

## Chapter III

# Education

### Introduction

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We have examined the basic processes underlying learning, and differences in the way in which these basic processes may be deployed by different individuals. We have also explored differences in the knowledge structures of different individuals, in terms of the prior types and levels of knowledge that they bring to bear on a given learning situation. This chapter explores the art and science of learning design and teaching. These represent the reverse side of the learning coin, and entail designing, delivering, and assessing learning activities and experiences in response to individual learners' needs for knowledge, taking into account differences in their styles and levels of learning as discussed in the previous chapter.

Learning design and teaching entail helping learners move from their current knowledge state to some new *desired* state. However, the notion of desired is problematic, in that what is deemed desirable may differ according to the perspectives of different stakeholders in the learning process. To continue the travel analogy, different stake-

holders may entertain very different views of what are desirable destinations—and routes. These differences may be substantially influenced by different views of what education is for, how people learn, and how learning may best be brought about.

Chapters I and II discussed how people learn. This chapter explores educational philosophies (which focus on what learning is for), and learning design (the goal of which is to bring about effective learning). This chapter also introduces another theme which recurs throughout the book, namely: the balance between pedagogical mediation (reliance by the learner on educators and/or educational systems) and learner autonomy (independence and self-regulation in learning). The chapter ends by further developing the model originally presented in Chapter I, and extended in Chapter II, by integrating key concepts relating to educational philosophies and learning design.

## **Educational Philosophies and Learning Design**

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Educational philosophies relate to views on *what learning is for* (for example, vocational preparation or self-actualisation). Such views, coupled with those on *how* people learn as discussed in the previous chapter, may influence educationists in specifying pedagogic approaches, which represent views on *how learning may best be brought about*—how teaching and learning should be designed, organised, and delivered (e.g., via lectures or independent study), and how learning can and should be assessed (for example, by providing evidence that *learning objectives* have been achieved). Such differences are characterised by a tension between mediation and autonomy (discussed later in this chapter).

There are a number of *mainstream* philosophies, each with its own distinctive view of what education is for. For example, the *liberal* tradition associated with Aristotle and Rousseau (Bamborough, 1963; Hutchins, 1968) emphasises the development of the intellect via a broad *well-rounded* education. *Realism* also emphasises intellectual development, reality being considered primarily in terms of empirically proven facts (Chisholm, 1961; Whitehead, 1933). The *progressive* tradition (Bergevin, 1967; Dewey, 1938; Lindeman, 1928) stresses links between education and society via the development of community-relevant practical and vocational skills. *Behavioural* educational philosophy (Skinner, 1971; Thorndike, 1927; Tyler, 1949) is predicated on the notions of control, behaviour modification, and compliance with standards, while *humanistic* education (Maslow, 1976; Rogers, 1969; Tough, 1979) places emphasis on freedom and autonomy, personal growth, and self-actualisation. The *radical* tradition (Adams & Horton, 1975; Freire, 1970; Illich, 1970) views the role of education as an agent for fundamental societal, cultural, political, and economic change. Each of these traditions also has implications for particular types of pedagogic approaches and learning goals that are desirable.

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