

*Conference Paper*

# **Professionalisation and the Entry Points of Adult Educators in Singapore**

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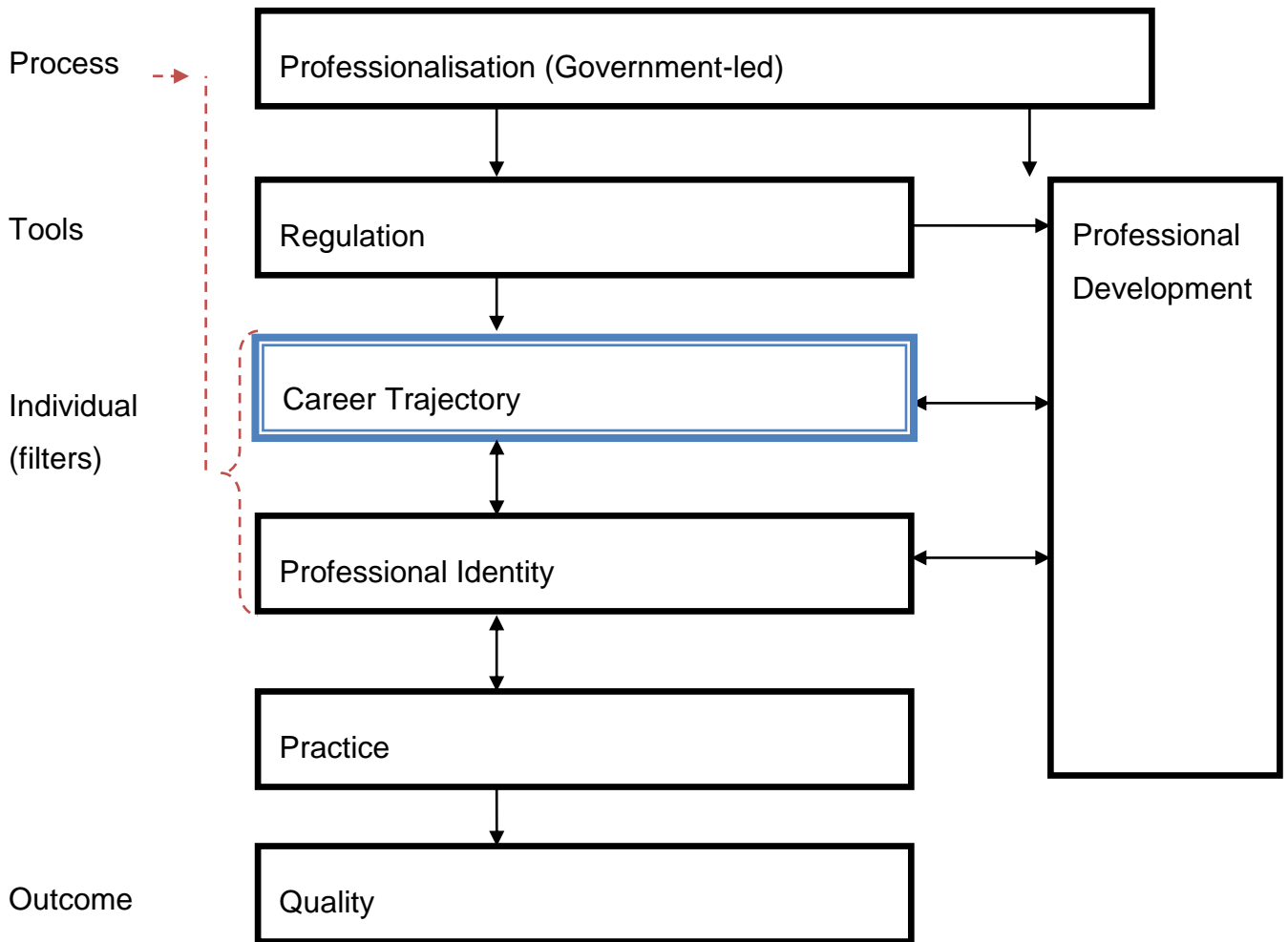
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# Introduction

Over the last 10 years, the adult education field in Singapore has shifted from being a largely private sphere, to one which encompasses a nationally regulated system of workforce development. Hand-in-hand with this development came a government-led agenda to professionalise adult educators and raise the quality of provision. There are many elements that affect the relationship between professionalisation and quality provision of adult education. The larger project, from which this paper is drawn, focuses on professionalisation, regulation, professional development, career trajectories professional identities, practice, and quality. The underlying assumption is that the career trajectories and professional identities mediate and shape the impact of professionalisation initiatives, influencing an adult educator's practice, and thus their quality of provision. This larger report has the aim of feeding what we have learnt about the career trajectories and professional identities of adult educators back into the professionalisation agenda, and enabling professional development initiatives to be more sensitive to adult educators' needs (Milana, 2010). The working conceptual model that frames this study is as follows (the solid arrows illustrate "influence", while the dotted arrow refers to "the need to influence").

**Figure 1. Conceptual Model**



This paper forms the basis for a short presentation at the 21<sup>st</sup> National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference, also known as the “No Frills” conference. It is a working paper that solely focuses on the entry points of individuals into the adult education field. The analysis of the data is ongoing, as is the development of the implications from this research. It is the further development of these ideas that makes the role of the conference integral.

Little is known about the entry points of adult educators in Singapore. Entry points, however, have seemingly direct implications, not only on one’s professional identity, but also on an individual’s engagement in the professionalisation agenda and the quality of training. Although the entry points, as one aspect of career trajectories, are the main focus of this paper, the importance of the other related aspects is acknowledged. A greater understanding of entry points will shed light on how adult educators get into this line of work, setting themselves up for their future endeavours in the field. The entry points also speak directly to professional development initiatives, which have the potential to affect how adult educators engage in their practice.

For the purposes of this paper clarification of the key terms adult educator and professionalisation will be useful. This research adopts the definition of an adult educator as someone who is directly associated with teaching, learning and assessment functions of adults. Their professionalisation is defined by Shah (in Egetenmeyer 2010) as a process of change in the direction of the ideal type

...as occupations professionalise they undergo a sequence of structural changes involving the establishment of training institutions, formation of professional organisations and mastery of theoretical knowledge and skills involved in professional practice.

The professionalisation agenda that this research refers to is largely a government-led initiative, which includes the use of regulation through legislating minimum qualifications, as well as professional development (in the form of professional networks and formal courses that lead to professional qualifications). It should be noted that there are forms of professional development that are not government directed (for example informal professional development or existing courses from private providers).

The next section of this paper details the methodology of the research. Following this is a brief background on the professionalisation agenda of adult educators in Singapore. The findings are then presented, which also engage with the existing literature on adult educator entry points. The implications of the findings are then discussed. It should be noted that these last two sections are still in development, and will be further refined through engagement in the NCVET No Frills conference, alongside the continual work on the wider research project.

## ***Methodology***

### **Biographical Narrative Approach**

This study takes a biographical narrative approach, which has been identified in the literature as particularly suited to exploration of people's career trajectories. Kelchtermans (2009), for instance, used this approach in his research as he felt it recognised:

the fact that teachers (like everyone) live their lives between life and death. Interpretations, thoughts, and actions in the present are influenced by experiences from the past, and expectations for the future. From a biographical perspective we are interested in teachers' experiences in the meaning these events have for the people who live them. The subjective career.

Such narratives focus on the practitioner's subjective, retrospective, reconstruction of their "formal career", understood as a "chronological chain of positions and roles" that a practitioner is involved in during their career (Bayer, Brinkkjær, & Plauborg, 2009). This approach is commonly identified as useful when seeking to understand how people have constructed their careers, as individual motivations and learning processes, which lead to professional identities, can come to light (Andersson & Köpsén, 2009; Horsdal, 2002 in Milana, 2010; Milana & Lund, 2009). It is important to hear how people tell their stories, and analyse their "thinking" so that we can understand and influence practitioners' actions (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Biographical narratives provide access to the dynamics between practitioners lives and experience, which can open a better understanding of the conditions for learning and professional development within and outside pedagogical settings (Guimarães, Sancho, & Oliveira, 2006; Maier-Gutheil & Hof, 2011). They allow us to focus on the interactions between practitioners and the structural conditions that make up the wider socio-cultural context in which they act. These contexts may be multiple, multi-layered and interacting with specific domains of social relations and physical context. The individual meaning is related to these conditions (Andersson & Köpsén, 2009; Milana & Lund, 2009). The biographical narrative allows the idiosyncratic nature of adult educators' work lives and move beyond the individual and his or her career story into a more general, but grounded, understanding of adult educators' careers. It is important to note, however, that the dynamic aspect of biographical narratives does not look at a story as the one true representation of one's experiences, but that the story told is an act of sense-making and may change over time (Kelchtermans, 2009).



## Procedure

After much discussion and reviewing the literature on professionalising adult educators an interview guide was designed to prompt participants to tell us about their biographical narratives in relation to their time becoming adult educators and pursuing this line of work. The areas of interview guide, most relevant for this paper, focused on the career paths that adult educators had pursued, and intended to pursue in the future; the elements that helped them do this, as well as the opportunities and challenges they faced. The larger research project also captured empirical data on how they positioned themselves within their field of employment (their professional identity); and how they perceived the government-led professionalisation of their occupation.

Adult educators were invited to participate in this study voluntarily and no incentives were offered. Interviews were conducted at a time and location convenient to the participant, and best efforts were made for the participant to feel comfortable during the interview. Interviews were recorded electronically and then transcribed by external transcribers. Transcripts were then uploaded into NVIVO 9, which was used to help organise the analysis stage. After taking a first pass over the transcripts, a coding tree was developed based on emerging themes. These themes were continually refined during the analysis stage. The thematic coding tree was keyed into NVIVO 9 and the transcripts were coded according to these themes. Two researchers then discussed the themes to refine their conceptual representation.

## Participants

The empirical research focused on people who became adult educators within their working lives, rather than those who enter the field as the initial or “first choice” occupation. This is because “within working life” entry points are the dominant route, both in the literature and in Singapore more specifically. “First choice” entrants into adult education appear to be minimal, as being an adult educator is not attractive for younger people, there are a lack of formalised entry level qualifications in higher education, a lack of career structure that can provide a clearer idea of what life as an adult educator could offer, a requirement of domain knowledge or experience, and finally as adult learners are more responsive and respectful of adult educators who clearly have the relevant experience matched by their years involved in the content area of their delivery. As well as this the economic market in Singapore provided many openings in this field for people who were made redundant during the Great Financial Crisis in 2008.

## Participant Profile

Twenty adult educators were interviewed for this research. As the term “adult educator” is rather broad, all participants in the sample were required to be conducting training for adults as at least one aspect of their work. This could be within the nationally regulated system (Workforce Skills Qualifications or WSQ), non-WSQ courses, or both, in any industry. The majority (70% n=14) were working within the WSQ system, of which slightly more than half (57% n=8) trained solely in WSQ courses. This is important as only the WSQ system is regulated by the government, with minimum training qualifications now being required.

The types of courses they trained in included: train-the-trainer (n=8), hospitality/service excellence (n=3), supply chain/organisational behaviour/manufacturing/engineering/electronics (n=3), life/generic skills (n=2), nursing (n=1), massage therapy (n=1), animation (n=1), sports (n=1), and baking (n=1). As some adult educators train in more than one type of course, the numbers add up to more than the total number of participants.

The age of the participants ranged from 32 to 69, with the majority over 40 years old. Nineteen out of the 20 participants had, or were in the process of completing, their Advanced Certificate for Training and Assessment (ACTA), which will be the compulsory qualification for all WSQ trainers by 2013. Six participants also had, or were pursuing, their Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education (DACE), which will be the mandatory qualification for all WSQ curriculum developers by 2015. Twenty-five percent also had other training related certificates. Eight of the participants had various Master degrees, with one currently pursuing a PhD. Seven held bachelor degrees, one held an advanced diploma, one their ‘A’ levels, two their ‘O’ levels, and one completed secondary four as their highest level of formal. Eighty percent of the participants were full time adult educators, and 65% were permanent rather than freelance employees. Participants were selected through a snowballing technique, which stopped once saturation of the data was achieved.

## Limitations

The findings of this empirical research provide a descriptive insight into how these various adult educators have worked in a field that the government is trying to professionalise. As the sample is opportunistic, non-representative of the adult education field, and limited in size, the findings of this study cannot be generalised with statistical confidence. The stories, however, did reach a point of saturation, which implies that there are likely to be similarities between the participants' experiences and those of other adult educators.

## ***Background***

For the past three decades various national committees, including the Economic Committee (1980s), the Committee on Singapore's Competitiveness (1990s), and the Economic Review Committee (2000s), have put forth the notion of upgrading workers' skills as key for economic progress (Hussain, 2010). In 2003 a national CET body to oversee workforce education, the Workforce Development Agency, was set up, and from 2005 the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) frameworks were developed and implemented. Over the past five years, in particular, Singapore has made a substantial and sustained investment in continuing education and training (CET). In 2012 a further \$2.5 billion was invested in CET (to be spread out over the next five years) to support the vision of providing high quality training for workforce development (Ministry of Manpower, 2011).

At the initial stages of government led workforce development it was acknowledged that success partly lay in the hands of those who would deliver, assess, and develop training to other workers. In the early to mid-2000s the existing pool of trainers, who operated in a largely privatised and free market, was very disparate, with many holding no training qualifications and unclear potential for job progression (Willmott & Karmel, 2011). The 2008 CET Master Plan stressed the importance of adult education and training in up-skilling the Singapore workforce as the foundation for economic resilience and growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Closely associated with this endeavour was the perceived need to attract, develop and professionalise continuing education and training (CET) practitioners. Madam Halimah Yacob ( Ministry of State, at the time of writing) expressed:

... it is ultimately your (adult educators') professionalism and continued capability development which will ensure that our workers have the best CET opportunities to upgrade their skills and raise their employability and competitiveness (Singapore Workforce Development Agency, 2009).

The enhancement of the quality of CET professionals remains a key aspect, being identified as one of the key thrusts reiterated by the Minister of Manpower Mr Gan Kim Yong in 2011. He stated that:

Today, we have about 4,000 WSQ trainers, assessors and curriculum developers. Less than half of them possess a formal qualification in competency-based training and assessment. Many are freelancers whom training providers engage on a project basis. In order to grow, support and professionalise the CET community, we must now take the next step. (Ministry of Manpower, 2011).

This quote sheds light on the diversity of CET practitioners and the perceived importance of qualifications for adult educators' professional development and quality. Although there were existing train-the-trainer programmes prior to the development of a nationalised system, it was seen as necessary to establish new training requirements and standards for the new CET system. With this, WDA launched the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA) in 2005. The certification is designed for adult educators who: perform the role of WSQ trainer and assessor with training providers or on an independent basis; anyone who wishes to perform effectively as a trainer or assessor; or anyone who wishes to conduct competency-based training and assessment (Workforce Development Agency, 2012). This has become the benchmark professional WSQ trainer qualification in Singapore, and will be mandatory for all WSQ trainers and assessors by 2014. ACTA is one of the first symbols of government regulated professional development for adult educators.

With the development of the Institute for Adult Learning, Singapore in 2008, professionalising avenues that expanded beyond ACTA were set up, including the Workplace Trainer Programme<sup>1</sup> (WTP) and the Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education<sup>2</sup> (DACE). Higher programmes of study, such as the Master of Arts in Lifelong Learning and the Master of Training & Development, have also been incorporated by the IAL in collaboration with external partners. Such avenues for knowledge production and practitioner training are crucial aspects of the professionalisation process, as accredited knowledge and systemised training helps

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<sup>1</sup>Including two delivered by the Institute of Technical Education (a workplace trainer course and the Pedagogical Certificate in Technical Education), and a Diploma in Training and Development delivered by the Singapore Training and Development Association (STADA). The WTP is designed for workplace supervisors, line-leaders and managers who sometimes perform the role of a trainer as a part of their professional duties (Workforce Development Agency, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> DACE is suggested for new and practising Curriculum Developers who need to design courseware with the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications system; practising Adult Educators who wish to upgrade within the WSQ system; and anyone who wished to join the adult education and training profession at Diploma level (Workforce Development Agency, 2012).

qualified adult educators gain skills and recognition (Tobias, 1996, p.95). The Institute for Adult Learning also launched the Adult Education Network (AEN) in 2009 to help build a community of practice for individuals working in the CET field (Institute for Adult Learning Singapore, 2011b). Other formal networking platforms also exist outside of the government's direct control.

The professionalisation of adult educators in Singapore has most strongly been a government-led process. The reason behind this agenda appears to be a desire to have a recognisably high quality level of workforce development provision. The government has attempted this process through formal regulation and professional development initiatives, which include networks as well as accredited courses for adult educators. The individual factors associated with adult educators careers and professional identity(ies) as they operate within (or at least partly within) this system are unknown, yet we believe these factors to filter engagement in the professionalisation agenda affecting the quality of provision. Therefore, this paper seeks to fill in this piece of the puzzle to weave individual stories into the wider professionalisation agenda, with the hope of providing a greater understanding that can influence professional development initiatives to be more responsive to the needs of these workers in order to achieve the desired outcome of quality CET provision.

### ***Tentative Findings***

The general literature on adult educator entry points identifies two main themes: a "first choice" career; and a "mid-career" or "second career" option. In our research we have moved away from these latter two terms, as they appear to be inadequate when looking at individual's stories. In other words, people may become adult educators after working in a different field or multiple fields, and this transition may be mid, late, or post career, and may be a third, fourth, or fifth career shift. The main point to emphasise is that these people have experience in other occupational fields prior to becoming an adult educator.

#### **First Choice**

None of the participants in this research project became involved in the adult education field as a "first choice" career. The rarity of this occurrence is also apparent in the wider literature. Farinelli (2010a) found in her European data that becoming an adult educator is never an intentional choice made at the outset of a career. It more commonly represents an opportunity to shift to a different line of work, when desired progression in a certain profession is no longer attainable. In Buiskool et al.'s study (2010), they also found that adult learning professionals generally have 10 to 15 years experience elsewhere before they decide to become an adult educator. This is perhaps a result of the nature of the occupation, in tandem with the lack of mainstream education offering courses that provide specialised

knowledge in the field of adult education, which can also attract young people and orient them towards adult education (Farinelli, 2010).

## Organic versus disjunctured entry points

Although the literature suggests a large majority of adult educators enter the field “mid-career”, there are different ways of doing so. Many enter without specific training to become an adult educator, instead depending solely on their life and work experience in a different field (Buiskool et al., 2010). In the United Kingdom, the majority of Further Education teachers come into the occupation after becoming established and experienced in a different field (such as surveyors, designers, child care workers, hairdressers etc). It is this experience that gives them the credibility they need to pass their knowledge to others, and has been historically prioritised over knowledge, roles, and identities as teachers or trainers (Venables, 1967; Tipton, 1973; Robson 1998 in Robson, Bailey & Larkin, 2004). Those with experience without formal qualifications often find their entry points through employers giving them a chance to train within their existing organisation, or private training providers viewing their experience as the crucial qualifying attribute (ESREA, 2011). Nuisl & Pehl (2000) found that most full-time staff move “sideways” into adult education in Germany. To further complicate the matter, Simons et al (2009) found that, in Australia, many beginning Vocational Education and Training teachers also had working lives outside the sector, which was often considered to be their primary employment (50% of participants).

Swain & Cara ( 2010) found seven typologies from their longitudinal study of over 1000 Skills for Life (SfL) adult educators. These typologies are:

- became SfL teacher after period as a volunteer;
- worked in teaching, but not in schools, before teaching SfL;
- worked as schoolteacher before transferring to SfL teaching;
- had prior career outside teaching before teaching SfL;
- had previously worked overseas before becoming an ESOL teacher in SfL;
- became SfL teacher after period as a (paid) learning support practitioner;
- SfL teaching is first career.

The dominance of these typologies as “second” career entry routes is evident. Our research looks at the stories of 20 individuals, who do have resonances with these typologies, but do not have the quantity to justify the use of them in this paper. Our participants’ stories, do however, identify two dominant entry point themes: organic; and disjuncture.

Organic entrances, could be similar to Nuisl & Pehl's (2000) idea of “sideways” movement, referring to individuals holding an existing occupation with specific job roles, who gradually have training incorporated as a part of their work. It seems to be this initial exposure, often coupled with positive affirmation, which entices people to slowly move away from their original occupation and slide into a role with a dominant focus on adult education.

... when I was in MOE, Ministry of Education, besides training the teachers, which was a small proportion of my time, I did a lot of research on learning style. So basically I was more of a researcher than a trainer... I still enjoyed the educational context, working with teachers, schools, students especially. So when I left MOE, I just wanted more flexibility. I wanted to leave school per se ... So I decided to branch out on my own. (AB\_130711)

Organic entry points were prevalent for the majority of our research participants, who mostly had jobs that allowed space within them, or next to them, for training roles. One slightly different example of training gradually becoming one’s main occupation is from the story of (AK\_270711). (AK\_270711) was first exposed to the idea of being a trainer through participating in a young preachers’ contest. While this is not exactly training, it led him to preach at a juvenile prison to help inmates develop life skills. Running alongside this began a full-time occupation in the insurance business, which also occasionally involved training insurance agents. This training element occurred as his boss heard he could preach. AK\_270711 states that “I always had a passion in training”, but training always took a secondary place to his insurance work, which morphed into him running his own insurance firm. It was three years ago when he decided to “pursue my passion on a paid basis” and relinquished his position in his insurance agency to focus on being a competency trainer within the Singapore WSQ system. This story illustrates the organic move towards pursuing training, where initial exposure occurred alongside, and then within, a non-training occupation.

This contrasts with stories of disjuncture, where people were not gradually exposed to training in a previous job, but made a clean cut from doing work involving no training (or other adult educator tasks) to jobs that centred around adult education, in particular, face-to-face training. AK\_190711 started her working life as a ward nurse before coming “full swing” into training.

I am a nurse by training. I was doing ward nursing, chronic nursing. I am onco [oncology] trained; taking care of cancer patients. That was where I started. After clinic nursing I went to nursing home. I went to varied places. And then I went to Institute of Technical Education to teach nursing as well. I was a research nurse in NUHS before I came here ... When I joined ITE, Institute of Technical Education, to train nurses. That time I was just trying out. After that, I thought I’ve been in

nursing for some time. I can't call myself I'm good. But I think there are some experiences and sharings I can do with new nurses. With this idea I came to training, full-swing.

When prompted further about why she chose training AK\_190711 elaborated:

I do want to see some changes in the healthcare stuff. We're not teaching like hundreds each batch. Perhaps each batch is like 20, 25, that's the average per class. With every one of them, if I can see changes, from the time they step in, to the time they go to clinical. I can see the improvements. How they treat the people, the patients. Personally I find that that is motivating.

AK\_190711 identifies a clean shift into training, and draws on her knowledge and experience for her new role. Her new role is closely related to her previous work in terms of content, but she never played a training role as a part of her practising nurse role.

AK\_150911 talked about his entry point of disjuncture in a more abrupt or brutal way. He refers to his shift as "a cut". AK\_150911 has shifted in his career from having an IT background, to being a business manager, and gaining the title of General Manager at the peak of his career. At this point he asked himself "Is that what I want to do for the next 10 years?"

... that's not what I want to do and I left my job. I left my job and went in search of full-time consultancy or training prospects. I just wanted to get out of that corporate and I wanted to go into the consulting ... I wanted to combine that, everything I have and get into consulting and training industry or rather I would say consulting was the initial thought ... but the consulting didn't go that well because it wasn't that straightforward as I thought. You could have all the experience and all the academic background, you have a Masters. So after three months and after six months it didn't go to be honest and that could be financially draining, especially for a high income earner with all the high assets then, I decided that I need to swap, I need to come training first.

This story sheds particular light on the inadequacy of naming this entry point "mid-career" or "second career". Here we can see that AK\_150911 had already experienced various shifts in his career, and this one firstly pointed him in the direction of consulting before eventually leading to training. These two potential occupations did seem to be attractive options as they allowed him, like AK\_190711, to draw on his wealth of experience in a different setting. Other points of disjuncture noted in the data are caused, not only by a hunger for a "sea change", but also physical limitations that meant one could no longer perform their job role and needed to find alternative work.



Ya I was in the pastry line for few years actually. About five years? Until I have a bad accident I cannot stand anymore, I mean I couldn't work ... I'm a hands-on person. Until a day where there is this accident where I cannot work in the kitchen anymore I started in the teaching line ... I always feel that I shouldn't hold onto my knowledge until I die. I should pass my knowledge to the next person ... I say, "Whatever you learn here you don't stop here, you have to generate to the next generation. If what you learn or what you created you doesn't pass it to the next person, then you stop there." I told them, "Imagine the olden days. The Chinese chef or all these, they won't teach you all these tricks, then how? Now all the things different right?" (AK\_200911)

Entering the teaching or training line in a related field, but with no training experience, is again reflected in this story. The push, however, did not come from boredom or mental burnout, but was instigated by physical incident. Teaching is presented as an attractive, exciting alternative, which in this case, may not have been possible without experience in the pastry line.

## Summary

These stories, and those of the other research participants, illustrate that there are multiple ways in which individuals enter the adult education field. Some are exposed to this line of work in an organic way, gradually, through exposure within an existing line of work. Others make a clear break from their previous occupation and make a somewhat brave decision to venture into the "unknown". The reasons behind why people who make a gradual transition versus a transition of disjuncture are slightly different. While both groups talk about training or teaching as an area where they can use their knowledge to help other people, additional reasons seem to vary between the groups. For the organic adult educators it seems that confidence in their abilities encourage the transition, with people telling them they have a talent, or should share their experiences. For those whose move is more abrupt, training is a new endeavour that offers them an alternative occupation where their previous experience and knowledge can be utilised. The implications of these varying entry points follow.

## ***Implications***

The major implication coming from the data on entry points speaks directly to professional development initiatives. The findings clearly unveil two distinct types of entry points, which come with difference levels of engagement in the adult education field. If professional development is seen as integral for all adult educators in order to improve the overall quality of workforce development provision, then perhaps professional development initiatives need to be more responsive to the different approaches and needs of the different types of adult educators. The current system

does not, however, acknowledge this difference, instead offering “one-size-fits-all” certifications.

On the one hand, the “organic” adult educators have prior experience engaging in training related activities as a minor part of a non-training role. This experience offers exposure to a set of practices, which may shape the way that adult educators perform their work, and also the types of support they may feel they need. For some people this means they are confident to start training without engaging in formal professional development initiatives. This is an especially viable option for work outside the WSQ courses. For those who choose to work within the WSQ system, however, a minimum qualification is now mandatory. Currently the provision of this qualification is the same, regardless of one’s prior experience with training roles. This may create resentment for individuals who consider their practice better than that offered in the course, or consider their abilities beyond those of the fellow novice classmates. Another point to note is that not all experience leads to best practice. Quite often people with experience in a particular field, such as training, may have to “undo” some of what they have learned in order to improve their practice. This again, may create resistance to new knowledge. These last two points illustrate characteristics particular to the group of adult educators who enter the field organically, which are not evident for those who enter through disjuncture.

Adult educators who enter the field due to a disjuncture from their prior work come with different “baggage”. They may not have confidence in their ability to train as soon as they hit the floor, and they will not come with a set of existing pedagogic practices. Disjuncture, caused by a desired sea change, injury, burn out, or redundancy for example, potentially place these people in a position of relative vulnerability compared to their more experienced counterparts. This group may be more likely to share the needs of “first choice” adult educators, who have no exposure to what it is like to practise as an adult educator except for their imaginations. This group is likely to need a different type of support compared to their counterparts with more experience.

Attaining interest in professional development to improve the quality of training may be difficult for both groups. It is not unreasonable to posture that adults with a wealth of experience may come with hostility towards engaging in professional development. Some may believe it to be “beneath” them, or may not see it as relevant to doing a job where they are well versed in their content knowledge. The importance of the “invisible” skills of being a good adult educator may not be apparent, or, gaining them, a welcomed endeavour. This dilemma could either mean that adult educators do not pursue formal professional development, or pursue it without interest. Either way, learning from professional development is less likely to take place without participants valuing their potential new knowledge and skills.

Each group has different levels of need, as well as potentially hostile attitudes toward gaining certified pedagogic knowledge. Those with organic entry points may resent being forced to gain a qualification simply to meet a regulatory requirement (if demanded by an employer) when they see themselves as already knowing how to train. On the other hand they may be attracted to investing more deeply in pedagogic knowledge to deepen their expertise in how to deliver their content to their learners. For those with entry points of disjuncture the attainment of a formal training qualification may be an attractive starting point for learning about skills and knowledge that are lacking in their practice. At the same time, however, they may not see these skills and knowledge as necessary to perform their job sufficiently, especially if they see their time as an adult educator as a brief encounter without long-term commitment. Either way, a single classroom with a mix of experienced and novice adult educators is going to face great difficulties. It does not seem possible to provide the appropriate breadth and depth of skills and knowledge to meet particular needs through professional development initiatives that may not be responsive to these differences.

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