

OUR FUTURE IS NOW

By Alan B. Knox

INTRODUCTION

A current Adult Learning article by Steve Schmidt [vol 3, no 1 Feb 2022, pp.40-43] is a timely reminder that during the past century global and local events and trends have shaped the publications and programs by educators of adults. We each recognize that the current global health, economic, governmental, military, environmental, and human rights crisis calls for collective contributions by educators of adults from all parts of the field.

This OUR FUTURE IS NOW article, aimed at American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE) members and other colleagues, is now part of the Knox/Houle Collection in the Adult Learning Exchange Virtual Community which located at the SCOC website Knox-Houle Collection (<https://scoc-consulting.com/knoxhoule-collection>). The eight interrelated sections of the article (intent, forward, context, global, future, opportunities, directions, and publications) contain citations to relevant publications, with the full bibliographic references, located following the website article entitled Enhancing Proficiencies, Praxis, and Performance.

INTENT

The intent of this essay is to share my reflections about our past that can help guide our collective future directions. The following comments about paths for lifelong, wide, and deep learning and change, include appreciation of major publications, admiration of exemplary performance, and use of mentor cascades of learning.

Origins of fundamental concepts about adult learning and change span several thousand years; and during the past century, English-language professional literature precepts and examples have accumulated for use to guide publications and activities. Ongoing use of such major professional publications have contributed to transcendent leadership by former and current AAACE CPAE faculty and students with limited indicators of use by educators beyond AAACE.

Contrary to a century-long priority by educators of adults, on behalf of learning, progress, and democracy during recent decades combinations of invisible political and economic organization tactics have undermined support for open-learning and citizen participation. The website noted above, includes an article about use of a forum for local discussion among print, radio, and public television journalists along with higher education faculty to explore ways to increase media literacy in support of truth and justice.

Effective past examples of CPAE graduate programs of various sizes illustrate potential future contributions by able and interested experts and adjunct arrangements regarding theory and practice as educators of adults from many fields such as administration, aging, anthropology,

arts, audiology, biology, chemistry, communication, counseling, economics, engineering, family health, family studies, history, human development, political science, psychology, public health, small business development, sociology, social work, special education, technology, and zoology. Deming style quality improvement procedures emphasize ongoing group assessment of desirable and feasible improvements. In democratic societies and organizations, the learning focus can be individual self-directed, intergenerational family, teamwork, self-help groups: and development within organizations, neighborhoods, communities, regions, along with international and global perspectives.

FORWARD

I share Steve's view that our professional publications throughout the past century can enable our timely contributions during this major crisis. Because of the multiple associations that include educators of adults, collaboration can increase impact. One fundamental challenge is to encourage cooperation by prominent colleagues regarding educational foundations in philosophy and history (such as Elias & Merriam, 1995; Ross-Gordon & Associates, 2017; concluding chapters on future directions in the Kasworm & Associates, 2010; and Rocco & Associates, 2020 decennial Handbooks; as well as the many publications cited following the website article on Enhancing proficiencies, Praxis, and Performance [which emphasizes concepts and procedures for improved performance] and articles in the 2017 International Compendium on mapping the literature of the field.

CONTEXT

Many changes have influenced our field in the past century: as noted in sources such as the 2022 article by Steve Schmidt; the 2016 Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ) article about graduate programs by Elizabeth Tisdell; and an AEA 1973 report on CPAE program trends and directions. Our professional literature and cascade of learning role models provide ample examples of concepts and procedures for use of educational technology for virtual interactive learning with conferences, collaborative projects, formal courses, seminar discussions, self-directed learning, and ongoing evaluation feedback to practitioners, which are very applicable to enhancing learning and change in formal education institutions, quality improvement in enterprises, and local agencies such as libraries, museums, and faith congregations.

GLOBAL

Reports and interpretations that characterize our field as fragmentary during the past quarter century reflect previous benefits from two 1994 publications by Stubblefield and by Kett; and by Houle's 1992 book on the literature of the field. Such publication help explain the structural and functional influences for associations that are relevant to practical roles, and cooperate on behalf of shared values. Decennial Handbooks typically provide chapters on the separate types

of provider organizations and related associations. The International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE) plans to publish highlights from early classic publications, which could be used for study groups. A 2016 publication on Improving Professional Learning, based on an open systems framework, concludes with a bibliographic essay, emphasizing performance.

Major recent books with global perspectives include Alfred and Associates (2021) on global, populations, environment, and education; Boyte and Associates (2018) on awakening democracy; Modise (2015) on cases on leading; and Milana and Nesbit (2015) on global policy.

The 2017 book edited by Rayburn, Turco, and Davis, has chapters that analyze educational strategies for each category of medical and healthcare roles. Sandmann and Associates (2016) reports a 20-year retrospective history of higher education outreach and engagement. Stake and Visse's (2021) book provides a rationale for a Paradigm of care by people in many organizations. Articles in popular media publications can also help us understand major contextual influences on learning opportunities for adults. Leaders of professional associations, with members interested in a proposed collaborative effort, will also have publications and procedures to suggest.

FUTURE

The Knox-Houle collection article on enhancing proficiencies, praxis, and performance includes eight topics about connections between learning and performance (education, publications, systems, resources, results, evaluation and proficient). Most of the publications referred to in this Collection focus on current conditions. Also, faith congregations and universities have explored earlier treatment of indigenous peoples and African slaves to encourage other people to own their past.

Steve's "call to action" (2022) article is entitled "Our time is now." Beginning several months before the 2020 Ides of March onset of the health, economic, and governmental crisis, my focus has been on future opportunities. Colleagues from other countries have expressed similar priorities, especially given the rising international solidarity on behalf of peace, justice, and lifelong wide and deep learning.

OPPORTUNITIES

Each of the 28 summaries in the Futures 2020 PLUS article in the collection begins with a few basic concepts about the topic and concludes with a question for your reflection and action. Seven decades of attention to CPAE graduate programs (Jensen and Associates (1964); AEA (1973); AEQ (2016); Decennial Handbooks; and the (2017) Compendium articles) chronicle major trends and influences.

Leaders of other associations of educators of adults, interested in such cooperation, can select and augment such summaries from other associations, for a working paper to explore potential interest in future cooperation. The result can be invitations to relevant associations and local providers, which can be mutually beneficial for all who cooperate. At each stage of the past century, major foundations have been supportive.

DIRECTIONS

The concluding chapters in the 2010 and 2020 handbooks provide perspectives on analyzing desirable future directions in the field (contemporary issues, reflecting on priorities, and complex influences). The 2018-2022 strategic plan for the international adult and continuing education Hall of Fame is exploring ways to increase connections with various segments of the field so associations for educators of adults such as AAACE, SACME, imagining America, and COLLO/UNESCO symposium series about learning cities illustrate potential cooperation.

The 2017 Compendium articles 63 (on associations) and 64 (on journals) provide useful information about corresponding websites to search to identify current Association leaders to contact about potential cooperation, and help drafting brief articles from their perspective on potential benefits of such collaborative contributions by educators of adults and cooperation among local provider organizations.

Effective past examples of CPAE graduate programs of various sizes illustrate potential future contributions by able and interested experts on theory and practice has educators of adults who may be associated with various fields and disciplines (such as administration, aging, arts, anthropology, audiology, varsity, chemistry, communication, counseling, engineering, family health, economics, hearing, family studies, history, human development, political science, psychology, public health, small business administration, sociology, social work, special education, technology, and zoology).

PUBLICATION

I plan to continue responding to requests for donations of print books (from a thousand book collection to select and add books not in CPAE related University libraries to increase their availability through interlibrary loan for use by educators of adults working in each local region). I hope many of us will support Steve Schmidt's leadership and example. Such cooperation with colleagues and other associations is important, especially during the next 2-6 years, to enhance local opportunities for lifelong learning about global events and contributions by educators of adults in various provider organizations and related associations. Faith congregations can help members use shared higher values to enable them to deal with controversial worldly issues (such as international conflicts and public health measures).

COLLEAGUES, I welcome your comments. ALAN

REFERENCES:

A complete list of references for this article are available as part of the article [Enhancing Proficiencies, Praxis, and Performance](#) which is included as part of the Knox Houle Collection at the SCOC website <https://scoc-consulting.com/knoxhoule-collection>

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