



LIFELONG LEARNING

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Abstract

Lifelong Learning defines life. Develop a passion for learning and you will never cease to grow. In Traditional learning the teacher is the source of knowledge IN LIFELONG learning Educators are guides to sources of knowledge. Learning in the 6 – 24 age groups is the holistic development of learners in four aspects, namely: physical, intellectual, social capacity, emotional and mental development. Individuals in the 25 – 60 age groups can learn informally during their working lives through the use of instructional media. Learning in the 60+ age group is termed as auto andragogy, from pedagogy, an adult who tutors himself. Lifelong learning is economically criticized “Lifelong (L)Earning” and “Learning to Earn” as their succinct criticism of the way the term is being promoted. Lifelong learning's core values of learning, exploring, and serving, coupled with benefits for the mind; body and spirit make it an incredibly powerful tool for personal transformation and enhancement.

Learning means TO KNOW, TO BE, TO DO, and TO LIVE TOGETHER. It is not only academics nor is it a 9 to 5 job. We are a part of lifelong learning community. According to Kimberlee Dubuque, “In the future you are going to need to know how to change “ In relationships and career, lifelong learning and personal growth are key ways to go up, up and away, up to the next level and away to new borders.

Lifelong learning defines your life. Develop a passion for learning and you will never cease to grow.

It is said knowing is growing. Without thought is labor lost, thought without learning is perilous. “The wisest mind has something yet to learn.”

It shares mixed connotations with other educational concepts such as Adult Education, Training, Continuing Education, Permanent Education and other terms that relate to learning beyond the formal educational system. The ability to pass this knowledge and skills on from one person to another is very important, as it keeps the learning cycle in motion and makes it 'lifelong'. It may be broadly defined as learning that is pursued throughout life: learning that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and in different places. Lifelong learning crosses sectors, promoting learning beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life (i.e. post-compulsory education). This definition is based on Jacques Delors' four 'pillars' of education for the future generations. Traditional educational systems, in which the teacher is the sole source of knowledge, are ill suited to equip people to work and live in a knowledge economy learning cycle in motion and makes it 'lifelong'. Some of the competencies such a society demands—teamwork, problem solving, motivation for lifelong learning—cannot be acquired in a learning setting in which teachers dictate facts to learners who seek to learn them only in order to be able to repeat them.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND LIFELONG LEARNING

- Traditional learning
- The teacher is the source of knowledge
- Learners receive knowledge from the teacher
- Learners work by themselves
- Tests are given to prevent progress until students have completely mastered a set of skills and to ration access to further learning
- All learners to the same thing
- Teachers receive initial training plus ad hoc in-service training.
- “Good” learners are identified and permitted to continue later education

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- Educators are guides to sources of knowledge
- Educators serve as facilitators for the student's acquisition of knowledge
- People learn by doing, or Action Learning
- People learn in groups and from each other
- Assessment is used to guide learning strategies and to identify pathways for future learning.
- Educators develop individualized learning plans

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- Educators are lifelong learners. Initial training and ongoing professional development are linked
- People have access to learning opportunities over a lifetime.
- Learning is put into practice.
- Learners reflect upon learning and analyze their personal development

STAGES OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong education means education resulting from integration of formal, non-formal, and informal education so as to create ability for continuous lifelong development disambiguation needed of quality of life. Learning begins in womb and ends in tomb, beginning with learning from families, communities, schools, religious institutions, workplaces, etc. The African traditional society envisioned lifelong learning by the roles one was expected to play in society from child, youth (boy or girl), young adult, junior elder to senior elder. Today with less defined changes in life roles in this age group, a lot of learning takes place, providing a foundation for future learning habits and resourcefulness. This is probably the age group where the greatest amount of informal learning occurs, as children imitate almost everything from parents, peers and their environment. Psychologists such as Sigmund Freud and other behavioral psychologists emphasize the importance of childhood learning. Learning in this stage affects the development of all other learning abilities later in life.

Learning in the 6-24 Age Group

Learning in the 6 – 24 age groups primarily takes place in educational institutions, from primary and secondary to tertiary levels. Family life, social organizations, religious institutions, and mass media can also play a role in non-formal and informal learning during this time. The objective of learning in this period is the holistic development of learners in four aspects, namely: physical, intellectual, social capacity, emotional and mental development.

Learning in the 25-60 Age group

Individuals in the 25 – 60 age group can learn informally during their working lives through the use of instructional media, mostly from their occupations, work-places, mass media, information technologies, environment and nature. Adults learn from experiences and problem solving. They therefore need continuous development of intellect, capability and integrity.

Learning in the 60+ Age Group

Adults seek new knowledge for their own sake. This could be termed as autoandragogy, from pedagogy, an adult who tutors himself. The challenge of seeking new knowledge and teaching themselves may result in a sense of pride of accomplishment and help maintain self-esteem. This may be further enhanced by offering their new knowledge in service to their local community, thus continuing to make valued contributions to society

HISTORY OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN US EDUCATION

Until the middle of the 1800s, higher education focused on educating the young in traditional, classical curricula. By the mid-19th, century Europe and the United States used the best technology of their day, the postal system, to open educational opportunities to people who wanted to learn, but were not able to attend conventional schools. The students who most benefited from such correspondence education included those with physical disabilities, women who were not allowed to enroll in educational institutions open only to men, people who had jobs during normal school hours, and those who lived in remote regions where schools did not exist.

By the end of the century, however, a number of vibrant institutional movements had appeared that expanded the scope of traditional education and the range of learners who were served. Colleges and universities grew to embrace technical and scientific subjects, vocational education, applications of research to practical matters and problem solving correspondence courses through continuing education. Education, training, and professional development for living a good life and making a good living thrived together in public colleges and universities. Community colleges grew to become critical providers of traditional and adult learning.

Many private institutions, in urban or metropolitan areas, also introduced adult learning to serve proximate populations. Private, for-profit universities and proprietary vocational schools moved aggressively into the traditional and the adult learning market. New technologies and the introduction of the Internet introduced online, blended and e-learning, making it even easier to serve adult learners. Continuing education and distance learning organizations lead the way by adopting technologies and flexible operations to support the varied needs of adult learners.

By the end of the 20th century, most major universities were expanding their traditional, degree-credit offerings with a variety of adult, continuing, and executive education experiences, some for credit, and some non-credit. New education programs were offered through a combination of organizational mechanisms: Extension Divisions, Adult and

Continuing Education Units, Schools of Professional Study, Executive Education Programs and Distance Learning Units. The diversity of these programs and their unique operations propagated completely new organizations within the traditional institution.

The early 21st century began the age of education globalization with local education institutions continuing their expansion efforts both within and outside North America, in an attempt to meet growing market demand. The breakdown of geographic boundaries has facilitated both local and global competition. Today's depressed economic environment and challenged workforce have dramatically increased the needs and demands of learners to retool their capabilities, acquire new competencies and align knowledge to the emerging new economy to avoid being laid off. At the same time, leaders within traditional education institutions, colleges and universities, are aggressively seeking new sources of revenues to counteract current federal, state and local budgeting shortfalls.

A challenged economic environment coupled with the reduction in traditional institutional funding has created a perfect storm of opportunity for organizations adept at evaluating, creating and offering new education programs. Those institutions with historical developments and expansions in adult learning, continuing education and executive education have recognized an innate ability to meet the diverse needs of today's economically challenged learner.

LIFELONG LEARNING IN EUROPE

One of the first uses of the term lifelong education can be traced to Yeaxlee, although it was the United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) during the 1960s and 1970s that popularized the concept as a way of connecting the various stages of formal education and linking them with informal and non-formal learning.

It was seen as a way of seeking to broaden the concept of education and foster education for all, while promoting education for both social development and economic growth.

The European Commission on Lifelong Learning initiative hopes to empower citizens to move freely between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries in pursuit of learning. Hence, lifelong learning focuses on learning from pre-school education until after retirement ("from the cradle to the grave") and covers all forms of education (formal, informal or non-formal). The European Commission's Lifelong Learning Initiative enables people at all stages of their lives to take part in stimulating learning experiences, as well as helping to develop the education and training sector across Europe

LIFELONG LEARNING IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

Lifelong learning in traditional African societies has spiritual, political, economic and cultural aspects. There has been particular emphasis on traditional African societies practicing indigenous African pedagogies that embrace lifelong learning principles as foundations for active citizenship and nation-building. These values are not concerned with a global competitive market or the strength of individualism and self-determination. However, the internet has exposed the latest African generations to external experiences. They are now more aware of globalization and are flexible in adapting new global life learning styles.

A good example is the spiritual dimension which locates the individual in the presence of a supreme being and at the centre of communal life. All activities must promote the existence of the community and put its interests before the self. Whilst there is evidence that these values are also changing through globalization influences, the influence of ancestors, the extended family and traditional democratic processes of decision making through consensus at community meeting places are primary value systems in African context.

LIFELONG LEARNING IN A LEARNING SOCIETY

Lifelong learning crosses sectors, promoting learning beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life (i.e. post-compulsory education). Jacques Delors' four 'pillars' of education for the future, states

- Learning to know - mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge.
- Learning to do – equipping people for the types of work needed now and in the future including innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments.
- Learning to live together, and with others – peacefully resolving conflict, discovering other people and their cultures, fostering community capability, individual competence and capacity, economic resilience, and social inclusion.

Learning to be – education contributing to a person's complete development [mind and body, intelligence, Lifelong learning can instill creativity, initiative and responsiveness in people thereby enabling them to show adaptability in post-industrial society through enhancing skills to:

- Manage uncertainty,
- Communicate across and within cultures, sub-cultures, families and communities,
- Negotiate conflicts.

The emphasis is on learning to learn and the ability to keep learning for a lifetime.

Learning Society looks beyond formal educational environments and locates learning as a quality not just of individuals but also as an element of systems.

The learning society is an educated society, committed to active citizenship, liberal democracy and equal opportunities. This supports lifelong learning within the social policy frameworks of post-Second World War social democracies. The aim is to provide learning opportunities to educate adults to meet the challenges of change and citizenship. Support for this conception was put forward largely by liberal educators in the metropolitan areas of the industrialized North in the 1960s and 1970s.

BENEFITS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

A number of important socio-economic forces are pushing for the lifelong learning approach. The increased pace of globalization and technological change, the changing nature of work and the labor market, and the ageing of populations are among the forces emphasizing the need for continuing upgrading of work and life skills throughout life. The demand is for a rising threshold of skills as well as for more frequent changes in the nature of the skills required.

It has also been said that:

Lifelong learning's core values of learning, exploring, and serving, coupled with benefits for the mind; body and spirit make it an incredibly powerful tool for personal transformation and enhancement.

Nancy Merz Nordstrom lists the top 10 benefits of lifelong learning

- 10) Lifelong learning helps fully develop natural abilities.
- 9) Opens the mind,
- 8) Creates a curious, hungry mind.
- 7) Increases our wisdom
- 6) Makes the world a better place.
- 5) Helps us to adapt to change.
- 4) Helps us find meaning in our lives.
- 3) Keeps us involved as active contributors to society.
- 2) Helps us make new friends and establish valuable relationships.
- 1) Lifelong learning leads to an enriching life of self-fulfillment.

CRITICISM

The main criticism of lifelong learning is the predominantly economic interpretation of the term. It has become problematic for many educators and practitioners who have come

forward with such terms as “Lifelong (L)Earning” and “Learning to Earn” as their succinct criticism of the way the term is being promoted.

This present situation is a continuation of the OECD lifelong learning discourse made public in its report, *Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning* (1973), which reframed the lifelong learning discussion in largely economist and employability terms. Gelpi points out that “in the industrialized countries, at the time of the economic boom of the 1960s, the ideology of ‘lifelong education=general education’ reflected in effect the necessity for the rapid training of workers at average and higher levels in the vocational field

CONCLUSION

A lifelong learning system must reach larger segments of the population, including people with diverse learning needs. It must be competency driven rather than age related. Within traditional institutional settings, new curricula and new teaching methods are needed. At the same time, efforts need to be made to reach learners who cannot enroll in programs at traditional institutions. Online and distance programs are considered as some of the methods implemented to achieve this goal. These experiences could be formal (training, counseling, tutoring, mentorship, apprenticeship, higher education, etc.) or informal (auto didacticism, life experience, etc.) Lifelong learning, also known as LLL, is the “lifelong, voluntary, and self-motivated” pursuit of knowledge. In the end we can say this in support of lifelong learning. You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by curiosity; he will continue the learning process as long as he lives, as said by Clay P Bedford.

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