The endpoint enigma

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Background

- Assessment affects learning (backwash effect) (Watkins, Dahlin and Eckholm, 2005)
- Profound effect in adult literacy and adult education (Merrifield, 1998)
- Under-researched in adult education - the biggest black box
- Contributes a formative tool
Endpoint

A program outcome and the demonstration of that outcome

Explicit

The endpoints are clear to everybody coming into the program and remain constant throughout the program for all involved.
Implicit

The endpoints are not clearly stated, but can be derived from the nature and topic of the program.

Collective

All involved in the program contribute to the definition of the endpoints, and are committed to them.
Negotiated

Individuals define their own endpoints, in conjunction with program staff, instructors, or others. Learners are committed to these highly personalised outcomes.

Subverted

The instructors or learners deliberately choose to move away from the endpoints that may have been established for the program.
Absent

Endpoints are simply not present for the program or individuals.

Explicit
Implicit
Collective
Negotiated
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Absent

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Community programs

Vocational preparation
MOOCs

Schooling
Some further questions

1. How aligned, or unaligned, can endpoints be?
2. What are the opportunities and costs for different types and relationships of endpoints?
3. How comfortable is the program planner with the particular pattern of endpoints in the program?
4. To what extent, and how, can the endpoints be changed?