far from secured and far from evenly distributed.

To understand this transformation that people are experiencing at the micro sociological level, we must grasp the broader social changes that explain them, drawing understanding from the sociologists of advanced modernity such as Lash and Urry (1987), Beck (2001), Giddens (1992), Antikainen (1998), Dubar (2002), Castels (2009), Illouz (2007b) and Martucelli (2009). Today's society is not the same as in the first age of modernity, when people's biographical paths were more synchronized and relative stability was ensured by social controls and the socialization of individuals, as well as by their allocation and distribution within a national social structure that was more predictable. But if there ever was a time when social systems actually did reproduce themselves in practically linear fashion (Beck and Beck-Gersheim, 2002), that time is no more. 'Living a life is becoming more and more problematic and unpredictable.' (Antikainen, 1998, p. 216).

Society today is being transformed both by globalization at the expense of national institutions and internally by a generalized uncertainty in which individuals must improvise their space and their life path through a process of practically continuous readjustment. Today's society is a risk society (Beck, 2001)—first of all, because of ecological risks in the physical environment, but also in relation to economic risks as well as social risks in the uncontrolled growth of inequalities (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) and cultural risks through the erosion of ideological certainties, the plurality of value systems, the diversity of reference schemas and the mixing of cultures within societies.

If new information and communication technologies are opening access to knowledge, they are also accelerating the globalization

of the economy. The traditional loci of decision-making are losing their importance. Alliances between labour and capital are coming undone; the historic compromises between employers and unions, on which the growth of national economies was once based, are crumbling. Capital flows across borders at the speed of the Internet, while the local jobs that produced this wealth stagnate. Finance is trumping the real economy. Career paths are becoming uncertain, permanent jobs the exception.

In the physical environment, industry both takes and causes ecological risks that it can no longer control, so that we can no longer even rely on the clean air, clean water and safe food that we need to sustain our lives. People around the world are mobilizing to forestall ecological disasters because of their potential impact not only on the environment, but also on the intimate physical lives of the people who live in it (Beck, 2001). New pandemics and the return of old ones have slowed the uninterrupted improvement in health conditions that we had come to expect. In short, this modern society that began some 150 years ago 'full steam ahead', with an unshakeable faith in science and progress, is now becoming a society of uncertainty, but also, and at the same time, a reflexive society (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994).

In the lives of individuals, biographical paths are becoming desynchronized and the number of forks in the road is multiplying. Milestones such as finding one's first job, or taking time off to care for children or grandchildren, or taking retirement, are becoming blurred (Guillemard, 1995). People's life paths are becoming more and more distinct from one another, even when these people occupy similar social positions (Martucelli, 2009). Now more than ever, the models of life offered by tradition and established culture have ceased to reflect reality; the linear life paths that people were once expected to follow have given way to life paths that are determined in part by such cultural traditions, but more and more by personal choice as well.

In the scientific realm, the absoluteness and 'purity' (Epstein, 1996) of science and of medical diagnoses are being called into doubt. When a doctor recommends an operation, or an engineer recommends a major repair, or a sociologist recommends a new social policy, people and communities now tend to raise questions and demand second opinions. Professional bodies are no longer the sole custodians of the professional knowledge that they represent and regulate. The right of citizens to question is becoming vital. In short, to quote the phrase that Marx used to characterize the society of his time, and that Berman borrows for the title of his famous book (1982), 'all that is solid melts into air.'

In the cultural realm, the emergence of pluralistic societies and the de-traditionalization of social norms and value orientations (Giddens, 1994) is creating new spaces for the construction of individuality. Society is becoming more complex because of the many different cultural orientations of the individuals and groups that now compose it. In this risky, unpredictable society, even the language is changing. We no longer talk of expert solutions, but of probabilities, not of integration but of equality *and* diversity, not of comparative but of transnational studies, not of exporting 'success stories', but rather of engaging in dialogue about experiences marked by their local contexts.

Today's society both demands and enables an increase in the public's general level of education and the amount of information that individuals have access to. This increase has, in turn, a feedback effect on the social demand for individual autonomy. More and more citizens are receiving an extended education that goes well beyond what they need to qualify for jobs. Through continuing education, adults can now acquire the means of changing the course of their lives and enlarging their fields of interest. Through both traditional media and social media, citizens have access to more information and an increased number of different points of view. These circumstances themselves have a feedback effect; they catalyze and accelerate the changes already under way.

In short, industrial modernity has given way to reflexive modernity (Giddens, 1994). The assertion of infallible economic and scientific dogmas is giving way to discussions that focus more on opportunities and risks than on functional adaptation or medium- and long-term planning. Citizens are therefore experiencing dissonance with respect not only to the norms of daily life, but also sometimes to value orientations.

This questioning, these contingencies and these uncertainties, are transforming the position and actions of the individual. The individual's place and roles are less and less subject to external dictates, and those that remain may quickly become obsolete or uncertain. In these societies of the 'second age of modernity' (Beck, 2001), of course there are still weighty factors and systems of social relations that determine the distribution of resources and the opportunities for mobility, but now individuals also face the social demand to shape their own lives in a world that is less and less perceived as unchangeable.

The dynamics stirred by recognition of the intimacy of learning stem not only from the tension between the subjective character of learning processes and the expected acquisition of objective knowledge, but also from another inevitable contradiction between relative autonomy and equally relative determinism, between the construction of the individual and the structural factors that partly determine the distribution of resources and opportunities to do so. While we cannot separate the individual from the social or reduce social issues to personal ones, we also cannot treat the individual as a merely social entity (Martucelli, 2009). Quite clearly, this represents a huge challenge. In a social context where ; author's translation 'subjectivity has become a collective issue' (Erhenberg, 1995, p.14), individualization/emancipation goes hand in hand with the 'fatigue of being oneself'. This individualization and consequently this fragility require some conditions to be put in place both individually and collectively. Bandura (2001), to whom we referred in the preceding chapter, clearly shows the connection and the necessary

complementarity between the development of individual agency and the collective agency that enables citizens to act creatively, transgressing the usual determinants (Rhéaume, 2009).

The demand for social space for this 'search for the self' is also a major theme of the new social movements (Touraine and Khosrokhavar, 2000; Maheu, 1995). These movements have proven so effective precisely because they have altered cultural codes and conventions and proposed alternative frames of reference where the creativity and sustainability of collective action rely on the expanded participation of the movement's members and on their capacity for initiative (Melucci, 1989). To cite the example of feminism once again, the precise breakthrough that this movement has achieved has been, through such approach, to secure recognition of a woman's right to control her own body and to develop the mental and psychomotor skills needed to construct her own identity independently—in short, the right to her dignity as an individual.

3.3 COMMERCIAL INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF INTIMACY

As a result of the growing social recognition of intimacy, obstacles to the integrity of the individual and violations of individual rights are increasingly being forced into the light of day and subjected to public scrutiny; but potential conflicts and contradictions remain, because we are also seeing an instrumentalization, if not sometimes even a tyranny, of intimacy (Sennett, 1979). Because of the potential for mobilization that it embodies, intimacy itself is subject to an interplay of interests and to commercial manipulation.

3.3.1 THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF INTIMACY

It was inevitable that people's growing aspirations for quality in their intimate, personal lives would be appropriated in some contradictory ways. Such aspirations have been co-opted, for instance,

by businesses seeking to sell products, capitalizing on the greater value that people now place on their emotions, and on their need to express their individuality through their clothing and bodily appearance. In a society where the 'managed heart' and the 'commercialization of human feeling' (Hochschild, 1983) are becoming standard components of advertising strategies, intimacy has also become fertile ground for cultivating a romanticized view of consumption (Illouz, 2007b). Marketers are often targeting people's innermost emotions and their search for positive self-image.

This tendency toward the instrumentalization of intimacy is also seen in certain companies where human emotions become resources to be managed and capital to be deployed (Gorz, 2004). Some firms demand emotional investment from their employees—a display of affective attachment to the organization and constant subjective involvement. The resulting pressure causes many individuals to live in a state of 'fake authenticity' (Neckel, 2005). Such practices can and in fact do lead to depression, burnout and substance abuse—maladies typical of the current age and, as Neckel (2005) writes, deriving from the ambiguity created by the emotionalizing of work and the economy. Indeed, when the deepest human interactions are bought and sold in the market (Hochschild, 2003), intimacy is at risk of becoming a commodity.

But this trend cuts both ways. While one of its effects is the cultural manipulation of the public, another is the resistance that it arouses. While the commercialization and the oversexualization of intimacy in advertising cannot be ignored, they do elicit strong reactions. The campaigns that U.S. women's groups led against sexist advertising in the mass media in the 1970s and 1980s are good examples.

3.3.2 PUBLIC LIFE AND THE TYRANNY OF INTIMACY

As early as the 1970s, Richard Sennett (1979) wrote about the 'fall of public man.' By this he meant a growing dominance of private over public life—a tendency to reduce public and political life to a

matter of individual and emotional authenticity. Under these circumstances, political power tends to be exercised through seduction. Voters' assessment of candidates tends to become a matter of their image, their seeming authenticity—of judgments about their personal credibility, their apparent sincerity, about whether they 'seem nice'. This need for apparent sincerity in human relations creates mistrust about public life.

In this context, Sennett (1979) writes, less value tends to be placed on the creation of a public space where people can play their social roles without having to lay their private lives bare. Yet the anonymity of city life—the possibility of collective practices without any immediate interpersonal relationships—is simultaneously a condition for democracy, the necessary context for the expression and negotiation of conflicts. Without it, says Sennett (1970), individuals lose their ability to play because they live in a society that no longer offers them any impersonal space in which to do so.

Of course, we are currently seeing a strong tendency for private concerns to take such heavy precedence that politicians, for example, are evaluated not on the basis of their programmes or proposals, but according to whether they seem personally appealing and sincere (Sennett, 1979). The challenge, says Sennett, is to strike a balance between private (personal and interpersonal) life and public life, whose functioning and mechanisms are based on secondary relationships. Similarly, Cohen (2002) identifies a new interaction between the private and public sphere in which the regulation of intimacy—for example, legal recognition of the various forms of intimate relationships—cannot be left to the private sphere alone; it requires public regulation, which will always be the product of collective action and the mobilization of broad coalitions. The relationships between the intimacy of learning and the public expression of this construct are reciprocal. Individuals cannot create their intimate selves unless they can also express them in their social relationships, unless they can go public in criticizing whatever

was preventing them from being what they want to become. It is, paradoxically, also through such social activity that they pursue the intimate construction of their identities.

3.3.3 VOLUNTARIST DISCOURSE

We are all familiar with the proliferation of voluntarist publications which, like Dale Carnegie's classic, *How To Win Friends and Influence People* (1937), show us how we can, if we want, quickly develop our personalities, become convincing salespeople and persuasive speakers, and win our co-workers' esteem; or how we can succeed in life, in business, and even in love. New professions are emerging that promise to help us achieve these same goals—life coaches, motivational speakers, and so on.

What is significant here is the inevitable oppositional dynamic between the genuine need to construct the self and the risk of slipping into a 'fake authenticity' that isolates this aspiration from the psychological and social conditions for its realization. There is no easy recipe for having good interpersonal relationships, for understanding and empathizing with other people, or for having a gratifying emotional life and sex life. Building a positive personal identity is a far more complex task.

We must not let the personal advice or astrological industries, with their promises of a 'quick fix' and magic of counselling abstracted from the true conditions of our lives dissuade us from aspiring to genuine intimacy. We must not let advertising that targets the Self to sell a product prevent us from understanding the rising tide of demands for expression of our true selves. All the drug companies that claim they can heal our souls, or that reduce our libidos to a matter of mechanics and chemistry, all these merchants of easy intimate happiness, whatever alienation they may induce, cannot keep us from understanding the growing demands for self-emancipation. True, the ambivalence of certain public discourses about this reality can lead to the commoditization of the self, but that in no way eliminates individuals' profound aspiration and the

social demand that is made upon them to form their own personalities, to enter into authentic, gratifying communication with other people and to realize themselves (Illouz, 2007a).

3.4 CONCLUSION

The instrumentalization of intimacy in today's society is of course part of the relationship between intimacy and social change. But, because certain social actors are trying to manipulate intimate feelings and take advantage of emotional relationships to make a profit, this does not mean that finding the necessary space to build and live a personal life has ceased to be an issue. Just because the quest for authenticity is tending to reduce political debates and elections to personality contests does not make the aspiration to have authentic relationships and to choose other forms of interpersonal relationships any less legitimate. Just because populist literature offers a superficial reading of intimacy does not mean that the conditions we need to better steer an independent course on uncertain seas throughout our lives cease to be a legitimate aspiration, if not a necessity!

It is essential here to make a clear-cut distinction between individualism, which is an ideological orientation, and individualization, which is a sociological fact that characterizes today's societies (Beck and Beck-Gersheim, 2002). In this new societal context, individuals must make choices, construct their individuality, and make common cause with one another in order to protect or expand their opportunities and alter the conditions necessary for this purpose. Quality of life, both individual and collective, has become a fundamental, mobilizing objective. Individualization is not a normative discourse promoting individualism, but rather a social change that is leading individuals to see themselves differently and to act differently. The recognition of the intimacy of learning, far from being a force for individualism, represents an act of resistance to it, an antidote.

We can thus grasp the ambiguity and hence the possible dynamic of this new social character of the relatively self-determined individual (Jonas, 2003). Individuals' life paths are becoming uncertain, as are the models of cultural orientation on which past generations relied. The universal *Declaration of Human Rights* of the UN precisely proclaims the recognition of the inherent right of each and all members of the human family to develop themselves in a normative context of liberty, fraternity and equality.

A second clarification also needs to be made here. People cannot successfully negotiate their life course through the many contradictions of current social structures unless they have access to appropriate spaces for organized and self-learning, as well as to counselling services, which are not always available at the right time and in all settings. Without space in which to learn through experience and without access to external knowledge sources, without a positive culture in which errors are seen not as something to be punished but as a way of learning, individual development will be severely hampered. We cannot turn experiences of cognitive dissonance into positive, creative educational opportunities unless we have already succeeded in gradually building learners' strength and ability to confront them. We cannot develop learners' taste for the unknown and their courage to jump into it, unless they can live in stimulating environments that facilitate the development of such autonomy. Without these conditions, which we shall analyze in Chapter 10, the desire for self-determination and the ability to achieve it may morph into new varieties of conformity (Jonas, 2003), especially since access to the various forms of self-actualization and empowerment is profoundly unequal (Giddens, 1992).

The intimacy of learning is a social issue. It is a social issue first of all because no society can be dynamic, reflexive, and democratic in all domains—social, economic, environmental, political and cultural—without the creativity, expertise and spirit of individual and collective initiative of the men and women who compose it. Second, the intimacy of learning is a social issue because

to master these abilities, people must have educational lives that make sense for them, along with environments and conditions appropriate for this purpose. Third, and conversely, the intimacy of learning is a social issue because these favourable practices and conditions are inconceivable except in societies that are reflexive and democratic.

As we shall see in the following chapters, this social recognition of the intimacy of learning is transforming the social demand for education throughout peoples' lives and in all areas of human activities.

CHAPTER 4
TRANSFORMATION OF THE LEARNING DEMAND

The demand for lifelong learning is growing constantly. From the 1960s to the 1980s, some 5 to 10 per cent of the adult population in North America and Europe participated in structured educational activities every year. By 2011, that proportion was over 33 per cent. In the Nordic countries, this participation rate already exceeded 50% in 2009 (Boateng, 2009; Tuijnman et al., 2001). And these figures are only the tip of the iceberg (Livingstone, 1999), because they exclude informal forms of adult learning.

Not only is this learning demand rising, but it is also becoming far more broad-based. The demand for on-the-job education and training is now being expressed by workers of all ages at all levels of qualification in every sector of the economy. Beyond the workplace, education is also being demanded in myriad other areas of human endeavour, such as health, the environment, citizenship, recreation, and culture.

In the context of reflexive societies, this learning demand for education is not only growing and expanding into new areas, it is also being transformed. The recognition of the intimacy of learning and the social contexts that explain it are changing both the volume of this demand and the way that it is expressed. In other words, society is beginning to recognize the dual nature of all learning demand.

4.1 THE DUALITY OF ALL LEARNING DEMANDS

Any learning demand, in any field, of course, includes the requirements expressed by the company, organization, or community in which the learning is to take place. These requirements include the skills to be mastered, the knowledge to be acquired and the way that learners are expected to familiarize themselves with the way of proceeding and value orientations prevailing within the group in question. This is the external component of a learning demand, required of individuals.

But it is the individuals themselves who must make this knowledge, these skills, and this expertise their own. Someone else may be imparting the knowledge, but the learners must integrate and master it on the basis of what they already know, who they already are, and the need they feel to learn it. This internal component of any learning demand encompasses not only the learners' immediate expectations, but also their longer-term aspirations as well as their fears, and the conditions that they require to do any significant learning (see Figure 4.1) both at work (Hager, 2004) and outside work.

The external component of learning demand is by definition imperative for participants, but that does not suffice to make it operational. The need for education and training cannot drive learning until it becomes for the learner a felt need. A society or other organization may demand that individuals learn skills and acquire knowledge to participate competently in its activities. But these individuals must not only see the need to master these new capabilities, they must also perceive them as meeting their own expectations within the organisation and as providing an opportunity for them to continue constructing themselves. In the face of external demands, individuals have personal demands as well. Moreover, if there is no mediation between these two components before the learning event begins—if this duality of the demand for education is not considered—then once it has begun, an implicit mediation, if not actual

resistance, will unavoidably occur so that the subjective dimension that was initially avoided will be put back on the table. In reaction to the prescribed content, the prospective learners will then express a variety of interests and questions arising from their personal educational histories. In the end, time will be taken to make the needed adjustments to the initial, one-dimensional content of the education.

Figure 4.1 The duality of all learning demands

External demands or requirements of the society or organization

THE LEARNING DEMAND

Aspirations and experiences of individuals

Felt needs
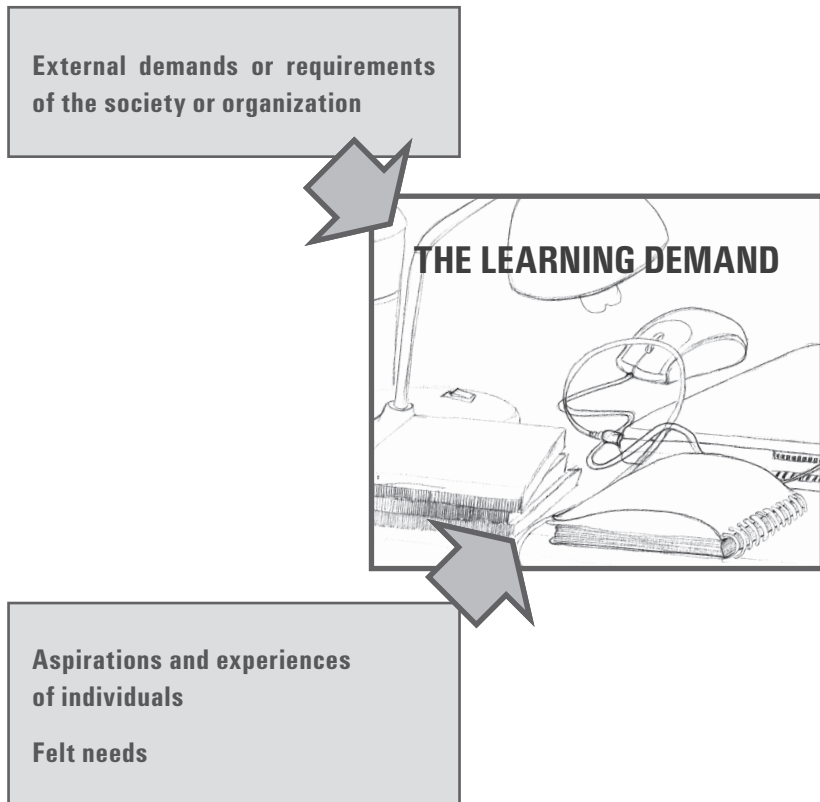
We are thus witnessing not only a growing demand for education, but also a growing insistence by individuals on negotiating this demand, both to make its content more meaningful and to make its form accommodate their singular life and work situations. The learning demand is in fact a social construct resulting from a more or less explicit negotiation between the functional requirements and expectations of an organization or a community, on the one hand, and the aspirations of the learners and the conditions that they require for learning, on the other.

The perspective proposed here does not deny the cognitive imperatives expressed by society or by organizations. But it does assert that learners will not be able to mobilize the knowledge and skills that these external actors deem necessary unless the learners themselves can grasp their relevance, and unless the trainers or animators can awaken their curiosity about these areas of knowledge that were previously unfamiliar to them. Learning is a necessary but voluntary act—not a process of training an animal through conditioning and repeated positive and negative stimuli, but rather a process that must engage the learner's own internal cognitive and emotional resources!

4.2 SOCIALIZATION AND INDIVIDUATION

Classical sociologists, from Durkheim to Parsons, defined the two social functions of education as socialization and the allocation of roles and statuses. Socialization consists of the transmission and assimilation of the prevailing culture and values; allocation consists of achieving the expected distribution of individuals within the social structure. The concept of socialization defines education as the process of inculcating the values, attitudes, norms and knowledge that are regarded as necessary for individuals to fit into and perform their expected roles within society.

Socialization is a 'soft' method of imposing discipline, because it leads individuals to internalize the instructions that they are

supposed to follow and prepares them to play their expected roles in accordance with the established rules and status expectations. When individuals develop expectations that go beyond the status that society expects them to accept and the role that it expects them to play, then education/socialization is there to perform the function of 'cooling out' these individual aspirations (Clark, 1960).

Socialization is certainly one component of education. For example, it comes into play when self-regulating professional bodies agree on the knowledge and skills that their members must master in order to practice their profession or trade. More generally, socialization plays a role in providing citizens with the minimum general acculturation that they need to interact with one another, as well as in preserving the legitimacy of institutions without recourse to physical control.

But today's society is not a static tableau in which everyone's roles have been scripted in advance. In today's society, the agents of socialization and the key moments when it occurs are becoming more and more diverse. But also, and most importantly, we are seeing a plurality of value orientations and normative standards for the forming of each individual's identity. As Dubar (1991, p. 113), puts it, 'Identity is the result of various processes of socialization both stable and provisional, individual and collective, subjective and objective, biographical and structural' (author's translation) through which individuals construct and define themselves. If there ever was a time when societies' relative stability could be attributed to social control and to socialization based on an established definition of expected behaviours, that time is now past.

The forming of one's identity—one's ways of doing, thinking and feeling—is in part determined by one's social background and thus inevitably takes place within social frameworks. But the growing diversification of these frameworks and the actions now being taken collectively to expand and transform them (Sainsaulieu, 1977) are producing multiple circles of differentiated socialization

at the intersection of which individuals can and must steer their life course. These processes are creating the spaces and the contradictions within which it becomes possible for individuals to construct their identities.

If we limit the function of formal education to acculturation, then we are reducing citizens' mandatory initial education to a process of internalizing social controls. We are relegating education to 'a social learning process that directs biological drives along socially acceptable channels and transforms instinctual energies into social impulses of the highest and most selfless sort' (Inkeles, 1964, p. 49). In such context, variance and individuality are then acceptable only within the limits of established norms and values; otherwise, they constitute deviance and are defined as social pathology.

Such a reductionist view of education as a vehicle for conformity and socialization ignores the manifestations of critical socialization, resistance and the construction of alternatives. One example occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, when what had initially been individual acts of resistance culminated in the feminist movement's fight against sexism in textbooks. A second example is offered by the movements in Quebec, both during the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and again in the student movement of 2012, to transform and democratize the role of education in allocating roles and status, reproducing social relationships and inequalities, and socializing individuals. A third example is provided by the national liberation movements in Africa and Asia that fought to bring the age of colonialism to an end.

In reaction to this equation of education with socialization, we are now seeing the proposal and construction of alternative education projects and even of counter-schools (Bélanger, 1980). Zeldin explains (1995) how the traditional societal objective of having people, at the beginning of their life, learn to act in predictable ways, in order to be functionally socialized, is losing its meaning in today's society.

If learning is also a personal, voluntary act on the part of the individual, then the learning demand can never be limited to the societal and social requirements authoritatively articulated and can never be expressed solely from this external perspective.

4.3 THE OTHER SIDE OF LEARNING DEMAND

The new knowledge, skills, and development being required of individuals and groups, just like the diagnosis of a problem that justifies such requirements, are only one dimension of the demands being placed on people to improve their performance. The individuals who are immediately experiencing these conditions have their own perception of their situations and their needs. For example, pre-natal courses for expectant parents can have no impact unless, from the very outset, the people delivering these courses consider each individual's situation (such as whether they will be parenting alone or with a partner), recognize inequalities in access to parental leave according to gender and work status, and, most importantly, listen to the participants, who are trying to acquire the expertise they need in order to be competent, independent parents.

This other side of any learning demand—the demands of the individuals who will be called upon to learn—is twofold. First, there are the learners' immediate demands, their needs and requirements regarding the external, short-term demands that they are facing. But in any learning situation, more profound aspirations are always present, even though they may not always be explicitly expressed.

4.3.1 THE IMMEDIATE LEARNING DEMAND

It is important to understand what goes on in people's minds when they decide to apply themselves to better mastering a given skill or a given body of knowledge. When someone tells them what education and training programme they have to go through or what

new skills or knowledge they must acquire—in other words, when they are faced with external learning demands—people inevitably and immediately ask themselves two kinds of questions that will affect how intensely and effectively they participate in the learning process, or even whether they decide to go ahead with it at all. The first question is, 'What is this learning going to give me that I don't already have?' The second is, 'Given my situation, will I be able to achieve the learning objectives?' Individuals' decisions to participate in a given learning activity thus depend both on their perception of how relevant it will be and on their conviction that they can complete it successfully.

To systematize this immediate context, Rubenson (1977, 1997) developed the 'expectancy-valence' model, according to which an individual's decision to participate in adult education or training depends on his or her perception both of the relevance of the demanded education or training (its valence) and of his or her chances of succeeding at it (expectancy). These two subjective perceptions are decisive. Unless they are expressed and mediated, the necessary commitment from the individual will remain problematic (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.1).

Learning is too personal an experience, and depends too much on the individual's motivation and life plans (Boutinet, 1999), for it to succeed without the learner initially being able to increase the relevance of the organization's demands and to negotiate the conditions under which the learning will take place. For a given education or training programme to yield the results expected by both parties, it is essential: (a) that the learners be able to grasp and discuss the relevance of the external demand to make sure that there is something in it for them, and (b) that the organization ensure that the learners recognize the relevance of the programme's objectives and offer the opportunity for them to achieve the expected goals. Sometimes individuals may clearly perceive the need to acquire a given body of expertise (the valence of the learning activity), but may not be convinced that they could succeed in doing so (their expectancy).

The reason for their doubts may be their living conditions and difficulties in balancing education and training with work and family life. Or they may have doubts about themselves that past experiences at school or elsewhere have created or reinforced. Until such people have found a personal answer to these two questions, their participation will remain unlikely or limited.

People have many different motivations for participating in education or training, but these motivations will not drive the learning process unless they are accommodated properly. Favourable conditions for participating are also among the subjective demands to be negotiated. Such conditions may include taking prior learning and experience into account; they may also include practical considerations, such as where and when the learning event will take place, how many people will be participating, and who they will be. For the learning experience to enable the learners to perform independently, they must be able to situate the proposed learning and the value of the new knowledge into the particular context in which they operate, so that they can anticipate its applications immediately and then later actually mobilize this knowledge and so experience its relevance for themselves.

With adult learners, the problem is often not so much their perception of the relevance of the proposed learning as their doubts about their ability to go through it successfully. This contrasts with young people who have dropped out of school, for whom the resistance most likely comes from their skepticism both about the relevance of this learning and about the desirability of participating in it within the framework proposed.

4.3.2 THE ISSUE OF AUTONOMY UNDERLYING ALL LEARNING DEMANDS

In the society of uncertainty described in the preceding chapter, everyone must continuously construct a singular personality that can take calculated risks, and hence that can assess these risks

beforehand and have enough self-confidence to decide to accept them. The social demand for a diffusion of the capacity for initiative into all areas of activity (Bélanger and Federighi, 2000), is answered by the individual's demand and inexorable need to become self-actualized (Rogers, 1983).

This implicit demand to make any learning experience one more step toward the 'invention of the self' (Kaufman, 2001) has several different dimensions.

Strengthening confidence in one's ability to take action

The first dimension, which is always present, regardless of the content being learned, is the intention to continue strengthening one's confidence in one's ability to take action on one's own. Developing such a sense of self-efficacy (Zimmerman and Bandura, 1992) is not just a matter of wanting to have it, but also of acquiring experiences that enable one to build it over time. A successful series of meaningful learning experiences are what produce the inner abilities needed to face future challenges.

Consider the example of the rehabilitation of people who have been victims of violence or abuse. Hand (2006) explains how such people may regain their freedom of action in a technical sense but, because of the trauma that they have suffered and the fear that is has aroused, they may not necessarily recover the strength and the desire to exercise this freedom spontaneously.

Another example: when people are learning to swim, their ability to determine their own actions depends not only on mastering the required technique, but also, and most importantly, on becoming capable of making their own decision to jump into the water—in other words, becoming inclined to exercise this new ability and developing the inner freedom to do so. That is why it is so important, in any learning experience, for learners to have a space in which they can assess their own progress, find gratification in it, and demonstrate it to themselves.

Learning from differences

The need for people to strengthen their individuality also arises in the culturally diverse context in which men and women must operate today, which inevitably places them in situations of both cognitive and emotional dissonance (Holzapfel, 2008). People are now encountering different values and new kinds of knowledge that raise questions about their own frames of reference and the knowledge that they already have. They face dilemmas that may cast doubt on their own values or world views.

Different people respond differently to such opportunities to expand their understanding of different cultures and their view of the world. Some people reject such differences out of insecurity, while others see them as a positive challenge (Antikainen, 1998). The ability to face such 'disorienting dilemmas' in a constructive way is crucial for leading an active educational life (Cranton, 2006). Creativity lies precisely in the ability to face these challenges—to explore such differences instead of rejecting them out of insecurity or because of principles that mask an underlying anxiety.

While being able to live with differences has become a necessary condition of modern life, people need a new kind of skill to learn from these possible sources of dissonance, to correct their own perceptions if need be, and to reconsider their own standards of behaviour and their own past beliefs. They may then decide to continue living by their own standards and values in a more thoughtful way, while acknowledging that other people's may differ.

To achieve such empathy and acknowledge such differences, people must meet certain emotional requirements: they must not only have the latitude or space to do so, but also the self-confidence to put themselves in someone else's shoes and accept the intimate and social consequences of making this comparison. But empathy also entails cognitive requirements: you cannot explore and learn from the unknown unless you can validate the new things you are

encountering, answer the questions they raise, and incorporate the results into your personal intellectual repertoire.

Nonetheless, people cannot become capable of learning from diversity unless they are in a situation where they feel psychologically and culturally safe to react to this diversity and to ask questions about it (Rogers, 1954). They cannot become capable of respecting diversity and freedom of speech unless they live in an educational environment that recognizes or even celebrates differences. This need for a climate of open communication and exchange among participants is often left unstated, but it is an essential condition if the members of a group are to learn from one another and test for themselves the knowledge they are acquiring in this process. It is through such open-minded interactions that individuals can successfully discuss and take ownership of the content and thus become more independent.

Learning to steer one's course through life's uncertainties
Every learning experience is a step in one's educational biography. Instinctively, people try to relate what they are currently experiencing to their past experiences and, even more importantly, to use the experience as context or even guidance for planning their futures. To cope with the proliferation of learning opportunities and the diversity of content available to be learned, people must make their own temporary, personal syntheses and thus iteratively ensure their own cumulative development.

In the literature on educational biographies (Karpiak, 2010; Felden, 2008; Alheit and Dausien, 2005; Dominicé, 2001; Pineau, 2000; Antikainen, 1998), the first dimension is people's varying degrees of desire and ability to choose or negotiate their own educational paths and, in the case of mandatory education or training programmes, to negotiate the manner in which they will be completed.

People today go through many episodes of change in the course of their lives. The first reason for the growing number of such life

transitions is the increase in life expectancy, a phenomenon that began a century ago and that has accelerated over the past five decades. In the late 19th century, when German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck introduced his old-age-pension policy, life expectancy for members of the working class was no more than 65 years. The situation is quite different today; for example, in the United States of America, there are now more than 100 General Motors retirees who are over 100 years old.

Thus people today are living longer and hence encountering more and more opportunities to change their life paths and adopt different roles. But they are also experiencing some even more profound changes in the way they live their lives. First among these is that paid work now plays a decreasingly central role in people's lives. Instead of working 72 hours per week, 52 weeks per year, they now work 38 to 40 hours per week, for 48 or 49 weeks per year. In other words, today, out of the average person's life span of some 700,000 hours, scarcely 10% will be devoted to formal work, compared with 25% during the first half of the 20th century. Moreover, as previously noted, these longer life spans with more time spent away from work are less and less synchronized and more and more unpredictable. The old 'normal' life course has become the abnormal exception.

If people are to manage these episodes of uncertainty successfully, the values and norms that they learned in the setting in which they grew up will no longer suffice to guide their choices and may even conflict with the new realities that they have to face. People must thus also draw on what they have retained and what they have rejected from their past experiences. It is no coincidence that adults' level of participation in continuing education tends to be significantly higher during major transitions in their lives (Doray, Bélanger and Biron, 2009).

In this 'biographicization' of the social (Alheit, 1999), individuals' more or less articulated vision of their as yet unlived life potential constitutes a latent component of their learning expectations.

Curiosity and a desire to explore the opportunities (what you are thinking of becoming, what you want to become, what you are afraid of becoming) (Markus and Nurius, 1986) are both causes and effects of autonomization. When adequately sustained, curiosity becomes the inner engine of the continuity of people's educational biographies. It relates the knowledge taught to the things that learners wonder about personally, and thus assures the quality of their personal appropriation of the knowledge they acquire.

Each of the critical episodes in an individual's life path, every 'transformative moment', gives that individual the opportunity to recover control over that path, and possibly also to recognize how his or her self-awareness is still evaluated, validated, and constrained by other individuals and institutions (Illouz, 2007a). Unfortunately, this positive dynamic, this accumulation of meaningful lessons learned, inevitably goes together with its opposite: the cumulative effect of failures and of learning difficulties not overcome. Such unsuccessful experiences and the resulting negative feedback make learners doubt their ability to learn and make them less resilient when faced with challenges, whereas successes motivate them to pursue their quest for knowledge.

In short, because people's life paths have ceased to be continuous, the demand is now for education to be continuous instead. Of course, not every individual will be able to develop a life plan—a 'biographical design'—and proactively steer their course to follow it. Some people will instead take an improvised, 'patchwork' approach (Alheit, 2005) and achieve varying degrees of success. Often, individuals will manage to negotiate life transitions successfully only with the support of a network or a group of peers, but they will still have to negotiate all the turns that come up along the way.

Becoming a reflexive learner

Always present in all of the personal competencies underlying educational demands is the individual's capacity for reflexive action

and, more specifically, the ability to see oneself learn. In their research on experiential learning, Kolb (1984) and Schön (1987) have shown that to be able to learn from their experiences, people must be able to look back and reflect on them, expand their knowledge to name what they are experiencing or have experienced, draw on different sources of knowledge to help solve the problems they encounter, and turn experiences into lessons that can be applied in future. All of this is true for all learning activities and all forms of learning including intimate experiential learning (Michelson, 1998). Individuals must be able to reflect on their past, draw connections among their daily experiences, and relate their new knowledge to the knowledge they already had. This self-evaluation of their educational experiences produces a psychic effect that, in turn, will influence the next steps they take in their educational biographies.

This subjectification (Martucelli, 2009) is essential not only to enable individuals to achieve the expected performance, but most of all to enable them to continue constructing themselves as singular, autonomous subjects. The social demand placed on individuals to increase their autonomy of action requires them to know how to assess risks and reflectively regulate their emotions, and to do so, they must also be able to name and understand them (Hand, 2006). Cognitively speaking, each time people successfully name a phenomenon they had previously grasped or experienced only tacitly, relating it to other previously isolated perceptions and realizing what they have just succeeded in doing, they are organizing their long-term memories and giving themselves tools that will let them perceive reality in a more discriminating way in future. They progress in their educational biographies. These metacognitive processes are of major importance; they shape learners who are more reflexive and hence more autonomous (Van der Veen, 2000).

Every success in intellectually understanding an event or phenomenon equips individuals with new resources and strengthens

their confidence in their ability to analyze their prospective courses of action (Bandura, 1989). In any educational episode, learning to give explicit meaning to one's actions and, in the effort to do so, learning to negotiate or reject that which opposes it, tends to become a profound though silent aspiration.

The personal learning capacity 'l'apprenance'
From this standpoint, the method and context of the proposed learning experience becomes just as crucial as its content. And if the medium is also the message, the participants also have a word to say about the medium. Individuals become autonomous in their educational lives only by learning that they can learn. And they will build their capacity to learn only to the extent that they discover or rediscover the joy of learning and recognize what things have made it easier for them to learn in some cases and harder in others. Referring to this need to develop dispositions conducive to self-directed learning, Philippe Carré (2006. p. 23) speaks of 'the personal learning capacity ('apprenance')... a stable set of affective, cognitive and conative dispositions that are conducive to learning, in all formal and informal situations, experientially or didactically, self-directed or not, intentional or fortuitous' [author's translation]. Clearly, in order for everyone to develop these dispositions, an 'ecology of learning', an educational environment, is required.

Thus these capacities and these active dispositions are neither innate talents nor simply a matter of will power. This autonomization is the result of a more or less continuous process of construction marked by the various contexts of life. It is therefore crucial to recognize the intimate level at which this process takes place, to observe how it enables individuals to negotiate their educational pathway to make it more personally relevant. It is also as important to examine how individuals come to act collectively to transform their living and work environments and to experience cultural plurality in a creative way.

4.4 THE EXPRESSION OF THIS DUAL DEMAND

This change in the representation of educational life as the 'potential of life not yet lived' (Alheit, 2005) and the continuing construction of autonomy of action were inevitably going to change not only the learning demand, but also the way that this demand is expressed. So how are organisations and individuals now managing to express and negotiate their demands?

Traditionally, education policies referred to a demand for education in which the contents and 'learning moments' were standardized according to a model that divided life into predetermined phases. In this model, people's educational biographies remained concentrated in the early part of their lives, except for a few other rare moments at expected times in adult life, such as the transition to new jobs or to retirement. In this model and with this supply-side logic, the demand was predictable. All the policies had to do was regulate the input and output flows within the education system.

Now, however, both the growth and diversification of the social demand for education and the desynchronization and unpredictability of personal biographies have made these policies obsolete (Bélanger and Federighi, 2000, Chapter 6). Today, educational offerings for adults must respond to learning demands that are so widely varied and so unpredictable in the medium-term that they must be analyzed before any education and training can be provided to meet them. The evaluation and diagnosis of the learning demands of organizations, societies, and individuals have become necessities if relevant educational responses are to be provided. But while the transition to demand-driven adult learning and education has increasingly become a reality, consideration of the duality and complexity of learning demand has not.

Such mediation of the social demand for education, before education and training programmes are actually delivered, are appearing in certain national and international policies on adult

education and training (Bélanger and Federighi, 2000; Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 2006), and we shall discuss them again in Chapter 10. However, the prevailing tendency in continuing education programmes and practice is still to give this phase short shrift, even though it is such a crucial prerequisite for any effective, relevant learning.

4.4.1 TAKING THE INEQUALITY OF EXPRESSION OF DEMAND INTO ACCOUNT

Of course, the way that individuals perceive their chances of succeeding at the education event in which they are being asked to participate, and, before that, their recognition of its relevance, are in part socially conditioned. To have the opportunity to express and negotiate these expectations, they must have the space and resources. As Rubenson (2000) puts it, 'One has to take into account the crucial "circumstances" in which expectancy and valence get socially constructed.' (n.p.) In a supply-driven adult-learning economy, the only people who can be reached are the ones who have already been reached!

The fear of failure, just like confidence in one's ability to meet challenges, is a social construct that goes back to people's early childhood and their first education experiences. A fear of failure deeply seated in an individual's life story may obstruct all subsequent educational progress. Such inhibiting fears cannot be overcome in adulthood unless people feel safe to express them and have the chance to participate in meaningful educational experiences that reactivate their learning projects.

People's learning biographies may be obstructed not only by the system's failure to meet the demands that they express or try to express, but also by the fact that they could not easily express their learning demands openly. All too often, people say, 'Education is not for me', and the institutions respond, 'Well, if you don't ask for it, we can't give it to you.' Indeed, waiting until people express their demand for education or training before you offer it to them can

be a subtle way of excluding them from it. People's internalization of an alienated view of their potential is one of the most pernicious and effective ways that educational inequalities are propagated throughout the life course. In a study conducted in Lithuania, Mickunaite (2007) shows that often people who are more distant from school culture tend to value education but, for all sorts of reasons, remain skeptical about their own ability to engage in it. They see a definite benefit, but think it is for someone else.

Luckily, people's cultural capital is no more immutable than their social or economic capital. People develop a sense of educational self-efficacy, form a positive picture of education and develop a love of satisfying their own curiosity when they see concrete examples of other people who are already doing so in their immediate surroundings—when they live in an environment that stimulates their curiosity and lets them accumulate positive experiences. This is true of social capital as well. To have the strength and courage to manage life transitions, people must be able to draw support from a network of peers, like the women's groups in the United States that did so with such great success through the 'Our Bodies, Ourselves' health education movement (Norsigian et al., 1999). Let us not forget also the economic resources, because without being able to counter the discriminatory effects of an adult educational economy based largely on market forces, those who have more will always get more.

In short, the demand for lifelong learning, which has now become an imperative, cannot be met effectively and sustainably unless the prospective learners secure the space to express their views about its relevance and feasibility. Paradoxically, organizations will only succeed in enlisting their members in continuing education and thus improve their skills, when they take the risk of making room for individual initiative and giving individuals the chance to speak about their demand. The engineering of investment in people and people's autonomy of action cannot be the same as the investment in physical capital.

This need for the expression of subjective demand does not mean that there are no situations in which an organization may make certain types of learning mandatory –for example, first-aid training. However, the expression of subjective demand is a condition for such learning to be effective – for the learners to understand and embrace the norms and knowledge that society deems indispensable.

4.5 CONCLUSION: THE RETURN OF THE ACTOR

The primary goals of the rising social demand for learner-negotiated education are to make external requirements more meaningful subjectively and to adapt education and training to the particular conditions of every individual's life, which will also help make education and training programmes more effective. This transformation of the learning demand and its expression reflects and gives tangible form to the recognition of the intimacy of learning. But this transformation goes further than a change in the way that demand is mediated; in a more profound sense, its aim is to increase individuals' freedom to steer their own educational life course and thus reinforce their autonomy of action both as individuals and as participants in society.

This transformation of the demand for education refers to individuals' plans to express and create themselves not only through the social necessity that compels them to do so, but first through their own intentions and actions. The painter Paul Klee speaks of the 'principle of inner necessity' (Aichele, 2006, p. 95). The dynamic of today's reflexive societies make this microsociological need easier to understand. Everywhere, the active social participation of the public as a whole is becoming both a pressing need and a manifest aspiration. The facts are simple, but momentous: there can be no society without active citizens, but there can be no active citizens without spaces for them to become so and social movements fighting for the change which that requires.

It is 'the return of the actor' (Touraine, 1984), the subject, the citizen, and collective action. The point of development, says Sen (2000), is participation not as a means, but also as an end. It is not as such the increase of human capital but the capacities of human beings to act autonomously and the development of their potential to do so.

Although, for the moment, the recognition of this dynamic is emerging chiefly in the world of work, as we will see in the next chapter, the limitations of a unilateral view of the learning demand are equally real for all stages and in all areas of life—in health, the environment, intercultural relations, and so on (see Chapter 8 on popular education).

PART TWO

IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH RECOGNITION IN VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL DOMAINS

CHAPTER 5
THE INTIMACY OF LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE

The world of work is undergoing a transformation that can be seen not only through changes in the means and technology of production, but also through the career paths that people are at present following and trying to manage. Keeping the same job for life is becoming more difficult. Changes in production and the globalization of the economy are altering both the individual's relationship to work and the individual's career path. Major debates are also going on about the economic trend toward greater market flexibility and financial fluidity, as well as about working conditions.

How then can we ensure that individuals will maintain continuity in such a context of job mobility, and thus guarantee their right to work? And if jobs cease to be permanent, then shouldn't education and training become a permanent part of people's occupational lives? In some European countries, there is talk of 'flexicurity' policy—not flexibility based on deregulation, waning government involvement, and worsening hiring conditions, but rather a genuine flexibility based on workplace focused learning. This ensures a continuous enhancement of the qualifications and versatility of the labour force but requires the implementation of programmes to achieve these goals (Rubenson, 2009, 2006; Bierema, 2009). Such is the new socio-economic context that is not only transforming the debate about on-the-job knowledge and skills development but also strongly increasing the demand for it.

In the workplace itself, the transition from Taylorism ('scientific management') and assembly-line production methods to more flexible, team-based production methods is altering the content

of jobs and demanding greater versatility and 'polyvalence' from workers. In addition, new technologies are being introduced that not only make work more abstract, but also make workstations more complex, enabling and requiring workers to make frequent changes in current operation methods to meet increasingly diverse production requirements. In Europe, 80% of the technologies now in use were introduced within the past 10 years, but 80% of the workers in the labour force completed their initial occupational education more than 10 years ago (Pedersen, cited by Rubenson, 2009)! And in the service sector of the new economy, the growing number of relational jobs is creating a growing demand for increasingly complex interpersonal skills based on both cognitive and affective capabilities (Field, 2008).

Not only are work environments changing, but the people who are looking for jobs in them face increasingly sporadic and uncertain work lives. In the traditional employment model based on the Fordist alliance between capital and labour, workers could expect to follow a well-defined, three-phase career path: initial education, leading to a specific, permanent job at that company, followed by a regulated transition to retirement at a specified age. Now this model applies in only a minority of cases, or has even become the exception rather than the rule, and the three phases often overlap in confusing ways (Lowe, 2002). Some workers will have a career path that consists of a succession of different jobs, interspersed with phases of intensive training. But for other workers—many others—the path will always remain uncertain. For them, the labour market has become a high-risk society, with a high likelihood of job losses or being limited to jobs that are precarious, part-time, or seasonal.

These are significant trends in a changing work world. The assembly-line model has not disappeared, nor have dull, routine jobs. But even the people who are still working in such jobs are developing new demands and aspirations inspired by these new trends.

This dual transformation, in the world of work and in personal career paths, is altering the relationship between the worker and the work. There is, first of all, recognition of the tension between the prescribed work and the actual work, a discrepancy that reveals the vital contribution that workers make as individuals (section 5.1). Second, individuals are increasingly seeking not only an exchange value but also a use value in their work (section 5.2). In this context, on-the-job education and training can no longer be, for the employer, a process of repeatedly making the worker adapt in a prescribed way to formally re-defined job functions (section 5.3), nor can it be, for the worker, a short-term process that fails to anticipate the many transitions to come in the longer run (section 5.4). Hence we see the need for the design of education and training programmes to include a planning phase in which education and training demands are expressed, so that the programmes ultimately delivered will meet the organization's requirements as well as the workers' expectations (section 5.5).

5.1 PRESCRIBED WORK VERSUS REAL WORK

Work activity can no longer be reduced to executing the prescribed task, not even on an assembly line. The action, even if it is a repetitive one, is always performed by a knowing agent. Ergonomists in the French tradition (Chatigny and Montreuil, 2003; Noulin, 2002; Teiger and Montreuil, 1996; Wisner, 1995) have shown that the prescribed roles are only one dimension of the actual observed roles. An individual's real work does of course include following instructions that set out the production objectives and procedures. But the worker must also make adjustments every day in the targets to be achieved and the methods of achieving them. To make these adjustments, workers must consider varying contingencies and conditions, including random events and unforeseen circumstances, such as equipment failures (Beckett and Hager, 2010). And

to do that, workers must rely on their experience, their practical intelligence, and their initiative. In fact, work activity requires workers to mediate constantly between their assigned tasks, on the one hand, and the conditions under which they are performing these tasks and the ways in which they are performing them, on the other. Workers are therefore not passive executors of tasks. To perform their functions and control the situation, they must intervene and become agents who can interpret what is happening, draw on their experience, and manage shifting contexts.

This gap between prescribed and real work, even when the work is fragmented, as on an assembly line, has less to do with the required work's being poorly planned or designed than with the fact that actual conditions, both objective and subjective, inevitably vary with the situations and individuals involved. We cannot ignore the myriad challenges that individuals face in their work. They must foresee hazards, and thereby avoid them. They must develop intuition through experience and apply it to new situations. They must improvise workaround methods, manage fatigue, remain alert for signs of equipment malfunctions, and maintain contact with other people. In addition, individuals react and interact differently, depending on their cultural and educational backgrounds, their personal aspirations, and their private assumptions and concerns, which do not simply vanish when they arrive at their place of work.

Workers attempt to '[author's translation] make the operating method conform to the needs of their mental structures'; they need a certain 'freedom in production' to experience the 'pleasure of functioning' (Dejours, 2000, pp. 158, 164 and 168). Work activity is not something to endure, but rather something to construct (Daniellou and Garrigou, 1995). Thus this gap reveals nothing less than the creative aspect of any work activity (Dejours, 2000), the capacity for independent action and continuing experiential learning that it requires—in short, the personal component of work. In

this inevitable distance between the prescribed and the real, the distinctive contribution of the individual becomes essential. In the space that this distance creates, employees are more than a work force: they are agents who build knowledge and seek to define themselves individually. The singular production of tacit knowledge and the invention or adaptation of tricks of the trade—in short, the day-to-day creativeness in which workers engage to give themselves some room for manoeuvre and forge their skills on the job—all express an intelligence in action that sadly too often remains the hidden face of work.

We are now rediscovering the intelligence of practice, intelligence at work, and hence the intimacy of learning. Clearly, then, the demand for on-the-job education and training can no longer be limited to prescribed tasks and behaviours. To deny the work that individuals really do is to deny their aspirations to increase their freedom of action and to negotiate the education and training demand accordingly.

And if this constant mental engagement is necessary even in the most routine work (Teiger, 1993), then it is all the more so in the new work settings just described, characterized by quantitative and qualitative variations in production, variability in tasks and teams, and rotation of roles within teams. In this context, the barrier between designing work and executing work is becoming slimmer and slimmer. First, there is a growing demand for voluntary co-operation and feedback from workers when innovations are being tested. There is also a demand not only for prescribed skills but also for open, unsaturated skills (Aneesh, quoted by Sawchuk (2006)), that is, for workers to go on learning, to learn from one another and to create, even if the product of this intimate process often remains tacit. Individual workers' use of their practical and strategic intelligence to diagnose and solve the problems of their daily work produces an inner-driven need to continue developing their physical and mental capacities.

The effect of radically separating manual work from intellectual work, as in the Taylorist model, is to limit the space for mental activity, if not shut it out entirely. When workers are seen as nothing but a blind force that performs prescribed, fragmented tasks repeatedly, their intelligence is denied (Dejours, 1993), as are their professional skills (Friedmann, 1950). But their 'shrewd intelligence' persists nonetheless. Even in such '[author's translation] unconscious, fragmented work' (ibid.,p. 337ff.), their senses remain alert; their collective and professional awareness does not disappear. By reacting intelligently, by improvising individually and collectively (Dejours, 1993), workers invent and share procedures by which they can, for example, keep workplace accidents from recurring. We are just beginning to recognize the long-term consequences of a work life that undermines intelligence in action, and the mental wear and tear ('*usure mentale*') that the associated, silent suffering can cause (Dejours, 2000). We have seen and understood employees' justifiable anger when they learn at occupational health and safety training sessions that working conditions to which they have been exposed for years have had serious or even fatal physical consequences, such as vision and hearing impairments or lung cancer. But our recognition of the practical intelligence that individuals invest in their work, and hence of the long-term repercussions of suppressing it, still remains marginal.

People can be dispossessed of their abilities in a variety of ways. One, of course, is to hire them for jobs for which they are overqualified ('de-skilling') (Braverman, 1974). Another is to refuse to regard their skills as personal traits resulting from their ongoing efforts to improve themselves, and instead to regard these skills as unchanging entities somehow external to the individuals themselves (Sawchuk, 2006). But employers can also disempower employees in more subtle ways, by refusing to recognize their capacity for initiative and their need for space in which to exercise it (Sawchuk, 2006a). Employers, who fail to tangibly recognize their employees'

subjective relationship to their work and to the training required, tend to treat their workers as mere assets to be maintained or resources to be renewed from time to time. And, as has been shown in the relational occupations, when individuals resist such devaluation, it is both because of the '[author's translation] consistency of their individual referents' and because of the collective defence mechanisms that they succeed in organizing (Maheu *et al.*, 1997, p. 131).

In contrast, workers in small custom-manufacturing firms today, like the artisans of the pre-industrial age, work in settings that constantly call on their intellectual ability to adapt and reflect:

'[author's translation] Because standardization of operations is very limited in these companies, the workers are constantly asking themselves what to do and how to do it. In this regard, their experience is the diametric opposite of that of workers on an assembly line, where such questioning seems unnecessary. […] Nothing could be more different from the assembly-line environment, where the way activities are co-ordinated is largely predetermined by the manufacturing process and by operational routine. […] Also, in custom-manufacturing firms, information does not simply circulate; it is substantially transformed by the workers at every stage of completing a project or filling an order. […] These characteristics of their work help custom-manufacturing workers to develop a reflective attitude about it; a sort of collective professionalism animates the workplace. [It] is based on the absence of routine, which provides tremendously fertile ground for the development of expertise through emulation, creativity, and pride in a job well done. (…) Custom-manufacturing firms are, by their very nature, constantly learning, and so are their work forces' (Hart, 2000, pp. 90-92).

This subjective relationship to productive activity, as revealed by the tension between the prescribed and the real tasks, leads individuals to seek not only 'exchange' value but also 'use' value in their work. Hence it is important that we now examine the uneven emphasis placed on the latter and its social and subjective meaning.

5.2 EXCHANGE VALUE VERSUS USE VALUE

The exchange value of work, such as the wages paid or demanded in compensation for the work done, is just as decisive a factor for society, for the national economy, and for businesses as it is for individuals. It constitutes the main mechanism for distributing collective wealth and resources and hence tends to be regulated. The same holds true for the exchange value of education. Formal recognition of qualifications is one of the non-arbitrary criteria for allocating jobs and pay; it is also an objective reference when adults register to return to formal education—hence the importance of recognized certifications. Also, as noted at the start of this chapter, these exchange values have become all the more important as workers' job security and, especially, their continued participation in the labour force in a context of *flexicurity* (Rubenson, 2006, 2009) have increasingly come to depend on continuing knowledge and skills development, responsibility for which has increasingly been shifted to the individual, who will demand, in return, conditions that make this development possible. Right to work is then becoming more and more intertwined with the right to lifelong learning.

However, the reality both of work and of education and training cannot be limited to their exchange value. They also, and first of all, have a use value, for society and organizations as well as for individuals. Socially, the value of work comes primarily from the goods and services that it produces and from the collective and individual needs that it thereby satisfies. Similarly, the social value of education comes from its distributing knowledge more widely throughout the population and enhancing the population's capacity for action. Individually, the use value of work comes from the quality of the activity, from its meaning for the worker, from the self-actualization that the worker derives from it, and from each worker's need to be consulted before performing it and to be

regarded as a colleague by his or her peers. In this context, Field (2008) speaks of a 'sense of agency' and 'personal authenticity' (see also Kreber et al. 2007).

In education, beyond the degrees and diplomas, its use value for individuals consists in the contribution of that education to their personal development and their gradual self-actualization, due to the cognitive development and emotional maturity that it engenders. Although these use values have no immediate price in the marketplace, they are no less real.

When work and education are cut off from the individual's contribution and the individual's capacity for action, they lose their intrinsic value. As Lave and McDermott (2002) state, referring to the writings of Marx, when individuals can no longer find a personal interest in their work and learning activities, work and learning become estranged from the individuals who actually do these things, and we speak of 'estranged labour' and 'estranged learning'.

In the new organization of work, which calls for workers to actively participate, it is less and less possible for an organization to maximize the productive contribution of its labour force without recognizing the individual workers' aspirations to find a subjective use value in their work as well. Otherwise, work and learning activities become commodities, reduced to their market value, activities with no intrinsic motivation, devoid of any opportunities for inner creativity.

Now—and this is a social issue—individual workers cannot participate in a productive activity in any true sense unless it provides a concrete way of at least partially satisfying their legitimate aspirations to develop their potential, to exercise it every day, and to take pleasure in doing so. For the individuals who perform the work, it is not just an instrumental activity; it is also a reflective one. Individuals cannot be active agents unless their personal contribution is recognized and a context is created in which this can happen. As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, *self-efficacy* and, more

broadly, *self-esteem*—two components of the intimacy of learning and hence of mental energy—have become essential traits both in daily work and in the ongoing development of knowledge and skills throughout the life course (Billett, 2007). Individual workers can be nothing but passive consumers of the education and training they accept, unless they find that it not only gives them the knowledge and skills they need to stay employed, but also meets their personally felt need to increase their knowledge and their capacity for action.

The social implications of recognizing the individual use value of work and education include enhanced efficiency of productive activities, but go beyond it. These implications also include the autonomy that individuals must increasingly have if they are to play an active role in advanced modern society. They include individuals' aspirations to construct and be able to live their own personal identities. The right to work involves more than just the right to be paid; it also involves the aspiration to make a personal contribution and have it recognized. The right to work includes the right to a job, but goes beyond this; it is inseparable from the right to 'decent work', which, according to ILO, raises the problem of the quality of work and respect for fundamental rights in its exercise (Bonnechère, 2008). Likewise, when it comes to education, people are not just demanding access; they are also demanding that what they learn be meaningful and impart forward momentum to their educational biographies.

Learning only because you are forced to, or learning only what your employer wants you to learn, is a bit like learning just to pass your exams. If people fail to heed their own felt needs, then their curiosity, their ingenuity and their inner spirit may be crushed. For any individual, being denied the chance to find meaning in their work or training causes frustration and ultimately, as noted earlier, mental wear and tear (Dejours, 2000.). It is not easy for people to resist this hidden suffering at work, especially when they

have no spaces in which to find individual and collective solutions and no means of doing so. However, as Scott (2008) has observed in a number of contexts, workers often resist silently and inwardly, unless this situation emerges and becomes the subject of public negotiation. Then they can take ownership of their hidden critique, express it openly, and take collective action accordingly.

This search for use value in work and a positive relationship with work is many-facetted. It of course includes individuals' quest for meaning in their work and the recognition of a zone of autonomy needed for reflective participation. But this search also involves the demand for working conditions that allow for individual needs and a balance between work and private life. Examples of such conditions include arrangements that help to reconcile the conflicting demands of work and family (often difficult, especially for women, who may work one shift during the day and then go home to work a 'second shift' in the evening) (Tremblay, 2008); parental leave (Philipson, 2002); time off to pursue education or training; permission to work at home; flexible retirement arrangements, and so on.

That said, the use value of work is not unrelated to its exchange value. Workers cannot be expected to contribute to productivity unless they participate in the benefits that it generates. In today's globalized economy, increasing productivity is a major concern. Unless businesses improve their performance, they cannot survive and grow and jobs cannot be maintained. But there is productivity and productivity. The negative approach to raising productivity ('*productivité sèche*') is to cut production costs, wages, staff, and pension benefits—in other words, to increase productivity on the back of workers. Another approach is to make the workers active participants in research and development and enlist their initiative and inventiveness in introducing innovations. The productivity enhancements thus achieved go beyond the short term. They involve relying on and investing in people and expanding their

ability to take initiative—in other words, enhancing knowledge and skills continuously in a more intense and more broadly based way.

In exchange for their active participation in raising productivity, workers demand a redistribution of the benefits thus achieved. But first and foremost, they demand *decent work* – a concept that, according to the International Labour Organization, sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men (ILO, 2010, par. 8-11).

The problem lies in the possible contradiction between the financial economy and the real economy, even though the latter represents the fundamental meaning of the former. The problem is the neo-liberal tendency to emphasize exchange value while denying use value. The point is not to deny that work has exchange value, but rather to link its exchange value to its use value, which should have primacy. The same is true of workplace-based learning, whose transformation is not solely quantitative and morphological.

5.3 THE TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE

The learning demand in the workplace, like any other learning demand, has two sides (see Figure 4.1). On the one hand, organizations seek to develop their workers' skills to meet the growing demand to improve their productive activities and make them more efficient. Indeed, the competitiveness of national economies is more and more closely tied to the ongoing development of the knowledge and skills of their work forces. This involves more than just a demand to

continuously increase skills. Organizations that are evolving and attempting to innovate recognize that they must take the risk of leaving more room for individual initiative in an increasingly reflective organization of work (Brown, Green and Lauder, 2001; Bélanger and Federighi, 2000; Lash and Urry, 1987). The numerous factors contributing to this growing learning demand in the workplace include changes in the organization and methods of production, increased quality control for purposes of exporting in a globalized economy, introduction of new productivity-enhancing technologies, and the demand for internal flexibility in the work force.

On the other hand, in their *actual* work activities (which are in constant tension with their prescribed tasks), individuals have their own demands as well. They want their work to have a personal meaning and allow them to enhance their ability to act more autonomously on the job. They are demanding recognition not only of the tension between their prescribed tasks and their actual work, but also of the gap between the prescribed learning and their actual learning. For example, to prevent workplace accidents more effectively, employees not only take mandatory workplace health and safety training, but also collectively develop complementary procedures, or improve on the prescribed ones and share these innovations with one another.

This dual learning demand – by organizations and individuals – explains the growth of on-the-job learning in advanced industrial regions over the past 30 years. On average, one out of every three workers now participates in structured education and training programmes, and in northern Europe, the figure is one out of two (Rubenson, 2009). And that does not count informal types of learning that are far more extensive but harder to quantify because of their diffuse nature (Livingstone, 1999). Hence there is a growing call for such learning to be recognized in some form of 'learning passport' that allows labour mobility. Continuous development of work-related knowledge and skills tends to be an increasing part

of the everyday life of organizations, and no longer reserved solely for top level personnel, as it was in the 1970s.

The demand for education and learning in the workplace is not only growing, but also becoming more complex. It extends to all levels of qualifications and takes many guises, both structured and informal. Examples include attending a set of education or training activities inside or outside the organization, formal or informal mentoring, assisted self-study, problem-solving ad hoc study circles and possible recognition of experiential learning. Surveys show that adults' participation in structured education and training is not evenly distributed (Belanger and Hart, 2012; Doray and Bélanger, 2005; Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009). It varies with age, initial level of education, occupational status, industry, organization size, access to educational institutions, and individuals' propensity to take the training offered. It also varies by country, because of the mechanisms and policies put in place by the state to regulate the unequal development of these activities (Bélanger, 2011).

Workers, says Sawchuk (2006), are 'knowing and acting subjects'. They silently improvise their own ways not only to endure, but also to participate in productive activity, and their improvisations are sometimes adopted by the organization. Moreover, only if externally required education and training becomes 'significant' for the individuals concerned (Rogers, 1983) will they become motivated and thus autonomous and more resourceful in their work. Paradoxically, for organizations to profit from their investment in education and training, they must address employees' demands that training be relevant to them and be grounded in actual local conditions (Dunberry et al., 2007; Preskill and Torres, 1999).

Take the example of the apprentices whom Lave (1991) studied in tailor shops in West African marketplaces. These apprentice tailors learn their trade by performing a sequence of tasks of gradually increasing complexity and responsibility. At first, these are seemingly banal tasks such as serving tea, which give the apprentices a

general overview of the work and production environment while also involving them in communication with the other members of the team. Apprentices then move on to more complex, risky activities, from ironing tasks to increasingly difficult sewing tasks to cutting out the material to be sewn into garments. This progression of activities gives them the chance not only to learn these skills, but also to observe and understand the desired standards, to learn about the various parts of garments, and to identify if not design the various kinds of garments. Experience, instructive feedback on errors, and reactions from fellow workers become additional sources of learning. Thus, throughout the two or three years of their apprenticeship, they are constructing their identities and their recognition as master tailors both for their customers and for themselves (see also Hodkinson et al., 2004). These young apprentices are gradually introduced into targeted productive activities in which practice and learning are closely intertwined. This gradual engagement reinforces, refines, and expands the apprentices' skills and knowledge (Rogoff, cited by Billet, 2002). They learn how to operate reflectively. To do so, they also rely on the advice and expertise of colleagues to put names to the things they know tacitly and to confirm or correct their intuitions. Thus these apprentices are not only trained, they actively educate and empower themselves.

To revive a concept from the 1980s (Artaud, 1981, p.137), such an apprentice is a 'self-educator' ('*un s'éduquant*') who can '[author's translation] deploy himself according to his own specific dynamism without sacrificing the logical requirements of the matter with which he is dealing'. Not from the standpoint of the organization, but from that of the individuals, the distinction between formal and informal learning remains a formal one because, regardless of its format, learning always remains the act of the individual learner (Billett, 2002). It is the learner who interacts with the sources of knowledge. By verifying its relevance to the

questions that triggered the learning process, learners interpret new knowledge so that they can then make it their own. Only after comparing new concepts with previously encoded knowledge can learners absorb them successfully. And they will succeed in applying their newly acquired expertise to productive activity only if they successfully experiment with it and thus organize it and internalize it in their own unique way. In fact, over an individual's lifetime, formal and informal learning are interrelated in many ways: in structured education and training, individuals learn the words to state and define the tacit knowledge they have developed in their informal training, which in turn enables them to initiate further self-training and experiential learning (Erault, 2004; Evans, 2004).

Workers' learning demand is not limited to the subjective conditions for effective education and training. It also comprises individuals' plans – articulated to varying degrees – for 'self-construction'. It relates to *self-image* (the way that individuals perceive themselves and see others as perceiving them), *self-esteem* (what value they place on these perceptions), *self-confidence* (how they act on the basis of this self-evaluation), and *self-worth* (the importance that they accord to their capacity to create) (Billett, 2002). The importance of this intimate dimension is also seen in inter-learning relations (Billett, 2007 and 2008; Candy, 1991). In his studies on the role of emotions in the workplace and their impact on training, John Field (2006) offers a complex analysis showing how individuals draw on both their affective and cognitive resources to position themselves in their workplaces and negotiate their working lives.

Learning demand thus includes individuals' hard-to-express aspiration to become active agents in their own lives and thereby strengthen their sense of self-efficacy, as discussed in Chapter 2. In this regard, we cannot ignore the doubts that individuals often have about their ability to master and perform the particular tasks required of them. Though individuals often sacrifice their dreams

of self-actualizing work in order simply to stay employed, those dreams never die. We cannot ignore the vast but hidden array of what French anthropologist and philosopher Michel de Certeau calls individuals' and groups' 'arts of doing' in the workplace – approaches that depart from the supposedly dominant top-down models, with their assumption that a space or a system can be constituted independently of the individuals who act within it. De Certeau reports a revealing case in which workers in a wig factory poached materials from their employer and took them home to make products not for profit, but simply to show off skills that they were not using at work and thus exercise their creative abilities and creative freedom (De Certeau, 1990, pp. 44–46).

Intrinsic motivations are thus part of learning demand. These motivations often include broader needs related to individuals' lives outside of work – for example, the need to expand a company's computer-training programme so that employees can communicate with their children who are already highly tech-savvy. Workplace learning theories cannot ignore use value, nor the demand for subjectively significant learning (Hager, 2004). From this perspective, on-the-job education and training can no longer be viewed as a recurrent series of adaptations to change, much less a process that makes operators continuously conform to the changing operational requirements of formally defined positions. On-the-job education and training is a complex, contextualized process of empowerment of the actor, in response to a demand whose two inherent components – both the organizational and individual – are articulated differently and according to precarious equilibria which depend on the social contexts and relationships within the organization. On the one hand, on-the-job education and training cannot contribute to the organization's effectiveness unless this training is designed and perceived by the workers as a meaningful experience for them. On the other hand, on a collective or individual level, workers cannot get their expectations and requirements

met unless they demonstrate a necessary complementarity or at the very least the opportunity of an accommodation between the two demands – in short, unless they contribute to the organization's performance.

5.4 PILOTING CAREER TRANSITIONS

Today's career paths are not straightforward. At many points, the path may fork, or cross another, and the individual must decide which way to go, overcome obstacles, and sometimes change course entirely. For this reason, in addition to on-the-job education and training, there is another work-related learning demand, a specifically individual one: the individual demand for education to help deal with increasingly frequent career transitions.

The first of these career transitions is the increasingly long and uncertain one from school into the labour market, often marked by insecure jobs and periods of unemployment. The way that individuals manage this first transition often leaves its mark on their subsequent career (Tuijnman, 1991; Field and Malcolm, 2006). At the other end of this path, the process of retiring from the labour market has become more desynchronized and chaotic. Often, in the years just before people retire, their status becomes more precarious and they experience episodes of unemployment (Guillemard, 1986). After officially retiring, many people continue working in the informal economy, to supplement, and sometimes erode, pensions that increasingly do not suffice to meet their needs.

Between this difficult entry into the labour market and this haphazard exit from it, career paths are no longer continuous. Steady jobs that people keep for their entire careers, retiring at a specified age with a guaranteed pension and the 'gold watch', are now the exception. Throughout their lives, individuals may have to change jobs many times, for many reasons. Some workers have to find new jobs when their plant closes. Others are transferred to different

jobs within the same organization, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not. Women return to the labour force after raising children. Migrants seek new jobs after moves that they may have made out of choice or out of necessity. In other cases, people simply change their plans and decide to follow a new career path. To a very large extent, the costs of all these changes, and the responsibility for dealing with them so as to remain employable, are being shifted onto the individuals themselves (Field and Malcolm, 2006; Lowe, 2002).

In this regard, it is significant to note that participation in work-related education and training is especially high during these various transitions (Doray et al., 2009). What does this mean, more precisely? To understand people's increasingly turbulent work lives, we must examine not only the economic and social structures in which they play out, but also how individuals learn to navigate these now uncertain seas. Yes, crises and fluctuations in national economies, along with social upheavals in countries of emigration, do partly explain and determine these transitions. But at these various crossroads, people are also forced to make choices even though their margin of manoeuvre is often limited. In the same way that individuals' abilities are co-constructed – reciprocally shaped by the individuals themselves and by the workplace that acculturates them – career paths tend to be co-navigated – reciprocally steered both by the social structure and by the individuals who may find, in these episodes of uncertainty, spaces in which to negotiate these changes in direction. In this regard, women's return to work after having children is especially revealing. A successful return – defined as women's keeping their previous job status – depends not only on whether or not such a return is legally guaranteed, what support is provided for planning this return (Houston and Gillian, 2003), but also on what opportunities they have been given meanwhile to continue their professional development.

In addition and in response to the societal demand that individuals assume more and more responsibility for their own employability

throughout their working lives, people have their own plans and aspirations (Field and Malcolm, 2006, 2008). But is society providing the minimum conditions that people need to assume this responsibility and fulfil these plans and aspirations? Though we can see that society is placing more emphasis on workers' capacity for initiative, we can also see how restructuring in the industrial and service sectors can destroy the working climate and undermine employees' commitment to the organizations for which they work (Lowe, 2002).

5.5 DIFFICULTIES IN NEGOTIATING OR MEDIATING THE DUAL DEMAND

Although the transformation of work and of career paths is creating a growing demand for education within the work force, the concrete expression of this demand, and especially its duality, remain problematic. For example, in France, after the mass student/worker protests of May 1968, the Grenelle Agreements signed by government, labour, and business led to the Law of July 1971 on Continuing Occupational Training and Education, opened access to education and training, and achieved an historic breakthrough by recognizing workers' right to paid education leave. But this legislation still left management the right to determine the content of such training. As one writer puts it, '[author's translation] the unions secured the right to education and training, but the employers secured the right to control them' (Rodary, 1980, p. 15).

5.5.1 EXPRESSING EDUCATION AND TRAINING DEMAND IN THE WORKPLACE

The expression of the demand for on-the-job skills development and mediation between the organization's requirements and its employees' aspirations cannot be taken for granted. Both sides of this dual demand are complex. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, in both cases, it comprises two dimensions (see Figure 5.1): first,

the perception of the usefulness of the planned training ('valence'), and second, the perception of its feasibility and potential success ('expectancy') (Rubenson, 1977, 1997).

From the organization's perspective, even though more and more studies are showing the economic value of providing education and training for employees and the positive returns that such

Figure 5.1 The duality of all learning demand

VALENCE

If the company sees a necessity for such training

If the workers perceive the training offered as a way to improve their operations and their situation at work

PROBABILITY OF PROVIDING MEANINGFUL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

EXPECTANCY

If the company thinks that they can deliver such training

If the workers believe that they can participate successfully
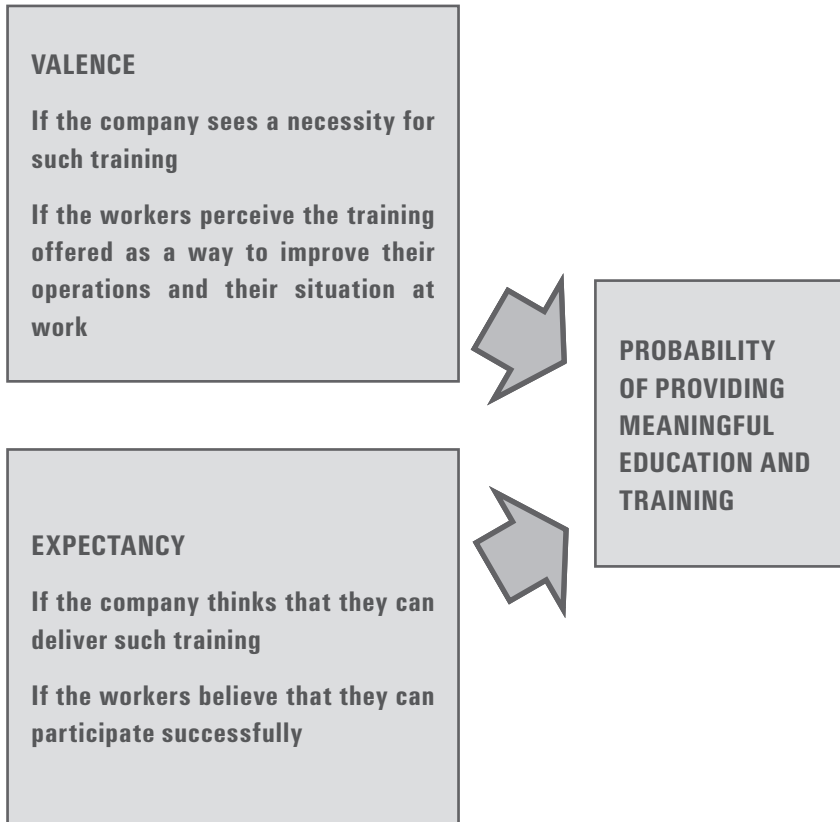
investments can provide (Chochard and Davoine, 2008; Bailey, 2007; Dunberry, 2006; Philips, 2003), the need for education and training is not always obvious in day-to-day operations. Often, the learning demand emerges and becomes operative only when the organization faces a specific problem and sees that certain special skills have to be developed to deal with it – for example, when new equipment or a new work-organization method is introduced, or when a new quality-control requirement is identified. But even once convinced that such a need exists, an organization may well question the feasibility of providing the training in question, for all sorts of reasons – trouble in scheduling time for employees to attend training sessions, lack of appropriate training options, lack of funds, etc. Thus, even when employers are convinced of the need for training, they may defer a decision. For such an investment to be profitable requires conditions that are not always present.

Firstly, from the employees' perspective, the perceived value of the education and training project depends on how much they believe it will help them to operate more autonomously, improve their working conditions, or simply keep their jobs. Secondly, employees' needs and interests, not directly related to their work, may also be involved. The possible motivations are manifold. And even when individuals perceive a definite benefit in taking training, they may worry about whether they can do so successfully and may hesitate because of the risk to their self-esteem. In addition, they simply may not have the conditions they would need to participate effectively; they may have scheduling conflicts, or lack the necessary physical resources, or have trouble in reconciling the demands of training with those of work and family (Tremblay, 2008), especially in today's societies if they are women. People may even perceive the value in the proposed training, think it makes sense for them, and have succeeded in collectively negotiating with their employer the conditions under which such organized learning will take place, but if they doubt their chances of success,

they will still resist getting involved. I will always remember the case of a Montreal firm, that, back in 2000, had replaced all of its workstations and offered the fifty affected employees the choice of either taking six months of education and training and having guaranteed jobs at the new workstations when they were done, or else taking early retirement. Only 12% of these employees opted for the training. The vast majority, out of fear of failing the course and thus being publicly humiliated, had not even dared to accept the challenge. Yet every one of the six employees who did take the training succeeded without any problem!

Education and training which fail to take the aspirations and needs of the trainees into account send them a subliminal message that the learning they will do has nothing to do with them. If the value of the education and training that their employer is offering them or requiring them to take remains meaningless for them, then how can the learning process really be the kind of intimate experience that enhances their capabilities and hence those of the organization? This is not to deny the external component of the education and training demand, but rather to show how it actually plays out at the personal level and hence to insist that it be mediated accordingly.

Of course, as Rubenson (1977) underscores, individuals' perceptions of the need for a given training programme and the feasibility of participating in it are influenced by their immediate work situations and by their past learning experiences, which are themselves characterised by the settings in which they took place and the cultural attitudes that the individuals absorbed within them. But the fact remains that if individual expectations are not expressed, then the effectiveness and the subjective meaning of the learning event will be severely compromised. Employees will not be inclined to mobilize their internal resources for participating in a training programme if employers do not consult them, verify their felt need for the training, and understand what conditions

they consider necessary to optimize the learning process or even make it possible in the first place. On-the-job learning is a relational transaction between the individuals and the organization. If this transaction is not mediated in a structured way ahead of time, then the problem of reconciling the two components of the demand may resurface while the training is in progress and hinder its successful completion.

Our observations also show that though the learning demands of employees and employers contrast, they are also potentially complementary and hence negotiable. Workers want the assurance that the increased capacity for action that they will have to acquire through their training will improve their personal situations. Employers will want their investment in training to provide a return: the desired improvement in their production activities. Here is a revealing example. At an automobile plant in Canada, the employer was asking the electricians to take technical-upgrade training. As a condition for agreeing to do so, the electricians got the employer to agree to provide training in residential electrical work as well. They showed exemplary foresight. One year later, the plant went out of business, but these electricians were ready to find jobs in the residential construction industry!

An organized expression and a contextualized analysis of the organization's demand is thus essential both for planning an appropriate response to the organization's contextualized needs and for ensuring that the learning will be meaningful for the learners. What is at stake is a lasting, integrated mastery of the desired knowledge and skills, so that the individuals can transfer them and mobilize them into action. In this regard, the behaviourist approach, in which the expression of needs tends to be reduced to verifying the elements or behaviours that are missing against the specified prerequisites for the task, poses problems. This model, based on deficit logic, assumes that jobs and tasks are fixed and that individuals are viewed simply as pieces of equipment who need to

be reconfigured to adjust to changes. An analysis of knowledge and skill requirements can be effective only if it is proactive, involves all of the stakeholders on the ground, and recognizes that the demand for continuous professional development emerges at every level of the jobs pyramid (Schuller and Watson, 2009; Goldenberg, 2006; Anderson, 1994).

The expression and mediation of these two aspects of any learning demand requires special mechanisms both at the organizational level and at the more immediate level of day-to-day work. The field of education and training is increasingly the subject of discussions and agreements in labour/management negotiations (Haipeter and Lehndorff, 2009). In times of crisis, for example, education and training becomes an important component of agreements regarding plant closings and corporate restructuring, and unions may ask that temporary layoff periods be converted into training time. But this trend for education and training to play a more prominent role in industrial relations can also be seen in normal times, regardless of general economic conditions or an organization's particular economic situation.

In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, business and labour organizations, working with government, have established a special fund to pay for legally recognized Union Learning Representatives (ULRs). Their role is to provide employees with information, advice and support regarding all kinds of education and training: basic, technical, and cultural, for professional purposes or personal ones. Such union representatives also operate in other countries, such as New Zealand (where they are referred to by the same title); Denmark (where they are known as educational ambassadors); Finland (union competence pilots); and Sweden (union learning counsellors) (Hart, 2011; Lee and Cassell, 2009).

Until recently, these negotiation and mediation processes tended to deal chiefly with access to and recognition of former education and training. But these learning brokers, operating in the

immediate local context (Hart, 2011) also tend to facilitate expression of the current learning demand. These initiatives indicate that workers and their representatives are being given greater control over education and training. On-the-job education and training no longer are and no longer can be the sole prerogative of management (Teiger, 1993, p. 185). Mechanisms are now being negotiated for expressing and negotiating demands. In France and Germany, there is a growing trend to expand the mandate of company works councils to include education and training or, in companies that do not have works councils, to establish labour/management training committees. Issues such as work-force flexibility, continuing education and training, productivity-related ergonomics, and work/training rotation are now the subject of negotiations. Some unions are negotiating increases in training budgets, while others are demanding negotiated company training plans (Glassner and Keune, 2010; Haipeter and Lehndorff, 2009). In Quebec, over half of all collective agreements contain clauses that deal with training. One quarter of these agreements provide for labour/management training committees, and half of these committees are not merely consultative but have decision-making authority shared by the two parties (Charest, 2010).

5.5.2 EXPRESSING LEARNING DEMAND RELATED TO CAREER TRANSITIONS

Employment services, along with policies and mechanisms for regulating the labour market, are indispensable for adjusting labour supply and demand, but can no longer suffice to do so on their own. In today's increasingly uncertain labour market, in which career paths are less and less continuous, individuals have to take their own initiatives to develop their skills or qualify for new professions, and cumulatively, such initiatives contribute greatly to self-regulation of the labour market. Some countries have introduced mechanisms to facilitate such personal initiatives to develop work-related skills or train for new

occupations. Examples of such mechanisms include individual learning accounts in Scotland; personal paid educational leave in France and Germany; individual training entitlements in France; training cheques in Belgium; and training credits in Italy. All of these mechanisms focussing on the individual complement policies that focus on the organization (Tousignan, 2012; Cedefop, 2009). It has even been proposed that some of the funds allocated for initial occupational training be redirected to help people who are currently employed train for new occupations (Schuller and Watson, 2009). This is also one of the conclusions of a conference on the value of skills in continuing education, held in May 2010 in Spain,[2] in connection with the Spanish presidency of the European Union and the *Public consultation on the Europe 2020 strategy*. The results of a European survey presented at this conference showed that 78% of the respondents planned to develop a broader range of knowledge and skills, 68% planned to develop more specialized knowledge and skills, 61% were doing so on their own initiative and for their own reasons, and 27% were doing so in response to a request by their employer. These personal decisions are usually made at key junctures in individuals' work lives, when they are seeking promotions or planning to change careers. But to plan and carry out these intensive periods of substantial learning, workers need access not only to information, advice, and guidance services, but also to financial support. Only then will the number of workers who take such personal initiatives become large enough to actually facilitate the continuous adjustment of labour supply and demand that has become necessary now that medium- and long-range workforce planning has become so difficult (Brown et al., 2010). We will discuss these policies and mechanisms further in Chapter 10.

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[2] OCE-UQÀM Bulletin June 2010, vol.1, no.1.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The relationship between people and their work is changing, and mediating between the intimate component of work and the intimate component of learning is becoming a challenge for individuals as well as for organizations. As the discrepancy between prescribed work and real work is increasingly recognized, the personal contributions that workers make are increasingly revealed. In striking a new balance between the exchange value of their work and its use value, people are more and more openly seeking a sense of meaning not only in the work they do, but also in the learning that they are expected to do in relation to it. Collectively, workers are helping to change the culture of their organizations so that individuality gains more recognition and productive activity becomes more reflective (Field, 2008). Indeed, knowledge can be put to active use by the organization only once it has been appropriated by the learners. At the same time, the new organization of work demands that employees at all levels operate more autonomously. In addition, individuals must now make myriad transitions in the course of their working lives and so must become co-pilots of their career paths; they can no longer travel down these paths blindly.

The expression and mediation of learning demand are becoming an issue for individuals as well as for organizations, which, if they are going to develop, will have to risk distributing the capacity for initiative more widely. There can be no sustainable productivity unless individuals' capacity for action is facilitated. The intelligence of work is being rediscovered. Workers are increasingly recognized as 'knowing subjects'. The intimacy of learning is being acknowledged.

But even though the new organization of work can create spaces for expressing one's self in one's actual work, and even though enhanced mobility can enable individuals to change career directions

and negotiate career transitions more effectively, certain conditions must be present to make all this possible. Some work settings can be oppressive. Insecure economic conditions can undermine the right to work. The segmentation of the labour market tends to discriminate against immigrants, older workers, and younger workers with more limited skills not to forget women and household work which, though an essential part of many people's lives, remains both invisible as vitally important work and unrecognized as a source of learning (Eichler et al. 2010). In Chapter 10, we will discuss the policies and mechanisms that can make a difference in this regard.

In summary, working women and working men are more than just human resources to be managed. They are agents who are developing their own capabilities. The knowledge-intensive economy cannot exist without an organization of work that is 'actor-intensive' as well. The concept of human capital does identify human labour as a key resource, but results in a reductive, one-dimensional perspective in which the individual is not seen as a sentient actor who can observe, reflect, solve problems, communicate—in short, change and evolve. As Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen (2000) asserts, human beings are more than a means of production or a passive force that performs work; they are the agents and the ultimate end of production.

What is at stake is human capacity and its continuing social and individual development, as well as the continuing capacity for occupational mobility that ensures the right to work. But individuals cannot enhance their performance and their autonomy unless there is recognition of their individual and collective demand for a type of learning that has personal meaning for them not just now, in their workplaces, but also throughout their lives. This recognition is becoming more common in the economic sphere, or at least in certain sectors of the economy, but the same dynamic can be observed in other areas of human activity as well.

CHAPTER 6
THE ROLES OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY IN ACHIEVING LITERACY

Ziba … had a sister in Iran, in Mashad, and, since Ziba was illiterate, she'd ask me to write her sister letters once in a while. And when the sister replied, I'd read her letter to Ziba. One day, I asked her if she'd like to learn to read and write. She gave me this big smile, crinkling her eyes, and said she'd like that very much. So we'd sit at the kitchen table after I was done with my own schoolwork and I'd teach her Alef-beh. I remember looking up sometimes in the middle of homework and seeing Ziba in the kitchen, stirring meat in the pressure cooker, then sitting down with a pencil to do the alphabet homework I'd assigned to her the night before.

Anyway, within a year, Ziba could read children's books … she read me … tales … slowly but correctly. She started calling me Moalem Soraya, Teacher Soraya…. [The] first time Ziba wrote her own letter … I was so proud of her and I felt I'd done something really worthwhile, you know?

From *The Kite Runner,* by Khaled Hosseini, p.132

In this passage from his novel about life in Afghanistan, Hosseini vividly conveys what this experience means for Ziba and Soraya—the intimacy of their educational and learning relationship.

Through the creative partnership between these two women, Ziba's quest for independence can take shape. By learning how to write her own letters, she recovers her lost self-esteem. Ziba's big smile is matched by Soraya's sense of pride in her.

To be sure, Ziba's learning experience consists in part of receiving instruction from someone else. But that is not all. It is also and before anything else an active process by which this woman, without forgetting to 'stir the meat', takes in the knowledge that she observes by herself and the knowledge that she is offered by someone else and makes it her own. Thus she makes herself more aware of realities with which she is unfamiliar, transcending her imposed identity. Accompanied by her mentor, she is constructing herself as a person (Crossan et al., 2003).

The act of learning is one that belongs to the learner, in which learners create themselves and seek themselves even more intensely in the very fibres of their being. In the case of literacy learning, the process of assimilating new linguistic codes may seem relatively impersonal, but acquiring and mobilizing literacy skills is nevertheless very much part of the effort to construct one's identity.

In this chapter, we will first examine the scope and complexity of the demand for literacy in today's societies. Then, without denying the social dimension of the demand for literacy now required, we will explore its deeply personal dimension. Finally, we will focus on two conditions that can facilitate or impede the rise of democratically literate communities and societies.

6.1 THE SCOPE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE DEMAND FOR LITERACY IN TODAY'S SOCIETIES

To understand the scope of the demand for literacy education in today's societies, we must first recognize the still too common tendency to oversimplify this demand and perceive it as purely a technical matter of teaching people how to read and write.

6.1.1 A DEFICIT-BASED DEFINITION OF THE DEMAND FOR LITERACY

Individuals' and communities' demand for literacy is often defined in terms of certain individuals' lack of certain externally defined, standardized skills. These individuals are thus reduced solely to what they don't have, are not, and cannot do (McDermott and Varenne, 1995). Labelled illiterate, they see their identity reduced to what someone else says they are lacking, even though their lack of skills is due not to any shortcoming on their part, but rather to changes that have occurred in the settings where they live and work every day.

What this definition overlooks is that these women and men, even when they were still living in orally based cultures and engaging in conventional economic activities, still communicated, debated, and participated actively. What has changed is not these people, but the methods by which communication takes place.

For example, at one time, pulp-and-paper machine operators used to assess the quality of wood pulp by feeling it and smelling it. To assess this quality now, they must use a computer terminal to perform tests on it. This does not mean that these operators have become less competent; on the contrary, when a computer system breaks down, they become sought-after experts!

Similarly, in Africa, agricultural officers used to give peasant farmers oral training in tasks such as applying fertilizers and pesticides and testing water wells for contamination. The farmers learned their lessons well and applied them independently. Now, because of budget restrictions, such training has to be provided mainly through written materials. This does not mean that the farmers have become less intelligent or less capable of applying their experience. All they are asking for is the knowledge and skills needed to continue doing their jobs in an environment that is becoming increasingly literate, computerized, and complex, and to continue developing themselves in this changing context, through a process of lifelong learning (Torres, 2009).

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Deficit-based definitions of literacy and illiteracy stigmatize the individuals concerned and chastise them for not having the new skills needed to respond to changes in their workplaces and their communities. Hence these people are prevented from demanding the education experience they need. In today's changing societies, we must move beyond the 'war on illiteracy' model and begin responding to men's and women's demands for active participation in changing social environments. As defined by UNESCO (2005, p. 21), literacy is 'the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve [their] goals, develop [their] knowledge and potential, and participate fully in [their] community and wider society.' This expanded, pluralistic, multidimensional definition of literacy recognizes both the intimacy of the various forms of literacy learning and their social implications.

6.1.2 ESSENTIAL SKILLS: A REVEALING TREND

One interesting example of the new, expanded definition of literacy is the concept of essential skills, which was developed by Canadian researchers (De Vries, 2009) and has been operationalized in a very creative way by an organization called Workplace Education Manitoba.[3] They identify nine skills that are essential for living, learning, and working in today's society. This reference model recognizes that depending on the specific circumstances of people's lives, they may already have mastered some of these essential skills, have learned others long ago but had little chance to apply them since, and not really need certain others at the present time (Ouellet et al., 2006). These nine essential skills of course include

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[3] http://www.wem.mb.ca/

the three Rs – reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic – but also include oral communication skills, familiarity with computers, and the abilities to solve problems, to work with others, to learn independently, and to use reference documents independently.

In all societies – in the North as well as the South – the workplace is changing from an oral culture to a written one. Workers must perform increasingly complex tasks such as operating sophisticated workstations, using computer-assisted production-management systems, and implementing quality standards and quality controls. But we cannot, in the words of the United Nations Development Programme (2001), 'make new technologies work for human development' if we do not ensure that everyone has access to the new information and communication technologies. In today's world, people must be able to use a telephone, follow instructions on product packages and in user manuals, understand the printed handouts that their doctors give them at increasingly short office visits, use maps to find their way on public transit systems, participate in elections as informed citizens and not simply touch a candidate's photo on a computer screen. But in today's world, people must above all be able to go on informing themselves and go on learning through the modes of communication that have become predominant.

The demand for essential skills cuts across all areas of life: work in both the formal and informal economy, health, the environment, and most of all, the quality of daily life in settings that have become more and more dependent on words and computers. This demand is also transgenerational, because the transition to a society with a high intensity of written communication involves all generations, from the tiniest children to their parents and grandparents. This society is creating a new demand not only for literacy skills starting in early childhood and continuing throughout primary school, secondary school, and adult life, but also for synergy and an inter-learning dynamic among the various age groups.

Some might argue that this problem will solve itself, as the education level of the younger generations continues to rise. This trend does of course have major implications. But as of 2014, 90% of the people in the world who will be alive in the next decade have already completed all of their initial education. At that rate, it would take 30 years to produce an active literate society through initial education of children and youth alone. We cannot wait that long. We must also provide education opportunities within the current generation of adults.

This holistic, universalist view provides a better insight into the societal nature of this demand, which requires a response not only from the actors responsible for education, but also from those responsible for culture, leisure, health, the environment, immigration, and economic development. Thus this vision also underscores society's collective demand and responsibility for adult literacy.

6.1.3 AUTONOMY AND SELF-ESTEEM

The manifesto for adult literacy learners published by the European Network for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (Eur-Alpha, 2012, p.1) states, 'The more we learn, the more we want to learn. The more we write, the more we want to write. The more we read, the more we want to read. Words have become our friends.' Adult literacy learners want to empower themselves so that they can inform themselves better, so that they put and write names on their tacit knowledge and make their voices better heard, and so that they can better observe and understand how society, government, and the health, education, political and economic systems work. When adult literacy learners talk about their learning experiences, the same words, images, and metaphors recur repeatedly: light, a window on the outside world, a gateway to the unknown. These experiences reawaken adults' thirst for learning and give them the means of satisfying it themselves throughout their lives (Torres, 2009; Giere, 1992).

Such learning demand should be seen as a request not to overcome a personal handicap, but rather to learn how to satisfy one's curiosity, to act independently in a new literate life and work context, and to continue constructing one's self in all of these new, constantly evolving situations. It is no accident that in studies evaluating adults' experiences in literacy and basic skills training programmes, two of the effects observed repeatedly are greater autonomy and a greater or renewed sense of personal dignity (Solar et al., 2006; Beder, 1999; Wikelung et al., 1992). These studies show that

[author's translation] 'adults who enrol in programmes to develop their basic skills increase their self-esteem, self-confidence, and resourcefulness. They gain better control over their daily lives and develop new networks of friends and acquaintances. Once these adults begin these programmes, they become more open to reading and writing and develop a more positive attitude about them' (Solar *et al.,* 2006, p.120).

Developing literacy and other basic skills is not a sudden passage from the darkness into the light, nor a sudden conversion from 'illiterate' to 'literate'. It is an ongoing process. As adults develop these skills and experience new access to knowledge, they will continue to try new things, such as consulting a document to answer a question, or thinking critically about what they have read instead of just believing it, or reading widely to satisfy their curiosity, or learning how to use constantly changing computer hardware and software, participating in conversations on blogs and social media, or reading for pleasure. The content of this process of experimentation will vary from one individual to another according to their life paths, but it will continue throughout their lives.

Thus, as Torres (2009) writes, when we talk about literacy, we are also talking about quality of life, freedom, autonomy, social consciousness, empowerment, and hence human dignity. By recognizing these aspects of the demand for literacy, we are not rejecting the functional aspect or denying the need to strengthen people's technical literacy skills. But we are acknowledging how the people

concerned will or will not perceive and negotiate this demand, and thus responding to their quest for autonomy and opening up 'a gateway to fuller participation in cultural, social, political and economic life' (UNESCO, 1997, para. 24).

6.1.4 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION

For a community, learning to read means learning the words to describe and debate its condition, to openly express what everyone has been feeling but not saying openly; it means learning to act in a new context. In the words of Paulo Freire (1971, pp. 8, 17), literacy learning '[author's translation] is not a matter of memorizing syllables, words and phrases detached from real life ... it is a matter of adopting an attitude of creation and re-creation, of teaching oneself how to have an impact on one's environment'. Literacy educators have to start from their learners' lived experiences and summarize them in 'generative words' that reveal these realities by giving them a name. These key words, by drawing on the terms in which the learners talk about their everyday lives, make their concrete situation more apparent and stimulate discussions and analyses that can give lead to critical awareness and an active rejection of oppression (Freire, 1980; Stromquist, 2014). This 'pedagogy of the oppressed' takes the people's existing knowledge into account. It rejects the 'culture of silence' that stifles all criticism. The goal of this pedagogy is not simply to transmit the institutionalized culture and its communication codes, but rather to facilitate meaningful learning that enables people to describe their environment, to learn more about it and then transform it.

Many literacy networks, such as the Reflect network in Africa and Asia (Archer and Cottingham, 2009), have embraced the main elements of this Freirian pedagogy, which is based precisely on learners' reflecting on their situation and engaging in active learning centred on powerful words that can help raise their

consciousness about this situation. To build community capacity, the Reflect approach relies on citizens' inner resources, on their ability 'to understand the interconnections between personal, local and global realities' (UNESCO, 1997).

6.1.5 THE NON-LINEAR HISTORY OF LITERACY

The history of literacy education is paradoxical. In the 19th century, literacy was a concern only in the industrializing countries of the North, where it ceased to be a concern once initial education became universal. But in the 1950s and 1960s, literacy emerged as an issue again, this time in countries on the path to national liberation. China, Cuba, and the United Republic of Tanzania became models for literacy education, as they implemented major national literacy programmes. And then, after more than 50 or 60 years of absence from their policy agendas, literacy emerged as an issue in the industrialized countries once more – tentatively at first, in the 1980s, and then picking up steam in the 1990s. Today, literacy has become a recognized issue in every country of the world (UNESCO, 2010; OECD, 2013, 2003).

In the workplace, new oral and written communication skills are required when a new work team is deployed or new information technologies are introduced. The same is true in people's personal lives, as they do their banking, use health-care services, and so on. When people migrate from one country to another, they must learn their new country's language and norms. Moreover, in addition to their varying needs, individuals also have varying perceptions of their own ability to learn the things that they consider necessary or desirable to learn. Differences in people's life histories, and in the settings where they live and work, and in their degree of access to learning resources all help to determine their unique, personal perceptions of both their need to learn certain basic skills and the feasibility of their doing so.

Yet, in advanced industrial areas, if the issue of basic skills re-emerges, it is very different from previously. Basic skills are not static qualifications which, once acquired in childhood, remain active throughout life. Initial universal schooling does not assure (within the already schooled grown-up generations) a continued command of these skills by individuals who live and operate in contexts of work and everyday life where they are precisely not required. At work, the arrival of new technologies, the introduction of teamwork and the frequency of technical training now make the utilization of these skills essential. It is the same in everyday life. This learning demand is very different from basic literacy. The demand here is to update skills now required daily and to be made use of in a more and more intensive technological environment.

The learning demand in basic skills is thus both generalized and diverse. Some people could not go to school when they were young, and now need to acquire such skills. Other people need to refresh and update skills that have now become essential for them and that they acquired long ago but have not utilized for many years.

6.2 THE SOCIAL AND INTIMATE SIDES OF LEARNING: A NECESSARY AMBIGUITY

As we have just seen, people's learning demands are highly personal and highly context-dependent. But unless these people can express their demands, the appropriate responses will not be forthcoming. And that is especially true when it comes to demands for 'essential skills', given the particular difficulties involved in expressing them.

6.2.1 HOW DEMANDS FOR LITERACY ARE PERCEIVED

In some quarters, the need for literacy is perceived as something like an illness that has to be cured. Hence women and men who might enrol in literacy and basic skills programmes may fear being

stigmatized and identified as 'deficient' if they do so (Gallacher et al., 2002). For example, some workers, who are well aware that they would benefit from strengthening their writing or arithmetic skills, to avoid being stigmatized and to preserve their own sense of dignity, instead apply all their ingenuity to hiding their weaknesses in these areas. In contrast, in another situation, a community women's group have openly demanded directly relevant training, thus successfully rejecting and overturning the humiliating image of illiteracy.

Cultural and emotional factors could also prevent people from expressing their demands for literacy education and must be given proper attention in the expression of these demands. For example, there is a tendency to assume that immigrant workers' difficulties in communicating in multicultural, multilingual workplaces are attributable solely to a lack of language skills and can therefore be overcome through language instruction alone, with no allowance for possible cultural or gender divergences in the workplace. This example clearly demonstrates the necessity of identifying individual needs, which cannot be isolated from the specific psycho-social context of the people concerned (Grünhage-Monetti et al., 2009).

Prejudices and stereotypes transmitted by families, schools, and society can also devalue certain skills. For example, girls who are exposed to groundless stereotypes about their need and ability to acquire mathematical and technological skills may become so afraid that they do not even try to do so, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy (Solar, 1995).

6.2.2 THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Theories and practices of literacy and basic skills education vary. As Brian Street (1984) wrote some decades ago, there is not just one vision and one approach –'not one literacy, but many literacies'.

The differences in practices across cultures, ideological perspectives, societal contexts, and societal demands result in differing perceptions and concrete expectations among the targeted learners and alter the meaning they attach to these practices. Beyond the formal curriculum, the more immediate learning climate, teaching practices, and socio-cultural conditions all imbue the educational experience with a subliminal meaning. They convey a hidden curriculum. The way that the instruction provided is portrayed in recruiting and teaching materials, and the way that the teachers interact with the learners, have a great influence. They affect 'the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants, especially the new learners and their position in relations of power' (Street, 2003, p. 78).

Thus, the question is not whether literacy education leads to democracy. Couched in abstract terms, with no distinction between various instructional practices and socio-political contexts, the question is meaningless. A mastery of literacy and other essential skills by the population at large is a necessary condition for democratic life, but not all literacy programmes lead to democracy. Historians such as Resnick (1983) and Graff (1986) report cases where governments have used literacy programmes as a means of discriminating against some social groups, or have selected programme content to influence if not indoctrinate the masses. For example, after the leaders of Brazil's military regime sent Paulo Freire into exile, they did not eliminate literacy training altogether, but they did channel it into a narrowly functional Brazilian Literacy Movement (MOBRAL) (Gadotti, 1998).

6.2.3 EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES ARE NOT NEUTRAL

For the individual learner, the process of mastering these essential skills is both a cognitive and an emotional experience, and to neglect either of these aspects is to hamper the experience.

Cognitively speaking, to participate freely in an increasingly literate world where culture, science and technology play a greater and greater role, individuals must master the increasingly specific vocabularies used in their workplaces and their communities, become familiar with the latest communication tools that refer to these new vocabularies, and learn to apply in real-world contexts the numeracy skills that they have learned in the classroom.

But the process of building these technical skills also engages individual learners emotionally. Successful learning experiences restore their self-confidence and are emotionally positive. But sometimes learners have negative emotional experiences. If someone has trouble in learning, does not receive the necessary support, and receives repeated negative feedback, he or she may never overcome the resulting feelings of disappointment and may ultimately be discouraged from trying to learn. To successfully appropriate encoded knowledge, individuals must also develop the personal resilience needed to see their inevitable errors not as reasons to become discouraged, but rather as potential learning opportunities. When people do acquire basic skills, they do not automatically learn to use them in daily life; they must be intrinsically motivated to do so, based on their personal perceptions of the need for and the usefulness of these skills.

To learn successfully, individuals must also cumulatively develop and integrate the knowledge and expertise they are acquiring. For example, neuroscientific research has shown that the specific human brain structures that have evolved to specialize in numeracy processing do not suffice, on their own, for learning and mastering mathematics. They must work in co-ordination with other neural circuits that apply the individual's life experiences to the numeracy-acquisition process. Thus it has been found that learning through repetition and memorization creates less efficient neural circuits than learning through strategy and reflection, a practice that then leads to memorization (OECD-CERI, 2007).

Similarly, the results of the first Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, in 2000 (OECD, 2003, p. 123), showed that students acquire, retain, and apply basic skills more effectively if, while and beyond memorizing information, they can process it and relate it to their own personal and social experiences. By thinking about what they have written and read, by drawing connections, by playing with words – through all these experiences and metacognitive pursuits – student succeed in mastering the written word and making this mode of communication their own (Cromley, 2005). Ultimately, they develop positive feelings about reading and writing and a ludic playful approach to them. These learning processes are highly complex, and to reduce them to a single dimension is to greatly understate their implications.

These same studies by the OECD and by the PISA programme to assess learning of basic skills (OECD, 2003) found that students who spend more time reading for pleasure read a wider variety of materials and tend to be more proficient readers.

6.3 CONDITIONS THAT FACILITATE OR IMPEDE THE LEARNING OF BASIC SKILLS

Education approaches are not the only thing that determines whether learners succeed in mastering literacy and other basic skills. For learners to acquire these skills successfully, their home and work environments must also allow and facilitate the process.

In industrial societies, adults' decisions to participate in basic skills education may be facilitated or impeded by institutional and structural variables. Examples include the geographic proximity of educational programmes; the availability of financial support, public information, and counselling and guidance services. But such decisions are also influenced by myriad variables related to the adult individuals themselves and their particular living conditions. Examples of such factors include the adults' perceptions of

the usefulness of such organized learning; their past educational experiences; their confidence in their ability to succeed; the extent to which they have well defined personal plans; the time and resources available to them; their ability to reconcile work, family and learning demands; the stability or precariousness of their employment; the life transitions they may be experiencing; their age; and the support they receive from their immediate community and their employers (Bélanger, Carignan and Stailescu, 2007). The consideration of all these individual differences—even if they are the result of societal forces—has become a major condition for the success of adult literacy and basic skills programmes.

Two other key problems have to be raised: the need for plain language in today's society and the difficulty of expressing literacy demands.

6.3.1 THE NEED FOR PLAIN LANGUAGE IN THE LITERATE ENVIRONMENT

Adults who finish their literacy training have little chance of continuing to use and improve their reading skills when they return to 'real life' if, once they get there, most of what they have to read is written in such convoluted language that it is almost impossible to understand. To make matters worse, the organizations that propagate such language are subliminally sending these people the false message that they do not really know how to read.

If the world is going to function effectively as it comes to rely more and more on written communication, then not only must the public's literacy skills be strengthened, but also the organizations that communicate with the public in writing—cultural institutions, government agencies, pharmaceutical companies, traditional and new media, and so on—must start doing so in accessible language. And yes, explaining a complex problem in simple terms does require a better understanding of the content and better communication skills. A message that is comprehensible does not

mean a message that is simplistic—quite the contrary. Needlessly sophisticated communication silently conveys invidious social distinctions. They use cultivated language to insidiously exclude entire groups of people, sending them the false but ever-so-effective message that they are outside the realm of knowledge, in the land of the ignorant (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970).

Helping individuals learn to read but then giving them nothing but unduly complicated written material creates a sense of frustration that is destructive. It undermines their sense of self-worth and their confidence in their ability to learn, and, within their communities, blocks the effect of their successful learning experience. This problem could even begin during the learning process itself, when literacy trainers choose to begin with 'non-authentic' teaching materials remote from work and non-work situations in learners' daily lives. By having the opportunity, in the course of their training, to foresee how they may apply it practically in their work and personal lives, participants will more readily be able to transfer these skills into action later on.

The need for plain language in the literate environment is now so widely recognized that it has been incorporated into many national literacy policies. These policies call for the creation of an environment in which all citizens, as they move from oral communication to written communication, first in physical and then in electronic form, can be informed, can communicate, participate, react, and hence continue to develop to their full potential. As Lind (2008) underscores, the literate environment is one in which reading has become enjoyable and useful if not essential in daily life, and when written information is routinely available and accessible in both physical and virtual forms. The result is a local community of practice in which the strengthening of reading and writing skills has become so integrated into daily life that it continues to take place in an informal way (Barton and Hamilton, 1998).

6.3.2 THE DIFFICULTY OF EXPRESSING THE DEMAND
FOR BASIC EDUCATION

As we have seen, the difficulties that adults often have in express-
ing their learning demands is even tougher in the case of essential
skills. Hindrances in deciding to enrol in such programmes can
be explained both by the stigma often attached to such education
and by the aversive associations that people may still have with
school (Bélanger, Voyer and Wagner, 2004). Too many adults who
could benefit from basic education have been socialized to blame
themselves for having left school and hence to ignore the unequal
distribution of cultural and social capital. They may thus spend
their entire lives suffering in silence this unfairness and an inter-
nalized sense of disgrace. Because people have not been exposed
to examples of success or positive images and because they did not
find support to overcome all the obstacles described above, their
objective demand is bound to remain unmet.

The practices of the pioneering organization *Workplace
Education Manitoba*, mentioned earlier, reflect a broader trend in
countries that have been industrialized for some time. According to
these practices, every company education and training programme
starts with an analysis of the employer's and the employees' needs.
A flexible scenario is then developed in which the context is care-
fully considered and the training programme is custom-designed
to address the concrete problems being experienced in the work-
place. The short-term objective of such programmes is to develop
employees' skills and improve their ability to act independently.
These learning activities, in addition to their immediate effects on
the production process and on the employees' actual daily work,
create a desire for and a culture of continuous knowledge and skills
development, hence a sense of personal efficacy.

It is true that countries have begun taking action and that
UNESCO, through UIL and various programmes such as the

Literacy Initiative for Empowerment,[4] is attempting to raise awareness of this issue. But the situation remains critical in Southeast Asia, in low-income Arab countries, and especially in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2011). In the industrialized world, things are starting to change, but only slowly. Despite the international surveys conducted by the OECD (2013) and Statistics Canada in 2002 and 2005 (Murray, Clermont and Binkley, 2005), which demonstrated statistically that the demand is there, nothing tends to be done in the workplace unless, following a change in production technologies or in the way that work methods and technologies are organized, an unexpected event reveals the need.

All too many national governments are still reluctant to recognize the need for adult literacy and basic education. This is either because the demand from various industries and other sectors falls between the jurisdictions of different ministries or because the education ministry fails to develop synergistic relationships with other ministries which would make such education a shared priority and secure inter-ministerial cooperation in meeting it. Even the United Nations did not dare to include adult literacy education in the eight Millennium Development Goals that it identified in 2000, and have hesitated to do so for the next post-2015 phase of these global development goals. As for UNESCO, out of the six goals of the Education for All movement that the member states identified at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, it is precisely those goals that involve adults and young people who are not in school (goals 3 and 4) that have received the least attention from these states and from international agencies. As noted in Chapter 1, in 2011, there were still almost 800 million people in the world who had not had even a minimal opportunity to acquire basic skills, and nearly two-thirds

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[4] Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE); 2006-2015. http://uil.unesco.org/filead-min/keydocuments/Literacy/en/life_leaflet_en.pdf

of these people were women (UNESCO, 2011, Part 1, Chapter 1). This institutional reluctance not only limits the resources allocated for basic education, but also limits the expression of this basic learning demand by the public concerned. When this demand is thus silenced and hidden away in a private corner, it no longer has any political or social weight, it is not seen as a necessity, and the *status quo* can then be upheld with impunity.

A new vision of basic-education policy is needed:
– a vision that recognizes the intimacy of these forms of learning, which have become so imperative in today's society, throughout the world;
– a vision that encompasses all stakeholders in all sectors of society;
– a biographical vision that sees basic education as a way of beginning or reinvigorating the process of active lifelong learning;
– a broader vision that involves not only the educational programmes themselves, but also prior interventions to inform potential learners and help them express their learning demands, as well as interventions following these programmes, to create an environment that encourages and facilitates continuous, lifelong learning;
– a democratic vision of adult literacy that is meaningful both for the learners and their communities and that actively supports equal opportunities to truly learn.

6.4 CONCLUSION

For adults to learn to read and understand on their own all the written information that surrounds them, they must unlearn all the fears and traumas left behind by their past interactions with the education system. Both learning and unlearning are simultaneously

intimate and social experiences. As today's society becomes more and more literate and makes problem-solving relying on written sources increasingly essential, many people find that they cannot improve their living and working conditions unless they improve their mastery of these skills. Society, the economy, the quality of life, and democracy demand it. The rising tide of these learning demands is part and parcel of citizens' emerging aspirations for greater autonomy and real opportunities for collective action.

As we have seen in this chapter, studies around the world have repeatedly shown that adult basic education experiences, when firmly rooted in people's actual life situations and the community's expectations, tend to have an emancipating effect. It is when people can relate their new knowledge and skills to their past experiences, build on what they already know, and revisit areas where they had difficulties in the past, that they learn significantly and effectively.

The demand for adult literacy has been demonstrated objectively time and time again, but efforts to respond to it remain limited. Many adults, in both the North and the South, have little chance to participate in this learning that would unleash their capacity for action. In too many societies and workplaces, the stigma attached to 'illiteracy' as some kind of deficiency or pathology discourages people from expressing this demand. To respond properly to this social necessity and these aspirations requires a living environment and a work environment that can create the necessary space and provide the indispensable resources. It requires conditions that are not yet in place in too many parts of the world.

The Declaration of UNESCO's Fourth International Conference on Adult Education in 1985 defined the right to learn as including the rights to read and write, to question and analyze, to imagine, to read one's own world and to write history, and to develop individual and collective skills (UNESCO, 1985). Unless people are free to exercise this right autonomously in their daily activities, their freedom to exercise all their other human rights remains limited. If the innate

human competence to acquire spoken language is a fundamental asset of humanity and humanity's creativity (Chomsky, 1986), the right to develop competence in the written forms of language is now also revealing itself to be essential throughout the world.

CHAPTER 7
CAN LEARNING TRULY BE LIFELONG?

Said the little boy, 'Sometimes I drop my spoon.'
Said the old man, 'I do that too.'
The little boy whispered, 'I wet my pants.'
'I do that too' laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy, 'I often cry.'
The old man nodded, 'So do I.'
'But worst of all,' said the boy, 'it seems
Grown-ups don't pay attention to me.'
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
'I know what you mean,' said the little old man.

The Little Boy and the Old Man by Shel Silverstein (1981)

If all life transitions are opportunities to observe and to learn about the ongoing construction of the self, transition to retirement can be especially revealing. In today's world, however, except for a minority of fortunate seniors, this life transition often marks the end of active living and active learning. In all of the countries for which statistics are available, scarcely more than one out of ten people aged 65 or older participate in structured adult learning, except in a few northern European countries, where the proportion is far higher at 40%.

Does the desire to learn really disappear at age 65? Women and men this age, though they are arbitrarily defined as consumers of personal care and occupational therapy, do have explicit or at least implicit plans for the potential of their life yet unlived. They resist being 'placed on the shelf'. But what space and resources do they have for expressing and negotiating their learning demand?

After describing such discriminatory views of aging, we will examine the learning and socio-cultural conditions of people aged 65 and older and the breakdown that they often experience in their social identity, along with the cumulative effects of their personal educational histories. We will then be in a better place to understand how these circumstances make it harder for older people to express their learning demand, and how, in some countries, new policies and programmes are starting to unleash lifelong learning from this pathological definition of advancing age.

7.1 A DISCRIMINATORY VIEW OF THE LIVES OF OLDER PEOPLE

An interesting parallel can be drawn between the prevailing views of older people's educational lives and their sex lives. In both cases, at the age when people's activities lose their instrumental functions – professional in the former case, reproductive in the latter – these activities tend to lose their personal value and social legitimacy. Education then comes to be regarded as an unnecessary luxury, and sexuality as a memory best suppressed. In other words, our society's productivist and pro-natalist biases cause older people's education and sexuality to be stigmatized (Colson, 2007a).

Such a trend can also be observed through the experience of physical and symbolic violence. Sexual aggression and sustained mobbing can have a lifelong impact on the affective experience of the body and the mind. When someone's body has been mistreated or abused, it tends to become an anesthetized and paralyzed, no longer able to feel alive, and the individual will have difficulty in finding the pathway to desire, in sharing sexual pleasure and experiencing sexual intimacy in a positive way (Colson, 2007b). In people's educational and learning biographies, the same pattern holds true. When a person has suffered academic failure early in life, such an experience can cause trauma and needs to be revisited in order to recover the joy of learning.

In both cases, at a time of life when people's activities derive their meaning from the pleasure of engaging in them rather than from their practical utility, society tends to fear that this activity will become excessive. Just like seniors who are enjoying intimate physical relationships with each other, seniors setting off on intellectual voyages into the world of the imagination are somehow disturbing. What does society fear? That if seniors' active learning lives go on for too long, they will start to use their imaginations too much and place too many demands on public services? Or analogously, that sensual caresses and sexual pleasure will become normal aspirations in this age-group (Colson, 2007b)? Why do certain institutions and certain authorities tend to be so worried when they see the joy of living assume an importance that is beyond their control? It is as if they were afraid that seniors who were not in decline but still full of life might somehow become too unmanageable!

Indeed, ideas about older people's sexuality are changing. In a 28-country survey in 2004, two-thirds of the respondents said that they disagreed with the statement that older people were no longer interested in sex (Bondil, 2008, p. 157). But cultural models that subtly repress the sex lives of older people still tend to prevail in policy-making circles and continue to have negative effects. This repression is a serious matter, because it interferes with people's right to live their own lives. These negative stereotypes have been shown to lead to distortions and inhibitions in the pursuit of emotional relationships (*Hite Report on Female Sexuality*, 2004), and hence seriously to impair people's psychological health and, more broadly, their quality of life. In contrast, when sexuality in seniors' relationships is normalized, it proves to be a source of experiences that help to give their life value and make them cleave to it more strongly (Bondil, 2008; Ribes et al., 2007). They tend to develop a more aesthetic sensibility, a greater imagination and feel more connected with their own feelings. They also become more intellectually curious and more tolerant, qualities closely associated with the development of wisdom, a signature attribute of 'aging well'.

In learning and education too, there is no age limit on desire. The parallels between the received wisdom about older people's sex lives and their educational lives are highly revealing. In both cases, the concepts of 'active' and 'successful aging', first developed to express the paradigm shift in perceptions of this stage of life, shed much light. '[author's translation] Aging may be unavoidable, but aging badly is not. Living better and longer is one of the challenges for the 21st century' (Bondil, 2008, p.170). Thus both sexual abstinence and educational deprivation are ceasing to be treated as inevitable concomitants of old age. The current generation of people aged 65 and older are being called upon to invent not only a form of sexuality liberated from the demands of reproduction but also a form of education freed from the demands of the formal economy.

This refusal to dissociate quality of life from longevity is part and parcel of seniors' growing aspirations for a satisfying intimate life, and their right to such a life (Tap, 2011). Their endogenous demand for such a life is also becoming a societal necessity. The broader vision of successful aging is also becoming a necessity in today's societies, because of the cultural, social, and economic benefits of a more independent life for this growing segment of the population. We shall return to this point later on, but first let us analyze in greater depth the current conditions that permit the sustainable development of the individual through 'active and successful aging' (Tap, 2011, pp. 79-81).

7.2 IDENTITY BREAKDOWN AND BIOGRAPHICAL CONTINUITY

The learning and educational condition of people aged 65 and over is characterized by two seemingly contradictory phenomena: a breakdown in social identity and a biographical continuity in educational advantages and disadvantages.

7.2.1 BREAKDOWN IN SOCIAL IDENTITY

When they're trying to be really nice to us, they talk to us as if we were children (...). It makes me want to throw up.[5]

When women and men reach the age of 65, they are suddenly slapped with a stereotype that has become practically universal in urban society: they are perceived as 'low on competence', but 'high on warmth' (Cuddy, Norton and Fiske, 2005, p. 268). According to these authors, this pairing of paradoxical perceptions is all the more powerful in that it first paints a negative picture of seniors, then covers it up with an attribute that has positive affective connotations. It thus legitimizes and perpetuates a culture of pity in which older people are treated as dependent and in need of help. This 'prejudice with a pretty face' is all the more pernicious because older people themselves may gradually come to embrace it, thus developing a self-induced sense of dependence. Once society has identified this group of individuals as physically and mentally weak and deficient, and placed them in a metaphorical waiting room for the end of life, how can they seriously be expected to maintain their self-confidence and their sense of individual and collective efficacy? This prejudice is tenacious and widespread (Cuddy et al. 2005) in North America, Asia, and Europe. The message sent is clear: You are no longer lively, capable, and industrious, so we will deny you any active role in life, but you're so nice! We're going to segregate you from the rest of society, but we really like you a lot! It is no coincidence that from an institutional standpoint, retirement from work is treated as a total retreat from active life in general. As if the hours spent at the workplace in today's biographies were the only life period that matters!

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[5] Quote from an unpublished report on popular education.

This deftly executed social exclusion has some major consequences. It prevents new retirees from continuing to construct their own identity and imposes a new one on them instead. It also affects their interpersonal and institutional relationships. It leads to policies that ignore older people's desires or that even impede their efforts to continue or resume their educational lives. In most societies today, despite the official rhetoric about lifelong learning, the general economy of what is paradoxically known as 'continuing education' suddenly ceases to operate when people enter this new frontier of their life. And yet, as their healthy life expectancy increases, more and more older women and men are full of energy and plans and would have all kinds of life projects, if they were given the space to dream about them. But unfortunately, society no longer supports their learning biographies. Unless they have the personal resources to pursue them on their own, their educational lives are destined to languish. Their animated inner lives are imperilled.

Luckily, however, the lines demarcating the exit from official economic life are becoming more and more blurred, and different stages of life increasingly overlap. This growing ambiguity is helping to belie the stereotypes by extending what is regarded as active life. But it has not eliminated this biased, destructive perception of older people.

For over 30 years now, we have been witnessing a re-thinking of the biological, psychological, and social implications of aging (Bélanger, 1992). We are seeing a new emphasis not only on the overall possibility of successful aging, but also on the social, economic, and cultural contributions that can be made by people who age successfully. Gerontologists now spend less time trying to measure individuals' lost capacities and more time trying to enhance the capacities that people have in reserve.

Research on how older people's learning ability changes over time has been conducted in the fields of psychology, ergonomics, andragogy and neuroscience and has yielded three fundamental findings about seniors' potential for educational development (Bélanger,

1992; Tennant and Pogson, 1995; Merriam and Caffarella, 2007; OECD-CERI, 2007).

First, although IQ-based indicators show that learning abilities begin to decline somewhat after age 67, more extensive research on active intelligence and learnable intelligence shows that for most individuals, there is no significant inevitable decline before age 80, except in psychomotor capacity and memory. Moreover, although these declines are real, they can be stabilized, if not sometimes even reversed, by various factors related to opportunities to live in a stimulating environment and maintain a curious, creative state of mind.

Second, researchers have found that as people grow older, they can compensate for loss of some skills by substituting others, for example, by applying their experience and sound decision-making in compensation for slower response times.

Third, studies on the education of groups of older adults show not only that in certain fields (technical, artistic, and linguistic, for instance), their success rates are relatively similar to those of other age groups, but also that their continued participation in either structured or unstructured learning helps them to maintain and sometimes even enhance their intellectual and psychomotor capabilities.

7.2.2 BIOGRAPHICAL CONTINUITY

Obviously, individual seniors' learning abilities and educational potential differ, as a result both of their past educational histories and of inequalities in their current living conditions. Despite the discontinuity in seniors' social identity, there is continuity in their personal biographies. The advantages and disadvantages that they experience over their lifetimes have a cumulative effect. Inequalities have a strong tendency to be perpetuated over an individual's lifetime. For example, in Canada in 2004, it was found that participation in adult education began to decrease at age 45. This decline accelerated at age 55 and became even more pronounced

among adults aged 65 and over, whose participation rate was only 15% (Doray, 2012). In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2002, the participation rate was 61% among people aged 20 to 24, but only 17% among those aged 65 to 74 and 8% among those age 75 and over (Tuckett and McAuley, 2005).

This gradual decline in education participation with age is closely linked to variables at work throughout individual life histories, such as social and professional status, periods of unemployment, level of education prior to entering the work force, and income (Doray, 2012). A survey conducted in France in 2000 showed that among individuals aged 60 and over, 32% of all managers, 10% of all white-collar employees, and only 3% of all blue-collar workers had access to continuing education (Céreq, 2002). Just like inequalities in education prior to entering the work force, such inequalities in education participation during the final years of working life are likely to be repeated to the same or to an even greater extent once people enter retirement.

However, this perpetuation of pre-retirement educational and cultural limitations in post-retirement life is not inevitable and can be prevented. The growing diversification of people's life trajectories creates room for such 'course corrections':

> 'Individuals are no longer so tightly locked into a preordained sequence of positions. Instead, they have a wider range of choices. (…) Whereas once society determined how they would spend their time, now they have more leeway to determine it themselves. Experts on such matters are unanimous in emphasizing this change: individuals now have more and more sovereignty over their own use of time, and as a result, their life trajectories are increasingly negotiated and hence more diverse.' (Guillemard, 2004, p. 7 ; author's translation).

But these life trajectories can become self-reflexive only under certain conditions.

7.3 A REPRESSED DEMAND AND THE CONDITIONS FOR FREEING IT

In developed countries, people aged 60 and over will represent one-third of the population by the year 2050. In developing counties, this age group currently represents only 8% of the population, but will represent nearly 20% by 2050. In all countries combined, this age group comprised some 700 million people in 2009; by 2050, the figure will be 2 billion.[6]

The population aged 60 and over is no longer a minority group. By 2020, 30% of the total population of Germany, Italy, and Japan will be at least 60 years old (NIACE, 2005). These women and men can expect to live to at least age 80, and they have a learning demand that they may not express, but that is nonetheless real.

7.3.1 THE LEARNING DEMAND

There are two different sources of information demonstrating this learning demand among older adults. The first consists of statistical data from countries that have taken steps to meet this demand: specifically, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Sweden. The second consists of numerous past studies on the educational needs and aspirations of older people, from which a convincing picture emerges.

7.3.2 THE DIVERSITY OF OLDER ADULTS' LEARNING DEMAND

Older people's learning demand and the settings in which they live their lives are also more diverse than in past generations. This demand varies in its form (informal versus structured learning), in its content and also between women and men (Merriam and Kee, 2014).

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[6] World Population Ageing, United Nations, New York, 2009.

One topic that has received more and more attention since the year 2000 is older people returning to work after retirement, either part-time in the formal economy, or more markedly in the informal economy, because their retirement incomes are too uncertain or keep them below the poverty line. The desire to avoid such circumstances clearly has something to do with the rising demand for education among seniors who are trying either to avoid forced early retirement or to start second careers at age 65 or 67 and thus supplement retirement incomes that have become inadequate (McNair, 2007; Carré, 2007).

This learning demand among adults aged 65 and over for work-related purposes is greatly underestimated, but seniors' reasons for seeking more education and access to knowledge extend well beyond the economic sphere. They include the desire for personal development, for a greater knowledge of art, history, geography, or science, to become better equipped to participate in a society where ways of communicating and ways of doing things are changing, or to discover and join new networks of people with common interests and, in doing so, to replace past workplace relationships and thus avoid isolation. In all of these ways, older women and men are striving to live up to potential that they have not yet fulfilled.

Learning demand among people aged 65 and over also reflects the new roles that they may assume at this stage of life. Some seniors may take on new responsibilities as grandparents. Others may be called on to provide care for friends or members of family. Still others may participate more actively in civil society as activists or volunteers. This social participation can take many different forms, such as working with children, helping to protect natural or cultural heritage, helping to run organisations, performing in choirs or orchestras, serving on disaster-response teams, joining social movements, sitting on boards of directors, and working in elected or unelected capacities for municipal, regional, or national political organizations.

Today's generation of seniors are also increasingly being asked to serve as mentors in more formal ways than past generations. Mentors are in demand everywhere: in the workplace, to share their professional experience; in schools, to give young people live insights into other places and times; and in not-for-profit organisations, to share their wealth of experience. This exchange of knowledge and experience between the generations is becoming very helpful, if not essential, for young and old alike. In the Netherlands, for example, one of the most popular computer training courses for seniors teaches them how to use a software application to write and publish their family histories and thus pass them on to the next generation. The most tragic form of memory loss is not the kind experienced by individuals (who can compensate for it in various ways), but the kind experienced by society, when it forgets the accumulated wisdom of its members. In this regard, the advent of literate society (discussed in the preceding chapter) is paradoxical. The introduction of writing had the extraordinary effect of enabling human beings to preserve and diffuse their accumulated knowledge in the form of books and to share it widely through libraries and new technological means. This innovation represents tremendous progress. But it would be tragic if, as a result, we stopped taking advantage of the repositories of living memory that older people represent. What a loss it would be if we move our living libraries onto a dusty shelf in society's attic!

Perhaps even more important here is the meta-demand underlying all of these demands and projects. As described at the start of this chapter, it is the demand of older people for a high-quality personal and social life. All seniors aspire to continuing to construct their personal biography (Dominicé, 2001), to continue or resume their educational life, to nourish their curiosity, and thus to maintain their autonomy. What is at stake is the search for quality in their physical, mental, emotional, and intellectual lives.

7.3.3 A DEMAND THAT IS ALSO SOCIETAL

This developmental vision of aging, and the policies and practices needed to make it a reality, are becoming a societal necessity. In the current context, older people's quest for a stimulating, independent life acquires a whole new social significance. Their internal demands are finding support among many other stakeholders in today's societies, who believe that they must embrace a broader vision of successful aging, because of the cultural, social, and economic benefits for everyone when this growing segment of the population lives a freer life.

Active, inclusive citizenship for all age groups is not only a condition for the well-being of senior citizens, but also a new resource for society as a whole. In a time of growing environmental concerns, today's societies cannot afford not to accept the contribution of this age group, no longer constrained by the need to work for a living. At the local level, today's increasingly pluralistic societies will not be able to turn their cultural differences from sources of conflict into opportunities to enrich their communities without the active participation of all their members.

As regards the previously noted rise of literate societies, it is in society's best interest for older people to master the skills that have now become essential, such as computer literacy, financial literacy, and the ability to speak a second language, in local multicultural communities. Not only their independence, but also their participation in society, depends on it.

As Canadian and U.S. research on health literacy has clearly shown, the general economy of preventive and therapeutic health services will only benefit if citizens improve their abilities both to take good care of their own health and to serve as informal caregivers in their families and communities (English, 2012; Nielson-Bohlman, Panzer and Kindig, 2004; Bernèche and Perron, 2005). The lack of health-related competencies is a 'silent killer' for

millions of older people who struggle to correctly understand and follow their healthcare providers' written instructions about their diets and prescription medications, or to properly understand and consider warning labels about their possible dangers and side effects.

7.3.4 A REPRESSED DEMAND

There is no shortage of examples and analyses showing the extent of this internal and external learning demand, though it remains largely unmet and its expression silently repressed. Older people themselves, having internalized the widespread, debilitating image of their stage of life, tend to silence their own learning demands, while the rest of the population, having absorbed the stereotype of older people as warm but ineffectual, perceive these demands sympathetically but take no steps to support them. Societal stakeholders who might speak up about the usefulness of investing in education for seniors tend to be ignored by policymakers who are preoccupied with a short-term view of feasibility and costs and who too often see such investments as nothing but an unnecessary expense.

If growing older can cause people in any economic bracket to become more isolated from their families, their communities, and society in general, this isolation is even more pronounced among the majority of today's seniors who are less well off. Deprived of a normal education in their youth and trapped now in harsh social and economic conditions, these seniors are excluded from the general economy of adult learning and of knowledge intensive societies. In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, studies have shown that few older adults participate in structured learning activities, and that this pattern is especially pronounced among seniors who left school before age 16. Culturally excluded in their youth and unable to afford the

education that is available now, these people are cut off from the learning society (Carlton and Soulsby, 1999). They have plenty of free time, but, because of their limited funds, very little real freedom to participate in this society, unless policies and programmes are put in place to counteract this lifelong cumulative discrimination. Such a change would clearly benefit not only these seniors themselves, but also society at large. As stated in *Learning to Grow Older and Bolder*, a policy paper published by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

'Learning throughout life is integral to active, healthy and independent living for all (…) there is a strong case for public investment in learning provision for older people (…) helping them to maintain a quality of life which is fulfilling and likely to lengthen independence.' (Carlton and Soulsby, 1999, pp. 3–21).

In most countries, the law of the marketplace prevails and thus excludes the majority of older people. Clearly, for seniors' pent-up demands for education to be met, the various adult education and learning programmes must be opened up and made accessible to them by methods that take their aspirations and their socio-economic and educational conditions into account and that offer them a variety of educational opportunities: personal development; technical skills related to recreation, science, history, and geography; basic skills; health; the environment; second languages; and new information technologies.

As far back as 1997, at its Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, UNESCO's member states adopted a declaration committing themselves to 'creating an educational environment supporting all forms of learning for older people, by ensuring access for older people to all the services and provisions that sustain adult learning and training and thereby facilitate their active participation in society' (UNESCO, 1997).

7.4 CONCLUSION

Today's societies cannot do without the contribution of older people who are autonomous or capable of becoming so. They represent a valuable human resource, freed from the need to work for a living. They are living repositories of human memory. They can interact with the generations born after them. Societies cannot afford to waste the resource and the potential that these older generations represent.

What does human dignity consist of, if not intelligence, curiosity, creativity, joy of learning and, most important, the freedom to pursue these intimate activities and thus to live and affirm one's full citizenship, both individually and collectively? Is there anything more fundamental than the right to truly live throughout one's life?

The two newest generations of older people include over 10% of the population worldwide and 20% in Europe, Japan, and North America. Can these hundreds of millions of people now be seen for what they really are, rather than continue to be defined in negative terms? As Midwinter (2007) puts it, can they be regarded 'positively as active citizens rather than negatively as social casualties'? (n.p.)

In classical economics, the period when people are operative in the paid labour market is regarded as the only meaningfully active phase of their lives; they refer then to 'the active population'. This one-dimensional view ignores the possibility of lifelong active participation and citizenship. As the later phase of life becomes longer and longer, its existential reality can no longer be denied (Cole, 1988). To do so would be to alienate older people from a third of their lives and deprive them of the chance to live it fully, reflectively, and expressively.

People's value as human beings cannot be tied to their practical utility, much less to their market value. We must change our conception of life and our learning lives. We must eliminate any doubt as to whether learning can truly be lifelong. We must delete

the question mark in this chapter's title. People's educational biographies and their efforts to construct their own identities do not stop when they cease to engage in the formal economy. The social implications of the intimacy of learning do not end when someone walks out of the workplace door.

CHAPTER 8
POPULAR EDUCATION, A NECESSARY COMPLEMENT TO FORMAL EDUCATION

Adults' learning projects and interests are more and more diverse and remain so throughout their lives. As we have just seen, adults' educational pursuits do not stop when their work day ends, nor when they retire. By examining popular education and the disparities in the ways that it is dealt with in lifelong learning policies, we can gain a new perspective on the intimacy of learning and the social issue that it represents.

Popular education consists of all of the educational practices that fulfil the personal and social development plans of individuals and groups in civil society. Alongside academic education and work-related education and training, popular education constitutes one of the three pillars of adult learning and education. It includes non-formal education activities aimed at all adults as well as organized learning initiatives associated with the activities of social movements and civic organisations.

8.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following brief history of popular education will provide a sense of its importance as the third pillar of adult learning and education.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the term 'popular education' referred mainly to political parties' and movements' historical demand for the working class to have the right to formal education, and more specifically for the children of the working class to have access to public school. The term is still sometimes used to refer to the democratization of schools in working-class communities

(Ferrer, 2011). However, since the end of the 19th century, following the wave of democratization of formal education for children, popular education refers predominantly to people's participation in adult-learning activities that have been designed together with them to meet their interests and out-of-work life projects. Examples of such educational initiatives organized for, by, and with the adult public include the study circles in Nordic countries, community education organized locally or by civic organizations like the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the popular or workers' universities in Canada, Italy, Switzerland and in France, where they were launched, again at the end of the 19th-century, in connection with the Saint-Simonian movement (Flowers, 2009; Chené, 1991; Caceres, 1964).

In the aftermath of World War II, this trend toward 'adult education for democracy' grew even stronger in the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland but also further beyond. In France, popular education, reborn from the wartime resistance movement, was given new impetus by several organizations, such as People and Culture, the Foyer Léo Lagrange, and the Laypeople's League for Education (Caceres, 1964). Folk high schools also proliferated rapidly in Germany, as did 'social education' community centres in Japan. In the Soviet Union, the *Znanie* (knowledge) movement, focusing mainly on popular education in the scientific domain, was created in 1947 and experienced renewed growth from 1963 but suffered a major setback after 1989.

In Latin America, popular education emerged in the 1960s in response to social and economic inequality and in resistance to authoritarian regimes (Fernandez, 1974) as in southern Africa. In both these regions, as democratic governments came to power in the 1980s and 1990s, popular education changed gradually from a means of resistance to a means of supporting democratic life at

both local, regional and national levels. At the same time, throughout the world, new social movements such as women's movements (Walters et al., 1996) and environmental groups (Clover, 2003) developed collective-action practices based on members competency. Membership training and empowerment was also part of the regular activities of many trade union and cooperative movements.

Before we examine the social and personal implications of popular education in today's societies, it is essential to examine the two types of popular education activities mentioned earlier: those aimed at the adult public in general and those closely associated with social or civic movements.

8.2 POPULAR EDUCATION AIMED AT ALL ADULTS

Around the world, popular or community education activities aimed at all adults are delivered by two different kinds of organizations: public institutions and community or voluntary organizations.

8.2.1 POPULAR EDUCATION PROVIDED BY PUBLIC AND PARAPUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

There are indeed many examples of popular education organisations around the world. They include local community learning services in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, people's universities (*universidades populares*) in Spain, folk high schools (*Volkshochschulen*) in Germany, study circles and folk high schools in the Nordic countries, as well as community outreach services offered by some universities.[7] To define the

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[7] http://www.livingknowledge.org/

characteristics of this institutionalized form of popular education, we will examine the best known example internationally: the study circles in Sweden, which have a long history and are currently very active.

Every year in Sweden, a country with nine million inhabitants, some 300,000 study-circles are taking place through the popular adult education (Folkbildning) scheme. Each circle has from five to twelve or fifteen members and explores a topic of shared interest using various methods of knowledge exchange.[8] In 2007, over 1.5 million people participated in study circles in Sweden. Every year, slightly more than 25% of the adult population age 18 and over does so, and over 75% of the population aged 15 to 75 has participated in at least one study circle at some time in their adult lives (Brennan and Brophy, 2010). A study circle's activities generally consist of a series of planned meetings held once per week over several months, generally in the evening. At a minimum, a study circle will hold three meetings in sequence, lasting two to three hours each. Sweden's study circles are organized by nine study associations operated by unions, political organizations, religious movements, and other groups under the auspices of the *Folkbildningsrådet* (Swedish National Council of Adult Education). This body manages the funding provided by the Swedish government and ensures the educational quality of the study circles' activities while protecting their freedom to determine their own content.

Adults participate in study circles for various reasons. They may include personal growth, the need to acquire a skill for use in everyday life, or simply curiosity and the desire to learn. Participation in a circle's educational activities is voluntary. The members of the circle, under the guidance of a leader, choose its content together.

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[8] Sources: Reports by Swedish National Council of Adult Education,
   http://www.folkbildning.se

This content may be a topic in current affairs, history, geography, or science; it may involve learning a second language, or learning to dance or play a musical instrument; or it may involve practical training regarding nutrition, the environment, health, preventive medicine, woodworking, and other fields.

Popular education programmes in other countries cover similar subject areas. The reports on the community education services in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the folk high schools in Germany indicate a high volume of educational activities in four areas: arts and culture, familiarization with new information technologies, second-language learning, and health (Huntemann and Reichart, 2011; Aldridge and Tuckett, 2010). Other subject areas include environment and international affairs, as well as applied training in various skills such as cooking and arts and crafts.

The Swedish national policy on adult popular education was last revised in 2007. The key concepts cited in the laws implementing this policy include democracy, lifelong learning and personal development. These concepts are very revealing of this society's overall drive towards the right to learn for all and in all areas! The late Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme used to say, 'Sweden is a study circle democracy'. Every year, the government provides study circles with grants totalling approximately 175 million euros (figure cited in 2011). The three objectives of this policy are spelled out explicitly. The first is to support activities that empower women and men to shape their own lives and that encourage them to participate in developing their society. The second objective is to strengthen and develop democracy. The third objective is to stimulate people's interest in participating more in cultural life and artistic creation. This focus on encouraging continuity in citizens' educational biographies is also intended, firstly, to help the country meet the challenges associated with an increasingly multicultural society and a rise in people's leisure time, secondly, to enhance participation in social and cultural life, thirdly, to actively

integrate people with disabilities and, finally, to support the ongoing shift towards a participatory welfare state. Let us remember, as noted earlier, that the specific topics and content of the study circles are determined by the participants.

A review of the international literature (Huntemann et al., 2011; Aldridge and Tuckett, 2010; Flowers, 2009; Crowther et al., 1999) reveals the following seven principles that govern popular education services in the various countries:

1. Participation is voluntary.
2. Access is non-selective and does not depend on individuals' past formal education.
3. The participants choose the topics about which they will learn.
4. The teaching and facilitation methods take as their starting point the participants' immediate interests and aspirations (project-based learning), draw on their past experiences (experience-based learning), and refer to their actual conditions (contextualized learning).
5. There is interaction between theory and practice, and between experiential knowledge and transferred knowledge.
6. Teaching and learning are collective, centred on the group of participants and aimed at encouraging them to express themselves freely.
7. The approach connects education with action.

8.2.2 POPULAR EDUCATION PROVIDED BY VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The second form of popular education for all adults is provided by independent organizations of civil society in one or more areas related to their specific concerns and activities such as consumer rights, human rights, housing, and international solidarity. Some civil-society organizations also provide training of trainers and leadership workshops like women's organizations in South Africa (Walters, 1996), or workshops on '*social animation*' like the *Centre de Formation*

Populaire [Centre for Popular Education] in Montreal (Chené, 1991). Autonomous popular education can thus be defined as all of the systematic learning and critical thinking activities that these non-profit organizations offer to adults who are interested in the organizations' areas of concern. The short-term objective is to improve living conditions in the community; the long-term objective is to transform it socially, economically, culturally and politically. In some countries, such autonomous or voluntary organizations can obtain government funding for their educational programmes if they meet certain criteria, such as achieving an explicit educational objective, comprising a foreseen specific sequence of activities and including known provisions for monitoring results.

Historically, one of the most advanced experiments in autonomous popular education, and the prototype for many others, has been carried out by the *Highlander Research and Education Center* in the United States.[9] Founded as the Highlander Folk School in the Tennessee Valley in 1932 by Myles Horton, one of the great popular educators, the Highlander Center now offers activities throughout the southeastern United States. Its action programme comprises three components: popular education per se (such as workshops, courses, popular universities in the summer, youth camps, and union training), participatory research (such as surveys, public consultations, and documenting and describing activist history), and cultural work (such as meetings with politically and socially committed artists; cultural demonstrations; socio-cultural animation or projects, and contacts with community media outlets). The Highlander Center is both a physical place and a network where people can meet, share experiences, produce and exchange knowledge, and develop tools. Its goal is to build citizens' capacity for individual and collective action (Horton and Khol, 1990).

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[9] www.highlandercenter.org/

The Highlander Center has always been and continues to be an incubator for non-violent action to fight racism and promote immigrants' rights, as well as a place for discussion and training to resist deindustrialization and for raising awareness of environmental issues. In the 1950s, the Highlander Center played a key role in the civil rights movement in the United States. It was at the Highlander Center that Rosa Parks, known for her historic role in the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott, met other leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr., and together with them developed not only the courage to act, but also the analytical skills and know-how needed for this collective action that transformed social relations between ethnic groups in this country.

The Highlander Center's popular education practices are inspired by the work of Paolo Freire, with whom Myles Horton had contact in the 1970s and 1980s. They take as their starting point citizens who are grappling with a problem, and then help them to empower themselves, to free themselves from internalized forms of domination, introducing them to external knowledge and analyses and leading them to imagine alternatives and become agents of change. These experiences, often the targets of contempt if not disdain in some mainstream network societies, constitute for these women and men a key reference source for constructing a new vision of their reality and consolidating their own power base in their community. Obviously, this form of popular education is inclusive and accessible to everyone, regardless of their level of formal education, and operates on non-hierarchical, participatory principles.

8.3 POPULAR EDUCATION IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Another form of popular education is that closely associated with the activities of social movements. Its purpose is to strengthen the initiative and participation of a social movement's members from

the inside. The tasks of constructing the group's collective identi-
ty, of formulating and reformulating its vision of 'another possible
world', and of deciding what collective actions it should take are re-
garded not as something beyond its members' capabilities; they are
a collective venture. The power to make decisions is not delegated to
the movement's leaders until its next elections; instead, it is derived
from continuing debate and discussion among the members, pre-
cisely because of their experience and the individual and collective
expertise that can be developed through collective action.

This form of popular education is found mostly in new social
movements, but it also present in some historic ones, such as cer-
tain union movements (Blondin et al., 2012; Nesbit, 2001; Mezirow,
1991). Since the 1960s, women's movements in various parts of
the world have offered good examples of such popular education,
taking different forms to suit differing contexts in Asia, Latin
America, and North America.[10] It is no accident that the concept of
'empowerment', which has now been taken up by so many other or-
ganizations (though sometimes in diluted form) originated within
the women's movements of the 1960s (see Chapter 1).

Women who experience violence or economic exclusion be-
cause of their gender and socio-economic status often do so in
isolation. But when they become involved in a women's movement,
they experience communication and solidarity which show them that
they are not alone. They become more aware of the forces that are at
play. They consolidate their critical reinterpretation of their situation
and hence develop the need to react individually and act collectively
in their communities. The individual's realization of the connections

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[10] For example, the following two international networks:
Network for Popular Education Among Women of Latin America and the Caribbean
(REPEM, http://www.repem.org/) and Development Alternatives with Women for a
New Era (DAWN, http://www.dawnnet.org/index.php).

between the specific nature of the oppression that she has experienced and the extension and diversity of such experiences transforms her view of reality. Thus women who join the movement not only develop a critical understanding of their situation and confidence in their ability to resist individually and to act as a group, but also become aware of political and economic power relationships and hence become convinced that these social relations can be transformed (Clover 2012; Sen and Grown, 1987; Stromquist, 1998, 2005, 2011).

This emancipating process does not arise spontaneously. It begins when new contacts generate and facilitate informal discussions in kitchen meetings or at the factory gate. Once the silence is thus broken, communication and dialogue continue, facilitated by the presence of a local organization or network that provides knowledge and contact with other similar networks. This in turn leads to joint actions that become further sources of experiential learning. And later, the connection of these local actions with those in other regions, or participation in meetings about reproductive health or domestic violence, will constitute further steps in this informal but very real revival of the educational biography of each of these women (Manicom and Walters, 2012).

The form of popular education associated with social movements gradually increases women's autonomy. As their conversations with one another confirm their heretofore silent perception of their oppression, they gradually move from passive resignation to a determination to resist actively. Together they develop their resilience as individuals and their capacity to act as a group. They learn to confront and negotiate both external and internal conflicts. Concrete experience, discussions and simulations prior to action provide them with informal real-world political training. Together they recognize how the various bases of discrimination (gender, age, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation) combine in various ways to reinforce one another. They learn how to articulate and distinguish strategies for the longer term and concrete steps

that need to be taken more immediately. This transition from local concerns and immediate experience to broader perceptions and analyses and hence to more global actions is a serious challenge. The informal communication networks associated with the local group's activities are precisely what enable the members to develop and test new visions and to redefine and broaden the issues (Medel-Anonuevo, 1996; Stromquist, 1998). The constant interchange between action and informal education becomes one of the essential elements in the operation of these social movements and one of the key sources of their self-determination and creativity.

Obviously, the construction and/or appropriation of this empowering knowledge (Sen and Grown, 1987) requires a minimum of social and cultural space allowing opportunity to raise questions and propose explanation without restriction. The constant reiteration of false beliefs and dominant ideologies maintains the various forms of discrimination and results in alienation and hence in acceptance of the situation. Such dominating socialization, effective because of the way that it operates silently inside people's minds (Foley, 1998), cannot be deconstructed without the creation of such permissive spaces and dialogue practices that let individuals discuss it with one another, together deciphering all of the prejudices and falsehoods and thus developing an individual and collective will to react, such as can be seen, for example, in the women's movement in Canada (Chovanec, 2009; Dumont and Toupin, 2003; Descarries and Corbeil, 1997).

The history of the women's movement in Brazil during the two decades of military dictatorship (1964-1984) provides an instructive example of this dialectic between internalized hegemonic cultural orientations and emancipating learning experiences. As Fischman (1998, p. 205) states, 'The production and reproduction of hegemonic regimes and discourses are not structured on the minds of unthinking subjects.' When acceptance of injustice and repression has been an integral part of the local culture for years, acts of collective resistance do not just happen spontaneously. They

require a gradually emerging awareness within the community of women to generate and nurture the various forms of action that the movement can take, such as holding demonstrations, blocking traffic, distributing pamphlets, lobbying, and engaging in acts of passive resistance. This necessary learning process occurs first at the micro sociological level, in discreet meetings and confidential conversations confirming heretofore personal observations. It continues in the discussions and training preparatory to collective actions such as demonstrations and gestures of solidarity, and then in these actions themselves (Foley, 1998 citing Alvarez).

In the mid-1980s, the transition to democracy in Brazil raised questions about the application of revolutionary theories that had underpinned the efforts to end the dictatorship and of the anti-hegemonic practices that had shaped the activists and inspired their actions in the past. Popular education then took on a new dimension within the movement to enable it to operate and negotiate within the new context of parliamentary democracy and neo-liberalism, whose contradictions were less apparent and ruthless but no less real (Ghanem, 1998; Fischman, 1998). Learning through action remained central, but as a result of the new democratic spaces that had been created, seminars, workshops, and debates became more common, as did communication through the media.

The history of the women's movement for justice and equality in India also clearly illustrates the importance of the learning dimension of social movements for emancipation (Patel, 1998). The Indian women's movement has understood that it cannot succeed in publicly questioning the ancestral ideology, transforming the institutions that maintain discrimination, changing existing power relationships, and strengthening individuals' control over their material conditions and over information unless women can recognize the forces and mechanisms that oppress them in their daily lives, in the settings in which they live – in other words, the injustices to which they are day-to-day subjected (Patel, 1996). This

recognition and this transition from passive resistance to action are achieved not through a one-way transfer of knowledge, neither through indoctrination or propaganda, but rather through inter-learning that takes place in local women's groups known as *mahila sanghas*. In these groups, women share their personal experiences of patriarchal domination; they experience a freedom to speak that leads them to begin taking action in their daily surroundings and in their local communities. Volunteer leaders facilitate these activities and bring in ideas and examples from the outside. When needed to better prepare the women for specific collective actions, more structured types of education are also provided on subjects that the women choose together (Patel, 1998). To succeed socially, the movement requires more and more participation by women from the local community. Thus, like a spiral and through its actions, the local group is joined by more and more women and builds ties with other groups to support and broaden its local struggles. Participation by the base becomes not only a means but also an end: personal empowerment, mutual assistance and solidarity.

8.3.1 THE DIALECTIC BETWEEN INDIVIDUALITY AND COLLECTIVE EMANCIPATION THROUGH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Pre-modern societies did display some cohesion and solidarity but in a form that was socially determined and mechanical; hence limited freedom was involved. It was based on the similarity of feelings, values, and behaviours prescribed by the dominant, traditional, often patriarchal culture. Life paths were also predetermined at birth.

Since then, fewer and fewer people tolerate having their lives so determined by outside forces. Collective actions, as in workers' movements already in the nineteen century, created an important step toward more political and social democracy. Without such movements, conditions and quality of life could not have been improved.

For collective action to succeed it increasingly requires a personal commitment from each and every member of the movement. The new social movements have played an important role in redefining the individual's role in collective action. The philosopher and political scientist Jean-Marc Piotte clearly conveys this dual dynamic – both individual and collective – of the construction of such collective actions by referring to the concept of individuality, which he sharply distinguishes from individualism (Piotte, 2001). Individuality refers to an individual's self-determination, whereas individualism refers to being focused on one's own interests and pursuing them without regard for the public good.

In today's societies, we have gained a great deal of individual freedom, but we tend to forget about solidarity. Thus, as Piotte underscores (Frenette, 2011, pp.79–96), it is essential to distinguish individuality from individualism. To be sure, this growing freedom can lead individuals to focus inward and show no concern for the development and transformation of the society to which they belong. But it can also lead to individuality and then to freely chosen solidarity and active participation in social movements to achieve social progress. Indeed, in response to the power relationships maintained by a dominant minority, the only way for citizens to exercise their individual choices is to enter in solidarity and find collective solutions to the social problems that concern them all to various degrees. But if these necessary collective actions to improve individuals' quality of life are to be truly effective and have genuine impact, then every member must also show more and more self-determination.

As discussed in the preceding section, as women have joined the women's movement in India and Brazil, they have come to see their situation differently and to perceive opportunities for change. Becoming aware of not being alone in his or her situation, women overcome the pressure of tradition and take the liberty of actively embracing the movement. They have freed themselves from their fears and begun to talk openly, to discuss issues and assume

responsibilities within their groups and thus recover their personal dignity. By affirming their individuality, they have also strengthened the democratic life of their movement. Thus, at the various crossroads in a life path that is no longer linear, today's adults – men as well as women – are developing more complex identities, adding new elements and altering existing ones, such as nation, family, friends, work, gender, sexual orientation, and personal beliefs. They are constructing their individuality and thus, paradoxically, becoming more active citizens. Hence their collective future, as well as their individual biographies, is no longer predetermined.

8.4 THE SOCIAL AND INTIMATE MEANING OF POPULAR EDUCATION

Popular education has an observable social impact in many spheres of society, but this collective impact is inseparable from its effect and significance on women's and men's capacity to express themselves and take initiative.

8.4.1 THE IMPACT OF POPULAR EDUCATION ON SOCIETY

Let us look first at the different effects of popular education on a society. The first and most obvious of which is that it makes knowledge resources more accessible.

As noted earlier, one of the distinctive traits of popular education is that participants do not have to go through an individual selection process to access it, as in formal academic or vocational education where access depends on the student's past educational attainment. In popular education, the only criterion is whether the person is interested in the subject being taught, regardless of what diplomas they do or do not have. Thus the public and community institutions that offer popular education are transforming access to education and enabling individuals to resume active learning

lives in situations where they would otherwise never have had the chance to do so. The non-academic public image of these institutions and the close linkage between their activities and the interests or concerns of their public are key factors explaining their accessibility.

A second effect of any form of popular education is to create autonomous spaces where people can go beyond their primary relationships and build ties with other individuals with whom they share some interest. Examples might include similar interest in history or geography, or in acquiring a particular technical skill, or in addressing a shared problem with which they have previously struggled alone.

In Nordic countries, for example, popular education centres are typically close at hand and offer a congenial atmosphere where people can get out of their homes, get together, and pursue learning plans that they agree on as a group. They thus tend to become active participants in their communities.

Moreover, these activities give previously isolated individuals the chance to join forces with others who have the same aspirations and experiences for their personal achievement and thus to build a broader, more social vision of their life project and their concerns. These '[author's translation] socio-cultural associative practices bring together the interests of individuals and groups of citizens' (Goffin, 2006, p.125) and hence alter their vision of society and of the opportunities for change.

Once individuals become better informed and better able to mobilize their new knowledge through their new associative networks, they want to have a say in the decisions that affect them personally. The experience and autonomy acquired in these networks transform their traditional dependent relationships with the professionals with whom they have to deal, as can be seen for example in the field of health care. In the United States in the 1970s, for example, a group of women who had been diagnosed with breast cancer were frustrated by the expectation that they would just listen passively to

their doctors and follow their orders, with no chance to get a second opinion or to have any say about matters that concerned them so intimately. In response, these women created the women's health movement now known as 'Our Bodies Ourselves' (Ruzek, 2007).

Similarly, in the 1980s and 1990s, some members of the gay community, when informed that they were infected with HIV, wanted to know the effects of the medications that were being prescribed. They were rejecting medical diagnoses tainted with moral prejudices that struck at their very identity. These men therefore created and joined networks that let them access alternative sources of expertise (Brashers et al., 2000). The parallel validation of the experiential knowledge that these patients found through their movement transformed medical communication. They asked specific questions and demanded explicit answers that they could validate themselves. They rejected the dominant culture that prevented health professionals from seeing patients as individuals with sexual and personal needs and as active and reflexive agents who wanted to control their own fate as much as possible during this major transition in their lives (Hordern and Street, 2007). The AIDS activism movement transformed the therapeutic relationship and thus the relations between individuals and institutions.

Combining learning with action, popular education supports and sometimes even generates collective movements that can transform social relations. For example, popular education has enabled citizens to free themselves from internalized sources of domination and to adapt analyses of situations similar to their own so as to raise their own awareness of political and economic power relationships and hence become more convinced of the possibility of changing them. Through popular education, people begin to see the alternatives and become collective actors who can turn these into realities (Sen and Grown, 1987; Stromquist, 1998), whether that means changing gender relations in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Walters, 1996),

or labour relations in Canada (Sawchuk, 2006a) or in textile mills in Malaysia (Heng, 1996), or rejecting structural-adjustment policies in Brazil in the early 1990s (Fischman, 1998), or making connections between local and global environmental actions (Clover, 2003; Flowers, Guevara and Whelan, 2009).

Such 'adult education for democracy' (Lindeman, 1926) lets citizens find their voice and frees them to take action. It makes formally democratic systems more truly democratic, a 'study circle democracy'.

This social impact of popular education is inseparable from the way that it also builds every individual learner's inner capacity to act. From this standpoint, the answer to social problems is rooted in the experiences of people who have been subjected to inequalities or discrimination, become capable of understanding the forces at play in them, and thus become capable of responding to them. It enables individuals to overcome cultural traumas suffered in school in the past, and hence lets them rediscover their ability to learn and to pursue educational aspirations that have heretofore been repressed in subtle ways. Indeed, the practices of popular education lead people to re-examine their own experience in a more informed light. As we saw earlier, citizens thus develop not only a confidence in their ability to resist as individuals and to act as a group, but also acquire a critical understanding of their own situation, which provides the basis for discovering their own autonomy. As each individual re-examines his own experience and compares it with others', he develops a personal reference that gives him a decisive advantage in seeking out external knowledge and expertise and thus in analyzing situations in a more liberated way and discussing what actions should be taken. This kind of popular education, closely linked with collective action, enhances the individual's ability to see, to analyze, and to act differently; it thus develops both an individual and a collective intelligence (Bélanger, 2002).

If public and community-based institutions of popular education help to improve living conditions and to invigorate civil

society in their local communities, it is because of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the men and women of these communities thereby acquire about the needs that they have identified for themselves. As individuals emerge from their social isolation, they build ties beyond their immediate circles, communicate with people in their own neighbourhoods whom they did not know before, and thus play a more and more autonomous and active role in their societies.

8.5. THE EFFECT OF POPULAR EDUCATION ON THE GLOBAL EDUCATION PROJECT

Despite its marginal position in most adult learning policies (see 10.2.2), popular education has a little known but nonetheless major effect on the global education project of every society. In the sociology of adult education, five major traits of the social meaning of popular education have been identified (Bélanger, 1980): its critical socialization function, its effect of correcting the social reproduction of inequality, and its contribution to the production of knowledge, its co-management of educational activities and its specific pedagogical or andragogical approach.

Popular education tends to hunt down the arbitrary, to distinguish the just from the unjust (Hansotte 2002). It offers a space where the inequalities and discrimination that people experience can be openly named. It questions the so-called neutrality of the written word. It builds a bridge between the often separate social goals of equality and respect for differences. It enables learners to develop skills, attitudes and behaviours directly related to their living situations and thus enhances their autonomy to act as individuals. To recapitulate Majo Hansotte's analysis (2002), popular education allows the various components of collective intelligence to develop: *argumentative* intelligence (knowing how to debate with others), *narrative* intelligence (knowing how to express oneself

and how to listen to other people express themselves to build the mutual understanding that makes for free speech), *prescriptive* intelligence (the courage to say no and to clearly state one's aspirations), and *deconstructive* intelligence (being able to break down the dominant discourse and resist the arbitrary).

Popular education seeks to improve living conditions for everyone, to implement mechanisms focused on the common good, and to pursue the well-being of the entire community, rather than just of individuals. Knowledge thus becomes a key to emancipation.

Popular education overcomes the limitations on individuals' access to education and demonstrates the opportunity and impact of democratizing this access. But it does more than that. It links individual emancipation to community development. It restores the sense of collective action. It refuses to see society as a collection of individuals who are concerned with nothing but their own interests. It allows social ties to be built and restored (Sue, 2001; Crowther et al., 1999), it increases 'their democratic power to act' (Maurel, 2010).

The practices of popular education produce '[author's translation] an egalitarian relationship in which the differentiated contribution of each individual adds to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes available for the common project, with positive effects both personally and collectively' (Goffin, 2006, p. 126). Through popular education, people acquire and apply new knowledge, but they also do more than that. In addition to learning how to gather information, discuss ideas, and sharpen their reasoning skills, people formulate new propositions and construct alternative visions. They investigate and re-write local history. By connecting their experiential knowledge with theoretical knowledge, they test and validate new approaches and develop new knowledge and perspectives.

As we have seen, one of the main characteristics of popular education is the self-management or co-management of activities

by the people themselves. Educational activities are chosen by the people and undertaken in partnership with them (Ferrer, 2011). Citizens participate in the design, practice, and evaluation of education (Goffin, 2006). In the very way they are managed, popular education centres are designed to be laboratories for experiments in democracy. They provide a place where education is available under the social governance of the local community or the movement.

Popular education takes the participants' immediate plans and interests as its starting point (project-based learning), draws on their concrete experience (experience-based learning) and contextualizes the learning process. The prevailing education and learning approach in popular education is based on questions such as the following (Hansotte, 2002): What is the problem? What is unacceptable? What are we in conflict about? By referring to historical knowledge and critical analyses, how can we decode these contradictions and decide what we want to change? What should we do? How should we act? As noted earlier, this constant interchange between non-formal or informal education and action becomes one of the essential elements in the operation of new social movements and one of the key sources of their self-determination and creativity. This learning approach enables people to express themselves continually, but without neglecting the dynamics of the content and the necessary discipline of rigorous learning (Chosson, 1987). Popular education involves an inherently self-reflective, reflexive and non-dogmatic approach. It works to make space for the collective production of knowledge and insight, and builds on what emerges from the experiences of those actively participating. The richness of the approach lies, therefore in the thought and implicit analysis that has gone into the design of the specific educational events or programmes, and in the spontaneous, sometimes serendipitous, process it unfolds at a particular moment, yielding even more challenges and possibilities. (Walters and Manicom, 1997, p. 2).

8.5.1   THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN POPULAR EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

On each of these five dimensions, popular education presents alternative orientations; it proposes another possible education. Current steps to democratize traditional education are intended not only to make it more accessible, but also to make its content less of a vehicle simply for dominant values, in order to better reflect or even celebrate cultural and gender diversity. These measures offer alternative modes of teaching and learning, as well as ways in which education could be managed so as to make it more dynamic. Some universities have even established community-outreach services to make their resources accessible to new social movements and labour unions, thereby enabling them to carry out training, research, and creative projects in partnership with these institutions.

Obviously, the situation is complex. For one thing, popular education is experiencing its own problems in a number of countries. For example, in response to recent economic crises, some governments that fund popular education organizations sometimes try to save money by cutting funds or pressuring popular education into meeting needs that the public system does not want to address anymore (Goffin, 2006). As a result in some countries, to survive, some organizations are being forced either to change their role and objectives or to recruit and retain paying customers – a self-selection process that dilutes the original purpose of popular education.

Introducing popular education into a country's overall educational policies creates a strong dynamic along all five of the dimensions described above. Popular education networks not only respond to the public's 'other' learning demands, but also, by doing so in such a way, provide alternative educational perspectives, where alternative forms of learning and education can be explored and demonstrated (Bélanger, 1980). Hence, the democratization of education cannot forget, as it often does, the development of popular education networks.

8.6 CONCLUSION

Alongside academic and vocational education, popular education, based on the principles outlined in section 8.1, constitutes one of the three pillars of all genuine adult learning and education (ALE) policies. Today, popular education constitutes an important part of people's learning biographies. Humanity is entering an historic period in which free time already exceeds work time during people's adult lives and will do so more and more.

But, at this very moment, this new frontier in people's educational biographies is being closed to most individuals excepting the wealthy. Today, too many national adult learning policies tend to marginalize or even exclude popular education programmes (Bélanger et al., 2014). Lifelong learning tends to be limited to institutions of formal education and the workplace. Lifelong learning ceases to be lifewide.

To ignore popular education would be not only to ignore a major individual and social learning demand but also to deprive societies of the diffuse effect of this other form of education and learning, of its non-selective participation, of its response to people's demand for self-development, of its relation to both individual and collective action, of its innovative mode of organization and of its unique contribution to social co-production of knowledge. Yes, only when considered in all its dimensions could the right to learn really change 'human beings from objects at the mercy of events to subjects who create their own history' (UNESCO, 1985).

We have seen in this chapter how popular education provides revealing insights into the social implications of recognizing the intimacy of learning. Another heuristic for grasping the central issue of this book is to analyze the intimacy of learning through an opposite phenomenon: psychological harassment in the workplace.

CHAPTER 9
HARASSMENT AND BULLYING AT WORK: A REVEALING PHENOMENON

Horace is a member of a production team at an industrial catering firm. An introvert, he tends to react shyly when his team-mates joke with him. At lunchtime, while everyone else eats together, he goes off and sits alone with his newspaper. As tasks are rotated, he finds himself being assigned more and more to isolated roles. At breaks, people don't ask him to join in. They talk behind his back and spread rumours about him. He feels like he is being watched. In his nervousness, he starts making mistakes, and as a result, his team's performance suffers. He starts to lose confidence in himself and less and less feels the need to go on improving his competence.

Gertrude is a telephone receptionist at an insurance company. From the very start, her boss has taken a dislike to her. He praises everyone else's work, but never comments on hers. He records and monitors her telephone conversations and tends to give her poor performance evaluations, without giving her any chance to explain herself. She doesn't dare to discuss her uneasiness with any of her colleagues, for fear of reinforcing their prejudices. She feels isolated and unvalued and becomes less motivated and more stressed out. Where will this vicious cycle lead? What impact will it have on the work climate?

Such cases of bullying or psychological harassment in the workplace are not new. What is new, and revealing, is the recent increase both in the incidence of this harmful behaviour and in the societal recognition of its consequences both for individuals and for organizations. It is essential to analyze why society has recently become so concerned with this issue. Through such an analysis, we

can understand not only the importance of individual initiative in recognizing and addressing this problem, but also the ambiguity of relying on individuals alone to do so. By considering precisely the opposite of psychologically harassing behaviours and their effects, we can in fact shed new light on the meaning and social implications of the growing demand to address psychological harassment in the workplace (and thus indirectly on the issue of individuality), as well as on the spaces and settings required to meet such a demand.

9.1 PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Hirigoyen (1998, p. 67) defines psychological harassment in the workplace as '[author's translation] repeated or systematic abusive conduct (gestures, speech, behaviours, and attitudes) that is damaging both to an individual's physical and psychological dignity and integrity, and thus threatens his or her job or degrades his or her work climate'. Such repeated or systematic abuse can be carried out by a work team against one of its members (as in Horace's case), by a manager against an employee (as in Gertrude's case), by an employee against a manager, or by a customer against an employee.

The literature on this subject (Hirigoyen, 1998 and 2004; Soares, 2002; Cassito et al., 2003; Hauge et al., 2011) provides a means of classifying acts of psychological harassment. One category of such acts consists in behaving aggressively toward individuals – for example, preventing them from speaking spontaneously, excluding them from daily informal interactions, saying humiliating things about their personal characteristics, threatening them verbally, or interfering in their personal lives. Other acts of bullying harassment may be directed not against the individuals themselves, but against their work. Examples include disparaging or making unfounded accusations about their work, assigning them tasks that are difficult or meaningless, subjecting them to unjustified punishments, and excluding them from formal and informal learning networks or generally available channels of information.

Various surveys (Hirigoyen, 2001; Cassito 2003) estimate that 3% to 13% of all employees are victims of psychological harassment in the workplace. Some authors (Soares, 2002) report that in some sectors, such as education, over 25% of all employees say that they have been the targets of psychological harassment.

The repeated, continuous nature of such actions creates a process that is destructive for the individual who is the object of it (Soares, 2002; Poilpot-Rocaboy, 2006). The consequences are well known. They may include hidden suffering, anxiety, humiliation, self-doubt, loss of self-esteem, obsessiveness, depression, social isolation, cognitive disorders, difficulty in performing on the job, and potentially, job loss. The repeated harassment breaks down the individual's psychological resilience and can ultimately take away all of his or her social and professional opportunities (Leclerc, 2002) and hence the ability to determine his or her own actions (Hand, 2006).

Harassing behaviours also have a negative impact on the organizations within which harassers and their victims interact. In France, the Social Modernization Act of 2002 refers to harassment in the workplace as causing a 'degradation in working conditions'. This degradation can take the form of breakdowns in internal communications, impediments to teamwork, increased absenteeism, unexpected employee departures, and possible harm to the company's public image. Over the long run, this systematic abuse does more than just degrade the work climate: it undermines the performance of the organization as a whole (Salin, 2008).

9.2 RECENT SOCIAL RECOGNITION OF WORKPLACE HARASSMENT: UNCOVERING A NEW SOCIAL ISSUE

Workplace harassment is nothing new, but its public recognition is recent and reveals some important changes in the world of work. To be sure, cases of psychological harassment have been around for many years, but only recently have they been identified as a

problem that demands public recognition. Since the late 1990s, many countries have openly recognized workplace harassment – sometimes referred to as 'psychoterror' – as an important issue and have passed laws to define it and provide remedies against it. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sweden, and the Netherlands passed such legislation shortly before 1998. Starting in the year 2000, these countries were followed by Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, and Quebec (following a report published in 2001). More recently, other countries, such as Argentina, Australia, Poland, Finland and USA have passed their own laws on this subject.

The aforementioned effects of workplace harassment on the organization – deterioration both in working conditions and in economic performance – explain why the various economic, social, and political actors have now agreed on the importance of an issue that they were still underestimating just a short time ago. Employers, unions, and governments have now reached a consensus on this problem. They not only see how harassment interferes with the organization's operations, but also recognize that it causes hidden suffering for the individuals concerned and violates their right to psychological integrity. This public recognition of the psychological impact of this aggression on the individual has now led to the implementation of internal complaint mechanisms at many companies. It has also led to the provision of legal sanctions that, in some countries, may include fines of up to US $20,000 and/or a year in prison.

This emergence of psychological harassment as a major issue in the workplace has been associated with some major changes in the world of work. More specifically, it follows three major transformations that have taken place in the world over the past few decades: the increasing destabilization of employment, changes in the way that work is organized within companies, and changes in interpersonal relations in the workplace. These changes are most

apparent in those industries that are at the cutting edge of competition in the globalized marketplace. But these advanced industries are not the only ones affected; gradually, these changes are pervading the entire economy as a result of subcontracting, among other processes.

Let us examine the first of these changes: the destabilization of employment. At one time, the majority of jobs were permanent, 'for life', but that proportion is now declining substantially. Seeking greater flexibility, big companies now tend to subcontract production of the components of their final products to smaller firms, organized into 'value chains'. The bigger companies thus tend to reduce the work force operating under their immediate control and shift a growing share of the required labour to these outside firms. Originally, such subcontracting was generally limited to firms within the same country, but gradually it has been expanded worldwide, with production being transferred to 'emerging economies'. Internally, many of these firms use other practices to maintain flexibility in their production of good and services – for example, short-term hiring, cyclical layoffs, and increased use of contract, part-time, and seasonal workers. All of these practices combine to make jobs more precarious and the labour market more segmented. They destabilize people's career paths, if not people themselves.

The second major transformation in the working world has been in the way that work is organized within the firm (Sennett, 2006). To meet the international competition while responding to their customers' increasingly diverse demands, companies are differentiating their production of goods and services, and to do so, they are also making their work organization more internally flexible. They are decentralizing decision-making and reorganizing their production workers into small teams, instead of having them perform repetitive work on assembly lines. The members of these teams rotate through a variety of tasks, and the teams

themselves can be shifted from one assignment to another as the situation demands. These teams become responsible for production and performance. They are subject to pressure not only from the continuous variation in production sequences and the ad hoc way that their work is organized, but also from the introduction of new technologies, the resulting acceleration of automation, and the tighter inventory controls associated with 'just in time' production methods (Mintzberg, 1982, 1990).

The third major transformation, resulting from the preceding two, has been in the relationships among individuals themselves in the workplace. In the past, companies adopted the Fordist model of a highly hierarchical organization and the Taylorist model of an intensive division of labour. Today, companies are implementing more flexible ways of organizing daily work and are decentralizing decision-making down to the work teams. This devolution of responsibilities does give the teams control over their immediate work methods and their productivity, but it also demands greater personal and interpersonal involvement from the workers. These new, networked forms of work organization rely not only on the autonomy of the teams but also on the initiative and versatility of their individual members. Interpersonal communication, which was not required or even prohibited under the Taylorist model, has now become a constant necessity. It is no accident that the four dimensions that work psychologists use to describe the human relationships characterizing this new managerial paradigm are *trust, commitment, influence* and *communication* (Lowe, 2002). Employer/employee relationships, which were historically collective, are tending to become more and more individual (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2011).

It should be acknowledged that while serving the goals of effectiveness and efficiency, such changes in the internal organization of work also respond to some social criticisms of capitalism by eliminating older forms of oppression of workers, such as the

top-down speeded-up work pace and the fragmented division of labour characterizing the sweatshops once common in northern countries and still common in places in Southeast Asia (Johnsen, 2003). But these improvements also have two major negative consequences for today's workers. At the macro level, they increase job insecurity and segmentation of the labour market. At the workplace level, they do not reduce the pressure for on-the-job performance; they make workers responsible for exerting this pressure horizontally on the other members of their team (Boltanski, Chiapello, 2011).

These consequences have combined effects. Externally, the demand for labour flexibility erodes the availability of permanent jobs and destandardizes workers' career paths (Guillemard, 1997), which alters both industrial relations and the relationship between individuals and their work. Internally, the demand for flexibility in the organization of work so as to achieve lean, just-in-time production creates pressure on and within the work teams to whom the responsibility for performance has been devolved. In the long run, the effect of this dual, internal and external flexibility is to make employees bear the burden of market uncertainty (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2011). In short, the requirement for personal engagement and versatility undeniably constitutes a recognition of the individual employee's intelligence and capacity for action. But unless appropriate preventive measures are taken, this new way of organizing work can create another, subtler form of exploitation, causing a kind of suffering that is no longer physical, but psychological (Dejours, 2000).

This new way of organizing work creates a competitive environment that can easily lead to suspicion and abusive behaviour among team members. It tends to erode traditional ties of solidarity (Le Goff, 2003a and b). The fluid operating methods of the work teams that are now being asked to co-manage productivity create a climate conducive to interpersonal conflict and,

consequently, an increased incidence of psychological harassment in the workplace. The teammate pressure on each member's productivity may well explain why the number of recognized cases of such harassment is on the rise. Psychological harassment in the workplace is therefore more than just a circumstantial problem; it is more than the accidental consequence of flexible worker-management methods that have been introduced to continually adjust production.

To address this psychological violence in the workplace, some immediate responses are indeed required, including support for the affected individuals and concrete preventive measures. But structural responses are also needed. First of all, employers' demands for flexibility must be balanced with policies and measures that ensure job security throughout individuals' careers. It is in this context that the debate over 'flexicurity' discussed in Chapter 5 (section 5.2) takes on all its meaning. Secondly, workplace harassment must be recognized as a law-breaking activity, and legal remedies must be provided to deal with it. Thirdly, the benefits yielded by the workers' increased productivity must be redistributed to them in various forms, including providing them with space to find a personal use-value in their work. Workers cannot be expected to become personally committed to the organization unless their psychological integrity as individuals is respected in return.

To sum up, in organizations that hope to mobilize workers' subjectivity to advance corporate goals, any practices that undermine the individual's personal commitment take on a heretofore unsuspected economic and social importance (Le Goff, 2003b), and thus become a growing concern in managerial circles. Recent revelations of this symbolic violence in the workplace have also been met with a public outcry much like that which first greeted revelations of the problem of sexual harassment, reflecting a growing recognition of intimacy as a societal issue.

9.3 WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE OPPOSITE OF WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

As this analogy with sexual harassment suggests, the public recognition of the problem of psychological harassment in the workplace is part of a trend that goes beyond the world of work.

9.3.1 RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUALITY

In all areas of their lives, people want first and foremost to be recognized and respected as individuals. The positive public response to revelations about the destructive effects of workplace psychological harassment on the individuals concerned is part of a more general trend toward recognizing individuals' rights to physical and psychological integrity. Society now realizes more and more that aggression against individuals' inner being not only thwarts their capacity for initiative but can also defeat their efforts to construct themselves.

The rising demands for a healthier, safer workplace, and the laws that have been passed to provide it, reflect a growing recognition initially of the individual's right to physical integrity. When individuals' work undermines their physical health, they start to demand safer, healthier working conditions, precisely so that they continue to enjoy the full use of their bodies and their senses – in short, their intimate physical lives. But the growing demands for a better quality of working life do not stop there. In the new work environment described in the preceding pages, the risks are no longer solely physical. Now that workers face new risks to their self-esteem and to their plans for building their own futures, they are demanding protection against emotional and psychological harassment as well.

By reversing the indicators used to describe psychological harassment and its effects, we can shed new light on the autonomy

being demanded of individuals in today's society, as well as on their aspirations to have their individuality respected and, even more important, to be able to continue constructing it.

Individuals cannot participate actively and make full use of their creativity and initiative unless conditions are provided and practices are encouraged that let them experiment with this way of behaving. For individuals to acquire the capacity for independent action, they must be able to operate in a space in which they can express themselves; they must be able to make their distinctive contributions and be recognized for having done so. They must be able to develop themselves and learn through exploration and experience. Though, of course, none of this means that they must not also acquire the knowledge and skills that the organization needs them to possess. By considering the practices that are the opposite of psychological harassment, we see that for individuals to meet the demands of the reflexive society and play an active role in it, they must, in their day-to-day lives, be allowed to satisfy their curiosity, exercise their creativity, review their errors so that they can learn from experience without fear of punishment, and acquire the expertise that they need to do their jobs.

For example, if we are going to ask workers to be responsive, communicative, flexible, versatile, and inventive, they must have the conditions they need to exercise their right not just to work, but to work as 'acting and knowing subjects' (Sawchuk, 2006; Jackson, 1994). An organization, that is looking for internal flexibility and thus to mobilize its employees' intelligence and problem-solving ability, will not be able to achieve such objectives if the way to achieve them is going to destabilize their employment status and undermine their attempts not just to secure decent pay and decent working conditions, but also to find a personal use-value in their work and thus to actualize themselves in and through their work (Sawchuk, 2006).

9.3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

If the organization can no longer manage its workforce vertically the way it used to, then it must take the risk of giving its workers some discretion, some room for initiative, so that in carrying out their prescribed tasks more reflectively and efficiently, they can express themselves to some extent, or at least have some freedom to react, resist, innovate and negotiate. As for the changes that this requires within the organization, it is enlightening to draw a parallel between the recommended practices mentioned in the learning organization literature and the reversed version of indicators used to describe psychological harassment and its effects. A successful learning organization will encourage active participation by its workers, assign them meaningful tasks, give them challenges that they can meet, encourage informal learning through communities of practice, quality circles, and other such mechanisms, give priority to formative evaluation and encourage and support self-education and self-training.

Such measures are certainly important for spreading the capacity for initiative more widely throughout the organization, but they are not enough on their own. Just as in some studies on psychological harassment in the workplace, the management literature on the learning organization (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, 1993; Senge, 2006; Thomas and Allen, 2006 and Wenger, 1998), prescribes the steps to be taken, but says little about the structural factors and conditions that make them feasible or which explain them.

Organizations cannot be 'value-led' if the values are not effectively supported and sustained. (Thompson and Findlay, 1999. p. 183).

This is one of the great ambiguities in the current concept of the learning organization. Firstly, people forget that the work environment cannot become stimulating and educational unless, despite this policy of flexibility and despite workers' expected mobility throughout their working lives, they know that they can always

continue to exercise their right to work, even if not necessarily always in the same job. Secondly, workers are not able to exert their right to work, if they cannot exercise their right to continuing education and training, which has become an essential prerequisite to that end (Soyer, 1999). Workers can no longer remain employed unless they can continue their professional development, can access on-the-job training that is recognized and validated by industry, and can take educational leave when necessary for a transition from one occupation to another. Thirdly, as stressed in Chapter 5, on-the-job education and training cannot produce the expected benefits for the organization and the individual unless they respond to the dual dimension of these learning demands – the requirements of the organization and those of the individuals. Workers cannot be expected to function as 'knowing subjects' unless they are given the conditions they need to be able to act and to develop themselves accordingly.

9.4 CONCLUSION

By analyzing and returning the various indicators of psychological harassment, we can obtain a picture of the conditions required to construct individuality, and of the life and work settings that foster it. By revisiting from a social perspective the implications of psychological harassment and bullying in the workplace, we can also obtain a corrected description of a work environment in which individuals can find the space and the conditions not only to become the autonomous actors that we want them to be, but also to collectively negotiate the conditions required (Thompson and Findlay, 1999).

By bringing the reality of aggression against people's most intimate being, as well as its effects on individuals and organizations, out of the shadows and into the light, society is also coming to recognize the importance of the intimacy of working life as much as that of educational life. We are now realizing that it is difficult if

not impossible for individuals to continue constructing themselves unless both the affective and the cognitive aspects of the subjective dimension of their learning life course are recognized. They cannot become autonomous actors unless we recognize the interiority of their learning process, as well as the conditions and environments required to support this process throughout their lives.

This is one of the key components of an effective policy for recognizing the intimacy of the act of learning, which we shall examine in greater detail in the next chapter.

POLICIES TO RECOGNIZE THE INTIMACY OF LEARNING

CHAPTER 10
POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PRACTICES

The capacity for autonomous action is a key competency in reflexive modern societies. Yet, this social requirement can only be met if people have access to the necessary conditions to go on building their individuality and their social self. This means that society must recognize the interiority of a learning life course that permits individuals to develop themselves in such a way. We have seen this in our analysis of learning and educational theories in earlier chapters (Part One), and, more concretely, in the various areas of human activity (Part Two). Now we must examine the conditions and environments required to this end for the duration of people's biographies.

10.1 THE COMMENCEMENT OF PEOPLE'S EDUCATIONAL BIOGRAPHIES

Obviously, children begin to learn long before they begin school. Indeed, early childhood is one of the most critical phases of every individual's development.

10.1.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Though government education policies often neglect the very first phase of people's learning biographies, this period has a major impact on the subsequent course of everyone's life. Applying research findings from economics, developmental psychology, and neuroscience, James Heckman (2006) has shown that cognitive, linguistic,

social and affective skills are all interdependent. People's future learning and educational careers are strongly influenced by their experiences from the last few months of prenatal life to the time that they begin school, as well as by the environments in which these early experiences take place. According to the OECD (Keeley, 2007), early childhood is the time of life when special policies and programmes for children from low-income backgrounds can have the most effect. At this age, sensory, social, and emotional stimulation from interaction with family members has a major impact on the architecture of children's brains and hence on their future ability to continue learning (NSCDP, 2007). Developing language and literacy (reading and writing skills) in young children is also recognized as an essential component of such policies (Brodeur et al., 2006).

When children are very young, they learn not only how to walk but also how to talk and listen and how to interact with other people. They become curious. They construct their self-image. They learn how to delay gratification. They gradually gain control over their circumstances. In short, they learn how to make their way through life. A responsive emotional and cognitive environment has a vital impact on a child's development. The more stimulating the environment, the more connections are made within the brain and the more sophisticated its architecture becomes, which will have an impact throughout the child's life (Center on the Developing Child, 2007). Children's curiosity and their ability to test and learn from what they experience in the outside world develop gradually, according to the quality of their interactions. What makes each child unique, his idiosyncrasy, is thus both an intimate and a social construct.

The darker side of this phenomenon is how vulnerable children's development is to experiences of mistreatment and violence. Children construct their selves on the basis of their lived experiences and their learning opportunities. Exposure to violence profoundly alters children's futures and their affective and cognitive

potential. Children who are mistreated become mistrustful of all communication. A body that is abused, especially at this age, becomes a body that has trouble in feeling truly alive and is at risk of becoming somewhat anesthetized (Dejours, 2001). When the individual becomes an adult, that body may be frigid, unable to interact with another body and to experience desire and share pleasure – in short, a body that is incapable of intimacy (Colson, 2007b).

To properly understand how such instances of deprivation and violence in early life can affect a child's educational future, it is important to analyze them from both a biographical and a sociological perspective. This analysis will show that socially induced advantages and disadvantages have a cumulative effect from the very start of life and thereon throughout, and that it is therefore extremely important to better understand the early predictors of educational success and learning ability, and to intervene starting in early childhood (Audas and Willms, 2001).

First of all, there is the child's immediate life setting. Experts agree that children's parents and the other people around them play a key role in creating and maintaining a positive, nurturing environment (Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman, 2007). The family and the community must provide a setting and conditions in which children receive the cognitive, social, and emotional stimulus that they need to practice the corresponding skills and make them their own. But without support from outside agencies, some children's families may have trouble in providing this stimulating environment on their own, because they do not have all the resources needed to do so. Firstly, it is important for low-income parents to have financial support so that they can provide their children with a decent home and a balanced diet and, above all, spend enough time interacting with them (Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman, 2007). Secondly, early childhood centres and services play a key role by exposing children to a variety of new experiences in such areas as art, crafts, culture, and sports. Daycare services have a tremendous

impact on children's development, so it has become essential to make high-quality daycare centres with qualified staff accessible to all children, as well as pre-school services starting at age 4 in neighbourhoods where parents have had less access to formal education (Japel, Tremblay and Côté, 2005; Grenier and Leduc, 2009). Such public investments provide a high return to society in the long term (Heckman, 2006; Keeley, 2007).

Fortunately, although psychological and physical violence in early childhood can interfere greatly with the ongoing development of children's selves, even this crucial phase in a child's learning biography need not decide his or her fate. The first years of school can perpetuate inequalities, but can also remediate them.

10.1.2 INITIAL EDUCATION

Both Durkheim and Parsons stressed the social functions of formal education. Durkheim (1922, new edition 1968) explained that education meets the needs both of the political society and of the particular occupational milieus for which children are destined, while Parsons (1937, new edition 1968) defined the functions of education as the socialization and the allocation of individuals in the national structure of social roles. Later, Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) decoded the social reproduction function of school. Micro-sociological analysis of educational inequalities shows that individuals internalize failure at school as their personal responsibility, attributing it to their own shortcomings or lack of personal commitment. In this way, educational inequalities are disguised, arbitrarily legitimized and strengthened.

However, since then, analyses have become more complex. Giroux (1983) has pointed out that this reproduction is real but never definitive. The integrationists rediscovered the importance of individual actions, without denying the effects of social anchorage. The individual is not only an effect of structure but also an

actor, an individual who is searching for meaning and has a distinctive biographical path (Dubet, 2002, 1996).

There is nothing inevitable about the role of family, cultural, and linguistic background, but it must still be taken into account, and educational systems and practices must be designed accordingly, to avoid penalizing children from less advantaged backgrounds. Otherwise, according to Terrail (2003, pp. 147-148), these children suffer for two reasons: '[author's translation] because they have a special need for the explicit transmission of basic codes and essential theoretical markers (for example, of grammar) that other children have more fully incorporated into their mental habits earlier on; and because they cannot get the help at home that would enable them to overcome the problems specifically caused by these teaching methods.' A major role of initial schooling is to communicate a passion for knowledge to children and thus enable them to flourish in adult life. But education cannot fulfil this mission unless the inequalities that children start with are recognized. An education that is designed for everyone does not operate in the same way for everyone regardless of their past biographies. Some kinds of positive discrimination or affirmative action are needed to rectify the early inequalities.

Implementation of national standardization of curriculum without attention to prior various socio-cultural life courses tends to mask the individualized nature of people's intimate learning experiences and to reduce the perception of children's actual learning and educational paths to the prescribed ones.

To identify the conditions and environments required for the intimacy of learning to be recognized and its social implications to be realized, we must recall the dialectic underscored in Chapters 2 and 3. In any learning experience, there is an intrinsic tension between the objective demand to master certain knowledge and the internal, subjective nature of the learning processes at work to that end. For this issue to be addressed, certain key premises of education must be revisited.

10.1.3 THE KEY PREMISES OF EDUCATION

The first key premise of education is dual-faceted: education must be recentred on the learner while carrying on the cognitive process and objective. Pedagogical action needs to be dialectical. Indeed, to assert the individual and active nature of every learning process is not to deny the need for learners to acquire and integrate new knowledge and skills. The necessary mobilization of knowledge is not in contradiction with the recognition of learners' singular learning pathway. That is actually the way that learners can gradually build their autonomy.

Let us remember that not all children have the same opportunities to learn interactively in the intimate setting of their early childhood environment. Not all children receive the ongoing stimulation of attentive, articulate responses to their words and actions. Not all children are exposed to books every day and get the opportunity to begin informally learning to read and write. We cannot simply ignore these inequalities in children's relationship with knowledge and proceed as if all children had the same background. In this connection, although for some children, emphasizing non-directive teaching methods may be helpful, for others and in particular those further away from school culture, it can subtly lead to a lowering of educational expectations. The teacher/pupil interaction can then become subtly selective and unintentionally discriminatory (Terrail, 2002 and 2003).

Obviously, the problem is not the use of teaching approaches that empower learners, or the requirement that they engage in self-learning and inter-learning, but rather the application of these approaches without due consideration for the learners' varying socio-cultural backgrounds, even though the original proponents of this pedagogical movement regarded such consideration as essential (Vygotsky, 1986; Lave, 1988 and 1991). In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, if the schools ignore inequalities among children

when they are starting school, teachers may become less demanding, subtly relinquishing the determined pursuit of learning objectives and, out of empathy for their students, letting their teaching become little more than a sort of occupational therapy. Thus, the failure to consider children's socio-cultural backgrounds and the specifics of their learning biographies starting in early childhood can become highly problematic. A more casual approach to conveying knowledge and skills may make sense for children who come from literate backgrounds and so already have some experience with it, but for children who have had less access to this written universal heritage, such an approach can be a silent way of perpetuating inequalities.

A second key premise of education is *significant learning*, discussed in connection with Carl Rogers (1983) in Chapter 2. The transmission of knowledge is essential, but for it to become an effective learning process, learners must also be able to appropriate the transmitted knowledge by drawing connections between the unknown and the known, referring if possible to what they have observed and experienced previously and recognizing how the new things they learn raise questions about their past assumptions. The cognitive dissonance created by new knowledge and new questions will provide a learning opportunity only if learners have the space and support they need to revisit and question their past ideas and schemas and thus continue to build the inner architecture of their knowledge. The pedagogy of the answer must be accompanied by a pedagogy of the question (Lengrand, 1994), so that learners can become active agents, recognizing and questioning what they have learned, drawing new connections, assimilating new knowledge – in short, constantly integrating and reintegrating what they know. What is learned has a cumulative impact only to the extent that it is subjectively significant to the learner.

A third key premise of education is the *passion for knowledge*. As the poet Rabelais said already 800 hundred years ago, 'A child

is not a vase to be filled, but a fire to be lit.' Children whose love of learning leads them to experience moments of such passion – of 'educational ecstasy', as Leonard (1968) puts it – over their years in school will want to repeat this gratifying experience throughout their life course. The joy of acquiring new knowledge at the end of an arduous process of discovery is an intimate experience, a moment of educational ecstasy that will leave its mark on the future course of the individual's learning biography.

Clearly, teachers cannot kindle children's curiosity through boredom and repetition. Instead, teachers must create situations in which learners discover previously unsuspected connections among things that they already know, and thus help them to make unexpected leaps forward. A person's learning biography is not linear. As on any journey, the periods of simply moving forward are much longer than the moments of discovery. But the former pave the way for the latter, and the latter shed retrospective light on the former. There are many different ways of communicating a passion for knowledge and encouraging curiosity. These things are not taught, but are rather lived and hence transmitted through the learning relationship. This is the silent curriculum hidden between the lines of the formal curriculum. True, teachers cannot arouse curiosity without communicating new knowledge, but unless they burn with a fire to do so, they will never kindle a passion for learning in their students.

10.1.4 STEERING THE PATHWAYS OF FORMAL EDUCATION

The learning and educational pathways that people follow, especially after elementary school, are becoming more and more varied. Firstly, in secondary school, young people choose between academic and vocational streams. Secondly, within each of these streams, they choose among programmes that vary in length and which constitute an area of specialization. The options for the

transition from secondary to post-secondary education are also becoming more varied. In addition to the traditional pathway, more and more countries are democratizing access to higher education by providing such alternatives. For example, students may complete a vocational programme in secondary school, then take further vocational education at the two-year college level, or complete a two-year vocational programme at a college, then go on to a university degree. Provisions are also being made to let students switch both ways between academic and vocational programmes, as well as to enable young adults to return to school.

10.1.5 A SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT THAT IS STIMULATING AND OPEN TO DIVERSITY

By considering the problem of bullying in school, we can paradoxically discover another function of school, one that is too often overlooked: it enables young people to construct their identities. Bullying in school, like psychological harassment in the workplace (see Chapter 9), is nothing new, but its recognition as a social problem is indeed recent (Beane, 1999). Now, when young people are repeatedly subjected to bullying by their peers, it is no longer looked on as an accident or unimportant phenomenon (Olweus, 1997; Carra and Faggianelli, 2003; Smith and Schneider, 2004). Bullying is destructive not only to its victims but also to its perpetrators, as well as to the people who witness it from the sidelines. In its victims, bullying undermines personal wellbeing, psychological integrity, self-confidence, and self-esteem, while creating anxiety and isolation. A close link has also been established between being bullied and depression (Lepage, Marcotte and Fortin, 2006). Being bullied can also lead to cognitive problems, such as attention deficit disorder, that can compromise young people's success in school. In the bullies themselves, a pathology is also observed that is often related to their own past

experiences and that affects their own performance in school. And for the people who witness bullying, whether they do so passively, or approvingly, or take the victim's side, they are still involved and hence affected by what they see.

It is a revealing thought-experiment to replace each of these acts of bullying with an opposing act, and each of the bullying's harmful effects with the beneficial effects of this opposite. One thereby discovers the characteristics of a school environment where everyone can become self-actualized, and the importance of a school climate that encourages everyone to express himself and to recognize one another's special contributions. It is an environment where interpersonal conflict is dealt with. Instead of problems being ignored, solutions are facilitated through various forms of mediation. Similarities are noticed and differences are appreciated, so that individuals can more readily be integrated into the group. In short, young people are taught to respect everyone's right to be and to become themselves. They learn to recognize that everyone else has needs, feelings, and desires that are just as valid as their own and to acknowledge such diversity as an inherent component of a creative community.

The generalized application of such practices based on recognition of diversity and equality of opportunity transforms the climate in the classroom and the school. It has a demonstrated impact on academic performance, as well as on rates of absenteeism and dropping out (Espelage and Swearer, 2003). The classroom is not the only place in school where learning occurs. It also happens informally in the hallways and in the schoolyard. Indeed, teachers and school administrators are now paying more and more attention to the creating a positive overall school climate, because it has such major effects. When individuals feel appreciated, they are better able to accept justified criticism and use it to improve their performance, thus enhancing their sense of personal efficacy. Such a climate encourages teamwork and informal learning from

one another while recognizing empathy as a skill that has become essential in today's world, a development required throughout the adult life.

10.2 ADULT LIFELONG LEARNING

For the intimacy of learning throughout adult life to be recognized, certain conditions must be met outside and within the workplace.

10.2.1 WORK-RELATED ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There are two different but complementary kinds of work-related adult education and training. The first kind refers to workplace learning. The second is the educational path that adults take individually for the purposes of occupational mobility.

In Chapter 5, we discussed the transformation that learning demand is undergoing in the workplace. We emphasized the ongoing dynamic between employers' demand on the one hand and employees' requirements and aspirations on the other. The expression of this demand and the mediation of its duality enable organized learning activities at workplace to be made relevant for all of the stakeholders in the organization. Hence, in contrast with initial-education policies, it is imperative for workplace education and training policies and programmes to include and support a phase of joint analysis and planning that precedes the activities themselves and which considers the immediate context in which they will take place and the diversity of expectations and backgrounds of the people involved. As is well known, learning can be meaningful for individuals and effective for their communities only when it is relevant to both. But government policies and programmes that provide for this kind of up-front involvement are still the exception; the tendency is to fund the education and training activities themselves, ignoring the preliminary mediation of

the organization's training demand. It is essential that collective agreements also take such considerations into account, not only by setting minimum standards for access to all forms of on-the-job training, but also by recognizing the crucial phase of expression of any learning demand and by creating mechanisms that let employees participate in the decisions related to their professional development. As we have seen in Chapter 5, some significant advances have begun to be made in this regard.

The second type of work-related education and training, for purposes of occupational mobility, is becoming more and more important because of cyclical fluctuations and, especially, structural transformations in national economies. Thus, alongside policies to support employers' training activities, programmes are now needed to support individuals who take the initiative to enhance their occupational mobility. The average person now experiences three or four major career transitions over his or her working life, so more and more individuals are trying to gain control over these transitions by taking the initiative to change or enhance their qualifications. But people cannot achieve this goal unless supporting policies and measures are put in place to let them leave work to engage in learning activities either part-time or full-time for a specified period. Such policies and measures can take various forms (see Chapter 5, section 5.5.1).

As a complement to public policies, we are beginning to see measures and mechanisms implemented through collective agreements and sectorial agreements. In fact, it is becoming harder and harder for people to enjoy their right to work unless they can, at some points in their career, exercise their right to return to vocational formal programmes. But in order to exercise such a right, workers must also have access to information, advice, guidance, financial support, and arrangements to help them reconcile the demands of work, family and education. Otherwise, all the responsibility is placed on the individual, which amounts to what Torjman (2000) calls a 'survival-of-the-fittest employment policy.'

Policies and measures of a third, less visible kind are equally necessary for developing workplace actors' capacity to act more autonomously. These policies and measures are aimed at enhancing the work environment. This of course includes providing all workers with 'decent work' conditions (see section 5.2). Analyses of harassment in the workplace (see Chapter 9) are revealing in this regard. Beyond immediate interventions, the development of a learning organization requires structural responses that not only combine internal flexibility with job security (Lowe, 2002), but also provide working conditions that guarantee and enhance individuals' physical and psychological health and safety. However, a work-environment policy of this kind is only a minimum requirement.

The work environment must not only meet international standards for *decent work* conditions and a fair income, but must also enable all workers to find a 'use value' in their work, to receive recognition for their performance, and, through it, to express and construct their identity (Yeatts and Hyten, 1998). In their day-to-day work, as they experience the differences between their prescribed tasks and their actual tasks, individuals build their experiential knowledge and improve their skills – for example, by observing, diagnosing, and solving non-routine problems. But to do so, they must be able to find the space and receive the recognition from those around them in order to exercise their practical intelligence (Billett, 2007), learn in action (Candy, 1991) and develop their creativity. But the concrete forms that the intelligence of each individual's practices takes, depend on the opportunities offered and on stimulating and challenging experiences (Rogers, 1993, p.14).

The creation of such work environments is an issue not only for employees' well-being and continuous personal development, but also for the productivity and growth of the organization. In this regard, the current relationships between organizations' policies and models for innovation (R and D), on one side, and, on the other, their policies and practices for education and training are

revealing. Too often organizational innovation operates in a vertical fashion, cut off from internal learning and inter-learning networks. Innovations are then introduced from the top; employees must then adjust to them. Within government, the departments or ministries responsible for supporting innovation and industrial research do their work in separate 'silos' from the ones responsible for sustaining training within industry and human-resource development. Fortunately, horizontal models for innovation are emerging, in which the employees are involved in diagnosing problems and finding and testing potential innovative solutions. This trend toward policies promoting greater interaction between industrial innovation and on-the-job training provides a good example of what is meant by a learning organization.

Workplace training policies do not stop with training as such. They also include the introduction of an invisible 'workplace curriculum' (Billett, 2006), that is, a culture and an infrastructure that facilitate experiential learning. Such a culture consists of standards, attitudes, values, and social practices that involve the individuals in the organization, keep them informed about development plans, recognize their self-taught knowledge and skills, invite them to take initiative instead of discouraging them from doing so, stimulate rather than stifle their curiosity, and enable them to gradually move on from the simplest tasks to more complex ones (Lave and Wenger, 1991). An infrastructure that facilitates experiential learning not only supports employee participation in structured education and training but also creates times and places for informal consultation and gives employees the practical resources needed to find information and satisfy their professional curiosity.

10.2.2 NON-WORK-RELATED ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING

There is no production without actors. Although this gap is currently most apparent in the workplace (see Chapter 5), it is becoming more and more visible in other areas of human activities as well.

This raising issue, as we shall see in section 10.3, is transforming the debate about adult learning policies. The adult population's learning demand now extends beyond work-related learning; it includes academic upgrading and basic education (Chapter 6) as well as the diversified domain of popular education (Chapter 8). And it does not stop with the end of working life (Chapter 7)!

Adult education and learning policies can no longer ignore or marginalize the adult population's demand for basic skills development, as we can observe in the ways many global actors are debating the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for the future (Chapter 6, section 6.3). Basic education is an absolute right which cannot be limited by age-based discrimination. A second chance for the 770 million adults who never had access to school and the hundreds of millions more who attended school all too little is not only a fundamental right but has also become an individual and social necessity. Furthermore, initiatives to meet the learning demand of these adults will be all the more effective and significant if they are rooted in the context of their daily lives.

As discussed in Chapter 8, popular education is the third pillar of adult education and learning policies, alongside academic education and work-related education and training. But among these three, popular education remains the sawn-off pillar of such policies, despite UNESCO's many efforts to highlight the extent of the adult population's demand for such education (UNESCO, 2010, 1997, 1985, 1972), despite the recognized social and economic benefits (see section 8.3) of strengthening adults' knowledge and skills in the fields of health, environment, community life, parenting, and individual empowerment, and despite the demonstrated impact of popular education on overall educational goals.

Government commonly helps to fund work-related adult education by providing subsidies and tax credits to the organizations

that deliver it, that is, the public education system, not-for-profit organizations, and labour-market partners. The situation is different when it comes to popular education, which may also be delivered diversely by public institutions, independent organizations of civil society or social movements.

True, some countries in Europe (such as the Nordic countries, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Belgium), in Latin America (such as Brazil and Uruguay), and in Oceania (such as New Zealand and Australia) have adopted national adult learning policies or policy components that recognize popular education. Some African countries have also established popular education programmes in the field of health, in connection, for example, with HIV-AIDS (UNESCO-UIL, 2009b). In fact, in most of the countries that do have a national policy on adult education and learning, such policies tend to focus almost exclusively on literacy, academic education and occupational education and training. In some countries, experiments in popular education are also being carried out by civil society, but for the most part they are barely recognized and often not supported by public policies.

This has not always been the case. Some countries went through intense periods of popular education, but they did not last. For example, under apartheid in South Africa and the authoritarian dictatorships in certain Latin American countries, popular education activities were supported by international solidarity and cooperation funds, but when these regimes ended, this funding dried up. Since the late 1980s, popular education has also declined in Southern and Eastern Europe, following the economic crises and political changes there. Some other countries, after undergoing major political transitions, adopted popular education policies, but they did not last. Examples include the policies introduced following the victories of the national liberation movements in Africa in the 1960s and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the 1980s.

In France, popular education experienced amazing growth as part of the resistance movement during World War II, but became much less of a priority 20 years later. Thus the famous Grenelle Agreements of May 1968, reached at the end of a major social conflict, removed the obstacles to continuing occupational education, required employers to invest a specified percentage of their payroll to support such education, and created paid educational leave, all of which represented major progress. But then, France gave such high priority to economic development that popular education was set aside and forgotten, even though 20 years earlier, it had spread so successfully through organizations such as People and Culture, la Ligue d'enseignement and the Léo Lagrange Homes (Rodary, 1980; Troger, 2001; Surleau and Hansotte, 2003; Dubar, 2008).

In Quebec, from the very start of the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, the adult education services were receiving government funding for their popular education activities. But two decades later, in the early 1980s, on the pretext that the prevailing economic crisis made popular education a luxury, the government of the day completely eliminated it from its education policies and programmes. At the time, 305,000 adults were signing up for popular education programmes in Quebec every year. Popular education accounted for more than half of all government-funded adult education activities in the province and every year was serving about 8% of the total adult population. In Quebec today, the only remaining popular education activities are offered by community literacy groups and volunteer organizations (both of which continue to receive some government funding through an interministerial community action programme), and by the Popular Education Centres of Montreal (also known as the *Intercep* network), which are few in number and in serious danger of disappearing. Their history and, most of all, their marginalization since the 1980s clearly illustrate the course that education policies have taken in Quebec over the past three decades.

Thus the prevailing pattern is clear, with the exceptions noted above, popular education has become or remains a marginal part of government adult learning policies and must therefore be self-funding – only people who can afford to pay can participate. In too many countries, what was supposed to be a new open space for personal and community development has instead become a preserve of the well-to-do. When it comes to adult education and learning outside the domain of formally academic or work-related education and training, the law of the market tends to prevail. And that is paradoxical, because humanity is entering an historic period in which adults' free time already exceeds their working time and will do so more and more as the years go on. Let us recall that time spent at work during the life course now accounts for less than 15% of people's total lives – about 90,000 out of 700,000 hours, compared with 165,000 out of 435,000 hours, or slightly less than 40%, at the start of World War II.

Precisely because of this prevailing trend in adult education policies and the unmet demand for popular education among older adults, the concept of lifelong learning policies is misleading. For people who are no longer in the labour market, who have learning needs unrelated to their work and cannot afford to pay for private education services themselves, lifelong learning policies are no longer lifelong. In Chapter 7, we stressed the value of people's continuing education throughout their lives, even when they are no longer doing paid work. This abrupt termination of people's learning biographies reflects and reinforces the prevailing tendency to define this increasingly lengthy period of life after formal work in passive, if not negative terms. People's aspirations to continue building their own identities are impeded.

It is essential for government policy makers to recognize this social demand, the need to meet it, and the feasibility of doing so. But that will not happen without the emergence of environments conducive to the expression of this demand. This last point

is critical, because when older people participate in education, they are doing so voluntarily. They decide to participate only if they see a need to do so and consider it possible and acceptable to do so in their communities. In this regard, cultural predispositions and the perception of the legitimacy of their learning demand constitute especially important factors in their decision to participate. And if older people could not express their demands openly, then governments can justify not meeting them, and the lack of educational opportunities for seniors becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Eliminating prejudices also means adapting community infrastructures to embrace the new vision of aging and thus preventing the older generation from becoming isolated from the younger ones. The frequency and quality of daily interactions between the generations plays a decisive role in this regard (Schwartz and Simmons, 2001). Urban and residential design that facilitates such contacts will make it easier for seniors to build their identities as active participants in the societies of the 21st century. Ensuring seniors' access to cultural infrastructure such as museums, libraries, and theatres, as well as to new technologies, has become an essential means of fostering and supporting informal learning activities, which account for the largest part of seniors' educational lives (Livingstone, 1999).

Some more immediate steps are also needed to help seniors express this demand and find the means of satisfying it. Information must be disseminated through the networks that seniors are in touch with. Educational intake and referral services for seniors must be established. Educational activities must be offered at locations that are easily accessible to seniors. Most importantly, registration fees for seniors' educational activities should be reduced substantially, if not eliminated.

This diversified learning demand of senior people is already taken seriously by some countries which have integrated it into their lifelong learning policies. In Germany, for example, community adult education centres known as *Volkshochschulen* (folk high

schools) serve some seven million adults every year, of whom one million, or 13%, are aged 65 or older. A third of the cost is absorbed by the participants, and the other two-thirds come from public funds (Huntemann and Reichart, 2011). In Sweden, whose population is only one-tenth that of Germany's, over 1.5 million adults participate in study circles, and 270,000 of these adults (18%) are aged 65 or older (Swedish National Council of Adult Education, 2012). In England and Wales, 23% of all adults aged 65 to 74 and 14% of all adults aged 75 and older participate in educational programmes (Aldridge and Tuckett, 2010). Another experience that says much about the importance of the learning demand among seniors is that of the Universities of the Third Age (U3A), now federated under the International Association of Universities of the Third Age. The idea of these universities for seniors first emerged in France in the 1970s and quickly spread to numerous countries and every continent. Universities of the Third Age are generally affiliated with traditional universities in the same geographic area and offer courses in various academic fields, and well beyond, to promote education for, by, and with seniors, throughout their lives. But unfortunately, their tuition fees too often tend to exclude the majority of seniors.

A parallel can be drawn between the public debate on aging and similar discussions about popular education in the fields of environment and health promotion. Studies show that if we do not start investing enough to protect the environment today, the effects and hence the costs will be out of our control tomorrow. The public perception of this risk is growing, as is the importance of intervening right away, but the awakening is happening too slowly. Similarly, the World Health Organization, since it first presented the *Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion* in 1986 and at the many international conferences held on health promotion since then, has continually asked countries to set aside part of their health resources for prevention and promotion, so as to slow the rising

demand for curative health services and thus avoid an impasse. But despite the demonstrated long-term benefits of investing in health promotion, policy makers cling to their short-term perspective and still fail to allocate 3% or 4% of their total health budgets to health promotion and health literacy in order to slow and eventually reverse the rise in health-care costs (Bélanger and Robitaille, 2010). As a result, governments are neglecting the prevention efforts that would enable all members of the population to maintain or improve their health, and are even delaying targeted investments to prevent the return of pandemics.

The environment and health promotion have emerged as areas for government intervention just as, after 30 years of prosperity, the welfare state in developed countries was entering a period of crisis. Meanwhile, in developing countries, the World Bank's structural-adjustment policies were substantially reducing government budgets for health and education. In all three areas – environment, health, and the aging of the population –policy makers will never look beyond the short term and take the risks seriously unless pressure from and collective action by an informed public force them to do so.

10.3 EXPLICIT AND INDIRECT POLICIES FOR ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

The field of adult education and learning constitutes a multi-faceted and multi-sectorial phenomenon. It encompasses formal, non-formal, and informal types of learning. It involves a wide variety of organizations (such as educational institutions, businesses, volunteer groups, private organizations, media outlets and professional corporations). It is provided in multiple physical locations (such as schools, libraries, workplaces, and cultural centres, etc.) and through many online platforms (such as e-learning sites, search engines, and social media). In addition, many different government departments or ministries are directly or indirectly involved

in providing or supporting adult learning, while the mandates of these bodies vary widely. In brief, adult learning policies go beyond and transcend their known traditional ministerial bounds (Bélanger and Federighi, 1999)

10.3.1 EXPLICIT AND INDIRECT ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING POLICIES

At first, we have to take note of the explicit policies on vocational continuing education and training, literacy and popular education, as well as on adults' access to formal education and recognition of prior learning. Their primary goal is to establish standard curricula that ensure the same high-quality education for all students. Adult learning and education policies must of course ensure the accessibility and quality of the education provided. But they must also take into account the duality of adult learning demands, the variety of environments in which adult learners live, and the variety of life experiences that they have had. Adult-education policies must also provide mechanisms that enable adult learners to take ownership of their learning process so that it is relevant to their needs and effective in meeting them.

A second aspect of adult education and learning policies is related to the intersectorial and interdepartmental/interministerial nature of this domain. The contribution of such indirect adult learning policies has to be taken into account. Various government departments or ministries and agencies, in their respective spheres, are counting more and more on the skills and initiative of individuals and local communities in agriculture, commerce, environment, families, fisheries, forestry, health, immigration, industrial development, justice, regulation of professions, social affairs, tourism, and so on. The educational activities with which these departments and ministries deal go under many different names, such as continuing professional development, dissemination, education in prison, extension education, innovation, instruction, learning, research and development,

second-language education, training, etc. Cultural departments or ministries deal with education in programme areas such as arts and literature, cultural communities, libraries, museums, cultural centres, and ecology parks. Ministries and departments of urban affairs are also involved through their 'learning cities' initiatives.

These parallel contributions to strengthen citizens' and civil society's capacity for action have to be recognized through the adult education and learning national policies. It is then essential to generate synergy among these varied sources of support for adult learning and to promote strategies and methods of designing and delivering learning opportunities that result in meaningful learning and do not simply transmit knowledge.

To prevent the fragmentation of such multi-ministerial interventions, it is essential for every government to establish an interdepartmental/inter-ministerial policy framework that sets priorities, provides co-ordination mechanisms, creates alternative pathways between programmes, and regulates and corrects any disparities with regard to gender, age, and socio-economic status. Such a framework is needed because policies that deal explicitly with adult learning are not the only ones that have an impact on knowledge mobilization, occupational qualifications, occupational mobility, competent citizen participation, and co-production of knowledge.

Moreover, in such a diversified delivery context, it is important to create proximate reference services that help individuals to develop their projects, access the information, resources, and support available in the various areas of education and training, and secure recognition of what they have learned, regardless of where or how they have learned it, as discussed in section 10.2 above.

10.3.2 LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Another key component of adult education and learning policies is a policy on learning environments. The first purpose of such a

policy is to ensure the accessibility of the various kinds of knowledge resources, including new information technologies, which means developing physical and virtual public libraries, as well as ecology parks and museums with interpretive services. The second purpose is to encourage communities and workplaces to be designed and managed as environments that encourage initiative and informal interlearning. Such policies are certainly less visible but are no less crucial for stimulating adults' creativity (Bélanger, 2003).

Policies on equal opportunities for lifelong learning include equal access to sources of learning and self-learning, but should also provide everyone a living environment that offers what Gibson (1977) calls 'affordances' and arouses curiosity, stimulates thinking, nurtures the joy of learning and invites people to react positively to instances of initiative. An analysis of the map of a city cannot be limited to its architecture or to the functionality of its urban design but includes the image of the city, its 'imageability' (Lynch, 1960, 1984) and its expressivity (Paetsch, 2013) – meaning the relationship between individuals and their habitat, the daily experience of this environment, the pleasure of moving through it, the safe spaces and opportunities that it provides for encounters with 'fellow strangers', the encouragement that it offers to do more exploration of the past, the present, and the future. What we are talking about here is the capacity of an environment to elicit cognitive and emotional reactions among people who live in it and thus inspire their imagination.

Experiential learning is not simply what happens when someone is exposed to or adjusts to a contingency, it is also a reflexive practice that is stimulated by the environment (Williams, 1976). As discussed in section 2.2 of Chapter 2, the behaviourists demonstrated the important role that stimuli play in triggering introspection, supporting the love of learning, awakening curiosity, and strengthening initiative in individuals (Skinner, 1969). In this

connection, Skinner (1977) also pointed out the need to examine the diversity and inequality of learning environments. He demonstrated the need to change the environments where people live and work, so that these environments encourage them to go on learning and exploring the unknown.

This ecological perspective on lifelong learning provides the final part of the analysis of the factors at play in recognizing the intimacy of learning. The passion for knowledge needs to be stimulated. People construct themselves through the various social interactions they experience throughout their lives; it is therefore crucial to take into account the environments in which these interactions occur.

10.4 CONCLUSION

All these explicit and indirect adult learning and education policies share the same global objective – the development of diffuse capacity for action. This has been recognized by international bodies such as the European Community (2011) and in countless books and white papers with evocative titles such as *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1991) A Nation at Risk (USA, 1984), *New Competence* (Norway, 2003), and *The Joy of Learning* (Finland, 2011). The resolution[11] that the European Council adopted in 2011 to renew the *European Agenda for Adult Learning* is significant in this regard. It defines, for its strategy 2012 to 2020, five priority areas that could be summarized as follows:

[11] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:372:0001:0006:EN:PDF

1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning and education;
4. Enhancing the creativity and capacity for innovation of adults as well as their learning environments;
5. Improving the knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult-learning diversified sector.

What is at stake is the reflexive capacity of today's high-risk societies. We cannot meet this collective challenge unless we effectively recognize the intimacy of learning for all citizens today.

Society has now reached a turning point in the development of adult education and learning policies. *The imperative* 'supply-side' approach, which imposed learning schedules, pace, content, structure, methods, paths, results, and evaluation methods, is dysfunctional. So are *laissez faire* policies that pretend to take a neutral stance on social demands but in fact preserve existing inequalities. While pretending to assert the genuine right to meaningful lifelong learning, these approaches actually deny it.

What is needed, before and beyond education, are policies for disseminating the capacity for initiative and creativity throughout all areas of human activity and, to this end, policies that guarantee everyone's right to continue learning in a significant way throughout their lives. Firstly, we need specific policies on early childhood education. Secondly, we need to redesign our elementary and secondary school programmes so that they truly provide students with a sound initial education and a solid take-off in life. And thirdly, we need specific direct and indirect adult education and learning policies –policies that encourage adults to express their learning demands in all areas throughout their lives and that guarantee all adults educational opportunities and conditions conducive to empowering learning.

CHAPTER 11
CONCLUSION

The intimacy of learning, a dimension often overlooked, has pronounced social implications. Paradoxically, learning is simultaneously an individual and a social act; learning is also both a rational act and an affective one. The recognition of this dual learning dialectic – intimate and public on the one hand, cognitive and emotional on the other – has become essential for the development of an active citizenry. The only way for today's societies to meet the ecological, economic, social, and cultural challenges that they face is to become reflexive and thus to draw on the individual and collective intelligence, imagination, and creativity of citizens who are both competent and engaged.

11.1 AUTONOMY OF ACTION: AN ESSENTIAL COMPETENCY IN THE FUTURE

Autonomy of action has become an essential competency for individuals. They need it not only to explore another possible world and to build it collectively, but also to individually negotiate the changing circumstances that each of them will face many times throughout their own lives. Individuals today must increasingly make decisions under conditions of uncertainty, both about their private lives (for example, regarding their health and their personal relationships) and about their careers. At each of these crossroads, individuals can and must make choices. Given the sudden transitions that individuals now experience so often in their lives, the only way that they can achieve a decent quality of life is to equip themselves cognitively and emotionally to steer their life course

more effectively and define themselves through the choices that they must inevitably make and the calculated risks that they must unavoidably take: 'There can be no darker or more devastating tragedy than the death of a man's faith in himself and in his power to direct his future' (Alinsky, 1972, p. xxvi).

For the moment, this demand for autonomy is most apparent in the workplace. Workers need to continue their professional development in order to protect their right to work. 'External flexibility' policies need to be transformed into 'flexicurity' policies (Rubenson, 2009). In the 19th century, employers had to take the risk of bringing large numbers of workers together in factories. In the 21st century, employers must take the risk of calling on their workers' capacity for initiative. But if workers are to respond to this call and play an active role in this new work organization, then their individuality must be respected, so that they can exercise their creativity and continue developing their expertise every day. The growing public awareness of psychological harassment in the workplace and its consequences, along with its growing social unacceptability, reflects the growing importance of matters of identity and subjectivity in advanced modern societies (see Chapter 9).

In this context, people are beginning to rediscover the value of intelligence at work and hence of the intellectual and affective contribution of every individual. It is thus becoming obvious, for example, that the demand for education and training in the workplace cannot be limited to the prescribed tasks. If we deny the tension between the prescribed tasks and the actual work, we end up denying the practical and strategic intelligence at work as well as the aspirations of individuals to enhance their capacity for action and to negotiate the learning demand accordingly. For knowledge to be mobilized within the organization, it must first be appropriated by its individual members. By acquiring and articulating knowledge for themselves, individuals secure their own autonomy and capacity for initiative, as well as their ability to participate in the team work arrangements of today.

Workers are also now trying to ensure that the tension that they experience between the exchange value and the use value of their work is also recognized in the education and training provided or requested by their employers. In participating in such organized learning, workers are not only looking for organisational and personal outcomes, but also for a personally meaningful experience. Indeed, the knowledge conveyed can be mobilized only once it has been appropriated by every individual. Through this process, workers are thus collectively helping to change the culture of their organizations so that productive activity becomes more reflective and individuality gains more recognition (Field, 2008). But this call for intelligence and initiative, demanded by the new contexts of production, cannot be heard unless individuals are given the space to exercise their creative abilities and to realize themselves in their work, and unless the fruits of thus enhanced productivity are shared in the form not only of higher pay and benefits, but also of an enhanced quality of working life.

But far from being confined to the workplace, the need to continue learning has now become a feature of civil society and private life as well. This imperative is evident in all areas of human activities, including collective action. The renewal of social movements, for example, is related to the increased involvement of individual members in debating and taking ownership of the issues. Of course, agitation and propaganda (*agitprop*) can stir opposition and insurgences against repression and inequality, but there can be no sustainable change without an informed and freely constructed solidarity between members of social movement.

As we have seen and continue to see in the movement to fight violence against women, collective action depends on the personal commitment of every member who not only realizes that he or she is no longer alone in his or her situation, but also breaks the bonds of tradition, assumes the freedom to actively join the movement and to develop their own expertise. Similarly, for the ecological

survival of our planet, all citizens must become alert and competent not only to clean up their own backyards, but also to join forces with one another, even beyond the boundaries of their own countries. Toxic clouds know no borders.

Philosopher and political scientist Jean-Marc Piotte (2001) expresses the simultaneously individual and collective, intimate and social dynamic of the construction of such actions of solidarity when he refers to the concept of individuality, which he sharply distinguishes from individualism. Individuality (see Chapter 8, section 8.2) refers to individuals' exercise of self-determination, whereas individualism refers to individuals' focusing on themselves and pursuing their private interests without regard for the public good. To say that a goal of education is to make individuals autonomous does not mean to develop their ability to make decisions all on their own, independently of the expertise and support of other people. Rather, it means to empower them to determine their own actions and, to this end, enable them to consider the opinions of others so as to make informed decisions (Hand, 2006). Thus, in opposition to a perspective based chiefly on the individual and competition, we must acknowledge that individual's authenticity and rationality are two essential conditions for active citizenship. The challenge, here again, is to relate the public and the private, the social and the intimate. The recognition of the intimacy of learning responds to the social demand for individuation throughout the life course.

Today's highly knowledge-intensive societies run the risk of becoming profoundly inegalitarian if they do not also become highly curiosity-intensive and creativity-intensive, if they do not widely distribute the resources that individuals need to develop their skills and integrate their new knowledge – in other words, if they do not become 'actor-intensive'. The expansion of citizens' skills and social imagination has become essential for destabilizing restrictive discourses (Probyn, 1993) and enabling citizens to

glimpse alternatives and act to make them realities. In today's pluralistic societies, individuals' continuous construction of their idiosyncratic identities has become a necessary condition for societal improvement, if not for the very survival of societies.

11.2   INDISPENSABLE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Yes, men and women are actors – curious, rational, and capable of observing, analyzing, communicating, and solving problems. But individuals cannot achieve the 'agency' (Bandura, 1990) which is increasingly required of them, unless they can continue to construct themselves through episodes of learning and educational pathways that make sense for them.

People cannot master new knowledge unless they can relate it to what they already know and thus structure it in their deep memory. And they cannot continue to learn unless they have developed, through their experiences, a thirst for knowledge and a sense of educational efficacy (ibid.). In this regard, we must ask more of education than just socialization and adaptation. We must also demand that it supports individuation, so that actors can maintain reflective, informed relationships with the settings in which they live and work (Ehrenberg, 1995).

The tension between the construction of one's identity for others and of one's identity for oneself (Dubar, 1991) sheds light on the policies, strategies, and practices that should be adopted to make this tension dynamic both for society and for the individuals/citizens who constitute it. Any learning demand is therefore dual: it includes not only the skills and knowledge required by the organization, but also the expectations and aspirations of the people who work in it. Education and training are effective only when they are designed to satisfy both the demands of society and the expectations of the individuals who will have to internalize the required knowledge and skills. The objective of a 'diffuse-initiatives

society' calls for a participatory model of the welfare-state based on the creative participation of the individual and collective actors (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009).

In this book we have examined how, in the various areas of learning and education, cognitive and affective dimensions constantly interact. In turn, this has led us to analyze the positioning of the learner in learning theory and to reject the supposedly irreducible opposition between cognitivism and social-constructivism. This debate setting up the objective of transferring constituted knowledge against the concern for subjectively meaningful learning is a false one. Whenever either of these sides of the educational dialectic is neglected, the result is tragic. We cannot enhance the intimacy of learning and personal autonomy by loosening the requirement for everyone to master basic and more advanced knowledge. But it is equally true that this knowledge cannot be appropriated and mobilized without the subjective, rational and emotional involvement of the individuals concerned. They have to connect the various bases of knowledge they have learned and the abilities that they have acquired throughout their lives, to combine them in constantly shifting ways so as to apply them in other areas or periods of their lives.

We cannot avoid the need to acquire constituted knowledge and to consciously take our place in the history and the cumulative, diverse heritage of humanity. There can, indeed, be no effective appropriation of procedural, theoretical, or declarative knowledge unless learners are interested in and willing to acquire it. Learners should be able to take ownership of the skills and knowledge that they have acquired in order to be able to mobilize them in their daily life. Every individual has a personal knowledge system that lets him or her interpret events and steer the course of his or her life. And when these ideas become incoherent or outdated, the individual must either confirm or revise his or her views. As Chomsky points out, every individual is a rational being, capable of deliberation and reflection (Baillargeon, 2006). The tension between the

development of self-esteem and the internal construction of the individual's knowledge creates a continuous dynamic that is crucial for the individual's autonomy. But this dynamic is not spontaneous; it requires support and instruction to give the individual access to the knowledge, and then guidance to enable the individual to assimilate this knowledge and make it his or her own.

In this book we have also attempted to obtain a better understanding of the public meaning of the construction of the self. In addition to the dialectic between the rational and the emotional, there is, as noted above, a second creative tension, between the individual and the social dimensions of all learning. Paradoxically, it is by engaging in social action and exercising the power to act and to understand that the individual pursues the intimate construction of his or her identity. And conversely, it is the individual's autonomy that enables him or her them to participate in society critically and creatively. In fact, individuals can never construct themselves unless they can successfully express this self-construction socially, live their intimacy with others, and fight anything that prevents them from doing so. And, conversely, once again, there can be no social change unless individuals take the initiative to question the way things are and then join forces to protest against them (Arendt, 1998).

11.3   INDISPENSABLE SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Societal recognition of the intimacy of learning has become a necessity, to help individuals become autonomous agents and make civil society more dynamic. But for this recognition to occur, social and educational conditions must be put in place that facilitate the pursuit of such reflexive biographies. The social structure can and does in fact condition the individual. But it can also offer a living environment that stimulates the creativity of people and provides them with the resources needed to go on constructing themselves.

For people to construct their selves and their individuality, certain social and economic conditions must first be met. Individuals cannot become empowered unless everyone has decent living conditions, unless the cultural environment makes diversity a source of creativity, and unless there is freedom of expression and space for collective action – in short, unless there is genuine democracy. It is by circulating and debating ideas and actively interweaving secondary relationships that citizens can successfully take control over their own lives and avoid being controlled by particular vested interests.

Similarly, the social movements' struggles for emancipation cannot succeed on their own – they require a democratic space for expressing and mediating conflicts, a political context that recognizes the legitimacy of non-violent collective action, generalized access to the information and knowledge that are relevant to these movements' activities, and freedom to speak about the need for change (Batliwala, cited by Patel, 1996). Individuals cannot appropriate the required knowledge and thus build their personal capacity to act and to express themselves in their communities unless they have access, throughout their lives, to the educational opportunities that make such learning possible.

It is imperative that such learning and educational conditions be present from early childhood, the critical period for awakening curiosity and building self-confidence (see section 10.1). In this critical phase, the presence or absence of sensory, affective, and cognitive stimuli will shape the emerging architecture of the brain and modify its future capacity to learn (Brodeur et al., 2006; Japel, Tremblay, and Côté, 2005). We thus understand the critical role played by preschool programmes starting at age 3 or 4, especially for children from less-educated backgrounds, in order that they may be introduced early to literate society together with children from families more similar to this cultural environment. People's learning biographies are never fully determined by their

backgrounds, but the cumulative effect of the successes and failures that people encounter along their educational pathways clearly shows the major impact of this early period of life.

The universal, lifelong right to basic education is thus becoming more fundamental than ever throughout the world. In the course of the 20th century, the second phase of people's educational biographies – their initial basic education – certainly became a societal commitment to which all member states of the United Nations subscribed, though even in 2014 more than 60 million children have no access to primary education! Yet, as we have stressed throughout this book, for this universal access to initial education to have the desired effect, the quality and relevance of the education provided must be ensured. These early years of school are when people systematically learn how to learn, and when they develop the inner resources they need to continue wanting to learn and being able to learn – in other words, when they develop a lifelong love of learning.

Throughout people's initial school years and of course also along the adult learning life course, the dynamic between the objective demand to master knowledge and the inner nature of the learning processes required to do so will constitute a major issue. But for the tension between these two dimensions to become dynamic and fruitful, it must be acknowledged and sustained, which requires the application of the following basic pedagogical principles that drive the learning and educational dialectic:

• A focus on content must not be regarded as opposed to or a substitute for a focus on the learner. Instead, the goal should be to articulate the dynamic in terms of the continuous, reciprocal movement between these two poles, between cognitive imperatives and the attention to individuals in order to meet these imperatives.

• Recurrent reference to what learners have already learned and experienced is necessary so that they can better integrate new knowledge and then mobilize it. But all 'significant learning'

(Rogers, 1983) depends beforehand on the transmission of knowledge and hence on the key role that teachers play in providing instruction and encouragement to facilitate such appropriation.

• The importance of providing opportunities to experience the joy of learning so as to stimulate curiosity and cultivate a passion for knowledge; the need to allow learners to see their cognitive abilities growing and to take pleasure in that growth.

Once learners become adults, other specific conditions are required. First of all, at work, the economy of today in this age of flexibility requires a continuing development of personal skills and self-discipline. However such requirement cannot be met unless working conditions change and educational, psychological, and sociological resources are reallocated (Illouz, 2007a). Otherwise, the requirements will become too heavy to be met both by individuals (Erhenberg, 1995) and by organizations. Opportunities to develop one's competency and to acquire new professional qualifications – including recognition for skills acquired informally – have therefore become a necessity.

This demand for intragenerational education and training (within the career path of every individual) is driven not only by the unpredictability of the labour market, but also by the continual increases in required expertise and qualifications. On-the-job education and training, though essential, cannot suffice on its own to support the required continuous self-regulation between labour supply and labour demand. Individuals also have a key role to play. They must take the initiative to go back to formal education full-time or part-time. But the mechanisms must still be put in place to make it possible for them to do so, such as paid educational leaves, education vouchers and so on.

Though increasingly present in the area of work, the adult learning demand is not only vocational. Lifelong learning is also lifewide and of course life-deep.

11.4   TOWARD A BROADER, DEEPER VISION OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The realm of learning and education remains an intrinsic component of human life from early childhood until the very end. Too many national education policies not only limit adults' education to the working lives of people, but neglect both their early childhood and senior years, as if learning only really begins when children enter school and ends as soon as people turn sixty-five.

To learn is to continue to live and to live consciously. Why should seniors be denied the chance to continue living in a knowledgeable way? Why should they not be allowed to see their current stage of life as a new chapter in their story (Dominicé, 2009), a new frontier in their learning biography? Why should their curiosity be buried alive? The wonder of learning and the thirst for knowledge have no age limits. Besides, how can people remain physically, mentally, and socially active unless they continue to learn and search to understand – unless they continue to lead an active leaning life (Purdie et al., 2003).

Unfortunately, the vision of lifelong learning is often short-sighted, not only in terms of the stages of life when it occurs, but also in terms of the subject matter that it covers. Too many societies ignore adults' learning aspirations related to health, the environment, citizen participation, and the quest for quality of life. Lifelong learning too often confines 'human activity' to what takes places in the formal economy. The entire set of educational practices that address the public's personal and social development goals tend to be ignored or left to the logic of the marketplace. And yet, popular (sociocultural) education represents one of the three pillars of any genuine adult education policy, along with vocational and general academic education. The concept of lifelong learning is not new, but the life situations that call for lifelong learning are undergoing transformation, and the vision of lifelong learning

must therefore be transformed as well, that is, extended, broadened and deepened. We are living in a society where social roles are in continuous flux and are becoming more and more complex and demanding. In this regard, Antikainen writes (1998, p. 231): 'I am referring to a society in which agents have become individualized and in which occupations and social roles keep changing.'

We are entering a period in the history of humanity when, in the course of adulthood, free time exceeds work time and will do so more and more. But this education that continues for the duration of life and in all areas of life is impossible unless learners also make it their own journey of personal development. Learning cannot become *lifelong* and *lifewide* without being '*life-deep*' (Walters, 2010). We often learn things out of necessity, but even then, we cannot do so unless we find personal meaning in what we are learning, so that we can actively assimilate this knowledge and subsequently mobilize it.

A few months before he died, in 1997, I asked Paolo Freire, the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, what he thought was the most important thing for the future of humanity. His answer: inquisitiveness, the right of each and every one of us to nurture and satisfy her or his curiosity throughout life. To experience learning that has meaning in one's life constitutes an intimate experience and inner joy that strengthens one's sense of personal efficacy and generates, from the inside, the energy needed to continue pursuing knowledge. People cannot continue to learn throughout their lives unless they have a genuine thirst for learning.

11.5 THE RIGHT TO LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL AND EVERYONE

By recognizing the intimacy of learning, we also advance the cause of democratizing education. Demanding access to school and further education is only a starting point. The right to learn entails far more. Once we have secured access to education, each and every

one of us must also be able to exercise our right to take ownership of the knowledge that we have gained, thereby building our capacity for individual and collective action. We must be able to enjoy our right to learn.

This right to a meaningful, multidimensional learning life supports the exercise of all other rights. Gender, ethnicity, age, social status, and education are not separate spheres. These vectors combine and have additive effects that can generate discrimination, but they are also dimensions with which individuals must deal in order to construct themselves. Thus, while discrimination cuts across these vectors, so does empowerment.

The right to learn is the right to question, the right to seek to know and understand what is going on. It is also the right to look at things differently, to gaze through a metaphorical telescope beyond the boundaries of the day-to-day and national borders. It is also the individual and collective right to dream together about another possible world. This right has become essential for living with dignity and fulfilling one's responsibilities. Of what is human dignity composed, if not of intelligence, creativity, competence, and, most of all, the freedom to exercise these intimate activities and thus to individually and collectively live and affirm one's full citizenship?

Yes, the recognition of the intimacy of learning has become a key condition for the development of a critical, creative citizenry. What is at stake is the democratization of critical thinking and of the ability to innovate – the right for each and every one of us to recognize all the potential of our lives yet unlived (Alheit, 2005), to explore it, and to fulfil it. There can be no democracy without informed citizens who are capable of initiative and of becoming autonomous, without space for participation, without a climate that makes diversity a source of creativity, without decent living conditions – in short, without democracy (Arendt, 1998). In fact, there can be no development of the self unless individuals can express

that self socially and live their intimacy with others, and make common cause against anything that prevents them and their fellow citizens from doing so. Paradoxically, it is through social action and the exercise of their capacity for initiative that individuals also build their most intimate identities. In today's society, a certain commercialization and instrumentalization of intimacy unquestionably occur, but this ambiguity is part of the current complex social context in which recognition of the intimacy of learning is being sought.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Throughout this book, we have tried to better understand the social meaning of this construction of the self. This meaning is simple, but has major implications. The continuous development of the individual and the collective potential of a population is not only an economic but also a social and cultural necessity. Unless our societies become reflexive and work on solidarity, and are thus capable of change, the future of these societies is in peril. But this serious challenge cannot be met without active citizenry and without the spaces and resources that women and men need to develop and exercise this reflexivity. Thus, our collective future is also at stake in the intimacy of the educational lives of the individual members of society. In these lives, the quest for authenticity and the development of rationality will be in continuous interaction and tension to produce the desired dynamic. In these lives, individuality, far from being a force that opposes social action, will become an ongoing condition for its success.

The required unlocking of people's creative social forces cannot be achieved unless knowledge is democratized, and, consequently, unless all individuals can continue internalizing and mobilizing knowledge and skills throughout their lives. There can be no real democracy unless citizens can acquire inner density and personal

expertise – these are the preconditions for freedom of thought and for creative participation in collective action.

The recognition of the intimacy of learning is therefore, in the truest sense of the term, a social issue. Lifelong and lifewide self-construction for all and every citizens is a necessary condition for sustainable social transformation.

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This book by international adult education researcher and scholar Paul Bélanger recognizes both the intimate and societal nature of the educational and learning life course, and the corresponding transformations in adults' biography. These transformations raise two closely related issues: the need for individuals to achieve autonomy in today's risk society, and the need for active and reflexive citizenship that enables social transformation. In response to these issues, Bélanger provides a thoroughgoing analysis of how his insights can be incorporated into discussions of work and learning, social change aging, and community education, as well as policy and practice. This is an inspired text for those passionate about lifelong learning.