

Prospects for Adult Learning and Global Change: A Canadian Perspective with Recommendations for Professional Practice

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how changes related to the processes of globalization are impacting teaching and learning practices and presents a vision for the future of adult education. By examining these changes, with the purpose of understanding their relevance to adult education, the author makes recommendations for how to adapt to new landscapes of work and learning. Three key recommendations to strengthen adult educators' professional practice are presented based on literature in the field of adult education and professional practice. These three recommendations are to engage in critical reflection, develop communities of practice and commit to lifelong learning. While each of these recommendations are distinct, they are mutually reinforcing to support adult educators practice and prospects. Adult educators can be influencers in fostering transformation through learning that will shape and strengthen the future. This is more relevant than ever in the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Discovering what to be aware of and incorporating awareness of the potential for adult education to inspire positive change will promote personal and professional success in practice.

1. Introduction

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire” - William Butler Yeats

Adult education is a remarkable and fascinating field that covers a broad and diverse range of theories on sharing and constructing knowledge (Tamish, 2018). Teaching adult learners differs from teaching children and affording consideration for these differences is critical (Brown & Hannis, 2012). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines adult education as:

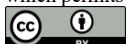
the entire body of organized educational processes ... whereby persons regarded as adult by the society in which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification, or turn them in new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the two-fold perspective of full

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personal development and participation in balanced independent, social, economic, and cultural development (Brown & Hannis, 2012, p. 79).

This thorough definition illustrates how adult education assumes various forms, draws on many sources of knowledge and experience, and can be applied to and is embedded in many contexts. This includes, but is not limited to, the “political, social, cultural and economic processes of society” (Walters, 2006, p. 22). Similarly, globalization is a process which operates on many levels, influencing cultural, economic, social, and political contexts. Globalization is a critical concept to understanding global change—past, present, and future. Though a complex and highly contested topic, globalization has nevertheless made its mark on the world. Given the breath of these two domains, it is not surprising that adult education and globalization should intersect. How can adult educators in the 21st century learn to adapt and respond to a changing world of learning to continue to thrive in their professional practice and find personal fulfilment?

This article presents ideas and opportunities to inspire the creation of a vision for the future of adult education by exploring the intersection between adult education and globalization. Based on findings from the literature on adult education, drawing on professional experience, and using examples from the Canadian context, such as specific reference to policy change and innovation, the author presents a perspective on how adult educators can prepare for and respond to changing global contexts. The second section presents evidence and examples of how the world of work has changed and continues to change due to globalization and how adult educators are important for supporting society’s response to these changes. The final section presents three recommendations for professional practices to strengthen the ability of adult educators to adapt to the emerging landscape of work and learning. Such insights will help adult educators become leaders and influencers in their profession and make a greater impact in the world with their work which has never been timelier and more relevant in the aftermath and ongoing challenges and uncertainties following the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. The Influence of Globalization on Adult Education

Global interconnectedness has become increasingly apparent (McGrew, 2011). Globalization is a complex and multidimensional process involving the growing, widening, deepening, speeding up and increasing impact of worldwide interconnectedness (McGrew, 2011). In the words of one theorist, George Ritzer, globalization is “not a singular process with uniform results” (Ritzer, 2003, p. 190) and therefore not a simple topic for discussion. There are many perspectives and opinions about globalization (Jarvis, 2004). Various theories conceptualize and articulate how globalization intersects and affects the human experience (Jackson, 2016). Globalization is “of great concern to, and enormous significance for, much of the world’s population” (Ritzer, 2003, p. 189) to the degree that its effects appear virtually everywhere, in every nation, affecting the lives of, if not all, most of the world.

Although the term “globalization” is relatively new, it is an ongoing process that began centuries ago (Magsino, 2007). The popularization of the word in public, academic and educational discourses came in the 1980s (Jackson, 2016). Mainly used in economic contexts, there is growing recognition and evidence for globalization affecting all principle sectors of social activity which include the economic, military, legal and cultural contexts (McGrew, 2011). International processes are not new (Jackson, 2016) but how they operate and how we perceive them changes constantly. Over the last few decades, globalization has intensified (McGrew, 2011). We can observe a cumulative contemporary interconnectedness which dissolves borders and boundaries (McGrew, 2011). The growing intensity of global interactions has significant consequences. Due to these interactions and increased

interconnectedness, the most distant events can rapidly, if not nearly instantaneously, have enormous and profound consequences (McGrew, 2011). For example, consider how the COVID-19 pandemic so quickly and easily spread to affect the entire world.

Globalization does not automatically signify emergence of a global community or global cooperative (McGrew, 2011). Contemporary globalization processes are considerably uneven and may be more accurately described as asymmetrical globalization. This means that different countries have experienced different fates from the influence of globalization. In Canada, we see this in how the country originated from the strong colonial and continental links as a former British colony. (Azzi, 2015). Also, Canada remains heavily connected and dependent on the rest of the world. Trade and culture, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, are just some current examples of globalization influences on the Canadian context (Azzi, 2015).

Opinions on globalization vary from pro-globalization to anti-globalization (Azzi, 2015). The construct may receive further dissection into sub-processes such as “glocalization” and “grobalization”, leading to distinction between “global” and “local” and new meanings that further complicate the discussion. Those opposed to globalization caution against the threat of “homogeneity” of culture (Ritzer, 2003) and even the loss of the local element. Ritzer (1983) cautions against the “McDonalization” of society where rationalization leads to emphasizing efficiency, predictability, calculability, the substitution of non-human technology, and seeking to gain control over the uncontrollable. Homogenization leads to uniformity and the concept which Ritzer and Ryan call “grobalization”, a subprocess of this “McDonalization” (Ritzer & Ryan, 2002). Conversely, those who see the potential of globalization look to a different perspective. The emergence of “glocalization” warrants consideration for not only local but also temporal and historical issues (Robertson, 2012). There is still much discussion and more consensus needed around the meaning and interpretation of globalization.

Many examples show the interrelatedness and influence of globalization and education (Jackson, 2016). Both cultural and political-economic considerations are necessary to understanding the major aspects of both (Jackson, 2016). Modern times have seen how contemporary globalization has shaped educational policies, values, curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and even the educational organizations and educational leadership around the world (Jackson, 2016). The rise of educational technology and ventures in learning technology have profoundly transformed methods for teaching and learning which have resulted in changes in perception of knowledge and the learner. The ubiquitous nature of technology means that individuals have a greater ease of access than ever before (Jackson, 2016). Online education and eLearning are rapidly growing. Students can earn credentials from reputable universities through distance education, and there is greater access to and selection of peers, mentors, experts, academic disciplines, vocations, and fields (Jackson, 2016).

Instances of globalization are evident in modern educational systems and institutions with the increase in interconnectedness and interdependence of academic communities and circles (Jackson, 2016). Another influence is in the new demands and desires for educational transferability (Jackson, 2016). Also, the globalization of educational testing has significant implications for local pedagogies, assessment, and curricula. Critics raise concerns regarding losing local languages and indigenous culture, sacrificing them for elite national and international interests (Jackson, 2016).

Recognition of global problems, coupled with global interconnectedness, has heightened awareness for how the security and prosperity of commonalities in different parts of the world coalesce (McGrew, 2011). Global challenges need solutions from gathering and sharing knowledge across disciplines and institutions on a global scale (Fox & Hundley, 2011). Critical to understanding and interacting with globalization and the issues it presents is that there are

different ways of framing and contextualizing globalization (Jackson, 2016). Our response to how we perceive the phenomenon influences how we respond to it. Adult educators have the opportunity through their positions to educate and encourage others to understand globalization in a new light to make informed choices in their responses to global change. It is important they be aware of the concept of globalization and the effects its forces have had and continue to have on the world, particularly on education.

3. The Changing World of Work and the Importance of Adult Education

As globalization has and continues to influence education, so too is it considerably redefining the world of work. Adult education holds an important role in supporting the entrepreneurs and employees, managers, and leaders by preparing them for future jobs and job markets. The major shift experienced in the world of work, influenced by forces of globalization, is a shift towards a more knowledge-based society. No longer do economic mass, natural resources, military dominance, and manufacturing might make nations competitive (Brown & Tannock, 2008). As with the term globalization, the broad term and description of “knowledge-based economy” (also referred to as “knowledge economy”) has several interpretations and implications. One explanation involves an economy reliant on knowledge-intensive activities and knowledge and information production and distribution (Government of Canada, 2016; Powel & Snellman, 2014). An accelerated pace of technical and scientific advancement with rapid obsolescence is normal. Critical to the knowledge economy is an increased reliance on intellectual capabilities rather than physical inputs or natural resources. Other key components are the increased efforts for integration and improvement at all stages in production processes. Also, a focus on producing new ideas can spur improvement of goods, services, and organizational processes (Powel & Snellman, 2014). Lastly, there is a central perception of theoretical knowledge as a source of innovation.

The internet has significantly contributed to, in considerable and widespread ways, the changes that have taken place in workplace activities. It offers greater flexibility in working conditions. A flexible workforce is emerging, one in which employment and work are becoming disaggregated. This means more tasks are moving or taking place outside of the structural and formal boundaries of organizations (Powel & Snellman, 2014). The “flexiworkforce” phenomenon is creating dramatic workplace shifts involving the expansion of the part-time labour market. This shift has resulted in a contingent workforce with new employee/employer relationships and alternative employment arrangements. Current trends are producing labour markets characterized by precariousness and impermanence. In fact, part-time employment is the largest division of the non-standard workforce (Doogan, 2009). This is challenging in many respects because it requires novel responses and ways of working that were previously unimaginable. For some it will not be difficult, but for others who value stability and traditional working conditions it is concerning.

Innovation is an important concept to the knowledge economy. Fenwick (2010) argues that innovation is key to this new economy as it constitutes the foundation for the “creative class” and drives new and better processes for applying knowledge. In the knowledge-based economy, being innovative is considered a means to personal advancement (Fenwick, 2010). According to Fenwick (2010), the OECD (2008) mention how universities are critical in promoting innovation, not just via knowledge generation. It is more important that they promote innovation through knowledge mobilization and developing students and graduates who can exercise innovative capacity (Fenwick, 2010).

In Canada, policy changes in response to the shift towards a knowledge-based economy have occurred. The Government of Canada encourages human capacity development and innovation

to maximize Canada's engagement in the knowledge-based economy (Government of Canada, 2016). The government sees three key areas for policy development as important to maximizing Canadians' engagement and success in promoting a knowledge-based economy: raising the average competency level of all Canadians; engaging in capacity building for entrepreneurship, venture capital markets and promotion of science, technology and innovation sectors; and establishing a framework to create innovation networks for global business relationships, thus increasing the flow of human capital and encouraging both innovation and entrepreneurship in Canadians (Government of Canada, 2016). Educators are being encouraged to support and prepare students to meet these demands with new policies and procedures.

As with globalization, conflicting opinions exist on the influence and evolution of the knowledge economy. Many challenges have arisen because of this. What counts as knowledge? The concept of knowledge is of central importance to the knowledge economy. Knowledge is being considered more mobile and uncontainable. Knowledge is not merely technical, but also intricately socially connected through networks of individual thought and discovery. Thus, the knowledge economy can be perceived as a series of global networks. Therein lies a strong connection to globalization (Fenwick, 2010). This connection makes knowledge different from other tradable commodities and therefore has different meanings (Fenwick, 2010). Knowledge production depends on innovation, improvisation, sharing and mobility, and these processes depend on the social capital of the country. Notably, knowledge has different values in different contexts. Some knowledge is produced and distributed easily, while other forms remain enmeshed in the local activity that produced it (Fenwick, 2010). This corresponds to the global local understanding relevant in the discourse of globalization.

Human capital models support the knowledge-driven economy. These models see a linear relationship between "learning" and "earning". They encourage individuals and governments to invest in their skills as means for improving prosperity. In this linear relationship the more skills and credentials a person possesses, the better and more productive that person is. Both individuals and society will benefit as people will make a greater contribution and earn a higher living. Such a rationale has led to a less positive aspect of the knowledge economy, which is the global war for talent. This dominant discourse has led to global competition for the most talented workers (Brown & Tannock, 2008). The "war" for the most talented workers arose from the increasing importance of "creative talent" and the belief that having the most talented workers offers advantages (Brown & Tannock, 2008). This is a phenomenon being seen worldwide between nations. The globalization of the "war for talent" represents a growing awareness of the importance that investing in high-skilled workers offers. With companies shifting focus and priorities from national to global markets, they insist on "global meritocracy" - the ability to recruit the best talent regardless of national identity. However, this is problematic for national models of meritocracy (Brown & Tannock, 2008). This global war for talent is reshaping the world and influencing how the world works. Fueled by forces of globalization (Brown & Tannock, 2008), it impacts educational efforts to prepare workers for the future. Given this development, a reconsideration of the meaning of global and local issues has arisen.

In a rapidly evolving world, where the fear of being "left behind" is ever present, the pressure for skilled labour shifts the focus of education to emphasize skill development, so that individuals and industries can remain competitive. Adults learners are often motivated by the expectation that the new knowledge they gain will help them achieve their goals (Brown & Hannis, 2012). That is important for adult educators to realize, but it is equally important to note that it is not the only merit on which adult education should be appreciated. The OECD (2013) makes an interesting comment: "what people know and what they can do with what they know has a major impact on their life chances" (p. 6). Adult educators are positioned to satisfy this stance. The knowledge of what to do through skill development is enhanced by

building confidence in understanding the ways of the world and how to take part in the world. This understanding can redefine what individuals do with what they know. Adult education encompasses so many facets of life and being educated for work has its foundation in understanding and being open to participating in life.

4. Insights and Recommendations for the Future of Adult Education

The previous two sections illuminated globalization for its influence on adult learning and the changes in the world of work connected to globalization. This established the current need for quality adult education. This last section raises three critical recommendations for adult educators to design meaningful educational experiences that will prepare learners to prosper in the present and in the future. These three recommendations are engaging in reflective practice, building communities of practice, and fostering lifelong learning.

There are many approaches that may be successfully employed by adult educators to improve their practice. These three strategies were selected because there is significant literature to support the effectiveness of their application. Moreover, together they present a balanced and varied combination of competencies. To illustrate, critical reflection occurs at and delivers benefit predominantly at an individual level whereas communities of practice expand the focus and present an approach for educators to engage with one another to strengthen their practice. Lifelong learning is an essential practice that weaves across and can support both at individual and collective levels and is necessary to promote continued learning and growth, especially in challenging times.

4.1. Critical Reflection

Critical reflection involves identifying and checking the accuracy and validity of assumptions that one has made (Brookfield, 2017). Reflecting upon one's efforts and results produces valuable learning (Lew & Schmidt, 2011). Adult educators should engage in and encourage engaging in reflective practice for several reasons. There is a growing body of evidence and research to support critical reflection and reflective practices, such as reflective writing (Boutet et al., 2017). The use of a learning journal is beneficial for maintaining this practice.

Although potentially considered an "indirect" support for the learning processes, these actions proffer diverse benefits to the learner. Such benefits include transferable skills including autonomy, metacognition, and improved self-awareness (Boutet et al., 2017). Reflective practices promote deeper understanding and the ability to develop new skills, broaden one's perspective and enhance one's self-confidence (Brookfield, 2017). Seeing the world with fresh perspectives is not only liberating but also affords one the opportunity to better engage with the world and those with whom one works and learns. Implementing a reflective practice has improved learning strategies, enhanced competence in learners, and helped them make sense of emotions (Boutet et al., 2017). Moreover, critical reflection affords opportunity to analyze, interpret and, if deemed necessary, reframe assumptions.

Engaging in reflective practice is vital for a deeper appreciation of the world and one's place in the world. This includes recognizing the influences of globalization, how these influences are creating change in work and learning and thereby find ways of prospering in a knowledge-based economy. Moreover, critical reflection is a key element of transformative learning through the expansion of awareness and reframing of assumptions (Brookfield, 2018; Mezirow, 1998; Taylor, 2017). In a rapidly changing world, the ability to adapt and respond is pivotal for success as educators and learners to thrive.

Often individuals react rather than respond or go through the motions instead of truly being involved in experiences. Introducing reflective practice in learning proffers new opportunity to choose how one participates and responds. Through critical reflection and developing skills to “notice” what is happening, one will feel a higher level of participation and act with more informed choices. This will provide a stronger sense of worthwhile action and engagement (Mason, 2002). This skill is important, especially in educational practice, for interpreting and responding to globalization and interacting with others and society. It will help individuals better understand the processes and forces at work in their contexts and countries. It may lead to deeper insights and inspiration for improved innovation, creative thinking, and solutions.

4.2. Communities of Practice

Communities of practice have received increasing interest and attention in academic circles with good reason. Wenger (2000) defines a community of practice as essential elements that make up social learning systems and corresponds to the social learning theory and work of Etienne Wenger (Wenger, 2000; Wenger, 2006). Wenger receives credit for the specific nomenclature of “communities of practice”; however, the concept is much older. This theory may be recognized by other names such as “learning networks” or “thematic groups” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). To be functional, a community of practice requires not only a “community” but also a “practice” to be recognizable. Practice refers to the pursuit of learning of the community (Wenger, 2000).

Human beings, according to Wenger (2000), share cultural practices that display collective learning. Collective learning is a learning process that creates a form of synergy which produces shared knowledge and understanding. It includes acting together and seeing one another in action. In this setting knowledge creation takes place through expanding interactive communities which transcend organizational levels (Doos & Wilhelmson, 2011). Collective learning is multimodal and must consider socio-cultural influences and the community (Billett & Choy, 2013). This relates to Wenger’s four processes of social learning theory, which are: belonging, becoming, experiencing, and doing (Evans & Rainbird, 2006).

A sense of belonging and connection has gained significant new meaning following the loss of connection and isolation that was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts on the part of adult educators to encourage a sense of belonging to support learners. Wenger (2016) identifies three modes of belonging. These are engagement, imagination and alignment. Learning architects must address all three modes of belonging and one mode is not to be considered superior to another (Wenger, 2016). Engaging adult learners is of particular importance, and adult educators can do this through relationship building and considering the histories and background experiences that learners bring. The fact that adults elect how they engage or participate is fundamental to understanding participatory practices (Billett, 2004). Engagement with the field, with fellow educators and with students will strengthen adult educators sense of belonging and is significant for their professional practice. Imagination contributes to both the understanding of place and sense of identity as well as visions for the future (Wenger, 2016). For adult educators, a continual investment in imagining possibilities and pushing the boundaries of the field will keep them inspired for their professional practice. Lastly, alignment which involves the coordination of energies and action is not only significant to the sense of belonging adult educators feel in their communities of practice but it is also important for seeing and believing there is an impact to their work (Wenger, 2016). Especially during challenging times and when there is uncertainty and change in the world, the ability to maintain alignment with teaching and the community of practice will keep adult educators stay connected to their practice and with community.

In addition to the four processes of social learning theory, there are three dimensions to consider when discussing communities of practice. These dimensions, which produce community coherence, are: mutual engagement, through participation and reification of activities; a joint enterprise, whose pursuit is determined by participants; and a shared repertoire, which can include shared histories, concepts, actions, stories and activities (Wenger, 2016). Educators engaged in the practice of teaching and learning can share in all three of these dimensions.

Maintaining the bonds of community and connection and cohesion are significant to supporting adult educators with the unavoidable demands that will come from their professional practice and support of students. The demands of educational professionals can be stressful. Career burnout is a state of mental, emotional and physical exhaustion in which an individual becomes so overwhelmed that they can no longer perform the duties of their professional role (CAMH, 2022). Since the COVID-19 pandemic academic burnout has been a growing concern in occupational settings which include academia around the world (Amer et al., 2022; Gewin, 2021). Nori et al. (2018) discuss how burnout leads to personal attrition. High rates of global change can also cause stress which is unavoidable but should not be ignored. Lammers et al. (2013) noted attachment to professionalized occupations is supported by socialization processes and those with strong professional identification could be less likely to experience burnout owing to a greater sense of purpose and work enjoyment. Community cohesion and a strong community of practice can provide the context and enhance these processes and support adult educators.

While many acknowledge learning and participation are inseparable (Billett, 2004) when discussing social learning theory, there is a second, less recognized process that must also be discussed called reification. Together, participation and reification converge and diverge. Both are sources of remembering and forgetting, which are part of a learner's journey (Wenger, 2016). These two constructs contribute to boundaries, which help recognize, build, develop, and maintain communities of practice. Earlier in this essay, encouragement of network formation to support innovation and the knowledge economy was mentioned (Government of Canada, 2016). Collective learning and learning network formation through communities of practice will support network formation. Boundary objects and brokering are two other processes involved in this. Brokering is where an individual from one community goes between communities (Wenger, 2006). It is not always easy and requires consideration for the brokers to gain admittance into communities. Despite certain boundaries and obstacles, in a world more interconnected than ever before given the influences of globalization, adult educators must not only look to strengthen their communities of practice but also seek opportunities to expand their networks.

Communities of practice are diverse and complex. However, the learning and experiences they provide are rich and rewarding. Understanding them and focusing on social learning theory will serve adult educators well. Adult educators will benefit from studying the principles and elements of communities of practice. They should apply these principles and look for ways to participate in and contribute to strengthening and sustaining learning networks within their practice. Especially in a world of uncertainty and change these networks and provide a source of resiliency and fortitude for adult educators who need to find ways to navigate the changing nature of work and learning.

4.3. Lifelong Learning

“Today, one of the greatest responsibilities of schools is to raise individuals who have the knowledge, skills, values and conduct as necessitated by the globalized world, while transferring the available cultural heritage to new generations.” (Demirel, 2019, p. 208).

Ultimately, true educators look for means to make a lasting impact in the lives of those they teach. As Brookfield (2017) states: “Every good teacher wants to change the world for the better” (p. 1). Fostering a commitment to lifelong learning will contribute to having this desired impact. This is how adult educators can leave a legacy in the lives and futures of the learners they serve and support through their professional commitment.

Lifelong learning is an important area of the field of education and together with adult learning and adult education these three interrelated activities, depending on the scholar’s perspective, may be considered either synonymous or distinctive (Milana et al., 2018). According to Demirel (2009), lifelong learning is: “a continuous process in which individuals retain and develop their life-based conduct, knowledge and skills” (p. 201). In simpler terms, it is learning which occurs throughout life (Jarvis in Demirel, 2009). Lifelong learning transpires as both formal (sponsored) processes and informal (unsponsored) processes (Demirel, 2009). Numerous models suggest approaches to lifelong learning (Regmi, 2015). Walters (2006) puts forth the perspective of a “wide-angle lens” and adopting a more holistic framework. Although a more challenging approach, it is worth investigation. Globalization is a diverse and multidimensional process. One must consider and evaluate various factors together. There are benefits from more encompassing, holistic perspectives since individual forces will not only impact one level but will also affect other levels. Considered holistically, one can appreciate how these factors influence one another, society, and the world. Regmi (2015) contends two fundamental processes are at the root of all theories in lifelong learning: the “human capital model” and the “humanistic model”. The human capital model encourages competition, privatization, and human capital formation to enhance economic growth through increased productive capacity. The humanistic model, based on the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, encourages building social capital and citizenship education to expand capabilities and strengthen social welfare and democracy (Regmi, 2015). Rather than say one is superior to the other, for both have reasons to recommend them and criticisms for their underlying assumptions, incorporating both models could benefit individuals and society by fostering a more balanced and inclusive approach to lifelong learning.

Maintaining a practice of lifelong learning is critical for many reasons. Lifelong learning will help individuals adapt to the rate of change in science and technology and the demands and innovation required for thriving in a knowledge-based economy (Demirel, 2009). Global change will continue. To understand and adapt requires learning and recognition of these changes. Lifelong learning is essential as it encourages innovation. To stop learning is to stop growing and changing. Individuals will need to change to face the challenges and opportunities of the future. Thus, lifelong learning deserves attention and investment.

Individuals who engage in lifelong learning support continuous aspirations for engaging in new learning and accept responsibility for managing their own learning (Demirel, 2009). Adult educators will benefit from the commitment to lifelong learning in their personal practice and dedicate efforts to inspiring and fostering that same commitment in their students. As globalization is about the speeding up and increased rate of change in science and technology, this continuous commitment to learning and transformation is vital for success. Furthermore, lifelong learning is essential to longevity in a profession and nurturing a sustainable career.

5. Conclusion

Global change occurs on many levels and will continue to redefine and influence the field of education. Globalization is a phenomenon through which one can explore, evaluate, and interpret these changes. This paper on the perspective of how globalization is shaping education and work encourages a response from adult educators. The author shares the view that

“Education has a vital role to play in developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable people to contribute to and benefit from a sustainable future” (OECD, 2018). The choices and practices of adult educators have a significant role to play in shaping the future.

This article supports consciousness raising of the potential of adult education in a world full of global change. The insights and recommendations provided will satisfy both policy suggestions and requirements and serve as tools for helping others in their professional practice. While examples and specific references to Canadian policy were made, the principles and foundational elements of the three practices suggested may be of interest and relevant to a broader international audience. Adult educators should consider themselves both learning architects and agents of change. Their influence can spread even further as they explore ways of reflecting, engaging, and reinventing learning processes. The passion and inspiration they can bring to their practice, combined with their commitment to continued learning, will benefit not only themselves, but will also expand to benefit others.

The current state of uncertainty in the world and and unpredictability of the future demand a response from educators. Without a response, both educators and the field risk a troubling future. Educators in the future will have to learn to be competent with change considering the impacts of globalization. Together critical reflection, communities of practice and lifelong learning have much to offer adult educators. These practices will advance their aspirations and endeavours in meeting expectations and help them find personal fulfillment in their practice and profession. Different fields and epistemological traditions and orientations can be drawn upon to understand these three practices. As a result, further research is needed into all three practices as there is still much discussion, questions, and critiques for these methods. None of these three practices is more important than the other and they are mutually reinforcing to support adult educators practice and prospects.

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