

## Stepping back into the same river: Current research in adult education and lifelong learning

Presentation to LCAE November 12, 2013

## Heraclitus

- + It is impossible to step into the same river twice.
- + *Everything flows, nothing stands still.*
- + *Change is the only constant.*
- + *It is better to hide ignorance, but it is hard to do this when we relax over wine.*



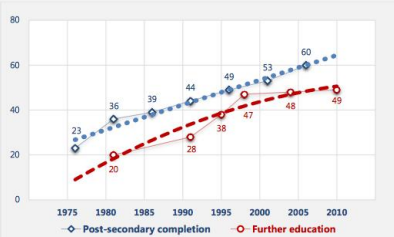
## Overview

1. Recent data on adult learners
2. Transformative learning
3. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills & students
4. Defining meaningful outcomes

## Adult learners- recent data

- + Who are they?
  - + An increasing number of us
- + Forms of learning:
  - + Formal schooling
  - + Further education
  - + Informal education
  - + Self-directed informal learning

**Figure 1**  
Post-secondary Completion and Further Education Participation Rates, 25-64 years Population, Canada, 1976-2010, (%)



Sources: Post-secondary completion: Custom tabulations from Canadian Census public use microdata on individual files, 1976-2006, 25-64 Population. Further education: 1983, Devereaux (1983), 1993, Statistics Canada and Human Resources Canada (2001), 1998, NALL 1998 (N=1,117), 2004, WALL 2004 Survey (N=6,310), 2010, WALL 2010 Survey (N=1,407). Percentages in further education in 1981 and 1991 refer to the larger population over 17, but including full-time students.

(Livinstone & Raykov, 2013)


## Diversity

Learners fit a diverse profile of abilities, challenges, and prior knowledge



**Recognition**

More than 60% of adult learners wanted some recognition for the prior learning they had accomplished.  
(Livinstone & Raykov, 2013)




Can you identify a transformative learning experience of your own?


**Assumptions of adult learners**

- + Learning is a natural process- a product of the interactions between:
  - + our drive to develop and improve &
  - + the changing environment in which we live



**Learning Ecology Framework**

- + Individuals who work with learners need to be aware of the conditions, characteristics, and moments when learning is taking place
- + Environmental conditions impact learning & engagement





**Transformative Learning**

Teachers guide learning in meaningful ways to foster understanding and confidence

**Core Concepts of Transformative Learning**

1. Power is shifted to the learner from the teacher (facilitator)
2. Learning = making meaning
3. Learners engage in reflective discourse/dialogue

Mezirow, 2012



## Transformative Learning

- + Adult learning is contextual & situational
- + Adults can create meaning in four ways:
  1. Intersubjectivity
  2. Relate events & behaviour to actions
  3. Construct rules and the truth
  4. Apply rules and distinctions

Bruner, 1996



### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

Knowledge & behaviours that promote success in an evolving climate of work, change, and diverse needs.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Toolbox

- + Ways of thinking
- + Ways of working
- + Tools for working
- + Skills for living



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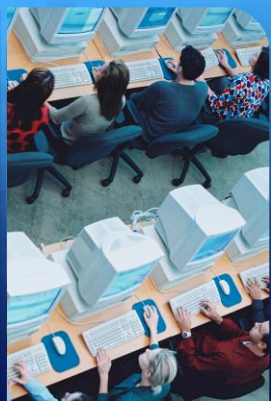
## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

- + Information sharing & **communication**
- + Teamwork & **collaboration**
- + Ability & comfort to adapt, **create** & innovate
- + Marshal technology to create new knowledge & **think critically**

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## Assessment of Learning

- How do we value experience?
- What kinds of knowledge do we value and prioritize?
- Does the student see value in their knowledge gain?
- Are our assessments responsive?



## Critical Self-Reflection as Teachers

- + The best is the enemy of the good (*Voltaire*)
- + What learning experiences have shaped your role as an educator?
- + How do we respond to our own learning needs?

Stake, 2013

## Outcomes

- + Are we measuring what we should be measuring?
- + Does the data match the need or address the right problem?

## References

- + [Assessment and Teaching of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills:](http://atc21s.org/index.php/about/what-are-21st-century-skills/)  
<http://atc21s.org/index.php/about/what-are-21st-century-skills/>
- + The Handbook of Transformative Learning (2012)
- + Livingstone, D.W. & Raykov, M. (2013) Adult Learning Trends in Canada. Toronto: OISE.
- + Brookfield, S (2013) Powerful Techniques for Teaching Adults. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

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