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Every year **August 21** is celebrated as **Senior Citizens Day** to recognize achievements of the more mature representatives of our nation. The day provides an opportunity to show our appreciation for their dedication, accomplishments and services they give throughout their lives. It is not known how many people really celebrate this day and even if they do, are they doing it with reason? This is not an isolated one. Many international and national days are celebrated or observed as a matter of routine by a few in which the general public very rarely show interest, may be they are ignorant of the importance of such events.

Human ageing is not only a biological problem, but also affects human society. The number of the aged is increasing at a tremendous pace all over the world due to advancements in medical and health technologies, health care, control of infectious diseases and better nutrition. This has resulted in increase in the levels of life expectancy, reduced death rates and decline in fertility levels. One must know that the proportion of the elderly in the general population is steadily growing. At present, developed countries have undergone change to become aged societies. There are some countries like Sweden and the United Kingdom where about a third of the population is of persons aged 60 years or more. In Scandinavian countries like Japan, the expectancy of life at birth is over 75 years. Almost all European countries and many others including the USA are also very close to this demographic trend. The phenomenon of ageing and the issues related to it are not primarily confined to developed countries alone. These are emerging concerns in developing nations also, may be having a smaller ramification.

In this context, India is no exception. At the time of Independence, the undivided India had a population of a little over 350 million. Expectancy of life at birth was just 32 years, the female longevity being even less. Within a span of mere five decades, the demographic situation has markedly changed. India's population has gone up manifolds and life-expectancy has almost doubled. Better medical facilities and health care, as well as low fertility have made the elderly the fastest growing sections of society. With the number of the elderly on an increase at a rate faster than the general population, the greying of India has become more visible than ever. India's elderly population aged 60 and above is expected to increase from 71 million in 2001 to 179 million in 2031 and further to 301 million in 2051.

A study of the Indian social system indicates the very high and respectable position of the elders. It was indicative of the gratitude of the younger generation towards their parents and grand-parents for bearing and rearing. It was also related

to the inheritance of property of the elders. Another rationale for the respect and regard for elders was their wisdom and experience. Unfortunately, urbanization, migration and industrialization and westernization have severely affected value systems. The fast changing pace of life has increased the woes of older persons and it has been compounded by crumbling of the erstwhile joint family – the natural support system.

The family as a single unit is likely to change. The old-age dependency will increase more quickly than the decline in child dependency. It will require a great deal of adjustment at the family level to accommodate and care for the elderly. While daughters and daughters-in-law are replacing their role as caregivers to their parents by working outside the home, a new challenge for elderly care will be posed. Day care centres, geriatric hospitals, and old-age homes are likely to play a major role in the living arrangements for the elderly.

I am of the opinion that protection for the old should come in a natural way. Both the old and the generation next should understand the issues and problems. Old people are not like old clothes which can be thrown away once they are worn out. Life is not like a ladder which never grows but it is like trees which always grow. Hence, as long as one lives, he or she has the right to live with respect. Younger generation should always think of the love, affection and guidance given by their parents. The first step of life is always guided by the father/mother. Hence, why not the children extend their hands for the last step of their parents.

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Abstract

Perspectives on temporality in education usually rely on a taken-for-granted view – learning and education are often seen as temporal phenomena and ‘objective fact’ but without much attention paid to time itself. Mostly, time is used implicitly but imbedded in pedagogical contexts. According to this argument, a distinguished conceptualisation of time beyond chronological or chronometrical perspectives is still missing in the study of education. A theory of temporalization and temporalism in (adult) education and lifelong learning does not exist. The idea of this paper is to identify and clarify temporal phenomena in adult learning and education. It explores and illustrates different temporal theorems such as collective, political, social and individual habituations of time, and concludes with a vision of learning as a temporal oasis against the acceleration and dynamic of change.

Keywords: dynamic, modernity, adult learning and education, time, temporalities

Perspectives on temporality in education ‘usually rely on a taken-for-granted view’ (Alhadeff-Jones, 2017, p. 33) – learning and education are often seen as temporal phenomena but without much attention paid to time itself. Mostly, time is used implicitly and imbedded in pedagogical contexts such as schedules, didactical-arranged sequences, or within the political norms of lifelong learning. In other words, time is often viewed in education studies as an ‘objective’ fact. In his comparative analysis, Cowen (2002) argued that fields of educational studies or educational theories are differently sensitive to time but most treat time as a routine working concept and, therefore, ‘undertheorize concepts of time’ (Cowen, 2002, p. 413). According to this argument, a distinguished conceptualisation of time beyond chronological or chronometrical perspectives is still missing in the study of education. A theory of

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[This article is based on James A. Draper Memorial Lecture delivered by the author on September 12, 2018 at International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE), New Delhi]

temporalization and temporalism in (adult) education and lifelong learning does not exist. This is different from other disciplines such as the sociology, philosophy or physics of time or chronobiology (cf. Schmidt-Lauff et al. 2019).

In order to understand the interrelations between time and learning, in a very first step, learning can simply be defined as 'action in time'. Learning always takes time (chronometrical) and is imbedded in different stages along a lifespan (chronological; cf. Dolch, 1964). Additionally, educational concepts and theories are historically contextualized (cf. *Journal History of education*). For example, educational policies and strategies – such as lifelong learning – are legitimised by modernisation (era of postmodernity) and the accelerating changes of our global knowledge society. Educational institutions and programmes promote lifelong and lifewide learning opportunities (formal and informal; 'from cradle to grave') to ensure continuous learning. Today, each subject has to react to and adopt transitions throughout their life course. Biographical learning transitions are discussed as 'de-standardised' projectuality (Leccardi, 2013) with limitation to linear development and concerning hereby unpredictable futures.

The idea of this paper is to identify and clarify temporal phenomena in adult learning and education. It starts, in the first section, with general observations inspired by James Draper's lecture concerning the 'Dynamic Mandala of Adult Education' (1992/2016). The second section of the paper explores and illustrates different temporal theorems such as collective, political, social and individual habituations of time. The article concludes with a vision of learning as a temporal oasis against the acceleration and dynamic of change.

Adult Education Today – An Indexing by James Draper's Memorial

I am going to begin this paper by discussing James Draper's controversial work on the 'Dynamic Mandala of Adult Education'². The catchword *Dynamic* together with the metaphor of adult education as a *Mandala* promises inspiring insight for a temporal related analysis and sets the starting point for a theoretical conception of time in adult education (cf. Schmidt-Lauff 2008; 2012; 2017). In order to analyse temporal contingencies in our modernity, and open a way to critically rethinking learning, Draper outlines two key concepts important to such analysis: *dynamic* and *future*.

Both phenomena are carved out briefly, but one finds in his introduction a broad definition of Mandala, which 'encompasses a world view' of adult education, the 'realities of today and a vision of the future' (Draper, 2016, p. 156). Through this, he points out the necessity of understanding adult education in 'its *broadest* perspective' (ibid., p. 156), which means contextualized between the present situation ('today') and the expectations of an upcoming time ('future').

In the next chapter, he speaks about learning as ‘a process whereby, through one’s sense, an individual comes to understand, interpret, interact with and the [!] adapt to one’s environment’ (ibid., p.157). In Draper’s work, adapting to one’s environment means not only reacting to the given situation (the here and now) but ‘to vision the future’ (ibid. p. 157). For him, ‘continuing education begins with a vision of the future’ (ibid., p. 160). He goes further and predicts: ‘In fact, if we lose sight of our vision of the future, we diminish what we do today’ (ibid. p. 160). Present and future are reciprocally interdependent: the temporal direction we are moving into is not a linear forward from the present into the future (e.g., what we learn today will be useful for our life, work, and family someday in the future). However, visions of the future give our present its meaning (the past is still not mentioned).

Learning connects the individual to the world: through learning, the individual gains knowledge, opens new horizons and can become a more reflexive and ‘autonomous person able to act in the social environment and to give reasons for what he or she does’ (Fuhr, 2017, p. 10; Schmidt-Lauff 2017). Learning in its ‘broadest perspective’ (s.o.) emphasizes ‘emancipatory’ developments and comes near to the classic, humanist concept of *Bildung*³ as a lifelong endeavour. Coming back to James Draper’s implicit temporal aspects within the ‘Dynamic Mandala of Adult Education’, one can find that: ‘A mandala, frequently expressed visually in a circular form, is intended to present a world view, representing a wholeness, a schematized view of a harmonious cosmos. It presents both an outward view of one’s universe or surroundings, and one’s place within it, but also an inner focus representing the effort to reunify and harmonize the self.’ (Draper, 2016, p. 156). A temporal interpretation may concern:

- a) by the word ‘circular’ the non-ending, continuous nature of learning as fixed in the programmatic of lifelong learning and
- b) the non-linear, circular and spiraling nature of learning as, for example, failing process, detour, loop-way.

Accordingly, this perception of learning aims first at a professional responsibility and awareness of ‘the challenge of preparing people for an unknown future’. Draper additionally states that ‘we can no longer predict what knowledge or practice people will need in the future’ (ibid., p. 160). Second, one has ‘to distinguish between the learning process and its outcome’ (ibid., p. 160). His distinction between learning as process and its results as ‘products’ is important in modern times, where time is a limited resource and should be treated carefully (s.u.). For him, ‘the “process” is the journey of the learning itself’ – there is a *present* value, but it is not steerable. ‘[The process] includes the methodologies used and reflects the value of self-discovery’ (ibid., p. 161). From this, there is a coming (*future*) ‘intended outcome’ (ibid., p. 161).

By this short indexing, it becomes visible that adult education and thinking about learning (concerning James Draper) is full of temporality:

- a) Importantly, *time is implicitly mentioned* in terms such as ‘circular’, ‘continuity’, ‘processes’, and ‘vision’ etc.
- b) Hence, *temporal effects and impacts on learning are important* (e.g., disregard of the present; (over)emphasis of the outcome / future) *and are not unfolded or elaborated upon*.
- c) Sometimes, *time-dimensions are explicitly mentioned* (e.g., as past, present, future, today, yesterday, morning, etc.).
- d) But, *time is mostly used or reduced to chronometric observations*, for example, in large scale studies (OECD ‘Education at a glance’⁴) as time spent for learning (measured as countable minutes/hours/years) or as time spent in classrooms for teaching.

Based on these observations, two questions arise: what does time in our modern, highly dynamic knowledge society mean for adult learning and education? And, how might rethinking the way we relate to time, by rethinking temporal constraints and contingencies—as the title says – produce a fundamental reassessment of the way we conceive of adult learning and education? As the German philosopher Rüdiger Safranski (2015) states, ‘If time only means what clocks can measure [...] the answer to all our questions about ‘What is time?’ could be easily given: Time is not more than a countable, objective factor of occurrence. But it seems to me that the proper meaning is merely not touched.’

Time and Temporality

Time is directly interwoven with one’s existence and experience. ‘Moreover, modern societal structures and cultures are characterized by a high degree of complexity with regard to time-related phenomena.’ (Schmidt-Lauff, 2018, p. 107).

The Oxford Dictionary defines *time* as the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present and future regarded as a whole. We use clocks to measure the *quantity of time* and we divide time into units such as seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. On the other hand, one recognizes another modality of time, the *quality of time*. One minute can seem very long while one is waiting and very short when one is busy with concentrated work. Time is, therefore, a relative and relational concept that ‘depends on a frame of references’ (Schmidt-Lauff / Bergamini, 2017, p. 147) such as situation and context, personal experience, personal behavior, social and cultural practices and norms etc.

Temporality, by contrast, encompasses all phenomena and modalities related to time while also taking into account the variable characteristics of time in terms of history and culture as well as individual interpretation. Temporality is the generic term used to express the concept of temporalization (cf. Schmidt-Lauff, 2018). It is therefore an analytical term and category and less affected by historical change.

Adult Education and Learning Today – Temporal Theorems

In educational science, the connection between time and learning is a matter of principle, with many facets, and sometimes contradictory (for an overview, cf. Schmidt-Lauff, 2012). Six theorems are outlined here.

Theorem 1: All learning occurs in time

Learning always takes time⁵. Learning something new, trying to understand, to question, to reflect, etc., as part of the learning process is neither a trivial experience, nor one that is easy to create or simply a teaching outcome (every professional adult educator can tell many stories about this). Käte Meyer-Drawe, a German *Bildungs* theorist, writes of getting ‘carried away’ with learning but also about the invisible in every learning endeavour (Meyre-Drawe, 2008, p. 29). From an educational point of view, she states that human learning will ultimately remain a mystery: ‘Learning can deny itself to me, even when I am motivated. The matter does not disclose itself to me. Learning, forgetting and remembering do not merely constitute a maximization or minimization of the volume of stored thoughts and information. They are specific articulations of our horizon of experience, which are not entirely in our hands’ (ibid., 2008, p. 29).

Theorem 2: Learning is always acting in time

Learning means ‘acting’ in time, be it in a historical context (epochal era), in a biographical context (the individual lifespan of a person) or in didactical structured sequences (planned time sequences, synchronizing classes). The challenges of cultivating learning over the lifespan as a whole contradict the notion of learning practice as a ‘smooth process’ or a ‘smart’, straightforward approach. ‘While interferences, difficulties and other inadequacies are unpopular because of today’s ideal of smooth, high-speed adaptation in a stress-free environment’, an educational theory of learning ‘ascribes much importance to time-consuming irritations’ (ibid., 2008, p. 15). A resulting ‘professional time-sensitive approach’ for teaching or didactical arrangements (cf. Schmidt-Lauff and Bergamini 2017) will always accept time-consumption. High-quality learning time allows detours, breaks, stimulates reflection and defines learning as a special form of transformation and development.

Theorem 3: Time as a countable resource

Usually time is seen as a neutral factor entity, based on solid facticity and expressed in a quantified form of measurement (e.g., hours, minutes, clocks, calendars, timetables). Our modern understanding of time defines time as a dimension which is, as a neutral quantity, controllable and steerable. This idea of time grounds itself in the possibility of an economisation of time (critical Schmidt-Lauff and Bergamini 2017). Since industrialisation in the 18th Century, the western world defines time as a

scarce resource ('time is money'). This entangles learning too: a.) as an individual, one has to spend or better 'to invest' time for lifelong learning, and b.) in all our decisions individuals are asked to be efficient – setting priorities, being output-concentrated. Nevertheless, personal development and evolution cannot be forced to speed up (as the proverb says, 'A flower will not grow faster if we pull.').

This leads back to James Draper's idea of differentiating between the 'process' and the 'product' or 'outcome'. It is obvious that in an economized understanding of time (time is money), learning-processes are not valued very highly – the outcome remains the important aspect. The moment of learning is not enough. The pleasure of it in itself is not considered valuable, rather, the *future* outcome will give value to it (through the use of our knowledge – acting competently; getting a job, etc.).

This might be acceptable, but two factors can be mentioned critically: a.) by valuing the process instead of only the result, learning becomes worthwhile as transformation, as transitional movement between knowing and unknowing. And b.) for people who need a longer than average time to learn, who need more guidance and support, the orientation towards the future could cause specific learning problems and stress.

Theorem 4: Time is of great symbolic significance

In a society in which time is of great symbolic significance, as Norbert Elias states (1988), social or individual phenomena (of disadvantage) can be characterised by temporal attributes. In our society of acceleration, the 'slow ones' are those who have been socially left behind. A school system that is timed around curricula, classes by age, using chronological time standards to evaluate learning progress has the distinct features of an educational time management tool. Alhadeff-Jones talks about 'the power of school's temporal regularities' and criticizes the norm⁶ that students have to move 'from grade to grade in a predetermined sequence – without having the freedom to choose their trajectory' (2017, p. 57). Deviations or contemplation are quickly dismissed as a waste of time.

Studies such as PIAAC⁷ show that educational disadvantage (e.g., functional illiteracy) could result from negative school experience or a resistance to didactically standardized learning (cf. Dolch, 1964). Critical modern pedagogics award education a 'moral authority' within which a main task is to create a 'time utilization ethics' and capitalism habituation to time (Göhlich and Zirfas, 2007, p. 108).

Theorem 5: Habituation of time (e.g., acceleration) through education

In modernity, changes in societal and social time structures are associated with questions of identity formation. Hartmut Rosa, for example, argues that 'the temporal structures and horizons of society [...] are bound to impact on the temporal structures

of the formation and preservation of identity' (Rosa, 2005, p. 237). Without explicitly addressing the concept of learning, Rosa –when referring to the acceleration society – speaks of the 'daily identity work' subjects have to perform and which, more than any other phenomenon, constitutes a 'break between *classical* modernity and what may be labelled *late-* or, depending on one's viewpoint, *post-modernity* (ibid., 2005, p. 237; emphasis in original). The temporal phenomenon of an (perceived) ever-shrinking present, and the consistent notion that the future is already there, results in a feeling of being rushed. Dynamics and the pressure to change and to adapt to changes (e.g., by learning) are no longer limited to individual changes, to a one-after-the-other or continuous reshaping. Rather, they encompass radical reconstruction and profound transformation. The ensuing destabilization of both individual conditions of life and collective orientation principles explains why (multi-) optionality ('anything goes') is neither mandatory for, nor appealing to, everyone. The challenge of discontinuous continuities is also growing increasingly important for the practice of adult education.

Time-slots for critical reflection require slow maturation; transformation via learning needs time and calls for a 'specific form of didactical deceleration' (Dörpinghaus and Uphoff, 2012, p. 115) against procrastination. In subject-oriented learning theories, 'learning conditions vital to critical cognition never emerges as a prompt reaction (to a stimulus)' (Meyer-Drawe, 2008, p. 126). The moments of receiving, processing and reflecting knowledge cannot be short-term instances of updating information (adaptation).

Theorem 6: The agenda of lifelong learning sets temporal norms

The agenda of lifelong learning follows the idea of using life-time efficiently and appropriately in adaption to the accelerated changes of our modern world and the loss of certainty (see Theorem 5). Lifelong learning is thereby reduced to infinite acts of adaptation. This, in turn, places individuals under constant pressure to learn, unlearn and relearn.

Besides this critical reflection on lifelong learning, it is even more interesting to consider what role adult education is playing here. Adult education may work as catalyser within these processes of lifelong adaption and therefore of acceleration, or, as provider for open spaces and time to calm down, to concentrate and to contemplate. The latter is needed for learning as transformation and is related to reflection, to thinking about meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. 'Where educational tracks are explicit and strong, the individual has little or no opportunity to veer from that track once it has been assigned' (Settersten 1999, p.49 in Alhadeff-Jones, 2017, p.61). For adult learning and education, this means that in 'such a scenario, the likelihood of "second chances", whether to make up for past mistakes or to change earlier decisions seems slim' (ibid., p. 16). This leads back to the beginning of the paper and James Draper's idea of adult education as dynamic Mandala. In his book *Rhythms of Emancipatory Education*, Alhadeff-Jones (2017)

stipulates: 'In the contemporary cultural context, one of the key challenges appears for adults to be able to develop the capacity to negotiate and pilot the temporalities and rhythms of their own life [...]; what Alheit (1994) calls "biographicity". In order to learn to negotiate the crisis, changes and transformation occurring throughout a life, one has to be able to connect past, present and future. [...] The challenge is not just about "time management", and not how one can manage one's daily activity. The challenge is about learning to interpret the way one relates to time, the way one perceives and interprets the heterogeneous temporalities of one's own life as a whole, and beyond one's own individual lifespan, the way one integrates learning made by parents and ancestors, through intergenerational learning' (2011, p. 397).

Adult Education and Learning as 'Temporal Oasis' – A Vision

Time is not only of great importance for our experience of everyday life in modern society. One could also state that modernity itself is defined by a specific temporality (Koselleck, 1989). At the same time, education and learning became crucial under modernisation and the rise of a highly dynamic knowledge society, leading to the overarching, globally spread and deeply anchored programmatic of lifelong learning. If we follow Draper and his idea of Adult Education in 'its broadest way', it might be conceived not simply as a more accelerated adaptation to change. In contrast, learning towards the future could harmonize the three dimensions of past, present and future. The past relays collective traditions and personal experiences. The present means now and today. The future, as a kind of vision, could be seen as expectation, always unknown in the end, unforeseeable and unpredictable. Learning, therefore, means more than orientation towards the future – it might connect and unite us to our past and present. Our history teaches us that there is no longer a simple belief in future as (positive)progression. In a complex world, progress is never a linear transition or easy improvement. Our experience of time globally becomes more and more a temporal alienation which suggests a 'shrunk present'. The time span of familiar continuity keeps shortening. In a knowledge society, one particularly learns to cope with tomorrow. Presupposing future effects of social changes as current facts increases the pressure on the present.

Adult education and learning might be able to generate learning as a counterpart to or against acceleration. This generates perspectives distanced from the general meaning of using time 'efficiently'. Instead of using the future exploitability of learning as a yardstick, learning is given a value related to the now, the moment and the present.

This opens up a perspective for periods of time when the joy of learning may (re) emerge. As studies have shown, learning, especially adult learning, should be characterised by unburdened time explicitly devoted to learning (Schmidt-Lauff, 2008; Schwarz et al., 2019). Time for processes in which learning can take place should not continue to be further dispersed between work and life. What is needed, apparently,

is time unburdened by the pressures of daily life, which in that respect may be understood as an 'oasis of deceleration' (Koller, 2012, p. 120).

This puts the emphasis on learning in a specific form; it gives learning a meaning of its own (in that it does not focus exclusively on outcomes); and it does not reduce the moments of receiving, processing and reflecting knowledge to short-term instances of updating information. Learning takes on a different temporal quality if there is time explicitly devoted to learning. If 'things slow down' and learners have the opportunity to 'immerse themselves in their learning', 'valuable learning time' will unfold (Schmidt-Lauff, 2008).

The complexity of time and temporality in adult education and learning is immense and even growing, but it is challenging and might be understood as an *invitation* to take time to consider variations, scenarios and utopian ideas as different entrances to (learning towards) the future!

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(Footnotes)

² The 2016 published paper is a revised version of a Roby Kidd memorial lecture James draper gave in 1992.

³ To point out one important aspect, how to understand the concept of Bildung: 'Bildung has worth in its own right. While Bildung can entail vocational learning, it should not be limited by utilitarian purposes and be only vocational' (Fuhr,2017, p. 10).

⁴ Available: <http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/> [17.12.2018]

⁵ In contradiction, the idea of digitalization and e-learning as learning 'everywhere and at any time' denies this general principle and suggests implicitly 'one click and everything is in your mind, learned'.

⁶ By the end of the 15th century, in our Western Society and European Context "time schedules had already become a widely implemented formality in schools" (Göhlich and Zirfas, 2007, p. 108). Knowledge and skill development is defined within clear steps of learning, understanding and knowing. The functional and symbolic aspects of time in School education shall balance the intergenerational inequalities. Regulation belongs to age norms and the idea of synchronizing it in 'classroom'-settings.

⁷ PIAAC (***Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies***) initiated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and is steered by the PIAAC Board of Participating Countries. Over thirty countries, including Germany, are participating in the second cycle (start 2018) of PIAAC. PIAAC aims to assess basic skills of the adult population in an internationally comparable way. The skills assessed – literacy, numeracy, and adaptive problem solving – are considered to be essential for successful participation in modern society and to be a foundation for developing numerous other, more specific, skills and competencies. PIAAC provides information about the extent to which the adult population in the respective participating countries differs in terms of the basic skills assessed. In addition, it examines factors associated with the acquisition, retention, and maintenance of these skills, and sheds light on their effects on social and, in particular, economic participation. Available at <https://www.gesis.org/en/piaac/piaac-home/> [17.12.2018].