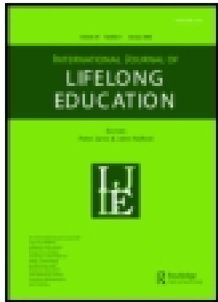
This article was downloaded by: [Allan C. Lauzon]
On: 29 April 2013, At: 13:11
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



International Journal of Lifelong Education
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tled20

Youth and lifelong education: after-school programmes as a vital component of lifelong education infrastructure

Allan C. Lauzon [a]
[a] SEDRD,University of Guelph , Canada
Published online: 29 Apr 2013.

To cite this article: Allan C. Lauzon (2013): Youth and lifelong education: after-school programmes as a vital component of lifelong education infrastructure, International Journal of Lifelong Education, DOI:10.1080/02601370.2013.792879

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2013.792879

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Int. J. of Lifelong Education, 2013
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2013.792879

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Youth and lifelong education: after-school programmes as a vital component of lifelong education infrastructure

ALLAN C. LAUZON
SEDRD, University of Guelph, Canada

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

This paper argues that after-school programmes need to be considered an essential part of lifelong learning infrastructure, particularly in light of the dominance of the economic discourse in both lifelong learning literature and the initial schooling literature. The paper, which is based upon existing literature, begins by providing an overview of after-school programmes, including their historical development. This is followed by an examination of the changing discourse in the lifelong learning literature and the initial school literature. The argument is made that the narrowing of lifelong learning and initial schooling perspectives represented by economic determinism leads to an increase in those on the margins. The youth development literature is then reviewed with a focus on positive youth development, arguing that after-school programmes with a positive youth development focus can meet the needs of those disengaged youth who are marginalised by the formal educational system. The Fusion Youth and Technology Centre is then presented as an illustrative case of an after-school programme that has a positive youth development focus. This is followed by a discussion of after-school programmes and the role they can play as part of the lifelong learning infrastructure.

Introduction

> In the emerging heterogeneous global society where job demands and basic life course and lifestyle decisions are not preconfigured, adolescents will need to acquire the motivation and skills to create order, meaning and action out of a field of ill-structured choices. Individuals will need the capacity to exert cumulative effort over time to reinvent themselves, reshape their environments, and engage in plentiful undertakings. A generation of bored and challenge-avoidant young adults is not going to be prepared to deal with the mandatory complexity of life and take on emerging challenges of the 21st century.
>
> R.W. Larson (2000, p. 171)

After-school programmes (ASP), which provide recreational and nonformal education and learning opportunities for youth, play a valuable role in

Allan C. Lauzon is a professor in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph. Current research projects focus on rural youth, education and afterschool programmes, the role of colleges in supporting small and medium rural enterprises, and social innovation and social enterprise development. Correspondence: SEDRD, University of Guelph, Guelph, N1G 2W1 Canada. E-mail: allauzon@uoguelph.ca

© 2013 Taylor & Francis

developed economies and have the potential to play an even larger role, particularly in the context of lifelong education. Durlak et al. (2010), in tracing the history of ASP, argue that in developed economies ASPs arose earlier, in response to historical changes in the labour force and formal schooling system beginning in the late nineteenth century. As they note, the decline in child labour, coupled with compulsory school laws, created more free time for children. At the same time there emerged a belief that more structured play was preferable to unstructured play left to the whims of the children and youth. Consequently, many ASPs began to develop structured programmes, framing their mission in the context of enhancing children's academic and social adjustment. The desire and need for ASPs continued to grow throughout the twentieth century as a consequence of maternal employment. By 1955, 38% of mothers with children between 6 and 17 years of age were employed in the workforce, and current estimates suggest 78% of mothers are now employed (Durlak et al., 2010). Durlak et al. argue that it is the rise of two-income families, along with the emergence of the phenomenon of the single-parent family, that has intensified this need, as there is a supervision gap between the time at which school ends and the time at which parents return home from work. The rise of the child development study movement, which raised concerns over the safety of unsupervised children, and research linking unsupervised children to poor developmental outcomes were noted at the same time. We have seen continued growth in ASPs, as highlighted by Dietel (2009), who maintains this growth is evidenced by the funding provided to ASPs. For example, he notes that in the United States, federal funding has grown to more than one billion dollars per year: California alone spends over 550 million dollars and has over 6.5 million school children participating in ASPs. Clearly these programmes, despite being ignored for the most part by the research community (Alvarez, 1994; La Belle, 1981) are, or should be, of significant economic interest and hence, in an age of reduced government spending, of considerable political interest. Furthermore, recent research suggests a relationship between programme participation and positive outcomes for youth, particularly those who may come from disadvantaged economic backgrounds (Dawes & Larson, 2011). In the case of economically disadvantaged youth, these programmes may be instrumental in helping them expand the scope of future options open to them. As Shieldrick and MacDonald (2007, p. 594) state in their description of the exclusion of youth: 'Social networks of peers and kin were powerful in shaping the way young people perceived and acted upon choices open to them.' For some youth, these networks are not positive forces in helping them to see the options available to them. ASPs and the relationships that are established with programme staff and other youth can help youth see the other opportunities that they may choose; these relationships may provide alternative visions of what is possible for them and for their lives, particularly in the case of those learners who have become disengaged from learning in the formal education system.

Field (2003, p. 1), quoting the European Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, writes: 'Lifelong learning is no longer just one aspect of education and training: it must become a guiding principle for participation and provision across the full continuum of learning contexts.' Durlak et al. (2010, p. 286), in the context of children and youth, characterise this as an 'ecological set of influences that promotes young people's development and well-being,' which includes all

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

organisations and institutions that impact the development of children and youth. This reiterates La Belle's (1982) argument that there is a need to link various modes of learning and education together, and this needs to be understood in the context of lifespan development, including ASPs. Given this, it is my contention that ASPs must be considered and valued as part of a lifelong learning system; ASPs may foster significant learning and development, especially for those youth and children who may experience alienation from the formal educational system, and this may shape more positive developmental outcomes. For example, the main focus of contemporary ASPs, as documented by Durlak et al. (2010), is to provide children and youth between the ages of 5 and 18 with structures and opportunities to develop and build competencies and to foster their growth and development while providing a safe and supervised space. In short, ASPs focus on short-term and long-term physical, social, personal and/or social outcomes. Clearly there is a diversity of programmes which vary in terms of context, mission and goals; however, most ASPs are intended to be more than suppliers of child care and/or simply recreation—they are programmes that promote the growth and development of young people. These programmes, particularly if they have an explicit positive youth development focus, can lead to increases in pro-social behaviour, academic achievement and peer acceptance, while decreasing negative behaviour such as violence/aggression, school disciplinary issues and peer rejections (Durlak et al., 2007). Durlak et al. (2007) further argue these changes result in youth following what can be construed as a more positive developmental trajectory. The ability for youth to realise these benefits requires a high degree of motivation on their part. As Dawes and Larson (2011) argue, it is not necessary for the youth to enter the programme highly motivated: through the process of engagement they become motivated; the challenge is to get them in through the door. They further argue that the higher the youths' intrinsic motivation and engagement, the deeper their learning. Part of engagement—as noted by Ord (2009), who draws on the work of John Dewey—is the necessity of experiential learning; youth need to be engaged in learning in meaningful ways that promote reflective behaviour, promoting growth and health through reconstructing experience. As Ord (2009, 498) writes, 'the educative process and growth are synonymous and importantly both involve the transformation of experience and a reconceptualization of one's relationship to the world.' Jensen (2005) suggests that this form of learning is effective for youth, as it remains close to the real-life issues and concerns of the learner and not only addresses cognitive aspects of learning, but also provides and promotes interaction among the cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning. This form of learning engages the youth in their entirety and does not fragment them; in many cases, it is existentially meaningful learning. The development that happens as a consequence of ASPs can then often impact and enhance the youths' engagement and performance in the formal educational system as they reconceptualise their relationship to the world.

In this paper I argue that ASPs are a vital and important part of any lifelong education system. I begin by examining the changes in lifelong learning discourse, followed by a discussion of education and, in particular, how education—like the lifelong learning discourse—has become closely tied to the economy, how this has diminished its other, more humanistic objectives and the differential impact this has had on different classes of learners. This is followed

by a discussion of youth development with a focus on positive youth development, after which, as an illustrative case, I provide an overview and description of an innovative ASP called Fusion Youth and Technology Centre. Then, using the illustrated case and the arguments presented previously, I discuss how ASPs can contribute to lifelong learning, particularly for those youth who become disengaged from formal learning. This is followed by my conclusions.

The changing discourse of lifelong education

Centeno (2011) has maintained that lifelong learning has become a concept of premiere importance in educational policy and entrepreneurial discourses. Griffin (2006) argues that while the concept of lifelong learning and education now has a substantive history, the meaning of the concept has changed over time. He argues that what once was a holistic and humanistic concept has now been subverted and is viewed through a human resource development lens whereby lifelong learning is focused on human capital formation to serve an increasingly competitive global marketplace. These shifts in our understanding of the meaning of lifelong learning and its purpose have, ironically, been a vehicle for greater inequality, whereby learning opportunities among classes are changing, with those who are wealthier and more highly educated having increased opportunities for learning across the lifespan while those who are less educated are left to flounder (Field, 2003). This problem is further exacerbated as governments move away from being providers of education to being promoters, looking to the marketplace as both a more efficient and a more effective means of delivering lifelong learning (Lee & Friedrich, 2011). Briton (1996, pp. 29, 35) in many ways captures the ethos of these changes when he writes:

> The proposed solution: "free" the market of social obligations, "liberate" individuals of their collective responsibility, subjugate justice to "individual free will," sanction "open competition," "rationalize" the lifeworld, and jettison all notions of equity in favour of an all-encompassing commitment to "efficiency." […] "Freedom" becomes merely an absence of economic constraint, "equality" an opportunity to "compete," "liberty" the abrogation of social responsibility. "Efficiency," the master signifier of the New Right, is elevated from a means to enhance productivity—itself a means to improve general welfare—to an end-in-itself.

This leads Lauzon (2000) to conclude that lifelong learning no longer concerns itself with the development of the citizen or civil society, but simply with preparation for the workplace. Even graduate education, the penultimate educational experience, is now cast in terms of training and vocational development (Lauzon, 2011). Lauzon (2000) further argues that what is under discussion is not really lifelong learning, but is better characterised as lifelong training. Medel-Anonuevo, Oshako, and Mauch (2001) and Lee and Friedrick (2011) suggest we can see these changes reflected in the difference between UNESCO's *Faure Report* (1972), which emphasized the development of humane individuals and communities, and its *Delors Report* (1996), which focuses on training and retraining to better enable individuals to adapt to a changing job market.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Bagnall (2000) argues these changes are the consequence of the increasing dominance of the discourse of economic determinism, whereby 'the value of education and learning are reduced to—calculated and constructed as—assessments of their contribution and cost to individual, local, national, regional or global economic well-being' (p. 21), leading to the vocationalisation of all education and, consequently, of lifelong learning. Bagnall further writes that this 'creates an individualization of educational responsibility, whereby the duty to succeed in education and to use it to further one's own welfare are seen increasingly as matters for the individual, not for the state' (p. 22). This is a product of an emergent enterprise culture and the idea of the entrepreneurial self (Peters, 2001). Thus business and the idea of enterprise become central to lifelong learning (earning). As Peters notes,

> The code words 'enterprise' and 'enterprise culture' are major signifiers in this new discourse, which emphasizes that there has been too much emphasis on social and cultural objectives and insufficient emphasis on economic goals in our education system. Henceforth, we must invest heavily in education as a basis for future economic growth by redesigning the system so that it meets the needs of business and industry. (2001, p. 66)

As Peters goes on to highlight, this constitutes the 'revival of *homo economicus* based on assumptions of individuality, rationality and self-interest' (p. 68) as the drivers of this discourse. Lifelong learning is increasingly becoming lifelong training and is intended to serve the interests of the elite through a focus on training across the lifespan to develop skills and competencies that meet market needs and demands. The humanistic vision of a more inclusive and humane world that once served lifelong learning is being replaced by a more instrumental lifelong learning for the marketplace that is increasingly creating a world of haves and have-nots. The rise of the entrepreneurial culture, the entrepreneurial self, and its affiliated ideology comes at the expense of the have-nots—under the delusion of equality of opportunity for all, when the playing field is skewed in favour of those who are most privileged.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Initial education

As we can see from the above, there has been a fundamental shift in the lifelong learning discourse. And while lifelong learning has often been synonymous with adult education, there is a need to consider lifelong learning across all learning contexts—including schooling, or what is often called initial education (Belanger, 1994; Field, 2003). Field (2003) makes this point when he argues that schooling is a form of initial socialisation and must be understood in the larger context of learning across the lifespan; the success or failure of children in initial education will set the context for how they interact with learning opportunities across their lifespan. Failure to be successful in initial education is likely to make the individual highly vulnerable to the vagaries of poverty and unemployment across their lifespan, as the marketplace becomes increasingly competitive, demanding and ruthless. Understanding this is becoming increasingly important given that education, once cast as a public good, is now being cast as a private

one (Bagnall, 2000) and, as Centano (2011) notes, individuals are increasingly responsible for the updating of their own skills and knowledge in order to remain employable and competitive. This is problematic, given that the one thing we know for sure is that those with more education are more likely to seek out additional formal and nonformal learning opportunities. Hence a youth's success in initial education can lay the foundation for what his or her life is to become (Belanger, 1994; Medel-Anonnuevo et al., 2001). And, as noted previously by Field (2003), lifelong learning has become a vehicle for creating greater inequality and widening the income and cultural gap between the classes. As Shildrick and MacDonald (2007) maintain, initial schooling can severely damage a youth's learning identity, and this becomes more likely with the changes and shifts in education in response to economic determinism. Thus the initial schooling experience may lay a foundation of lifelong learning, or may lay a foundation of increased marginalisation across the lifespan.

In this section I propose to examine the changes in schooling and their differential impacts on learners and subsequent outcomes.

Diepstraten, du Bois-Reymond, and Vinken (2007) argue that the institution of education is intended to provide maximal benefits to society, but since the 1980s, maximal benefits are being increasingly equated with economic benefits. This is congruent with Davies and Bansel's (2003) argument that all aspects of behaviour are now cast in economic terms, including learning and education, premised on the assumption that security and prosperity are linked to market solutions and the continuous growth of the economy. This has led, according to Diepstraten et al. (2007), to the economising of learners and learning psychology, and this is congruent with what was previously described as the rise of entrepreneurial culture and the entrepreneurial self. As Bartlett, Fredrick, Gulbrandebsen, and Murrillo (2002) conclude, schools increasingly exist to serve the economy. These authors further argue that as a result of preoccupation with the relationship between education and the economy, those issues that schooling had considered an important part of the educational mission—character development, the function of a responsible citizenry and the development of a more just society—have been marginalised, leaving the economy as the central concern of public education policies and systems in developed economies.

As a result of the emphasis of the economy at the expense of other educational goals, the very practice of education has changed. For example, Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) argue that one of the consequences is increased emphasis on standardised testing to better compare national educational systems, which is then used as an indicator of a competitive economy. And despite the intention for this to make educational systems more efficient and effective, it has, in many ways, had negative consequences. Bartlett et al. (2002, p. 2) state that 'the radical expansion of testing reduces education to rote memorization of basic facts and standardized outcomes, rather than creative exploration of ideas and construction of knowledge'; Morch and du Bois-Reymond (2006), meanwhile, argue that knowledge is redefined in the context of competencies and qualifications intended to meet labour market demands. Bartlett et al. (2002) further argue that these shifts in the educational system are intended to boost national economic performance and, in doing so, serve the interests of those who benefit most from economic growth—the elite. Given this, they argue that the case is

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

then made that it is the business community who are best able to guide and further develop educational systems. As former US Xerox Chairperson David Keane stated (quoted in McMurtry, 1998, p. 180), 'business will have to set the agenda… a complete restructure driven by competition and market discipline, unfamiliar ground for educators.' Bartlett et al. (2002) argue that these changes in the educational system have disadvantaged certain groups, in particular working-class and minority groups. Morch and du Bois-Reymond (2006) also point to this when they argue that within the public school system, there is increased emphasis on the individual for being responsible for his or her success. This is reflected in the belief that the best way to solve societal problems is through individual biographies. Davis and Bansel (2003) describe this as producing entrepreneurial actors—highly individualised, responsibilised subjects who are responsible for their own lives regardless of their life's context. This is problematic, as Bynner (2005) notes, as it is premised on the assumption that all youth have the necessary resources to navigate through this phase of life: in fact, some do not, and consequently their needs may be overlooked. This viewpoint fails to account for the life circumstances of youth and how this might impact school performance, and while this has negative consequences for youth, I would argue that it can also have negative societal consequences.

Morch and du Bois-Reymond (2006) have emphasised that despite the rhetoric of equal opportunities for all youth, a 'private school' often develops within the public school that privileges children from upper socio-economic backgrounds through special opportunities and attention received from adults. This often marginalises certain groups of students—those students whose values and life experience are not represented in the dominant discourse and curriculum—and can lead to them becoming disengaged. When disengaged learners were asked, as part of a study, why they were disengaged, they cited the school's indifference to them as individuals (which is ironic, given the emphasis on individualisation) and said what they studied was irrelevant and not connected to their life in meaningful ways. Furthermore, they reported that they were unable to influence their education in positive ways in order to have their needs met (Morch and du Bois-Reymond, 2006). Brook (2007) argues that there is a need to recognise differences between groups of youth and acknowledge and accommodate the complexities of their lives beyond simply being wage earners if we expect them to be 'successful adults.' The consequence of not accommodating the diversity of students and their needs is educational failure and, ultimately, increased social exclusion across all domains of life. As Bynner (2005) has noted, prior to the 1980s there were 'good jobs' for the unskilled, who could earn a reasonable livelihood, but now the labour market is bifurcated between low-paying, temporary work and highly skilled professional work. Bynner (2005, p. 377) writes:

> Until the 1980s failing to get qualifications was no hindrance to getting work in Britain, because the labour market absorbed virtually all such unqualified young people into the larger number of deskilled jobs that existed then. In the modern labour market, opportunities for the unqualified and unskilled are more limited, they face the prospect of 'patchwork careers' characterized by part-time and casualized jobs interspersed with periods of unemployment.

He continues in his description of the futures of these disengaged learners, describing their lives as characterised by '[e]arly marriage followed by divorce and single parenthood among the young women, or often failure to achieve lasting partnership at all among the young men' (p. 378); this constitutes, he argues, a social fracturing which was not as prominent 20 or more years ago.

What, one might ask, causes some learners to remain engaged and others to disengage? Morch and du Bois-Reymond (2006, p. 31) found a

> precarious relationship between participation, motivation, and biographically relevant learning: if one of those links is weak, the chain will break sooner or later. For disengaged young people their learning chain at school broke because they found no way to influence their learning environment favourably to their needs, and they lost or never acquired the motivation to learn the formal curriculum because they did not feel it mattered, either to themselves or to society at large.

While there have always been learners who have been marginalised in the educational system, for a variety of reasons, the rise of entrepreneurial culture, the entrepreneurial self, and the 'economizing' of education is facilitating the widening of the margins while increasing their density. As Guerin and Denti (1999) noted, increasing numbers of students are being pushed to the margins of the educational system. Wortherspoon and Schissel (2001) have argued that the public education system has often been guided by contradictory purposes. As they argue, on the one hand it is expected that the education system will be responsive to its economic mandate, focusing on conformity, responsiveness and knowledge transmission while demonstrating a commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, personal development and innovation. Over the past three decades the economic mandate has won out over the humanistic agenda, and this has left increasing numbers of youth on the margins.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Youth development

While the concept of youth is often considered a normal and universal stage of development, it is in fact a cultural construct (McCulloch et al., 2006; Summerville, 1972). Furthermore, most contemporary developed societies have been preoccupied with what has become known as the *youth question*: what is to be done about young people (France, 2008)? This plays into the historical notion that youth are incomplete adults. For example, Bucholtz (2002, p. 532) writes that '*Adultum* is the past participle of the Latin verb *adolescere* "to grow up." The sense of growth, frustration and incompleteness are therefore historically embedded in *adolescent*, while *adult* indicates both completion and completeness.' Summerville (1972) has demonstrated how the child and youth are symbolic of irrationality and primitivism, the antithesis of the successful adult. As a consequence, an adult-centric view of youth has emerged (Bucholtz, 2002) whereby there is a preoccupation with the development of so-called 'pro-social' behaviours in youth as defined by the dominant adult/cultural discourse, rather than by the diversity of needs that characterise youth as they attempt to successfully negotiate the precarious transition between adolescence and young adulthood; consequently,

social investments are intended to mitigate risk (France, 2008), to make good little adults of all youth.

This has led to the stage of youth being viewed through the lens of psychology (Bynner, 2005), and subsequently the challenges faced by youth are the challenges of the individual. As noted by Zarre and Eccles (2006), success requires that youth learn to manage demanding and often competing roles as they struggle with identity formation in order to successfully transition to adulthood. This has been further complicated by the rise of the entrepreneurial culture and in particular the entrepreneurial self, which has led to our narrowing conceptualisation of the successful adult, impacting how we conceptualise the path from youth to adulthood. This is further exacerbated by what Peters (2001) has described as the 'responsibilising of the self,' whereby youth are held completely and solely responsible for the choices they make. France (2008), however, argues that the responsibilising of the self offers little insight into how social problems emerge, and how these social problems are often the context in which those identified as being at risk live their lives and make their choices. As France writes, 'there is little acknowledgement to the struggles and conflicts that exist between the powerful and the powerless over the way concepts such as crime and anti-social behaviour are defined, understood or enacted' (2008, p. 7). As he further explains, taking only a psychological perspective on the 'youth problem' fails to explain how the government and powerful others use these conceptions and understandings to control the powerless. There is an increased emphasis on self-reliance in social policy and failure in school, just as failure in the marketplace, is viewed as a function of individuals' choices, which are viewed as being made freely and without constraint. The dominant discourse fails to acknowledge how existing structures and power relationships enable some youth while constraining the agency of others.

In response to the deficit perspective on youth, the 1990s saw the development of the theory of positive youth development. This approach to youth development has its origins in what has become known as positive psychology. Selgiman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, p. 5) state that positive psychology is about 'well-being, contentment and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future) and flow and happiness in the present.' They further state that it is about more than health and illness, but is about 'work, education, insight, love, growth and play' (p. 7). Park (2004, p. 41) reiterates this perspective when he writes that

> The emerging field of positive psychology focuses on building strengths and encouraging wellness as much as on remedying weaknesses and repairing deficits. Within the framework of positive psychology, one can find a comprehensive scheme for understanding and promoting positive youth development.

Edwards et al. (2007) argue that a positive youth development framework emphasizes the development of resiliency—the ability to face and successfully navigate adverse life circumstances. As they state, resilient youth 'succeed despite what are seemingly devastating and disadvantages in life.' Kroevetz suggests that there are four dimensions to resiliency. They are:

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

- Social competence: the ability to elicit positive responses from others, thus establishing positive relationships with both adults and peers.
- Problem-solving skills: the ability to plan based on seeing oneself in contrast and being resourceful in seeking help from others.
- Autonomy: a sense of one's own identity and an ability to act independently and exert control over one's environment.
- Sense of purpose and future: having goals, educational aspirations, persistence and hopefulness and a sense of a bright future (Kroevetz, 1999, p. 121).

Often the goal of resiliency is used as the focus of interventions to meet the needs of those youth deemed at risk. However, while resiliency is a quality that is desirable by all, and in this sense can be seen as a quality that allows the individual to adapt to his or her environment and be successful under the conditions it prescribes, the emphasis is on the individual to change and adapt.

While no one could really argue against this as a goal for youth and adults alike, Learner et al. (2002) argue that we need more than resilience; we need to promote 'thriving'. They argue that thriving is premised on a moral commitment to act to effect family and community life in positive ways, and this requires consideration being given to the individual and the multiple contexts in which he or she interacts. Learner et al. (2002) suggest examples of opportunities for youth to thrive by assuming positions of leadership in the community whereby they work for improvements in social life or work on issues of social justice and at the same time develop the skills of community-building. Thriving steps beyond resiliency in that it is not just about the individual changing, but about changes that are manifest in the exercise of personal agency of an actor who strives to promote the well-being of both themselves and the larger collective; thriving is, in other words, being engaged. As they further state (2002, p. 18),

> When these respective contributions are synthesized over time in a manner that involves increased thriving of individuals, there is a growth in the institutions of civil society, in the "space" between people and government. A system of positive human development is therefore present.

Park (2004) argues that thriving is a function of character; for him character refers to such positive and cultivated habits as resoluteness, self-discipline and social responsibility, executed over time, which promotes social development and justice. This, Park argues, is the basis of thriving; character mitigates challenges while building strengths that serve all.

Benson (2002), and the work of the Search Institute, operating within a positive youth framework, focuses on asset development. Benson (2002, p. 125) states that

> Asset development is a relatively new conceptualization of positive human development, synthesizing individual factors that, when present, serve to protect from, or inhibit health-compromising behaviours and enhance opportunities for positive developmental outcomes.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

The framework establishes 'benchmarks for positive child and adolescent development, weaving together in an *a priori* conceptual model a taxonomy of developmental targets requiring both family and community engagement to ensure their acquisition' (p. 216). The assets are appropriate to the second decade of life and their presence promotes thriving and resiliency while mitigating high-risk behaviours. Furthermore, the assets are intended to 'reflect core developmental processes' (p. 126).

Benson and others have identified 40 assets, 20 of which are considered external assets, which are characteristics of the youth's environment, and 20 of which are internal assets, which are skills, competencies and self-perceptions that youth develop over time.

The 20 external assets can be divided into four broad categories:

- *Support*: offers a range of experiences for affirmation, approval and acceptance;
- *Empowerment*: focuses on providing opportunities for youth to exercise agency within the community that are valued and useful;
- *Boundaries and expectations*: provides a consistent message across contexts in which youth act and adult and peer role models who model appropriate and responsible behaviour;
- *Constructive use of time*: offers an array of activities available to youth where they nurture and develop their skills and capacities.

These assets constitute the developmental experiences of opportunities and relationships that the community or adults offer youth, occur in the interactions of youth with caring adults and peers and are supported by the network of community institutions.

The 20 internal assets are also divided into four categories:

- *Commitment to learning*: a combination of values, skills and beliefs known to enhance academic performance;
- *Positive values*: subscribing to values that are pro-social and represent personal character;
- *Social competencies*: a personal skill set needed to deal with the myriad of choices to be made in light of challenges and opportunities present to the individual in contemporary society;
- *Positive identity*: identity, a major developmental task of adolescence, is rooted in high self-esteem and a sense of purpose and power.

The internal assets are those which the individual possesses and are acquired over time as youth interact across a variety of contexts.

Benson then argues that there are four contexts which can strengthen—or, in the case of youth for whom asset developing factors are absent, undermine—the development of assets. They are: neighbourhoods, national and local youth organisations, faith community and primary supports (which include before and after-school programmes) and sports etc. These contexts are part of what Benson (2002, p. 138) calls asset-building communities, which he defines as 'a geography of place that maximizes attentiveness to promoting developmental strengths for

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Table 1. Current fusion programme and programme descriptions

Programme	Programme description
Art Breaks	Art Breaks is a programme offered to youth between 12 and 18. The programme offers basic and advanced drawing techniques from object and figure drawing, character design, perspective and basic design. The programme also provides professional grade artists' materials such as sketch books, canvases, paints, markers, spray paint, clay etc.
Digital Game Development	This programme is offered in collaboration with Fanshawe College, whereby youth learn what is required to create and develop original games, applications and web-based interactive media using the latest in game development software and Fusion's gaming computers.
Fitness Program	This programme focuses on choice and suitability, as Fusion youth have the choice to participate in a number of different forms of traditional sport or functional fitness exercise. The focus of the programme is on well-being and teaching the youth about fitness, nutrition, health and wellness and healthy lifestyle choices.
Girls Group	The girls get together to discuss difficult topics. In addition, they may collectively participate in recreational activities and learn different life skills including cooking and personal hygiene. Various guest speakers are brought in to address topics of interest to the female adolescents, such as eating disorders, self-esteem, domestic abuse and other health issues.
Hockey Night at Fusion	This programme is intended to provide youth with physical exercise while promoting sportsmanship, improving hockey skills, making new friends and having fun.
Ingersoll Youth Advisory Group	This leadership development programme is intended to act as an advisory body that brings forth youth issues in Ingersoll, communicating them and promoting action to be taken for appropriate stakeholders. In doing this it promotes a positive image of youth in the community and promotes youth to be involved in meaningful community activities with other stakeholders and partners.
It's All About the Guys	This is a leadership programme for male adolescents and provides opportunities to discuss issues of concern to them, engage in competitive and cooperative sports, appreciate cinema through private screenings and learn about and utilising other community programmes and services.
Nutrition Program	Youth learn about nutritious meal planning, preparation and cleaning through hands-on experience in Fusion's kitchen.
Tracy's Diner	Youth who participate in this learn about and participate in meal preparation, in addition to receiving a free meal. Meals are available for other youth who do not participate in this programme for a minimal charge.

(*Continued*)

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Table 1. (*Continued*)

Programme	Programme description
Music Program	Free music lessons are available to youth in the following areas: drums, guitar, bass and percussion. Participants learn such concepts as tempo, bars, beats and chords and are encouraged to practice. One-on-one instruction is provided to youth with programmes tailored to their specific abilities. Instruments are provided.
Open Jam	This programme brings youth together to use making music and dancing with others as a form of self-expression and as a means of managing stress.
Photography and Graphic Design	Youth are introduced to cameras and are taught everything from the basics through to advanced photography. In addition, youth are introduced to programmes such as Adobe Creative Suite Illustrator and Photoshop and are taught about logo and poster design for businesses.
Radio Broadcasting	In partnership with 104.7 Heart FM, youth develop their broadcasting skills with the help of real-life on-the-air personalities. Youth have an opportunity to host a show on Fusion's closed circuit radio station.
ReBuildIT	Youth learn to use, build, troubleshoot and repair computers. There is also an emphasis on environmental responsibility and the appropriate disposal of electronics through recycling. Currently Fusion partners with an e-waste firm to disassemble electronics for safe disposal.
Recording Studio	In Fusion's state-of-the-art professional studio, youth learn about all areas of production and development of production skills. Youth are encouraged to record and mix their own music or the music of their friends.
Video Editing	Youth learn all facets of video production, from pre-production through to editing and post-production. They have an opportunity to put their skills to work by assisting with Fusion TV, a Fusion-based show which is aired on the local cable channel.
Youth Entrepreneurship Partnership Program	The main goals of YEPP are to provide resources and support to youth with creative business ideas.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

all children and adolescents.' He further asserts that within any geographical community, there are five sources of asset-building potential. These include:

- Sustained relationships with adults, both within and beyond family;
- Peer group influence;
- Socialising systems;
- Community level social norms, ceremony, ritual, policy and resource allocation;
- Programmes, including school-based and community-based efforts, to nurture and build skills and competencies.

Of particular import for the development of youth are sustained relationships with adults, peer group influence and programmes available to youth, emphasizing the primacy of relationships for healthy youth development. Unfortunately, as Benson

notes, most contemporary communities are marked by age segregation, civic disengagement, a loss of personal and collective efficacy, social mistrust and a lack of collaboration across systems, undermining a community's capacity for youth asset building.

An illustrated case: The Fusion Youth and Technology Centre

The Fusion Youth and Technology Centre (Fusion) is a unique not-for-profit youth centre in Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada (population 12,146). It is municipally owned and operated and can be best described as a social innovation. It is the first facility in Ontario to bring together recreation, leisure, technology, arts, leadership development, health and well-being promotion, youth engagement and volunteerism under one roof. Fusion serves all youth in Ingersoll and the surrounding area between the ages of 12 and 18. It operates out of a positive youth development framework whereby it strives to provide the conditions to foster positive asset development, at the same time as attempting to promote knowledge and skill acquisition that will serve youth as they transition into adulthood. Fusion provides opportunities for youth in a variety of ways and incorporates a number of skill development programmes involving youth from all walks of life. They offer innovative approaches to rural youth programmes in entrepreneurial training, business development, recreation and leisure activities, health and well-being, art and culture, civic engagement—including volunteering in the community—multimedia and technology training and skill development (see Table 1). In addition, Fusion currently runs three social enterprises that provide youth with opportunities to put their new knowledge and skills to work, with the youth earning money while at the same time the social enterprises serve as a revenue generator for the centre (see Table 2).

To become a member of Fusion, youth pay a $5 membership fee, which provides them with lifetime membership. As of 2010 approximately half the

Table 2. Current Fusion social enterprises

Social enterprise	Social enterprise description
Multimedia production	Provides a one-stop shop for multimedia needs including videography, photography, video editing, graphic design and printing.
Digital and audio recording	Offers a fully equipped studio for a wide variety of recording and audio services, including a professional recording engineer (along with trained youth). Also provides live audio services for community and private events.
Computer services	The Fusion ReBuildIT programme is approved by the Ontario Electronic Stewardship Program as an e-waste collection site and is also authorised as a Microsoft Refurbisher, selling refurbished computers. This service also provides PC troubleshooting and repair, PC setup and installation, hardware/software installation and upgrades, anti-virus installation and removal, PC training and tutoring and repair services.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

youth target population held Fusion memberships (Fusion, 2010). Currently Fusion is open from 2:30 to 9:30 Monday through Saturday and is visited daily by 90–110 youth (Smith, personal communication, 2012).

Fusion's origins are rooted in November 2003, when the town of Ingersoll initiated a 'grass-roots' strategic planning process. By May 2004 the town had identified six strategic directions they were to pursue, one of which was addressing the needs of youth in the community. Following this a Youth Planning Group was struck and developed the following vision to guide their work (Fusion, 2012):

> Youth will be encouraged to achieve a high sense of purpose, of identity and pride for, and within their community.

They identified their expected outcomes as being:

- Development of a permanent Youth Committee created by Town Council in conjunction with a broad-based youth oriented council;
- Preparation of a youth strategy that is responsive and flexible to the needs of youth;
- Establishment of a fully funded and professionally supervised youth centre to meet the diverse needs of local youth.

In 2005, with the help of donations and a grant from the province and in partnership with Craigwood Youth Services, the town of Ingersoll purchased a local school as a permanent site for Fusion and hired its first staff. In February 2006 Fusion opened its doors, occupying only two rooms of the school and employing two part-time staff members (it now occupies the full school, which covers 16,000 square feet). In 2007 the town of Ingersoll assumed full financial and operating responsibility.

In 2007 a number of grants were received that allowed Fusion to update its original computer equipment and purchase video and digital editing equipment. In addition, in 2007 the skate park was developed and several more staff were hired to provide programming and supervision. In 2008 Fusion began to complement the staff body, which consisted predominately of individuals trained in child and youth development, with individuals with industry experience in the various programming areas. In addition, a nutrition and fitness programme was started at the same time that the outdoor sports field was developed, with the hope of engaging youth in the development of healthy lifestyles. In 2008 Fusion was asked by the provincial government to develop a policy brief on 'youth places and spaces' based upon its experience to date.

In 2009, a number of developments took place:

- The Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEPP) was started with assistance from the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade;
- Youth travelled to the provincial parliament as part of a delegation in the Canadian legislature for the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Youth in the YEPP programme were taken to Toronto to a national conference to learn about entrepreneurship and starting a business;

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

- The recording studio opened, providing youth with the opportunity to explore their musical talents, take free music lessons and also learn the technical side of music and audio production;
- Four social enterprises were developed that employed Fusion youth while providing additional revenues for Fusion (ReBuildIT, a catering service,[1] a graphic design enterprise and the opening of the recording studio to the public);
- The art room was renovated and a gallery created for youth art work;
- The centre hired its first youth chef to assist with the Fusion nutrition programme;
- The Thames Valley Board of Education provided an alternative high school located in Fusion for youth who were not able to function and perform in the local high school.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

In 2010 the electronic waste programme was fully implemented, heightening environmental awareness while developing youth skills and knowledge. A group of youth also entered the Ministry of Citizenship anti-racism contest, producing a video that was selected as one of the top 10 in Canada; the youth were flown to Ottawa, where their video was screened in front of Queen Elizabeth II. It was also during 2010 that Fusion entered into partnership with 104.7 Heart FM; this led to the development of a radio broadcasting programme whereby youth can learn the 'ins and outs' of radio production and broadcasting.

In 2011 Fusion, in partnership with Community Employment Services, and with a grant from the Trillium Foundation, the Youth Entrepreneurship Partnership Program evolved into the Oxford County Youth Entrepreneur Skills and Career programme. This programme provides hands-on experiential learning opportunities for youth between the ages of 15 and 24 to develop job skills and builds on Fusion's social enterprises. This is a cost-free certificate programme that also serves as an incubator for youth business ideas. The development of this programme has expanded Fusion programming to the county and has increased its target population to include older youth. In addition, 2011 saw Fusion enter into partnership with the Thames Valley District Board of Education, delivering the part of the grade 10 business curriculum. Furthermore, the two partners are currently exploring ways of accrediting Fusion learning for high school credit with the board. In addition, it entered into a partnership with Fanshawe College whereby two interactive media faculty will come to Fusion to teach interested youth gaming and 'smartphone app' programming, which will then be channelled into a social enterprise whereby youth will be employed at the same time as generating additional revenues for Fusion through their social enterprise. Fusion is also partnering with Conestoga College; learning that takes place at Fusion will be accredited as college credits, allowing Fusion youth as young as 12 to earn postsecondary credits.

Organisationally, Fusion is funded through the town of Ingersoll as part of its Parks and Recreation funding. However Fusion is run with an entrepreneurial spirit and for every dollar it receives from the town, it generates an additional $0.54 to make an annual budget of close to $1,000,000.[2] As evidenced by the above paragraph, Fusion also actively works at developing partnerships, and it is through its partnerships with private, public and not-for-profit organisations that

it has been able to extend its resources at the same time as providing greater opportunities for Fusion youth.

Fusion programming is demand-driven and responds to articulated youth needs. The youth are also engaged in assisting with the development of the programmes. For example, the recording studio was a response to a youth-articulated need. The youth who articulated this need were then engaged by and with staff in all facets of the programme development process, including the development and presentation of the proposal to the funder, engagement in the design of the recording studio and selection and purchase of the equipment, through to sitting in and participating in the meetings with the contractors (Smith, 2012). And while there was no documentation of the learning that took place, I can only imagine the depth of learning and the benefits derived by the youth as a result of being actively involved from concept to fruition of this particular project.

While little formal research has been done to date at and on Fusion,[3] Christie (2012) undertook a qualitative study that examined the experience of Fusion youth and the impact participation had on them. Christie began by examining the youth's experience of living in a small town. As is the case in most small towns, the youth reported that there was little to do in the community, transportation to go anywhere else to do something was lacking and in general, it was boring. The one high point for youth was the development of Fusion, as it allowed them their own space—a space they felt ownership and responsibility for, and where they could explore things and areas they would not normally have the opportunity to explore. Fusion also offered a safe environment, one the youth reported allowed them to escape peer pressure (such as in relation to drug use) and family pressures. In essence, it served as a refuge where youth could go to escape some of the stresses of their lives.

Christie also reported that youth valued the diverse programmes available through Fusion and used these programmes to explore potential career options as they developed skills and knowledge. The youth also reported that through participating in these programmes they learned how to set and work toward goals, developing their work ethic. In addition, the youth also reported that through these programmes that they came to understand how they have choices, and how they need to be accountable for the choices they make. It was also reported that youth self-esteem was enhanced through these learning activities, in addition to effective communication and interpersonal skills being developed. As one youth reported, she learned that she had a lot more choices for her future than she had thought.

Of particular importance, as reported by Christie, were the connections that youth made at Fusion. The bonds they formed with Fusion staff were reported by the youth as greatly relevant. They reported being accepted for who they were and being able to talk to staff about anything without feeling judged; they felt they could be themselves. Youth also reported that through Fusion they learned to get along better with other youth, avoiding much of the 'drama' of adolescence. They also reported that the youth cliques which were prevalent on the outside (such as in school) are not present in Fusion; everyone had learned to get along, and they often discovered they shared common interests with youth they would not have associated with outside of Fusion. Some youth also reported forging stronger bonds with the community, as Fusion encourages the

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

youth to become involved in the community through various opportunities to volunteer and engage in other similar activities. Fusion strives to teach youth about citizenship and the value of community, whether in the context of Fusion or that of the larger community. Some youth in Christie's study also reported that they learned not to be 'bystanders'; if they saw bad behaviour, such as bullying, they would take a stand to try and change the situation.

Discussion

As we can see from the literature reviewed, there has been a narrowing conceptualisation of education, from a broader humanistic agenda to an agenda that links all levels of education more closely to the economy. These changes in educational discourse have also coincided with an increasing number of students being pushed to the margins, potentially laying the foundation for their disengagement from learning across the lifespan, and subsequently offering them a lifetime of limited options.

The central argument of this paper is that we need to consider ASPs as a vital component of lifelong learning infrastructure, particularly if these programmes have a positive youth development focus, as they can begin to mitigate some of the negative consequences of the dominant educational discourse; ASPs can begin to address the learning needs of those who are increasingly being pushed to the margins, along with providing opportunities for meaningful interaction with adults, a critical variable in the development of youth. These relationships are important because, as previously noted, increasing dual-income families and increasing numbers of single-parent families mean that youth have more unsupervised time available, and unsupervised time often leads to poorer developmental outcomes (Durlak et al., 2010). This is also complicated by the fact that often a 'private school' develops within schools, whereby a limited number of select students get the majority of adults' time (Morch and du Bois-Reymond, 2006). This is of critical importance for the relationships that youth develop both with adults and with other youth, and will shape the choices youth perceive to be open to them (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007). The development of these relationships, in conjunction with the opportunities that are often provided through ASPs, often leads to improved academic performance in the formal educational system, while mitigating anti-social behaviours and opening up unseen opportunities (Durlak et al., 2007).

Fusion has been presented as a case study and does illustrate, I believe, how ASPs might contribute to the positive development of youth: this has been illustrated in many different ways. In Christie's (2012) study of Fusion, she identified the following outcomes:

- Youth felt ownership and responsibility for Fusion;
- Diversity of formal programming provide opportunities to choose programmes and engage learning opportunities on their own terms, and hence learning is meaningful (there are no requirements);
- Youth learn to work toward specific goals and hence develop a work ethic and a capacity to self-regulate their behaviour in terms of both their learning and their social interactions;

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

- Youth experience relationships with adults where they can be themselves, along with having adult mentors;
- Youth experience positive relationships with other youth, escaping the 'drama' of adolescence and cliques that exist outside of Fusion, often connecting with youth with shared interests that they would not interact with outside of Fusion;
- Youth recognise they had choices they had not seen and consequently are able to reconceptualise their relationship to the world, seeing new opportunities and choices they were unaware of;
- Youth report enhanced self-esteem.

Edwards et al. (2007) emphasize the idea of developing youth resiliency as being key to navigating life's challenges. They further note that to be resilient is to have social competence through developing positive relationships with adults and youth; to be able to problem-solve and plan, seeking out guidance from others when necessary; to develop autonomy whereby one can act independently and exert control over one's environment; and to develop a sense of purpose through increased persistence and sense of hope. If we examine Christie's list of outcomes we can see some evidence for developing social competence, as the youth develop relationships with staff and other youth. They also demonstrate a capacity to problem-solve through self-regulation and work toward self-identified goals. In terms of autonomy, they are allowed to choose how and where to engage at Fusion (there are no requirements to be engaged in certain ways as in the case of the formal educational system). In addition, they also expressed that they now saw options open to them that they had not seen before. This suggests that they are beginning to develop a sense of purpose. Based upon this evidence, I would not claim that Fusion 'produces' resilient youth, but it does suggest that participation in Fusion helps to contribute to the development of youth resilience.

Lerner et al. (2002) have suggested that resilience is too narrow a goal, suggesting adaptation to the environment; they suggest that our goal needs to be thriving, whereby youth can exercise their agency to improve not only their life but the life of the community. Certainly this seems to be happening in the context of Fusion, with youth participating in identifying needs and assisting in developing programmes (i.e. the sound recording studio). They are able to exercise their personal agency and have an impact upon the environment—in other words, they seem to be thriving.

In the context of asset development, Benson (2002) argues that the development of youth assets requires a set of external assets that includes: support through a range of experiences; opportunities to exercise agency in ways which is valued within the community; sets boundaries and expectations; and provides opportunities for constructive use of youth's time. When these external assets are present, according to Benson, it leads youth to commit to learning, the development of positive values, the development of social competence and a positive identity. Again, Christie's research suggests participation in Fusion is contributing to the development of these assets for youth. They are engaged in various forms of learning as they acquire knowledge and skills, they are developing positive values as they learn to set goals and work toward them, they are developing social competence, as evidenced by the relationships they are

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

developing with adults and youth alike—all leading to a positive identity, as suggested by their reports of enhanced self-esteem.

If we consider what is being learned through participation in Fusion, the outcomes are really related to some of those issues that are no longer of operational prominence in formal education: character development, developing social competence and, to some degree, civic responsibility. This is not to suggest that Fusion, or ASPs in general, are a panacea, but rather that in the context of lifelong learning they can play an important role in helping youth develop a positive learning identity and the development of assets, competences and skills that will help support their transition from youth to adulthood, particularly for those youth who live on the 'margins.'

Conclusions

The central argument of this paper is that ASPs need to be considered an important part of the lifelong learning infrastructure. This has become increasingly important as lifelong learning and the formal education system in general become more closely aligned with the economy at the expense of other education goals and outcomes. In the context of initial schooling this has meant the narrowing of the curriculum, pushing more learners to the margins. As noted, when learning is not biographically relevant, or the learners have no influence over their education, they will often become disengaged. Disengaged learners do not develop a positive learning identity, and given the centrality of lifelong learning to being 'successful' across the lifespan, disengagement is likely to lead to marginalisation across the lifespan.

ASPs, it is argued—particularly if they have a positive youth focus that strive to develop youth assets—can mitigate some of the negative consequences of changes in the formal learning system, providing opportunities to develop a positive learning identity. I have used Fusion as an illustrative case, and while it is not a rigorous report on the research conducted by Christie, I have used the results of Christie's research to suggest ways in which Fusion contributes to positive youth development, potentially mitigating some of the more negative impacts of the changing formal educational system, and how it may lead to developing assets that will support the development of a positive learning identity.

As we move the lifelong education agenda forward, and particularly as we reach out to those who may be left behind, it is imperative that we look at lifelong learning as a system that is inclusive of all learning opportunities, including ASPs. ASPs have the potential to offer opportunities to youth that support their growth and development in ways which ease the transition to adulthood and provide the foundation for developing a positive learning identity that will serve them well across their lifespan—particularly those youth who exist on the margins of the formal education system. This requires that we acknowledge the 'playing field' is not level, that some youth are more privileged than others and that the neoliberal emphasis on self-responsibility is unfair, giving those who are privileged further advantage. Mitigating this unfair advantage requires a social investment for which communities and governments must bear the cost. However, we live in an age of accountability and all social investments must demonstrate their efficacy. As a research community we need to develop a research agenda that includes ASPs as

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

part of that lifelong learning system, and to consider not only the direct impacts these programmes have on youth, but also the longer-term impacts (such as ASPs' impact on academic performance in the formal educational system or career and labour force development). ASPs have a valuable role to play in promoting a life of learning if we recognise their importance and begin to document their impact. ASPs have a vital role to play in lifelong learning, as they can contribute to laying the necessary foundation whereby youth can engage in a life of continuous learning. ASPs deserve the attention of educators, policy-makers and researchers as we collectively develop the foundation of a lifelong learning system that promotes lifelong learning for all.

Notes

1. The catering service is no longer running.
2. Clearly the question of cost must be raised during this fiscally constrained time of reduced government spending. However we also need to broaden the scope in which we consider cost. For example, a study was undertaken by Brown (2008) that examined the costs saved in the delivery of other services (such as healthcare and policing) as a result of Fusion's presence in the community; she estimated that costs averted in other areas as a result of Fusion amounted to approximately $636,657 per annum. In a study conducted by Snyder and Hickman (1999) in the United States, they estimated that the overall cost of one lost youth through crime, substance abuse and lost productivity measured over a 16-year period would cost society 2.2–3 million dollars. Clearly ASPs not only provide opportunities for youth, but also avert costs in other areas and may, in the long term, save society significant amounts.
3. In addition to Christie's research, there are currently three graduate projects examining the impact of participation in Fusion on health, asset development and the imagined futures of Fusion youth. In addition, we have just begun a three-year research project funded through the OMAFRA Agriculture and Rural Policy Research Program that will examine the impact of youth participating in Fusion on the youth, the community and the local economy.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

References

Alvarez, B. (1994). Assessing youth programs: An international perspective. *Comparative Education Review, 38*, 253–266.

Bagnall, R. G. (2000). Lifelong learning: The limitations of economic determinism. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 19*, 20–35.

Bartlett, L., Fredrick, M., Gulbrandebsen, T., & Murrillo, E. (2002). The marketization of education: Public schools for private ends. *Anthropology and Education Review, 33*(1), 1–15.

Belanger, P. (1994). Lifelong learning: The dialectics of lifelong education. *International Review of Education, 40*, 353–381.

Benson, P. L. (2002). Adolescent development in social and community context: a program of research. *New Directions for Youth Development, 95*, 123–147.

Briton, D. (1996). Marketspeak: The rhetoric of restructuring and its implications for adult and higher education. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 28*, 29–47.

Brown, G. (2008, July). Annual return on investment in Fusion. Presentation to Fusion stakeholders, Ingersoll, ON.

Bucholtz, M. (2002). Youth and cultural practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 31*, 525–552.

Bynner, J. (2005). Rethinking the youth phase of the life-course: The case for emerging adulthood. *Journal of Youth Studies, 8*, 367–384.

Centeno, V. (2011). Lifelong learning: A policy concept with a long past but short history. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 30*, 133–150.

Carnoy, M., & Rhoten, D. (2002). What does globalization mean for educational change? A comparative approach *Comparative Education Review, 46*(1), 1–9.

Christie, S. (2012). *More than just hanging out after school: Afterschool programs and youth's feelings of inclusion and exclusion (Unpublished master's thesis).* Guelph, ON: University of Guelph.

Davies, B., & Bansel, O. (2007). Neoliberalism and education. *International Journal of Quantitative Studies in Education, 20*, 247–259.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013

Dawes, N. P., & Larson, R. (2011). How youth get engaged: Grounded theory research on motivational development in organized youth programs. *Developmental Psychology, 47*, 259–269.

Diepstraten, I., du Bois-Reymond, M., & Vinken, H. (2006). Trendsetting learning biographies: Concepts of navigating through late-modern life and learning. *Journal of Youth Studies, 19*, 175–193.

Dietel, R. (2009). After-school programs: Finding the right dose. *Phi Delta Kappan*, November, 62–64.

Durlak, J. A., Taylor, R. D., Kawashima, K., Puchan, M. K., Du Pre, E. P., Celio, C. I., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). Effects of positive youth development programs on school, family and community systems. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 39*, 269–286.

Durlak, J. A., Mahoney, J. L., Bonhert, A. M., & Parante, M. E. (2010). Developing and improving after-school programs to enhance youth's personal growth and adjustment. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 45*, 285–293.

Edwards, O. W., Mumford, V., & Serra-Roldan, R. (2007). A positive youth development model for students considered at-risk. *School Psychology International, 28*, 29–45.

Field, J. (2003). Researching lifelong learning trends and perspectives in the English-speaking world. Retrieved from http://www.ioe.stir.ac.uk/staff/docs/field-researchinglifelong.pdf.

France, A. (2004). Risk factor analysis and the youth questions. *Journal of Youth Studies, 11*(1), 1–15.

Fusion Youth and Technology Centre. (2010). *Annual report*. Ingersoll, ON: Town of Ingersoll.

Griffin, C. (2006). Research and policy in lifelong education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 25*, 561–574.

Guerin, G., & Denti, L. (1999). Alternative education support for youth-at-risk. *The Clearing House, 73*, 76–78.

Jensen, T. B. (2005). Formalizing the nonformal: Potentials of sociality and the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes. In L. Chisholm, B. Hoskins, & C. Glahn (Eds.),*Trading up: potential and performance in nonformal learning*. Retrieved from http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Youth_Work/Research/2005_trading_up_NFL_coepub.pdf.

Krovetz, M. L. (1999). Resiliency: A key element for supporting youth-at-risk. *The Clearing House, 73*, 121–123.

La Belle, T. J. (1982). Formal, nonformal and informal education: A holistic perspective. *International Review of Education, 28*, 159–175.

Larson, R. W. (2000). Toward a psychology of positive youth development. *American Psychologist, 55*, 170–183.

Lauzon, A. C. (2011). The changing nature of graduate education: implications for students in the second half of life. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 30*, 287–308.

Lauzon, A. C., & McCallum, M. (2001). *Negotiating rural futures: a study of relationships between boards of education and rural communities during a period of school consolidation*Report prepared for the SRC Research Program, OMAFRA.

Lauzon, A. C. (2000). University extension and public service in the age of economic globalization. *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 26*, 79–96.

Learner, R. M., Bretano, C., Dowling, E. M., & Anderson, P. M. (2002). Positive youth development: Thriving as the basis of personhood and civil society. *New Directions for Youth Development, 95*, 11–33.

Lee, M., & Friedrich, T. (2011). Continuously reaffirmed, subtly accommodates, obviously missing and fallaciously critiqued: Ideologies in UNESCO's lifelong learning policy. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 30*, 151–169.

McCulloch, K., Stewart, A., & Lovegreen, N. (2006). We hang out together: Youth culture and social class. *Journal of Youth Studies, 9*, 539–556.

McMurtry, J. (1998). Unequal freedoms: Globalization as an ethical system. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Medel-Anonuevo, C., Oshako, T., & Mauch, W. (2001). *Revisiting lifelong learning for the 21st century*. Paris: UNESCO.

Morch, S., & du Bois-Reymond, M. (2006). Learning in times of modernization. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 113*, 23–35.

Ord, J. (2009). Experiential learning in youth work in the UK: A return to Dewey. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 28*, 403–511.

Park, N. (2004). Character strengths and positive youth development. *Annals, AAPS, 591*, 40–54.

Peters, M. (2001). Education, enterprise, culture and the entrepreneurial self: A Foucauldian perspective. *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 1*, 58–71.

Seligman, M., & Cskiszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist, 55*, 5–14.

Shildrick, T., & MacDonald, R. (2007). Biographies of exclusion: Poor work and poor transition. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 26*, 589–604.

Smith, N., Lister, R., Middleton, S., & Cox, L. (2005). Young people as real citizens: Towards an inclusionary understanding of citizenship. *Journal of Youth Studies, 8*, 425–443.

Snyder, H. N., & Sickmund, M. (1999). *1999 National Report*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Summerville, C. J. (1972). Toward a history of childhood and youth. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 3*, 439–447.
UNESCO. (1972). *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow.* Paris: UNESCO.
UNESCO. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within.* Paris: UNESCO.
Wortherspoon, T., & Schissel, B. (2001). The business of placing Canadian children and youth 'at-risk'. *Canadian Journal of Education, 26*, 321–339.
Zarre, N., & Eccles, J. (2006). The passage to adulthood: Challenges of late adolescence. *New Directions in Youth Development, 111*, 13–28.

Downloaded by [Allan C. Lauzon] at 13:11 29 April 2013