

ABSTRACT Chapter 2 Later life learning and development of older workers to motivate and enabling flourishing of older workers. Domini Bingham

Keywords : motivation to learn, ways to meet learning needs, later life learning and development, older workers, sustained employability, older workers' motivation, theories of workplace learning, human flourishing, critical social theory, Habermasian ideal speech situations, participation.

Motivations to learn at older stages of a career are important in shedding light on types of learning and development seen as valuable and valid to both older workers and management.

Therefore, finding ways to meet the learning needs of older workers to encourage extended working lives is pertinent. This chapter explores the major theories of workplace learning and human flourishing, workplace learning connected to lifelong learning for older workers, and sustained employability and motivation of older workers.

Links are made between workplace learning and lifelong learning and how it might be further cultivated. Definitions and participation rates in workplace learning are explored.

Participation and motivation of older workers in their own learning needs is considered.

Critical social theory is explored through Habermasian ideal speech theories, giving older workers a voice.

Chapter 2

Later life learning and development of older workers

Chapter 1 indicated that governments should work with employers on schemes to provide training throughout working lives to improve employability, increase retention and upskilling of older workers and potentially reduce their unemployment (Altmann 2014, McNair 2011).

This would motivate older workers and enable them to stay in the workforce longer which would potentially contribute to a better quality of life in later years (UNESCO 2015).

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Vignette Addressing the demographic challenge and employability of older workers in the UK

In the UK, the Age Positive Initiative set up by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP 2006) to maximise the impact of removing the default retirement age (DRA), works in partnership with business organisations to push for sustained change in employer practices towards increasing the employment and retention of older workers. Over a decade on, there is a growing momentum to encourage employers to consider the value and relevance of older workers. In September 2016, the UK Government appointed a Business Champion for Older Workers and tasked Business in the Community, a UK business-led charity, to support businesses to retain, retrain and recruit older workers. Employers across the UK are being called upon to increase the number of people they employ aged 50-69, by 12% within five years, creating employment opportunities for a million more older workers by 2022.

Theories of workplace learning

Workplace learning [also called work-based learning] ‘derives its purpose from the context of employment’ (Sutherland 1998:5) differing from training restricted to business needs (Evans, Hodkinson and Unwin 2002). Workplace learning is dynamic covering an expanding variety of elements including business and management thinking, psychology, human resources and industrial relations (Evans et al. 2002). When thinking around learning from a life course perspective, inter-disciplinary connections embracing psychological, socio-cultural and post-modern theories (Unwin 2009; Unwin et al. 2015) can deepen our understanding of theories of learning and work (Hager 2004; Unwin 2009; Unwin et al. 2015).

Two workplace learning approaches appear central to a study of older workers and their learning and development. First, a workplace learning approach that includes contextual, socio-cultural, organisational and other factors (Hager 2010). Second, relational and context-related theories, addressing learning relative to the structure and agency debate appear

significant. Models of learning which include the role of personal agency (Billet 2001), work agency (Harteis and Goller 2014) and affordances of the workplace which draw attention to those who participate in learning (Billett 2001) also appear to have merit.

Over the last few decades, theoretical understandings of learning have progressed from theories mainly derived from psychological framing where the learner was atomised, individual and human consciousness privileged (Maslow 1970; Rogers and Freiberg 1993), to more complex and multi-layered notions of learning to include adult learning, relations, communication, meaning making and identity formation. These developments represent a challenge in focus to arrive at a holistic and more nuanced understanding of later life learning than has been previously suggested (Hager 2010) and they are dynamic.

Theories of workplace learning embrace psychological, socio-cultural and post-modern thinking relating to learning and work, suggests Hager (2010). Contextual factors also play a role in workplace learning. Social, cultural, organisational and other factors, it is argued, have been hitherto underestimated in workplace learning (Baumgartner 2001; Hager 2010), and provide a platform for re-thinking the nature of continuing professional learning to better reflect how learning occurs. Furthermore, it has also been suggested that since workplace learning occurs and is embedded in workplace activity and technical and social relations of production (Billett 2001; Hoyrup and Elkjaer 2006; Felstead et al. 2009; Unwin 2009) it is affected by these factors.

The notion of a humanist orientation to learning which is independent of context and where learning is self-actualised and autonomous, as argued by Maslow (1970) and Rogers and Freiberg (1993) is rejected by socio-cultural theory. Vygotsky's theory suggests that we are not separated from contexts in which we live (1978), development for learners 'accords with a metaphor of participation' (Hager 2010: 23) meaning that we learn through relationships with others.

Evans et al. (2002) also point to dominant literature concerning workplace learning theory, as being broadly in a Vygotsky vein, encompassing situated cognition (Lave and Wenger 1991), or activity theory (Engestrom 2001). Progressing notions centred on socio-cultural theories, Evans et al. (2002) argue that workplace learning literature omits wider social, economic and political factors which would have more resonance to modern public sector and private organisations which are similarly affected by globalisation, government policies, and

increasing managerialism, forming part of the complexity of what it is to be part of, and to manage modern workplaces. Significant in the socio-cultural paradigm, is the relational aspect of learning, being related and inter-dependent, as well as individual (Billett 2001).

Relational and context-related theories of learning

In what I consider relevant to exploring whether older workers are marginalised when decisions are made with regard to who gets to participate in development, Billett proposes a workplace learning theory which addresses personal agency, arguing for models strengthening relational inter-dependencies, between individual and social agency, between the engagement of the worker, and affordances of the work environment (Billett 2001, 2004, 2008; Billett and Smith 2006). Billett (2001:57) accentuates the subjugation of the individual in socio-cultural theories, where the structuring of 'learning experiences in workplaces is directed towards sustaining practice'. Complex negotiations about knowledge use, roles and processes occurring between imposed expectation and norms by organisations to further continuity and survival, are set against learners' preferences and goals, 'essentially as a question of the learner's participation in situated work activities' (Billett 2004:312).

This development perspective is culture-based influencing what skills people obtain, when they can participate, and who is allowed to do which activities (Miller 1993). Touching on inclusion of who is in, and who is out (Slee 2010), it draws our attention to workplace conflict over who participates, relevant in exploring older workers' marginalisation.

Furthermore, as workplaces exist to produce goods and services (Rainbird et al. 2004), they are restricted and affected by a broader productive system and the politico/economic realities they operate within (Ashton 2004; Unwin et al. 2007; Felstead et al. 2009; Unwin 2009). Also, organisations are affected in how they conduct business, time scales, risks taken and opportunities such as who is afforded/chosen for development in a time of cost cutting (Unwin 2009). This is relevant to many sectors affected by increasing competition and the requirement to innovate which has increased exponentially and where, in some countries, public sector organisations receive dwindling government subsidies. As workplaces are sites for learning as Unwin suggests, to improve learning means improving workplace conditions and what happens within workplaces, asking how 'we might make greater use of their (employees) potential in order to benefit employers, individuals and society at large' (Unwin 2009:4). This brings in the role of contextual factors and mutual benefit, pertinent in

considering to what extent opportunities for development are available, and to whom it is offered in a rapidly changing environment.

Enabling human flourishing in the workplace - theoretical lenses

Billett's reflection on the capability of practitioners, in particular, social practices and their related knowledge domains (Hager 2010), aligns with Sen's work on human flourishing (1993). Sen's work draws on Aristotelian views of what it means to have a good life, '*eudaimonia*', or human flourishing, where the role of politics is to promote well-being or *eudaimonia* for the populace (Sen 1993). Sen's work operates, or, is *activated* in context. Billett and Sen view the capability of the practitioner, that is the function of the whole person operating in context, an approach that is not humanistic but socio-cultural, embedded in context. It is not based on rational choice, but on preferences.

Humanistic theories of learning (Maslow 1943; Rogers 1969, 1983; Rogers and Freiberg 1993), and Knowles' concept of andragogy (1978), view learning as a function of the whole person, being person-centred. Humanistic theories of learning encompass both cognitive and affective domains where self-determination is central. Humanistic psychology is based on beliefs that humans are truly able to decide what they do in their lives, although in reality, this may be difficult to achieve. Workplaces can thwart self-actualisation, curtailing expression and activation of capability, as environmental factors can impede (Sen 1993). Workers are not necessarily free to decide how their learning needs should be met.

Sen's work provides a link to deprivation and exclusion in the workplace, in this case to learning and development. However, there are unintended consequences in that 'giving equality in one space frequently leads to inequality in other spaces' (Sen 1992:117) and is open to critique that measuring intangible capabilities for an individual or society are considered difficult (Nussbaum 2003) to effect.

Habermas's theoretical work (1987) on knowledge is relevant as it aligns with Sen's capability approach, being linked to structure, and in particular, how spaces might be created to enable older workers' learning. Habermas's (1970, 1987, 1990) critical social theory offers potential in analysing modern workplaces from critical and pragmatic perspectives supporting the role of older workers, including access to equitable training and development.

Habermas's writing around emancipation considers how older workers could negotiate what are sometimes unyielding rationalised organisational structures and processes, through spaces where their voice can be heard. This is very pertinent, as an effect of an instrumentalist approach to management and organisations has resulted in rationalisation being the mean ends norm of chasing profitability or targets in contemporary workplaces. So, distribution of life chances of individuals within, or by organisations, can be safely ignored or minimally accommodated through minor or token adjustments in the push for the accepted goal (Adler et al. 2007).

Through a lens of human flourishing, opportunities for development and advancement are anticipated and imagined, staff and management join in a relational and dialectic space to re-negotiate, respect and advance older workers' contributions (when not always valued). Presenting an argument for this linkage, an overlap between equality and age is seen. Moody's studies of critical gerontology drawing on Habermas's work (1971), challenge predominant views of ageing arguing a type of 'emancipatory knowledge' offering 'a positive vision of how things might be different or what a rationally defensible vision of a 'good old age' might be is absent' (Moody 1993:xvii). This view turns ageing on its head, with older people staking a rightful claim in the workplace, re-envisioning learning spaces for older workers and career progression.

For Habermas (1971:290), human interests circulate around three 'knowledge interests': technical control relating to labour activity, but humans should not be diminished by it; interest in mutual understanding linked to interaction in the lifeworld and communicative action; and emancipation from domination in 'the sense of being in control of the conditions under which one lives' (ibid). Where the first two interests are linked to labour and language, the interest in emancipation is linked to power. Habermas examined possibilities to survive in increasingly rationalised societies, proposing a reconceptualisation of modernity not as a negative factor but:

The development of communicative rationality, practical reason (Kant), the freeing of morality from its religious base (Durkheim) and the emergence of the mature individual (Mead and Kohlberg). (Rasmussen in Rasmussen and Swindal 2002:232)

Teasing out notions of emancipation, Chapter 3 explores the findings of a study into a higher education workplace which considers whether Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action (TCA) (1984), as a counterpoint to rationalisation in society, could be applied to micro-levels

of the workplace, specifically older workers' development opportunities. Habermas (1990) viewed dialogic spaces as a mechanism for workers' agency in rationalised organisations, and in this case, spaces for dialogue for older workers to be agentic. Discovering 'voice' in lived experiences of older age, we can begin to consider what an emancipatory perspective would be for older workers in contemporary workplaces. Habermas's work (1971, 1987) on rationalisation and modernity, the replacement of traditions, values, and emotions which motivate society, to ones based on rational and calculated ideas, were influenced by Weber's 'iron cage' where humans lose their individualism, trapped in a rules-based rational world (Finlayson 2005:56,140).

For Habermas, rationalisation is problematic, its remedy being rationalisation of communicative action through social interaction, leading to communication free from domination; free and open communication (Habermas 1970:290-292). The TCA (1984) viewed humans not colonised by the 'lifeworld' of the system, but free to be capable of critical thinking and political action. The TCA is defined as 'actors in society seeking to reach common understanding and to coordinate actions by reasoned argument, consensus and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals' (Habermas 1984:286), implying a groundswell of similar, communitarian thinking or norms. Based on pragmatism and communicative action, rather than critique of modernity, implying a critical view of the technical rationality, it creates and allows pre-conditions for a paradigm shift on rationality (Englund 2006). Habermas saw its realisation through 'ideal speech situations' (ISS); the importance of linguistic communication in coming together seeking agreement on important issues, through informed discourse in a sphere of public debate, such as education (Englund 2006). Rasmussen discussed Habermas's reconceptualisation:

Language as a communicative discourse is emancipatory (p18) and his task is to rehabilitate the project of modernity by reconstructing it viz a viz the theory of communication, that is communicative action, communicative reason (p4). (Rasmussen and Swindal 2002:12)

Thus, the TCA can be viewed as a theory of integration (Englund 2006), having potential to make Habermas's work relevant to workplaces, providing a theoretical basis for a view of development and learning, transcending bureaucracy and market driven climates. Chapter 3 provides an example of the potential for this theory of integration in a discussion of the findings of a study into a UK university.

However, Habermas's theories have been critiqued as wide-ranging, difficult and over-complex (Finlayson 2005), for an over-emphasis on the language and of being unduly theoretical and systematic (Terry 1997). Furthermore, Ritzer (2012) suggests that forces in the modern world which distort the free speech process, preventing an emergence of consensus must be overcome to realise Habermas's rationalised, ideal society. Nevertheless, it is also argued such criticism is mis-conceived; the theories provide 'original, insightful and thoughtful responses to alienation and social fragmentation afflicting modern society' (Finlayson 2005:58). Habermas's work is functional not moral or ethical. Its purpose is functional, as colonisation 'thwarts the good functioning of the lifeworld depriving society of the benefits of communication and discourse found in shared meanings and attitudes, feelings of belonging, social order and other areas' (ibid.:58). Whether Habermas's implementation and practice of ISS was tested is unclear. Despite criticisms, ISS related to organisations could shed light on an exploration of older workers in modern society, approached from a pragmatic perspective, to align the systems structure and the everyday lifeworld of older workers to achieve an engaged, active and fulfilled workforce.

Barnett (2012:3), imagining future possibilities for twenty-first century universities but also of relevance to many contemporary workplace settings, discusses Habermasian views of a university reflective of ideal speech situations. Although critical of Habermas's lack of insight of modern universities' complexity, Barnett proposed a re-design of the university encompassing a 'multi-planar' approach, reaching into and opening up spaces for intellectual collaborative thinking, and imagining of possibilities. Pre-conditions include an ethos of trust and communicative openness, where 'something approaching a Habermasian ideal speech situation is logically entailed, and where hierarchy and boundaries need to be temporarily set aside' (ibid.), supporting requirements for Sen's flourishing vectors *in situ* for flourishing to occur in all staff, including older workers.

Workplace learning and connection to lifelong learning

Exploring how much older workers' learning takes place is valid as workplaces are important sites for learning in knowledge based economies, and there is evidence that age matters in opportunities given for professional development and training, with those under 30 most likely to benefit (SSDA 2007). As ever more learning is through work, finding out what types

of workplace learning offer a 'best fit' for older workers and environments they best learn in is important for flourishing, and can be mutually beneficial to workers and employers.

It is argued that the increasing tendency for individuals to fuse the working and non-working parts and spaces of their lives (Felstead et al. 2009, Field 2006) raises questions as to the extent to which 'learning at, through, and for work' is embedded in lifelong learning as opposed to being separated from it' (Unwin 2009:2). Similarly, others argue for expanded notions of work-based learning reflecting learning at work, for work and through work, arguing work-based learning expands and develops wider capabilities, self-esteem and professional identity (Evans, Guile and Harris 2010:159) encompassing career progression either within the same organisation or externally.

Recognising the conjunct between individual and social structures and models of learning, Hodkinson et al. (2004) consider that links between workplace learning and lifelong learning are present when there is acknowledgement that people can be identified as being both separate from their workplace and incorporated into it. They propose people's view of learning might take on a lifelong learning perspective, drawing attention to how identities and individual biographies are significant in learning, as people have lives outside of work and lives which pre-date their working spaces. This shapes how people view themselves in their learning and how they approach it, suggesting a role for individual growth which may not be restricted by or reduced by social constructs, such as age.

Models of workplace learning include learning with and through work (Billett 2010, 2001, Unwin 2009) and work-process knowledge (Boreham et al. 2002). Billett (2001, 2010) makes the case for understanding learning as participation, where learning is proposed as being interdependent between the individual and the social practice. Billett (2004) argues that considering learning as participation in work is important when lifelong learning policies and practices (OECD:1998) pass the responsibility for maintaining currency increasingly to workers. Participation in learning becomes ever more crucial proposes Billett (2001), when for the majority of workers, the workplace represents the only or most viable location to learn and/or develop vocational practice. In what is a complex theoretical field, this model argues that lifelong learning can occur through and at work, emphasising the role of work practices and learning, including informal learning (Billett 2004).

Boreham et al. (2002) too consider that the social aspects of learning support the building /creation of work-process knowledge, defined as knowledge that an employee needs to work flexibly in modern workplaces. Knowledge comes from the collective memories of the individuals in a community of practice, and in the artefacts and technology within them. Part of what it means to have work process knowledge is to be able to work collaboratively, where members of a community share knowledge in the practice of their work to carry out tasks and working roles. Language enables workers to construct knowledge in the workplace, learning perspectives are carried forward in language that reflects organisational culture structure (Boreham 2004). What appears critical then is how the workplace is managed, accentuating the role of cultural and organisational structures in understanding processes of organisational learning.

Workplaces offering employees learning are important sites not just for learning, but in mediating flourishing in the immediate environment and society, extending learning to life course perspectives. Workplace learning is fundamental for individual learning, but more widely, where individuals are part of a learning society. According to UNESCO (Faure et al. 1972), a learning society is viewed as the involvement of society as participant and actor in education and whose community can engage in critical dialogue and actions (Coffield 1997). The UNESCO report 'The Treasure Within' (Delors 1996) positioned education as central to a nation's economic development, considering that education should extend beyond formal learning into informal learning, expanding on the notion of lifelong learning. The OECD Knowledge Management in the Learning Society (2000), in developing the 1972 UNESCO framework (Faure et al. 1972), advocated for a learning society and the contribution that lifelong learning can make to human development.

Definitions of lifelong learning are myriad and contested, recognising learning may be conducted over a lifespan (Field 2006), and deliberate learning over a person's lifetime (Knapper and Cropley 2000). Given the relative shortness of compulsory schooling it can be argued much learning is in the workplace. Two competing paradigms of lifelong learning have been driven by UNESCO and OECD over the last 40 years. One, a wider holistic view of human development, the other a functionalist view of human capital. The Learning to Be Report (UNESCO 1972) emphasised the right to fulfil individual potential, personal development through lifelong education. Social inclusivity amidst 'the variety of nations and

cultures, of political options and degrees of development' (ibid.:v.) was recognised as a key principle in the report. However, lifelong learning has become part of the economic and political discourse of global capitalism for increasing competitive performance, positioning people as human resources, discarded and retrained if their job is redundant (Jarvis 2001). The emphasis is firmly on economic rationales where 'lifelong learning from early childhood education to active learning in retirement will be an important factor in promoting employment and economic development' (OECD 1997:13). Nevertheless, there is mutual benefit and value between learning for personal development and learning for organisational benefit to realise organisational imperatives seen in the shaded part of the overlapping circles in Fig 2.1, which could convey spaces for ideal speech situations. Spaces could be provided for learning through the concept of lifewide learning (Skolverket 2000; Clark 2005) which considers that learning occurs in different places simultaneously and is helpful in widening out where learning can occur. The term lifewide learning (Jackson 2008), embraces the many sites for learning that occur in a learner's life at any point in time with work being a very important context but not the only one (ibid.). Lifewide learning 'acknowledges the shift from traditional stable structures of learning to more fluid, transient, and technology-enabled structures of the 21st century' (Jackson 2011:xii), which offers opportunities for holistic learning at work.

About here. **Fig 2.1: Focus of learning in the workplace**

Barnett (2010) proposes that there is learning across an individual's lifeworld at any moment in time in learning spaces that may be completely different from one another. Critically, these learning experiences will be marked by differences of power, ownership, visibility, sharedness, cost and recognition. Crucially, both lifelong and lifewide learning imply a shift in responsibility for education and learning from the public to the private and civil spheres (Skolverket 2000). Nevertheless, it is argued that it is still the responsibility of government and society to create good conditions for lifelong and lifewide learning, particularly by promoting educational equity (ibid.), which has inferences for older workers who are not always first in line for development. Similar to lifelong learning, lifewide learning is connected to both formal and informal learning and requires the capabilities to plan, manage and self-regulate own learning and development. These capacities will be key to being an

effective and agentic learner where personalisation, collaboration and informalisation (informal learning) will be at the core of learning in the future (Redecker et al. 2011).

In connecting lifelong and workplace learning, the OECD (Kallen and Bengtsson 1973) proposes that the concept of 'recurrent education' entails regular participation across the life course to nurture career and skills development. Morgan-Klein and Osborne (2007:2) suggest that this concept is related 'to human capital theory which emphasises the value of investing in education and training since this is assumed to bring returns in economic development and growth for individuals and for society'.

Links to lifelong learning are present if it is accepted people are separate from their workplace and incorporated into it (Hodkinson et al. 2004). Lifelong learning plays a role in transforming lives. For Dewey, individual growth is intrinsic in how society should view its members, and growth has a moral dimension (1938:114). Allied to Dewey's moral dimension, what differentiates 'doing' from 'learning' is that the latter changes what we are by changing our ability to participate, belong and negotiate meaning (Wenger 1998:226), highlighting the transformative and moral dimension to learning, its role for flourishing in society and in the workplace. The England and Wales National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) (now the Learning and Work Institute) enquiry into the future of lifelong learning recognises this transformative power, and recommends a society where learning plays a full role, being a human right (Schuller and Watson 2009). The enquiry supports enhanced training and education for ages 50-75. Access to up to date skills for older people, is also called for (OECD 2006; Tikkanen and Nyhan 2006).

However, concepts of lifelong learning and learning at work are problematic due to scepticism about how much learning occurs. Workplaces as learning environments are evident in research and policy but rarely discussed relative to lifelong learning (Unwin 2009). With workplaces crucially important sites for learning and access to learning (Evans et al. 2002), inherent is the recognition of power differences and who gets to participate in this learning. These restrictions limit the political and philosophical moral ideals of UNESCO's Faure report (Faure et al. 1972); reframing the original ideal to lifelong learning, dominantly linked to training and new skills, for rapidly changing workplaces (Matheson and Matheson 1996; Bagnall 2000).

Power differentials and workplace climate can work for or against older workers, providing expansive or restrictive learning environments and motivation to engage in learning. Learning can be limited through workplace structure, power, gender relations and culture (Rainbird et al. 2004). Belatedly, age as a limiting factor, has been recognised. Bringing the two concepts of older workers and lifelong learning together (previously separate discourses), Tikkanen and Nyhan (2006) draw on empirical research across Europe, Australia, Japan and the U.S, stressing that the demographic challenge affects everybody in society as everyone eventually grows old, so age-management, lifelong learning and training measures that anticipate people's needs at different life phases, needs implementing in all workplaces. However, for lifelong learning to become a reality for older workers 'ordinary workplaces must become primary places of learning', which again raises important issues about employers' roles in promoting lifelong learning (ibid.:3).

Participation and motivation of older workers in learning

Nevertheless, Hager (2004) argues that pockets of 'good' lifelong learning are still found in reduced circumstances or 'alienation' (Dewey 1916). Dewey recognised workplace constraints, proposing that by viewing learning differently as a process rather than product, it was possible to hone meanings about socio-political aspects of work extending beyond workplaces, sharpening an educational experience of working, connecting to workplace learning. Work and lifelong learning are 'occupation as becoming' as workers place high value on satisfaction obtained from work giving a strong sense of personal development. This provided intrinsic satisfaction, separate from work and workplaces that may reduce motivation (Dewey 1916), and potentially relevant to older workers. If work, as Dewey suggested, is 'creativity' rather than 'labour', it is possible to see lifelong learning *through* and *at work* possible. Such learning emphasises the role of work practices and learning, including informal learning, becoming ever more crucial when, as mentioned earlier, participation in workplace learning is sometimes the only location where workers can develop their lifelong learning, and ability to flourish in work and beyond (Billett 2001).

Providing appropriate training and development opportunities over the life course will be crucial in maintaining healthy and productive lives; encouraging lifelong learning and importantly participation can lead to increased employability for the 50+ cohort. Conversely, it is this same cohort that is most unlikely to participate in work, possibly falling to 0% by

2025 for the 65+ age group (Hyde and Phillipson 2014). A policy brief commissioned by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, bringing together research on equity and employment for those disadvantaged in the UK labour market, indicates participation rates are lowest and fall steepest for ages 60-69 years (McNair 2011), with serious inferences for this older segment of the workforce in the UK. Additionally, poor employability is a key challenge in increasing employment rates of those 50+ (ibid.). Adopting age-friendly employment policies and practices to reverse the negative effects of older people on public finance can 'convert the process of population ageing to one of being an opportunity for society and older workers' (OECD 2006.:8). Cedefop's EU commissioned (2006) overview of contributions from scholars in Europe, Australia, Japan and the US into older workers and lifelong learning indicates that age-friendly workplace learning practices should include improved access to up-to-date skills, employment services and improved working conditions (Tikkanen and Nyhan 2006).

Findsen and Formosa (2011:117) argue motivation always underpins participation, raising two questions. What motivates those for later life learning? How might age affect workplace motivation? The findings of the NIACE UK Adult Participation in Learning Survey (NIACE 2015), an annual survey series, provides an overview of the level of participation in learning by adults with a breakdown of who participates and who does not. The survey adopts a broad definition of learning, including formal, non-formal and informal learning. From a poll of 5,000 adults aged 17 and over across the four UK nations, it appears a fifth of adults (22%) were learning at that time, with around 41% having taken part in some form of learning in the previous three years, although a third of adults (33%) had not participated in learning since leaving full-time education. Although the 2015 survey indicated that overall participation in learning had increased slightly after remaining the same for the previous three years, 'there has been little variation in the overall level of participation since the survey began in 1996 (ibid.:1).

The findings of this same study indicate that engagement in learning in the UK is unevenly distributed and is determined by social class, employment status, age and prior learning. Older age groups are less likely to participate in learning, with a decline in participation for those aged 55+, with only 31% of those aged 55-64, 20% of those aged 65-74 and 12% of those aged 75+ considering themselves as learners (ibid.:4).

The most commonly cited reasons within the 2010 National Adult Learner Survey (BIS 2012) for not learning are cost (58%), lack of time (42%), and inability to fit learning around job (29%), or family life (25%) (2010 National Adult Learner Survey (BIS 2015)). The 2010 survey which covered England only, conducted 4,647 interviews with 16-24 year olds not in continuous full-time education and those aged 25 and over. Uncovering motivations to learn, respondents were also asked to consider what would motivate them to take part in learning. Three in five (62%) were motivated by the prospect of learning something new and two in five were motivated by improved job prospects and income (mentioned by 42% each). Motivations for learning were closely related to life stages. Respondents aged 16-39 were particularly motivated by enhanced job prospects (promotion and higher income), while those in the latter stages of their working life wanted to be able to improve their performance at work for their own job satisfaction. People aged 20-49 wanted to learn to help their children, while those aged 50 and over placed greater value on learning new things, meeting new people, and confidence building (ibid.). Conversely, non-participation in learning had negative implications for this grouping's employability, wellbeing, resilience and furthering of intellectual possibility (ibid.:2012).

The powerful relationship between learning and work is evident across the NIACE survey (BIS 2012). Adults in work are more likely than those outside of the workplace to take part in learning. Nearly four-fifths of learners surveyed say that they took up learning for work-related reasons (ibid.).

The economic prosperity of countries also depends on people becoming more skilled, innovative and capable through continuing to learn. Thus, it appears critical to understand what types of workplace learning participation might be mutually beneficial to increase employee engagement and organisational wellbeing. Costley and Critten (2012) surveying graduates, suggest that high level thinking skills are needed in future workforces and developed through applying learning and reflecting on real work issues. Practically, these skills can be developed through researching aspects of their workplace, developing key skills for understanding research statistics, improving presentation skills, and conveying learning to others. Developing such skills sets are also relevant to older workers.

What motivates older workers?

Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) argue that ageing and adult development represent important but largely unexplored influences on work motivation. Their integrative framework for the use and effectiveness of different motivational strategies with mid-life and older workers in a variety of jobs located motivation in the broader context of life-span research which emphasises four intra-individual change trajectories over the life course (loss, gain, reorganization and exchange). This framework for learning suggests work circumstances affect work motivation aligning with socio-contextual learning theories. Practically, Kanfer and Ackerman argue work motivation may be improved by organisational strategies and managerial practices taking account normative patterns of adult development (*ibid.*). This argument was reinforced through a meta-analysis of 24 empirical and nine conceptual studies (those sampled were all from Western developed countries) showing most age-related factors can impact negatively on motivation for extended working lives, most significantly declining health and career plateaus, which should be addressed through human resource management policies and practices including ergonomic adjustments and continuous career development (Kooij et al. 2012).

Theories of work motivation (Herzberg 1959; McClelland 1961; Vroom 1964) may be limited in understanding older workers' motivations and organisation practices, tending to focus on intrinsic rewards related to learning and emphasise extrinsic rewards around pay, promotion and recognition. Conversely, Kanfer and Ackerman's study found that learning and extrinsic rewards are often constrained for older workers leading to them being less valued (Kanfer and Ackerman 2004). Furthermore, knowledge utilisation, helping, collaboration and enhancing positive affect, seen as motivators, are not addressed in either theory or practice (*ibid.*) partially borne out by some evidence of a lack of enthusiasm of the over 55s in learning new skills (*ibid.*). This lack of enthusiasm shown was consistent with a meta-analysis of 418 empirical studies relating to age stereotypes of older workers in the US indicating that older workers were less willing to participate in training and career development (in contrast to Greller's (2006) findings). However, the findings disproved other common stereotypical views of older workers (Ng and Feldman 2012:824). Moreover, a comparison of national Austrian labour force data with EU labour force survey data (ELS 2003, 2008) tracking participation in training indicated closeness to retirement led to a decrease in training participation but chronological age was not related to training across the

age groups sampled, leading to difficulties in finding a straightforward relationship between training and ageing (Schmidt 2010).

It appears that what motivates older workforces is multi-layered, requiring playing close attention to the ‘complex interplay of educational level, occupational status, company environments (provision of time and cost incentives for the employee as well as sector-specific differences in training needs) and individual cost-benefit considerations’ in terms of how decisions are made to participate in training (Schmidt 2010:211). Care needs to be taken in not falling back on negative stereotypical views of older workers to decipher what is really occurring as the influences of stereotypes and their role in workplace culture is significant to understanding how organisations treat different groups of workers (Unwin et al. 2015). Rather more, we should direct attention to the ‘heterogeneity of older workers and the organisations in which they work’ (Schmidt 2010:211) where a more holistic response to workforce development is required which may not be about counting days participating in training or the number of qualifications a person obtains (Unwin et al. 2015).

A UK-wide study of 1615 participants aged 18-55+, showed the perceived importance of learning new skills, which is different to a lack of enthusiasm, fell with age compared with 18-24 younger age groups (AAT 2015)¹. However, even though the perceived importance fell corresponding with age, it does not necessarily follow that it would be lower amongst those aged 55+. The research suggests this is probably because once a person reaches the top of their career they feel that additional skills will add little job security. An additional factor is that often those researched had been in their current occupation for several decades and may feel that they have mastered the most important skills. This mind-set leads to a lower uptake of training. Contrastingly, aligned to the aforementioned 2010 National Adult Learner Survey (2012) and the findings of Kooij et al. (2008), life transitions were a motivator for later life learning. Work-related reasons included sustaining employment, making existing work more enjoyable, facilitating career change, providing greater financial security and gaining job specific skills or qualifications (Findsen and McCullough 2006). Empirical studies show the importance of training needs being relevant as older workers are more critical consumers of

¹ A YouGov online survey conducted for AAT with a total sample size of 1615 adults, in February 2015. Covering all areas of Great Britain, across all vocational and professional sectors, the results were weighted to be representative of all adults in Great Britain (aged 18+).

training products (Cedefop 2008), with 'buy in' difficult to achieve if no value or benefit was seen.

These empirical studies are helpful in moving towards some understanding of what motivates older workers' participation in learning as they rely on large scale nationally representative samples, which encompass older workers' experience of learning across a range of sectors.

Summary

If as argued, workplaces are significant for lifelong learning and as sites of learning, how might we make the most use of older workers' potential to benefit individuals and employers in wider society, thereby recognising learning is a human right and education a form of democracy (Dewey 1916)? Obtaining an answer means exploring what learning older workers value, what learning employers value and how any differing views on what should be offered be reconciled between these two groupings, which is taken up in the findings of a pragmatic higher education workplace study in the next chapter.

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