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**Beyond the boundary: is there something
called 'real knowledge'?**

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Biographical Statement

Professor Emeritus David Davies

David Davies is Professor Emeritus at the University of Derby, UK. He has published extensively on access and widening participation/equalities over a long period. After researching and teaching in Germany, Professor Davies worked for the Open University in the UK and at the universities of Surrey and Cambridge. In 2002/03, he pioneered a new campus as Executive Dean in Buxton, Derbyshire which incorporated further and higher education provision as well as research and the development of new vocational / professional degrees. He has edited three academic journals and is currently engaged with the Global University for Lifelong Learning (GULL) which tries to engage with some of the most needy communities in the world.

Reem Shamshoum

Reem Shamshoum holds a researched doctorate in Education and pioneered the development of music and dance therapies in educational settings in Palestine / Israel. Her research work was based on the transformational power of the arts and performance in a professional community centre in Nazareth. Reem explored the 'contested terrain' of traditional culture and modernity in contemporary Arab communities situated within Israel. Reem now lives in Toronto with her husband, Anan and daughter, Noor.

Professor James Nyland

Jim Nyland is Associate Vice Chancellor at the Australian Catholic University in Brisbane, Queensland. He holds a doctorate in Education and has published research covering curriculum change, the nature of learning and the impact of modernity on educational opportunity. Professor Nyland's work has been international in scope and he has developed programmes in the UK and Australia as well as keynote academic papers in Ireland and South Africa. He is particularly interested in extending our knowledge and capacities in 'new learning' both in work and professional settings and in communities which are in transition and face challenges. He is Editor of the Australian journal Transform: Journal of Engaged Scholarship and contributes to current educational debates and issues in regional and national publications.

Emer Clarke

Emer Clarke was Principal of Merthyr Tydfil College in Wales following a career in further and adult education in Liverpool. Emer helped pioneer learning provision for ethnic minorities accessing higher education and the world of work. Her later posts involved directing the UK's Learning and Skills Councils in South Yorkshire and Cumbria where she developed particular interests in provision for young people and adult learners. Emer has researched and published recently in the fields of community regeneration and the impact of the student voice in higher education. Emer is director of Loweswater Research Associates.

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Introduction

The great story teller and art critic John Berger (1984; 1985; 2016) has asserted that the idea of community represents the longings of our time. Our longing for a connection between our past and our future is intense and widely felt, and modernity for many is a separation from our roots in local places, neighbourhoods and older communities. The new world is one where the old boundaries are disappearing alongside the old certainties. In fact the knowledge we had of places, of people and of ways of 'being ourselves' are increasingly redundant as the quickening pace of change and new forms of communication re-shape what we do and think and the way we feel about what we thought we knew and valued. Communication is now practically instantaneous through the internet; Google can provide us with immediate 'knowledge' of almost any topic under the sun; the virtual reality of the screen has become for so many the actual reality of life. For many this is a comfortable and inevitable immersion in a real and existentially rewarding life. For many others it is a world of uncertainty where reality is a form of 'distanciation' – a place set apart from our direct experience and lying beyond our sense of being in a community. This leads us to ask what then will replace the old forms of knowing and the old certainties? It surely must be knowledge and learning that is relevant and useful, yet it must take us both to the problems that face us and to the possibility of change and progress. For those of us who believe that knowledge should be used for a social purpose there is also a question of where knowledge is generated and used. The proper place for knowledge has been thought to be the school or university, not exclusively of course but institutions of learning have been very significant for the growth of modern societies and the broadcasting of the values of modernity. Just as change challenges the old certainties the institutions dedicated to learning and teaching must themselves change.

Knowledge gained outside the classroom can engage people and communities in new and meaningful ways. We should seek out such experience. Our experience is of course shaped by current and contemporary events, by the imperatives of 'now' and the immediate pressures of a life lived in the present. This current and present reality is both international and transcultural and we live interdependent lives, whether in the 'virtual' or 'real' sense. The argument here is that this is forcing us to lose our sense of belonging to communities which were once local and specific, and were recognisably 'ours'. This is the conundrum which our learning needs to address in order for real knowledge to be put to the test.

This paper is organised into four sections. Section 1 explores six themes which are threatening our current sense of well-being and futures. They range across the impact of neo-liberal marketization of the world economy, the continuing impact of poverty, the marginalisation of young people in a world of economic chance, the challenge of digital technologies to our identities and jobs and the loss of community and a sense of identity for many where societies and communities are undergoing rapid and disruptive change. Section 2 of the paper explores a specific place and culture – Nazareth in Palestine/Israel. Some of the impact of the destabilisation of community life is exemplified by the case study of Mawwal – a centre for Dance and Arts located in Nazareth. The study focuses on some of the shared themes of the first section of the paper such as the nature of community cohesion, the impact of poverty, the devastation of exclusion and loss of homeland and the vital questions of identity and difference in community life. The study by Reem Shamshoum (2016), goes on in Section 3 to explore the transformations brought about by creative arts and dance therapies within a community based centre of arts and culture and learning. Individual and group identities are re-created through

performance to show how community culture can be sustained and how identity can be a progressive force for change and improvement in people's lives – even under some very challenging circumstances. Section 4 of the paper attempts to assess some of the implications for learning and knowledge which engaging with these themes and issues brings into focus. A critical understanding of the qualities we need to be truly social and yet independent is required. The impact of IT and digitalisation is considered to be an emerging and ever more important force which impacts greatly on young people and their futures. In all of this the role of the 'self' as a learner, the significance of identity and community and the capacity of individuals as social beings to act as self-critical subjects and as knowledge producers are considered crucial to future well-being. New forms of learning and knowledge are needed to help bring this about and it is hoped this paper opens at least some capacity for debating these issues.

This paper, therefore, aims to explore and understand something of the nature of knowledge that can be gained beyond the classroom or lecture theatre. It looks beyond the boundary and it focuses on issues to do with learning and knowledge in workplaces, communities and life experience. The focus is on how learning needs to engage with our lives and identities as individuals who live within communities of interdependence.

Yet we live in a world of neoliberal thinking where individuals are seen to be acting in their own interests, rightly and without reference to the wider social context. The freedom of one individual is said to be about the right to pursue happiness and make choices without considering the essentially social nature of all human activity (Rustin 2013). The realities are of course entirely different. Individual freedoms are always controlled by forces and institutions over which no individual has control. There are, according to Anthony Giddens (1979) values and as 'structures' which are inscribed within social practices so that individual actions are simultaneously always social in character. The essential interdependence of social life and activity forces everyone into mutual interdependence but this is often unrecognised and refuted by those whose interests lie in stressing the separateness of us all, which leads us to ask what is shaping experience and reality in modern times? Some six themes are outlined as a possible answer to this question.

Section 1:

A vulnerable economy and a dislocated society characterise modern life

New economic forms are appearing world-wide which threaten traditional communities and which appear to have little concern for the worlds they are destroying and leaving without supports. Narrow economic objectives rule over social and ethical needs and the future even of the planet is brought into doubt by climate change and pollution. Whole populations and communities are thrown into disarray, and unemployment when the economic imperative demands it, and this affects both the developed and so-called undeveloped worlds.

All of this is occurring in a world where communications will continue to be ever more globalised and where cultural and social identities are re-defined and re-made. On the one hand this shared culture makes us all members of much larger communities whilst on the other hand it leads many people to re-assert more local and comprehensible identities in terms of how people feel about their localities, their national and ethnic groups and frequently their faith and religious affiliations. This too creates issues for learning at all levels.

One of the effects of these changes is global pressure to replace systems of national planning and control with devolved and fragmented market-led systems, which allow a more rapid and individualised response to changing needs. These pressures make individuals more vulnerable to change and they challenge traditional notions of authority, accountability and democracy. Giddens (1990) has referred in this context to the ending of traditional sites and sources of authority. We are moving, argued Giddens, into a more fragmented society where the social bonds and shared values and traditions which held us together in the past are breaking apart or dissolving. This tendency can be seen as an aspect of the breakdown of tradition and the dis-embedding of individual lives from stable social roles and local traditions. At the same time many people are being drawn into even larger economic and social systems whose rules, regulations and requirements for operating are arranged and managed from very far away. Perhaps in reaction to this there is also a counter-balancing pressure to assert local identities within nations and regions and within social, ethnic and religious differences. Cultural pluralism which allows the blossoming of many diverse cultural phenomena exists alongside a more fiercely committed orthodoxy where communities feel their identity may be at risk.

Economic logic often runs counter to the needs–based logic of human goals (Rustin 2013). The quality of relationships in work and in communal life are often decisive for a positive outcome and there are values located in the workplace, in labour organisations, in community life, in social activity and in reflective self-consciousness (Giddens, 1991) which have significance way beyond any profit to be made from them. It is vital that we seek the content of these values so we can organise and educate around them.

The world we have seen, in recent decades of individualist accumulation of wealth and profit has now become unsustainable. The market cannot work and reward all in an equitable way. The re-balancing of economy and society has profound implications for the role and functions of schools, colleges and universities, not least for the way we shape learning and qualifications for an uncertain and disruptive future. If it is the case that the links between the individual and the family, the culture and traditions in early and pre-modern society have been lost as modernism and the global market economy evolved, then it is equally the case that we should re-think the way we conceptualise and produce knowledge and learning (Giddens 1990, 1991; Beck, 1994; Freire, 1972; Schor, 1980; Barber et al, 2013).

We need to give recognition to the reflexive capacity of the individual who is embedded in a web of relationships and social meanings and make this central to our learning and to our understanding of what we are calling 'real knowledge'.

Poverty is still with us –globally and locally

There is currently in existence an ideology of progress which asserts that new technology can and will bring in a new and better future. This future involves the use and application of computing and digitalisation to transform our working lives. Technological innovation, it is assumed rather than actually proved, will transform our economic and social lives as a vanguard for change. Whilst there is surely truth of a kind in this vision , there is also a wilful wish to ignore the deeper question about the harm and threats our present industrial and social ' progress' is making in its dependency upon this technology. The 'real 'world , out there still consists of millions who are without an adequate income to rear their families, a world without dignity or education , without clean water or adequate food and medicine and whose share of world wealth is actually diminishing. There is also a world out there where climate change and

pollution are far from improving and where the threat of human extinction is real. The arguments for devising a new curriculum which addresses these issues seem to be self-evident. The issues are pressing and time may be running out! The question is therefore whether the existing curricula of our schools, colleges and universities is capable of addressing these matters? A curriculum which is focussed on received and propositional knowledge, encoded within academic disciplines which evolved often in the 19th century and which is thought fit for only an elite selected for and by universities, may not be fit for the new purposes. The fact that the forms of learning and curricula which predominate in most formal schooling and higher education are not adequate to the task they face is not new (Porter, 1999). The new curriculum, however, should enable people who are disabled and disadvantaged by inequalities to both learn about the problems that beset them and to address them individually and collectively. This paper has drawn on concepts of lifelong action learning which have been developed in practical environments and these involve learning which can be practised by people in the contemporary world within their economic and political circumstances (Jarvis, 2011; Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013 ; Shamshoum ,2016). And furthermore, we would be short-sighted if we were to ignore the pace of change and the force of changing circumstances upon us as we try to live our normal and sometimes stable lives. The modern world is highly unpredictable in terms of its economy, its ecology and its social –political balance, all of which has implications for what we learn and how we learn (Barber et al, 2013).

Poverty, some suggest has always been with us, and is still with us, though it may be a contested notion and it may not be easy to establish a universal definition of what it is to be poor. As Gertrude Himmelfarb noted some 30 years ago, the idea of poverty she researched had no accepted structure and no established boundaries (Himmelfarb, 1988). She asserts, however, a notion that many of us would agree with …" - that the condition of the poor is the "touchstone" of a civilisation, a nation, a philosophy". Poverty may indeed be amorphous but it is still real. Wilson and Wylie suggest that … "Poverty is a state of want or deprivation that gravely interferes with someone's life" (Wilson and Wylie, 1992). Such a definition does not lend itself easily to determine the extent of poverty, but nevertheless we can identify and recognise poverty. In the UK, in a wealthy country with one of the biggest economies in the world, there has been in recent years a growth of food banks for those who do not have enough money to feed themselves or their families. The people who use these food banks are poor. However, their experience of poverty is significantly different from people in many parts of the world where the impact of poverty is greater, where people do not have access to clean water, to a regular supply of food, and where there is famine and disease. People in the UK who are poor, often, but not always, do not have paid work; do not live in habitable housing conditions; do not have enough money to feed and clothe themselves and their families adequately. They often, but not always, live in communities where the impact of globalisation can be seen starkly. Where there are old disused factories and the remnants of the world which used to provide employment in traditional industries for their communities. But not everyone who is poor is without paid work. Young women, who work in garment factories, in Bangladesh, for example, providing cheap clothes for rich western countries, are poor and do not have access to educational opportunities which might help them escape from their situation. In the UK, some people in paid work, sometimes known as the working poor (Toynbee, 2003), require welfare benefits to enable them to look after their families. These people certainly appear to have been left out of the technological revolution, although, they may own smart phones and other IT devices. The impact of technology and globalisation for

them means that they work in low-paid jobs, many with low levels of training, often having to have two or even more jobs to earn enough money to achieve a pitifully low standard of living. They do not benefit from the technological revolution. The poor are still with us despite the development of technologies. What has been startling over the recent decade has been the growing inequality between the rich and the poor. One consequence of globalisation and the growth in technologies has been that the very rich are now rich almost beyond our comprehension and, at the very same time, some of our populations do not have enough to eat.

For young people at risk, to be born in a poor home is to face serious disadvantage. The opportunity to rise above their accident of birth seems almost impossible. Education can provide a way for some who have the talent and opportunity to acquire qualifications that enable them to move into jobs or careers which provide a reasonable life. For others, the opportunities through education are not available or are not appropriate to enable young people to have a decent life. Undoubtedly, this is not solely the responsibility of educationalists but also rests with employers who do not provide adequate work-related training opportunities or pay. Formal learning and institutionalised 'schooling' struggles to prepare many people for our globalised, uncertain and unequal world. Schools and higher education need to consider what real knowledge and skills young people need.

The immense task of understanding and addressing poverty is beyond the scope of this paper. It is a global and local "problem " which will shape the world we live in, in the near future and in the longer term . In some senses, the issue of equality versus inequality is THE world issue beyond all others on the planet and it is pervasive, persistent and all-encompassing. In global terms, Picketty (2014) has shown that the historical returns to ownership of capital is such that the proportion allocated to work or people who must sell their labour and skills is inevitably declining. Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi (2013) have argued persuasively that the evolving conjunction of inequality and lack of opportunity is such that social dislocation on a mass scale can be predicted. The issue has not escaped even the current Pope, Francis, who has indicated the moral imperative of addressing global poverty and deprivation. Nevertheless, we cannot simply be defeated by its size and complexity unless we are to give up the chance to control our futures for the benefit of most if not all of us? The answers to the difficult questions must surely lie partially at least in education and learning. The poorest and most disadvantaged communities in our world need learning opportunities to develop their human potential and capacities. This will involve a curriculum which is radically different from the one we have now. At its heart will be the series of questions and approaches to learning explored by some leading practitioners and thinkers , such as Paulo Freire, Reg Revens, Richard Teare, Ira Schor ,James Porter, Danny Dorling, Manuel Castells…amongst many others too numerous to review here. These questions will include asking how can the world's poorest communities become self-sufficient and self-sustaining and learn how to do well economically? In addition how can they learn from the sheer multiplicity of learning methods and opportunities now available and how can they be 'producers' of knowledge, not just consumers? This implies that people should be taking control of their own environment, their livelihood and their sense of their own selves as communities. This means community development, economic well-being, learning and the future of social and community life must be somehow integrated if human potential is to be unlocked and harvested for the benefit of all and not just for the few who are rich and affluent. New educational thinking and pathways are needed for this agenda and a new and better curriculum!

The marginalisation of youth - from work and the future - is a current reality and means new learning is needed

The rapid pace of social and economic change, apparent quickening of mass migration across large parts of the globe, de-industrialisation of many traditional manufacturing heartlands and 'hollowing out' of many traditional economies and communities have meant the growth of more challenges to the neoliberal consensus in many societies. For many young people in particular this has meant the future is severely at risk. In the UK, such persons are called NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training) and in this paper, the phenomenon is referred to more widely as YPAR (young people at risk).

Those young people, who are not in education and training or in work with career and training prospects, constitute a persistent and troublesome problem for society which says it believes in offering all young people the chance to fulfil their potential in life (see Compass, 2015, Evans, 2006 and Savage, 2015). The local economy and neighbourhood characteristics are important in understanding and combating the persistent and multiple disadvantages of certain communities. 'Worklessness' and lack of access and take up of education and training by young people is a key indicator of such a community. Spatial segregation and concentrations of worklessness can be pronounced and show us that economic processes can be profoundly territorial. Spatial development (neighbourhoods) and the cultures they contain are crucial in understanding local concentrations of deprivation, as we shall hope to show in the 'case study' of youth in Nazareth that follows in this paper.

Young people are more readily engaged if appropriate role models are available. For YPAR, the economic and cultural obstacles are significant and persistent and many can be traced to the nature of the local economy, the neighbourhood/housing market, local social networks and family and cultural lifestyles. We need to consider the value of those types of social capital which can underpin neighbourhood solidarity as well as the extent and characteristics of the informal and 'black' economy. All of these factors shape the experience and outcomes of life for young people, and the role of learning and education is crucial to the objective of better life chances for the many who are denied such outcomes. Currently what is learned and taught, however, may be of less value than we suppose as the world economy moves on to de-skill and destabilise whole communities and populations. Gorrad's (2013) research appears to show categorically that poverty and deprivation correlate most accurately with educational and social selection.

A range of factors which embrace cultural matters, including segregated neighbourhoods, social difference and a whole history of ancient and modern class divisions, cultural, ethnic, religious and political issues serve to define the problems and issues which confront us (Brake, 1980). One thing is abundantly clear in this, the problem is fundamentally not educational but social. How might we think through these matters and draw attention again to the need to understand and act to safeguard the future of a threatened part of a whole generation? The persistence of social class as a divisive reality for all people (in the UK) cannot be denied, however much we would wish it otherwise!

Low participation in education is perceived as equating with poverty and if you are out of formal learning and training with no job you are in danger of being perceived as 'poor'. The reality is that to be excluded from education has become co-terminus with exclusion from opportunity and from participation in the things that confer social worth and value in modern society. This has become true in large parts of the globalised world.

Whatever the nature of the social and economic problems faced by these excluded young people there is no doubt that the system does not give them the a trade and skills and motivation to use such things to get a job in the formal economy. Yet the evidence is that these boys and girls are in many cases strikingly bright and talented. They have gifts which are not recognised and potential which is unrealised. This is a loss to us all.

All of which leads us to the question of what can be done to engage these young people in training and learning which really matters to them? Such learning would need to begin from the point of view and experience of young people themselves. Only such a starting point would let them choose their own destinies, get out into the world and run their own lives out of the orbit of the welfare agencies.

These are social processes, which impact specifically on YPAR and working class people, who often live in economic insecurity and cannot predict the course of their future lives. In such circumstances, there is a need to live in the here and now and to define oneself in terms of immediate needs, wants and desires. There is little opportunity to invest in the future either through material things or through achievable aspirations. This enforces a certain type of localism and security around certain primary links such as family and neighbourhood. Neighbourhoods represent specific types of social relations and therefore provide an 'encounter' (not always harmonious) with the 'system' which allocates resources and the social practices (ie behaviour) of the inhabitants. YPAR present themselves as a contradiction: they are active agents in a system of social practice and behaviour (unemployed, uneducated, dis-located, 'dangerous', vulnerable, etc.). At the same time, they present themselves as themselves but always in relation to something else – what might be their potential and their position in the wider society and social structure. They may be severely at risk but they are certainly part of our future.

What seems clear is that a key issue is the lack of forms of education that engage and seem relevant to every young person. YPAR inhabit problematic cultures and neighbourhoods and therefore are in the consciousness of professionals in the world of education, employment, social welfare and public policy. They represent a potentially lost future for a significant part of a generation and at a point in history (in this case), Britain could offer the real opportunities to acquire skills and a life of better value and worth. It seems little short of criminal to condemn them to future poverty and continuing dependence.

From the perspective of learning providers, including schools, colleges, universities and the myriad of training providers, there needs to be a new approach to meet the challenge of YPAR. This involves, we would argue, a greater degree of understanding of the nature of the actual places where YPAR live and a re-working of the kinds of learning which young people find 'real' and useful. It may lead us to want to re-define our ideas of what useful knowledge and skills are! A first step in this might be to examine how young people live and act in the neighbourhoods and spaces available within their communities. This is a key aspect of a young person's identity and it may well involve a contested reality. The relationships that are experienced in the streets and neighbourhoods of poor and deprived communities are physical and social. They may be dangerous and threatening but may also be close, warm and supportive. Specific social relations with the world of public authority and local government are structured and experienced differently from those who have wealth and economic and social resources. This yields a particular set of attitudes and expectations again whose explanation is social rather than simply educational.

The 'at risk' neighbourhood is often a localised social and communal unit which has values of its own but it also expresses a social process. Residential sub-cultures (in neighbourhoods) have a relationship and articulation to social representations and practices. The YPAR are expressions of relationships involving exclusion and inclusion, power and powerlessness and wider cultural acceptance and rejection. The YPAR are in effect a negative comment, as it were, on the wider society and on those social processes which produce and sustain inequality and deprivation. Our starting point in engaging with these issues is a belief that it is possible to break the cycle of deprivation and dependency which underpins the at risk experience in such neighbourhoods. There is evidence that where neighbourhoods generate possibilities and life chances are enhanced, then differentiated behaviour occurs and individuals are more able and likely to adopt positive activity and escape the YPAR label and status (Castells, 1977).

However, space, in our case defined in terms of the neighbourhood, is not just a context, it is also conceptually an element in a certain social practice. The street, itself, the houses within it, the street architecture and furniture, the arrangement of space and its accessibility, the patterns of behaviour and the social and recreational buildings and meeting places are all part of the practice of 'inhabiting' a location (Lefebvre, 1971; Shamshoum, 2016). There is an implicit link between the impact of a place and its cultural meaning, but we cannot simply read off this meaning.

Young people at risk embody an 'ensemble' of social practices and processes whose different and concrete combinations lead to different forms of behaviour. This is then the basis of our belief in the effectiveness of intervention strategies. However, the essential role of social homogeneity (Whyte, 1955) is significant and is linked to the social characteristics of the residents of a given neighbourhood. Space, location and neighbourhood can accentuate or deflect certain kinds of behaviour but they have no independent effect and thus there is no simple and systematic link between different urban contexts and ways of life and culture (Brake, 1980). Where such a link can be observed it is a starting point for research and positive intervention (Shamshoum, 2016).

The role of social capital and social networks during young people's transitions to adulthood and to work is also considered to be critical. Whereas some cultural and social patterns and opportunities are clearly eroding for young people living on 'estates' or in the ghettoes, the significance of knowledge-driven possibilities (ie learning) is increasing as life becomes ever more complex and unpredictable for individuals and communities. In order to cope individuals must, according to some influential commentators such as Giddens and Beck, continually produce and reproduce their 'own biographies', by which is meant a personal engagement with the social and cultural situation in which a person finds him/herself. When people find a voice and a platform for action they join together to create new meanings and action which has the capacity to change lives. This is a form of social capital, which may be especially significant for those who have risk biographies and who may be living outside the formal systems of social or state support.

The concerns which flow from this perspective might include how we handle the great variety of interpretations as to the meanings of individual learning and self-learning. We shall need to engage in the future with the learning-to-learn syndrome and define what it is to be competent and self-learning in the context of the 21st century with its crises and challenges facing young people at risk.

Self-learning competency may prove to be the concept that helps us shift away from the historical obsession with learning content towards the theme of how we learn. The idea of 'self as learner' in the adolescent and adult phases of life involves the key defining structures and experiences of that life, including membership of key organisations such as those found at the workplace, in the family or community. The self as an individual is never a contained entity. It is work and a place in the market for labour, for example, which not only confers income but critical parts of the sense of social and individual worth and self-belief.

Much learning is never recognised though we learn constantly and many people seek to learn about themselves and the meaning of their lives. Anthony Giddens (1991) referred to this process as … "the self as a reflexive project", which means learning is about the inner principle of activity and of instructing oneself. The 'self' as individual competes and cooperates with other individuals, is usually part of an organisation or group and is always developing – never completed.

The key to this idea is the recognition of the individual self in different, real life contexts, some of which we may not always find convivial. We are always faced by the notion of the 'other': persons who are in some way not ourselves and who have different beliefs, values and practices. However, overcoming such distinctions and differences and finding common ground is a key task of self-development and self-learning.

There are some key features of this approach which must inform the opportunities provided:

- Alongside existing knowledge and skills, taught and learned in conventional ways, there must be an emphasis on new knowledge which is about problem solving, task solving, communication and active knowledge construction.

- This new knowledge must relate to the lives and selves (the 'voices') of YPAR themselves, as it is about young people's own existential projects .

- The learner is the primary actor and activist, not the teacher.

- The knowledge used in such projects must be about goal-directed activity related to young people's work and lives.

- The capacity to act on and in an environment (known as affordance) should be sponsored by those whose task is to support interventions.

These new approaches are of course not really new. There are myriad examples of those who have attempted to change learning and teaching and our understanding of young people in particular throughout the ages. In modern times, Paulo Friere, A.S. Neil, Ira Schor, Anthony Giddens, Jerome Bruner, Stuart Hall, Paul Willis and Tim Brighouse among others have offered us transformative insights and examples. However, each generation does need to re-invent the wheel in that building upon existing insights, new understandings and knowledge and skills are needed in each successive generation.

What then might these new skills be? They are the survival skills of modernity that require the development of new abilities, including the ability to:

- live with doubt and uncertainty whilst maintaining a positive outlook and persistence

- establish a balanced life where all skills and qualities can be recognised

- promote one's skills through networking and cultivating relationships

- prepare a personal career plan with a range of options including fall-back positions

- acquire a range of competencies and experience

- engage with lifelong learning in the new contexts of self-competency

- develop a commitment to personal development within a framework of support

- deliver responsiveness involving learners and their experience, values, expectations and contributions

- support a focus on the individual's responsibility for learning rather than on the institutions themselves

- recognise that young people learn in an increasingly wide range of sites and settings (including community-based and voluntary sector bodies, churches, ethnic groups and associations, such as trade unions and the business community).

Recent examples of work which has been rooted in the experience of young people at risk and which has sought to transform the perspectives and prospects of such people can be found in the narratives published by Richard Teare (2013) and by Reem Shamshoum (2016). Their very different work in respectively Papua New Guinea and Nazareth is ground-breaking and entirely distinctive, yet focussed on self-learning and personal capability. This is a commonality of focus.

The crucial idea is that young people should be given a role and a greater 'voice' as responsible co-producers of their own learning. Taken to its logical conclusion where learners become producers of learning, the learning could take place anywhere. Learners could engage and incorporate into their learning any relevant activities which they felt would help them achieve their own objectives. The 'old' providers and supporters of learning would need therefore to be seen in a different light – as gateways to resources and solutions to learning challenges.

The learner voice becomes crucial in this scenario. Choice focussed on decisions by learners drive the process and should generate resources. The impacts will of course need measuring as the principles of personalised learning are tested and developed.

The approach outlined here is significant in addressing the needs of YPAR within the dual contexts of a developing sense of 'self' and an awareness of social and community life. Solving problems and creating stronger social bonds through learning from each other is a powerful concept. Typically, this type of action learning, as outlined above, occurs when people learn from each other in shared conditions and challenges. They create their own resources, identify their own problems and begin to form their own solutions. The point of commitment and engagement is when learners begin to realise they do not necessarily need a formal classroom, a teacher or a textbook to learn important things that can help them in life and work.

Young people at risk, like all of us, need to have a place in the scheme of things – a sense of being equipped for the present and the future. These are the outputs to be desired. What is needed is that willingness to engage and to learn, a readiness to learn from others and a

determination to bring about much needed change through critical and collaborative thinking and action.

The growth of digital technologies – is the challenge of change in the 21st century

In a society where knowledge has exploded into availability, learning is being transformed by the artefacts and the apps of the so-called information age. Giddens (1990 and 1991) has argued persuasively that the new communication technologies have disrupted the fixed realities of time and space. This impacts on economic and social life in fundamental ways. Distanciation occurs, where individuals can no longer identify with the sources and meanings of the products they acquire. Everything that is consumed is made somewhere else. All communications are instantaneous, no matter where in the world that is. Delivered items arrive the next day; reality becomes something 'virtual'. Local communities can become severely marginalised and impoverished by the almost instant switching of production to cheaper locations, perhaps half way across the globe. The sources of authority can be undermined and value systems and traditions are fragmented or simply destroyed for those left behind in the global race for economic supremacy (Castells, 1997). The fixed realities of time and space are increasingly disrupted as the media we use are available 24 hours per day and everyone on the planet is a potential media partner no matter where they live.

What is of huge significance to each and every one of us and to our collective experience, the stuff of our daily lives, is now mediated by the products of the knowledge economy and the communications/entertainment industry. A changing social and economic reality has been accompanied by a rapidly changing knowledge base. It can be argued (Gardner and Davis, 2014) that for some young people the reality of experience and real life has already been replaced by the reality of digital dependency. What Gardner and Davis refer to as the "app generation " may be a metaphor for what young people have come to think of the world as an " ensemble of apps " where everything they do is part of a larger digital system experienced via the screen. The effects of this on the younger generation are as yet unknown. It may be imagined that they are not all entirely healthy and there is evidence that excessive use of screens has a negative impact on the health of young people (Booker, 2015; Booker et. al. 2015). There is also the question of how intensive use of digital media impacts on identity, imagination and intimacy. The question has been put... are young people becoming app dependent, their lives slavishly reliant on software and surrealities of the screen as substitute for actually being out there and doing something with other people? Or are they becoming app enabled, with new technology allowing them to express and organise themselves in ways previously unimagined?

Today's young people are internet driven; they download e-books and articles, Skype with their tutors, observe lectures on their iPads at several locations and as students get open coursework on-line from a variety of university and other sources. MIT open coursework has 100 million individual learners and this is increasing by one million a month. The Global University for Lifelong Learning (GULL) takes learning to the remotest villages in Papua New Guinea and Africa (Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013). The learning revolution has meant that the mass higher education agenda has penetrated some of the most elitist and prestigious institutions, including the Ivy League in the USA and the Oxbridge axis in the UK.

The explosion of digital technologies has undoubtedly opened up access to learning. However, as well as positive outcomes for many it is also possible to discern some threats to cherished

values for those generations who are defined by these dominant technologies. These dangers are part of the mass psychology of contemporary experience.

On a worldwide basis, there were in 2014 more than 600 million web sites (The Independent 12.03.2014, *25th anniversary of the World Wide Web*) and the internet has changed our lives forever in that we can access information and share things in ways simply not possible to any previous generation. The web has provided a new dimension through which we can communicate and its scale is vast. Billions of people are on-line and hundreds of millions of messages and pictures are exchanged every single minute. The economy worldwide has been transformed with IT companies becoming amongst the most valued share holdings.

Gardner and Davis (2014) have argued that a 40-year-old parent may be four generations away from their teenage child, separated by the internet and its applications, smart phones and tablets. Young people today have come to think of the world and themselves as inevitably linked by the internet. The world for young people is an ensemble of apps and they are the app generation. In Gardner and Davis' formulation the metaphor of an ensemble of apps describes life lived as part of a larger digital system, through the screen. This is a world where young people in particular have developed a slavish reliance on their machines and apps. As opposed to the notion that this technology allows people to liberate and express themselves in ways previously unimagined, young people are becoming less capable of developing their identity and imagination. They are becoming app dependent and this is a growing problem which is curbing creativity and creating a conformist generation that is risk averse, shallow and self-regarding.

This is difficult given the problems of email and texting as the means of communication of choice respectively for older and younger people. Texting appears to have the same addictive qualities as email but these are compounded by the 'hyperimmediacy' of texting; they demand immediate responses and people feel they cannot ignore them. Furthermore, they discourage thoughtful reflection and discussion. It is clear that E-mail, Facebook and Twitter checking are what Levitin (2015) calls a "neural addiction". Each time we send an email in one way or another, he asserts, we feel a sense of accomplishment and our brain receives a dose of dopamine; a measure of reward hormones. Yet the cognitive losses involved in the sorts of intensive and compulsive multi-tasking required of constant email and twitter and Facebook use are considerable. Levels of stress, anxiety and impulsive behaviour are likely to rise and the uncertainty generated can lead to decision overload. This in itself can create havoc with the way we apply categories for the selection of important things, as opposed to the non-important things which clutter our lives and work. Levitin is scathing about the effects of the compulsive twitter and Facebook checking that can be observed everywhere. When we do this , " we encounter something novel and feel more connected socially (in a weird impersonal cyber way) … but remember, it is the dumb, novelty-seeking portion of the brain driving the limbic system that induces this feeling of pleasure, not the planning , scheduling, higher-level thought centres in the prefrontal cortex. Make no mistake: E-mail, Facebook and Twitter checking constitute a neural addiction" (Levitin, ibid, p. 102).

Loss of community – dispossession

What then are the dangers and threats to our vision of new learning needed for young people and in higher education presented by the digitalisation of learning and communication? Should we be technophiles or technophobes, and do we have an effective choice at all? One of the

contexts we would suggest should shape our response might be how such technology does or does not increase our personal autonomy and enhance our freedom to be what we might be. From differing but related perspectives, Ivan Illich (1971) and Herbert Marcuse (1964) explored such themes decades ago. Whether we are conscious, creative and active agents in our own world and communities, or whether we are passive consumers of things produced for us, elsewhere becomes a vital question.

 Levitin (2014) and Carr (2015) have shown that extensive use of computer and hand-held screen time encourages consumerism and leads children to value money and branded goods. Furthermore, it induces anxiety, low self-esteem and depression and it harms children's relationships. These arguments purport to show that screens turn children off from accountability and empathy and have proposed that this type of toxic technology does not teach the core curriculum of the human condition such as kindness, generosity, self-control, sensitivity and courage. In a recent article (Guardian, 10.03.2014), Jay Griffiths asserted.... "Children are being treated for addiction to technology, and there can be a fetish quality to their relationships with gadgets. Their animistic imaginations are wrested away from living things to synthetic ones, and cumulatively the authentic world takes second place to the artificial world". There is a loss of 'belonging' and this is frequently experienced as a loss of 'community' and a longing for a sense of continuity of past and future. Community has geographical, emotional, ideological and identity dimensions. It is a multi-layered and over-lapping idea (see Berger, 1984 and 1985) and can be so over-used that its specific meanings are lost in the generic 'amorphousness' of 'community'. It can be all things to all people. Nevertheless, community still represents I some of the deepest longings of our time and the sense that it can be lost is a powerful driver of emotions and actions, not least where concerns around identity , place and culture are raised(Davies and Clarke, 2012).

The need for a sense of self-identity and personal viability

In societies undergoing rapid and disruptive social and economic change we can expect the production of new knowledge needed in each generation to give expression to these wider social and cultural issues. Different knowledges are likely to generate different and competing hierarchies of status and competing values, as witnessed by the continuing debate over the values of popular versus elite culture and what constitutes a fairer and more just learning society (Welton, 2005; Benn, 2011; Compass, 2015).

Although it might seem itself unfair to lay the blame for inequalities on the tech corporations, they after all did not invent inequality, there is a serious issue regarding the progressive educational and social meaning of their doings! The tech firms capitalise on the social and psychological value of 'community'. The power of networks is realised and the underpinning dependencies and needs of millions of individuals are monetised, ruthlessly. Google, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and others, in spite of their attempts to build their own local communities (in California primarily), are contributing massively to the contradiction at the heart of modern capitalism. One of these concerns the expansion of potential that new innovations can bring whilst simultaneously confirming the exclusion of millions from a decent life. In addition, these are threats to the privacy of individuals brought about by state surveillance rooted in the on-line communities created by the new technology.

An example of such a shift in sensibilities concerns the view that there is taking place a forced marriage between technology and narcissism at a truly global level. This idea suggests

strongly the dangers of social consumerism. The future as described in David Egger's novel 'The Circle' (2015) alludes to a vast commercial company that is at one and the same time Google, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, where life is constantly recorded and rated. Every experience is known to the company, as is every encounter with a person and every product bought or desired. As it is expressed in the novel … ''All that happens must be known''. Membership of the society is only possible through your 'participation ranking'. To withhold any information is to be selfish and ultimately to wish for the destruction of society. The company of course provides for everything.

The threat in this increasingly recognisable dystopia lies in the psychological anxieties created by the undermining of individual autonomy and independence necessitated by the technological and psychological dependence on hardware and software. Our daily lives are more and more embedded in the technology and devices through which communication and knowledge is transmitted. What needs to be explored now is not just the changing interface between us and the outside world but a more fundamental shift in ourselves. What is at stake is our concept of an essential self, the idea of subjectivity and a unique way of experiencing the world and sharing that with others.

On-line identities are manipulated to reveal only what we wish people to know about our lives and to hide the 'real 'us. We do not have to be confronted by the actual persons with whom we are sharing our relationships. On-line identities can be created or performed. They do not have to be engaged with and encountered, with all of the messy and literal compromises of face-to-face reality. The struggle for a viable identity can be transposed to a virtual place and time; it can be postponed and evaded, for a time.

There are people who cannot apparently look up at the sky outside their buildings to see what the weather holds. They unfailingly consult their hand-held device to check whether an umbrella is needed before venturing out. Virtual reality has become more real than reality itself. Remote, dislocated and evacuated- the words that are used have lost their meaning - 'friend', 'cloud', 'search' and ' identity ' have been drained of life by their web usage; they have somehow been annihilated by their new on-line connotations so they no longer mean what they say.

We are clearly not going to simply lose these means of communication, however and therefore we need to be able to control them and to conceptually 'master', them in order to be able to benefit rather than suffer from them. This is an agenda for teachers and learners if ever there was one. The problems are compounded by an accelerating set of issues and concerns. The loss of cognitive control and skills already alluded to means that the individual can become an operator of a computerised system rather than an 'activator'. When the computer performs complex activities and intellectual work such as observing, sensing, analysing and judging, and even decision-making, it changes both the nature of work and the worker in unanticipated and disturbing ways:

- Individuals can become 'automation complacent' and can trust the machine and software to act for them

- Personal performance and capacity can become degraded and a 'learned carelessness ' can occur; we learn less and know less

- The computer becomes both a liberator (from boring , routine tasks) and an enforcer of rigid time frames and work rules

- Computers can deskill some work and workers by standardising work processes whilst for some others they may support a flexible personal work style and be a tool for greater individual autonomy

- As more skills are built into the machine, it takes more control over the work itself, progressively de-skilling the worker (Carr, ibid, p. 77); computerised statistical predictive algorithms are already in use in software which can replace human judgements in the fields of medicine, health, education, finance , law, marketing and business

- Economic life shifts from the flow of goods to the flow of data and information and the Network Society is created as a reality for everyone (Castells, 1996); some of the effects of this are catastrophic for those whose intellectual and skilled jobs become automated including the threat of displacement and unemployment for even those who operate complex computer systems themselves (Carr, ibid, p. 118).

The contradictory character of modernity is nowhere more clearly shown than in the contrast between the vast expansion of personal means of communication and digital technologies available to all who can afford them and the millions of people simultaneously trapped in economic poverty and backwardness. The sheer pervasiveness, the scale and intrusiveness of what is available via digital media confirms the outlandish inequity of exclusion. Modernity has brought with it a capacity for dialogue, communication and the attendant benefits of reflexivity and self-awareness and self-development. It has also created unpredictability, uncertainty and exclusion. All of this illuminates the importance of the learning agenda for an uncertain future, where we shall need 'real knowledge' which addresses the issues sketched above in this paper. It is important then that we consider evidence and cases where new learning is occurring – such as that of 'Dancing in Nazareth'.

The first section of this paper has presented a written analysis and critique of issues which are shaping student learning and the choice of work and careers in fundamental ways, such as destabilised communities, a vulnerable economy and ecology, the mass marketization of higher education, mass migration and poverty, mass youth unemployment and the growth of digital technologies in education and social life, worldwide. All of these represent threats to the taken-for-granted and 'normal' lives of many in modern society. The paper suggests a new and radical departure is needed in curriculum thinking and learning in order to engage with this.

Section 2:

A specific place and culture - Nazareth and Mawwal

The second section of this paper presents extracts from a case study which analyses and explores the impact of therapeutic arts on members of the Arab community in Nazareth. The study illuminates actual learning in a community dealing with dispossessed and disaffected young people. Christian Palestinian Arabs, Muslim Arabs and those of no faith were the subject of a learning project which lasted some 6 years and which focussed on the explication of social themes and issues through artistic and therapeutic processes. Music, dance and drama were envisaged as a means of liberating feelings, emotions and desires for a

progressive purpose – the betterment of personal and community relations in an environment of risk and danger.

The project involved action research and was undertaken with Mawwal Centre of the Arts in the City of Nazareth with 4 key research questions:

- How can dance help transform the lives of young people, especially those at risk?

- How can dance and drama empower children at risk?

- What is it like to be a dancer when your culture seems to demand a different identity: the conflict between personal desire and social conformism?

- How can dramatherapy bring change where personal and biographical experiences interact with the realities of gender, class, ethnicity and identity?

This paper as a whole aims to engage with thinkers and practitioners who are minded to explore and challenge some of the limitations on learning, including the self-imposed ones given to learners and teachers in institutions such as schools and universities. The project in Nazareth as outlined here and the analytical sections of this paper both seek to link the learner with 'real' knowledge , where learning is connected to the growth of opportunity for individual lives and for free, tolerant and democratic social systems. The researcher and authors were involved also in a return to earlier concepts such as those of Paulo Freire and Ira Schor and with current developers such as Richard Teare and Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, where learning is viewed as a dialogue which allows the learner to re-experience the 'ordinary' and everyday things as useful in gaining control of his/her life. In the case study in Nazareth, a radical approach was used and evaluated to show how learning beyond the classroom can help transform feelings, experience and realities for young people and their communities.

Extracts from 'Dancing in Nazareth' – a doctoral thesis by Reem Shamshoum (2016)

Fragmented ethnic/religious groups/neighbourhoods

The Palestinian Arab Community in Israel, in particular in the City of Nazareth, has been experiencing a social transition for at least the past two decades. At the time of writing (2015/16), the social gaps (social status and sectarianism) are widening and a sense of social injustice is intensifying. In my research project and doctoral thesis, I aim to explore and analyse some of the social issues which are expressions of 'social alienation' in my community. Social alienation refers to estrangement, disgruntlement, division and distancing of people from each other. It can also indicate the sense of social isolation many individuals feel even within their taken-for-granted and familiar environment. This has been articulated as: "The feeling of being segregated from one's community" (Kalekin-Fishman, 1998, p. 97).

It is a challenging task to study the social conditions of the City of Nazareth. This population is suffering discrimination within Israel as well as internal discriminations and it is a community which is divided into distinctive neighbourhoods and ethnic groups, as well as having divisions based on social classes, ethnic and regional origins and on religions and faiths. There is a sense of social segregation which is illustrated by the receding tide of integrated and inclusive communal and social life. The sense of social segregation and separateness is palpable and visceral. In some cases, in my opinion,

this segregation is intentional and by choice people do not want to be in contact with the 'other', with the 'different culture', or they want to protect themselves and their children from what they perceive or are told is a 'poisoned culture'. The notions of inclusion, acceptance, tolerance and reciprocity, which are key aspects of life for many people, are seen to be severely problematic and are both desired objectives and the objects of the researched activity reported here.

In this project my aim was to encourage children to get to know each other, to express themselves, to listen and to witness the 'other'. In addition, I wanted to improve, and to a certain extent, create a sense of unity and harmony within the centre. This was contradictory to the lost sense of unity and belonging which I had witnessed in the City of Nazareth. A society which has become divided, estranged, and alienated requires such initiatives, however modest they may appear in the face of massive and persistent inequalities.

By 2015, Palestinians comprised some 20% of the total population, numbering almost 1.2 million people (CBS- Central Bureau of Statistics - Israel) becoming an involuntary minority and a part of the Palestinian people who currently live in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Diaspora (Adalah report, 2011, p. 6).

The Palestinian Arab community in Israel is heterogeneous. It is made up of different religious and ethnic groups mainly Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Bedouins each of which has its own sense of identity. In addition the many divisions along family, regional and ethnic lines have made it difficult for them to share a collective identity (Peleg and Waxman, 2011).

Palestinians belong to three religious communities: Muslim (82%), Christian (9.5%) and Druze (8.5%). Their status under international human rights instruments, to which Israel as a State is party, is that of a national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minority (Adalah report 2011, p. 6).

In her book 'Stateless Citizenship: the Palestinian- Arab citizens of Israel ', Molavi (2013) says that the collective situation of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel is paradoxical. They are denied both national membership, as non-Jews, and state identification, given Israel's legal, political and social self-definition as a state for the Jewish people. At the same time, this community is also distanced from the rest of the Palestinian population through the same legal, political and social dimension, "Palestinians are placed in a paradoxical situation where, as Arab citizens of a Jewish state, they are both *inside* and *outside*, *host* and *guests*, *citizen* and *stateless*" (Molavi, 2013, p. 3).

Poverty and exclusion amongst Palestinian Arabs in Nazareth

This picture of social disintegration and fragmentation across the social, religious and ethnic distinctions in Nazareth provides a context for the economic, social and psychological vulnerability of many people. It is the context of risk where many children from lower income families, in particular, are vulnerable and exposed to risk factors in deprived neighbourhoods. As might be expected this badly affects their development in a number of different ways. Ali Salam, Nazareth's mayor stated recently that "the number of the families in need is increasing in Nazareth, where we see every year an increase in

the number of such families in need. We know that now there are about 60% of families below the poverty line.

Arab families are greatly over-represented among Israel's poor and over half of the Arab families in Israel are classified as poor, compared to a poverty rate of one-fifth among all families in Israel. Arab towns and villages are heavily over-represented in the lowest socio-economic rankings. It is not an exaggeration to argue that gaps in income and poverty rates are directly related to institutional discrimination against Arab citizens in Israel (Adalah, ibid, p. 8).

Unemployment rates also remain significantly higher among Arabs than among Jewish citizens, and the rate of labour-force participation among Palestinian women citizens of Israel, at just about 20%, is among the lowest in the world (Adalah, ibid, p. 9).

The report prepared by Israel National Council for the Child (INCC) in 2012 reveals that the average poverty rate in Israel is 25 percent, and among Arabs it is 57 percent. For Arab children in Israel it reached 67.9 percent in 2012, compared to 65.8 percent in 2011, and 56.8 percent in 2002. Additionally, the report states that the percentage of Arab children living in poverty is now three times higher than it is for Jewish children.

Comparing the general poverty rates of particular cities across Israel highlights even starker inequalities. For example, the child poverty rate in Nazareth is 73.2 per cent (the highest in Israel), while poor children comprise only 12.4 per cent of the child population in Tel Aviv. In addition, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics Israel (CBS) Nazareth is one of the top three cities across Israel where the possibility exists of a citizen slipping into poverty.

Cultural forces – cohesive and disparate

This thesis is about learning and development at work as an alternative to the formal educational system. It focusses on creative learning and thinking through music, dance and drama in a community which is economically deprived and socially and politically marginalised. It draws on the cultural resources of a community in Nazareth which set out to help itself. It is a narrative with an external object- the experience of Mawwal Dance Group which trains and performs to a high standard- and it is concurrently a story of personal and professional development. It has an internal and personal dimension which connects the world of lived- experience and community development.

The persistence of the original religious quarters and the evolution of new religious, refugee, and mixed quarters typify patterns and relationships that go beyond residential segregation. They speak of a city in which communities of Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, Maronites, Copts, Anglicans, Baptists, and Muslims have all chosen to live. They also speak of a city in which early and continuing patterns of separation are indicative of underlying tensions where Christian-Muslim relations can be strained and where Christian- Christian relations have not always been cordial. This separation is also indicative of a much more complex set of relationships in which the many communities of Nazareth have been able to ensure a relatively peaceful coexistence in a region where communal conflict is often the norm (Emmett, 1995, p. 4).

> … the separation of religion and politics had, until the mid-1990s
> alleviated significant strain on communal relations. When the focus was
> not on religion, it helped to maintain peaceful coexistence, tolerance
> and civility. …separation into quarters helps to maintain
> accommodation among communities. As in other cities of the region,
> the peoples of Nazareth found that living in segregated communal
> clusters not only strengthened community cohesiveness, but also
> helped to keep conflict to a minimum.

(Emmett, 1995, pp. 285-286)

Need for a sense of self-identity and personal viability

The project was not simply an empirical investigation into learning systems. It was research into feelings, emotions and desires which were played out through music, dance, dramatherapy and performance on stage and within Palestinian Arab culture- itself a highly contested reality in 21st Century Nazareth! The project records the linked worlds of the therapist- researcher and her respondents through the framing concepts of biographic continuity (Gardner, 2003; Jenkins, 2008) and personal viability (Teare, 2013).

A key assumption of the thesis is how the principal agent of learning is within the learner him/herself and that the individual quality of lived experience is best understood within the broader social network of meanings. These meanings are always personal and biographical and are thus part of the sources of action and change. The location of the change and action was learning and knowing in a specific context –which was Mawwal, a Palestinian cultural centre in Nazareth dedicated to bringing about inclusion and a happier and better community. This is in a wider context where there are fiercely committed orthodoxies where identities are at risk and where for some people social and religious schisms can be the defining characteristic of life.

In the project, the focus … was on identity: Who one is? What one is? What defines his/her identity? were key concerns. The sessions (involving dance and drama) were intended to examine directly and indirectly issues such as meaning, value and what is called 'personhood'. We explored self-identity through daramatherapy's wide repertoire of dramatic expressive forms. The self and individual identity was presented and developed through group and social interaction, exploring how the self relates to others, promoting the development of relationships with the other, alongside the ability to identify with others and their emotional perspectives.

Section 3:

The solutions presented in 'Dancing in Nazareth'

Dance can transform lives

The overall theme of the research and the project concerns the idea of 'transformation'. Within this broad term certain key issues and themes are encountered, quite often as opposites or antinomies. These include:

- Individual versus collective and group identity in Arab society, and in particular in Nazareth

- Social and cultural identity versus religious identity in Arab society

- Personalisation and personal viability versus family and cultural obligations within Arab culture

- Group identity versus national and ethnic identity

- Modern dance versus 'dabka' (a traditional dance of identity) as a symbolic signal

- The modern city (Nazareth) versus the Palestinian heritage

- The desire for change, progress and outward expression versus the forces of inward and internalised oppression.

All of these themes occur in the narrative of the research.

Dramatherapy and Transformation: the argument here is that the process of being involved in making drama and the potential for creative satisfaction of enactment can be transformative. In part this is due to transformation of identity by which is meant the discovery of new capacities and qualities which allow new selves to emerge. The creation of dramatic products and the involvement in dramatic processes can bring together a combination of thinking, feeling and creativity. The relationship the participant forms with the dramatherapist or other group participants can also be transformative, in that they can re-work relationships and explore (Jones, 1996, p. 121), for example, ways of responding to each other and to their context and situation. The concept of transformation is central to this thesis and it was dominant in the research results and analysis … where, for example, participants and parents reported personal, family and communal change.

Dramatherapy can empower individuals

Dramatherapy gave the children an opportunity to be creative and to escape reality into another world- the dramatic world. They were fascinated by the props, costumes, puppets, cards, pictures, music and dramatic activities. They were also given a large space to move freely in the drama sessions (less children and more space), which they only had maybe in the physical education class. The drama sessions gave the children an opportunity to express themselves and release some of the pressure, as well as meeting their emotional and social needs. Children were very excited about dramatherapy in general and very loud. I had to be creative in some cases and implement dramatherapy games and techniques even in the hallways on our way to the therapy room in order to keep boundaries and to stay in control, because children were easily distracted and very loud. For example, we used to play the 'freeze' game on our way to the room. Children enjoyed this game a lot, and as another teacher described it:

> "dramatherapy brought a fresh air to the school, I saw those children on the hallways 'freezing' and smiling… they were happy… I wanted to play with them and to be part of the experience… I felt like a kid… instead of screaming at them and asking them to shut-up and be quiet!"

> (Teacher A, Nazareth).

The dramatherapy sessions were an opportunity for the children to socially interact in a positive way. This positive interaction was reflected outside the drama room in the school as well as at home. They planned, played and rehearsed different scenes during their

breaks, boys and girls together, which was an unusual scene at the school. They also visited each other after school hours to rehearse and in some cases even parents stepped in and directed scenes and provided props and costumes.

Dramatherapy and learning: this thesis in many ways is about learning ... Participants learn in dramatherapy through "life drama connections"; a process of relating drama to real-life events, experiences and beliefs. All drama is based on reality either explicitly or through metaphor. Participants discover associations with real happenings in their lives and can learn from them by comparison, explanation and discussion (Jones, 1996) and through social interaction, they can also learn about the 'other' as well as about their own self.

Individuals developed self-confidence and self-awareness

One of the aims of this project was to encourage children to get to know each other, to express themselves, to listen and to witness the 'other'. Alternative identities became available, which in turn created opportunities for change and personal growth. Also improving and to a certain extent, creating a sense of unity and harmony within Mawwal Centre was a key objective. This was to counter the lost sense of unity and belonging in the City of Nazareth. A society which has become divided, estranged, and alienated requires such initiatives, however modest they may appear in the face of massive and persistent inequalities.

As a result, the pieces created in the performance reflected 'oneself' and the 'other' in many ways; they reflected different identities and social statuses (see Video no. 2, scene 11); they reflected school and neighbourhood (Video no. 2 scene 11 and 4); they gave expression to notions of good and evil (Video no. 2, scene 6 and 7); they criticised society including teachers and parents (Video no. 2, scenes 4 and 5); and reflected the conflict between parents and children as well as between school and student. The performance also reflected different emotions and personal processes (see Video no. 2, scenes 9 and 13) including social and community experience and alienation (Video no. 2, scenes 11 and 16). They reflected wishes and dreams (see Video no. 2, scenes 14 and 15). Through the process, children found many things in common and worked together, as a group, towards creating a children's performance, reflecting their vision, observations, life, happiness, pain and dreams.

Community culture can be sustained

The Mawwal approach brings some liberation to the individual, but it is a concurrent phenomenon; it does not aim to lose the social support provided from a conservative and concerned family structure. Mawwal is collective, gives security and is socially accepted. It does not cause the person to lose his family and the concomitant security it yields. Mawwal is involved working directly with the family, for example, by trying to help the family mainly with problems with the child. This can involve contacting the school, or working on issues at home, and even in many cases encouraging family involvement such as supporting the group in the committee, or helping with the performances. When one wants to create a significant change or a transformation in Arab society, one needs to change the family too.

Dramatic identity as a progressive force

The national identity of the Palestinians in Israel is very complicated, also identities in Nazareth itself are very conflicted. In dramatherapy the notion of the role involves the creation of dramatic identity. This might be different from the participants' usual identity, or perhaps it may be the dramatic representation of this usual identity. All work with a role involves the development of a dramatic identity, the enactment of that identity and the separation from that identity (Jones, 1996, p. 220). Through the whole dramatherapy project we (participants and myself) 'played' with identities and this was reflected in the dramatherapy performance,

I observed that there were two types of children at risk at Mawwal, the first, were children who were interested in drama or dance, and at the same time, had a very strong sense of belonging to their own family and/or neighbourhood. They loved dance, but they did not want to be estranged from their family or smaller community, seeking at the same time their families' and community acceptance. The second were children who did not have this sense of belonging and in some cases they hated where they came from. Such children were alienated and different anyway. So, by joining Mawwal, they were seeking social belonging and acceptance and they were looking for others like themselves who were interested in drama or dance. For example, Video no. 4 ('Mahmood') presents this conflict of belonging. Also quite apparent … is the portrayal of conflict involved in becoming a dancer when the wider society displays an acceptance-rejection dynamic. Admiration for the performance may concurrently exist with rejection of the wider meaning and contexts of contemporary display of the embodied self on 'westernised' stages or in film. This contradiction was very present in the interview analysis and in the contrasting themes of 'maleness' and 'femininity' associated with public performance of dance.

In a traditional Arab family, talking about feelings or experiences is exceptional. Within this collective united family, the person or the self is absent. To survive in an authoritarian collectivistic society, people learn to repress their personal needs and emotions. They are used to being detached from their internal feelings and, instead, focus on external demands and expectations. Social awareness substitutes for self-awareness. Of course as I argued in Chapter 2 (section 4 of Shamshoum's thesis), the dramatherapy experience challenged this idea. Participants shared their experiences and feelings in the sessions and even presented part of their own process of self-development at the dramatherapy performance.

The boundaries between groups, and processes of social exclusion from 'us', can be renegotiated and changed as people come to embrace new understandings of 'who they are' and what they value and believe. In this way, categorisation and group process are not only the basis of stereotypes and prejudice, they also are part of the solution.

Transformations are possible

Transformation is not a quick fix; it is not, as the old Russian saying has it ... a walk across an open field…; it is challenging, difficult, protracted and frequently contested. It is about the engagement with communities and individuals whose potential needs to be released so that persons can be confident, self-disciplined and motivated to achieve a more rewarding and sustainable life for themselves and their families. In this way it is

hoped that future performers will know how to sustain their culture and their community development.

A story of transformation which is rooted in personal and biographical experiences was presented in this thesis. Such experiences are themselves incorporated into the realities of group and collective identities embodied in social class, ethnic identity, religious affiliation and gender ascriptions- all of which help make up an identifiable community, yet may also serve to divide that self-same community. The project presented in this thesis was intended to be transformative and innovatory and challenged some conventional work. It is unique in its own cultural and social context in that it is action based and deeply experiential whilst facing outwards towards an ethnic and cultural community.

In exploring dance, drama and performance as culturally shaped behavior we are opening a window on how individuals are formed and on how communities are developed and sustained. The story of dancing in Nazareth is a story of how dance and drama is also a struggle and a contest to define contemporary identities and possibilities, especially for young people who may be at risk in an uncertain world. It is at one and the same time a story of joy and happiness in the doing and making of dancing and acting, of entertaining and creating something new. It is intensely personal but can only be done in a shared and social setting, essentially for others .It demands the affirmation and recognition of 'others' and thus contributes to our welfare and well-being. No other justification is surely needed.

Table 4 Video no. 2 (Dramatherapy performance 2011) list of the scenes: from Shamshoum's thesis

Video no. 2 – Dramatherapy performance July 2011		
Scene	**Scene title**	**Issues and concepts**
	Presentation	Groupness, unity, family, happiness, love, accomplishment, strength, creativity
Scene 1	Fear	Expressing fears
Scene 2	Favourite Things	Expressing and facing fear
Scene 3	I'm Not Afraid	Polarities and differences in society/ rejection and acceptance of the different 'other'
Scene 4	In The Classroom	Teacher/ pupil struggle, frustration, control, confrontation, enjoyment, happiness
Scene 5	My Mother and I	Generation differences and confrontation
Scene 6	Good and Evil	Differences, good and bad behaviours, identity struggle, good/bad struggle
Scene 7	Good and Evil Dance	Rejection and acceptance in groups, good against evil struggle
Scene 8	In the Forest	Working together, dance and enjoyment, facing fear, defeating the 'enemy' by being united
Scene 9	Thoughts	Loneliness, being different, stress, despair, being stuck, jealousy, insensitivity, social pressure, group support, love
Scene 10	Faces	Different people, different social classes, happiness, sadness, hiding behind masks
Scene 11	Neighbours	Social classes tension, superficial society, pride, disappointment, identity struggle, social pressure, reputation
Scene 12	These Chicks	Love, care, motherhood
Scene 13	Got to get Through This	Pupils' frustration and struggle at school, learning difficulties, expression
Scene 14	Billy Elliot	Love to dance, girls' liberation, body expression
Scene 15	Somewhere Over the Rainbow	Dreams, light and hopes for a better future
Scene 16	Revolution and Democracy	Revolution against oppression, Arab world, criticism, democracy, comedy

Induction
- Working with different social groups in their different environments.
- A fine tuning process and is mostly behavioural.
- Referring individuals and small groups who showed interest and potential to Mawwal Centre of the Arts after school program.

Integration
- Bringing different children and 'others' together.
- Mainly grouping children based on chronological age.
- In few cases based on mental capacities and performance level.

Boundaries & Internalisation
- Setting up clear and strict boundaries.
- Working on internalisation of collective norms in the group.
- Family membership- obeying the rules- ethics.

Socialisation
- The processes of primary and subsequent socialisation.
- Ongoing interaction during which individuals define and redefine themselves and others. (Jenkins, 2008).

Prejudice & Stereotyping Reduction
- Reduction of stereotyping and prejudice.
- Leading to acceptance.

Creating a Sense of Belonging
- Developing a common group identity.
- Developing a sense of belonging and social tuning.

Creating a Mawwal Identity
- Creation of a common identity – ' Mawwal Family'.

Harmony
- Group interactions among members are friendly and congruous with no serious conflicts.
- Positive social interaction and pleasant environment where participants work and perform together as a group.

Transformation

The entire process leads to transformation and change:
- Personal change: such as self-esteem, self-confidence, and identity.
- Collective change: becoming part of Mawwal Family.
- Communal change: when Mawwal experience touches and changes participants' families, their own communities, friends, or relatives.
- Social change: performances touch audiences, and thus society, which leads to change.
- The personal change of different members of Mawwal through three generations brings another level of change when those individuals project this change into their own families and lives.
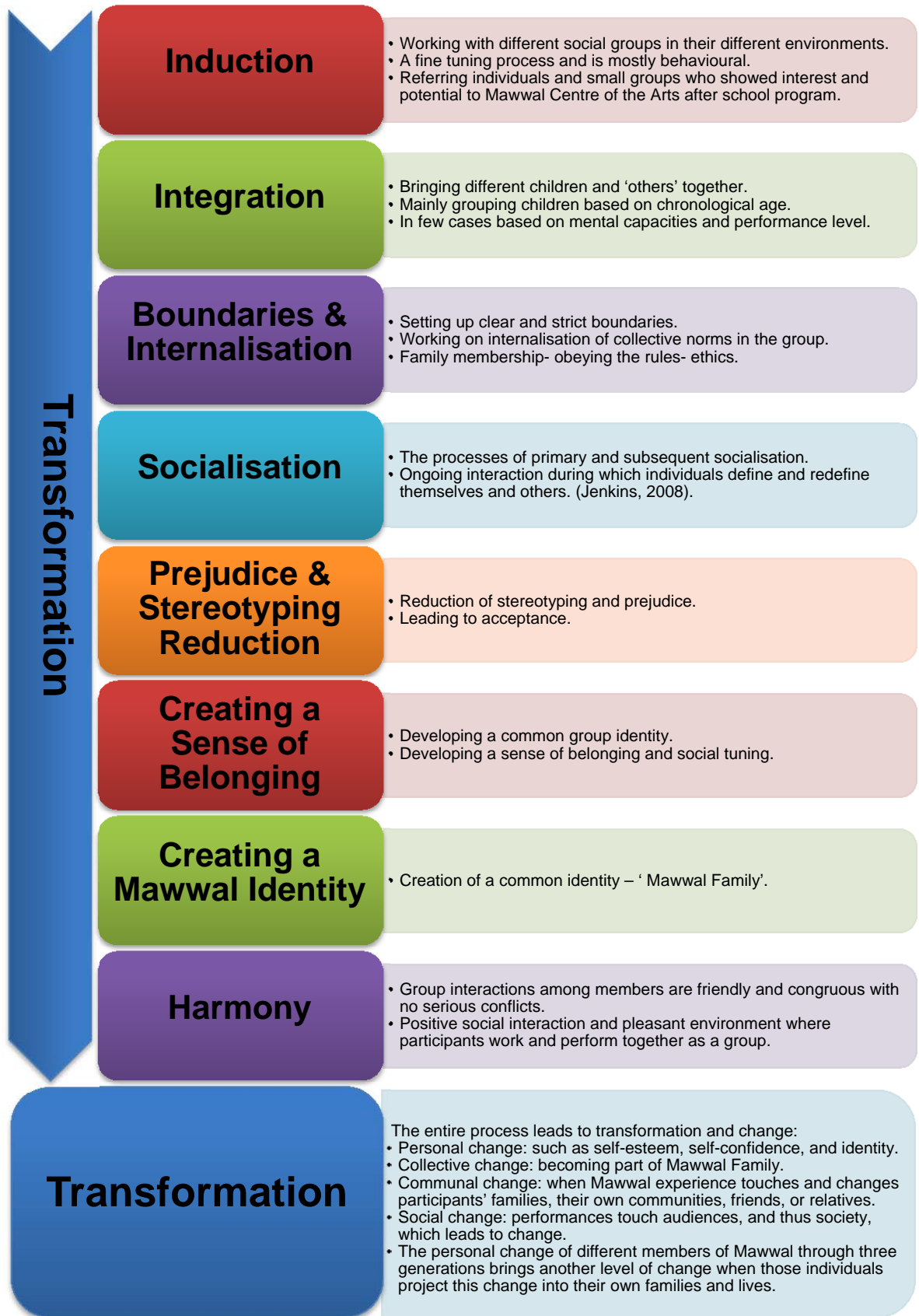
Illustration 12 Transformation process at Mawwal: from Shamshoum's thesis

Section 4:

What can real knowledge bring?

If there is a new curriculum needed, we could perhaps do worse than to remind ourselves that the demand for new knowledge and new ways of consuming it is itself not really new.

There were struggles and demands for "really useful knowledge "in earlier times (Johnson, 1981) when access to schools and universities was seriously restricted for the broad masses of working people. The need to possess knowledge which is relevant to the life of the majority is a continuing theme in the history of social emancipation and reform. It underpins our concerns with the centralisation of authority and control over schools and universities (Grossman, 2005). Democratic engagement with schooling in its wider sense therefore is a corollary of our concern with the need for a real life curriculum in learning institutions and situations, whether at schools or universities or colleges or in 'real life' communities where people live out their lives.

Knowledge and learning relevant to life and work

The sheer power and availability of computerised automation has now shifted the nature of work and leisure so fundamentally for so many people that it faces us with an existential challenge. Computerisation has narrowed people's responsibilities and removed complexity from jobs. Once upon a time, work involved some of us in meaningful task, it laid out clear goals, it set down a clear time-frame for achievements and it provided a context for meaning in communities and neighbourhoods which validated work and workers. Work may even have allowed some individuals and groups to use their skills to the utmost by being deeply absorbing and rewarding. Traditional work for many in the past, of course, involved unskilled, back-breaking and exploitative conditions which rested upon class divisions and social exclusion no longer considered to be acceptable. Modern work , for many, involves a lack of engagement in the task and even leisure and free time may be occupied by 'lazy' and aimless pursuits such as window shopping, watching TV or logging on to Facebook or endless text gazing. Carr (2015) refers to this as being 'sentenced' to idleness. This can lead to being disengaged from an outward focus and where our attention turns inwards and leads to what Ralph Waldo Emerson called the "jail of self-consciousness ''. If self-consciousness becomes self-obsession and develops into a form of technological narcissism, then we must be aware that such an unexamined life may not in fact be a life worth living, in that it may remain unfulfilled.

Knowledge workers are seeing their work infiltrated and surrounded by decision-support systems which turn the decision-making and judgement-making parts of their jobs into a data processing routine. The computer apps we use in our free time serve a similar function and they serve to separate us from the things that actually make us feel free. This is the sense of engagement and control that comes with personal and professional responsibility and the sense that we are acting on the world, intentionally and consciously to do what we wish to do, not just doing that which is imposed on us by circumstances.

We are also faced with technological unemployment where 'workers 'are increasingly and continually devalued by technical developments and a world where not everyone can benefit from technological progress. The massive growth of computers world-wide

has not led to a corresponding growth of employment, which some commentators expected it to do. Jobs continue to be obliterated by technology and today this is impacting on white collar and middle class jobs as well as manufacturing; labour is being removed from the productive processes and new jobs are frequently in low-paying sectors with little job security and low levels of skill required. The gains in wealth and productivity connected with the new technologies are going to those who own the technologies, not to the workers who actually produce the gains and operate the machines (Mason, 2015; Pickety, 2014).

It is in the personal and biographical encounters and in the intrinsically individualised experience which can be brought into conscious engagement with the task of **social enquiry** and **social action** that we find new knowledge which is capable of challenging and transforming actual, empirical 'in the world' situations. This new knowledge, it can be argued, is intensely linked to the practical involvement of the individual and it is suggested that it is transformative (rather than simply informative) of both the external context and object of research and of the individual her/himself. The biographies of the individuals, in the way they seek to overcome challenges and limitations, are testimony to the power of individual action and motivation within the context of challenging circumstances.

Reflection and reflective practice – individuals as creators of practical knowledge

This leaves us with the task of developing knowledge and skills and a curriculum which can cope with the capacities and threats presented by the machines we depend on and which can help us challenge the loss and separation of ourselves from our communities. It seems clear that we can identify a range of actions which are underpinned by critical understanding of issues and themes:

- We need as workers to have demanding tasks so we can learn thoroughly and deeply ; we have to generate critical thinking , not just have tasks done for us by the nearest software package

- Tacit knowledge , which draws upon deep understanding rather than robotic methods, is required so we can make creative and right judgements

- We need to have knowledge which encodes facts and experiences in personal and biographical memory as the basis for higher level cognitive activity

- We need to recognise that a continuously active mind and an active 'self' requires the challenge of engagement, action and feedback (Teare , 2013; Carr, 2015, p. 77)

- We need to be able to see the flaws in data and to be sceptical ; individualised knowledge has a value which can be severely under-estimated

- Automated calculations of probability (and/or algorithms) cannot and should not displace the need for judgements about social and professional purposes; our key values and commitments have the potential to be undermined by automation and we need to be consciously capable of resisting this

- We need to be aware of living in dependency on our computers and handheld phones; it is easy to become subservient to your own phone and its apps, a point argued by Carr (2015)

- There is a critical need to be aware and sensitive to the invisibility of the new technologies; when the programmes we use have become so accepted and taken-for-granted and have infiltrated our own wishes and desires we can be victims of our own internalised oppression as Herbert Marcuse (1964) pointed out to an earlier generation

- We need to value the transformative learning and knowledge that is available to us; this means supporting the struggle for new and 'real' knowledge.

The framework that is evolving and of which this paper attempts to be a part, seeks to link quite consciously the personal and biographical to the social and the communal. C. Wright Mills famously attempted this in 1959 when he articulated the view that the individual's problems, were to be understood in terms of social problems and that the self was both a product and producer of social reality (see also Furedi, 2004, p. 124). Individuals, within this perspective, always have the capacity to think critically and differently.

Collaborative and practical/practitioner learning

We believe that all forms of learning, whether formal or informal, classroom-based or workplace-based, need to incorporate within their learning methods the capacity to transfer skill and expertise between differing contexts and circumstances which are themselves often complex and contested. Learning, it has been extensively argued (Revens, 1982; Kolb, 1984; Schon, 1987; Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013), is experientially informed and it is closely related to the perceived need to change an environment. This can be referred to as educating for a social purpose. The project outlined in this paper seeks to understand the nature of distinctive learning communities in relation to work and working life and to chart something of the dynamics that sustain learning within and beyond the classroom. In this sense, it refers to 'real' learning and it challenges existing boundaries of knowledge and expertise and mutual knowledge.

The critical 'self' as learner

It is Anthony Giddens who provides us with a potential framework for conceptualising the role of the self as a reflexive agent in the process of knowledge production (1979, 1991). People are engaged in producing and reproducing their own social world and have the capacity to make choices and to act differently. According to this view they have the capacity to reflexively monitor their own actions and to rationalise these actions. They are able to engage with their own motives and with their unconscious motives.

Responsibility for oneself and for others within the constraints of culture and power are also key concepts with which the reflexive practitioner works to uncover the perceived and actual realities of experience. Giddens has used the idea of the self as a reflexive project itself in modern life, where critical engagement (i.e., learning) with the meaning and actions of one's own life is the focus of attention.

Immersion in the subcultures of work and social life by such learners is seen as a key to the generation of what Giddens (1979, p. 251-253) has called mutual knowledge. Mutual

knowledge is not co-terminus with common-sense knowledge, and in fact it is the immersion and engagement in these everyday worlds that yields the potential for mutual knowledge when that experience is subject to critical, analytical understanding. Such understanding we have suggested needs both a biographical and a social affirmation to be effective and real.

These contexts are the actual social and communal experiences of the learners themselves; they produce diversity and differentiation to a marked degree which is the basis for real and useful knowledge which is shared and is mutual.

A critical understanding of digitalisation

More and more young people in particular may be spending their time on the internet under the illusion that they are being social when in reality they are increasingly isolated and alone in their rooms. The electronic connectedness may in fact be inhibiting our capacity to make actual and biological connections with other people. Authentic companionship, intimacy and relationships may depend upon physical rather than cyber connections. It is a fact that the presence of a close and intimate physical relationship between two people is one of the strongest predictors of health, well-being and happiness. Positive social relationships, what Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013) refer to as " personal viability " for example, and which rely on the use and development of certain human qualities, are vital for the development of social and community life. This cannot be done as a virtual reality; it takes direct personal contact and engagement.

> ''Google, Facebook, and other makers of personal software end up demeaning and diminishing qualities of character that, at least in the past, have been seen as essential to a full and vigorous life: ingenuity, curiosity, independence, perseverance, daring. It may be that in the future we'll only experience such virtues vicariously…in the fantasy worlds we enter through screens.''
>
> (Carr, ibid, p. 182)

Whatever the future holds the present at least demands real experience in the real world which in turn requires knowing directly and physically those 'others' with whom we work and live. This is then a key aspect of the real learning agenda.

Conclusion

Perhaps the key unifying concept needed to bring together many of the wide ranging ideas in this paper is that of social practice, where people using reflexive techniques can generate social scientific knowledge and can incorporate it into their behaviour and thereby change the conditions of its validity. In other words, they can take some control of the conditions which shape their experience. Individuals are viewed as flexible and knowledgeable agents or subjects and not viewed as compelled to act just by material interests or by social norms and conventions. Crucially they act in relation to others, respecting and recognising differences but forging mutually beneficial associations to bring about desired and progressive change.

In modern societies, social practices are continuously revised because key institutions in society sponsor practices which aim to gain knowledge and insight into how these self-same institutions function, precisely in order to improve institutional performance. The incorporation of new knowledge is crucial to the driving forces of modernity and it is not limited to the

institutional level. There is, according to Giddens (1990, 1991), a constant interplay of the reflexive processes between the personal and social levels of experience. Both institutional and individual reflexivity can be enhanced by conscious and reflexive action and can therefore offer possibilities for social progress. It is our contention that a new professional learning programme can offer a theorised and practical curriculum for social knowledge and enquiry. This could facilitate the creation of new knowledge(s) and give people better access to the learning solutions to the issues and challenges that govern their lives. What such a curriculum actually looks like – nobody can know. It has to be invented in practice by those it impacts upon. However, some of its elements may be discerned and it is hoped this paper has indicated what such elements may look like, not least in identifying some of the issues that must be debated as part of the on-going process of learning renewal and change.

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