The Possibilities of Creating a Borderless Society through Lifelong Learning in Japan

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Abstract

Since 1980, the Central Japanese Council of Education has produced two major reports (1981, 1990) on lifelong learning, and lifelong learning politics have been put into practice at the Prefecture and community levels in Japan.

In this essay, firstly the relation between lifelong learning and lifelong development is explained. Then it is suggested that lifelong learning, especially 'self-directed (lifelong) learning' for the middle age will promote both an 'overcoming of middle-age life crises' and lifelong learning. In particular, 'transformative learning' will promote the development of social perspectives and 'social empowerment'.

Finally the possibility is examined that lifelong learning will promote overcoming some cognitive and social gaps among, for example, 'researching and learning' and 'social activity', 'the professional knowledge of professionals and experts' and 'practical knowledge of people' and so on.

Key words : lifelong learning, self-directed learning, critical transition, empowerment, middle age, transformative learning, borderless society

Introduction

As its use to refer to the development of negatives into photographs suggests, the word 'development' denotes the process whereby, over time, something which is hidden gradually reveals itself. Learning, by contrast, is defined as being, generally speaking, "ongoing changes in thoughts, values and attitudes brought about by experience" (Cranton : 1992). If we apply this same definition to lifelong learning, then, we can assume it to mean the ongoing changes in thoughts, values and attitudes, brought about by experience and lasting throughout the span of one's entire lifetime.

Development, then, refers to activities through which the potential inherent within people is drawn out, and learning consists of activities which seek to draw out that same human potential; the two are thus very closely connected. Equally, research into lifelong development and lifelong learning theories are directly interrelated.

In this essay, I will attempt firstly to elucidate the relationship between lifelong development research, and theories and practices of lifelong learning. I have tried to focus on clarifying the developments brought about by lifelong learning, and the possibilities for creating a borderless society that it represents. I will attempt to explicate the various developments in middle age, in particular those related to social development, which are fostered by lifelong learning, and furthermore explain how these can contribute to remedying social difference and the possibilities of creating a borderless society, by fostering changes in learning values.

In the first section, I will introduce the relatively new concept of lifelong learning, mainly through policy reports. In the second section, I will try and draw together the three following points, centered on the idea that lifelong learning can, in particular, contribute to the development of individual self-realization : 1) the development of self-determinedness, 2) participation in learning focused on developmental tasks, and 3) critical transitions in development. Whilst the perspective of the second section focuses on individual development and the development of personal self-realization through lifelong learning, the third section examines how lifelong learning encourages development in terms of the wider social aspects of middle age, and moreover will investigate empowerment and transformative learning. In the fourth section, I will attempt to draw conclusions on the relationships between learning and social activity /social participation, and between theories and practice, and what could be called the 'deborderization' of these. These conclusions will be

presuppose that that lifelong learning which contributes to individual self-realization as well as to development in wider social terms will result, ultimately, in a blurring of the borders which exist currently between learning and social activity, and between practical and professional knowledge.

1. The concept of lifelong learning

In Japan, *shakai kyōiku* (social education) is the term which has traditionally been used to denote the concept of public educational projects and activities outside of school education. In Article 2 of the 1949 Social Education Law, social education was defined as follows : "for the purposes of this legislation, "social education" will be taken to refer to those organized educational activities (including physical education and recreational activities) directed in the main at adolescents and adults, excluding educational activities carried out as school curriculum under the remit of the School Education Law".

Social education, then, refers to those educational programs and activities involving prefectural, municipal and other local authority Boards of Education. In practice, these activities can and do include the establishment and operation of citezen's public halls, libraries, youth houses and sports facilities, and the opening of school grounds, pools and other facilities to the public for educational projects with a purpose other than that of school education.

Social education has shown proven results in terms of the provision of practical education programs grounded in local communities. At the same time, however, it cannot be denied that neither the new concepts of the appropriate direction in development for educational programs and activities that have accompanied the changes in social structure seen in Japan since the 1970 s, nor the growing trend towards urbanization, are being met by Japan's current social education system. For example, the definition adopted above, namely that of organized educational activities beyond the scope of school education, is problematic in that adults undertaking to study at universities are not engaging in "social education," and that learning within the private education industry (such as cultural schools, etc.) is not governed by municipal Boards of Education, and thus - at least with that specific definition - do not fall within the remit of social education. The definition, therefore, does not appear to have been adapted to the actuality of current learning activities.

As a result of this definitive restriction governing the scope of social education, a broader concept, which still encompasses the traditional definition of social education, has been called for. The idea of "éducation permanente," as expounded by Paul Lengrand at the International Conference on Adult Education in 1965, represents one possible soltuion to this problem.

The Japanese translation adopted for this concept was *shōgai kyōiku*, literally "lifelong education". However, there was a certain resistance towards the word *kyōiku* (education), in the sense that the persons engaged in such activities were not concerned with academic enlightenment through education, but rather furthering their own learning voluntarily and with initiative. As such, the alternative translation shōgai gakushū (lifelong learning) came to be widely adopted. To illustrate this, in 1981 the Central Japanese Educational Council (*Chūō Kyōiku Shingikai*) published a policy report, *About Lifelong Education*, which defined the differences between lifelong education and lifelong learning as follows :

> In today's rapidly changing society, many people are concerned with self fulfillment, self enlightenment, and improving their lifestyles, and as such seek viable and varied learning opportunities. The undertaking of such learning is based fundamentally on the motivation of the individual, and such individuals will, as appropriate, select those methods and manners of learning as are appropriate to their ambition, and will carry out this leaning throughout the course of their lives. In this sense, it certainly seems appropriate to refer to such activity as "lifelong learning" (*shōgai gakushū*).
> ..... The principle behind lifelong education (*shōgai kyōiku*) lies in attempting, for the purpose of lifelong learning, the comprehensive organization and reinforcement of educational facilities with a view to nurturing the desire and capability for self-motivated learning, whilst taking into consideration the interrelationships between the diverse educational capabilities of our society. Put another way, lifelong education is the fundamental principle that must determine the entire educational system, which exists in order to assist each and every citizen to enhance his or her life, throughout the entire course of that life, by engaging him or herself in learning.
> (Central Japanese Educational Council : 1981)

We can see that a concept of lifelong *education* is still being used within this policy statement, at least in the latter half, but it is taken be something that exists in order to comprehensively organize and reinforce those diverse educational capabilities within Japanese society that can aid lifelong learning. Later policy statements

came to refer to the organized and integrated educational functions being overseen by the administrative government as the 'promotion of lifelong learning,' the 'fundamental basis of lifelong learning,' and 'lifelong learning policy,' with its counterpart, lifelong education, all but disappearing from use.

Moreover, within this policy statement, lifelong learning is explained in terms of its relationship to three stages of development, namely 'learning until adulthood,' 'learning throughout adulthood,' and 'learning in old age.' Here we can clearly see the principle of lifelong learning as a function being considered on a firmly temporal axis, spanning the course of lifelong development.

Since the release of *About Lifelong Education*, various other policy statements on the subject have been published. The following elements can be said to be common to most of these : 1) the principle that people learn voluntarily, and with self-direction, throughout the course of their lifetimes; 2) the idea that, based on a temporal axis spanning an entire lifetime, the developmental tasks that should be learnt, particularly during adulthood and middle age, are to be presented as learning curriculum; and 3) the belief that society's various educational resources should be comprehensively integrated for the purpose of lifelong learning in middle age.

In the second section, I would like to expand upon these first two elements, in terms of their being significant themes in the consideration of the possibilities for encouraging development and creating the kind of borderless society that I believe lifelong learning can engender.

2. Self-directed development, and learning about development issues

Underpinning the idea of lifelong learning is the principle that learning is not something that comes to an end once childhood and young adulthood pass; rather, it is something that can encourage the development of initiative and of self-directedness over the span of an entire lifetime, and further that can facilitate learning about developmental tasks in middle age.

2-1. The development of unrealized self-directedness

Initiative and self-directedness in learning were emphasized strongly throughout *About Lifelong Education.* Unlike elementary and junior high school students, who are still in compulsory education, it is very rare for a middle age learner to take part in a course for which the themes and issues will have been

determined by the 'school', or that the school will have set the curriculum, carried out classes, and then assessed the results of that learning through examination. Rather, the image of lifelong learning in middle age is very much one whereby one uses one's own spare time to pursue and further ones interests.

The potential for and in self-motivated learning for adults was investigated in the USA from 1960 onwards, firstly by Cyril Houle's study into the reasons for adult participation in learning, and by Allen Tough's ideas on learning projects. It was Malcolm Knowles, however, who took these ideas and integrated them into a concrete theory on self-directed learning. He suggested the use of the term *andragogy*, meaning the art and the science of helping adults learn, and his concept of andragogy was based on the change in self conceptualization that happens in adulthood, with people becoming gradually more and more self-determining as they mature. He believed, therefore, that learning should also be developed in parallel with this shift. He proposed the need for learning programs based on a sequential flow of the self-appraisal of learning needs, the formulation of learning plans and the undertaking of learning by the learner him or herself, and the subsequent self-evaluation of learning achievements (Knowles : 1980).

What should be noted about Knowles' theory of andragogy is his observation that adults are not necessarily honest in showing self-determinism in places of learning. He argues that adults find themselves placed in a conflicting space between their knowledge model of the role of the learner, which is subject to prior conditions, and their deep psychological need to be self-determining. As such, adult learning (lifelong learning) should be focused on drawing out the inherent self-directedness within the learner. Lifelong learning, then, is posited to have a role in facilitating the hidden self-directedness of learners,

2-2. Learning about developmental tasks

In terms of the furtherance of development through lifelong learning, there is also the question of learning about developmental tasks. Within each life cycle and developmental stage there are certain developmental tasks which should be acquired, and lifelong learning can therefore be positioned as that learning which is undertaken in order to acquire the necessary knowledge to solve these developmental tasks.

Robert J. Havighurst identified adolescence (12-18 years), early adulthood (18-30 years), middle age (30-55 years) and later maturity (55 years and over) as the stages of development, together with specific developmental tasks for each of these stages. For example,

developmental tasks for his middle include achieving social and civic responsibility, achieving and maintaining a certain level of economic stability, assisting teenage children to become responsible and happy adults, developing adult leisure time activities, relating oneself to one's spouse as a person, accepting and adjusting to the physiological changes of middle age, and taking care of aging parents.

Havighurst believed that if all of these developmental tasks could be achieved then the individual could become happy and fulfilled, and would go on to achieve the developmental tasks of the next major life stage. Leaving these tasks unfinished, however, would lead to unhappiness, isolation from society, and difficulties in achieving the developmental tasks in the subsequent life stage (Havighurst : 1972).

Knowles' theory of andragogy cites, alongside self-determinedness, the issue of readiness for learning. 'Readiness to learn' refers to the adult becoming increasingly directed towards the developmental tasks relating to his or her social role, and this causes the adult to encounter issues and problems within his or her actual life (for example, preparing for a career in early adulthood or raising children during parenthood). The adult will then feel a need for learning in order to be able to better deal with these problems, and this will provoke an increased desire for learning. We can see that this principle is very much based on Havighurst's theory of stage specific developmental tasks.

However, as Knowles himself points out, Havighurst's developmental tasks were based on an idealized American middle-class, and are very much removed from the cultural and developmental values of minority populations, such as African Americans. We too, then, should incorporate his theories whilst maintaining a clear awareness of the differences that exist between them and the developmental values of Japanese society. Is it really enough to judge the outcomes of lifelong learning based solely on the question of whether or not the developmental tasks of the Havighurst's middle life stage have been successfully overcome?

2-3. Developmental tasks as critical transition

Argument also exists, in the context of the learning of developmental tasks, over the critical trends in the middle life stage and lifelong learning. Erik Erikson's well known life cycle theory posits that human ego achieves growth by overcoming the various psychological and social crises that it encounters throughout the various stages of life. His life cycle is categorized into eight distinct stages, and each of these is assigned certain psychosocial crises and developmental tasks, which must be overcome in order for development to the next stage to be achieved. For Middle Adulthood, Erikson suggests that the basic conflict of this stage is one of "generativity" versus "stagnation."

Erikson's perspective imagines a longer lifespan than that of Havighurst, even positing a ninth stage, that of very old age, which is concerned with "development towards death" (Erikson : 1982). Moreover, compared with Havighurst, Erikson's approach rejects an 'all-or-nothing' view of development, encompassing rather ambiguity in development, and the psychosocial crises that can arise from such ambiguity.

Daniel Levinson also developed a theory that sought to define adult development as the development of life structure in adulthood, although his research centered on adult males only. He posited that periods of stability (periods in which life structure is built) and periods of transition (periods in which life structure changes) occur constructively to form overall major life structure. Periods of transition, argues Levinson, occur cyclically, around every ten years, and include turning 30, reaching one's half-life at age 40, the period of transition at 50, and the transition into old age at 60. For example, in the mid-life transition stage, which lasts whilst the man is around 40 until 45 years of age, although people will have reached a near peak in terms of their abilities, they will begin to experience a gradual weakening, and thus begin to envisage their own decline. This will lead to a crisis in which they reflect on all of the things that they have had to sacrifice in their quest for success. However, crises during these transitional periods are by no means unusual, and Levinson suggests that they are simply normal developmental stages. At the same time, Carl Gustav Jung called age 40 the 'noon of life', and life after 40 the 'later life' period. During this time, he argued, a process of individuation takes place in which people will preoccupy themselves with that which they failed to achieve in their early life, and consequently search for meaning in their lives.

If we are to include within the concept of lifelong learning these ideas of critical transition within and throughout development, then what needs first to be considered is a concept of lifelong learning that allows learners to overcome crises by learning the skills that are needed to combat the developmental tasks that arise during the critical transition periods of middle age, in terms of the developmental task categories proposed. For example, counseling sessions to help parents overcome the psychological depression ('empty nest syndrome') that can occur once parenting of non-adult

children is completed, volunteering skills workshops for people who are looking to undertake a greater role in wider society in their attempts to take up interests outside their families, and community life seminars for people hoping to make the transition from full-time employment to a retired life within the local community as smooth as possible.

3. Social development through lifelong learning

As suggested by the above, focus has been on theories of lifelong learning that promote such learning as a facility by which to encourage self-determinedness and to learn the skills needed to overcome the developmental tasks of middle age, structured along a temporal axis. However, if we look at the reality of the middle-aged learners who take part in lifelong learning programs, it becomes clear that we cannot in fact fully comprehend the situation simply by relying on an approach that places priority on the self-realization of the individual, such as self-determinedness and learning to overcome developmental tasks. This is true despite the fact that there is an increasing number of cases which adopt this perspective of attempting to adapt oneself to critical transitions.

The learning needs of middle age are based on a considerable accumulation of life experiences. However, these learning needs are also built socially, through social lifestyle including family relationships and professional careers. We are now able to think about how, through lifelong learning, people can reevaluate the values that have been built up socially, and by doing so can expand their social outlook. I would like to consider the aspects of social development engendered by lifelong learning, from two specific perspectives.

3-1 Cognitive Social Development and Empowerment

Debate about the social context of self-determinedness in middle age is also being developed and advanced. For example, the idea of self-determined learning, as espoused by Knowles et al, has been accepted within the adult educational practice, but it makes tacit assumptions, such as autonomy and freedom. Does it not, as such, fence in this autonomy and freedom, and lack discussion and observation of the social and cultural context of learning needs? Moreover, concerns have also been expressed about the likelihood of an increased focus on a new perspective, in which the self-determinedness that is supposedly furthered through lifelong learning comes to have a direct impact on social change.

Much of the debate on self-determinedness overlaps with similar debate on cognitive development. As such,

in this section I would like to outline the debate on both cognitive social development and empowerment.

Jean Piaget suggested that adult thinking reached maturing at the formal operational stage, after developing through the sensorimotor, preoperational and concrete operational stages. Now, the idea that cognitive development is not, in fact, complete at the formal operational stage is being hotly debated. William Perry, for example, believes that people undergo a transition from believing in absolute right, and in the existence of authorities which possess knowledge, towards a more relativist and dialectic attitude in middle age, one which allows that contradiction must accompany life, and that choices must be made from uncertain choices. This cognitive uncertainty must exist since the existence of society itself is an uncertainty. Klaus Riegel developed this theory further, envisaging contradiction and ambiguity exists in the thought processes of each stage, and that the matured thinking of the middle age sees this ambiguity take particular prominence.

The attention paid to these dialectical aspects of cognitive development is particularly noticeable amongst theories on lifelong learning for women. Erikson, Levenson, Perry and Piaget all showed heavy bias towards men, using male case studies to develop their theories. By contrast, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule worked together in the United States on the Women's Ways of Knowing Project, interviewing women - with an emphasis on non-white, non-middle class women - about the changes in their perspective on the issue. As a result, they have developed five distinct categories of 'ways of knowing' (Belenky/Clinchy/Goldberger/Tarule 1986; Merriam/Caffarella 1999).

Women's ways of knowing pass through the stages of silence, in which a woman has no voice or opinions of her own, then of received knowledge, in which knowledge is received from external authorities, then of subjective knowledge, in which a woman beings to find her own voice, and finally of procedural knowledge, in which she learns how the procedures for making objective use of the knowledge which she has attained. Eventually she will reach the stage of constructed knowledge, in which she will be able to look upon all knowledge in terms of its social context, and to create new knowledge.

The relationship between social context and the generation of knowledge is painted as being strongly dialectical within Belenky's learning model. Women's

knowledge has been created within a social context that works to, seeks to silence women. This social context is internalized within women's consciousnesses throughout the knowledge generation process. However, using lifelong learning to attain structured knowledge, based on these stages, women are able to gain access to knowledge that has a much wider social perspective, and that furthermore has the power to change the constraining force of the contemporaneous social context.

In terms of theories of lifelong learning for middle-aged women, Japan too has seen a proliferation of debate about lifelong learning that is geared towards reappraising one's own social positioning, whilst at the same time attaining the power that is needed to change society (empowerment). At the practical level too, through a learning process that encourages women to notice and express concrete matters within their daily lives, and to express themselves and their own thoughts, women come to realize that, in current society, they are considered as passive entities. This realization causes the women to become more self-determining and to move towards participation in creative activities in society, in and through which they can exercise their knowledge. This type of lifelong learning is currently developing throughout Japan (Takahashi/Makiishi : 2005).

3-2. Reflections on and changes in social values through transformative learning

In terms of approaches to the relationship between middle age as a period of critical transition, and lifelong learning, we have seen that one principle is view such critical transitions as developmental tasks that are to be tackled and learnt from. Equally, however, another approach to lifelong learning theory is developing, which suggests that there is a need f or a learning process which allows reflection upon the values which have been developed in each individual up until middle age.

Jack Mezirow, an American scholar on adult learning, argues that the role of educators within lifelong learning is to help the learners to realize the root of their own learning needs. In other words, their role is to help learners come to know and understand the nature of one's habitual awareness, thoughts, emotions and behavior will be constrained by the 'meaning perspective' (the assumptions that each individual uses to interpret experience) that represents our internalization of social scope (Mezirow and Associates : 1990). The Canadian scholar on adult education, Patricia Cranton, has attempted to position transformation learning, based on this theory, within learning for the middle aged.

She defines transformative learning as "a process in which we attempt to critically evaluate ourselves, and a process by which we seek to reappraise the assumptions and values which form the basis of our world view" (Cranton : 1992).

Amongst all of the people who start lifelong learning, it is certainly more than just a few who have done so as a result of some kind of middle age crisis (psychological crises accompanying divorce, changes in employment, promotion, or physical crises such as illness). For those people who have felt the need to change jobs or careers, who have thus learnt new technical and professionals skills, and who have thus successfully changed job or career as desired and enjoy the latter part of their lives to the full. These people have been able to change their lives through lifelong learning that focuses on professional or technical skills. This learning, however, is not transformational learning. This is because Cranton holds that in order for learning to be transformational, learners take part in a learning process in which they must become aware of their own value systems within the context of wider socially defined human relationships and systems, must review and alter the presuppositions upon which those value systems are based, and must acquire a new set of values.

The thinking behind positioning transformative learning as key to middle age learning is that just as the focus on learning for children is placed firmly on 'formation,' so the focus on learning for middle age should be placed on 'transforming' that which the learners have picked up from society thus far.

The below represents a summary of the transformative learning process :

- Adult learners are already in possession of established value systems and beliefs (experiences)
- Many of these value systems will match the value systems prioritized in the learning environment, (e. g. a typist will find it easy to take part in a computer seminar), and this helps to make learning easier
- Life crises, such as illness, career or job change, retirement, the death of a partner, moving, or divorce, can force people to adjust the values that have been self-evident to them thus far, and as such a reassessment of those values becomes necessary.
- Learners are able to confirm that the values which they held previously were formed by wider society, and that by choosing a different system of values it may be possible to adapt to their new circumstances.

So how are the methods and overall form of

transformative learning conceptualized? Transformative learning allows for the provision of courses designed to consider recruitment values and working values, as well as traditionally courses that focus on qualification attainment. Moreover, even qualification focused courses can be implemented with a view to including discussion which seeks to reappraise working values and more general lifestyle values (Creze : 2005).

Within transformative learning, however, it is perhaps best not to demand sudden and rash transformation, bearing in mind that it is intended to be a learning process that helps learners to adapt to the critical transitions of middle age. If the transformation does not take place as a result of a voluntary process of reflection, then it becomes unilateral indoctrinative overseen by the learning support side. Transformative learning, then, is not a learning preoccupied with entirely negating or contradicting the values that the learners have held thus far, but rather is a learning that seeks to widen learners' perspectives on values, and as such is clearly different from unilateral indoctrination.

4. Shifts in developmental and learning values and the creation of a borderless society

In the second section of this thesis, aspects of lifelong learning as a contributor to the development of self-determinedness, and learning as response to developmental tasks, were covered. In the third section, I examined from a number of perspectives how theories of lifelong learning that incorporate the idea of development within social contexts can contribute to empowerment and to the widening of social perception in middle age. Looked at in another way, this idea of lifelong learning is not just about learning for and overcoming the developmental tasks of middle age, it is about starting, through learning, to work within society in a self-determined way, and to become a driving force for behavior that will help transform society by beginning to transform one's own awareness. Here we can see a shift in the way in which learning is viewed.

In this fourth section, I will attempt to examine the ways in which this shift in the way in which learning is looked upon is managing to change the very ideas behind the traditionally accepted dichotomies of learning and social participation, and practical knowledge and professional knowledge, based on investigations of a number of practical case studies.

4.1 Volunteering and NPO movements : Deborderization between learning and (pro) activity

Lifelong learning has also encouraged us to consider society's educations resources as an integrated whole; not simply just school education and social education, but learning in the private sector, such as music classes or dance lessons, and learning within companies, such as in-house corporate training. At the same time, a strong view is emerging that learning does not have to be undertaken simply with a view to education and to learning, but can also form part of recreational activities. For example, a 1990 policy statement, *The Basic Maintenance of Lifelong Learning*, the Central Japanese Education Council included the following :

> Lifelong learning is not just those learning activities undertaken intentionally and systematically within schools and within society, but can also be carried out as part of sports, cultural and recreational activities, hobbies and volunteering... .
> （Central Japanese Educational Council : 1990）

Including unintentional, unsystemized and informal learning within the scope of lifelong learning will doubtless lead to further ambiguity towards the concept of lifelong learning. Equally, however, there is a need to think carefully about the significance of this active positioning of informal lifelong learning. I would like to look at the example of volunteering and Non Profit Organizations (NPO) as an illustrative example of this.

Volunteering is the process of voluntarily participating in social programs and projects, and engaging in work and activities without, as a rule, any form of remuneration. Volunteer groups, then, are groups that engage in volunteering.

By contrast, Non Profit Organizations (NPOs) are organizations and groups which undertake activities for social and public benefit, which are independent from the national government, local authorities and private corporations and which are able to operate through support from citizens and the private sector. NPO activities, then, are the activities carried out by these organizations and groups. NPOs which have been incorporated through law are referred to as NPO Corporations (Non Profit Organization Corporations).

Amongst the NPOs are those which focus exclusively on lifelong learning, often named 'XX Community College' or the like. It is, however, important to stress that the learning within volunteering and NPO activities is undertaken informally. The following outlines what kind of learning takes place within the activities of

organizations, and what efforts are made to share information and expertise :

The relationship between learning and activities
- Each group has a mission, and there is opportunity to learn about that mission
- The two elements are linked in a cycle, in the sense that the results of learning can be used directly in the activities of the group, and that learning can be used to deepen the understanding and experience gained through participation in activities. Moreover, the boundaries between activity and learning become blurred as people can learn whilst taking part, and take part whilst learning.

Human relationships and knowledge sharing
- Sharing of knowledge about the mission between more knowledgeable 'veteran' participants and new joiners, in the course of activities. Rich and diverse learning activities present within the relationships between participants and within the opportunities to be autonomous.
- In the case of those NPOs which carry out activities for the benefit of society, the sharing of knowledge and information, and the human relationships between group members and the benefits of their activities, represent or can develop into learning activities (e. g. between an NPO that participates in a school voluntary scheme, and the school)
- In terms of utilizing NPO activities within government projects, learning takes places between the government and the volunteer group/ NPO in terms of knowledge, information and systems sharing.

According to the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities (hereinafter, NPO Law), promulgated in March 1998, NPOs were given the right to gain incorporated status. That the spotlight was suddenly thrown upon NPOs in the field of lifelong learning was due to the fact that the law included "activities to promote social education" within its definition of NPO activities. Following on from social education and lifelong learning projects led by the government, and the for-profit projects offered by run by the private educational and cultural industry, then, comes a third type of project, offered and supported by NPOs. Even so, it should still be noted that the increasing integration of learning and activities within NPOs is working to break down the fences between these two elements.

The current proliferation of NPO activities and volunteering has led to an increase in the number of voices calling for the need to shape a new type of collaboration between government and NPOs and volunteer groups, a new kind of relationship that is no longer based on the government giving 'guidance' or 'advice' to groups involved in social education as and when those groups might request. Change is required in the government administration charged with the promotion of lifelong learning, too. If one takes into account the reality that is the creation of shared learning opportunities by mature citizens, then it seems natural that the role of administrative government responsible for this field should consider a number of different matters : providing support to volunteer group and NPO learning facilities, developing coordinating functions within volunteer groups and NPOs, and enhancing the schedule of training seminars available to leaders of volunteer groups and NPOs. The cooperation between volunteer groups and NPOs, and the government must be just that, and not, to put it another way, division between ordinary citizens and government specialists. By integrating concepts of lifelong learning and learning, the specialization of these two parties can be gradually worn down, and we will be able to suggest that deborderization is taking place.

4-2. Lifelong learning at universities : Deborderization between practical and professional knowledge

A similar deborderizing phenomenon is taking place in universities, which have started to accept ever greater numbers of mature students.

The concept of lifelong learning is beginning to have an influence on the nature of universities and graduate schools. For example, in terms of the form at faculty level, efforts have been made to adapt to mature students (in middle age) such as implementing reformed admission policies, allowing nondegree students, introducing special selection procedures for mature students, and recognizing the unitary value of learning achievements outside of traditional educational facilities. At graduate school level, many innovations are taking place, such as implementing day and evening courses, establishing independent graduate schools, and associations of graduate schools, creating a degrees academy, and systemizing vocational and specialist graduate schools.

However, despite the fact that efforts are being made to adapt university courses both temporally and spatially, allowing night courses, and lunchtime lectures, and distance learning, as well as making the entrance requirements more flexible, it is still the case that efforts to adapt the curriculum and the content of the lectures to the needs and characteristics of mature students, or to the experiential and practical knowledge of the middle aged, remain weak. Higher educational facilities such as universities have a mission and a

responsibility to transmit the fruits of academic research that have been accumulated thus far. As such, there is still a strong sense that it is only right and natural that teaching about diverse subjects - the humanities, the social sciences, and the various natural sciences - should be given precedence over the particular needs and peculiarities of middle age learners.

Donald Schön believed that the knowledge amassed in universities is, based on *Technical Rationality*, knowledge that exists for the benefit of the accomplished specialist. He also held that the art and artistic capability used to exercise this knowledge should be reconsidered, and understood as knowledge that is born as a result of carefully hindsight on meaning (Schön : 1983).

By having middle age adults, rich in social experience, joining universities and graduate schools as mature students, there has been strong demand to see activities geared towards linking this new knowledge - namely, practical knowledge - with the professional knowledge of the universities. Many university staff have a tendency not to differentiate between the education provided to younger students and that provided to mature students. To combat this, these people should consciously position themselves as adult education providers (adult learning supporters). The need to work to draw out the life and professional experiences that mature students can offer, and link it with the professional knowledge existent within the university. By doing so, possibilities emerge for the creation of a new type of knowledge, different again from that which is based on Technical Rationality.

Conclusions

In parallel with developments in lifelong learning, we have witnessed an explosion of learning activity geared towards adults in middle age. In this essay, I have attempted to examine middle age development, or rather various categories of development, with a view to clarifying how lifelong learning can contribute to the furthering of development over the span of an entire lifetime.

Taking the position that lifelong learning serves to promote the development of individual self-realization, then, I have tried to give a brief overview of : 1) the development of inherent and hidden self-determinedness, 2) the idea that learning about those developmental tasks that are expected in middle age can help to facilitate the clearance of these hurdles, and 3) the idea that the critical transitions people undergo can be eased with learning about the developmental crises that are faced

in middle age. Moreover, presupposing that lifelong learning contributed to the furthering of the social aspects of the various kinds of development, I have summarized that : 1) by stimulating cognitive social development, lifelong learning makes a significant contribution to empowerment (particularly that of women) in middle age and 2) through transformative learning, which consists of a reappraisal of the value systems that have been stipulated by one's immediate social environment, we can hope to foster bodies capable of making contributions to social change.

What this means, then, is that lifelong learning makes contributions to both the individual aspects of middle age development, and the social aspects of development. The final part of this essay has examined how the previously clear boundaries between learning and activity (participation in social activity), and professional and practical knowledge (experiential knowledge), are becoming blurred.

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