PYRAMID CONCEPT

A distinctive feature of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), regarding benefits for educators of adults from many parts of the field, is its connections with the entire PYRAMID of educators. The AAACE website can serve as a COMMONS to clarify and alert educators from each level of the pyramid to their importance and connections.

The pyramid image clearly portrays connections among roles of educators of adults, as Houle explained several generations ago. These connections are especially relevant today for librarians, historians and members of AAACE and partner associations. People at the apex of Houle’s pyramid included: educators of adults whose live and recorded presentations and publications through digital, print and electronic media are based on scholarship by themselves, and other educators of adults, along with scholars and practitioners from related fields such as: humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and helping professions; including teaching, health, counseling, libraries, organization and community development; whose contributions include cascades of learning through diffusion and adoption of innovations to a succession of educators in various roles and successive pyramid levels.

The middle pyramid level included educators of adults who used graduate study and self-directed learning to acquire and transmit concepts, examples, publications, and summaries to demonstrate and explain relevant concepts and procedures to colleagues and stakeholders in volunteer and part-time roles with formal, community and association learning activities with adult participants in various local contexts and role relationships. Educators in middle pyramid roles were mainly interested in their use of knowledge, skills and predispositions, but may be unaware of related sources and procedures.

The broad pyramid base of adult learning included any educators engaged in mentoring, informal and self-directed learning projects and activities that may include limited contact with educators of adults from the middle and apex pyramid levels who can share their familiarity with publications, examples, concepts, resources and procedures that could help colleagues and stakeholders to transcend primary reliance on local examples, sources and assistance.

The AAACE website can serve as an essential, accessible, open-access COMMONS and source of information for colleagues who assist with Compendium, Association, and partner association member connections for future cooperation. Website Compendium page items include: progress reports on use of Compendium and Association connections; participation in virtual forum sessions; reading and comments in the Adult Learning reflection series; use of the Thesaurus list of terms and concepts for communication among various educators; explanations about relations among pyramid concepts; and use of a Compendium library edition to facilitate connections among providers of educational opportunities in each region.

Use of this website COMMONS can enable educators of adults to explore questions with colleagues regarding: benefits from collaboration among partner associations, and priorities for future directions.