Transcendent Future Directions
for Lifelong, Wide and Deep Learning

PURPOSE- This Transcendent Future Directions summary of major conclusions from the Cascades of Learning memoir, is intended as the last part of the Emeritus summary; and as a separate item on the learning exchange AAACE website, to facilitate increased connections with publications of partner associations.

FUTURE- A professional memoir about Cascades of Learning, provides a rationale for future directions that benefit from experience followed by graduate study opportunities regarding adult and continuing education. Many colleagues discover that their active learning entails precepts and examples that enable program participants to engage in inquiry and enhanced performance as educators of adults. This series of mini-essays reflects the main conclusions from successive stages of the memoir; which suggest desirable directions. Each conclusion includes a question for educators to ponder.

1. EDUCATORS- People in various occupations serve as educators of adults. Fortunately; such boundary-spanners guide an ongoing cascade of learning and enhanced performance by people associated with their field. Examples include teachers in preparatory elementary,
secondary and higher education who transcend a narrow definition of teaching as transmission of their knowledge to largely passive students. Also included in helping occupations are people associated with health professions, including physicians and nurses, and many others in allied roles in which cascades of learning and quality improvement are central to a continuum of care and prevention for patients and caregivers in the family and community. Subsequent segments in this series, and corresponding examples in the Cascades of Learning memoir, illustrate prominent examples of roles and fields in which people transcend routine performance, and benefit from colleagues and publications. Additional examples include: counselors, librarians, public journalists and investigative reporters; and people who coordinate group, organization and community development activities. Reports on the process and outcomes from these varied examples occur in conferences and publications by dozens of associations; in which members who value their contributions as educators of adults with a shared purpose, welcome opportunities to connect with other 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; similar to personal, family and occupational change events can trigger a heightened readiness to learn and change. Past assumptions regarding demands and constraints are questioned; assistance regarding transitions is recognized; and new opportunities and barriers can be explored. All aspects of American life and times, are being explored in many ways since March 2020. A central theme in publications by and for educators of adults during the past century, has been lifelong learning and change. Decennial handbooks, the Compendium and related publications, have chronicled the broad scope of adult and continuing education. Reports during the past six decades have reported increasing portions of the adult population, as program participants and educators, who are volunteers for learning. Technology has increased access to learning opportunities that could benefit people in every location, role, stage and walk of life. Unfortunately, people who are most in need of assistance for learning and change; are those who are least engaged in lifelong learning activities. The historic mission for transcendent educators of adults has been to reduce barriers to further learning opportunities. For more than a decade, the new majority in higher education has been adults returning to school or studying part-time. Since March 2020, e-learning options using distance education and simulations have become standard for the near future. The emerging shared
purpose for educators of adults is to contribute highlights from our theory and practice from the past century (including our experience from power poor positions), regarding organizational and societal priorities; that have been largely shaped by social, political, economic, and other institutions. Educators of adults occur throughout our society. 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 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, and by other program stakeholders. The interrelated linkage between the purpose, process and product of the participant and the stakeholder cycles, contributes to sustained progress. This basic model is applicable to many learning activities, even self-directed learning projects. For many decades, quality improvement and talent development in organizations illustrate this approach, when staff members share leadership with human resource development specialists and organizational supervisors. Voluntary association administrators support mutually beneficial exchanges, especially for volunteers whose enhanced learning and performance for their other life roles is one of their
benefits. Land grant university County extension staff members have assisted multiple volunteer leaders. Self-help group members learn from and assist each other. Members of extended families and faith community congregations, depend upon such exchanges; and people in counseling roles can refer to promising examples with members who were seeking help. Edited excerpts from recordings can be accessed by people in remote locations, for discussion using social media guided by a discussion leader in a separate location. This distance education example illustrates use of technology on behalf of learning and change; which is becoming more widespread since the March 2020 transition. Consider ways in which educators of adults can share such examples to enrich their own programs.

4. CREATEION- Educators of adults have available many creative examples of their art and science. 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 upon creative contributions by authors, composers, directors, and performers onstage in major and minor roles. Consider the credits at the end of the motion picture. 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 helped 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 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, includes 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 program coordinators and participants themselves. Consider memorable instances in which you reflected on the aesthetic and technical aspects of an outstanding educational activity.

4. PERFORMANCE- Role performance is part of adult life in family, community, work, faith congregation, association, and as citizens in states 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 a half-day workshop or a month-long retreat contribute to enhanced performance. Included are
mentoring, demonstrations, inquiry, practice, reflection, and creative products; for which ongoing evaluation feedback provides reinforcement for desirable improvements by participants and other stakeholders. 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.

5. DEVELOPMENT- There are many potential contributors to professional development by educators of adults. In addition to graduate courses and workshops; examples by mentors and role models; there are publications focused on concepts, examples, comparative analysis, and collaborative projects. Some of the most powerful forms of professional development by educators of adults combine shared collegial experience, joint teaching and inquiry projects, and shared leadership of local, national and international programs and associations. Cascades of learning and mentoring, that can occur during most of the 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.

6. **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, analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and exploring alternative futures, along with shared values. 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, and ways to deal with unanticipated events. International perspectives are especially valuable because global connections have become so widespread that they are part of many public issues that confront educators of adults. Consider ways to modify the scope of familiar programs.

7. **RESULTS**- Criteria for judging excellence, quality, standards, and outcomes; tend to emphasize results.
Assessing preparatory education teaching and learning tends to emphasize grading of individual outcomes, to judge preparation from the previous stage and selection for the next stage. By contrast, many examples of educational programs for adults; typically ignore program evaluation and leave it to the learners to assess their progress, and demonstrate their readiness to use what they gained. By contrast, especially for externally funded programs, program evaluation can emphasize intended outcomes and indicators of results; comparisons 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. Effective use of educational portfolios can enable individuals or teams of learners to report their plan, resources, procedures, results and implications. Meta-analysis of such reports could enrich criteria for judging standards of excellence. Publications on educational evaluation generally illustrate various models to consider regarding similarities and differences between preparatory and continuing education.

8. SYSTEMIC- Each of the foregoing paragraphs, and each 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 essay, for your conjectures about the coming years following the March 2020 recognition of widespread transitions during the next few years, and the following decades.

9. 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 as program objectives, procedures, and outcomes. Consider ways in which ongoing program evaluation can increase attention to such values, as well as knowledge and skills.

10. REFLECTION- Educators of adults are reflective when they make decisions and plans that take into account assumptions, beliefs, implications, values and priorities. One example was teachers and leaders during the 1930s in AAAE; and in the 1950s, AEA emphasizing social philosophy. More recent publications provide guidelines; which are especially relevant with increasing interprofessional teams, in an era of polarization in which respect for societal norms are in question. Achieving professional standards also benefits from reflection.

11. PUBLICATION-Sharing examples, concepts, conclusions, and implications for performance can be made public in various forms; such as oral, simulation, print, and hybrid publications (by publishers and 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 are accessible. Timing, location and cost are familiar influences for educators with distance education and social media 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 to guide creation and use of publications; similar to big data for artificial intelligence.

12. COLLEAGIAL- the creation and performance of educational activities for adults, is typically the result of teamwork. There are many examples of colleagues who collaborate on inquiry projects and excellent programs; who learn 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.

13. INQUIRY- In a multidisciplinary applied field 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. This collaborative
benefit can be especially attractive for educators from a number of partner associations. Comparative analysis can help identify distinctive characteristics.

14. INTENTIONS- Educational program participants and stakeholders typically expect that desired 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.

15. IMPROVEMENT- Effective lifelong, life wide and life 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 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.

16. INTERNATIONAL-Global connections with adult learning and change have been noted for centuries. Publications, travelers, and examples from other countries
inspired American educators. An early image of adult education was basic literacy, Americanization for immigrants; the Junto associates, and Literacy schools that enabled slaves to vote. A century ago, the National Education Association 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 such as: extramural courses, folk schools, and study circles. A common theme was 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 is an example. Increased polarization in the United States and some other countries, is a counter trend.

17. ACCCESS- For many decades, a high priority by educators of adults was increased access to educational opportunities by 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 a new majority in higher education by adult learners. Selection for staff development opportunities in enterprises, depends on an alignment between staff members’ interests 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. Program coordinators and staff tend to emphasize responsiveness and marketing to potential participants. Informal evaluation can facilitate the process, including retention and word-of-mouth from satisfied participants.

18. 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 projects by undergraduate students in higher education, can emphasize self-directed learning projects for learning portfolios, if instructors guide students to share connections that they recognize between course content and service projects; and if members of community agencies help 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.

19. **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 of broad societal influences, and helped local people to cooperate on learning and desirable change. 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.

20. **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 a region. A case conference can help a team of health professionals from several relevant specialties diagnose multiple symptoms for a failing patient. Extension community development specialists seek input from somewhat representative residents to help them 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 course 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 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.

21. PROFICIENCY- The Proficiency concept has been very useful for me and others for many decades, because the affective domain includes attitudes, feelings, beliefs and values; along with the other two domains of a taxonomy of educational objectives; knowledge and skills. Especially for topics such as faith and public issues; 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.

22. 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; and respecting 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

23. 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. The recent March 2020 transition is a timely and relevant example.

24. STEWARDS- In fancy restaurants, a wine steward may approach your table to request your preferences, confident of supplies in a well-stocked wine cellar. Stewards in community-based voluntary associations, faith communities, local cultural institutions, and professional associations, should be so lucky. Stewardship in these organizations entails their commitment to enhancing both financial and human resources.

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 Learning Exchange AAACE website, which also includes other items related to the Compendium and related publications; such as Improving Professional Learning (2016) (as IPL has a hybrid format for educators of adults, and a bibliographic essay), along with the Learning and Performance article. The list of references from these publications contain the full bibliographic information for the citations in the
memoir, and the foregoing Summary of Conclusions; which does not include reference to publication authors, titles, publishers and dates. Locating specific publications occurs in a search by use of information about publisher and date. I can locate documents from my inbox and sent messages including attachments from my computer “archive”; by beginning with the title and date; to retrieve an original document, so it can be transmitted, on request.