

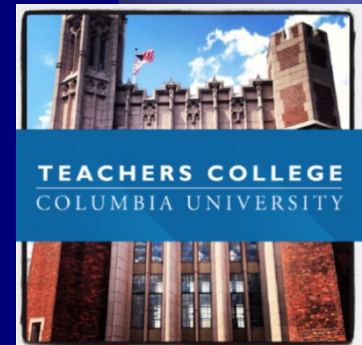
We survived Covid - now what?
The Place of Adult Education in an Era of Long Covid

Paper at
*Beyond the Covid Recovery: New Challenges for Education
and Lifelong Learning*

at
Festival of Education & Lifelong Learning
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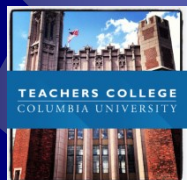
Three thoughts for discussion as we emerge from Covid

The delight is real, including the delight at survival but this delight is diluted.

Covid is a social disease and we learn in relationships.

Less talk about learning for a moment: Education is a priority

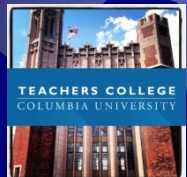
The growth of digital learning is impressive but the danger of a bigger digital gap



The Delight at Survival is Diluted

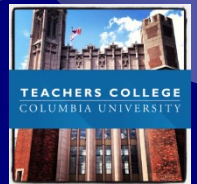
- ☀ I am delighted to be here, indeed delighted to be anywhere!
- ☀ So many had to die....So many yet to get health care for new illnesses and long-covid
- ☀ We, the survivors, learned so much – about T-cells and exponential growth, usually the territory of higher mathematics.
- ☀ Connections are the most sought after experiences as well as the most risky, during the past months of Covid.
- ☀ Above all we learned that being close to people could be fatal and connections were the most risky activities. When can granny give a hug again? The most life sustaining activities were possibly the most risky.
- ☀ The traumas, and there were traumas in these months, may create post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in many groups from Covid survivors to carers, etc.

A new study published by the JAMA Psychiatry shows that 30% of Covid survivors may develop PTSD. See: JAMA Psychiatry. 2021;78(5):567-569
doi: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2021.0109



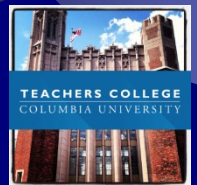
Covid is a Social Disease - part 1: Education is a Relationship

- ✦ Education is: A **RELATIONSHIP** between learner and teacher and between learners that become friends of each others minds, and dreams and ambitions and imaginations and intelligences and learning.
- ✦ We learned about our old and new vulnerabilities
- ✦ There has been so much lost: Lost time, lost people, lost opportunities to deal with illness due to hospitals full of covid. The experiences for many may be a form of post traumatic stress disorder – it will be formative for our next years.



Covid is a Social Disease - part 2: Re-assessing socio-economic status

- ✿ Those on the bottom economic rungs became key workers and essential workers and front line workers. Many of these were the lowest paid. Such inequalities are in the system for too long....
- ✿ Workers, especially essential workers and all who had to continue to go to work (in hospitals, and residential care, in prisons, etc.) spent many months leaving home with partners, parents, children all worried at the risks being undertaken on behalf of everybody.



Education is a Priority Post-Covid: Less talk about learning for a moment

This is a Festival of Education – this word is important!

Education is the activity in society that takes care of how we bring people (usually children) into community and society and autonomy (and work). It also refers to activities that enhance adult participation in society and community.

It takes care of how we become able to make a better society

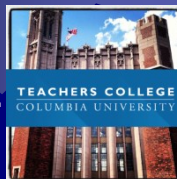
A more caring community;

Increase social justice in the world;

Work toward a fuller democracy with active citizens engaged in all decision making – nothing about us, without us!

We are more than an economy.

If you think Covid was bad (mistakes were made, not all the decisions were the right ones) wait (or do not wait) for climate change. As the assault on science, knowledge, experts (from far right) will continue. There will continue to be 'winners and losers'.



The Growth of Digital Learning: A bigger digital gap

- ✿ It is an amazing success - how the adult education sector adapted to digital learning challenges – real successes, real learning too by teachers who Zoomed their way in to the homes of learners.
- ✿ Adults learning in their own homes was a real change in the way education became more accessible to so many. Home deliveries!
- ✿ This resource as an access route has only barely been exploited – there are so many more possibilities that we can imagine.
- ✿ But our problems continue to be real and
- ✿ We will not google our way out of whatever mess we know still exists
- ✿ Only learning and education offer a way forward toward a better society
- ✿ Growth of on-line learning with its new concepts and apps will lead to a wider gap between the wide broadband society and those without digital skills and without amazing broadband speed.
- ✿ The danger is that on-line learning will (not may) widen the gap between the digital haves and the digital have nots.

