

LIFELONG LEARNING

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Abstract

Education is the lifelong learning process. Educational process should be changes from education to lifelong education/learning. Lifelong learning is necessary for updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications from the pre-school years to post retirement which promotes the development of knowledge and competences that will enable adaptation to the knowledge-based society and also valuing all forms of learning. This paper includes meaning, stages, characteristics of lifelong learning & learner, comparison between traditional and lifelong learning, benefits and limitations of lifelong learning.

Key Words: *lifelong learning, Lifelong learning in a learning society; education,*

Introduction:

If learning involves all of one's life, in the sense of both time-span and diversity, and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources, then we must go even further than the necessary overhaul of 'educational systems' until we reach the stage of a learning society.

Education is the lifelong learning process. It is useful for human life. Education in its broadest, general sense is the means through which the aims and habits of a group of people lives on from one generation to the next. Generally, it occurs through any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts. In its narrow, technical sense, education is the formal process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills,

customs and values from one generation to another, e.g., instruction in schools. According to the 21st century every concept changes. Hence educational process should be changes according to them. It changes from education to lifelong education/learning.

Definition:

Lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual.

Learning is therefore part of life which takes place at all times and in all places. It is a continuous lifelong process, going on from birth to the end of our life, beginning with learning from families, communities, schools, religious institutions, workplaces, etc. It occurs through experiences encountered in the course of a lifetime. These experiences could be:

- 1) Formal- Training, counseling, tutoring, mentorship, apprenticeship, higher education, etc.
- 2) Informal -Autodidacticism, life experience, etc.

Lifelong learning, also known as **LLL**, is the "lifelong, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. As such, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability. 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

Lifelong Learning is the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfillment..

Lifelong learning in a learning society:

The learning society is an educated society, committed to active citizenship, liberal democracy and equal opportunities. 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. Learning Society looks beyond formal educational environments and locates learning as a quality not just of individuals but also as an element of systems.

Range of factors motivating people to undertake adult learning for self motivated learning are:

- To upgrade job skills;
- To start a business;
- To learn about a subject or to extend their knowledge;
- To meet new people;
- To develop self-confidence;
- To get involved in the community; and
- To develop personal skills;
- To participate in social networking

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 of quality of life. Learning is a continuous lifelong process, going on from birth to the end of our life, beginning with learning from families, communities, schools, religious institutions, workplaces, etc.

1. Age 0-5 years

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.

2. Age group 6-24

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.

3. Age group 25-60

Individuals in the 25 – 60 age groups can learn informally during their working lives through the use of instructional media, mostly from their occupations, work-places, colleagues, touring, mass media, information technologies, environment and nature. Adults learn from

experiences and problem solving. They therefore need continuous development of intellect, capability and integrity.

4. Age group 60+

In their senior years people may seek new knowledge for their own sake. This could be termed autoandragogy, from pedagogy, an adult who tutors him/herself. 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.

Characteristics of lifelong learning:

The concept of lifelong learning spans a wide range of education and training issues and speaks to many different audiences. Common themes conveyed in literature on lifelong learning articulate four characteristics which transform 'education and training' into the concept of 'lifelong learning'.

1) Informal learning

It encompasses both formal and non-formal/informal types of education and training. Formal learning includes the hierarchically structured school system that runs from primary school through the university and organized school-like programs created in business for technical and professional training.

Whereas informal learning describes a lifelong process whereby individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educational influences and resources in his or her environment, from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

2) Self-motivated learning

There is a heavy emphasis on the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own learning. Lifelong learners are, therefore, not defined by the type of education or training in which they are involved, but by the personal characteristics that lead to such involvement. Personal characteristics of individuals who are most likely to participate in learning, either formally or informally throughout their lives, have acquired. The confidence to learn, including a sense of engagement with the education and training system.

3) Willingness and motivation to learn.

It is recognized that economic incentives alone are not necessarily sufficient to motivate people to engage in education. A range of motivational barriers need to be identified and addressed in order for some people to participate in education. While some of these barriers are economic and can be overcome with financial assistance, many people are deterred from engaging in education and training by social and personal factors.

4) Self-funded learning

The concept of self-funded learning is linked to the characteristic of self motivated learning. In recognition of the costs involved in subsidizing lifelong involvement in education. The lifelong learning policy agenda emphasizes the responsibility of individuals to finance their own continuing education and training with minimal support from government. The lifelong learner as a person who takes responsibility for their own learning and who is prepared to invest time, money and effort in education or training on a continuous basis.

5) Universal participation

The fourth feature of the lifelong learning is a commitment to universal participation in education. Universal participation is necessary for meeting the economic demands of the 21st century. The concept of universal participation includes both informal and formal learning for all purposes - *social, economic and personal*. In arguing that universal participation in lifelong learning is necessary for social cohesion in a time of rapid economic and social change.

Lifelong Learner Characteristics:

- They are insatiable knowledge seekers - they continually seek learning experiences or opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills
- They are social learners – Lifelong learners learn both from and with others. They will take classes or look for social groups. They usually seek out acquaintances who are better or more knowledgeable in fields than they are
- They are not simply just take in information - they analyze, synthesize and or apply what they've learned
- They are teachers themselves – lifelong learners usually openly share what they know because they understand that having open networks actually gives them more access to the information from others.

- They never think of themselves as the ultimate expert in anything

The changing way in which people learn in lifelong learning:

"Traditional vs. lifelong learning"

Traditional learning	Lifelong learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educators are guides to sources of knowledge• Educators serve as facilitators for the student's acquisition of knowledge• People learn by doing, or <u>Action Learning</u>• 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• 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.

Measuring lifelong learning:

It include assessments of youth literacy skills, high school dropout rates, participation in secondary education, participation in job-related training, volunteering, access to community institutions, broadband internet access, and learning through sports, culture, media, and cultural resources.

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 labour 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.

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

Limitations of LLL:

1) The acquisition of certain essential skills should not be deferred until they are needed because the time to learn them may be not available or the environment may be too dangerous for safe learning processes.

2) Learning on demand is task driven and therefore may be limited to exposing users to isolated pieces of knowledge while providing only limited support for learning essential principles.

3) Users may encounter difficulties in decontextualizing knowledge so that it can be used in new settings.

4) Whereas learning on demand may be well suited for evolutionary extensions of knowledge base, it may not support substantial restructuring, because the additional features learned occur only in the neighborhood of what learners already know.

Conclusion:

Lifelong learning is essential problems for our current and future information Societies. Lifelong Learning is the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfillment.

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