

# FUTURES 2020 PLUS

By Alan Knox

This FUTURES 2020 Plus article provides an overview of the main conclusions and implications from each location and stage of the Cascades of Learning memoir. This Futures 2020 Plus article focuses on the future; which differs from the Cascades of Learning memoir's emphasis on past and present activities and influences.

The 25 brief summaries of conclusions that compose this Futures 2020 Plus article are about concepts for lifelong, wide and deep learning, to encourage readers to reflect on each conclusion, regarding their own future leadership as educators of adults.

This Futures 2020 Plus article is in the Knox / Houle Collection of the Adult Learning Exchange website, along with the companion Enhancing Proficiencies Praxis and Performance article and attached bibliography of publications; which also includes references cited in the Futures 2020 Plus article. Each of the 25 conclusions about desirable directions, concludes with a question for readers to ponder.

**1. EDUCATORS-** People in various occupations serve as educators of adults, who guide ongoing cascades of learning and enhanced performance in stakeholder roles (participants, instructors, and coordinators). Examples include teachers in preparatory secondary and higher education; who transcend a narrow definition of teaching as transmission of their knowledge to largely passive students. Also included in helping/caring occupations are people associated with health professions, [ physicians, nurses, and allied roles], in which quality improvement is central to a continuum of care and prevention, for patients and caregivers in the family and community. Additional examples include: counselors, clergy, librarians, social workers, investigative reporters; and people who coordinate group, organization and community development activities. Reports of the progress and outcomes from these varied examples occur in conferences and publications by dozens of associations. Consider more examples (that you encounter) of people serving as educators of adults in paid or volunteer roles. You are encouraged to reflect on such examples, with implications for yourself and your colleagues.

**2. PURPOSE-** Educators of adults have an unprecedented opportunity since the Ides of March 2020, to assist with one of the most sweeping societal transformations in the United States during the past century. Similar events occurred at the beginning of the Great Depression, and of World War II. Such societal events are similar to personal, family and occupational change events, which can trigger a central theme regarding demands and constraints that we experience, which have become questions for us to consider. Assistance about transitions are being recognized; as new opportunities and barriers to be explored.

A central theme of publications for educators of adults during the past century, has been lifelong learning and change, as in 2010 and 2020 Decennial Handbooks, including the 2017 Compendium, and related publications, that have chronicled the broad scope of adult and continuing education. Reports during the past six decades have documented increasing portions of the adult population, serving as program participants and educators.

Technology has increased access to learning opportunities that could benefit people in every location, role, stage and walk of life. The historic mission for transcendent educators of adults has been to reduce barriers to further learning and change opportunities.

Since March 2020, eLearning options using distance education and digital simulations have added more widespread opportunities. Consider ways, during the next few months, in which colleagues from various parts of the field can cooperate, with shared purpose, to apply lifelong learning concepts and procedures to the current multi-year health, political, economic, and opportunity transition.

**3. EXCHANGE-** A central concept about adult learning and change, is mutually beneficial exchanges. Planning for beneficial exchanges entails active learning by program participants, along with other program stakeholders. The interrelated linkage between the purpose, process and product of participant and stakeholder cycles, contributes to sustained progress. (1969, Havelock).

This basic model is applicable to many learning activities, even self-directed learning projects, and quality improvement / talent development in organizations, voluntary associations support mutually beneficial exchanges, for volunteers, whose enhanced learning and performance for their other life roles is one of their benefits. Many land-grant university county extension staff members assist multiple volunteer leaders in their region. Members of extended families and faith congregations, depend on such exchanges. Distance education examples illustrate use of technology on behalf of learning and change. (2011, Burge, Gibson & Gibson). Be alert to ways in which educational technology can strengthen exchanges. Consider ways in which you and other educators of adults can share such examples to enrich your own programs.

**4.CREATION-** Educators of adults have available many creative examples of their art and science (2011, Knox). Before identifying with a field of adult and continuing education, some practitioners and scholars enjoyed careers related to the arts and humanities. The performing arts such as music, theater, and movies, take for granted the large and small collective ensembles that depend on creative contributions by authors, composers, directors, and performers onstage in major and minor roles. On a small but important scale, people who help plan and conduct learning opportunities for adults are members of improvisational performing arts in which people behind the scenes, onstage and in the audience, can help to create the experience for everyone, and contribute to opportunities for future productions.

Painting and the visual arts provide additional examples of the relationship between patrons and museum education participants, and about artists over the centuries. In addition to

scientific creativity and products for the public, the art and science by scholars and practitioners related to education of adults, has included use of archives that contain past examples and publications of innovations, that can enrich educational program planning, performance, ongoing evaluation, use of technology; and follow-up by coordinators and participants themselves. Watch for relevant examples. Consider memorable instances in which you reflected on the aesthetic and technical aspects of an outstanding educational activity.

**5. PERFORMANCE-** Role-performance is part of adult life in family, community, work, faith congregation, associations, and as citizens with local, state, and global connections. Authentic performance is valued as a basis for trust, cooperation, productivity, peace, and justice.

A major criterion for professional development by educators of adults, is that in addition to dissemination of knowledge, enrichment of appreciation and refinement of skills; effective educational activities enable participants to enhance some aspects of their role performance. Many aspects of an effective half-day workshop or a month-long retreat can contribute to enhanced performance. Included are mentoring, demonstrations, inquiry, practice, reflection, and creative products; for which ongoing evaluation provides reinforcement for desirable improvements by participants and other stakeholders (2021, Conceicao & Howles). Use of such program evaluation feedback can enable educators to share ways to enhance successive programs, and report conclusions and guidelines from such inquiry with colleagues elsewhere. Reflect on major instances in which colleagues have shared written, digital, and oral precepts and examples that have enriched your professional performance; and ways in which you have returned the favor.

**6. DEVELOPMENT-** There are many potential contributors to professional development by and for educators of adults. In addition to graduate courses and workshops. Along with examples by mentors and role models; there are publications that focus on concepts, examples, comparative analysis, and collaborative projects (2016, Knox). Some of the most powerful forms of professional development by educators of adults have combined shared experience, joint teaching, and inquiry projects, along with shared leadership of local, national, and international programs and associations (see Compendium examples). Cascades of learning, memoirs, and mentoring, that can occur during most of a career can be especially powerful. For local provider organizations, graduate programs, and professional associations; arrangements for new members to steadily gain experience and assistance, and for experienced members to provide coaching, in the spirit of succession, are especially valuable. Consider functional and dysfunctional examples with which you are familiar, and advice that you would share if asked.

**7. SCOPE-** Professional associations can provide noteworthy opportunities to learn from local, regional, national, and international contexts, arrangements, and colleagues. An open systems perspective can be especially valuable; which includes: resources, process, outcomes, context and evaluation feedback. Leaders who have gained an open systems perspective can better understand multiple influences on educational programs and provider organizations; for purposes such as strategic planning, dealing with major transitions, preparing funding

proposals; or analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and exploring alternative futures; along with shared values. Publications about various roles and contexts in the health professions are very useful. (2017, Rayburn & Associates).

Because the current context tends to be taken for granted, comparative analysis of provider programs can help to identify important influences to understand; regarding how things work (2010, Stake), and ways to deal with unanticipated events (2017, Cutrer). International perspectives are especially valuable because global connections have become so widespread that they are part of many public issues; which confront educators of adults. Use examples of large and small scope, to consider ways to modify your perspective on familiar programs.

**8. RESULTS-** Criteria for judging excellence, quality standards, and outcomes; tend to emphasize results. Educational programs for adults may leave it to the learners to assess their progress and demonstrate their readiness to use what they gain. Especially for externally funded programs, program evaluation can emphasize intended outcomes and indicators of results; comparison with similar programs; and connections with human and material resources; choice and use of procedures; situational influences; along with plans and conclusions from program evaluation (2016, Improving professional learning). Effective use of educational portfolios can enable individuals or teams of learners to report their plans, resources, procedures, results, and implications. Meta-analysis of such reports could enrich criteria for judging standards of excellence. There are efficient ways to assess program results; which could be especially useful during the current pandemic transition. Explore local and regional examples.

**9. SYSTEMIC-** Each of the foregoing paragraphs on conclusions and each of the remainder, include consideration of systemic connections and multiple influences. Consider ways in which you and colleagues make implicit and explicit decisions related to systemic connections. Your conclusions and reflections will be especially important toward the end of this article, for your conjecture about the coming years following the March 2020 recognition of widespread transitions during the next few years, and in the following decades. What are implications for use of holistic comparative analysis for guiding opportunities that are identified.

**10. VALUES-** Especially for lifelong, wide and deep learning; reflection about value judgments and respect for differing values, is why attitudes (feelings, emotions and beliefs) are emphasized as one of the taxonomy of educational objectives, along with knowledge and skills. Reflective practitioners include empathy and equanimity in their program objectives, procedures, and outcomes. Value judgments occur in each aspect of educational opportunities for adults; learner performances, instructor choices, coordinator priorities, provider supports, and association emphases (1987, Schon; 2003, Sternberg; 2017, Ross-Gordon, Rose & Kasworm). Priority for university outreach to local residents is illustrated by the Compendium article 14 by Auerbach about Odyssey, that reflect fundamental humanistic values. Provider organizations can reflect a paradigm of care (2020, Stake & Visse). Consider ways in which ongoing program evaluation can increase attention to such values, as well as knowledge and skills.

**11. REFLECTION-** Educators of adults are reflective when they make decisions and plans that take into account assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, values and priorities (1987, Schon). Some teachers and leaders during the 1930s in AAAE provided examples, and in the 1950s in AEA when they emphasized social philosophy. More recent publications provide guidelines; which are especially relevant with increasing interprofessional teams, in an era of societal polarization when respect for societal norms were in question. [See especially 2010, Handbook, Kasworm, Rose & Ross- Gordon (Eds) Ch. 31-40]. Achieving professional standards also benefits from reflection. What are promising implications during the current transition?

**12. PUBLICATIONS-** Sharing concepts, examples, conclusions, and implications for performance can be made public in various forms; such as oral, simulation, print, and hybrid publications by publishers (and through open access). Educators can select forms of publication that are accessible to intended participants. Earlier publications [that are archived and recorded in a form that is compatible with current technology] should be accessible. Timing, location, and cost are familiar influences for educators with distance education and societal experience and objectives. In addition to accessibility of publications for program participants, educators' concern for publications includes their own performance as they create, select, and use various forms of publication, for their own lifelong learning. Ready access to professional publications can serve as an external memory for the creation and use of publications; similar to big data for artificial intelligence. Cascades of learning through conversations and publications among valued colleagues, helps to guide selection of especially worthwhile publications. Be attentive to relevant publications. Consider submitting a manuscript to one or more of an increasing number of publications that are seeking submissions.

**13. COLLEAGIAL-** The creation and performance of educational activities for adults, is typically the result of teamwork. There are many examples when colleagues collaborated on inquiry projects and excellent programs; and learning along with the participants. Notable examples of cascades of learning illustrate the process and benefits of such collaboration, which sometimes transcends time and space, especially with current educational technology. Welcome opportunities that enrich your creativity. Consider current needs and opportunities for teamwork that you could initiate.

**14. INQUIRY-** In multidisciplinary applied fields such as adult and continuing education, many research and evaluation activities can be connected with program development and coordination. All of the program stakeholders can contribute to and benefit from connections with the inquiry process. (2008, Patton; 2002, Merriam); including policymakers and the general public (2008, Glass). These collaborative benefits tend to be especially attractive for educators associated with a number of partner associations. Comparative analysis can help identify distinctive characteristics (2011, Burge & Associates; 2016, Pratt & Associates). What inquiry activities have you experienced recently, with what benefits; and what additional opportunities interest you?

**15. INTENTIONS-** Educational program participants and stakeholders typically expect that desirable program outcomes will result. Potential sources of expectations also include: participants' associates; and provider organization policymakers. Ongoing program evaluation feedback provides a way to sample such expectations to achieve alignment, and mutually beneficial exchanges. Such oral and written evaluation feedback and use is desirable before, during and following effective programs (2002, Knox). Be alert to examples. Who might welcome your initiatives?

**16. IMPROVEMENT-** Effective lifelong, wide and deep learning activities for adults typically seek desirable changes for program participants, other program stakeholders, and the mission of provider organizations and related associations. Typical program participants are volunteers for learning who want to use what they gain; and program stakeholders usually enhance their own proficiency along with the participants. Formal and informal program guidelines and standards, along with performance by similar organizations, and accomplishments by participants; can serve as reference points for assessment, feedback, progress and recognition. Consider manageable ways to guide and use assessment reports regarding progress indicators and lessons learned. What program improvements these days might be welcomed, and what contributions would you welcome?

**17. INTERNATIONAL-** Global connections with adult learning and change have been noted for centuries. Publications, travelers, and examples from other countries have inspired American educators. An early image for adult education was basic literacy, Americanization for immigrants, Benjamin Franklin's Junto associates, literacy schools that enabled former slaves to vote, and Jane Addams 'settlement houses. A century ago, the National Education Association (NEA) and the US Department of adult education provided encouragement and guidelines for adult secondary education. Philanthropic foundations such as Carnegie, supported publications including reports on long-standing programs in other countries, procedures such as extramural courses, folk schools, and study circles. A common theme has been further education for adults who missed earlier schooling. In recent generations, graduate programs for educators of adults include: students, publications, international projects, and faculty members who valued ongoing international connections. Popular media and the general public are aware of international connections that sometimes are more influential than local events. The Great Decisions series by the Foreign Policy Association; and National Issues Forum programs, assisted by Kettering Foundation, are examples to be modified through virtual sessions and subgroups. Increased polarization in the United States and some other countries is a counter trend. What could you and your colleagues do to support public policies on behalf of educational opportunities regarding peace, justice and desirable environmental and societal change for adults and local communities? Mass media, magazines and newspapers provide many examples. How do you take global issues into account?

**18. ACCESS-** For many decades, a high priority by educators of adults, was increased access to educational opportunities for adults. Specific barriers that were identified, varied with learner

characteristics and provider organization expectations. Expansion of community colleges, and fluctuations in full-time enrollment in universities and colleges by younger students directly from secondary school, contributed to this new majority of adult learners in higher education. Selection for staff development opportunities in enterprises depends on an alignment between staff members' interest and preparation; and criteria used by supervisors and human resource development staff that partly reflected supply and demand. Community-based agencies and voluntary associations including faith congregations, tend to initiate and sustain program offerings based on participant interest and demand. During the next decade of transformations related to the current health, economic, environment and opportunity issues, educators of adults can provide creative access and opportunities for estranged residents [including Indigenous Native Americans]. NOTE two 2006 books with research explanations (Cramer, resentment; Hochschild, anger). Program coordinators and staff can emphasize responsiveness and marketing to potential participants. Informal evaluation can facilitate the process, including retention and word-of-mouth from satisfied participants. Now that lifelong learning as a concept is well accepted, how can educators of adults, help broaden program priorities to better serve Native Americans, immigrants, and estranged residents; and help local and regional programs flourish? What publications are useful to you.?

**19. ENGAGED-** Provider organizations and program participants can each contribute to lifelong, wide and deep learning for participants and program stakeholders by emphasizing mutually beneficial exchanges. Service-learning virtual activities by undergraduate students in higher education, can emphasize self-directed learning projects for learning portfolios, if instructors will guide students to share connections that they recognize between course content and service projects; and it would help if members of community agencies assisted student volunteers to focus on mutually beneficial exchanges. Educators of adults have demonstrated the value of learning organizations and learning communities for adults of all backgrounds and ages, including retirees. In spite of pandemic restrictions including social distancing; e-learning technology enables students, faculty members, and educators from community organizations to cooperate on virtual service-learning projects (2011, Beere, Votruba & Wells). What could be done during the current pandemic transition to adapt and use such service-learning activities?

**20. INFLUENCES-** Scholars have noted that societal conditions such as: climate, economy, affluence, military, health, politics, and demographics; are more powerful influences on educational program priorities, than goal setting by educators. However, there are inspiring accounts during the past century and more, in which educators of adults have understood the interplay among broad societal influences and helped local people to cooperate on learning and desirable change. An example is creation of cooperatives during the depression. Lifecycle role changes can trigger heightened readiness to learn. Sometimes the more general and abrupt societal changes can contribute to collective learning opportunities and creative results, for which you and your colleagues can launch creative initiatives. The current crisis and societal transition for the next decade has provided a widespread unwelcomed change, for which lifelong learning has already been recognized as fundamental to progress. The issues and policy

decisions are largely international, national, and state in nature. During the past century, educators of adults related to many roles and provider organizations have been recording information about concepts and practices for residents in their local region. For which challenges have you noted similar readiness?

**21. PROGRESS-** Not all change is positive. Multiple gradual changes may be difficult to discern. Desirable or undesirable changes in a person may be apparent; but less so in a community, organization, or region. A case conference can help a team of health professionals from several relevant specialties to diagnose multiple symptoms for a failing patient. Extension community resource development specialists can seek input from somewhat representative residents to help them collectively understand complex community features and dynamics; explore together desirable and undesirable aspects of the main options; and build support for the most desirable and feasible courses of action. Quality improvement groups in enterprises seek indicators to guide organization development choices. Educators and consultants who assist such planned change efforts, can select from various potential ways to help adult learn and change. In very hierarchical organizations, much of the decision-making power is near the top. However, in many of the groups and organizations in which educators of adults assist, it takes time and care to help members enhance their proficiencies through values clarification, collective problem-solving, and respect for differing perspectives. Community engaged action research has great potential for assisting the process (2017, Compendium article 80; 2016 Sandmann and associates; 2018 Walshok & Associates). Look for examples. What local and regional initiatives would you find timely?

**22. PROFICIENCY-** The proficiency concept has been very useful for me and others for many decades, because of the centrality of the affective domain which includes attitudes, feelings, beliefs and values; along with the other two inter-related domains of the taxonomy of educational objectives: knowledge and skills. Especially for topics such as faith and publications; people's feelings can override facts and evidence. This is why values clarification and deep learning are important for equanimity and professional judgment in evidence informed professional practice (2016, Knox). Watch for applicable instances. Consider program directions that include emphasis on emotional intelligence and ethical issues.

**23. COMMUNITY-** A sense of community is an especially important feature of a democratic society. In neighborhoods, regions, organizations, and associations; active members who help to build and sustain community, tend to value diverse roles and perspectives for a viable community; but also respect community members who are mainly invested in a few aspects. Many graduate programs for educators of adults have regional connections with various types of provider organizations; each with distinctive missions, resources, participants, and stakeholders. Look for indications and reports about results. What could local or regional councils or roundtables do to enhance collaboration, public support, and new program directions?

**24. CRISIS-** For millennia since the axial age when tribal perspectives confronted empires; sages recorded their insights that within a crisis there may be both danger and opportunity. Explore influences on an axial age, such as increased affluence, reward systems, and cognitive styles. The recent March 2020 transition is a timely and relevant example. What are the implications for educators of adults at local, regional, national, and international levels?

**25. STEWARDS-** In fancy restaurants, a wine steward may approach your table to request your preferences, confident of supplies of a well-stocked wine cellar. Stewards in community-based voluntary associations, faith congregations, local cultural institutions, and professional associations, should be so lucky. Stewardship in these organizations entails their commitment to enhancing both financial and human resources. Educators of adults with distance education and e-learning expertise, and higher education instructional designers, are now assisting with guidelines and examples for hybrid workshops and online courses for teachers in schools and community colleges. Regional graduate program faculty and their graduate students assist leaders of educational opportunities for adults in their region. (2007, Conceicao; 2011 Burge, Gibson & Gibson; 2016, Pratt and Associates; 2016, O'Tuama; 2017, Compendium articles 25, 26; 2017, Halverson & Kelly; 2019, Michelson; 2021, Conceicao & Howles). The recent March 2020 transition is a timely and relevant example. Consider ways in which you and your colleagues can strengthen ties with other provider organizations.

**[NOTE:** The foregoing summary of conclusions about transcendent future directions parallels the consecutive ages and stages in the Cascades of Learning professional memoir; posted on the SCOC Adult Learning Exchange website. The website also includes other items related to the Compendium and related publications; such as Improving Professional Learning, (2016), with a hybrid format for educators of adults; and a bibliographic essay; companion article on Enhancing Proficiencies Praxis and Performance; for which the list contains full bibliographic citations; for many of the references in the Cascades of Learning Memoir; and all of the citations in this article on Futures 2020 Plus.]

**26. SERVICE LEARNING-** Virtual Service Learning by students/participants in higher education institutions, can serve as a concluding futures oriented mega-theme for this Futures 2020 Plus article. This service-learning example is associated with each of the foregoing 25 conclusions; the companion article on Enhancing proficiencies, praxis and performance, about applications of learning outcomes; and the summary conclusions for the seven locations and connections in the Cascades of learning professional memoir. This note on service learning is also associated with adult and higher education generally; because of connections between the origins of face-to-face service-learning projects for traditional undergraduate college students; and potential future virtual service-learning projects using educational technology for learners of all ages.

**27. LOCAL FORUMS -** Current global confrontations between leaders of autocratic / totalitarian versus free / democratic nations, provide daily reminders of the importance of engaged local attention to lifelong wide and deep learning. My proposed personal plan for conversations with colleagues in various locations are about donating publications wanted for their libraries; which

address purposes and procedures for enhancing the performance of educators of adults in their regional location. [I recently processed a thousand books for donation.] The intent of this demonstration is to illustrate ways in which colleagues in other regions can make more accessible their university graduate program library, by augmenting their collection. The intent of additional books and articles is to provide additional classic and recent print and digital publications, for use in a combination of professional development activities and self-directed learning; by co-sponsoring regional sessions with some of the dozens of national associations for educators of adults. An illustration is the SCOC website <https://scoc-consulting.com>

**Strategize Collaborate Optimize Create – Building learning experiences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century across the globe** owned by Professor Emerita from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Simone Conceição. The website includes the Knox-Houle collection of resources as part of the Adult Learning Exchange; I can provide an update to individual colleagues, and encourage them to explore their local priorities regarding connections with program providers in their area. My personal inquiry can lead them to discussions by colleagues associated with a community college, university, healthcare organization, library, museum, faith denomination, retirement village, enterprise, public media, or nonprofit community organization. When a few colleagues with a shared interest in a topic or issue want to participate in a virtual Forum: the topic, dates and times can be selected; and a study circle format explained. Each Forum participant can suggest questions to explore, additional participants to include, and sharing results with other colleagues; along with guidelines for progress reports to other Forum participants. The SCOC website provides open access and the list of publications in the Knox Houle collection includes books and articles from which to select a few excerpts on which to focus a specific Forum topic. Bibliographic essay's such as: Houle (1992); Elias & Merriam (1995), and Knox (2016) contain suggestions of related concepts and publications. The series of books by Peter Jarvis is a similar resource for colleagues in North America, Europe, and other countries. Many of the 80 articles on learning, teaching, coordinating, and evaluating parts, in the 2017 International Compendium for mapping the literature of the field of adult and continuing education; contain examples of topics, influences, procedures, and references; which can serve as a starting point for a Forum session. The concluding chapters in the 2010 (Kasworm & Assoc); and the 2020 (Rocco & Assoc.) Handbooks, contain provocative discussions about diversity and future directions; as do Ross-Gordon & Assoc) 2017 book on educational Foundations, and the 2021 Alfred & assoc. book on educators of adults as strategic partners regarding global issues; that have become more urgent recently.

Extra credit is awarded for readers of all articles in the Knox/Houle collection, who identify most of the connections to the University of Wisconsin Morgridge Center for Service Learning; and the following sources: 2016,Cramer; 2016,Adam and 2016 Arlie Hochschild; 2011,Votruba; 2019, Brooks; 2011,Burge & Gibson's; 1951, 1956, 1961, 1980, 1992, 1996,Houle; 1985, 1988, 1990, 2006,Cervero; 1977,1993, 2002, 2011, 2016,Knox; 2007, 2010, 2021,Conceicao; 2017,Halverson & Kelly; 1969, Havelock; 2015, Martin; 1997,Merriam & Brockett; 2021, Packer;2008, Patton; 2016,Pratt; 2016,Sandmann; 1987, Schon; 2021, Stake & Visse.

Trust that some of my thoughts about future implications may spur yours.

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