Lifelong Learning-centred Community-based Leadership Development in Higher Education

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Abstract

This article proposes a Learning Sciences framework, set within a community-based leadership lens, emphasizing the implementation of a humanistic Lifelong Learning process, towards well-being in Higher Education (HE). What makes a community focused LL environment so difficult, is the longstanding business-based model that has dominated HE institutions over the past twenty years. It has produced a politically charged marketing-style mindset within HE administration that cascades to faculty and students. This cascade has contributed to mental health issues at several levels of HE. In response, HE administration and professional developmental bodies need to reframe leadership and professional development away from this dominant model, placing humanistic-focused development at the centre. The framework focuses on individual experiential development through the tripartite of LL, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Learning Communities (LC) through an Integration, Continuity and Engagement (ICE) process. This framework emphasises the reciprocal relationship that HE Administration must initiate and foster within the context of community development.

Keywords: lifelong learning; community-based leadership; business-based leadership; learning sciences; higher education

Introduction

Twenty-first-century Higher Education (HE) faculty are challenged to design, implement, assess, and evaluate curricula that promote and develop holistic self-regulating lifelong learners while also teaching their specialized content (Cornford, 2002; Longworth, 2003). The *entrepreneurial-business model* has dominated global HE institutions over the past 20 years.

Correspondingly, it has created a politically charged marketing-style mindset, dominating the HE ecosystem at all levels. (e.g., administration, faculty, and students) (Field, 2000a, 2000b; Gustavsson, 2002; Molesworth et al., 2011; Vicedo, 2017; Webber & Scott, 2008). Haimovitz & Dweck (2017) define *a mindset* as "beliefs about the capacity to grow one's abilities" (p. 1849). The business-based model is oriented towards externally motivated gain with the marketing-style mindset and has created learning communities that are characterized by transactional cost/benefit analysis without taking systemic or human effects into account. Much of HE leadership is not aware of these effects. HE administration and HE professional developmental bodies need to first appraise HE from a community-focussed lens. The community-focused lens places individual *Lifelong Learning* (LL) development and the development of its requisite micro-skills (e.g., growth mindset, appraisal, reflection, metacognition, critical thinking) at the centre. That stated, active consideration of the continual development of the community and the individual's contribution to that community are also critical. While LL is widely disseminated in policy papers, mission statements, accreditation documents, and department guidelines, HE professional development is filtered through the myopic marketing-based mindset. This involves the use of normalized structured business languages, such as investment, stakeholders, dividend, and leverage. The business language that emphasizes individual external gains and/or career prospects places economic rewards at the centre which impacts the entire HE ecosystem.

The entrepreneurial-business model and its corresponding marketing mindset has made the challenge of balancing lifelong learning development with content instruction more polarizing. Meeting the holistic development needs of learners while meeting the specific content learning needs, requires a paradigm shift when thinking about HE administration, teaching and learning. This paradigm pivot would dictate the need for training, mentorship, and coaching on how to effectively stream humanistic development for self-directed LL parallel to the subject matter. Regardless of the discipline, HE instructors rarely have teaching or leadership training in the field of learning. HE instructors tend to stay current with developments in their content areas. However, outside of their area of expertise, staying up-to-date with developments in education, teaching, learning, and leadership must also be considered. As societies and social dynamics change, educational practices are updated to reflect current levels of knowledge in the research literature and professional practice. This includes the most current knowledge in teaching and learning. HE professional development and leadership need to bring holistic development to the forefront by emphasizing the tripartite synergy between (a) LL, (b) Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and (c) a community-based approach with Learning Communities (LC).

This article proposes a Learning Sciences epistemological framework, grounded in a humanistic development approach (McKenney, 2018; Sommerhoff et al., 2018; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2019, 2021). This is applied through a community-based leadership lens (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The integrated humanistic learner development approach provides opportunities for HE instructors in the classrooms and administrators in offices to experience an approach that equally emphasizes transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary integration. This integration focusses on (a) individual growth and (b), community social development (Schweigert, 2007). This model

encourages self-directed LL Knowledge Frame (KF) foundations, functioning to concomitantly help the community and each individual within the learning ecosystem grow together.

While not comprehensive, Figure 1 shows the integrated nature of the Learning Sciences framework with a sample of major disciplines. The Learning Sciences has the potential for shared Knowledge Frames (KF) and research bodies as well as operationalizing the *in-between space* within each discipline and between each and every discipline.

Figure 1

Basic Adapted Learning Sciences Overview
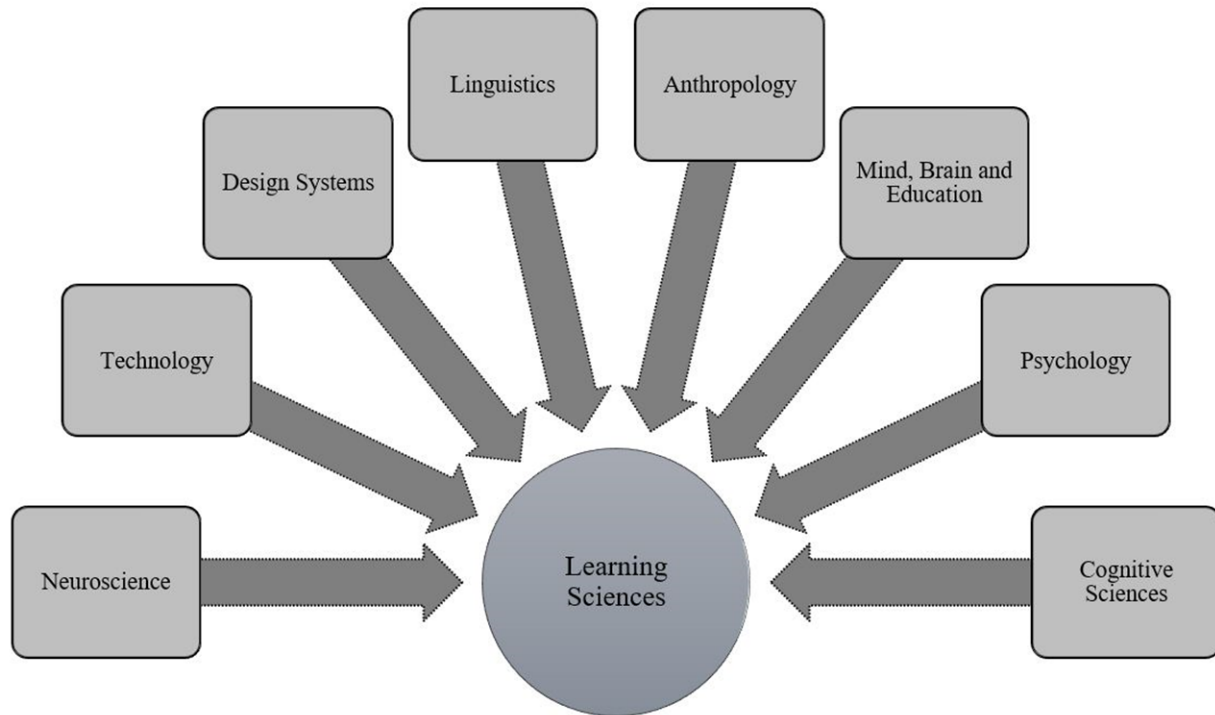
Adapted from (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2019, 2021)

The use of in-between spaces within disciplines and amongst related disciplines takes advantage of integration opportunities, promoting potential LL, SEL, and LC development for all HE administration, faculty, and students. The opportunity to integrate KF, create continuity between KF and to promotes engagement in new directions.

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The Learning Sciences Approach

In recent years, the field of Learning Sciences has emerged as a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary field designed to integrate several aspects of independent but related fields or disciplines that each intersect with learning. Tokuhama-Espinosa (2019) states that "the goal of the Learning Sciences is to … study how people learn best and under which conditions … including a wide range of fields such as neuroscience, psychology and education which grow independently and also collectively" (p.2). The combination of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in the Learning Sciences gives licence to the integration of knowledge and skills from several fields, maximizing the holistic and humanistic process of classroom learning within a community model. In support of this, Choi and Pak (2006) state:

> Interdisciplinarity analyzes, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole. Transdisciplinary integrates the natural, social, and health sciences in a humanistic context, and transcends their traditional boundaries. The objectives of multiple disciplinary approaches are to resolve real world or complex problems to provide different perspectives on problems. (p. 351)

While not a comprehensive list of the Learning Sciences disciplines (Full graphic: Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2019, 2021), Figure 2 shows the breadth and depth that this type of integrated approach offers.

Neither LL or leadership are traditionally included in the Learning Sciences. However, given the integrated relationship of learning with leadership, its role in the community-based leadership model should be considered. Figure 2 shows three core elements of the Learning Sciences (i.e., Neuroscience, Psychology, and Education), immigrating the fields of lifelong

learning and leadership. Analysing, synthesizing, and harmonizing these three disciplines with lifelong learning and leadership and taking advantage of their intertwined relationships shows the interdisciplinary functionality of the Learning Sciences.

Figure 2

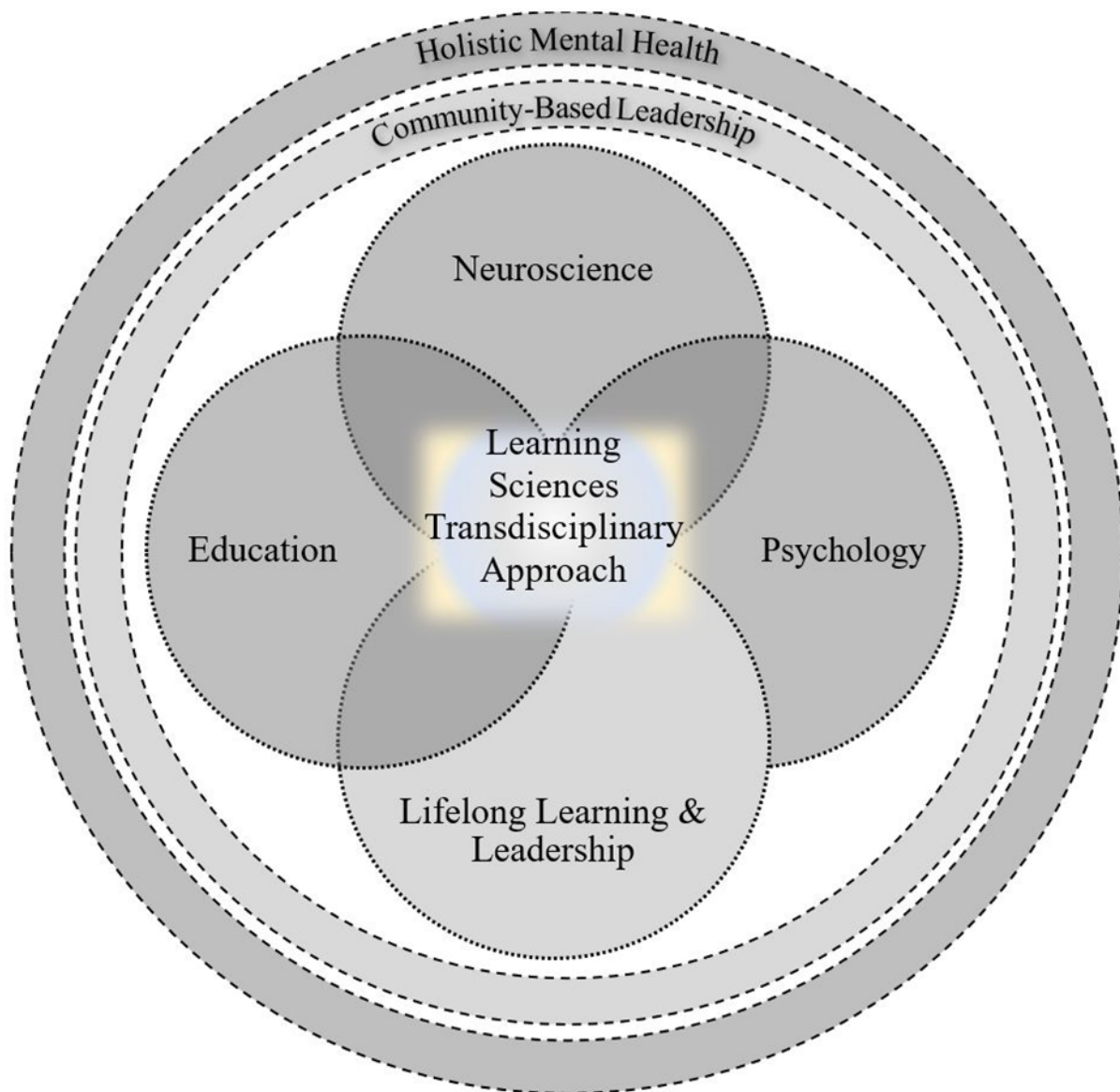*Learning Sciences Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Approach*

Figure 2 shows the immersion of the five components within the community-based leadership lens. From this lens, each member of the community is expected to grow while contributing to the

growth and development of the community. Figure 2's final layer of immersion is framed around holistic mental health. Mental health is defined as "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes [their] own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and can make a contribution to [their] community" (Galderisi et al., 2015, p.231). Overall, the Learning Sciences promotes growth towards a balance between humanistic development, content learning (knowledge and skills), mental health, and wellness.

Knowledge Frameworks (KF)

Goffman et al. (1997) introduced and defined the concept of *knowledge frames (KF),* designating how individuals initiate, develop, and maintain or even change expectations. In the current generation, this is often referred to as *ways of knowing*. At every level of HE, evidence of business-based KF and the subsequent mindset is producing students and graduates that have limited LL skills, translating into limited ways of knowing. These limited skillsets co-exist through a reciprocal relationship with the environment, causing high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in current and graduating students (Haidar et al., 2018; Kumaraswamy, 2013; Stallman, 2010; Watson, 2021)). In the face of these unremitting and expanding side effects, humanistic LL is still systemically seen as a fluffy superfluous construct. Ironically as infants, our innate humanistic learning system is based on play (Weisberg et al., 2013) and active integration of experience. However, this is abandoned for a linear and management-based organization at the earliest levels of structured education and learning. Designed during the industrial revolution, the current learning model for schooling, was originally intended to put workers into factories and should have evolved since then (Dewey, 1933). Despite KF evolution and development in several disciplines (e.g., technology, neuroscience, psychology,) that adapt to advances in learning and teaching, higher educational KF, with respect to community-based learning, remain relatively

planted in 19th century learning approaches and has increasingly adopted more economic-based language and action discourse towards management in recent years.

A New Mindset for KF

Given the research literature supporting new ways of knowing, at this point, embracing new expectations of KF in HE leadership, with the requisite mindset shift, seems prudent. The shift begins with an awareness of the need to move away from the business-based discourse KF. This includes appraising and building awareness of compartmentalized business language that exists in the current dominant KF and its influence on mindsets in HE. This would require breaching the Normative Learning Culture (NLC) and Set-Social Mechanisms (SSM) (Gross, 2009) that dominate HE and embracing the in-between space towards a community-based learning KF. Within the scope of humanistic learning, and grounded epistemologically, Figure 3 shows a brief overview of how to breach, provide framework scaffolding, and mentor LL towards operationalized and transferrable humanistic skillsets.

Figure 3

Overview of the Breach, Framework, Emancipation Process for Humanistic Learning
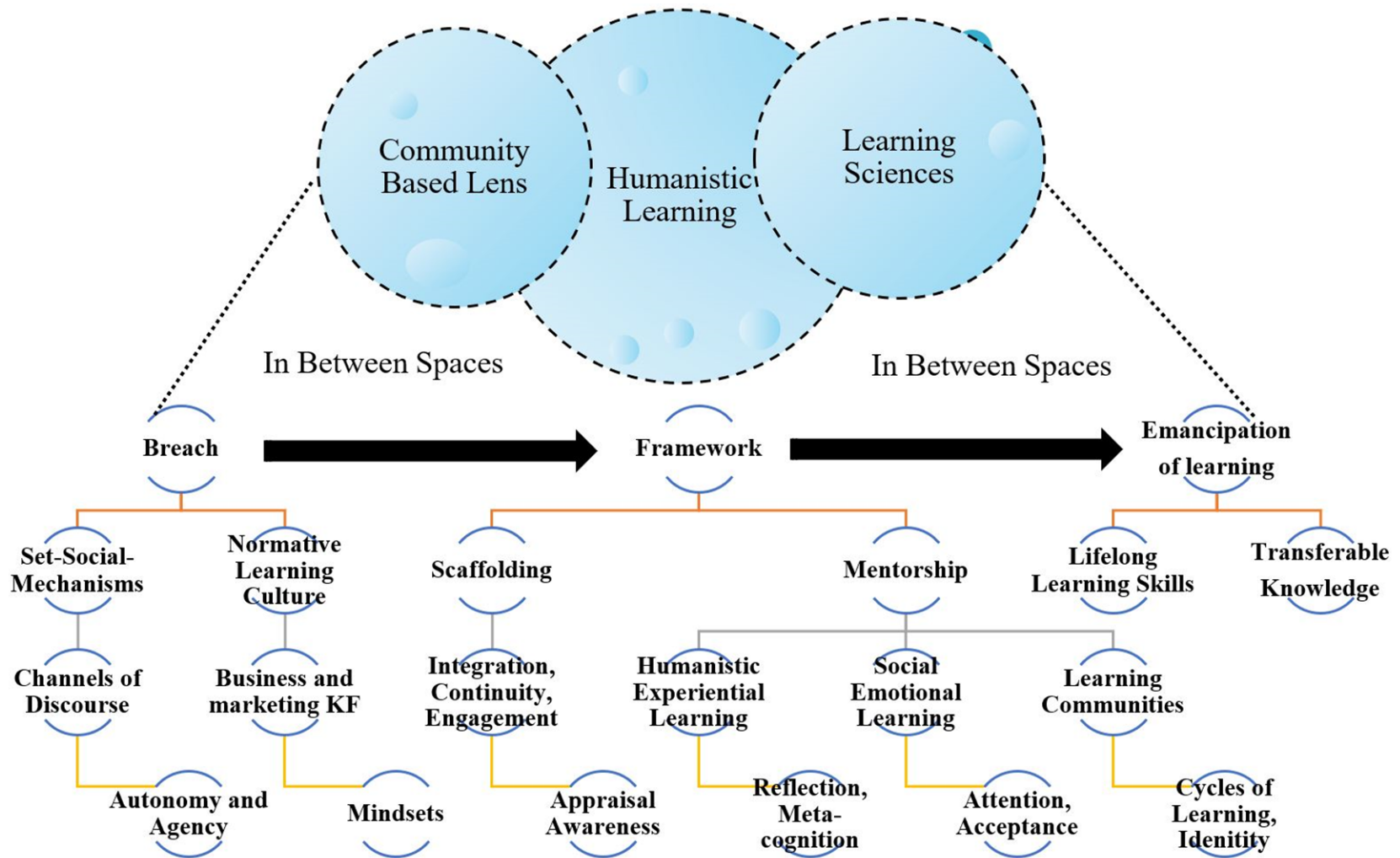
Initially, training would include a breach of the current dominant teaching and learning mechanisms. This would be followed by a framework to be scaffolded in order to compensate for the breached NLC. New knowledge and skills would then be mentored within each LL, SEL, and localized LC knowledge frame.

Introducing integrated and community-focussed KF language while mentoring faculty on how to understand, synthesize, and operationalize that language within their courses is vital. This facilitates courses that inculcate LL and SEL through community-based LC. HE administrators and instructors would be introduced to the process of Integration, Continuity, and Engagement (ICE) with learning and leadership at the forefront. Figure 4 provides an overview of humanistic development and its integral parts and processes.

Figure 4

Humanistic Development with Classroom Components and Processes
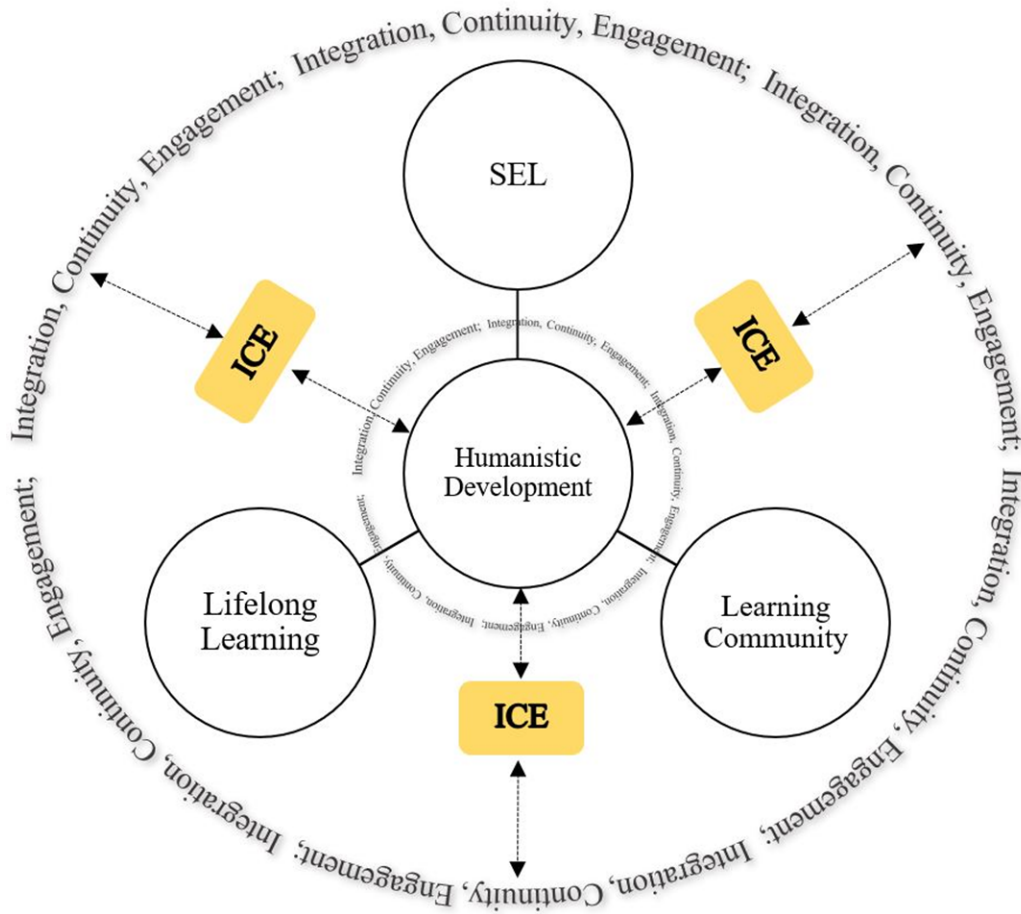

Figure 4 (Watson & Sokugawa [in Press]) shows a humanistic development KF in the centre, curated through the dual ICE processes, with LL, SEL, and LC components.

ICE creates greater autonomy and agency within coursework, and would require new ways of conceptualizing student learning outcomes, content delivery, groupwork, and assessment. These KF offer increased opportunities for self-directed learning mindsets for each learner within a classroom, and for the classroom group as a whole. ICE and its interplay between LL, SEL, and LC would develop HE educator abilities to concomitantly teach course content while streaming research-informed learning skills to their learners. This integrated process has the potential to

create a community-focused *learned significance* within the HE administration, faculty, and student body, influencing the entire HE landscape.

Lifelong Learning with Leadership in the Context of the HE Business Model

The Transition and Commodification of Lifelong Learning (LL)

LL is a concept that is included in most HE campus mandates, mission statements, charters, and core competencies. LL was originally meant to reflect the holistic and humanistic capacity to learn throughout one's lifespan (Field, 2000a, 2000b). This includes the interplay between neurobiological, psychological, and sociocultural aspects of learning. As the neuroscience (e.g., embodied cognition, social cognition neuro plasticity, dual coding) and psychology (e.g., zone of proximal development, growth mindset, activity theory) literature has expanded, human learning literature and knowledge bases have also grown. However, despite developments about the nature and process of learning, education and LL have continued to develop towards a framework based on industry and economy. Few institutions or bodies can agree on a stable definition of a *lifelong learning* orientation or skillset beyond the economics of education. For example, Nesbit et al (2013) contend that the primary focus of lifelong learning is "on economic interest: countries, communities, businesses, and individuals increasingly require flexibility in their responses to the changing forces and factors of production that were initiated by a shift from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy" (p. 36). This is specifically the type of economy-based definition that dominates higher education lifelong learning and causes the current state of confusion in education.

In the HE landscapes, there are two discrete but equal KFs. Both KFs are influenced by the business-based leadership model. These KF are (a) learning; and (b) leadership; however, each requires rationalist, empirical, and pragmatic (Scheffler, 1965) understanding to create a legitimate

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body of knowledge. These KFs impact the entire HE ecosystem, yet each has clear needs within their separate but parallel research literature. Each KF has not sought to integrate into the practical context, nor have they investigated integration from a research perspective. This lack of integration has created HE institutions that limit (a) LL orientation, (b) LL culture, and (c) LL skills development outside of the economic definition. These limitations impact KF development at all HE levels and have created a dependency that continues to propagate the business mindset and model. This dependency and its lack of humanistic development are specifically why there is a need to consider LL, SEL, and LC through the transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of the Learning Sciences.

LL has transitioned from its humanistic origins to represent an economic-focused emphasis (Delors, 1998; Elfert, 2015; Faure & Herrera, 1972). Gustavsson (2002) considers language discourse and action as a critical element of this shift by stating:

> the humanistic and democratic vocabulary, which had earlier dominated the
> rhetoric in educational politics, came to be transformed into an economic
> language. Catch-words like 'active citizens', 'responsible people', 'collaboration'
> and 'social care', were replaced by 'efficiency', 'quality', 'competence', 'goal-
> direction' and 'evaluation'. (p. 14)

However, through global economic policies of production, distribution, and management, government and NGO agencies (e.g., OECD, EU) have altered the humanistic LL landscape from its holistic form and converted it into economic rhetoric (Gustavsson, 2002). Through the language of discourse that exists within the scope of globalization, the concept of LL has become a function of workforce development. It has transformed it from "being a humanistic concept with social implications to being defined in terms of human capital" Gustavsson, 2002, p.14). Gustavsson

(2002), made these observations twenty years ago but decades earlier Polanyi ([1944] 2001), forewarned that social progress was fixated on the *market society,* showing parallelism to Gustavsson's *human capital in lifelong learning*. He stated, "instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system." (p.60). Stated simply, instead of the economics being driven by the social milieu, it is the economy that drives social relationships. This influence manifests as ideas that promotes lobbyist style advocacy. For instance, modern social media and the marketing-lobbyist style mindset is propagated and driven by this exact business-based KF, emphasizing Misguided Self-Advocacy (MSA).

For this article, MSA is defined as *actively self-promoting one's own knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values without critically considering the social world, or the critical impact on the community*. MSA focuses on lobbying heuristics that use advocacy as social capital for self-promoted beliefs with minimal historical or contextual knowledge. MSA also emphasizes SDL as a form of self-promotion fueled by emotional rhetoric for solely individual external gain. In this MSA context, advocacy-focused language and communication (Harris and McGrath, 2012) dominates the learned significance of HE community development, influencing KF action and language discourse.

HE Learning and the Business Mindset with MSA

This business model and marketing mindset relies on MSA and a self-projection of personal growth, focussed solely on external individual gain. Since the 1970s this KF has infiltrated a number of interest groups and social movements including education, and has contributed to the strong business-based influence over HE policy, teaching, and HE leadership. Applied to HE, this mindset impacts the role learning experiences play in an individual's learning process, compartmentalizing the individual's value of a learning experience (Yeager et al., 2019).

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It is opportunistic without the consideration of others outside of an obstacle to overcome. This mindset also projects future opportunities through a *cost-benefit lens*, emphasizing *efficiency* and *investment-dividend* KF. Further, this mindset skews learning into a transactional KF, impacting how all parties (i.e., administrators, instructors, students) approach the learning process.

The language of HE is also significant in the operationalization of KF. Language through metaphor is a strong reinforcer (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). They contend that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action" (p. 4). Connected to the HE business model KF, if conceptual systems emphasize and encourage business-based or marketing-focussed metaphors, they become so engrained that individuals and groups fail to recognize them. For example, the simple metaphor of *time is money* is so engrained in global societies now that the dominant thinking in relation to time often leads to actions representing (a) *don't waste my time*, (b) *use your time profitably, or* (c) *you don't have much time left, so budget your time*. Clearly, through language, principles and values demonstrate a business-based emphasis. Further, the language and thinking of these simple examples can lead to MSA when acting in the social world. MSA metastasizes the business-based model thinking as justifications to emotional rhetoric such as, *it's nothing personal it's just business*. This promotes an ego-centric non-humanistic process: *step on everyone else to get what I want* mindset. The importance of language through metaphor is critical in KF mindsets and heuristics that people depend on in education and in life.

The Permanence of the Business Mindset

The dominance of social, political, and cultural autonomy and agency has been usurped from the people due to this mindset. Polanyi (2018) identified the façade of the business mindset, contending that a new way to think was necessary. Polanyi (1947) commentary titled "Our obsolete

market mindset: Civilization must find a new thought pattern" was republished in 2018. At *face value*, his statement speaks volumes about the long-standing permanence of the marketing mindset. Polanyi further believed "behind the fading fabric of competitive capitalism there looms the portent of an industrial civilization with its paralyzing division of labor, standardization of life, supremacy of mechanism over organism and organization over spontaneity" (p. 197). This warning was not heeded, and his concerns are still relevant today in HE learning and leadership culture. Examples include a reliance on digital technology (mechanism over organism), and the rising costs of education globally (paralyzing division of labor). This reflects the current state of HE leadership KF.

The Dominance of the Business Model

The majority of HE language, thought, and initiatives in the current generation come from business backgrounds (Houchens & Keedy, 2009; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2019; Webber & Scott, 2008). The reasons are twofold. First, funding from governments for HE has been declining over the past two decades (Webber & Scott, 2008). This creates a frenetic market economy in the field of education which further has created a language that places learning firmly in the crosshairs of commodification and marketing competition. Second, all HE levels, language relating to study and learning is often taken from the business world. Gustavsson (2002) discusses the changing language of education to reflect human capital and economy over learning; accordingly, phrases such as, *investment in your studies will produce dividends in the future* is a small example of language directly linked to the business world.

This type of language implies that investment in learning is a passive process that is devoid of individual autonomy and agency. In contrast commitment to learning is an active process that includes being present within a back-and-forth experiential process (Jarvis, 1987, 2006, 2012),

requiring reflection, metacognitive monitoring, agency, and continual hard work. Language and thought are intricately intertwined and lead to the establishment of mindsets. As the HE administrative level, the literature presents data that more than half of educational leadership standards come from business models (Houchens & Keedy, 2009; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2019), strengthening the argument that business is intertwined with the language and learning of education. As a result, it is not surprising then that policy development, outcome and goal development, and strategic thinking initiatives are business oriented. Scott and Webber (2013) and Webber and Scott (2008) maintain that the nature of educational organizations have fundamentally changed. Webber and Scott, (2008) contend that these changes are the result of:

> Resources for teaching and research initiatives come from a combination of government, student research grants, private sector funds, and industry partnerships … there is an increased consciousness of strategically positioned institutions to enhance their market share within the highly competitive educational industry … thereby increasing their funding sources. (p. 1)

Given that HE is considered an *industry,* as opposed to a public sector, it reasons that language and action discourse and research literature would trend in that direction. This is a solid example of the power of language and the influence it can have on teaching, learning, and education.

## The Marketization of Learning through Educational Hegemony

Education as a Tradable Commodity

Currently, the focus on education as a *tradable commodity* (e.g., domestic HE fees versus international students) dominates the discourse. This domination has led to changes in leadership mindsets that impact HE institutions, faculty, and students. Molesworth et al (2011) argue that

over the past four decades, under the pretense of flexibility, efficiency, and accessibility, "the culture of academic life has been transformed by the institutionalization of the policies of marketization … it is the cultural, intellectual and pedagogic consequences of marketization that represent a cause for concern" (pp. 1-2). *Marketization* creates a *Service Provider–Customer Mindset* (e.g., mission statements, student surveys, accountability assessments, overly structured benchmarks) for students and faculty that impacts the social perception of education and learning. This overemphasis has propagated the business-based leadership model, spanning organizational levels to individual levels. Psychologically, the schemata (Bartlett & Bartlett, 1995; Neisser, 1994) of modern students are different (Sokugawa, 2022). These schemata, inundated with the business management leadership model, promote the simplistic and shallow internalization of knowledge that leads to subject matter-based bulimic learning (Zorek et al., 2010). This produces heuristics that lean towards a conditioned response or simply performing well on a standardized exam. This short-sighted focus undercuts holistic humanistic development within HE leadership interactions. This *Service Provider–Customer Mindset* must change to represent a dual-pronged approach that builds from Freire's contention of emancipated learners. Freire (1970), intended for individuals to focus on holistic self-development to overcome present challenges but also to transfer that learning towards the emerging self as a lifelong learner for humanistic development. Figure 5 identifies the critical connections between LL, SEL, and LC and the interplay of back-and-forth with the self.

Figure 5

Dual-Pronged Emancipation and the interplay with LL, SEL, and LC
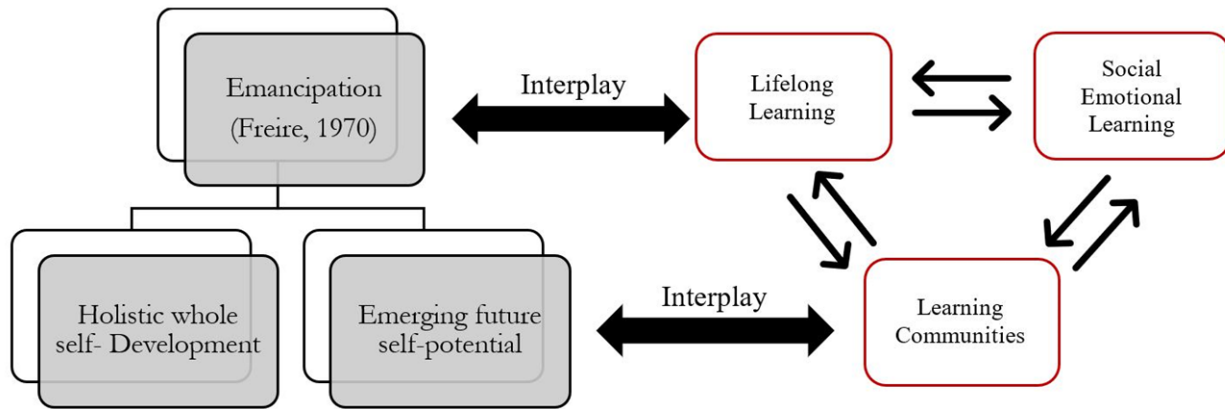
(Adapted from Watson, 2019 and Watson and Sokugawa, in Press)

Advocates of the Business Model and Lifelong Learning

Advocates of the business-based leadership model in HE contend that flexibility and access give an *adult learning* sense to the learning process. However, Jarvis (2006) states that "flexibility and accessibility do not, contrary to popular view, enhance the 'adultness' of the learning experience. They primarily facilitate the economics of education, thus enabling greater consumer access and increasing commercial opportunities of higher educational institutions" (p. 183). Under the seemingly transparent guise of flexibility and accessibility, the business-based leadership model has metamorphosized HE into management, reducing HE leadership to not how the human learning spirit is cultivated but how greater revenue can be generated. This has, in turn, altered learner agency and autonomy into organizational and individual MSA. One result of MSA is language patterns and KF being reduced to simply an investment-dividend relationship, feeding into a schema of instant gratification (rewards) that is externally focused. These rewards serve to create learned significance (social cognition), promoting an external locus of control (Rotter, 1966) versus a holistic development internal locus of control. This influences how individuals perceive

learning and how they perceive learning experiences in the social world. MSA encourages learners to push against LL, SEL, and LC while promoting language and thought patterns that have both neuro-biological impacts (e.g., elevated dopamine levels) and pragmatic behavioural impacts (e.g., bullying, hierarchical power dynamics).

Integrated KF and the Need for Learning Sciences

The current HE academic model does not inherently or intentionally foster the development of self-directed LL skills (e.g., metacognition, reflection, resilience, goal setting, decision-making, self-care, and wellness). In fact, it is complicit in the development of many HE mental health issues that are now commonplace (e.g., stress, anxiety, and depression). Two specific examples of these issues in HE academics that impact the learner's identity are maladaptive perfectionism and impostor syndrome (Hu et al., 2019). This has sparked the creation of centres/academies for teaching and learning within several HE contexts (e.g., undergraduate transitioning from high school; medical schools; business schools). However, centres/academies and their measures are predominantly reactive in nature as students who reach out for assistance are generally already having learning issues. Further, many students do not self-identify for several reasons. One reason is the stigma surrounding asking for help. The dominant business culture promotes this "badge of honour" resistance to proactive calls for assistance.

A second reason is learners are coming to HE without a resilient lifelong learning skillset and mindset to even self-appraise themselves as needing assistance. As seen in the adaptations to Tokuhama-Espinosa's (2019) conceptualization of Learning Sciences shown in Figures 1 and 2, Learning Sciences does not currently include leadership or lifelong learning. The Learning Sciences is grounded in the integration of multiple fields that work together to grow both independently and together. The key is in the process of operationalization within the scope of HE.

This operationalization requires a synergy between the research fields and finding the critical integration, continuity, and engagement points for LL, SEL, and LC. This requires the awareness of several lenses to initiate this process.

The Lifelong Learning Lens

Holistic lifelong learner mental health, self-care, and wellness in relation to learning, education, neuroscience and psychology are significant discourses in the current generation, lending to the prudence of a discussion of LL in the HE mindset. A humanistic definition for *lifelong learning* (LL) is:

> the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process, which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values towards the understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes, and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments. (Adapted from Longworth, 2003, p. 62)

From this definition, growth over a lifespan is contingent on the continuous development process toward human potential. This requires each individual to actively seek experiential learning opportunities that foster self-improvement. Longworth (2003) states that "in the end, it is the individual citizens who exercise the choice to learn or not to learn" (p. 79), which indicates the need to foster and develop the self-regulating skills essential to holistic LL.

As a developable aspect of lifelong learning, *self-directed learning* (SDL) is defined as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help from others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and implementing appropriate learning strategies (Knowles, 1975, p. 18). Self-regulation as a skill of SDL is central to the human foundation for choice and decision-making but requires substantial

external support and the development of micro-skills (e.g., self-reflection, metacognition, self-regulation). However, to mentor learners to become self-directed, there must be scaffolding frameworks in place that foster the LL skills of appraisal, awareness, attention, and acceptance (Watson, 2019). This would require HE leadership ensuring that HE faculty were able to stream LL skill development within their context courses.

The Sociocultural Psychological Lens

From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), the context of creating a systemic learning support system (e.g., education, HE) that fosters the symbiotic relationship between individuals and their development within their communities is essential. Support within this process is necessary to stimulate and empower the individual's ability to meet their learning potential; however, if this type of learner development is never mentored or supported learners will not understand the experiential back-and-forth process of self-directed lifelong learning.

Humans are naturally curious organisms and seek to master their environment through intrinsic motivations. (Causgrove Dunn & Zimmer, 2020; Deci, 1972; Deci & Moller, 2005; White, 1959) White (1959) termed this competence. This inherent motivation significantly impacts individual perceptions of one's own capabilities within a certain environment (Bandura, 2005; Bandura & McClelland, 1977; Harter, 1978). As a result, if the environment or dominant culture is business-based, human nature will drive individuals to master that environment. This includes the development of skillsets that reflect those values (e.g., test-taking, external rewards, external locus of control). This is the basis of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Causgrove Dunn & Zimmer, 2020; Deci & Moller, 2005; Gillison et al., 2009) and its requisite components of competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Regardless of social context, humans innately gravitate towards relatedness and autonomy in attempts to master their own environment. It is the relationship between language, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in response to social conditions that are reinforced over time. Business mindset vs lifelong mindset is about risk-taking and motivation. A person's outcome depends on their motivation and that motivation is impacted by their mindset. Therefore, it is mindset combined with motivation that determines actions and outcomes.

The Neuroscience Lens

It is clear that the social cognitive nature of the brain is set up to cater to dominant KF and patterns of language and behaviour. Adolphs (1999) defines social cognition "as the processes that subserve behavior in response to conspecifics (other individuals of the same species), and, in particular, to those higher cognitive processes subserving the extremely diverse and flexible social behaviors" (p. 1) Essentially, the brain has a system in place to integrate the complex relationship between humans, their environments and their social interactions within those environments. Figure 6 shows the interplay between the individual genes, the organism (i.e., neuroscience and psychology), the social context and the social interactions.

Figure 6

Social Cognition and the Interplay with Genes, Brain, Behaviour, and a Person's Biography
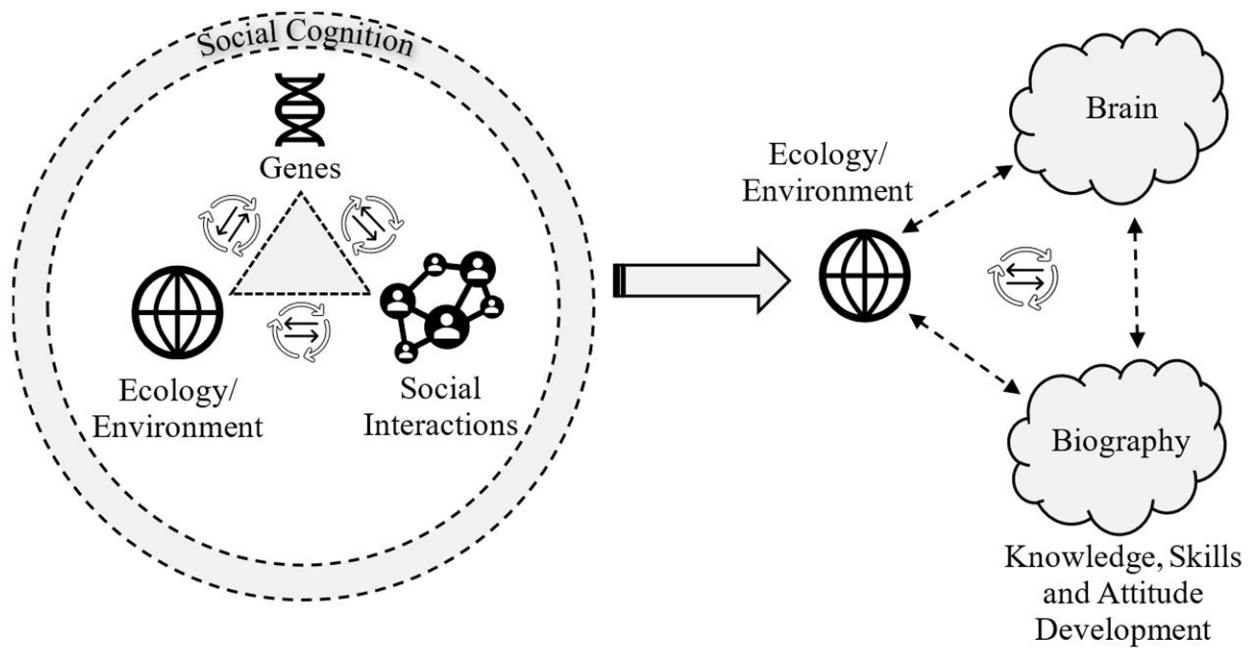
The current HE knowledge frames within learning and leadership are set up to maximize the social plasticity of the brain and these intrinsic drives. The integration begins with the organism (individual) interacting within its environment. Dweck (2008) emphasizes the critical importance of integration at the neurobiological level. She states "not only do genes and environment cooperate as we develop, but genes require input from the environment to work properly" (p. 4). She also stresses that people have more capacity for lifelong learning and brain development than they ever thought" (p. 4). Immersed within one's experiences in the social world and following Haimovitz & Dweck's (2017) definition of mindset, an individual's genes in conjunction with the social world. The clear interaction between the environment, the individual, their communication interactions have a great impact on physically, socially, cognitively, and emotionally in response to experiences (Adolphs, 1999). The integration of human neuroscience, and psychology with the environment through communication shown in Figure 6 is exactly why the integrative nature of

the Learning sciences is critical. It also shows the experimental nature of the LL process, the need to understand SEL and why LC are critical. The neuroscience lens offers significant value for integration within the HE landscape.

The Humanistic Process of Experiential Learning in HE For Lifelong Learning

From the perspective of LL as an experiential process, throughout life, each person, develops experiences that create contextual references in the social world. These contexts are stored as memories and become a person's reference to future social situations and potential learning experiences or knowledge gaps. In the psychology research literature these are referred to as schema/schemata. In the context of Experiential Learning, Jarvis et al (2003) defines these collections of memories as a person's *biography* and state that the experiences alone are not the termination process but "how we interpret that experience" (p. 76). How individuals take these interpretations and apply them in future experiential situations is pragmatically significant.

Currently in HE, these experiences are directed by heuristics that push the marketing-focussed mindset and MSA. Jarvis et al (2003) considers *experience* as "subjective … not merely inseparable from thought but itself a form of thought" (p. 54) that are highly personalized, socially influential. Jarvis follows by positing that our subjective thoughts and corresponding actions are created, influenced, and curated "by our biography and by the social conditions in which they occur (p. 54). Considering the biography as malleable and socially impactful, the empowerment of intentionally applying it context of community-based learning in HE is exciting. Jarvis et al (2003) defines human learning as occurring:

> when individuals, as whole persons (cognitive, physical, emotional and spiritual),
>
> are consciously aware of a situation and respond, or try to respond meaningfully

to what they experience and then seek to reproduce or transform it and integrate the outcomes into their own biographies (p. 67).

Experiential Learning as a Situated Social Process of Challenge

Accepting this definition, Jarvis (1995) purports that a person's "Perception of the situation is largely determined by individual biography and it is therefore subjective and individual" (p. 67). In a back-and-forth manner, previous experiences, stored in the *biography,* the mind selects and applies significant episodes to give context to sensory and learning experiences, so the individual can grow holistically. Therefore, an individual, armed with a biography of experiences can make informed learning choices in future experiences in increasing contexts. Jarvis et al (2003) provide a learning episode framework that highlights the social, cognitive and physical elements of learning.

Considering Jarvis' *experiential model of learning* (Jarvis, 1987, 1999, 2006, 2012; Jarvis et al., 2003)*,* extending Kolb's (1984) experimental *learning theory*, as each person experiences life, through specific social interactions, he/she is transforming individual information into situated knowledge and making that situated knowledge available to others, while continuing to reflect, adapt to, and learn individually. Essentially, learning occurs twice; once socially and a second time individually (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Vygotsky, 1980).

Gustavsson, (2002) offers a straightforward analogy for the process of experiential learning:

Our processes of learning and experiencing starts at home. At home may be translated as our identity and understanding of ourselves and our well-known and mundane world. But in order to grow as human beings we must leave our safe homes and go out in search of adventures to encounter what is foreign and different. The well-known meets the unknown. The key to developing lifelong

learning must be tied to one's own self and built on understanding. Knowledge

has to touch oneself and one's own world in some way, without being enclosed

and kept there. (p. 18)

Extending from Jarvis' concept of biography and using Gustavsson's analogy within community-based lens, to be effective, each individual within the learning community must understand and be capable of operationalizing their biography by intentionally leaving the safe confines of their own biography (home). Bourdieu (1977, 2017) terms this *home*, a *habitus or sense of place,* representing one's understanding of his/her own self-concept, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and their perception of the requisite needs of any social environment. The habitus creates a sense of individual safety. This sense of safety encapsulates beliefs of one's learning capacity and beliefs of one's cultural competence. Connecting to Jarvis' *biography*, he postulated that discrepancies between one's biography and experiential challenges are part of the experiential learning process. Jarvis (2006, 2012) terms this imbalance (gap) as *disjuncture.*

Entering a social world and experiencing disjuncture, creates opportunities to fill those gaps through Jarvis' et al (2003) four-routes-of-Learning (non-learning, memorization, reflection, doing). Attempting to grow, learn or build the humanistic biography is an innate process of autonomy and relatedness, seeking to achieve competence (mastery) within an organism's environment. These are the tenets of *Self-Determination Theory* (Causgrove Dunn & Zimmer, 2020). Circling back to the current HE environment and the business-based model, the marketing-based mindset has numbed the ability of individuals to engage in humanistic development, replaced by externally focused goals and motivations.

Application of Experiential Learning in HE for Lifelong learning

Taken together, this would potentially initiate an active back-and-forth process where learners have the autonomy and potential agency to intentionally enter and engage different communities of practice (Lave, 1991) in the social world. The individual would then be able intentionally seek out social interaction in order to have fully immersed experiences individually and in groups. Taking advantage of Vygotsky's (1978) theory of *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD), learners could actively engage in self-initiated ZPD, by seeking self-development within all social interactions. However, this would require the individual to have the micro-LL skills of appraisal, awareness, attention, and acceptance within their biography. Self-initiated ZPD represents the self-advocacy of the individual actively seeking out more knowledgeable and skilled others for the betterment of their biography. However, it would also integrate individual growth and identity needs with a community-based focus, towards betterment of the community.

Shown in Figure 7, learners would leave their learning and cultural habitus to experience content in the social world with a micro-focus on the context and context, fully aware of their biography and levels of disjuncture. Learners would have to adjust to the amount of autonomy and agency afforded to them in each context. Next, the learners would be able to (a) cycle back to their cultural and learning habitus, and to their biography. In addition, learners would be able to (b) expand their holistic application of their biography by considering the contribution to the community members and/or the community as a whole. Imagine, if administration, instructors and students were all applying this community-based lens, through their own self-development-based biographies. The potential for greater LL, SEL, and LC development and holistic applications would be exponentially increased. This process and the integrated lenses that it considers is the embodiment of the Learning Sciences Approach.

Figure 7

Learning, Lifelong learning and a Back-and-forth Process in a Community
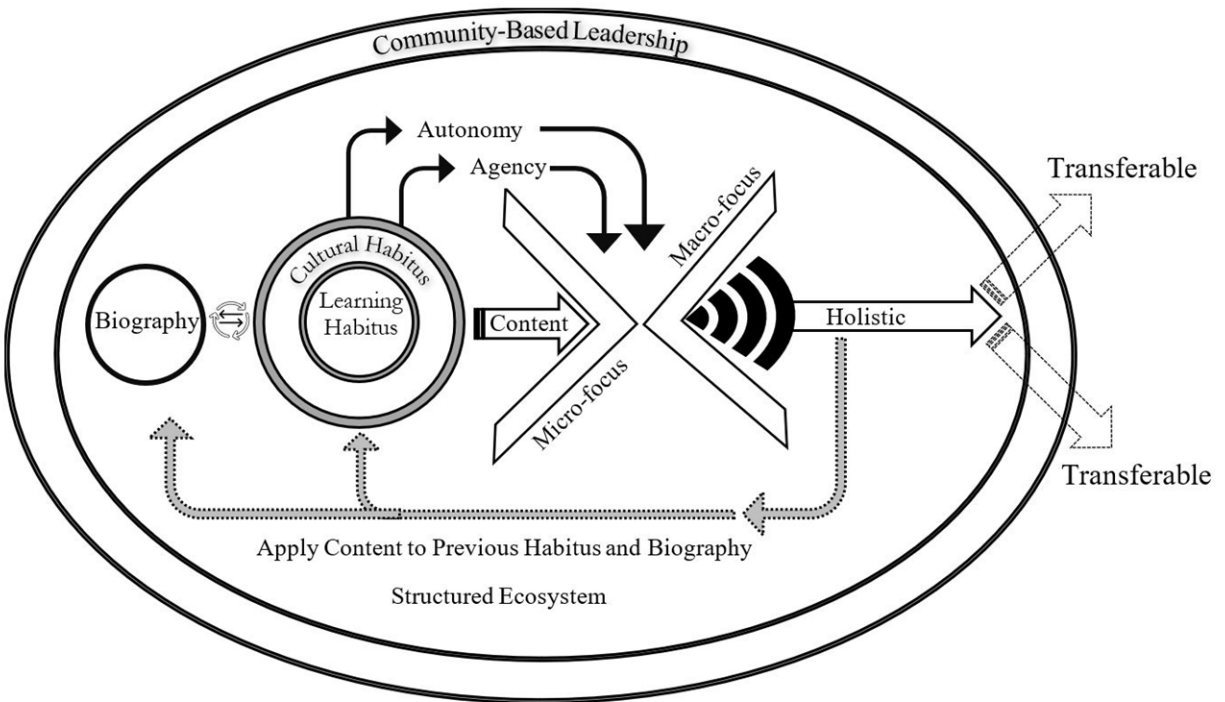
The Leadership Lens in Higher Education

While this is not a condemnation of business, entrepreneurship, or the open market, its impact on HE learner skillsets and society's conception of the learning process remains an issue. First, there has been a shift away from HE institutions promoting LL, critical thinking, and scholarly research towards pivoting through industry technology and production changes. Functioning like a conveyor belt and employment pipeline, HE continues to fluctuate without learning skillset development as the primary function. While students still receive their degrees and find employment, there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that graduates need to find employment and be lifelong learners.

Second, leadership in HE also comes predominantly from the business-based model. Leadership is a dynamic, multimillion-dollar industry that is referenced in all facets of social life from recreation, sports, and education to business, politics, and war (Day, 2011; Edmonstone et al., 2019; Grint, 2012). However, there is no consensus on defining, building, mentoring, maintaining, or enhancing it (Day et al., 2014; Grint, 2005, 2012). Traditionally, leadership is synonymous with the process of management, including mindsets and skills taken from business-based thinking. This thinking is often associated with a managerial skillset highlighted by step-by-step planning and mistake-free solutions (James et al., 2020; Newman, 2020).

The major reasons leadership has such difficulty solidifying a common thread is (a) the transient, context dependent, relational nature of leadership, (b) its lack of a stable definition, and (c) its reliance on linking individual personality with leadership (Day et al., 2014). The shortcomings of leadership theory reside in the emphasis on the superiority and command and control of leaders over their followers (Collinson, 2005, 2006; Riggio, 2018). This serves to only blur the organizational leadership vision (e.g., lifelong learning) and replaces it with compliance

or management (e.g., business). Furthermore, Grint (2012) characterizes leadership as a *Pandora's box*. Pandora's box represents the uncertain nature of the experiential world and how the uncertainty can also create hope through leadership. This is the true nature of leadership, (i.e., overcoming problems instead of managing day-to-day plans). This aligns with the concept of self-directed, lifelong learning as the hope of maximizing individual development. This development is a process that requires overcoming challenges experientially, dealing with mistakes and formulating organic responses that lead to growth and development.

Humanistic Lifelong Learning and Leadership

The following definition of leadership is most appropriate to LL and community approaches:

> The relational process of vision and strategy development that allows thew alignment of relevant people to adapt to and overcome problems within a particular social environment or community … empowering people, positions, processes, and results that serve growth practices of each individual towards the betterment of the community and the collective vision. (Adapted from Grint, 2007; Grint & Jackson, 2010; Lichtenstein et al., 2006)

This definition shows the integration between the vision of LL and community with the operationalization of leadership, combining individuals' learning and growth with the community's development. Similarly, Lichtenstein et al (2006) characterizes leadership as "an emergent event, an outcome of relational interactions among agents … that emerges through dynamic interactions" (p. 2). Applied to the HE ecosystem, leadership should seek to apply the self-directed LL vision by responding to issues and challenges to the landscape of learning for all administrators, faculty, and students. This requires leaders to be capable of dealing with relational aspects of social,

emotional and academics. Instructors at all HE institution should be ensuring that, through duty of care, they have created an environment and a curriculum that not only meets the needs of their content, but also meets the needs of their students' lifelong learning holistic growth.

Reframing the Language Discourse on Leadership

The business-based leadership model is reinforced by linguistic relativity (Enfield, 2015). The language, thoughts, feelings actions and reactions apply directly to the metaphors and directly to both dominant KF: learning and leadership. Cognition, language, emotion, culture, and communication are all intertwined aspects of the social human experience (Tomasello, 1992, 2001). The business language discourse combined with the malleable nature of social cognition (Lieberman, 2007; Owens & Tanner, 2017; Van Overwalle, 2009) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) (Brackett et al., 2019; Watson and Sokugawa., in press) has created neural heuristic patterns that connect directly to how language impacts perception, cognition, and mindsets towards sociocultural influences and compartmentalized thinking.

In order to initiate a change towards a community-based leadership lens, a language change is needed. Terminology such as investment, dividends, and stakeholders need to be replaced with terminology such as commitment, development, and relation-holders (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019). In addition, the learner-centered approach that emphasizes the service provider-customer relationship needs to be replaced with a learning-centered approach that focuses on the dual processes of personal development and content.

Through the lens of leadership, the language of leader-follower also needs to be reconsidered to reflect a more individual–relation-holder–community interaction (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019). This language discourse change would shift the focus away from the idea of a stakeholder who is "dependent on the power and influence that these parties can exert on the

organization due to the strength of the contractual underpinnings of their claims or stakes" (p. 36). It would provide an opportunity to reframe concepts such as reciprocity and responsibility toward the development of self and others. This fits in line with Freire's (1996) claim that within a true educational community, the purpose of leadership must emphasize being "liberated with the people—not to win them over (p.95) and that the teacher cannot think for her students nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking that is concerned about reality does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication" (p. 77). This supports the critical nature of the language within leadership and learning and demonstrates the link between them. It is clear that learning and leadership significantly contribute to the HE experience, but lifelong humanistic learning must be seen as the liberating aspect of human experience. Once the language change has been introduced, foundational thought and action can be scaffolded in through training.

Learning and Leadership Together

Since the HE learning experience does not occur in a vacuum, framing the leadership and learning together, two concepts that have multifactorial roles within the human experience, could stabilize the discussion towards a community-based lens (Haruna, 2009). This is specifically why HE leadership needs to focus on a community-based model to the betterment of the HE community as a whole, articulating the need to ensure that as a community, learners are taught how to learn effectively side-by-side with content.

Reframing of Leadership in HE through the Learning Sciences

Framing leadership as a relational process depends very greatly on the context, including the environment and the individuals within that environment. Lichtenstein et al. (2006) foreshadowed that "traditional hierarchical views of leadership are less and less useful given the complexities of our modern world" (p.2) and that leadership scholarship "must transition to new

perspectives that account for the complex adaptive needs of organizations" (p. 2). Educational organizations are not immune to these changes as leadership needs to be viewed through an interdisciplinary model and wrapped within a community-based lens. The current default lens in HE needs to define leadership, not as a person, process, position, or results working step by step through a management style plan but operationalizing lifelong learning mandates that are already in place. Reframed in this way, leadership praxis in HE can focus on the practice of responding to ongoing problems through strategic relationships that place learning through the community at the centre. The practical application of this reframing must not be cosmetic in nature but must include professional development training at all HE levels.

In general, most training for HE, is centered around understanding domain-specific content. This renders many HE instructors, from the lecturer to the professor, as expert content delivery specialists but does not necessarily provide them with teaching skills or leadership skills. Once framed in community-based leadership, it is critical to define the aspects of learning that are central to the foundational knowledge in several areas ranging from neuroscience, psychology, education, and anthropology combined with an understanding of self-directed lifelong learning. What is needed is to develop multidisciplinary educators who can understand, synthesize, and operationalize the critical relationships between their subject content and learning. Teacher education must look for an integrated way to take advantage of what is known and educate itself to provide learning-focused community-centered leadership.

Community-based leadership is defined as:

> The development of vision and strategies that that allow the alignment of relevant
>
> people to adapt to an overcome problems within a particular social environment
>
> or community. The practices that occur behind those strategies empower people,

positions, processes, and results that serve to the growth of each individual

towards the betterment of the community and the collective vision (Adapted from

Kotter, 1999, p.10)

This definition speaks to the integration of the individual within the community and the vision to

overcome problems together. Within a community-based leadership lens, LL orientations, culture

and skillsets are foundational pillars that foster SEL and humanistic LC within HE institutions,

offices, and classrooms. Lending from global models of community-based leadership, Ubuntu is

one model representative of humanistic development congruent with LL values (Metz, 2018;

Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019). Metz (2018) describes the foundations of Ubuntu, an African

form of community-based leadership. Ubuntu espouses the values of:

I am because we are … a person is a person thro0ugh other persons… which

means honoring people by sharing virtue of their dignified ability to be party to

communal relationships of sharing a way of life and caring for others' quality of

life. (p. 38)

The Ubuntu lens models the possibility of individual development with an LL mindset focused on

the caring in-between relationships needed to build humanistic individuals and communities that

reciprocate for one another in HE.

Conclusion

This article attempted to further the discussion of the potential for community-based

leadership and its future role in HE. This article proposed the need for a Learning Sciences

approach to community-based leadership. This change requires reconstituting the environment of

the business-based leadership that is deeply ingrained in the mindsets of HE administrators

instructors and students. This article proposed a humanistic framework applied through a

community-based leadership lens and a process of integration, continuity and engagement. This approach offers HE instructors in the classrooms and administrators in offices to educate, teach, and learn towards integrated LL and leadership KF foundations. Figure 8 shows this process beginning with a shift in language and mindset. This would be scaffolded and supported by learning community training towards cooperation and reciprocity for all HE faculty, administration, and, students towards holistic development and wellness.

Figure 8

Processes and Components of a learning-community Focussed HE Framework
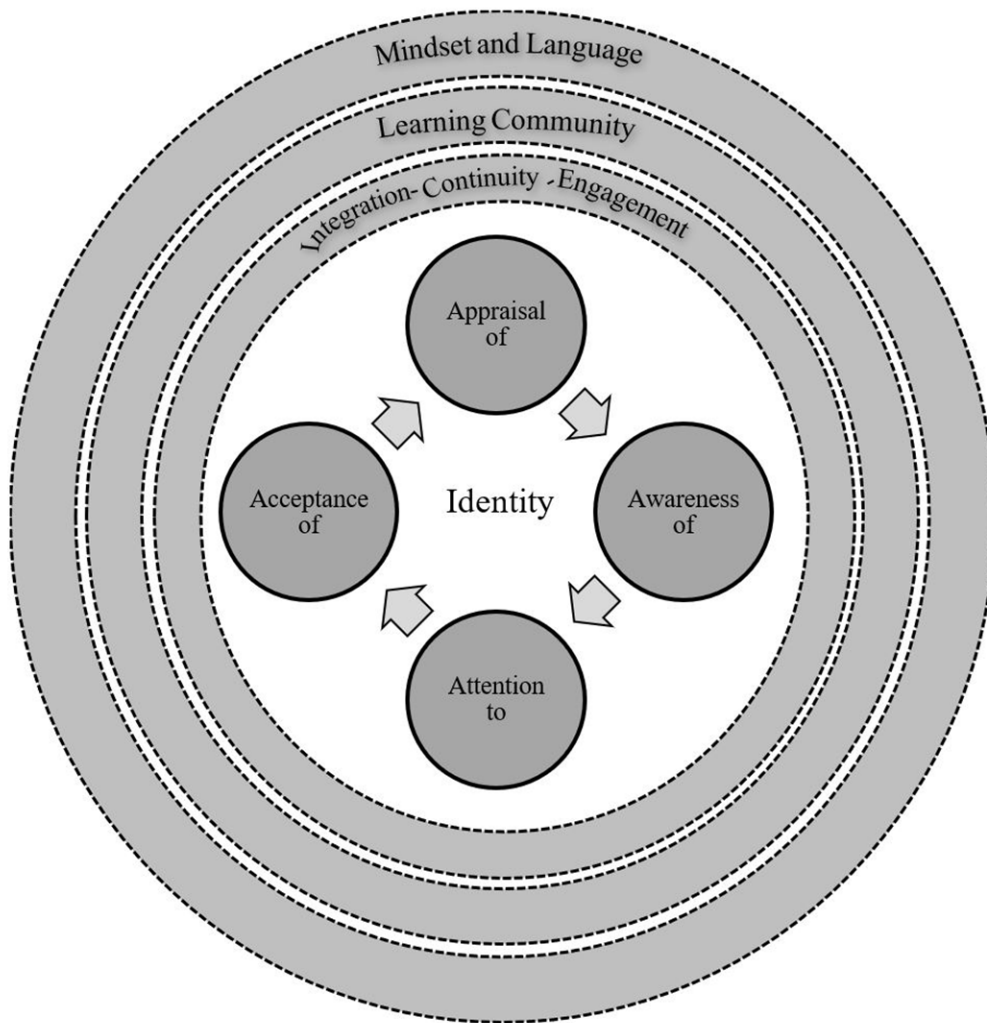
The HE learning community would be mentored through the ICE process. Each individual within the HE learning ecosystem would have the potential grow together through micro-skills of appraisal, awareness, attention and acceptance. Shifting towards the lens of a community-based model offers the opportunity to move HE training towards well-being. This model would allow all HE members to develop their LL identity and provide opportunities to engage in a more reciprocal way.

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Author Biography

Kevin Watson is a learning Specialist at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. He is a Learning Sciences doctoral candidate at the University of Calgary. He holds an MSc. in Applied Professional Studies in Lifelong Learning from the University of Surrey (UK) and an MSc. in the Psychology and Neuroscience of Mental Health from King's College London (UK). He holds bachelor's degrees in Education (ESL, English Literature, Drama) and Kinesiology from the University of British Columbia (UBC). Further, he holds a Graduate Certificate in Systemic Functional Linguistics from UBC. He is Teacher Regulation Board (TRB) certified in Canada and holds a TESOL accreditation. Lastly, Kevin hold certificates in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Yoga training, Mind Body Medicine, and Fascial Stretch Therapy. He believe in the integration of Mind, Body and Spirit in learning and education.

For the past three decades, Kevin has been working as Learning Specialist and Higher Education faculty member. Kevin has taught several subjects around the globe in Abu Dhabi, the USA, Japan, Thailand, and Barbados, as well as in his home in Canada.

Kevin research focus is phenomenological hermeneutic research that is committed to exploring the interpretive lived experiences of students. He is committed to student development, curriculum design, faculty development and leadership. Kevin was most recently the Course Director for Several cohorts of the Essentials of Lifelong Learning Course for struggling medical students and the Coordinator of the Mindsets for Medicine program within his institution.

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