



**XII INTERNATIONAL TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING CONFERENCE
ENGAGING AT THE INTERSECTIONS
PROCEEDINGS**



**October 20-October 23, 2016
Tacoma, Washington**



PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY



**Aliki Nicolaidis & Dyan Holt, *Editors*
University of Georgia**

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International Transformative Learning Conference



Reference

Nicolaides, A. & Holt, D. (Eds.). (2016). *Engaging at the Intersections*. Proceedings of the XII International Transformative Learning Conference, Tacoma, Washington, Pacific Lutheran University.

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Front Page

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ENGAGING AT THE INTERSECTIONS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE XII INTERNATIONAL TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING CONFERENCE

October 20–October 23, 2016

Pre-Conference – October 20, 2016

Conference Sessions – October 21–October 23, 2016

Tacoma, Washington, Pacific Lutheran University

Editors

Dr. Aliko Nicolaidis, Assistant Professor, University of Georgia

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WELCOME to ENGAGEMENT
through
Community, Hospitality & Rigor

Welcome to the XII International

Transformative Learning Conference. As Host and Chair of the Steering Committee, I am honored that you have traveled so far to be in community on my beautiful campus and in my beautiful city of Tacoma, Washington.

The 2016 conference went from “napkin to ribbon cutting” over the course of four years. I made the first napkin notes about hosting on Thursday, November 1, 2012. I had arrived to hotel for the 10th conference. I found Elizabeth Kasl in the bar. We discussed the program laid out before us. As we talked a vision began to form in my mind that Pacific Lutheran University would be an ideal host location. As the 2012 conference unfolded and the community discussed our best practices and traditions, my notes went from scratches on bar napkins to detailed plans on a yellow pad. I returned to PLU and discussed hosting with various administrators. Simultaneously I was in conversation with Aliko Nicolaides, Victoria Marsick and others about bringing the conference to Tacoma. While serving on the Steering Committee for the 11th conference at Teachers College, Columbia, I was also working at home on the 12th conference.

My four-year odyssey has been joyful, insightful, inspiring and stimulating. I have encountered very few stressors in the process, truly. As a communication scholar-practitioner who specializes in conflict and dialogue, I can say with confidence that the success of the planning process has been due to solid leadership, stellar collaborators and the dedication of the community. The individuals that thoughtfully designed this conference did so with past conferences in mind, especially moving from the 2014 theme, *Spaces of Transformation*, to the 2016 theme, *Engaging at the Intersections*. Everyone involved has taken on monumental tasks regardless of one’s larger life: professional advancement work, campus leadership, civic leadership, dissertation advising, extensive travel, family time, health issues, mentoring, new jobs/cities, teaching,

etc. And of course, on August 1, 2016 the sudden death of Patricia Cranton (1949-2016) was a shock to move through, fortunately together.

All through the summer Patricia worked with Victoria Marsick and Elizabeth Kasl on the Mezirow award process. I cannot speak for Patricia, though her life and scholarship embraced intersectionality: of adult education and transformative learning; of novels, artwork and learning; of animal welfare, ecology and mentoring students. There is a strong connection to Patricia at this year's conference as our community engages transformative learning questions in the physical and conceptual intersections.

The theme **Engaging at the Intersections** was selected not just because of the 2014 theme or because it captures the praxis of this community. It was selected, in part, because of the nature of PLU and Tacoma. I hope you take a moment to stand in Red Square just outside the University Center, our main venue. Red Square is a place where students, faculty and staff often come together to wrestle with powerful topics. I also hope that you take a moment to walk two blocks from the University Center to the corner of Garfield Street and C Street to see the Parkland Mural. The Mural is new as of 2015 and has an important story that I elaborate upon in the explanation of our conference theme which follows.

Engaging at the Intersections is a way of life in the greater Tacoma area which is alive with a living cultural development plan, natural beauty, social justice projects, peace and community building organizations and more. Tacoma is literally an intersection where the Pacific Rim connects with the first most western railroad terminal and the 3rd largest port on the U.S. West Coast. When you visit, you find yourself surrounded by creativity, inspiration and innovation. When you engage the city through eating, sight-seeing, shopping and strolling, you are immersed. Unlike the bustling cities of Bangkok, Dubai, London, New Delhi, New York or Seattle, Tacoma provides space to relax and reflect. We linger over specialty coffee or craft beers. We stroll green spaces such as Chambers Bay, Point Defiance Park or Ruston Way. We wander through museums. We savor locally sourced cuisine. We browse book stores, art galleries and boutiques. We have physical space to engage in these activities – we can sit at a pub and see the open waters of the Puget Sound; we can read in a park with tall, centuries-old evergreens reminding us that time is longer than we think; and we can share a meal in a restaurant that is lively, but not cramped or frenetic. Tacoma is rightfully, The City of Destiny.

As a communication scholar-practitioner with an emphasis in conflict, dialogue and peacebuilding I know that **Engaging at the Intersections** is critical if we are to be vibrant people living in healthy communities. Tensions and conflicts are something most people avoid or accommodate rather than engage. Yet, engagement is an opportunity to explore and transform complexity. Non-engagement, the alternative, is to let the complexity change into deeper tensions, escalated conflicts, division and even violence. We see this happening across the globe as divisions deepen because as said by Martin Luther King Jr. speaking at Cornell College on October 15, 1962, *"I am convinced that men hate each other because they fear each other. They fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they don't communicate with each other, and they don't communicate with each other because they are separated from each other."*

It is not simply that discord, disharmony and violence are happening due to a lack of communication and due to deeper divides. It is happening because we do not engage as learners together. Violence is a method, not an outcome, for dealing with the complexity found in intersection. Transformative learning is a better, more desirable method. We must come together with others, especially with those unlike us to learn from and about each other. We must not simply communicate. We must dialogue, listen and reflect so as to transform our embodied, emotional, spiritual and attitudinal relationships to others.

With this in mind I have invited you to Tacoma and to Pacific Lutheran University to stand in an intersection and to learn together. Ask questions of one another that invite stories of perspective, struggle, marginalization, privilege and concern. Reach out to someone you do not know – ask someone to join you for a meal, talk to our volunteers about their transformative learning experiences, confront your own discomfort about new ideas or about being around so many unknowns. For many that may even be the largest fear at this conference – "I am nervous about being here, I don't know anyone, what to expect or how to behave". I invite you to acknowledge that feeling and then introduce yourself to someone.

At this, the XII International Transformative Learning Conference, October 20-23, 2016, we bring together over 200 individuals representing at least 25 nations and cultures. What an amazing opportunity! I welcome you to this four-day learning experience.

In closing, thank you for attending and for sharing of yourself. Of all the conferences I have ever attended, this conference is always my favorite. I hope it becomes your favorite as well and that I see you at future conferences.

With deep appreciation,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Feller".

Amanda E. Feller

In Memory of Patricia Cranton

Edward W. Taylor & Elizabeth J. Tisdell
Penn State University—Harrisburg

It was a sad day on August 1, 2016 when we first learned of the passing of our beloved colleague Dr. Patricia Cranton. She had been our vibrant and brilliant colleague for a long time, but we were both privileged to teach with her at Penn State University—Harrisburg from 2005-2011 when she was on our faculty. During those years we engaged in many conversations about adult education and transformative learning theory, and those conversations continued both verbally and in writing; they were full of scholarly engagement, some argument, and full of a lot of dry wit and fun. As we begin this XII International Transformative Learning Conference with great excitement and anticipation about the study of transformative learning theory, we wanted to reflect a bit on the significant contribution Patricia made to the advancement of this theory and its practice. She was indeed a scholar, researcher, mentor, colleague, friend, worker bee, and lover of all things living,The lists go on and on.

Looking back on her long career, her many writings contributed to the advancement of transformative learning theory, and the many classes she taught both face to face and online deeply affected adult learners and scholars of adult education. It would be easy to compile a long and impressive list of books and journal articles, and the list of classes that she taught. However, Patricia was much more than a collection of her publications or her list of courses both online and face to face. For one, she was most adept at taking complex ideas and making them understandable, particularly for those just beginning to study the theory of transformative learning. Most notably is her book, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, which was recently released in its third edition. This ground-breaking book first published in 1994 offered for many their first introduction into the theory and practice of Transformative Learning, influencing the theory's interest and access well beyond the field of adult education. In many ways, metaphorically Patricia was like a "town crier" spreading the word of TL through her work. Scholars from many disciplines across the academic spectrum continually reference this text as well as her other publications.

Not only was her work accessible, she was as well. Like many people in the field, we worked with Patricia on a variety of projects, one being as co-editors (or author) of the *Handbook of Transformative Learning*. Patricia was always willingly to assist both the novice and experienced scholar in any way possible, which is what made her a great editor of scholarly journals; she was a co-editor with us of the *Adult Education Quarterly*

from 2006-2011, and worked with John Dirkx and Chad Hoggan as a co-editor for the *Journal of Transformative Education*. Her collaborative interchanges with so many scholars led to numerous co-authored or co-edited book-length publications, including *Stories of Transformative Learning* with Michael Kroth, *A Novel Idea* with Randee Lawrence, *Reaching Across the Border: Canadian Perspective in Adult Education* with Leona English, and *Cultures and Self-Directed Learning* with Victor Wang, just to mention a few.

The volume of her scholarship in both its breadth and depth, and the fact that she collaborated with so many people, might give the impression that Patricia was very social. Despite her interaction with many people, she was quite a private and modest person. One of her last publications titled "Transformative Learning: A Narrative" published in *Learning, Design and Technology* was about the development of transformative learning over 40 years. While it is very thorough, she was modest in the sense that you never get a sense of the significance of her work in actually shaping the study of transformative learning.

Patricia was a hard worker with an engaged intellect. But she also had a life beyond her work. She was an incredible photographer, who loved nature, the wild places of the earth, and of course her animals (especially her dogs Cookie and Foxy, and her prior animal companions). An introvert for sure, but always full of dry wit and a lot of fun for those who had the opportunity to work alongside her and got to know her well. Patricia clearly listened to the beat of her own drum. She cared for the earth with such conviction that she was vegan for more years than many of us have been alive, and lived the kind of minimalist lifestyle out of a firm and steadfast commitment, which is simply an idea for most of us. While she had traveled much in her life in both physical and metaphorical ways, in her last few years after she left Penn State, she wanted to stay at home with the animals and the landscape that she so loved. She continued to write and to teach online, but did so with her photographer's eye ready to capture the next abstraction or natural wonder.

We encourage everyone during this conference as they engage in their work on transformative learning to explore and become aware of Patricia's contributions. And may the dialogues we share continue to transform us as we carry on Patricia's legacy in the ongoing development of transformative learning theory and its practice.



PRE – CONFERENCE
Thursday, October 20
Pacific Lutheran University

You are Invited!

Please join the International Transformative Learning Community on Thursday, October 20, 2016 at Pacific Lutheran University for an opportunity to learn, network and energize! Whether you are an educator, a facilitator, student, artist, activist, leader or volunteer – welcome! Whether you work in government, spiritual life, non-profit organizations, for-profit business or the private sector –welcome!

This invitation includes the Pre-Conference Schedule, descriptions of the sessions, and logistical information. Please note that this Pre-Conference and the full Conference offers CE credits.

PRE-CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- 10:00AM to 1:30PM Free Shuttle Vans from Downtown Hotels to Campus
- 10:00AM Registration and Luggage Storage Opens
- 12:00PM to 1:30PM Pre-Conference A: What is Transformative Learning?
- 2:00PM to 5:00PM Pre-Conference B: A Collaborative Inquiry into research designs and methods for understanding and extending the theory or Transformative Learning
- 5:30 PM Formal Conference Opening Welcome Session & Reception

For more information about the full conference visit the TL Network:
<http://transformativelearning.ning.com/page/2016-conference-4>

Pre-Conference A: What is Transformative Learning? Primary Facilitator, Urusa Fahim, Ph.D.

Do you work to help individuals and communities learn, progress and change? If you answered “yes”, then no matter your role, your work, your methods, your context you are likely engaged in transformative learning. This lunch seminar is an opportunity to learn more about Transformative Learning and to connect with others engaged in similar work.

Transformative Learning theory has the potential to inform many aspects of our life such as our relationships, the beliefs that inform our actions, our reactions when we encounter those who are different from us, and the shift in perspectives which can follow. Transformative Learning theory also offers us a frame to understand the world we live in and our response to it. In short, the application and practice of Transformative Learning is not limited to the academic arena and can be observed in our everyday life, work and practices.



Dr. Fahim will lead an interactive discussion on the ways Transformative Learning can be used to understand our experiences and reactions in our lives. She will use anecdotes from her own life to illustrate aspects of Transformative Learning and share how Transformative Learning has influenced her. She will introduce participants to the general concepts and frameworks of transformative learning theory and discuss a wide range of practices.

About Dr. Fahim: <http://urusafahim.com/>

Pre-Conference B: Collaborative Inquiry into Research Designs and Methods for Understanding and Extending the Theory of Transformative Learning

Facilitators: Aliko Nicolaides, Ed.D.; Stacey Robbins, Ed.D.; and Chad Hoggan, Ed.D.

The purpose of this collaborative inquiry session is to convene those interested in the research and practice of Transformative Learning - students, faculty, and practitioners. Together we will collectively engage in a facilitated inquiry process that explores conventional and novel research designs and methods to understand and extend the theory and implications of Transformative Learning. This session is framed as a collaborative action inquiry where together we explore and prototype methodologies by which to study Transformative Learning. Some guiding questions are:

- What research paradigms help us to describe, understand, and measure the phenomenon of transformative learning?
- What methods of inquiry are suitable to understand the impact of transformative learning at the individual level, for groups or teams, organizations, and communities?
- What emerges from novel research that contributes to theorizing Transformative Learning and extending its epistemological and ontological roots for sustainable and beneficial impact?

This session is for those actively engaged in transformative learning research or who wish to pursue such research. Attendees should have a fundamental understanding of TL theory and of research in general. Whether a long-time researcher or currently pursuing graduate research, attendees have important contributions to offer. Living theory requires disturbing traditions to make space for new perspectives.



About Dr. Nicolaides: <https://coe.uga.edu/directory/profiles/alikin>



About Dr. Robbins: <http://www.owls.txstate.edu/people/FacultyList/Robbins.html>



About Dr. Hoggan: <https://ced.ncsu.edu/people/cdhoggan/>

PRE-CONFERENCE DETAILS

Location, Parking & Logistics.

- Pre-Conference Sessions will be held at Pacific Lutheran University in the Anderson University Center, also known as the UC.
- Parking will be free and available. Campus Map <http://www.plu.edu/map/>
- If you are attending the full conference and staying at the designated downtown hotels, then the complimentary shuttles to/from hotels and campus will be available.
- Luggage storage will be available throughout the day for those coming to campus directly from the airport, etc.
- Conference registration and check-in for the full conference will be open throughout the day for those who wish to register or for those who have registered needing to check-in.

Nourishment.

Lunch and beverages will be supplied for Session A: 12:00-1:30PM.

A light snack buffet and beverages will be supplied for Session B: 2:00-5:00PM

Cost, Lunch Included.

For those paying to attend the full conference, October 20-23, the Pre-Conference is included.

For those only attending part of the main conference or only attending the pre-conference, the following rates apply:

- Pre-Conference A: \$35
- Pre-Conference B: Complimentary

Pre-Conference-Only Attendees: you may also attend the Thursday 5:30-7:30PM Conference Opening Session & Welcome Reception

Registration.

- Registration for the pre-conference can be made online: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/international-transformative-learning-pre-conference-tickets-26627374193>
- Our events management and catering office needs attendance numbers prior to October 20, so please register at least 48-hours in advance.
- On-site registration is possible. We will do our best to accommodate your attendance.

Continuing Education Credits.

Up to 10 clock hours for CE credits are available for pre-conference and conference participation. Please contact Amanda Feller for details.

Please contact Amanda at itlc2016@gmail.com with any questions or inquiries about the pre-conference or conference.

Amanda E. Feller, Ph.D., ITLC 2016 Host & Steering Committee Chair
Mobile: 253.921.6454 Twitter: @AEFScholarDiva LinkedIn: Amanda E. Feller LinkedIn
Address: Pacific Lutheran University / Tacoma, WA 98447 / USA
ITLC on the Web - Join the Network: <http://transformativelearning.ning.com/page/2016-conference>
Follow the ITLC Community on twitter: @ITLC_Community

The Who's Who of the XII International Transformative Learning Conference

Within these Proceedings you can read documents, letters and statements from many of the people and groups who made this conference a reality and a success. When you interact with these individuals, please extend them a hearty statement of appreciation.

The Steering Committee, comprised of dedicated individuals, accomplished our work with focus and thoughtfulness.

Amanda Feller, Pacific Lutheran University, Steering Committee Chair & Conference Host

Misha Burstein, University of Arizona
Melannie Cunningham, Pacific Lutheran University
Urusa Fahim, Independent Scholar
Placida Gallegos, Fielding Graduate University
Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University
Victoria Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia
Claudio Melacarne, University of Siena
Aliko Nicolaides, University of Georgia - Athens
Stacey Robbins, Seattle University
Steve Schapiro, Fielding Graduate University
Ellen Scully-Russ, George Washington University

The Steering Committee divided into subcommittees and added others as consultants.

The Scientific Committee

Misha Burstein, University of Arizona, Chair

Patricia Cranton, University of New Brunswick
Elizabeth Kasl, Independent Scholar
Urusa Fahim, Independent Scholar
Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University

Design Committee

Placida Gallegos, Fielding Graduate University, Co-Chair

Steve Schapiro, Fielding Graduate University, Co-Chair

Claudio Melacarne, University of Siena
Aliko Nicolaides, University of Georgia - Athens
Stacey Robbins, Seattle University
Ellen Scully-Russ, George Washington University

Anna Laros, University of Applied Sciences, Northwestern Switzerland
George Koulaouzides, Hellenic Open University
Ilene Wasserman, ICW Consulting

The Jack Mezirow Living Theory of Transformative Learning Committee was an incredibly detailed and methodical group who, in addition to the intensive work of reading all papers for the Mezirow award process, also served the Steering Committee with planning the overall conference.

Patricia Cranton, University of New Brunswick, Coordinating Committee

Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University, Coordinating Committee

Elizabeth Kasl, Independent Scholar, Coordinating Committee

Victoria Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia University, Coordinating Committee

John Dirkx, Michigan State University

Fergal Finnegan, National University of Ireland / Maynooth University

Ted Fleming, National University of Ireland / Maynooth University (Retired)

Placida Gallegos, Fielding Graduate University

Juanita Johnson-Bailey, University of Georgia

Sherry Kennedy-Reid, George Washington University

Maura Striano, University of Naples Federico II

Edward W. Taylor, Penn State University - Harrisburg

Pre-Conference Group

Urusa Fahim, Independent Scholar

Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University

Aliki Nicolaides, University of Georgia - Athens

Stacey Robbins, Seattle University

The Ground Team, as we informally decided to call the group, consisted of five impressive young women who handled everything asked of them with grace, timeliness and autonomy. Any tangible aspect of the execution of the conference is due to their planning and efforts. There is not enough gratitude available to offer these young women.

Kaitlyn Porter, Pacific Lutheran University '16

Janae Reinhardt, Pacific Lutheran University '15

Danielle Bradley, Pacific Lutheran University '16

Kate Hall, Pacific Lutheran University '17

Kendall Buell, Pacific Lutheran University '17

Eleanor Reinhardt, ITLC 2016 Ground Team & PLU Class of 2038

Further support came from the **Program editors, the Proceedings Editors, our web manager** each of which required hours of detailed and methodical work which required constant adaptation to “last minute” and “final” changes.

Program Editors

Peter Neaman
Elizabeth Kasl
Victoria Marsick

Proceedings Editors

Dyan Holt
Aliko Nicolaides

Web Manager

Dan Schabot

Pacific Lutheran University, Support

This is, of course, only a partial list of who provided support for the conference. It does not name the countless campus safety officers, cooks, faculty members, groundskeepers, van drivers, volunteers among others who contributed in some way to the planning.

Office of the President

Thomas Krise, President
Kris Plaehn, Senior Advisor to the President
Vicky Winters, Director of Administration and Secretary to the Board of Regents
Deidre Hill, Executive Associate to the President

Office of the Provost

Rae Linda Brown, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Geoff Foy, Associate Provost for Graduate Programs and Continuing Education
Lauren Hibbs, Director of Partnerships and Professional Development
Jan Lewis, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs

Division of Marketing & Communications

Donna Gibbs, Vice President of Marketing and Communications
Lace Smith, Executive Director of Content Development
Kari Plog, Senior Editor for Content Development
Zach Powers, Media & Content Manager
John Froschauer, Campus Photographer
Rustin Dwyer, PLU Videographer

Hospitality Services

Kim Kennedy-Tucker, Director of Hospitality Services Conference & Event Administration
Alex Murray, Events Coordinator
Alyssa Herandy, Events Coordinator

Linda Nyland, Catering Lead
Marin Jaksha, Hospitality Services Administrative Assistant

Dining Services

Erin McGinnis, Director of Dining & Culinary Services
Mary Lou Yeomans, 208 Garfield Manager
JJ Stolz, Marketing Manager
Rebecca Farris, Administrative Assistant
Anthony McGinnis, Sous Chef - Catering and 208 Garfield
Javier Alejandro, Lead Catering Cook
Erica Fickeisen, Lead Baker

Media & Technology Services

Travis Pagel, Classroom & Events Technology Team Lead
Amy Robbins, Classroom & Events Technology Coordinator
Art Giddings, Stage Manager

Noteworthy PLU Faculty & Staff contributors

Cameron Bennett, Dean of the School of Arts and Communication (SOAC)
Terry Bergeson, Interim Dean of Education
Ron Byrnes, Associate Dean of Education
Beth Capoun, SOAC Senior Administrative Assistant
Justin Eckstein, Department of Communication & Theater
Kate Hoyt, Department of Communication & Theater / Department of Art
Mandi LeCompte, SOAC Outreach Manager
Joanne Lisosky, Department of Communication & Theater
Dan Lee, Vice President, Division of Advancement
Robert Marshall Wells, Department of Communication & Theater
Douglas Page, Executive Director of Gift Planning
Mark Mulder, School of Business
Edwin Powell, Department of Music
Sarah Sanders, Academic Scheduling Manager
Pauline Shanks-Kaurin, Chair, Department of Philosophy
Kat Slaby, Assistant Director of PLU Clubs & Organizations
Jonathan Wohlers, Department of Music
Amy Young, Chair, Department of Communication & Theater

PLU Student Organizations

Associated Students of Pacific Lutheran University (ASPLU)

Ellie Lapp '16, ASPLU President
Ellie Lapp

Taylor Bozich , '16 ASPLU Vice President

Ian Jamieson, Advisor

Network for Peacebuilding & Conflict Management

Angela Nommensen, Co-President

Binyaamemen Novus-Khan Artomen, Co-President

MAST Media

Matthew Salzano, '17 Mast Editor-In-Chief

Rhiannon Berg, '18 News Editor

MediaLab

Rachel Lovrovich '18, General Manager

Njal Frilseth, '16

Transformative Learning Club

Organizations & Businesses

All Academic Inc.

Rick Peacor, Vice President

Chris Svetich, Customer Service Support

Carrs Catering

Ellen Carr, Owner & Manager

Color Graphics

Voshte Demmert-Gustafson

Heidi Lopez-Mix

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Jessica Duren, Lakewood WA Branch Manager / Rental Car Division

Greater Tacoma Peace Prize (GTPP)

Theresa Pan Hosley, 2016 GTPP Laureate & Chinese Reconciliation Foundation Project

Janet Ruud, Thomas Heavey, Lisa Ottoson, Toni Simpson (GTPP Board members)

Hookfish Branding

Mark Huebner, CEO & Founder

Nate Kuberski, Sales Strategist

Cross Insurance Agency

John Buell

Joint Base Lewis-Mchord

Captain Ryan McCauley

Sargent Josh Reinhardt

Senior Airman Matthew Bradley

LeMay – America’s Car Museum (ACM)

Ann Sweeney, ACM Private Event & Sales Coordinator

LeAna Reising, Sales and Event Assistant

Peace Community Center aka “Peace”

Kerri Pedrick, “Peace” Service Team Director

Pierce County Center for Dialog & Resolution (PCCDR)

Maralise Hood Quan, PCCDR Executive Director

Jennifer Norlund Unger, PCCDR Associate Director

Tacoma Hotels

Rebecca Cattnach, Sales Manager, *Holiday Inn Express & Suites Tacoma Downtown*

Adrienne Manning, Sales Group Coordinator, *Hotel Murano*

Lynsey Norton, Sales Manager, *Courtyard Marriott Downtown Tacoma*

Tim+April LLC

Tim Norris, Co-Owner & Graphic Designer

Travel Tacoma

Jenny Curtis, Travel Tacoma Marketing Manager

Lisa Barker, Visitor Experience Manager

Letter from the Ground Team

Dear 2016 International Transformative Learning Conference attendees,

We are thrilled you are attending this conference and here with us in beautiful Tacoma! As a group, we have been planning this conference for more than two years, working to create a comfortable space for dialogue about problems communities worldwide currently face. Seeing our vision become a reality has been our greatest pleasure and we wholeheartedly hope you are enjoying the place we call home.

Our experience with the XII International Transformative Learning Conference began with quiet meetings in the back of the communication building, dreaming of something far away. We rose from humble beginnings, eating spring rolls from the small restaurant up the street, savoring our time together and gobbling up new, innovative ideas. It slowly evolved into emails and stolen moments of time in the hallway, stopping other members of the committee to share a thought in passing. Our team has transformed and grown, bringing together students from diverse backgrounds and expertise. The days, months, and suddenly years we've spent together have spanned the moments that changed our lives forever.

Planning is a process of success and failure. From dropped presenters to gained attendees, we navigated the checks and balances of managing a conference. We have become highly aware that nothing is ever certain. Despite its uncertain nature, planning has connected us to each other and to our community. We've met artists and academics, local business owners and community leaders. This conference is not just about telling our story - it's about telling theirs. It's about evolution, transformation and lasting change. An exciting part of the nature of transformative learning is that it extends far beyond theory and classrooms and directly into the lives of every individual we interact with.

We hope that during your time here, you see not only the impact of intersections at various levels and contexts, but also the unique nature of our campus, community and people. Transformative learning challenges each of us to examine our own views and engage in thoughtful inquiry to improve our own situations and the situations of others, working together to solve complex problems.

Our team is honored to have planned this conference. We have brought together practitioners, professionals, professors, and students to engage in thought-provoking discussion to create lasting change. Seeing this in practice has been a dream come true for the ground team. Each of us has grown significantly in skill and experience. Gaining perspective on the complexity of global interaction has been incredible and eye-opening.

This conference has blossomed into a learning experience about both our own communities and the world at large. We had the opportunity to meet new people, learning from their passions and gaining insight into how to view the world in a more caring and compassionate way.

We hope you enjoy your time here in Tacoma and your experience at the XII International Transformative Learning Conference. It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to plan an event for such a diverse, talented, unique group of individuals. We thank you for travelling to our slice (and our favorite part) of the Pacific Northwest and participating in our sessions and events.

Thank you for your time, consideration and thoughtful contribution.

Best,

Danielle Bradley
Kaitlyn Porter
Janae Reinhardt
Kendall Buell
Kate Hall

Letter from the Design Team

September 26, 2016

Dear conference attendees:

As our transformative learning community prepares to reconvene in Tacoma in a few weeks, we are writing on behalf of the conference Design Committee to introduce ourselves to you, to explain the principles that guided our work, and the thinking behind the overall framework of the design and to highlight some special features within it.

Our team of ten people represents a wide cross-section of our TL community including North American and European, second time attendees and those who have been attending for many years, women and men, white and People of Color, cross-disciplines, varied universities and regions. Our differences enriched our collaboration and created a high degree of involvement and wide range of perspectives.

The design team had multiple principles in mind when we did our work. We were dedicated to sustaining the TL community by providing a conference that met the varied needs of our participants. We wanted to provide multiple modes of learning and exchange including panels, experiential sessions, symposia, etc. We value the historical and theoretical foundations of transformative learning while also inviting cutting edge thinking and expansion of these theories in new arenas. We took seriously the theme of the conference at each step of our process, wanting to maximize the opportunities for all of us to learn through the intersections of our various perspective and identities, recognizing and affirming the simultaneously occurring multiplicity of ways of thinking, being and acting contained in each of us. Our hope is that the conference, by providing for all of us to encounter unsettling new ideas and ways of knowing, will catalyze the seeds of transformative learning that we all are coming to the conference to explore.

We collectively have experienced this conference as unique and distinguishable from most professional conferences in that we strive to engage in real dialogue across attendees and evolve our thinking about the field together rather than the usual barrage of presentations and papers without space to digest what people are hearing. The past few conferences (starting where and when) have intentionally built in innovative opportunities for deeper engagement that were eventually called our "Innovative Spaces", which was the theme of the 2014 conference at Teachers Colleges in New York. Conference planners in Toronto, East Lansing Bermuda, Athens, San Francisco and New York experimented with creative ways of fostering in-depth small and large group dialogue about the status, challenges and progress of TL.

Our team for this conference has designed four plenary sessions where a modified open space design will be utilized. These "Innovative Open Spaces" will be distributed across each day of the conference and will provide a structured but fluid process for engaged conversations to occur. As planners and designers, we will be paying close attention to what is on people's minds and how

our process can support having conversations that matter most to our field. We invite topics or questions to emerge from participants in advance of the conference as well as throughout our time together. This process will be explained in greater detail at our meeting but we are sure that you will find these parts of the conference to be some of its most engaging aspects.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon at on the beautiful campus of Pacific Lutheran University, which provides us a wonderful venue in which to reconvene our international transformative learning community once again.

Sincerely,

Placida Gallegos and Steve Schapiro, Design Team Co-chairs
Fielding Graduate University

Team members and institutional affiliations:

Claudio Melacarne, University of Sienna

Aliki Nicolaides, University of Georgia, Athens

Stacey Robbins, Seattle University

Ellen Scully-Russ, George Washington University

Anna Laros, University of Applied Sciences, Northwestern Switzerland

George Koulaouzides, Hellenic Open University

Ilene Wasserman, ICW Consulting

Letter from the Scientific Committee

Greetings!

Welcome to the 14th international Transformative Learning Conference. The papers, presentations, workshops, and symposiums have been selected with the conference theme in mind. The topics span a wide range of areas and disciplines and showcase those places of scholarship and practice where Transformative Learning Theory makes a connection with other disciplines and ways of thinking. The rich mix of the now familiar connections along with new intersections where Transformative Learning theory and practice comes together with different ways of knowing, acting and being will enliven how we look at scholarship. We have brought to this conference a fine selection of scholarship that adds to the discourse.

We received a total of 178 proposals, out of which 148 were accepted for presentation at the conference. We invited a large number of scholars to review the proposals. Many scholars accepted our invitation and agreed to review at least 10 proposals each. Majority of the proposals were reviewed by at least 2 reviewers and some by three.

Earlier the Scientific Committee had developed a set of criteria on which the proposals would be evaluated to ensure they matched the conference theme, added to the conversation about the scope of Transformative Learning, and indicated new or unique application for Transformative Learning theory and practice. Reviewers were provided a set of criteria on which to evaluate each proposal and recommend acceptance or rejection.

At the conference 78 number of papers will be presented, 24 experiential, 4 symposium, and 4 roundtable.

We hope you will find the presentations thought-provoking and energizing; that they will lead to the generation of exciting knowledge and research that will deepen our understanding of the scope of Transformative Learning and Practice at the intersection where it meets other disciplines, ways of knowing and being.

We wish you an enjoyable conference.

With regards,

Members of the Scientific Committee:
Misha Burstein, University of Arizona, Chair
Patricia Cranton, University of New Brunswick
Elizabeth Kasl, Independent Scholar
Urusa Fahim, Independent Scholar
Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University

A Short History of the International Transformative Learning Conference

Elizabeth Kasl

The first Transformative Learning Conference convened in 1998, at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City. Teachers College had awarded a small grant to Jack Mezirow, a retiring professor of adult education whose work in formulating a theory about the transformative dimensions of adult learning had precipitated a lively discourse among adult educators across North America and beyond. Mezirow used the grant to develop a conference. His idea was to invite people who were interested in theory and research about transformative learning to what the conference planners called "a small working conference." They expected about 40 people. News of the conference spread by word-of-mouth and nearly 200 people attended in April 1998.

The conference planners invited several people to give papers in which they summarized an area of research related to transformative learning. The second and third day included a mix of learning activities and structured conversations. Participants identified several emerging discussions about different approaches to transformative learning and explored current critiques. With no formal structure or sponsoring organization, the conference evolved in North America, with a number of different institutions volunteering to play host. Eventually, a biennial norm emerged.

Conference program structure evolves and expands. In addition to research paper presentations, many scholar/practitioners conduct experiential sessions. Less formal sessions also provide space for ideas-in-progress. All conference activities are invited based on juried blind review of proposals. Written proceedings for many of the conferences are available on the Transformative Learning website - <http://transformativelearning.ning.com/>

As new voices join the conversation, conference content has also evolved and expanded to embrace multiple perspectives on the nature of transformative learning in individuals, small groups, and larger institutions or communities. Each conference has contributed to Mezirow's initiating vision of transformative learning theory as a "theory in progress" by developing diverse perspectives on transformation learning theory, research and practice.

In 2012, a group of scholar-practitioners who have extensive experience with the conference formed an oversight group that they named the Stewards. This group convenes periodically to deliberate and explore possible organizing principles that will ensure continuity of the growth and development of both the community and the living theory of Transformative Learning. Prior to the 2016 TLC, the Stewards submitted an application for non-profit status as the International Association of Transformative Learning (IATL).

In 2014, an award was established for a conference paper that embodies the ideal of theory-in-progress: Jack Mezirow Living Theory of Transformative Learning Award. In 2016, the committee has selected papers that meet the criteria of the award and will present the Awards on the first evening of the conference in Tacoma.

Sponsors and Locations for International Transformative Learning Conferences:

1998	Teachers College, Columbia University	New York City, USA
1999	Transformative Learning Collaborative	San Francisco Bay Area, CA, USA
2000	Teachers College, Columbia University	New York City, USA
2001	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)	Toronto, Canada
2003	Teachers College, Columbia University	New York City, USA
2005	Michigan State University	East Lansing, MI, USA
2007	University of New Mexico	Albuquerque, NM, USA
2009	Teachers College, Columbia University and College of Bermuda	Bermuda
2011	Teachers College, Columbia University and The Hellenic Open University	Athens, Greece
2012	Meridian University	San Francisco Bay Area, CA, USA
2014	Teachers College, Columbia University	New York City, USA
2016	Pacific Lutheran University	Tacoma, Washington, USA



**Engaging at the Intersections:
Learning as a Community in
Tacoma & at Pacific Lutheran
University**

by Amanda E. Feller

“Engaging at the Intersections” was thoughtfully designed and selected as the theme for the XII International Transformative Learning Conference by the Steering Committee. The theme is derived from both the significance of the host location, Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, USA, and from the provocative work of the XI conference, “Spaces of Transformation and Transformation of Space” where we asked ourselves how we shape our spaces and how they shape us. In 2016, as a conference community we made the move from exploring the spaces of transformation to exploring the intersectional potential of those spaces.

Fundamentally an intersection in the context of human activity is where disparate ideas, activities and systems jostle for attention. The robust image of the town square comes to mind as the primary intersection where people come together for commerce, debate, worship, governance, entertainment, socializing, protest and more. Thus the square and its intersecting pathways are alive with energy, activity, clash and chaos.

To take the metaphor further, intersections can also be places of innovation as well as the location of disparity. Intersections are places of contact and connection at many different levels and in many contexts simultaneously: individuals, cultures, races/ethnicities, organizations, institutions, professions, disciplines, nations, and systems. Intersections are full of possibilities for transformation and influence. A primary question of our work is how can we be more intentional and creative in our interactions at these points for the purpose of transformative learning?

Engaging at the Intersections as a Community during the XII International Transformative Learning Conference

What aspects of life connect and jostle for attention at the intersections, and how do these connections create potential for transformative learning? Accessibility and support services? Arts and emerging communities? Conflict in a community over land usage, climate change and water rights? Economic industry and sustainability? Indigenous rights and dominant cultural practices? Movement, improv and bodywork to explore dominant and marginalized identities? Organizational cultural change and professional autonomy and practices? Race, gender, class and privilege?

“Engaging at the Intersections” is a call to meet at such points of contact and connection so as to be changed by them and to assess the theory and practice of transformative learning. We examine the intersections of lived experience rather than examine through a single and isolating lens. The framework of intersectionality allows a more complicated and nuanced analysis of situations so that we can avoid oversimplifying complex dynamics or challenges. Transformative learning theory tells us that when we deliberately engage with tensions and dichotomies we can transform them into something productive and generative.

In considering and designing the 2016 conference theme, the Steering Committee wanted to showcase how, when we intentionally come together in the intersection to explore and grapple with the messiness of human activity, we can generate something new, progressive and productive. We can bring transformative learning theory to make sense of clash, discord and incoherence to move people and systems in the direction of greater uplift. Therefore the intersections where transformative learning is possible are generative and exploratory. The potential exists to leave these interactions with new ways of knowing, being and understanding. As such we gather in community at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, USA, October 20-23, 2016 to consider and share:

- How can we be more intentional and creative in our interactions at these points of connection for the purpose of transformative learning?
- What aspects of life connect and jostle for attention at the intersections, and how do these connections create potential for transformative learning?
- What intersection do you work in; what are the combinations you seek that hold transformative potential?

- How is our collective work grounded in transformative learning theory? How does our work affirm, challenge, critique and expand the body of theory?

At the conference “Engaging at the Intersections” takes many forms:

- discussing research presented by scholars & practitioners on TL intersections
- participating in experiential learning sessions
- joining a roundtable session to explore emerging ideas
- listening as a community to symposia to ideas central to our community
- generating insight via a four-part innovative open space series across four days
- nourishing yourself with community meals while talking, reflecting and resting
- exploring the Exhibition Space featuring TL works by attendees
- visiting the Promotions Space to look for new resources and opportunities
- reflecting alone or with colleagues new and old at receptions and restaurants
- reading about other attendees and their works in the conference documents
- making use of social and digital media – creating and/or absorbing
- connecting and dialoging with attendees from around the world
- walking the campus to take in the blended natural and human environment
- immersing in the Tacoma culture: a museum, a cup of coffee, a craft beer, a walk
- inviting undergraduate students to share stories of TL through PLU programs

Tacoma, WA: The Host Location and Its Intersections

Many conferences are the same, arrive at the airport, shuttle to a hotel, live in the conference venue for a few days and then fly home. You could be in any city, anytime. The International Transformative Learning Conference is different. Location is part of the conference experience. For example, when in Albuquerque in 2007, the conference highlighted border issues, cultures and experiences as well as those of the University of New Mexico community. When in Bermuda, the conference highlighted 400 years of slavery and post-slavery struggles and cultures of a tiny island once-colony, still protectorate. The culture of a place, its design, its way of life and its story matters. Thus at ITLC 2016, Tacoma and PLU are present, and not merely serving as a location or comfortable space.

Engaging Intersections: Tacoma. Tacoma is an exemplary Pacific Northwest city, sitting on Puget Sound’s majestic Commencement Bay. Tacoma has an important history, facing its own historical legacies, transitions and transformations. Just the name is an indication.

"Tacoma" was adapted from "Tahoma", the Puyallup tribe's name for the nearby behemoth peak of the Cascade Range which today is known as Mount Rainer. Some fifty years after Captain Vancouver and traders from Hudson's Bay arrived, immigrants began settling the region -- predominantly from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Tacoma was incorporated in 1884 and became known as the "City of Destiny" when it was designated as the western most terminus of the transcontinental railway, connecting the railway to what is today the third largest port on the U.S. west coast. The transportation and port systems were built by Chinese and Korean laborers, most of who were treated poorly and forcefully expelled.

Today, Tacoma celebrates its indigenous tribes as well as its many ethnic populations. Similarly the relationship of culture and industry has evolved. What began as a hub of transportation and trade led to heavy industry such as silver and copper smelting; and eventually gave way to today's modern cultural hub. For instance, famous glass artist and Tacoma native, Dale Chihuly, along with visionary municipal leaders led the conversion of the downtown corridor and the Thea Foss waterway from a Superfund toxic clean-up site to an arts community. Once the location of the infamous Asarco smelting plant and toxic plume, Tacoma is now host to several world-class museums. Nearby in Old Town the street which lines Tacoma's Commencement Bay waterfront, Ruston Way, is home to the Chinese Reconciliation Park a product of the learning process led by Tacoma's Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation (CRPF). For this work, Theresa Pan Hosley was selected as Tacoma's 2016 Peace Laureate by the Greater Tacoma Peace Prize foundation and also as a speaker for the XII International Transformative Learning Conference.

Similarly, Tacoma's Hilltop area has a transformative learning tradition. The Hilltop, first settled by immigrants predominantly from Sweden, Norway and Denmark, was for decades an affordable neighborhood for all. In the 1970s, white flight and lack of resources made the neighborhood especially vulnerable when the Bloods and Crips brought their illicit drug business from L.A. up the U.S. west coast, setting up shop in the more vulnerable communities. The Hilltop's sense of community was challenged: neighbors were out less; children, pressured to sell drugs, dropped out of school; parents were overwhelmed and municipal leaders did what could be done with the resources available. The Hilltop became a place to avoid. Today, the Hilltop is a thriving affordable community and neighborhood. What happened from the 1970s to now? Neighbors, area business owners, school teachers and others organized. As one example, the Tacoma Peace Lutheran Church happened. Established 1909, the church was a community

gathering place. However, with the erosion of community and increase in fear Peace Lutheran wanted to do more. Pastor Holle Plaehn began walking the neighborhood, getting to know everyone, including the drug dealers. He began to connect neighbors again – who was a plumber and who needed a plumbing repair? Which children were alone after school and which adults were home? From this humble neighborhood walk the Tacoma Peace Center was formally established in 1996. “Peace” as it is known in Tacoma, has been dedicated to the community in supporting families in much needed ways especially Pre-K through college tutoring.

The Asarco-to-Arts, the Chinese Reconciliation Park and the community reclamation of the Hilltop are just three examples of Tacoma’s intersections, where competing ideas and activities have met, clashed, and transformed. Importantly it is through learning, not through task forces, policy changes, or technical trainings that these transformations have occurred.

The story of Tacoma is characterized by such transformative learning, historical and current. For example, there is ongoing learning about inclusivity and diversity in the Tacoma region. On February 24, 2017 Pacific Lutheran University will host “The People’s Gathering: A Revolution of Consciousness” a one-day learning conference for those in the region’s governments, police forces, businesses, schools, health care agencies and civic organizations to dialogue about race and systemic and structural barriers to equality. Another ongoing learning conversation surrounds the name of our majestic mountain – Mt. Rainer or Mt. Tahoma. Unlike the process of 2015 when President Obama officially reclaimed the name of the tallest mountain in North America as Denali rather than Mt. McKinley; the process locally is one of learning, not decree.

Engaging Intersections: PLU. Pacific Lutheran University is a unique institution that parallels the evolution of Tacoma. PLU is situated just south of Tacoma proper and adjacent to Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), a U.S. military base. The PLU community lives its mission well, *“PLU seeks to educate students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care—for other people, for their communities and for the Earth.”* Founded in 1890 by Norwegian pioneers, PLU began as a Lutheran seminary, expanded to a college and finally into the University it is today. PLU is an exemplar of the New American University—integrating the liberal arts, professional studies and civic engagement. PLU is host to some 3,500 students from 46 states and 26 countries who are diverse in ethnicity,

cultural values, socio-economic status, gender-identities, spiritual belief systems and more. PLU's faculty and staff are just as diverse.

It is important to emphasize what the "Lutheran" in PLU is about and what it is not about. PLU is not a religious institution, though it does maintain a strong connection with Lutheran clergy. PLU faculty, staff and students do not engage in overt Lutheran religious practices or teachings as part of campus life, though some are active members of the Lutheran church. Rather, the heart of the "L" in PLU is about Martin Luther's critical question, "doesn't the world need good schools and educated persons?" Luther urged the establishment of public schools for children and to reshape the curriculum of universities. Today PLU embraces the seven core elements of education purported by Luther: (1) Critical questioning of current knowledge and values; (2) Freedom for expression and protection of learning; (3) A liberating foundation in the liberal arts; (4) Learning and research within community; (5) The intrinsic value of the whole creation; (6) Discerning one's vocation in the world and (7) Service to the advancement of life, health, and wholeness.

In adhering to both its mission and Luther's core elements, PLU has several distinguishing features: global education (50% of undergraduates study away and on all seven continents); sustainability (PLU recycles 70% of its solid waste and all new buildings are LEED certified, Silver or Gold); service and community engagement (71% of undergraduates participate in service-learning, leadership, and civics-oriented programs); professional arts (PLU features two theatres, a music concert hall, three art galleries; and a media-film documentary center; and all are award-winning programs.) These are just some of the elements which make PLU unique and special. Like Tacoma, PLU embraces its own history, legacies and transformations. PLU has not always been so progressive, community engaged or inclusive. Over 125 years, a learning community is bound to change. However in a short time, the past 15-20 years or so, PLU has transformed as a result of being a learning community.

Two seemingly small and insignificant examples center on changes in PLU cultural language the outcome of a deeper learning process. The students often lead the faculty and staff in learning – learning about gender equity, safe spaces, transgender rights, who is invisible, who is dominant. Consider the now past motto of the PLU football team: "EMAL: Every Man a Lute" ("Lute" refers to those who have an affiliation with or an affinity for PLU). EMAL originated in 1972 when Coach Frosty Westering came to PLU. Though

now deceased Coach Westering is, even today, a college coaching legend in the United States. EMAL is a deeply meaningful cultural signifier and invokes deep emotions among the hundreds who played for Frosty. For forty years the motto troubled many because it suggested that everyone associated with PLU was a man. Criticisms were raised, but not often or loudly. When Frosty retired his son became coach. One of Frosty's grandsons came to PLU, played football, majored in communication and graduated in May 2016. Even in the face of overwhelming tradition, emotional bond, family legacy and a sense of belonging, conversations on the appropriateness of EMAL became stronger. In fall 2015, one could say the disorienting dilemma occurred: Annika Smith-Ortiz joined the PLU football team. The student-athletes on the team and across campus engaged in thoughtful discussion and reflection: a woman on a team where "every man is a Lute"? Pressure from history and tradition was intense. Yet, through the best learning practices of PLU, EMAL is no longer a motto. Yes, it still exists for alumni and traditionalists alike – that is the echo of history. However, the statement is seldom heard in classes, seen on campus posters or featured in campus press. This example is one point of engagement and change out of many that demonstrates how the PLU community comes together to confront a tension through learning, and not through forced policy changes or regulations.

A second linguistic shift reflecting a deeper learning emerged when, on June 1, 2012, Thomas Krise became the 13th President to lead PLU. In his short time he has brought new energy, ideas and policies to the campus and has led an important shift in organizational culture. For example, since becoming President, the PLU faculty, staff and student composition has become increasingly more diverse in important demographic areas: ethnic, socioeconomic, gender identity, sexual orientation, spiritual practice. Importantly, such changes have occurred in positions of power and cultural leadership including all five Vice-Presidents. He has created new positions such as Director of Multi-cultural Outreach & Engagement as well as greatly expanding the Center for Community Engagement & Service (CCES). Out of this work another seemingly small shift in language and cultural metaphor has occurred. The phrase "The Lute Dome" had arisen over time as a metaphor students used to describe the implicit safety of campus and the implicit danger of Parkland. "I don't get out of the Lute Dome much" students would often say, or "I'm so excited for the holiday, I get to leave the Lute Dome!" The metaphoric barrier became a physical barrier. Students would be wary to walk or even drive a few blocks to a store or restaurant. CCES was created in 2010 and greatly expanded in 2012-13 by President Krise. In 2015 the Parkland Mural was designed and painted by the PLU

community and literally exists at an intersection that students once thought of as the barrier separating the Lute Dome and Parkland. (The mural is explained in one of the videos on the conference website.) Today, through the work of CCES, that phrase has disappeared from student vocabulary. PLU is now seen as in Parkland not separate from it. More importantly, Parkland is seen by most students as a vibrant community not a frightening, run-down, crime-ridden zone. Importantly, students walk those few blocks to local businesses.

Summary

As you move through the conference and return home to your communities, hopefully you will implement ideas from the 2016 conference. Hopefully you will consider how to invite others to **Engaging at the Intersections** so as to confront today's challenges through deep learning and perspective shifts. As communities struggle with the impacts of climate change, failing economies, human migration, militarization, social injustices, and state aggression we can lead our communities. We can bring members of our towns, organizations, and neighborhoods together around important tensions. We can facilitate learning processes that humanely challenge harmful attitudes and actions. We can and must lead using transformative learning. We need not wait for any particular circumstances such as knowing more or being "ready". We find one collaborator, one need and step into the fray. This is our birthright, as Parker Palmer explains in his essay *Now I Become Myself* (March 1, 2001), "*our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood... as we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks—we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service, as Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as 'the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need.'*"

Jack Mezirow Living Theory of Transformative Learning Award (2016)

The Jack Mezirow Living Theory of Transformative Learning Award is inspired by Jack Mezirow's efforts to engage the field of adult education in thinking theoretically about adult learning. To promote reflection about what he called "a theory in progress," Mezirow founded the International Transformative Learning Conference in 1998. In prior decades he had developed his own vision about the transformative dimensions of adult learning, generating lively discourse in the field of adult education as scholars and practitioners expanded, applied, and critiqued his ideas.

Mezirow (2012) defined transformative learning as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action" (p. 74). Transformed frames of reference are "more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective" (p. 76).

The recipient of the Jack Mezirow Award contributes to living theory by addressing frames of reference about transformative learning, providing scholars and practitioners with a more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective theoretical and practical perspective that is dynamic in its possibilities for growth and change.

The Jack Mezirow Living Theory of Transformative Learning Award is given at the International Transformative Learning Conference, held every two years. The award was established in 2014 and was awarded for the first time at the conference that year.

Recipients of the 2016 JMLT Award will be given a glass work by the Hilltop Artists, students in grades 6-12 who enroll in Hotshop programs at two local schools. The programs are funded by sales, donations and local artist Dale Chihuly.

Eligibility

- All papers, experiential sessions, and symposia **accepted** for inclusion at the Transformative Learning Conference are eligible for the award.
- Single or jointly authored papers are considered for the award.
- If the author or a co-author is a member of the selection committee for the award, the paper cannot be considered for the award.
- The paper should extend theory, research, and/or practice in a way that reflects a vision of living theory in progress, as described above.
- The award can be given for promising new perspectives as well as more established or researched perspectives.

Members of the 2016 Award Selection Committee

Patricia Cranton

University of New Brunswick, Canada

John Dirkx

Michigan State University, United States

Fergal Finnegan

Maynooth University, the National University of Ireland

Ted Fleming

National University of Ireland Maynooth (Retired)

Placida Gallegos

Fielding Graduate University, United States

Chad Hoggan

North Carolina State University, United States

Juanita Johnson-Bailey

University of Georgia, United States

Elizabeth Kasl

Independent Scholar, United States

Sherry Kennedy-Reid

George Washington University, United States

Victoria Marsick

Teachers College, Columbia University, United States

Maura Striano

University of Naples Federico II, Italy

Edward W. Taylor

Penn State University-Harrisburg, United States



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

This conference program contains the times and locations of events as well as the authors, titles and abstracts of sessions. More detailed information for some items such as special sessions, transportation and receptions is provided in the conference packet. Full papers are available on the website in the Proceedings and also online in the All Academic searchable program.

EDITORS

Peter G. Neaman
Victoria J. Marsick
Elizabeth Kasl

PROGRAM NOTES

1) In one case, an author is presenting two papers within the same session (26). These two are listed in order within the sequence of all presentations in that session. 2) In the four Symposium Sessions (017, 018, 063, 064), different Presenters wrote subsections of the master paper. The order of presentation is indicated numerically and—in one case where two authors participated—also by alphabetic indication of their relative positions on the paper's author list. 3) Any changes during the conference will be posted near Registration and posted to social media accounts.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER, 20

- 001. Stewards Meeting**
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Anderson University Center: 134
- 002. Luggage Room Hours**
10:00 am to 8:30 pm
Anderson University Center: 212
- 003. Registration Hours**
10:00 am to 8:30 pm
Anderson University Center: Grey Area
- 004.A Exhibition & Art Gallery Hours**
10:00 am to 8:30 pm
Anderson University Center 201
- 004.B Promotions Hall Hours**
10:00 am to 8:30 pm
Anderson University Center 201
- 005. Complimentary Shuttles to Campus**
10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Downtown Hotels: Murano, Marriott, Holiday Inn
- 006. Pre-Conference Session A: What is Transformative Learning?**
Urusa Fahim, Independent Scholar
12:00 to 1:30 pm
Anderson University Center: Scan Center
This lunch seminar is an opportunity to learn more about Transformative Learning and to connect with others engaged in similar work. Transformative Learning theory has the potential to inform many aspects of our life. It offers us a frame to understand the world we live in and our response to it. In short, the application and practice of Transformative Learning is not limited to the academic arena and can be observed in our everyday life, work and practices.
- 007. Pre-Conference Session C: Collaborative Inquiry into Research Designs and Methods for Understanding and Extending the Theory of Transformative Learning**
Aliki Nicolaides, University of Georgia – Athens
Stacey Robbins, Seattle University

Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University
2:00 to 5:00 pm

Anderson University Center: Regency Room
This collaborative inquiry session convenes those interested in the research and practice of Transformative Learning—students, faculty and practitioners. Together we will engage in a facilitated inquiry process that explores novel research designs to understand and extend the theory and implications of Transformative Learning. Together we will explore prototype methodologies. Attendees should have a fundamental understanding of TL theory and of research in general. Living theory requires disturbing traditions to make space for new perspectives.

- 008. Opening of Conference: “Engaging at the Intersections”**
PLU Welcome & Innovative Open Space Part I
5:30 to 7:00 pm: Mary Baker Russell: Lagerquist Hall
Welcome Reception
7:00 to 8:30 pm Mary Baker Russell: Foyer & 306
- 009. Complimentary Shuttles to Downtown Hotels**
7:30 to 8:30 pm
Anderson University Center: CK Hallway Outer Door
Downtown Hotels: Murano, Marriott, Holiday Inn

FRIDAY, OCTOBER, 21

- 010. Complimentary Shuttles to Campus**
7:00 to 7:30 am
Downtown Hotels: Murano, Marriott, Holiday Inn
- 011. Luggage Room Hours**
7:30 am to 5:00 pm
Anderson University Center: 212
- 012.A Registration Hours**
7:30 am to 5:00 pm
Anderson University Center: Grey Area
- 12.B Exhibition & Art Gallery Hours**
7:30 am to 5:00 pm
Anderson University Center 201
- 12.C Promotions Hall Hours**
7:30 am to 5:00 pm
Anderson University Center 201
- 013. Light Breakfast, Buffet**
7:30 to 9:00 am
Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hallway
- 014.A Opening Session: Framing on Transformative Learning & Our Community at PLU**
9:00 to 10:45 am
Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hall
- 014.B Break**
10:45 to 11:00 am
Coffee, Tea, Water Refresher
Anderson University Center near Grey Area

015. Innovative Open Space Part II

11:00 to 12:30 pm

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hall
& UC Spaces as Assigned

016. Lunch, Buffet

12:30 to 1:30 pm

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hallway

017. Embodied Learning and Social

**Transformation: Opening Space for Expanded
Worldviews through Experiences of Intersectional
Dissonance**

Symposium (1 of 2)

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Anderson University Center: Regency Room

Personal transformation often involves the presence of communities—a supportive community, and liminality—freeing from previously accepted restraints and beliefs. From the stories of those who survive and grow from “disorienting dilemmas,” “discomforting transitions,” or “moral injuries,” we find common threads about ways that the dissonance of violated moral codes can be transformed into energy and vision for social change and community-building – expanding our collective worldview and social sphere.

Authors & Presentations:

John Dirkx, Michigan State University

1) “The Role of Liminality and *Communitas* in the Social Construction of Transformative Space”

Barton David Buechner, Adler University

2) “Resolving Dissonance at the Intersections of War and Peace: Moral Injury and the Transformation of Worldview”

Deedee Myers, DDJ Myers, Ltd.

3) “Somatic Generativity and Transformative Change of Organizational Teams”

Tzofnat Peleg-Baker, Rutgers University

4) “Transforming Adversarial Interactions into Constructive Conflict Engagement”

Zieva Dauber Konvisser, Wayne State University

5) “Transforming the Trauma of Wrongful Conviction”

018. Dancing at the Crossroads: Recollections and Reflections on Jack Mezirow's Early Work

Symposium (1 of 2)

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Anderson University Center: Scan Center

Four people who worked with Jack Mezirow in the 1970s return to re-engage with the concerns and preoccupations of the time. We re-collect Jack’s interests in making theory and his always present concern for social change. The paper captures the personal Jack and the academic Mezirow and the

ways that research and scholarship never quite escape the interests of the researcher.

Authors & Presentations:

Ted Fleming, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

4) “DancingMinds: Mezirow and Habermas Meet Honneth”

Victoria J. Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia University

2) “Dancing to Different ‘Women’s-Re-Entry-Study’ Tunes”

Elizabeth Kasl, Independent Scholar

3) “Dancing with Jack”

Amy D. Rose, Northern Illinois University

1) “The Rest of the Story: Mezirow’s Early Search for Theory and Social Change”

CONCURRENT SESSION A, FRIDAY 3:15-4:45 PM

019. Concurrent Session A Panel 3 Paper Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 208

Presentations & Authors:

Engaging Intersections: Mapping the Neuronal

Underpinnings of Transformative Learning **Daniel Glisczinski**, University of Minnesota Duluth

Why do some experiences at life’s intersections have little effect on our habits of mind and points of view, while other intersections engage and trigger transformation of frames of reference? Research on the brain’s attentional system reveals three separate networks that process alertness, orientation, and executive cognition. Such networks are responsible for critical reflection and rational dialogue that transform problematic meaning schemes into more accurate meaning perspectives. These findings suggest consideration for fostering perspective transformation.

Researching Transformative Learning: Using the Typology of Transformative Outcomes as a Research Tool **Chad Hoggan**, North Carolina State University

This paper approaches transformative learning as an analytic metatheory that cuts across disciplinary perspectives. One purpose of a metatheory is to provide research tools that can be used and understood despite disparate backgrounds. Hence, this presentation provides a tool for researchers derived from the Typology of Transformative Outcomes published recently in *Adult Education Quarterly*. The presentation will demonstrate its use, and attendees will gain practice using the tool with sample data.

The Neurophenomenology Roots for Transformative Learning **Alessandra Romano**, University of Naples “Federico II” **Maria Rosaria Strollo**, University of Naples “Federico II”

This paper aims to expand the body of transformative learning theory challenging the theory with openness to the contributions from neuroscientific theory about mirror neurons and from the neurophenomenological perspective on intersubjectivity. Starting from a literature review of the research on mirror neurons, empathy and connectome-theory, the paper attempts to track the neurobiological roots of transformative learning.

“Where Philosophy Ends, Education Begins”: Engaging at the Intersection of Transformation Theory and Richard Rorty’s Philosophy *Saskia Eschenbacher, University of Augsburg*

This paper aims at expanding Transformation Theory with Richard Rorty’s idea of frames of reference which he conceptualizes as vocabularies. In order to distinguish between good learning and transformative learning and to counteract the critique of conceptual looseness I take advantage of Rorty’s idea of re-conceptualization. By doing this the tension between personal growth and social action can be utilized as a source of autonomy and creativity.

020. Creating Virtual Communities of Practice for Sustaining Transformative Learning

Experiential Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 200

This workshop will introduce participants to an innovative virtual Community of Practice (vCoP) developed by a group of learners, alumni and faculty of a graduate leadership program that is grounded in transformative learning theory. We created an engaging online platform for members to support each other’s leadership development. Workshop participants will leave with tools and ideas to begin designing vCoPs in their own settings through this hands-on, interactive workshop.

Presentation Authors:

Ty Tynan, Leverage Point Consulting Corp
Kristen Del Simone, Leverage Point Consulting Corp
Dan McKegney, Independent Researcher
Marguerite Welch, Saint Mary’s College of CA

021. Exploiting Opportunities for Transformative Learning in Remedial Math Education

Experiential Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 212

Remedial math courses offer a unique opportunity to do much more than improve math skills; we have the opportunity to transform students’ self-identity as learners. In this experiential session participants will be asked to imagine that they are our remedial math students while engaging in two activities: a group

problem-solving activity that focuses on process rather than solution and writing their brief math autobiography, guided by a series of trigger questions.

Presentation Authors:

Jocelyn Chapman, Santa Rosa Junior College
Regina Guerra, Santa Rosa Junior College

022. Stories in the Agora: Transformative Learning through the Medium of Digital Storytelling of Personal Spiritual and Cultural Experiences Learning

Experiential Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 204A

This workshop reports the findings of a study examining learners’ perceptions of the experiences of transformative learning from a digital storytelling experience and provides workshop participants with an opportunity to experience the transformative learning potential of digital story telling for themselves and/or their students.

Presentation Authors:

Ingrid Andersen, Penn State University Harrisburg
Elizabeth J Tisdell, Penn State University Harrisburg

023. The Mandorla: A Symbol for Exploring Intersections in Transformative Learning

Experiential Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 204B

The mandorla is an ancient archetypal symbol created by drawing two overlapping circles that represent opposite perspectives and intersections. The center of the mandorla is more than a blending of two opposites; it represents a highly energized space with creative potential. We use the mandorla, creative arts, and group process to explore intersectional potential in this experiential session. Come paint in community with us!

Presentation Authors:

Janet Marinelli, St. Catherine University
Carol Geisler, St. Catherine University
Laurie Anderson Sathe, St. Catherine University
Janet Dahlem, St. Catherine University

024. Assumption Analysis as a Tool for Understanding White Supremacy

Experiential Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 206A

Using the tools of transformative learning, especially those of assumption analysis, participants in this workshop will be guided to consider the assumptions underlying “white supremacist consciousness.” This highly charged phrase is drawn from the discourse of Critical Race Theory (Delgado, 1995) and refers to a

meaning perspective that takes for granted the legitimacy of having white norms and values dominate U.S. society and, implicitly, the legitimacy of white privilege.

Presentation Author:

Alec MacLeod, California Institute of Integral Studies

025. Regenerative Change: Engaging at the Intersection of Inner and Outer Work Through Contemplative Learning

Experiential Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 211B

This session will engage participants in the intersection of the inner and outer work of regenerative change making through contemplative practices. The facilitators will model practices that promote holistic and transformative learning preparing learners to be effective change agents in the world. Participants will explore not only personal awareness and meaning, but also authentic connection to cultural and ecological change-making through contemplative practices such as stillness, poetry, images, and relational reflective activities.

Presentation Authors:

Heather Burns, Portland State University
Celine Renee Fitzmaurice, Portland State University

026. Concurrent Session A Panel 4

Paper Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 209

Presentations & Authors:

Exploring the Intersection of the Subconscious and Conscious Through the Use of Mandalas *Paul Timothy Carr*, University of Georgia

This paper explores the intersection of the subconscious and conscious through the use of mandalas. This self-study explores pre-linguistic imagery by creating mandalas at junctures along my PhD program. I offer grounding and analysis through transformative learning theory from the perspective of depth psychology supported by Mezirow, Boyd & Myers, Dirkx, Hillman, and Jung. I share mandalas indicating points of transformative learning.

The Shape of Oppression: Habits of Mind and Being in the Social Context *Amy Chiang*, Fielding Graduate University

Embodiment is the process by which people awaken to their senses and lived experiences to integrate the whole self. This means developing an awareness of how colonizing systemic forces (e.g., racism, capitalism, patriarchy) have

contributed to our fragmented states. Adding a somatic approach/lens to transformative learning theory can make it more relevant to those from marginalized groups, and provide a means through which internalized oppression can be unlearned.

Unfreezing Habits of Mind and Body: Bodywork Practitioners' Contribution to Transformative Learning Theory *Amy Chiang*, Fielding Graduate University

Throughout the last century, bodywork practitioners have proposed that what we have learned and know consciously and unconsciously is connected to and expressed through the human body. When a movement, emotion, or opinion is well-practiced enough, it becomes habituated and identified with the self; in this way, what we understand as 'habits of mind' become habits of being. Bodywork practitioners can help individuals surface underlying embodied assumptions and help individuals co-create new ways of being.

027. Storying, Inhabiting and Performing Transformation: An Aesthetic Exploration of Ontologies and Epistemologies of Art Roundtable

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 211 A

In this roundtable, we explore questions around the ontological and epistemological aspects of art in terms of its transformative learning potential, and ability to allow us to 'inhabit' the complexity, chaos and ambiguity of our experience and the world. We focus specifically on journaling, and use a methodology called *métissage*, the art of weaving, braiding and performing stories. We will assemble individual stories and understandings into a collective tapestry of transformation.

Presentation Authors:

Darlene Clover, University of Victoria
Mary Ann Fenimore, University of Victoria
Bob Fenimore, Retired
Budd Hall, University of Victoria

028. Concurrent Session A Panel 2

Paper Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 214

Presentations & Authors:

Maximizing the Intersection of Voices in Classroom and in Virtual Spaces to Promote Learning and Innovation in Higher Education *Daniela Angela Mangione*, Liverpool Hope University; *Nicholas Almond*, Liverpool Hope University

This paper offers examples of promoting

transformative learning, both in students and their tutors, through a 'next generation' learning space that fuses new and emerging technology with traditional teaching tools. It discusses the creation of learning spaces and of pedagogical practice that are possible within this environment. The pedagogical framework of our work sees the learners' perspectives, dialogue and negotiated meanings as platforms for the creation of transformative learning processes and for pedagogical innovation.

Nurturing Living Systems Awareness: Engaging the Diverse Intersections of Community College Online Learning Environments *Barbara Widhalm, Peralta Community College District / San Francisco School of Biodanza*

How can online learning environments become rich intersections of cross-fertilization in ways that motivate students to become change-agents for a healthier world? I draw on my experience teaching online humanities and philosophy courses at highly diverse inner-city community colleges, and offer my framework of nurturing intimate online environments, integrating nature's organizing principles and multiple ways of knowing. Special consideration is given to support learners who are trauma survivors.

Technology Use to Promote Transformation for International Students: The Intersection of Emerging and Existing Identities *Michelle Leigh Amos, University of Central Missouri; Rachel Plews, École hôtelière de Lausanne*

English Language Learner enrollment and technology use continue to increase at postsecondary institutions. In addition to navigating increased academic demands, these students must negotiate identity in an unfamiliar culture. Reliance on technology may provide support or limit acculturation. Our discussion seeks to engage around the results of a survey given to students in the United States and Switzerland to answer the question: How could technology help to facilitate transformation for international students?

The Online Intersection: The Experience of Incidental Transformations *Alice Jean Fearn Mongiello, University of Highlands and Islands*

This paper explores the nature of transformative learning as experienced by non-traditional learners undertaking an online degree, and ways in which the online context offers an intersection that better meets their needs. While acknowledging an intellectual debt to Mezirow's work, a more unified theory of transformative learning is offered.

029. Concurrent Session A Panel 5

Paper Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 219

Presentations & Authors:

Beyond "It Gets Better": Supporting Seminarians' Crises of Faith Beyond the Classroom *Anastasia E. B. Kidd, Boston University School of Theology*

Research on transformative learning in seminaries primarily focuses on classroom pedagogy. Transformative Learning Theory suggests that, though concepts are introduced in the classroom, much learning takes place beyond the purview of faculty management. Seminary staff interacts with seminarians encountering crises of faith but have few published best practices of how to support students' disorienting dilemmas from a non-faculty standpoint. This study identifies such best practices and calls for collaboration between seminary student and academic affairs.

Creative Tension and Transformation through Cycles of Learning: Indigenous, Chinese, and Western Ways of Knowing *Robert Paul Giebitz, University of New Mexico*

In the spirit of a more unified theory of transformative learning, I propose a model of collective transformative learning based on cycles of learning operating within a field of creative tension with roots in Western, Indigenous, and Chinese epistemologies. Both the vision and the understanding of current reality that together create a field of creative tension must have roots in diverse cultural and epistemological orientations in order to harness a broad spectrum of human experience.

Exploring Transformative Learning Praxis and Dignity in the Training Context for Lower-Wage Workers *Cheryl Baldwin, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

This paper provides a theoretical exploration of the intersection of dignity and workplace transformative learning for lower-wage workers. Workplace dignity is defined and threats to dignity for lower-wage child and youth workers in professional development contexts are described. Transformation-supporting instructional design features, such as dialogue, small groups, and use of varied media are conceptualized as mitigating dignity threats and supporting learner engagement. Further study of trainer dispositional and communicative practices and dignity is proposed.

Silenced Voices That Cry In the Night: The

Transformative Experience of Spouses of Wounded Warriors *Vicki A Brown, George Washington University*

This qualitative study, using transformative learning and the feminist-inspired theory of women's development as its conceptual framework, sought to better understand the transformative nature or "essence" of the experiences of spouses of junior/mid-grade enlisted soldiers severely wounded in combat during the Global War on Terror, how they learned to make meaning of their new life circumstances as a result of profound and dramatic changes in their lives, and how society can better support them.

030. Concurrent Session A Panel 1

Paper Session

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Hauge Admin: 221

Presentations & Authors:

Academic-Practitioner Collaborative Research

Projects: Intersections Where Diverse Professional Identities Meet, Providing Opportunities for Transformative Learning *Rita Kowalski, Work Life Consulting LLC*

The question this paper addresses is "How do academic researchers and practitioners who engage in collaborative research create a space where transformational learning may occur?" Building on a previous study about academic-practitioner collaborative research (Kowalski, 2015), I explore the learning that occurred as academic researchers and practitioners encountered situations that tested their frames of reference. I also consider the connection between transformative learning and recognition (Fleming, 2016) and academic-practitioner collaborative research.

Connecting Disciplines and Divisions—On the Ground with Transformative Learning *Ed Cunliff, University of Central Oklahoma; John Barthell, University of Central Oklahoma*

This paper describes a case in which vision and serendipity intersected to create an operationalization of high-impact educational practices as the "Central Six of Transformative Learning" at a metropolitan university. Bringing the goal of helping students to transform their lives to the forefront and connecting it to the strategic planning process has allowed students, faculty and staff to embrace Transformative Learning both conceptually and pragmatically.

Exploring "Holding" in Groups: A New Model for Understanding Collective Learning in

Organizations *Keren Stashower, Fielding Graduate University and Kinnectics, LLC*

Moments of insight and group level shifts in awareness are profound experiences. Group members adopt broader perspectives of themselves, their roles, and their organizational context. This qualitative interpretive research explored these shifts as holding environments that include conditions for transformational learning. Research findings include a model for collective holding. Participant use of improvisational dance and music metaphors link 8 practices that shape learning space with 5 emergent conditions that can support transformational learning for all.

Factors at the Intersection of Collaborative Inquiry and Jungian Synchronicity that Reorganize / Transform Classroom Learning *Linda Donna Lazzeretti, Oakland Unified School District, California*

This is an inquiry through a Jungian lens of qualitative research done examining factors affecting synchronistic phase transitions in creating and implementing teacher action plans that reorganize and transform learning in the classroom. It is based on research at the New Teacher Center, University of California, the mentoring work of Lipton and Wellman, and quantitative studies by Mainzer, etc., on phase transitions in nature and the brain involving the breaking of symmetry in complex systems.

031. Complimentary Shuttles to Reception

4:45 to 5:30 pm

Anderson University Center: CK Hallway Outer Door to LeMay: America's Car Museum

032. Reception, Awards & Honors

Food, Beverages and Playtime at the Museum
Recognitions & Awards

Jack Mezirow Living Theory Award of
Transformative Learning

Patricia Cranton Commemoration

6:00 to 10:00 pm

LeMay: America's Car Museum

032.B Complimentary Shuttles to Downtown Hotels

8:00pm onwards

*From LeMay: America's Car Museum to
Downtown Hotels: Murano, Marriott, Holiday Inn*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER, 22

033. Complimentary Shuttles to Campus

7:00 to 7:30 am

Downtown Hotels: Murano, Marriott, Holiday Inn

034. Luggage Room Hours

7:30 am to 5:30 pm

Anderson University Center: 212

035. Light Breakfast, Buffet

7:30 to 9:00 am

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hallway

036.A Registration Hours

7:30 am to 5:30 pm

Anderson University Center: Grey Area

036.B Exhibition & Art Gallery Hours

7:30 am to 6:30 pm

Anderson University Center 201

036.C Promotions Hall Hours

7:30 am to 6:30 pm

Anderson University Center 201

CONCURRENT SESSION B, SATURDAY 9:00-10:30 AM

037. Concurrent Session B Panel 3

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 216

Presentations & Authors:

Between Continuity and Discontinuity: Conceiving the Rhythms of Transformative Learning *Michel Alhadef-Jones, Teachers College, Columbia University & Sunkhronos Institute*

Transformation is often assimilated with critical events that constitute discontinuities; it is also traditionally conceived through on-going processes whose continuity is taken for granted. The aim of this paper is to propose a theoretical framework to elaborate more thoroughly the dialogical relationship between the continuities and discontinuities shaping TL processes, in order to rethink TL, not only as a process inscribed in time, but more radically as a rhythmic phenomenon.

Mezirow's Conception of Critical Reflection: A Critical Review *Edward W Taylor, Penn State University-Harrisburg; Tino Concetta, University of Padova; Francesca Cimino, Gruppo Polis Social Cooperatives*

In an effort to provide a more in-depth understanding of essential components of transformative learning theory, the purpose of this paper is to review the empirical literature (2001-20016) that focuses on Mezirow's conception of critical reflection.

Reframing Developmental Tasks in Later Life: Religion, Spirituality, and Paradox in Transformative Learning *Elizabeth J Tisdell, Penn State University Harrisburg; John Dirkx, Michigan State University*

The purpose of this paper, is two-fold: (1) to consider the potential role of transformative learning related to spirituality and religion among aging academics in light of the tasks of later adulthood and the paradoxical role of faith and doubt; and (2) to engage both in writing and presentation in a potentially transformative auto-ethnographic dialogue about how each of us as co-authors and aging academics (60+) engage with the paradoxes and intersections of spirituality/religion and doubt.

Transformative Learning Theory: One Leg of a Theoretical Triad Grounding a Study of Personal Transformation *Annette L. Becker, Utica College*
A myriad of factors can stimulate personal transformation, making the assessment of this phenomenon quite difficult. However, a theoretical triad from psychology (constructive-development theory), student development (self-authorship theory) and adult learning (transformative learning theory) provided a foundation upon which to study personal transformation in registered nurses (RNs) who recently finished a baccalaureate completion program. This paper will describe this framework and the concepts that linked the theory, the research methodology and the study findings.

038. Inquiring into Dimensions of Difference through Whole Person Dialogue—Experiencing the Dimensions of Difference Empathically
Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 200

Adult educators often facilitate difficult conversations on topics that carry high levels of emotional valence for participants who hold very different meaning perspectives on the issue. Harvesting the potential for transformative learning from diverse perspectives among the learners requires creating empathic space where participants with very different perspectives can gain felt insight into lived experiences of the other. In this experiential session participants will deepen their understanding of creating empathic space.

Presentation Authors:

Lyle Yorks, Teachers College, Columbia University
Elizabeth Kasl, Independent Scholar

039. Possibilities in Transformative Learning: Facing Radically Passive Teachers Including Artwork, the Breath, and Shunyata (Emptiness)
Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 202

This paper and experiential session engages Levinas'

(1969, 1987) notion of the alterity of the Other in artwork (Kenaar, 2011), our breath, and the Buddhist concept of shunyata or emptiness (Loy, 2008). Together we explore two additional processes of transformative learning: detachment and finding our “zero-point balance.” We will discuss, do a voiced meditative practice, and engage in mindful breathing exercises.

Presentation Author:

Stacey Bliss, York University

040. Transform-in-Action: Transforming Stuck Issues and Relationships through Resonance
Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 221

What needs to be Transformed? What is my Interior state about this situation? [Resonance Story] What Action is needed now? In this workshop, participants will use a simple framework (Transform-in-Action) embedded in their personal stories to unlock resonance moments. Resonance opens space or creates an opportunity for transformational learning around habitual patterns in stuck issues and relationships. Narrative methodologies, including personal story, reflection, and music will be used throughout the process.

Presentation Author:

Yabome Gilpin-Jackson, Fielding Graduate University

041. Exploring the Intersectionality of Learning and Our Senses

Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 204A

Our interior life is fueled by sense perceptions and arbitrated by the Mind. From a yogic perspective, sense data is filtered through levels of consciousness (chakras) and our mind can help reinforce or examine this data, helping us to become aware of our interior complexity and its impact on our outer expression in the world. This workshop will explore the intersectionality of our inner spiritual space and the role of the senses in constructing our reality.

Presentation Authors:

Alicia Catherine Pace, Yasodhara Ashram,
Yasodhara Institute
Christie Rall, Columbia University

042. Concurrent Session B Panel 4

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 209

Presentations & Authors:

At the Intersection of Learning and Healing: the Productive Power of the Imagination *Laurie*

Anderson Sathe, St. Catherine University

From a holistic perspective health is seen as an interconnection of physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, communal and environmental aspects. For many this is a shift from a more reductive perspective that isolates one or more aspects of the self in the healing process. I explore how the use of story with care providers, in the process of transformative learning, can facilitate this shift in perspective through the productive power of the imagination.

Caregiving as a Space for Transformation: Crucible at the Intersections of Life, Learning and Systems
Donna Clark, PhD student Fielding Graduate University

Caregivers play a critical role in systems of care for aging baby boomers suffering with dementia. Many caregivers experience negative impacts such as emotional, physical and social problems. This paper integrates autoethnography and critical reflection to suggest new applications of transformative learning to intentionally support positive caregiver outcomes. Written from the unique intersection of life as a caregiver, transformative educator and graduate student, this paper brings critical and feminist perspectives to inform caregiver support practices.

Examining Transformative Learning in Narrative Medicine as an Intervention in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
Courtney J. Donovan, San Francisco State University; *Loretta L. Donovan*, iAttain

In this paper the authors examine Transformative Learning (TL) as a phenomenon in narrative medicine practice to assist women veterans with managing the symptoms of PTSD. Integrating TL and narrative medicine they help clients manage symptoms and cope with the after effects of combat experiences. Veterans developed and critically reflected on personal health narratives. The authors suggest that narrative medicine can be a powerful tool for veterans to learn about, cope with and communicate experiences.

Exploring the Crossroads of Transformative Learning and the Family Experience of Terminal Illness
Karen S. Schlumpf, George Washington University

A diagnosis of terminal disease creates an interruption to the routine of life and marks the beginning of an illness journey for patients and their families. Applying Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning (1978), the diagnosis represents a disorienting dilemma and a moment of critical reflection for everyone involved. This paper will explore the potential contribution of

Transformative Learning Theory in framing a study on the family learning experience during the terminal illness journey.

043. Transforming Conflict at the Intersections: Making Meaning at Moral, Cultural, Social, Psychological and Spiritual Crossroads Roundtable

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 211 A

Can peer coaching or mentoring collaborations create transformative learning effects across disciplines and institutions? A novel fellowship program brought together eleven scholar-practitioners working on “transforming conflict” projects, igniting multiple intersections of people and networks of relationships to look at conflict from different levels of consciousness and context. We present findings and implications for expanding venues for communicative and reflexive learning, and making better social worlds by collaborating at the intersections.

Presentation Authors:

Barton David Buechner, Adler University

Beth Fisher-Yoshida, Columbia University

Ilene Wasserman, ICW Consulting

044. Down the Rabbit Hole: Using Theatre-Based Methods to Generate Spaces for Transformation

Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 212

In this experiential session, we advance the notion that Transformative Learning is an on-going mythic journey of the soul. We draw upon embodied methods and theatrical conventions to invite participants as learners to join us down the rabbit hole. We encourage learners to follow their individual and collective stories to identify the intersections in their own life, that is, the place where there is potential for the old story to give way to the new.

Presentation Authors:

Kathy Bishop, Royal Roads University

Catherine Etmanski, Royal Roads University

045. Concurrent Session B Panel 2

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 214

Presentations & Authors:

Riverspeaking: Transformative Learning within a Relational Ontology *Elizabeth Lange*, *St. Francis Xavier University*; *Joy Kcenia O'Neil*, *University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point*

Through stories of social and environmental transformative learning related to Rocky Mountain rivers, the co-authors perturb predominant modernist ontology in

transformative learning theory. Riverspeaking conveys a relational ontology, in that the nature of reality is constant change and flow. Informed by Indigenous ways of knowing and the New Science and their importance for theorizing transformative learning, we suggest that ‘form’ in transformation includes matter, process, and making meaning in (be)coming of the world.

Teaching for Change: Transformative Learning

Theory and Holocaust Education *Saskia*

Eschenbacher, *University of Augsburg*

Transformative Learning Theory and Holocaust Education are both concerned with teaching for change. While a common theoretical basis for the various practice-based approaches and theoretical reflections on Holocaust education has yet to emerge, the purpose of this paper is to explore Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow) as a theoretical framework and vocabulary for fostering change within the field of Holocaust Education.

The Student as a Researcher. Fostering and Evaluating Students’ Meaning Perspectives in a Collaborative Action-Research Program *Claudio Melacarne*, *University of Siena*; *Loretta Fabbri*, *University of Siena*

The paper describes a case study focused on a teacher’s experience conducted in the Department of Education of the University of Siena. By using Transformative Learning Theory, the research aims to identify some conditions that can promote a ‘transformative experience’ into a university course. Fifty students have been involved in an action-research program for 3 months. At the end of this period, we submitted a questionnaire to evaluate the impact of the activity.

Transformation Intersection: Global Place-based Experience and Transformative Learning Pedagogy *Mark Mulder*, *Pacific Lutheran University*

Pedagogy that involves students as active learners and participants has been shown not only to stimulate student interest, but also to generate insights, skill building, knowledge and offer the potential for long-term changes in behavior. Come engage with us as we consider how unique programs which offer study away service experiences and internship opportunities can be created via the lens of Transformative Learning.

046. Intentional Exploration, A Method to Transform the Group Experience through Structured Interaction

Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 211B

This experiential session introduces a unique way of fostering exploratory and relational dialog. Participants will briefly be introduced to a few slightly disorienting protocols that will create our supportive micro-culture. An interesting dialog experience with no pre-determined topic will ensue for the remainder of the session. Please note that to create the necessary conditions for trust, this session will start and end on time. Late arrival and/or early departure is strongly, though respectfully, discouraged.

Presentation Author:

Che Borkhetaria, Fielding Graduate University

047. Concurrent Session B Panel 1

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 210

Presentations & Authors:

Becoming a Coach: The Transformative Learning and Development of Coach Training Students *Penny Potter*, Fielding Graduate University

Mezirow contended that hierarchical development has always been at the heart of transformative learning theory. An unexplored place to explore this link is executive coach training. While coaching research is building, there is a dearth of research on the impact of learning coaching skills. Coaches report their training as transformational. This study utilized two recently developed methods to empirically link transformative learning and hierarchical development: the transformative learning survey and the LECTICA Assessment System.

Reframing Professional Challenges through Action Learning Conversation in Medical Organizations *Maura Striano*, University of Naples "Federico II", *Alessandra Romano*, University of Naples "Federico II", *Maria Rosaria Strollo*, University of Naples "Federico II"

We will present three different case studies involving a variety of medical professionals that focused on different kinds of professional challenges and dilemmas in order to identify and track the transformative processes involving the professionals and the outcomes in terms of their new understandings and reframing of actions, plans and situations, as well as new ways to play ones' professional role.

Transformative Adult Education in Further Education

Sector in Ireland *Meg Benke*, Empire State College; *John Wall*, Waterford Institute of Technology

Research is in process related to the role of the professional development for the adult educator in the further education sector in Ireland. Recent initiatives in Ireland require instructors who want to teach in this sector to complete a certificate or degree in adult education. While controversial, this directive has allowed for an active review of the role of professional development for the further education teacher.

Transformative Potential for Physician Educators in an Adult Learning and Leadership Program *Juliet Aizer*, Teachers College Columbia University and *Weill Cornell Medical College*; *Maya Hastie*, Columbia University; *Dimitrios Papanagnou*, Thomas Jefferson University; *Jeanne E Bitterman*, Teachers College, Columbia University

Physicians in an adult learning and leadership doctoral program conducted a collaborative inquiry investigating program impact and factors contributing to significant learning. Though initially motivated by instrumental interests, participants gained an appreciation for transformative learning, recognizing an evolution of perspectives and identities promoted by curricular content coupled with engagement with faculty and classmates in intersecting medical and non-medical educational communities. Implications for designing learning experiences for physician educators are discussed in light of transformative theory.

048. Concurrent Session B Panel 5

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 208

Presentations & Authors:

Beyond Dichotomies in Transformative Learning: Dialectical Relationship between the Social "Urge to Merge" and the Individual Quest for Authenticity *Kaisu Mätkki*, Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki; *Larry Green*, Counselling Psychology, City University of Seattle, Canada

A pressing issue in TL discussions is the emphasis on dichotomies. For example, the individual and social dimensions are often presented as separate from one another. This paper offers a dialectical framework that integrates both the social and psychological aspects of transformative learning. This framework organizes four aspects of that dialectical process to reveal how they may be profitably integrated and, further, how imbalances will result when one or more of these

aspects are neglected.

Coaching for Resilience in Transformative Learning
Ian Stuart Corrie, University of Cumbria; Ron Lawson, University of Cumbria

The critical incident technique is an established method within transformative learning. There is, however, a caveat when using such techniques with health care professionals whose personal experience may harbour traumatic memories. The deeply reflective nature of transformative learning can bring those memories to the fore, and potentially cause harm. This research study examines the practical use of coaching as a means to facilitate the development of emotional resilience to mitigate harm and enable transformative learning.

Developing Crisis Leaders Through Transformative Learning
Deborah H. Needham, Crisis Optimist Coaching & Consulting

What does it take to prepare a leader to handle crises? Traditional preparation consists of conveying knowledge cognitively and practicing tasks and skill. However, research points to certain emotional intelligence dimensions as the key to good crisis leadership. Transformative learning offers a better path to achieving competency as a leader, both in crisis, and in daily practice. A new format and curriculum for a crisis leadership development program is presented.

Individual Transformation Through Organizational and Societal Opposition
Victoria J. Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia University; Katharina Wegmann, Ernst & Young

This paper applies transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) to the intersection of conflict between whistleblowers and organizations, based on an empirical study. It analyzes to what extent whistleblowers go through transformation and highlights tensions that grow out of their intersection with opposing views expressed by those in social, organizational and professional networks. We conclude by addressing shortcomings of our selected perspective, and implications for theory and practice.

047.B Break
10:30 to 10:45 am

CONCURRENT SESSION C, SATURDAY 10:45-12:15PM

049. Concurrent Session C Panel 3

Paper Session
10:45 to 12:15 pm
Hauge Admin: 216
Presentations & Authors:

Finding the Intersection of Corporate Governance and a Participatory Worldview
Toni Aspin, California Institute of Integral Studies - Transformative Inquiry department

This paper explores the intersection of corporate governance and a participatory worldview, aiming to: contribute to the dialogue as it relates to the vital need for new insights in corporate governance (Sonnenfeld, 2002); illumine ways in which the participatory paradigm (Skolimowski, 1994) and the practice of reflexivity (Heron & Reason, 1997) might contribute to these insights; and consider the potential to reframe boardroom interactions as a transformative learning project (Mezirow, 1991).

Learning Cities Interaction: Connecting Lifelong Learning through Transformative Action Research
Leodis Scott, LearnLong Institute for Education and Learning Research

This paper focuses on transformative learning for its potential impact on societies. Combined with the emerging concept of learning cities, transformative learning can be experienced socially through the practice of action research and lifelong learning. As such, this paper merges the concept of learning cities, along with a collective transformation theory; thus advancing experiences of social values with practical policies and programs, such as the Lifelong Learning Act and Affordable Cooperative Housing that benefit entire communities.

Micro-transformations of Everyday Life: Addressing the Transformative Potential of the Intersection between Our Meaning Perspectives and Daily Challenges
Kaisu Mälkki, Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki; Larry Green, Counselling Psychology City University of Seattle, Canada

Mezirow's (1991; 2000) transformative learning theory focuses primarily on the major disruptive events that exceed the capacity of the person's existent framework. We argue, that to address the transformative potential of everyday life, we need concepts that draw from transformative learning theory but that are more capable of grasping the subtle dynamics of the small-scale intersections—the ongoing interface between the person and her/his emergent circumstances. This paper offers an initiative towards such a conceptual basis.

Social Labs as an Opportunity to Foster Transformative Learning
Ximena Maria Vidal De Col, George Washington University; Nkiruka Elena Ogbuchiekwe, George Washington University
Social labs address problems that reflect the

intersection of social, political, economic, and environmental forces that have resulted in intractable problems and human suffering. They are spaces where individuals with different, even opposing, interpretations of the same problem come together to reach common ground and collectively create solutions. By identifying points of intersection of social labs and transformative learning theory, our paper proposes that social labs encourage individual and collective transformation to impact social change.

050. Learning Cities and Transformative Learning: A Study of Community Engagement in New York and Philadelphia

Experiential Session

10:45 to 12:15 pm

Hauge Admin: 200

In times of increasing change and disruption, the intersections of experiential learning, spirituality, and/or consciousness-raising in local neighborhoods can provide the context for transformative learning “on the ground.” This paper introduces an adapted EcCoWell approach to learning cities, integrated with place-based pedagogy and reflective practice, in New York City and Philadelphia. Emergent themes and lessons learned for future research and application are shared.

Presentation Authors:

Maria Liu Wong, City Seminary of New York
Connie Watson, LearnLong Institute for Education & Learning Research; Community College of Philadelphia

051. Person/Planet, Mind/Heart,

Contemplation/Action: Engaging the Intersections in the Anthropocene

Experiential Session

10:45 to 12:15 pm

Hauge Admin: 211B

How can we empower our students to grapple with potentially overwhelming planetary problems? How can we foster the kinds of creativity, agency, and psycho-social resilience that will help us navigate the uncharted waters of the Anthropocene? This workshop offers a rationale for integrating contemplative practices into the classroom; experiential examples drawn from the presenters’ combined 30 years of contemplative education; and a discussion of how participants might integrate contemplative and reflective practices into their courses.

Presentation Authors:

Abigail Lynam, Cascadia College
Karen Lutfin, University of Washington

052. Self Transformation through Values-Based Test Feedback: A Work Example

Experiential Session

10:45 to 12:15 pm

Hauge Admin: 204B

This session demonstrates how transformative learning may be fostered through a work-related, values-based learning experience. The session utilizes value-based assessments, which participants are expected to complete prior to the session. Based on the assessment process, we provide collaborative feedback and facilitate discussion focusing on participants’ values and beliefs and explore their change processes, including the potential for transformative changes in self-awareness and frames of reference for working and their careers.

Presentation Authors:

Yoshie Tomozumi Nakamura, Columbia Business School
Melanie Leuty, University of Southern Mississippi
Bill Hanson, University of Alberta
John Dirks, Michigan State University
Craig N. Shealy, James Madison University

053. Concurrent Session C Panel 2

Paper Session

10:45 to 12:15 pm

Hauge Admin: 209

Presentations & Authors:

Developing Trust and Empathy in Diverse Cohorts: A Collaborative Inquiry *Rachel Fichter*, Teachers College, Columbia University; *Andre Harper*, Teachers College, Columbia University; *Maria Papadakis*, Princeton University & Teachers College

This paper presents the findings from a collaborative inquiry (CI) on the topic of developing trust and empathy in a diverse educational cohort. Three cohort members completed four CI cycles of action and reflection utilizing photos, journals, video, music, and food to learn more about each other. Using presentational knowing, the authors share their deeply personal experience in a creative and engaging 23-minute video, describing their inquiry goal, process and findings.

Learning within Diversity: Conceptualizing Triple-loop Learning in Managing Diversity *Chang-kyu Kwon*, University of Georgia, Athens

In this paper, the author attempts to apply the concepts of single- and double-loop learning to explain the paradigm shifts in diversity management. The author further explores the definition of triple-loop learning and conceptualizes how organizations would look

with this type of transformative learning.
Understanding Empathy and the Paradox of Diversity as
a Force in Transformation *Elizabeth Kasl,*
Independent Scholar; Lyle Yorks, Teachers College,
Columbia University

Adult educators can maximize the potential of
diversity as a force for transformative learning by
assessing and influencing key elements in the
learning environment: dialogue content and
context, differences in relational power and
hegemonic awareness, emotional valence, and
empathic space

“Where are you from?” Shifting Identity Interrogation
for Interpersonal and Social Transformative Learning
Yabome Gilpin-Jackson, Fielding Graduate University

“Where are you from?” “Where are you really
from?” “What is your background?” “What is
your story?” I call this Identity Interrogation (II),
the commonplace experience for me, a Black
African woman, of being asked biographical
questions by strangers. This paper examines
through analytic autoethnography, the meta-
question: At the intersection of worlds of
difference colliding, what are the transformative
possibilities? I make propositions, including that
the experience of II can be shifted through
Relational Connection.

**054. Teaching Adaptive Leadership: Variations of
Practice from the Perspective of Transformative
Learning**

Experiential Session
10:45 to 12:15 pm
Hauge Admin: 210

Adaptive leadership is about helping organizations
confront difficult challenges and increasing the
likelihood that people learn, participate in solutions,
and make the adjustments necessary to achieve
progress. Teaching adaptive leadership is a powerful
example of fostering transformative learning. An
integrative framework of adaptive leadership and
transformative learning will be presented, followed by
an experiential application exercise that involves the
use of video clips, analytical case work, and
interactive explorations of interventions.

Presentation Authors:

April Hyeoun Bang, Teachers College, Columbia
University
Marc Manashil, 11plus Philanthropy

**055. What Role does Transformative Learning Play
in Adolescence?**

Roundtable
10:45 to 12:15 pm
Hauge Admin: 211 A

The purpose of this round-table is to discuss what role

transformative learning may play in adolescence. The
intersection between the fields of adolescent
development and transformative learning offers an
opportunity to uncover how an adolescent (under 20
years old) may experience transformative incidents
and to what degree these may align with the
frameworks of adult transformative learning theory.
Discourse from scholars and practitioners can address
the gaps in the intersections between these two fields.

Presentation Author:

Katie Titus Larson, Antioch University

**056. Engaging the Living Edges of Community
through Creative Movement and Music**

Experiential Session
10:45 to 12:15 pm
Hauge Admin: 202

How can we engage Life more fully? We invite you to
a playful workshop of experiencing the transformative
learning community AS a vibrant ecosystem rich in
“living edges,” and to carry that felt sense into the
conference. This offering is based on a creative
modality called Biodanza that deepens connection
with self, others, community, and the world through
movement, music, and authentic connection. It is also
utilized in organizational development. No dance
experience needed!

Presentation Author:

Barbara Widhalm, Peralta Community College
District / San Francisco School of Biodanza

057. Concurrent Session C Panel 4

Paper Session
10:45 to 12:15 pm
Hauge Admin: 214

Presentations & Authors:

At the Intersection of Transformative Learning
Theory, Systems Thinking, and Learning through
Story-telling *Saskia Eschenbacher, University of
Augsburg*

My paper focuses on the communicative
dimension in transformative learning theory and
the intersection with systems thinking and
narrative learning. To explore this perspective we
need to work with a model that reflects circular
intrapersonal communication, as well as the
interpersonal dimension describing the dialogue
between the adult learner and the adult educator.
This framework offers us new ideas on how to be
more intentional and creative in fostering
transformative learning processes.

Creating Dialogic Conditions for Transformative
Learning with Adult Women Students: Taking a
Communication Perspective *Robin Ayers Frkal,*
Assumption College

Reflective discourse is viewed as an essential

element of perspective transformation. Adult educators are faced with the challenge of creating learning environments to support this specialized form of dialogue. This paper describes some of the findings of a descriptive interview study of educators in an adult women's leadership program in order to deliver insights into the episode work that educators do in their facilitation to create the dialogue conditions for transformative learning.

The Negotiation between Individual and Collective Identity of Being a Teacher in the Context of Cultural Transition *Wen-Ting Chung, University of Pittsburgh; Sarah Kate Brem, Arizona State University; Jenefer Husman, Arizona State University*

Large-scale educational reforms aim at achieving a fundamental paradigm shift in how the society considers educational assumptions, ideas, and goals, challenging conventional and traditional beliefs systems and practices. This paper explores how a psychological perspective shift and development of a critical historical view in individual transformation, usually happening in interacting with narrative scenarios, could facilitate teachers autonomously to question and revise held mindsets in a holistic and critical way, and hence help larger social transformation.

058. Learning at the Intersections of Identity, Courage, and Power: The Promise of Intersectionality as Transformative Experiential Session

10:45 to 12:15 pm

Hauge Admin: 219

What if engaging each other at the most important intersections of our identities held the promise of transformative learning? And what if transformative learning and interrelatedness are the gateways to developing a different framework of interacting with otherness? This workshop explores the promise of intersectionality as transformative. Two different same-sex leadership development programs are used as examples to explore how relationships with "the other" can be transformed.

Presentation Authors:

Jo Ann Morris, Fielding Graduate University
Pete Anthony Saunders, Fielding Graduate University

059. Concurrent Session C Panel 1

Paper Session

10:45 to 12:15 pm

Hauge Admin: 204A

Presentations & Authors:

Citizenship Education. Personally and Professionally

Transformative Teacher Education *Janicke Helda Stray, Norwegian School of theology*

This presentation reports on a study undertaken in an initial teacher-training institute that sought to explore how teachers developed their professional teacher identities in the context of democratic education.

Linking Controversial Issues Education and Transformative Learning *Emil Sætra, Det teologiske menighetsfakultet*

One weakness regarding the broader field of citizenship education is that both theoretical and empirical writings are too seldom put in conjunction with learning theory. The aim of this paper is, followingly, to theorize some links between controversial issues education – which I regard as part of the broader field of citizenship education – and transformative learning theory.

The Theatre of the Oppressed as an Imaginative Metaphor for Transformative Learning. *Alessandra Romano, University of Naples "Federico II"*

The paper will explain the findings of empirical research (Romano, 2014), which aimed to demonstrate that the experience of the Theatre of the Oppressed with students and teachers promoted transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000; Marsick, 2015). The Theatre of the Oppressed is a learning experience that, starting from a reflection on the constructed meanings and inequality that are the background of individual educational, social and professional life contexts, can promote complex thinking.

Transforming Passion to Action: Youth and Community Leaders as Agents of Change *Beth Fisher-Yoshida, Columbia University*

This is a paper presentation based on a practice in a community setting in Medellín, Colombia. One of the goals of this work is to support youth and community leaders in their work on transforming conflict and creating healthier communities. The focus of this paper is on the intersections of scholarship, practice and activism for transformative learning. We grounded the collaborative work we are doing through the use of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM).

060. Concurrent Session C Panel 5

Paper Session

10:45 to 12:15 pm

Hauge Admin: 221

Presentations & Authors:

Evidence of Student Transformative Learning through a Campus-wide Student Learning Record *Mark Walvoord, University of Central Oklahoma; Sharra*

Hynes, University of Central Oklahoma
Our campus launched a university-wide initiative to assess and record student transformative learning across experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom. This paper will demonstrate early results of this initiative and provide opportunities for discussion as well as methods of replicating the initiative in other learning contexts. Timely data and specific examples of effective programs will be included.

Reflections on the Outcomes of a Service Learning Course *Miki Yamashita, Reitaku University*
This qualitative case study of the outcomes of a service-learning course for a group of 17 first and second year students at a small liberal arts college in suburban Tokyo, Japan, describes the changes that occurred in their frames of reference, especially in terms of human relations. It illustrates how experiential discoveries can be a source of transformative learning for students by creating stronger relationships and reflecting on the process.

The Fruits of Transformative Learning: Uncovering Potential among the Most Vulnerable *Ken Marquard, José Maria Vargas University*
With a focus upon positive outcomes of transformational learning, this presentation introduces postsecondary research that engaged students with disabilities in contexts that tapped into student potential. These contexts often proved transformative, serving to reframe perspectives on academic and extracurricular barriers. More importantly, previously unknown potential was often tapped to produce better outcomes. Defining contexts and catalysts activating potential may prove useful to the transformational learning theorist in applications to, and intersections with society in general.

Exploration of the Liminal Space through Undergraduate Students' Critical Reflections of Disability *Marisa Kofke, University of Delaware*
This paper details a study conducted with an undergraduate Disability Studies course to examine the liminal space of understanding and meaning making as students learn disability-related concepts. Disability Studies in Education and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) frameworks were applied to this study. Qualitative methods coded reflection assignments assigned. Results uncovered themes related to the process of residing within a liminal space.

061. Lunch, Buffet

12:15 to 1:30 pm

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hallway

12:15 to 1:30 Journal of Transformative Education Editors' Lunch, Anderson University Center: 134

062. Innovative Open Space Part IV

1:30 to 3:00 pm

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hall & UC Spaces as Assigned

062.B Break

3:00 to 3:15 pm

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hall

063. Interrogating Transformative Processes in Learning and Education: Sustaining a Trans-Oceanic Conversation

Symposium (1 of 2)

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Anderson University Center: Regency Room

The aim of this symposium is to provide participants with an opportunity for a meta-reflection on the impact, meaning, and challenges inherent in the use of TL theory from an international perspective, considering especially the European context. Discussing how we relate to theories focusing on transformation, this conversation is aimed—more largely—at opening and enhancing dialogue among scholars in the Conference, who come from different continents, cultures, and traditions.

Authors & Presentations:

Michel Alhadeff-Jones, Teachers College, Columbia University & Sunkronos Institute

4) "Differences in the Ways We Refer to Transformative Learning: Reflecting on Implications and Multireferentiality"

Laura Formenti, Milano Bicocca University, Milano, Italy

3) "The Pattern which Connects: "The Systemic View on Transformative Learning"

Alexis Kokkos, Hellenic Open University

2) "The Use of Art within Transformative Learning"

Linden Reginald West, Canterbury Christ Church University

1) "Transformative Learning in the Company of Friends"

064. Move Over, Descartes!: Engaging the Intersection of Transformative Learning and Neuroscience.

Symposium (1 of 2)

3:15 to 4:45 pm

Anderson University Center: Scan Center

Cartesian dualism has finally been laid to rest by recent discoveries in neuroscience: "we feel, therefore we know." This symposium describes implications for

practitioners and curriculum developers of emerging research on how the brain learns. To demonstrate these findings, we will engage participants in illustrative activities. We also reexamine an oft-heard critique of Mezirow's theory—that its focus on cognitive learning fails to adequately acknowledge the contributions of spiritual, affective, and tacit learning.

Authors & Presentations:

Kathleen Taylor, Saint Mary's College of California

1) "Background and Introduction"

Paul Loper, Saint Mary's College of California

2b) "Toward Transforming the Practice of Transformative Learning"

Dean Elias, Saint Mary's College of California

2a) "Toward Transforming the Practice of Transformative Learning"

Urusa Fahim, Independent Scholar

3) "Embodied Learning: Implications of Cultural Difference"

Donald Proby, Association for Dispute Resolution of Northern California

4) "Diversity-work, Inclusion, and Intercultural Communication as Transformative Learning"

065. Reception: Hors d'oeuvres, Beverages & Entertainment

5:00 to 7:00 pm

Anderson University Center: Lower Plaza

067. Complimentary Shuttles to Downtown Hotels

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Anderson University Center: CK Hallway Outer Door

SUNDAY, OCTOBER, 23

068. Complimentary Shuttles to Campus, Sunday

7:00 to 7:30 am

Downtown Hotels: Murano, Marriott, Holiday Inn Express

069. Luggage Room Hours

7:30 am to 2:00 pm

Anderson University Center: 212

070.A Registration Hours

7:30 am to 2:00 pm

Anderson University Center: Grey Area

070.B Exhibition & Art Gallery Hours

7:30 am to 2:00 pm

Anderson University Center 201

070.C Promotions Hall Hours

7:30 am to 8:00 pm

Anderson University Center 201

071. Light Breakfast, Buffet

7:30 to 9:00 am

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hallway

CONCURRENT SESSION D, SUNDAY 9:00-10:30AM

072. Concurrent Session D Panel 2

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 216

Presentations & Authors:

Internet Political Memes, Public Discourse, and Transformative Learning *Brian McClure, University of Georgia, Athens*

Social media sites are burgeoning virtual town squares that allow participants to enter into public dialogues, discussions, and debates on a wide spectrum of topics. Different topics, positions, and views intersect with the internet meme, a popular form of social media communication and emerging epistemology. This paper examines memes as a type of "meaning-forming" (Kegan, 2000), and subsequently explores ways that we might "transform our meaning-forming", and employ memes to foster and cultivate transformative learning.

Intersections between Law and Education for Transformative Learning Based on Cultural Contamination *Rossella Marzullo, University of Rome "Tor Vergat"*

This research is based on judgments of a Southern Italian juvenile court. A judge is trying to help children in mafia families by taking them from their parents at the first sign of trouble. Instead they are exposed to a non-crime-based worldview, being placed in a program that uses Mezirow's principles. Revealing the contrast between two intersecting cultures gives the children a choice: a future away from crime vs. the one for which they were destined.

Rights-based Transformative Learning in the Intersection of Various Forces in Rural Cambodia *Rikio Kimura, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University*

From the perspective of transformative learning (TL), this study explores how the rights-based approach (RBA) by a Cambodian NGO has influenced rural citizens' agency in fulfilling their rights to development within the intersection of various forces such as decentralization, hierarchical social structures, and resource scarcity. This study reveals the possibilities of TL through RBA in such a context, yet casts doubt on its replicability as a number of enabling factors need to be mobilized.

The intersection of Business and Ethics:

Transformative Learning as a Facilitator of Ethical Behavior in the Financial Sector *Rachel Fichter, Teachers College, Columbia University; Adela J.*

Gondek, Columbia University; Katharina Wegmann, Ernst & Young

This paper seeks to spark a dialogue on how transformative learning can promote the development of ethical behavior in the financial sector. Broadening current discourse on the role of finance in society and applying our own research on ethics and sustainability, we posit that emotion-based approaches to transformative learning are key to “catalyzing a sustainability worldview” and facilitating a “merger between business and ethics.”

073. Transcending and Transforming University and Community Boundaries: Using Collage to Explore the Edges and Beyond

Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 202

This experiential session uses collage as a metaphor and method for exploring community-university engagement. Collage is a creative aggregation process that can lead to transformation as the process involves bringing together disparate parts to make a more integrated whole. We seek to examine the hegemonic assumptions and the relationship between community and academic institutions in the creation of knowledge. Participants will engage in storytelling and collage making as we explore this phenomenon.

Presentation Authors:

Randee Lipson Lawrence, Yorkville University
Shauna Butterwick, University of British Columbia

074. The Experience of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry: Intersections between Transformation and Reflection

Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 206A

We will conduct an experiential workshop based on Matthew Lipman’s community of philosophical inquiry. The aim is to create a space for transformative learning, suitable for developing that cosmopolitan perspective which is necessary to engage with contemporary cosmopolitanism-oriented experiential spaces. The community of philosophical inquiry is a multidisciplinary intersection that can activate critical thinking processes in all participants, interpreted by combining Lipman’s and Mezirow’s views.

Presentation Authors:

Maura Striano, University of Naples “Federico II”
Alessandra Romano, University of Naples “Federico II”

075. Intergenerational and Cross-cultural Communication: Influence Transformative Learning

Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 208

In this experiential session, you can gain skills to replicate a transformative learning process between intergenerational groups. We will examine three intergenerational programs from Canada, Hong Kong, and Vietnam, comparing how each site revealed insights about how to influence reciprocal dialogue through disorienting dilemmas and shifting meaning perspectives. Ultimately, each intergenerational research site illustrated opportunities for transformative learning. We will work to recognize unconscious biases and practice transferable activities that may elicit cross-generational transformative learning via these dynamic relationships.

Presentation Authors:

Patricia Goodman, Northeastern University
Katie Titus Larson, Antioch University
Albert Low, Essex University

076. Concurrent Session D Panel 4

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 209

Presentations & Authors:

Figurations of the Other—Self-other-world Relation

Thomas Neubauer, Heidelberg University; *Annika Lehmann*, Heidelberg University

Transformation is conceptualized as a deep shift of self-/world-relation (following German theory of Bildung as transformation). We are particularly interested in the nature and determinants of transformation. In our empirical study the “pedagogical professional” was seen operating in individuals’ relations to the world. In that context, what does “the other”/the third/the mediating authority look like? We tried to carve out figurations of “the other” from written documents in order to get a picture of different manifestations of self-other-world relationships.

Interfaith Dialogue and Perspective Transformation:

Promise and Possibilities *Elizabeth Martin Pope*, University of Georgia

Religious conflict is an enduring problem that continues into the 21st century and its violence still surges across the world. Such conflict often stems from complementary misunderstandings, distrust, and dehumanization, and this complex has proven deadly for many. Yet within a setting of interfaith dialogue, many believe the promise of religious peace can be cultivated. This study considers how interfaith dialogue can promote perspective

transformations of the religious other that may lead to peaceful acceptance and action.

Transformative Learning at the Intersections of Family, Faith, and Urban Ministry *Maria Liu Wong, City Seminary of New York; Geomon George, City Seminary of New York*

In an interconnected, urbanizing world, ministry leaders in the city seek to be equipped to face increasingly complex challenges in their practice. In that effort, making sense of the intersections of faith, family and urban ministry is important.

This paper describes the impact of a non-degree urban ministry certificate program in New York City on family relationships of students who are spouses, siblings, parents and adult children, and the potential therein for transformative learning.

Transformative learning (TL) at the Intersections of the Psychosocial: Comparing an Islamist and the Good TL Group *Linden Reginald West, Canterbury Christ Church University*

The paper focuses on the nature and values of TL, by reference to narrative and historical research in a post-industrial city. Groups, in intersectional spaces, offer individuals recognition and even transformation, but the Islamist group also brings closure. This is contrasted with an historical 'experiment in democratic education', in which equality, fraternity, and encounters with otherness were the key to profounder forms of learning.

077. Collaborative Inquiry into the Research Designs and Methods of Transformative Learning
Experiential Session

9:00 to 10:30 am
Hauge Admin: 200

The purpose of this experiential session is to convene those interested in the research and practice of transformative learning—students, faculty, and practitioners—to collectively engage the research designs and methods of transformative learning. To galvanize a space for generative engagement, we will encourage participation from the growing transformative learning network as well as invite special guests, faculty, community activists, students, and practitioners from a variety of disciplines beyond adult education programs.

Presentation Authors:

Stacey Robbins, Seattle University
Aliki Nicolaidis, University of Georgia
Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University

078. A Mixed-method Approach to Evaluate Critical Reflection and Transformative Learning for Sustainability among Graduate Students

Roundtable
9:00 to 10:30 am
Hauge Admin: 211 A

Given that little is known about the effectiveness of business administration courses regarding the nature of reflection proposed in these programs and its ability to encourage change in the student's mindset towards sustainability, this paper aims to develop tools, duly adapted to the context of business education, to assess, qualitatively, the level of reflection and to measure quantitatively the process of transformative learning that students of a graduate course in management for sustainability can actualize.

Presentation Authors:

Claudine Brunnuell, Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie
Janette Brunstein, Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie

079. Transformative Global Learning through Storytelling
Roundtable

9:00 to 10:30 am
Hauge Admin: 211 B

As the boundaries between local, global, international, and intercultural become increasingly tenuous in our interconnected world, supporting transformative learning to further enhance capacity for empathy amongst adults in intercultural environments is becoming increasingly important. In our interactive and participatory roundtable session, we plan to explore how storytelling might serve as a means to promote transformative global learning, where perspectives, identity, and consciousness shift toward more interculturally empathetic frames.

Presentation Authors:

Brigette Adair Herron, University of Georgia
Beate Vagt-Traore, University of Georgia
Karen E Watkins, University of Georgia

080. Pariahs, Postmen, and Poets at the Intersection: Performing Arts and the Path to Transformative Learning

Experiential Session
9:00 to 10:30 am
Hauge Admin: 221

One of the most profound yet neglected intersections in Adult Education is the adult learner who returns to a community or private college environment to earn his/her high school equivalency and Associate's degree. This session examines how the performing arts are used to lead these adult learners past their negative experiences in education to a glorious space

where transformative learning can occur. Participants will engage potentially transformative works and create original performing arts pieces.

Presentation Author:

Jonathan Howle, Teachers College / Columbia University

081. Concurrent Session D Panel 3

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 214

Presentations & Authors:

Ancient Future: Paradigmatic Intersections and the Spiritual Turn of Transformative Learning Theory
Susan L. Herrmann, Fielding Graduate University;
Megumi Sugihara, independent

Spiritual transformation, social engagement, non-duality, ancient future, critical global consciousness, integration, being and doing, thoughts and action, cognitive knowing and visceral knowing ... this scholar-to-scholar session is an intersection of all of these concepts and more. Two recent dissertation research projects are shared with conference participants who are interested in the spiritual turn of transformative learning theory.

The Role of Reflective Practices in Developing Authenticity in Leadership: Three Year Case Study
Yoshie Tomozumi Nakamura, Columbia Business School;
William M. Klepper, Columbia Business School

Discovering one's leadership values empowers her or him to better respond to challenging conditions in our society. The purpose of this study was to explore how a leadership development course impacted the participants' authentic leadership development. More specifically, this study sought to understand how participants reflected on their significant life events and experienced the discovery of their leadership values as a result of having participated in a leadership development program.

Towards an Integrated Conceptualization of Dialogical Action
Alexis Kokkos, Hellenic Open University

Dialogic action is conceptualized in ways that move in various and often opposite directions. Consequently, there emerges the challenge to achieve congruency. This paper contributes to this task. Habermas' view constitutes a seminal suggestion in the notion of discourse as a specific form of reflective dialogue used to question the validity claims of our speech acts. Mezirow and other scholars' enrich the conceptualization of

discourse or provide alternative views of dialogical action.

Understanding the Role of Vulnerability in "Transformative" Executive Development Programs
Everett T. Shupe II, Goodwill Industries International

This paper seeks to understand how senior level executives experience vulnerability through a "transformative" 16-month executive development program. Specific questions this paper will explore are as follows: How do executives acknowledge whether or not they experience vulnerability? How do they understand and make sense of the phenomenon of vulnerability? How do these interpretations impact the transformative learning experience of these executives, especially during times of transition?

082. Concurrent Session D Panel 1

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 219

Presentations & Authors:

Giving a hand—Transforming the Lives of First-time Volunteers
Julie Anne Willans, Central Queensland University

When seven Australians, for the very first time, voluntarily participated in a humanitarian, prosthetic 'hand' fitting project in a previously war torn country, little did they realise the life changing experience it would be for them. Based on their narratives, this paper demonstrates that transformation of personal perspectives can occur when intersections within unfamiliar contexts pose challenges to preconceived notions of self and others.

Transformative Learning: The Young Person's Perception of Prisoner Education
Michelle Waldron, University of Edinburgh

This presentation will focus on the data gathered as part of a qualitative study on the experiences of young people engaged in prisoner education programs in the United Kingdom. The research seeks to share the experiences of young people in a prisoner learning community, discuss the motives for pursuing education during incarceration, and also to discuss to what extent and in what form, transformative learning occurs as a result of participation in prisoner education.

Transforming Greek Primary Schools into Learning Organizations
Emmanouil Koutouzis, Hellenic Open University;
Asimina Papazoglou, Hellenic Open University

The aim of this study was to identify primary

Greek schools that demonstrate characteristics of a learning organization and to examine possible relationships between leadership style and the above characteristics. A quantitative survey was conducted in Athens, Greece. Findings show that the combination of all transformational leadership dimensions and a “contingent reward” transactional dimension, explains a significant proportion of the “learning organization’s” variance. Therefore, there seems to be an intersection between leadership and organizational learning in schools.

083. Concurrent Session D Panel 5

Paper Session

9:00 to 10:30 am

Hauge Admin: 212

Presentations & Authors:

At the Intersection of Transformative Learning in the Training of Counsellors *Madeleine Mary De little, Simon Fraser University*

This presentation involves Madeleine De Little’s doctoral research into the potential for the intersection of transformative learning and the postgraduate training of counsellors. The research interweaves a holistic, nurturing and experiential transformative learning model with current research on counsellor training. The presenter will discuss the results of the training of counsellors in a specific expressive model of therapy that she has developed called “Neuroscience and Satir in the Sand Tray” within a transformative learning context.

Developing and Releasing Agents of Change:

Teaching Adaptive Leadership from the Perspective of Transformative Learning *April Hyoeun Bang, Teachers College, Columbia University*

Teaching adaptive leadership involves equipping and empowering people to face and address difficult challenges, and thrive. Through a literature review and reflections on personal experiences, I examine how teaching adaptive leadership integrates with transformative learning theory. I also describe how my approach to teaching reflects a variation on how the course has been traditionally taught in order to foster engagement with social change and collaboration. I conclude with a summary of next steps for research.

Developmentally Aware Teaching and Learning: Does Letting Go of Transformation Deepen the Overall Transformative Impact? *Abigail Lynam, Cascadia College*

Understanding the deep iterating patterns of how adults develop can deepen the impact of

transformative spaces. Constructive development theory helps us recognize the kinds of transformation students are going through, where they might be in the transformative process and the kind of support they might need. This mixed-methods research found there was a transformative and developmental impact of learning about adult development for faculty and students in a graduate program in sustainability education.

Making Meaning: Exploring the Teaching Portfolio as a Mechanism to Promote Transformative Learning

Rachel Plews, École hôtelière de Lausanne

This paper explores the potential for transformative learning for faculty members who have completed a teaching portfolio as a developmental tool and two years later as an evaluative tool. The preliminary findings and analysis support the transformative learning themes of personal experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse. The discussion focuses on the question: Is this transformative learning triggered through the portfolio process or a realization of prior perspective transformation outside of this process?

083.B Break

10:30 to 10:45 am

Coffee, Tea, Water Refresher

Anderson University Center near Grey Area

084. Innovative Open Space Part IV

10:45 to 11:30 am

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hall & UC Spaces as Assigned

084.B Break

11:30 to 11:45 am

085. Lunch and Closing Session & Ceremony

11:45 to 1:30 pm

Anderson University Center: Chris Knutzen Hall

086. Complimentary Shuttles to Downtown Hotels, Sunday

1:45 to 3:00 pm (or earlier by request)

Anderson University Center: CK Hallway Outer Door

087. Paid Shuttles to Airport from Campus or Hotel (on your own)

1:45 onwards

Anderson University Center: CK Hallway Outer Door is the standard pickup point at PLU for Shuttle Express

INDEX OF SESSION PRESENTATIONS BY AUTHOR SURNAME

NOTES: 1) Authors are listed in alphabetic order by surname without regard to listing in papers or order of presentation within sessions. 2) Author names are listed once for each article presented. 3) Multiple author listings are sorted by ascending session numbers. In the case of the author presenting twice in one session (26), the two listings are sequenced according to place within the overall order of the session. 4) In the symposia sessions (017, 018, 063, 064) presenters wrote subsections of the master paper. Within the sessions the position of each subsection is identified numerically. In the case where two authors participated in writing a subsection, their relative positions in the author list are further identified alphabetically.

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Andersen, Ingrid	022	Stories in the Agora: Transformative Learning through the Medium of Digital Storytelling of Personal Spiritual and Cultural Experiences Learning
Anderson Sathe, Laurie	023	The Mandorla: A Symbol for Exploring Intersections in Transformative Learning
Anderson Sathe, Laurie	042	At the Intersection of Learning and Healing: the Productive Power of the Imagination
Aspin, Toni	049	Finding the Intersection of Corporate Governance and a Participatory Worldview
Baldwin, Cheryl	029	Exploring Transformative Learning Praxis and Dignity in the Training Context for Lower-Wage Workers
Bang, April Hyoeun	054	Teaching Adaptive Leadership: Variations of Practice from the Perspective of Transformative Learning
Bang, April Hyoeun	083	Developing and Releasing Agents of Change: Teaching Adaptive Leadership from the Perspective of Transformative Learning
Barthell, John	030	Connecting Disciplines and Divisions—On the Ground with Transformative Learning
Becker, Annette L.	037	Transformative Learning Theory: One Leg of a Theoretical Triad Grounding a Study of Personal Transformation
Benke, Meg	047	Transformative Adult Education in Further Education Sector in Ireland
Bishop, Kathy	044	Down the Rabbit Hole: Using Theatre-Based Methods to Generate Spaces for Transformation
Bitterman, Jeanne E.	047	Transformative Potential for Physician Educators in an Adult Learning and Leadership Program
Bliss, Stacey	039	Possibilities in Transformative Learning: Facing Radically Passive Teachers Including Artwork, the Breath, and Shunyata (Emptiness)
Borkhetaria, Che	046	Intentional Exploration, a Method to Transform the Group Experience through Structured Interaction
Brem, Sarah Kate	057	The Negotiation between Individual and Collective Identity of Being a Teacher in the Context of Cultural Transition
Brown, Vicki A.	029	Silenced Voices That Cry In the Night: The Transformative Experience of Spouses of Wounded Warriors
Brunnquell, Claudine	078	A Mixed-Method Approach to Evaluate Critical Reflection and Transformative Learning for Sustainability among Graduate Students

Author/Presenter	Session	Presentation Titles
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Buechner, Barton David	043	Transforming Conflict at the Intersections: Making Meaning at Moral, Cultural, Social, Psychological and Spiritual Crossroads
Burns, Heather	025	Regenerative Change: Engaging at the Intersection of Inner and Outer Work through Contemplative Learning
Butterwick, Shauna	073	Transcending and Transforming University and Community Boundaries: Using Collage to Explore the Edges and Beyond
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Chapman, Jocelyn	021	Exploiting Opportunities for Transformative Learning in Remedial Math Education
Chiang, Amy	026	2) The Shape of Oppression: Habits of Mind and Being in the Social Context
Chiang, Amy	026	4) Unfreezing habits of Mind and Body: Bodywork Practitioners' Contribution to Transformative Learning Theory
Chung, Wen-Ting	057	The Negotiation between Individual and Collective Identity of Being a Teacher in the Context of Cultural Transition
Cimino, Francesca	037	Mezirow's Conception of Critical Reflection: A Critical Review
Clark, Donna	042	Caregiving as a Space for Transformation: Crucible at the Intersections of Life, Learning and Systems
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Cunliff, Ed	030	Connecting Disciplines and Divisions—On the Ground with Transformative Learning
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Donovan, Loretta L.	042	Examining Transformative Learning in Narrative Medicine as an Intervention in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
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Eschenbacher, Saskia	045	Teaching for Change: Transformative Learning Theory and Holocaust Education
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Fahim, Urusa	064	Move Over, Descartes!: Engaging the Intersection of Transformative Learning and Neuroscience. 3) Embodied Learning: Implications of Cultural Difference
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Fenimore, Mary Ann	027	Storying, Inhabiting and Performing Transformation: An Aesthetic Exploration of Ontologies and Epistemologies of Art
Fichter, Rachel	053	Developing Trust and Empathy in Diverse Cohorts: A Collaborative Inquiry
Fisher-Yoshida, Beth	043	Transforming Conflict at the Intersections: Making Meaning at Moral, Cultural, Social, Psychological and Spiritual Crossroads
Fisher-Yoshida, Beth	059	Transforming Passion to Action: Youth and Community Leaders as Agents of Change
Fitzmaurice, Celine Renee	025	Regenerative Change: Engaging at the Intersection of Inner and Outer Work through Contemplative Learning
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Frkal, Robin Ayers	057	Creating Dialogic Conditions for Transformative Learning with Adult Women Students: Taking a Communication Perspective
Geisler, Carol	023	The Mandorla: A Symbol for Exploring Intersections in Transformative Learning
George, Geomon	076	Transformative Learning at the Intersections of Family, Faith, and Urban Ministry
Giebitz, Robert Paul	029	Creative Tension and Transformation through Cycles of Learning: Indigenous, Chinese, and Western Ways of Knowing
Gilpin-Jackson, Yabome	040	Transform-in-Action: Transforming Stuck Issues and Relationships through Resonance
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Hall, Budd	027	Storying, Inhabiting and Performing Transformation: An Aesthetic Exploration of Ontologies and Epistemologies of Art
Hanson, Bill	052	Self Transformation through Values-Based Test Feedback: A Work Example
Harper, Andre	053	Developing Trust and Empathy in Diverse Cohorts: A Collaborative Inquiry
Hastic, Maya	047	Transformative Potential for Physician Educators in an Adult Learning and Leadership Program
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Herron, Brigitte Adair	079	Transformative Global Learning through Storytelling

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Lange, Elizabeth	045	Riverspeaking: Transformative Learning within a Relational Ontology
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Mälkki, Kaisu	049	Micro-transformations of Everyday Life: Addressing the Transformative Potential of the Intersection between Our Meaning Perspectives and Daily Challenges
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Welch, Marguerite	020	Creating Virtual Communities of Practice for Sustaining Transformative Learning
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XII International Transformative Learning Conference
Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA
October 20-23, 2016

Schedule as of October 7, 2016

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10:00AM	Luggage Room Opens	AUC 212
10:00 AM	Exhibition Gallery Opens	AUC 201
10:00 AM	Promotions Hall Opens	AUC 213
12:00 – 1:30PM	Pre-Conference Session A: What is Transformative Learning? Facilitator: Urusa Fahim, Ph.D.	AUC Scandinavian Cultural Center
2:00 – 5:00 PM	Pre-Conference Session C: Collaborative Inquiry into Research Designs and Methods for Understanding and Extending the Theory of Transformative Learning Facilitators: Aliko Nicolaides, Ph.D.; Stacey Robbins, Ph.D.; and Chad Hoggan, Ph.D.	AUC Scandinavian Cultural Center
5:30 – 7:00 PM	<u>Opening Session & PLU Welcome</u> Welcome from Dr. Amanda Feller, Host & Steering Committee Chair Remarks from Dr. Rae Linda Brown, PLU Provost Fuchs Organ Address by Theresa Pan Hosley, Tacoma's 2016 Peace Laureate Tribal Opening Ceremony Innovative Open Spaces, Part I	Mary Baker Russell Hall (MBR): Lagerquist Hall
7:00 – 8:30 PM	<u>PLU Welcome Reception</u> Reception: Hors d'oeuvre & Beverages	MBR Foyer & 306 (No food in Lagerquist)
7:30 – 8:30 PM	Complimentary Shuttles to Hotels	Outside AUC CK
8:30 PM	Luggage Room Closes	AUC 212
8:30 PM	Registration Closes	AUC Grey Area
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7:30 AM	Luggage Room Opens	AUC 212
7:30 AM	Registration Opens	AUC Grey Area
7:30 AM	Exhibition Gallery Opens	AUC 201
7:30 AM	Promotions Hall Opens	AUC 213
7:30 – 9:00 AM	Light Snack Breakfast, Coffee, Tea, etc.	AUC CK / CK Hallway
9:00 – 10:45 AM	<u>Morning Session & Welcome</u> Welcome & Announcements	AUC CK

	Remarks from Dr. Thomas Krise, PLU President Steering Committee Opening Framing on Transformative Learning & “Engaging at the Intersections”	
10:45 – 11:00 AM	Break: Coffee, Tea, Water refresh	AUC near Grey Area
11:00 – 12:30	Innovative Open Space, Part II	AUC Spaces, Assigned
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch, Buffet	AUC CK / CK Hallway
1:30 – 3:00 PM	Symposia: choose one of two: <i>(1) Dancing at the Crossroads: Recollections and Reflections on Jack Mezirow's Early Work</i> with Ted Fleming, Victoria Jean Marsick, Elizabeth Kasl & Amy D. Rose <i>(2) Embodied Learning and Social Transformation: Opening Space for Expanded Worldviews through Experiences of Intersectional Dissonance</i> with Barton David Buechner, Zieva Dauber Konvisser, Deedee Myers, Tzofnat Peleg-Baker & John Dirkx	AUC Scandinavian Center (downstairs) AUC Regency Room (main floor)
3:00 – 3:15 PM	Break: Coffee, Tea, Water refresh	AUC near Grey Area
3:15 – 4:45 PM	Concurrent Session A: Paper Panels, Roundtables, & Experiential Sessions	Administration Building Rooms
5:00 PM	Luggage Room Closes	AUC 212
5:00 PM	Registration Closes	AUC Grey Area
5:00 PM	Exhibition Gallery Closes	AUC 201
5:00 PM	Promotions Hall Closes	AUC 213
5:00 PM	Complimentary Shuttles to Museum Reception	Outside AUC CK
6:00 – 10:00 PM	Food & Beverage Reception: Honors; Jack Mezirow Living Theory of Transformative Learning Awards; Patricia Cranton Commemoration.	LeMay / America’s Car Museum
7:30 – 10:00 PM	Complimentary Shuttles to Hotels	LeMay
Evening	Dinner on your own / Self-organizing Groups	Recommendations
Saturday October 22nd		
7:00 AM	Complimentary Shuttles from Hotels to Campus	Downtown Hotels
7:30 AM	Registration Opens	AUC Grey Area
7:30 AM	Luggage Room Opens	AUC 212
7:30 AM	Exhibition Gallery Opens	AUC 201
7:30 AM	Promotions Hall Opens	AUC 213
7:30 – 9:00 AM	Light Snack Breakfast, Coffee, Tea, etc.	AUC CK Hallway
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Concurrent Session B: Paper Panels, Roundtables, & Experiential Workshops	Administration Building Rooms
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Break	
10:45 – 12:15 PM	Concurrent Session C: Paper Panels, Roundtables, & Experiential Workshops	Administration Building Rooms
12:15 – 1:30 PM	Lunch, buffet	AUC CK / CK Hallway
12:15 – 1:30 PM	Editors’ Lunch Journal of Transformative Education	AUC 133
1:30 – 3:00 PM	Innovative Open Space, Part III	AUC Spaces, Assigned
3:00 – 3:15 PM	Break: Coffee, Tea, Water Refresher	AUC near Grey Area
3:15 - 4:45 PM	Symposia: choose one of two:	AUC Regency Room

	(1) <i>Interrogating transformative processes in learning and education: Sustaining a trans-oceanic conversation</i> with Michel Alhadeff-Jones, Laura Formenti, Alexis Kokkos, Anna Laros & Linden West (2) <i>Move Over, Descartes! Engaging the Intersection of Transformative Learning and Neuroscience</i> with Kathleen Taylor, Paul Loper, Dean Elias, Urusa Fahim, & Donald Proby	AUC Scandinavian Cultural Center
5:00 – 7:00 PM Reception: Food & Beverages	Main Reception Entertainment: PLU Student Groups Teachers College, Columbia Reception Fielding Graduate University Reception	AUC Scandinavian Cultural Center AUC 133 AUC Regency Room
6:30 PM	Luggage Room Closes	AUC 212
6:30 PM	Registration Closes	AUC Grey Area
6:30 PM	Exhibition Gallery Closes	AUC 201
6:30 PM	Promotions Hall Closes	AUC 213
5:30 – 7:30 PM	Complimentary Shuttles to Hotels	Outside AUC CK
Evening	Dinner on your own / Self-organizing Groups	Recommendations
Sunday October 23rd		
7:30 AM	Complimentary Shuttles to Campus from Hotels	Downtown Hotels
7:30 AM	Registration Opens	AUC Grey Area
7:30 AM	Luggage Room Opens	AUC 213
7:30 AM	Exhibition Gallery Opens	AUC 201
7:30 AM	Promotions Hall Opens	AUC 213
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Light Snack Breakfast, Coffee, Tea, etc.	AUC CK
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Concurrent Session D: Paper Panels, Roundtables, & Experiential Workshops	Administration Building Rooms
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Break	AUC CK Coffee, etc.
10:45 – 11:30 AM	Innovative Open Space, Part IV	AUC CK Starting Point
11:30 – 11:45 AM	Break	AUC CK Hallway
11:45-1:30 PM	<u>Lunch & Closing Events</u> Gathering threads and synthesis of Innovative Open Space Recognitions Tribal Closing Farewell	AUC CK
1:45 PM	Complimentary Shuttles to Hotel (can be arranged for earlier)	Outside AUC CK
2:00 PM	Luggage Room Closes	AUC 212
2:00 PM	Registration Closes	AUC Grey Area
2:00 PM	Exhibition Gallery Closes	AUC 201
2:00 PM	Promotions Hall Closes	AUC 213
Anytime	Paid Transportation to the Airport on your own	From Campus or Hotel

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PAPERS

SYMPOSIA

Embodied Learning and Social Transformation: Opening Space for Expanded Worldviews through Experiences of Intersectional Dissonance

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Abstract: Stories of those who survive and grow from “disorienting dilemmas,” “discomforting transitions,” or “moral injuries” reveal how the dissonance of such lived experiences may be the catalyst not only for personal growth, but also social action – helping to create more just and humane social systems. Some of those so affected by disrupted lives include displaced workers, veterans, amputees, persons-in-conflict, and exonerated individuals. The process of personal transformation often involves the presence of *communitas*, in which there is a willingness to accept and give voice to emotion-laden experiences in the presence of supportive – and sometimes challenging – others. The experience of *liminality*, or freeing from previously accepted restraints and beliefs, is also a significant aspect of this transformational experience. From the theoretical intersections of imaginal learning, social construction, somatics, conflict theory, and posttraumatic growth, we consider some principles by which the dissonance of violated moral codes can be transformed into energy and vision for social change and community-building – expanding our collective worldview and social sphere.

Transformative Learning Theory (Taylor, Cranton, & Associates, 2012) provides insights within the field of education into how transformation of perspective (Mezirow, 1991) and personal growth may be achieved by guiding individuals through the dissonant, and often traumatic, lived experiences of conflict-in-transition (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). These concepts also offer insights into how the dynamics associated with the embodiment of individual change – altering behaviors through increased self-awareness (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014) – may also be applicable to “opening up” collective space for organizational and social transformation. We address this phenomenon from the perspectives of various persons-in-transition, including dislocated workers, wartime veterans, amputees, persons-in-conflict, wrongfully convicted and exonerated individuals, and others who have been marginalized through misalignment or disengagement with prevailing socio-cultural systems. The intent is to evoke discussion around the phenomenon of enlarging transformative space through lenses of shared imaginal learning, social construction in communication, somatic awareness, constructive conflict engagement, and posttraumatic growth.

Part 1: The Role of Liminality and *Communitas* in the the Social Construction of Transformative Space

John Dirkx, Ph.D.

Adulthood is often characterized as a series of relatively stable states punctuated by varying levels of discomfiting but predictable transitions. However, voluntary and involuntary transitions are increasingly characterizing our individual and collective lives, causing varying degrees of conflict and trauma that are manifest at the psychological, moral, and spiritual, as well as physical levels – contributing to what Vaill (1996) refers to as “permanent white water.” Many adults find these periods difficult to work through and succumb in different ways. Others are able grow through and are transformed by these experiences. Jungian and post-Jungian psychology is helpful in examining the powerful, transformative dynamics evoked in such experiences (Dirkx, 2012), as exemplified in the case of dislocated workers (Dirkx & Lang, 2009).

Downsizing the manufacturing industry within the United States displaced millions of men and women from well-paying jobs that they held for many years. Going to work in factories right after or often before high school graduation, they now find themselves without a livelihood to support themselves or their families. As they seek to retool themselves, they face daunting and often traumatic transitions.

Daloz (1986) uses Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy* to illustrate the transformational journey associated with learning in adulthood. The story begins at midlife when “Dante find himself lost in a dark wood, terrified and fleeing in desperation from wild animals” (p. 28). When it seems Dante has lost all hope, Virgil appears and “leads the pilgrim through Hell on the paradoxical journey downward to the light” (p. 28). They encounter those condemned to Hell but Virgil continues to guide and instruct him. At one point, Virgil gathers Dante into his arms and plunges further downward, past evil spirits. He then tells Dante to look directly at the Emperor of the Woeful Kingdom, a reference to Satan himself:

my master. . .took himself from before me and made me stop, saying: . . . “the place where thou must arm thyself with fortitude.” How chilled and faint I turned then. . . I did not die and I did not remain alive; think now for thyself, if thou has any wit, what I became, denied both death and life. (p. 43)

Daloz portrays a central, powerful characteristic of the transformative journey, that of a liminal space. The encounter with the Emperor of the Woeful Kingdom represents a metaphorical expression of the liminality that characterizes processes of transformation. In contrast to the relatively stable, recurring states that we regard as depicting normal life, the experience of liminality feels like we are pulled by two powerful poles within our beings, one that seeks unity and fusion and another that struggles for separation and differentiation. We are frightened by the prospects of disintegration and coming apart and also by the stark challenges with the struggle for wholeness.

As the opposites pull at our being, we find comfort in moving towards one end or the other but also are plagued by the sense of incompleteness that this comfort creates. We find ourselves betwixt and between (Turner, 1964). These transition spaces reflect rites of passage that, according to Turner, are associated with change from one state to another, with feelings of being neither here nor there, a sense of marginality, of not belonging to this group or that group, of a deep and painful loss of identity. Dante captured psychological and spiritual dimensions of this transition in powerfully imagistic and poetic language.

Dislocated workers experience this transition as a crisis. As they show up for class each morning, the trauma and worry is clearly palpable in their bodies, as well as in their language and

tone of voice (Dirkx & Lan, 2009). They feel desperate and alone, grieving the loss of a way of life, a sense of who they were as a person. This leaves many of them feeling empty, emotionally spent, and bereft. If not hell, many of them would agree it is pretty close. As they begin retraining, they are ready to bolt at the first hint of employment to the security of the familiar, the certain.

Framed through the lens of Dante's experience and post- Jungian psychology, two points of this experience seem important to highlight. First, the workers are challenged to re- imagine their sense of self. Having spent 20 – 30 years as a factory worker, they now need to re-imagine themselves and to re-write their story. The emotional struggle of letting go of who they once were and coming to re-imagine themselves as students, shifting their identities away from the factory worker (Dirkx & Lan, 2009), is perhaps their greatest challenge.

The dislocated workers can and do use vocational retraining programs as a context for this reworking of their sense of self. This process, as Dante so clearly saw, evokes our inner demons, a darkness to this journey that should not be underestimated. Yet, this darkness must be “gazed upon” and a relationship established with the figures that arise; despair, grief, doubt, as well as hope and longing (Dirkx, 2012). The texts, teachers, fellow worker-students provide the contexts which evoke this process and the emotion- laden images associated with it.

Individuals in this transition need to learn to be open to these emotion-laden images and experiences associated with this transition, and be willing to work with them through a process like the imaginal method, which engages them through image, symbol, ritual, fantasy, and imagination (Dirkx, 2012). In addition, however, this process needs to occur within a particular context. Learning to live with and work through the sense of liminality that comes with these powerful transitions also involves the presence of *communitas* (Turner, 1964). The experience of liminality creates for the individuals a shared sense of marginality, resulting in intense solidarity and togetherness. A leveling of social status within the group also occurs, providing students with the opportunity to imagine and explore new and more egalitarian social roles or self-identities. When conducted as a cohort, the group itself provides a kind of container or “holding environment” (Ward, 2008) that contributes to the students’ ability to entertain and engage a learner identity.

When it is part of an intentional organizational intervention, working through trauma associated with involuntary transitions is mediated through liminal experiences created by the transition, and reshaped by the emergence of *communitas* within the group. This container provides a safe space in which individuals can, through imaginative engagement, reconstruct and try out the self as a different kind of worker.

Part 2: Resolving Dissonance at the Intersections of War and Peace: Moral Injuries and the Transformation of Worldview

Barton Buechner, Ph.D.

Much attention in public policy has been devoted to address the difficulties experienced by many combat veterans with their reintegration with civil society. While conventional approaches consider this as an individual psychological disorder related to combat trauma (classified as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder or “PTSD”), there is increasing evidence that at least part of veterans’ experience of *dissonance in transition* results from their returning home with heightened levels of awareness that have emerged to promote cooperative survival in hostile conditions (Buechner, 2014). Paying attention to this *transformation of perspective* (Mezirow, 1991) among returning veterans by deeply listening to the stories they are telling – or not telling, may uncover troubling “*moral conflicts*” (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997) or “*moral injuries*” (Shay, 1995) that

change the way veterans come to see our social world, and its meanings. Opening up space for these difficult conversations may require the perspective of many disciplines. Put simply, it “takes a village” to unravel the meaning of the stories told, or not told, by returning veterans. This process of shared meaning-making in community is potentially transformative for the village, as well as cathartic for the individual.

One way to understand the expansion of social space is through the realization that the “reality” we experience in our social worlds is co-constructed in communication (Pearce, 2007). Within the social construction paradigm, communication is more than just the transmission of information, but acts as a constitutive force that dynamically shapes (and re-shapes) our identities, social worlds and worldviews as a “generative” force (p. xiii). In the case of individuals who have experienced incoherence in the social world through moral conflict, “moving forward together productively requires breaking out of the ‘normal’ patterns of communication” of that social world (p. 17). Therefore, facilitation of communication across moral conflicts involves *creating a new space* for discourse, in which dissonance around specific differences between value systems or groups may be transcended. This is accomplished by shifting the focus of attention to the system-level interactions that created the problematic “contradictions, conflicts, and paradoxes” in the first place (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997, p. 136). This level of engagement requires deep and purposeful listening to the experiences of those at the intersections between differing social worlds, and the specifics of how their stories vary from common experience. The otherwise “unheard stories” that emerge may produce transformative insights based upon previously unexamined perceptions of self, society, and worldview.

Since nearly all returning veterans in the current era will pass through the world of higher education as students, educators in general, and the transformative learning community in particular, may have much to contribute to this process. Stories and writings of these veterans have similarities to the warrior archetypes of classical literature and philosophy (Campbell, 2008). These warriors nearly always have trouble when returning home and encountering moral and ethical inconsistencies in the society which has sent them to war in their name (Sherman, 2015, Meagher, 2015). These experiences of ethical betrayal, or moral injuries, are phenomenologically distinct from the psychological syndrome classified as PTSD (Jinkerson & Buechner, 2016). Simply stated, these are wounds of the psyche that are sustained not in combat, but in the process of coming home. In that sense, they can serve us as indicators of where our social structure or “container” is inadequate. Treating these experiences of dissonance in transition as a form of mental illness that affects only them and not us forecloses opportunities for learning about the true nature of the conflicts to which we have sent them, and how these conflicts themselves may be transformed. Creating space in which this moral complexity can be explored can be both healing to the warrior, and transformative for the global “village.”

Transformative Learning Theory offers useful conceptual models, as well as a viable theoretical context, for examining and rebuilding moral codes in transition. For example, Mezirow describes “communicative learning” as a process of understanding, describing, and explaining “values; ideals; moral issues; social, political, philosophical concepts; feelings and reasons” (Mezirow, 1991, p.75). These are all essential components for rebuilding shattered belief systems and broken moral code, which often result from encountering the *liminal space* of combat, in which the rules and moral codes of society no longer apply (McConnell, 1997). Mezirow also identifies dynamics of “collective transformation” of perspective that are applicable to removing perceived barriers of understanding between returning veterans and the broader society. It includes the ability to listen to stories of other that “we initially find discordant, distasteful, and threatening, but later come to recognize as indispensable in dealing with our experience”

(Mezirow, 1991, p. 185). The collectively transformative aspect of this process comes in “making an imaginative interpretation of it, (construing) it to make it our own” (p. 185).

While the potential for this type of transformative dialogue with an estimated 1.5 million returning student veterans exists on many college campuses today, a number of social barriers – including the “firewalls” between academic disciplines and separations between professional communities of professional practice – more often than not serve as a deterrent to effective reintegration (Buechner, 2014). Removing or lowering these socially constructed barriers, and focusing attention more on what we can collectively learn from dissonant experiences of returning veterans and less on consoling or “fixing” those afflicted by trauma, can help to create more transformative space for reflexive homecoming in our communities and social institutions. There is increasing evidence to suggest that community-based approaches which privilege interpersonal communication and storytelling are more successful in attracting and engaging veterans and their families, as well as producing observable improvement in social functioning and personal growth (Konvisser, 2016). This shift in approach from the expert/programmatic to the community/relational focus can in turn serve to further transform our social spaces: “classrooms, hospitals, workplaces ... where the lived worlds can seem alien until we morally engage each other, and do what we humans do best: recognize and acknowledge each other, and invoke and convoke community through our emotions and understanding” (Sherman, 2015, p. 161).

Part 3: Somatic Generativity and Transformative Change of Organizational Teams

Deedee Myers, Ph.D.

Principles of embodiment from the field of somatics offer conceptual models for how social and organizational space may be transformed. Somatics stems from the Greek *somatikos*, or *soma*, which refers to the life in the body, living, awareness, attention, and action, not separated from mind (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). Somatics can also be seen as a transformative change theory for individual and collective embodied transformation. Sustainable and intentional organization change requires a leadership team to experience somatic transformation as a catalyst to organizational change. Somatic theory provides a framework for facilitating deep change within the individuals and teams, integral to a new organizational somatic shape. An outcome of somatic transformation is the expanded capacity to feel and make sense of one’s body in relation to self and others in an organization (Myers, 2015). A somatically aware team comprised of sensitized individuals has a wider range of capacity to think and act together strategically, engage with others, and make and fulfill powerful commitments.

Teams have a soma, a certain shape to how they self-organize, engage in deliberate dialogue, coordinate, collaborate, communicate, and commit to and move into action. A person—and, by extension, a team—is shaped by a collection of experiences that produces conditioned responses. Team members have a collection of experiences in their individual somas, which create a container for the team’s soma. Dirkx, Mezirow & Cranston (2006) discuss engaging the emotions of students in the classroom in the learning setting. By extension, engaging the emotions of the team members creates a *somatic opening* for advanced learning, understanding resistance, and a sense of purpose through generative dialogue and action on how they have historically coordinated and mobilized and to imagine future possibilities.

Generativity, crucial to adult development, is a constructionist concept (Gergen, 1978, 1982) that creates new sources of meanings and actions. Taking a generative approach in a team creates a somatic opening for the team to challenge its status quo and open the door to a new somatic shape with intentional, supportive practices and accountability (Myers, 2015). Teams

using generative practices create an organizational culture of ongoing and continuous learning of the self and of the self in connection with others. The more connection, the deeper and more meaningful relationships and trust are among team members.

A team is the byproduct of the collective somas with each individual bringing to the table their individual experiences. A body stores memories and produces *armor* in the form of unconscious muscular contractions (van der Kolk, 1994), which can manifest as minimizing one's voice in the team, not listening, or being creative or disruptive, for example. Attention and awareness to the life in one's soma increases the capacity to live more authentically, step into one's potential, and create an identity of being an exemplary leader.

The body, which is the integrated mind–body–spirit, is the unified space in which humans act, perceive, think, feel, sense, express emotions and moods (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014) in a unified space in which the individual reacts, responds to, or contributes to the team soma. By extension, the embodied team practices and automatic responses either produce a desired or an undesired organizational culture. A precipitative event or overwhelming dissatisfaction with organizational performance produces a fork in the road for the organizational leadership: continue with the status quo or move toward a generative practice of leadership, which itself can be disorienting in letting go and taking on a new shape, or soma, that is more vibrant and connected.

Disorienting dilemmas and conscious intentions to transform (Mezirow, 2000) are two of the principles of transformation that can potentially increase awareness of the team soma. Is what is being created today sustainable for those who will come after? A team that continues with a status quo of mistrust, lack of commitment to the collective purpose, and competing personal agendas produces a different future than a team declaring a different future and committing to generative practices that reignite the organization's soma.

Haines (1999) theorized that the somatic process for transformation includes three components: awareness, deconstruction, and learning new practices. This three-step process can release and heal the symptoms of somatic armor, such as emotional numbness; avoidance; irritability; difficulty focusing; lower levels of activity (Leitch, Vanslyke, & Allen, 2009); disassociation and distancing in relationships; loss of appetite, sleep, and energy levels; and depressed moods (Tylee & Gandhi, 2005). Haines (1999) theorized that transformative changes in the body occur through relevant practices, an important distinction fulfilling the potential of life (Myers, 2015).

An integral framework is needed to support an organization through the transformative somatic change and help the organization hold its commitment to the desired transformation. An outcome of a somatic organization transformation is increased capacity for the organization to be a container for participants to feel deeply and sense themselves as they engage in commitments, participate in rigorous debate, and extend offers and requests. Somatically alive leaders and executives increase trust, build connection, and foster relationships that appropriately support and challenge team members. The opening for somatic shifts requires a deconstruction of what no longer adds value, what no longer works, and the organization and intentional design of new practices that will increase energy toward a new organizational somatic shape. Such a somatic deconstruction and reconstruction can be disruptive, unfamiliar, and chaotic and requires the participants to increase attention and volition, as well as their level of commitment to and engagement with the new collective shape.

Organizations that consciously shift embodied practices and conditioned tendencies that have created an unhealthy culture that contracted innovation and increased mistrust toward a somatically aware culture and way of being are on the path to sustainable embodiment of somatic practices. Such practices include listening rather than being listened to and increased access to

inner wisdom because participants are not behind or in front of the wisdom; rather, they are with it in the moment (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014).

Intentional organizational somatic development is a major transformation because it requires a disengagement with or letting go of the organization's historical self so that an opening occurs in which the leaders can construct the new organizational shape, followed by embodiment of different practices that will sustain the life of the organization. The start for organization transformation is awareness of what we already embody and then use our imagination to envision the future and commit to intentional practices to strategically create a somatic organization shape that is life-giving and sustainable. Using a trained somatic change catalyst coach with organizational skills can help with setting the framework, understanding the journey, and appropriately challenging the group and its members.

Part 4: Transforming Adversarial Interactions into Constructive Conflict Engagement

Tzofnat Peleg-Baker, Ph.D. (ABD)

A conflict happens when there are incompatibilities or perceived incompatibilities in needs, goals, interests, resources or views by at least two parties (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Pruitt & Kugler, 2014; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011). It emerges within the broader context of human relationships, which are complex, continuously changing and evolving (Lederach, 2003). Thus, conflict and change are inseparable and interdependent aspects of human life.

While a conflict is a daily event, it can be painful and draining; an interruption within the *natural*, ongoing relationships. When conflicts surface, we stop and feel as if something is not right. There is confusion along with a flood of negative feelings from uneasiness and worry, through distress, anxiety to horror and fear, contingent upon the magnitude of the conflict and how important the relationship in which the conflict arises. The relationship becomes complicated, and not as flowing as it was. Growing energy is invested in trying to figure out what happened and its implications. The invisible starts attracting our attention. As communication becomes increasingly challenging, so is our ability to express how we feel and what we think, and to understand what others think and do.

Similar to a traumatic event that involves physical, emotional, and psychological instability and distress, conflicts affect our physical well-being, self-esteem, emotional stability, capacity to perceive accurately, and spiritual integrity (Lederach, 2003). A conflict is often perceived and experienced as a threat to a person's self-esteem and identity, and stability in the world. When people encounter opposing views, they typically cling to their beliefs (Cohen et. al., 2000). Since beliefs represent valued sources of identity, people are reluctant to give up on them even when confronted with strong contradictory evidence. When beliefs are challenged, there is a perceived threat to one's identity. As long as there is no end in sight, there is a growing sense of uncertainty and disorientation. People enter a *liminal space* – an in-between zone characterized by tension, ambiguity and not-knowing. In this transitional stage the relations are no longer the way they used to be, and their next form is yet to be created, and unknown. However, it is an opportunity for improving relation and growth.

A problem-solving approach to conflict focuses on the immediate issues or problems the parties are presently dealing with and the content of the conflict. However, conflict transformation is a way of looking at conflict. It provides a set of lenses through which we can make sense of a conflict as a pattern of relationships within a social context. Lederach (2003) refers to these as progressive lenses in which each lens brings a specific aspect of a complex reality into focus, but

within a single frame. By shifting lenses, we can look at immediate solutions, the deeper level of the relational patterns along with ways to maximize long-term personal and relational growth.

The idea that challenging life situations can lead people to meaningful change is ancient and prevalent. Hidden possibilities for growth from experiencing pain and suffering is central in philosophy, religious thinking, and social science. What is fairly recent is the intentional and systematic study of this phenomenon by scholars in the arenas of psychology, counseling, psychiatry, conflict, and others. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) identified positive psychological changes that can happen ensuing a potentially traumatic event as *posttraumatic growth*: improved relationships with others, openness to new possibilities, greater appreciation of life, enhanced personal strength, and spiritual development. Similarly, Lederach (2003) sees conflict as an opportunity for growth at physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. It calls for a deliberate intervention to gain from the disruption and the enormous energy accompanying conflict. The energy can be channeled to positive change through reassessing our perspective, relationships, and the social situation.

Based on Lederach's (2003) personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions of change, I propose a framework to think about and practice conflict transformation- an intentional intervention to maximize cooperation through recognizing and changing the relational roots of the conflict. When focusing on the following dimensions, it is important to also bear in mind three considerations: short and long term goals, and improving awareness to underlying issues and skills. Acquiring skills, as attentive listening, asking questions, suspension of opinions, and challenging assumptions, are inseparable from changes in perspective.

Personal – reflects the need to increase mindfulness to our perspective of conflict. If we are able to see the hidden benefits of conflict, we can embrace a positive outlook toward it. Transforming conflict is contingent upon envisioning conflict as having the potential for change.

Relational – transformation indicates revisiting how we position each other in the relationships, and how we view the other, the relation, and ourselves within the relation. Probing into the nature of our connections--how we use and share power, and compare existing relational patterns to what we aspire to have can support change. Concurrently, it is as important to increase awareness, not only to our relational mode, but also to what impedes healthy connections. Therefore, understanding biases and psychological defenses to reject those who seem opposite to our way of thinking, is critical. These propensities are inseparable parts of human interactions and conflicts, and pose a severe threat to cooperation.

Structural – calls attention to how social structures, organizational processes, and procedures shape human interaction. The ways organizations are built govern how much accessibility people have to resources and decision-making, how they feel and interact, whether they experience negative or positive emotions, and whether interactions become destructive or constructive. Galtung (1969) has long emphasized the role environment plays in fostering adversarial interactions and destructive conflicts, and similarly, Burton (1984; 1996) views the environment as a critical factor in determining whether and how basic needs are fulfilled. Transformation refers to understanding existing social contexts and underlying conditions that generate destructive conflict. And at the same time, calls for intentional efforts to construct social environments that nurture a relational perspective to reduce adversarial interaction through meeting basic human needs and maximizing participation in decision making.

Cultural - denotes the ways that conflict changes cultural patterns of an organization as well as the ways shared culture affects the understanding and response to conflict. Transformation seeks to increase awareness to these patterns, and improve cultural resources for constructively addressing conflict.

This framework focuses on the social context and relationship in which conflicts emerge and develop. Since conflicts can become quite complex, this scaffold can support in developing a purpose and direction for conflict transformation. It provides practical guidance as to where we are heading, what social bonds we are hoping to construct and for what purpose. Without it, especially in the case of intractable conflict, we can easily focus on immediate problems, and lack a clear long-term meaningful purpose. Likewise, if we leave out the underlying sources of the conflict, we will not be able to generate the necessary foundations for compassionate and respectful connections, as well as sustainable social spaces conducive to learning and growth.

Part 5: Transforming the Trauma of Wrongful Conviction

Zieva Dauber Konvisser, Ph.D.

Transformative Learning Theory describes a “disorienting dilemma” as an experience within which a current understanding is found to be insufficient or incorrect and the learner struggles with the resulting conflict of views. Such experiences are sometimes described as creating a state of “disequilibrium” for the learner and often are those to which learners point as the beginning of the process of questioning their understanding and views and entering the transformative learning process (Mezirow, 1991).

Traumatic life events are “disorienting dilemmas” that can shatter our fundamental assumptions about ourselves and our world. In the aftermath of extreme experiences, coping involves the arduous task of reconstructing our world to incorporate the traumatic experience (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), as survivors “struggle with assimilating the new and often frightening worldview with the old and familiar one, and...integrating the newfound fragile sense of self with the relatively secure one of the past” (Berger, 2004, p. 237). In this struggle to transform and transcend their traumatic experiences, they may experience positive psychological changes, i.e., the phenomenon of posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi, Park & Calhoun, 1998) that often coexists with ongoing personal distress (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

The trauma of wrongful conviction has been compared to the trauma suffered by torture survivors, concentration camp survivors, refugees, and asylees who similarly have been arrested, wrongfully incarcerated, and released back into society (Konvisser, 2015, pp. 306-307). Their experiences may also be likened to the “moral injury” experienced by returning veterans of war, i.e., trauma to their spirit, values, or deeply held beliefs and expectations (Buechner & Jinkerson, 2016). They are all survivors of “sustained catastrophes” that extend over long periods and can change their lives – and the lives of their loved ones – forever.

When innocent persons are suddenly wrongfully arrested, convicted, and incarcerated for a crime they did not commit, they describe their experiences as “surreal” and their feelings as devastation, shock, horror, and terror as they were vilified and harassed by members of the criminal justice system. For them, prison is a culture shock – a strange, new world with its own rules and language – and a process designed to destroy their self-esteem and sense of who they are (Konvisser, 2015, pp. 317-321). Later, when they are exonerated, their release is usually abrupt and without any time for pre-release programs; nor are they generally qualified or appropriate for the post-release systems and transition programs that are in place for parolees. They therefore re-enter society without the support that is needed to re-establish a sense of independence and control over their lives that were taken away from them while imprisoned. Like others in unplanned states of transition, they are thrown into *liminal space* – a place of uncertainty, waiting, and not knowing where and how to belong – no longer knowing their purpose, worthiness, and identity.

The traumas and dissonance that exonerees have experienced compel some of them to seek out opportunities to further understand and overcome those experiences. Having been raised with a belief and faith in a safe world and just society, then having been violated by the justice system, all exonerees understand its flaws and some wish to take action to remediate the injustices they have suffered, as well as find meaning in their experiences (see Konvisser, 2012). The existence of the “innocence movement” (Innocence Project, n.d; Innocence Network, n.d.) that helped many to be exonerated in the first place creates safe space for their personal growth, as well as collective avenues to channel their energies to correct injustices in the system through organized activism. In the process, these victims of the criminal justice system grow organically into effective new leaders and advocates for criminal justice reform (Konvisser, 2012; Weigand, 2008).

The author’s study with women exonerees (Konvisser, 2012, 2015) identified a variety of techniques they used to make sense of what happened and to cope with the untenable reality of their wrongful conviction and exoneration experiences. Some do this by continuing to work on their restitution; helping other prisoners they left behind or who have been released (both the rightfully and the wrongfully convicted); and supporting those currently going through the wrongful conviction process. Others speak publicly about their cases to educate and raise public awareness, which also can help them normalize the trauma and build confidence through acknowledgment and affirmation (Konvisser, 2015, pp. 358-360). While such speaking engagements can be healing for some exonerees, they also can be triggers of PTSD symptoms for others, especially when speaking to a legal audience or with the media (Weigand, 2008, p. 256). Nevertheless, many exonerees understand that it is important “to share such stories to help others who might encounter wrongful convictions and so that society learns as much as possible from these events” (Weigand, 2008, p. 257). By doing so, they give testimony to their resilience, “if only to reduce the likelihood that it would happen to someone else” (Vollen, 2005, p. 7).

In a second study with exonerees and innocence organization personnel engaged in innocence policy reform (Konvisser, in press), exonerees describe their participation in the innocence movement as individuals, as consultants to and speakers for innocence organizations, and as founders of or participants in related organizations. Although not all exonerees are able to participate and advocate to correct the injustices that they and others have suffered, the actions of those who are able to do so has the power to transform the innocence movement, and possibly the criminal justice system, as well as themselves, and holds potential lessons for building a more inclusive society, which lies at the heart of America’s constitutional values.

These survivors of wrongful conviction, like other survivors of seemingly hopeless situations facing a fate that cannot be changed, “discover for themselves that the meaning does not lie in the disaster, but in the way they respond to the disaster” (Konvisser, 2014, pp. 266-267) and “that healing doesn’t mean the damage never existed; it means the damage no longer controls their lives” (Konvisser, 2015, p. 348). They have learned to *live next to* their feelings of grief, pain, and helplessness, overcoming suffering, growing, and moving forward to hope and healing.

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Dancing at the Crossroads: Recollections and Reflections on Jack Mezirow's Early Work

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Abstract: Four people who worked with Jack Mezirow in the 1970s return to re-engage with the concerns and preoccupations of the time. We re-collect Jack's interests in making theory and his always present concern for social change. The paper captures the personal Jack and the academic Mezirow and the ways that research and scholarship never quite escape the interests of the researcher. Though dancing was certainly not an activity one would associate with him, his open mind and eclectic scholarship—which we re-interpret as transdisciplinarity—is the form of dancing with which we associate him.

Introduction

Crossroads are complex and ambiguous as they imply that one has arrived and is also ready for departure. The four people of this symposium are at imaginary crossroads, having journeyed on paths from the 1970s that include knowing Jack Mezirow as he developed his vision of transformative learning. As pictured by Matisse in *Dance*, we celebrate our experiences of research and learning, refreshed by the swirling movement that will carry the dancers into further and future adventures of transformation. We are reminded of Toni Morrison's words accepting the 1996 Distinguished Contribution to American Letters Award where she spoke of the "dance of the open mind" and the importance of "experiencing one's own mind dancing with another's" (Morrison, 1996). Our experiences, recollected and shared, are that Jack engaged in the dance of the open mind. In that same spirit we approach this symposium.

The members of the symposium at slightly different times were Jack's students at Teachers College and/or researchers who all became in various ways colleagues and sometimes friends. This privilege was not ours alone. Many more enjoyed this experience, but few can recall the beginnings of the research and how the theory emerged. We tell two kinds of stories. There are those that locate his thinking in a set of experiences of adult education and community development, in a serious critique he made of the state of the field. The absence of theoretical grounding for adult learning and adult education drove his quest for theory, informed by his wide reading of many, such as Dewey, Tough, Knowles, Freire, Blumer, Kelly, Glaser and Strauss, Habermas and many more. This was partnered by a lifelong pursuit of his interest in social justice and social change—often not clearly evident in how the debates progressed over the subsequent decades.

Other stories are personal and some are told in this symposium. They are equally revealing of his ways of being Jack, a reluctant dancer (as Elizabeth recounts), a man private with his

personal life and thoughts, always and hugely supportive of students, colleagues and friends but restless and occasionally abrasive when he thought something important was at stake.

Our main task is to recollect with intent. Our reflections are about capturing the genesis of ideas that have had a significant impact on theory and practice. The original motivations for transformation theory reveal important work done but not yet completed. In particular, we underscore that, for Mezirow, transformative education *is* about social change. These papers recollect with the intention of continuing to develop a theory that is living and dynamic—its potential yet unrealized.

The Rest of the Story: Mezirow's Early Search for Theory and Social Change

Amy D. Rose

While most discussions begin with Mezirow's 1978 article in *Adult Education* (1978b), for this paper I am using it as an end point. My intent here is to introduce the various strands of thought that are closely linked to the development of transformative learning. In particular, I examine Mezirow's writings and thoughts on community development, qualitative research, evaluation, and theory development. The story of the generation of Mezirow's ideas about transformative learning, or as it was then called perspective transformation, is well known. This narrative, as presented by Mezirow in his first paper, was that "a friend" experienced a marked transformation after returning to college as an adult. This story was later expanded to include the information that the friend was his wife, Edee, who returned as an adult to Sarah Lawrence College's program for adult women. Based on this experience, Mezirow submitted a grant proposal to study women's re-entry programs in community colleges. The proposal was funded and the project initiated in 1975. This narrative is true as far as it goes. However, what it leaves out is the body of work and thought that Mezirow brought to his initial view of transformative learning or perspective transformation.

First I need to introduce myself. I met Jack Mezirow when I started to work for him in 1975. My background was in history and I had just finished a master's in medieval history. After starting the adult education master's program, I was invited to become a research assistant and full-time graduate student in adult education. After I completed my master's I became the project manager. However, in searching for a dissertation topic I returned to my first love, history, much to Jack's consternation.

The women's project was not a study of perspective transformation. It was an evaluation project. Jack's work on perspective transformation emerged from cherry-picked data that had been collected for different reasons. The first publication coming out of the project was an evaluation guide (Mezirow & Rose, 1978). This guide was to be disseminated to re-entry programs around the country as a way of beginning their own evaluation processes. The second publication was a monograph that laid out Mezirow's (1978a) theory of perspective transformation.

I will attempt to establish the ways that Mezirow drew on his previous work as he developed and refined his ideas about transformation. This is important, not only because it provides some much needed background, but also because it allows us to better understand both the political and subversive aspects of Mezirow's work. Both of these have gotten lost over the years.

Formative Strands

In this section, I briefly lay out the basic strands of Mezirow's early views. Furthermore, I understand that Mezirow himself departed from his beginnings. However, I still think it is important to situate his early thinking more accurately than has been done previously.

Community Development

For much of his early career, Mezirow was involved in community development in the US and abroad. That part of his career, particularly his work in Pakistan, serves as the backdrop for his later thinking. In particular, he developed his focus on perspective as part of this work. He saw aid workers come into a country and pay little attention to the needs of the people being served. Writing about this upon his return, he complained about the administrative obstacles, the lack of attention to the culture of Pakistan and the cavalier way that village inhabitants were disregarded through the same top-down approach. In effect, Mezirow saw community development as the antithesis of modernization theory that permeated development work. He labeled his view of community development as "growth perspective" (1963, p. 86).

Theory-Building

Before beginning his doctoral work in adult education, Mezirow had studied the Foundations of Education at the University of Minnesota. In his early work, he was concerned with the lack of theory in adult education. Although he came from a Foundations background he criticized the fact that adult educators limited their premises to social philosophy instead of theorizing more deeply. He wrote:

Theorizing has been almost entirely limited to social philosophy given largely to refining differences in emphasis between those contending major focus should be placed either upon educational processes involved in group interaction and community development or on more orthodox forms of teaching adults about the culture with emphasis on liberal arts and the humanities. The continuing dialogue has contributed little toward improving the quality of professional activity. This chapter suggests a rationale and strategy for the systematic development of an integrated body of inductively formulated generalizations with which adult educators can understand and predict behavior of adults in educational situations. What is proposed is research-based qualitative theory, indigenous to adult education and capable of indicating dependable and practical guidelines for policy and program decision making. (1969, p. 3)

There are several points to note here. The first is his desire to develop an inductively generated theory of adult education. Also important is his view that much of what is written is unusable. He is particularly concerned with the lack of a rigorous methodology. At this early stage, Mezirow draws on his work from Pakistan to emphasize the importance of understanding the perspectives of all participants in the development of theory. Thus his call for theory was embedded in his recognition of the importance of qualitative research and in particular the work of Glaser and Strauss and their development of grounded theory.

Qualitative Research

For Mezirow, research methods and the subsequent generation of theory were at the heart of understanding adult education. Both in his early thinking, and in the ways that developed his ideas about perspective transformation, he was committed to understanding phenomena through close and immersive study (at least in theory, the actual practice was something else). There were several aspects to Mezirow's thinking about qualitative research. Initially, he relied heavily on Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism and the ways that individuals interpret and then restructure meaning. In that view, we can't understand behavior without first analyzing the meaning that individuals attach to their own situations and social relations. Building on his understanding of

Blumer, Mezirow advocated the use of grounded theory as a way of gathering information and theorizing. In particular, Mezirow emphasized the importance of individual perspective.

Mezirow was drawn to grounded theory because of its implicit connection to predictive research. In his view, research needed ultimately to be predictive if it was to be useful in the real world. This insistence created a tension in his work that was ultimately resolved by turning solely to theory building.

Evaluation

Mezirow used his newly gained insights on research in his study of Adult Basic Education programs by pioneering a qualitative approach to evaluation that he called Perspective Discrepancy Assessment. This meant examining the perspectives of all stakeholders and looking for the gaps between their expectations and their views about what was really happening. Analysis of these gaps could lead to insights about program issues and in particular, policy failures. He worried that the top-down evaluation models lost the voices of participants and those working in programs. This approach was utilized to great effect in *Last Gamble on Education* (Mezirow, Darkenwald & Knox, 1975), which actually resulted in national policy changes.

Conclusions

This brief explication of some broad strands from Mezirow's early work is aimed at providing a framework for understanding both the women's study and Mezirow's early work on perspective transformation. The first is that everything he did was premised on his ideas about social change. Mezirow was committed to social change and saw education and his ideas about perspective as central to this change. Additionally, by looking at this early work, we are struck by his insistence on going beyond behavior and looking at intent. He was adamant that education involved understanding individual perspectives. This does not necessarily negate the critique that Mezirow relied too heavily on the cognitive. It does, however, introduce new pieces to the puzzle—that deserve further exploration.

Dancing to Different “Women’s-Re-Entry-Study” Tunes

Victoria J. Marsick

In this paper as well as in a previous reflection (Marsick, 2015), I dance with Mezirow's theorizing about Perspective Transformation (PT) based on re-view of four research memos—discovered in the late Mezirow's papers—that I had written as doctoral student and Research Assistant. I was struck by how my memos pointed to Honneth's later recognition theory (Fleming, 2014). Each memo examined, respectively: goals, processes, blocking conditions, and the Women's Movement—vis-à-vis building self-confidence in the Northern California programs studied. I became curious about Mezirow's choices as he theorized PT vs. mine as I explored programmatic self-confidence building and social support. Our respective interests influenced the melodies we each “heard” and how our theorizing choreography unfolded. Jack was my mentor; over time he and his wife, Edee, became dear friends. I met them while working with World Education, a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to participatory development, literacy, and women's and girls' education. I helped identify and support projects in Southeast Asia; built relationships with national counterparts; and assisted, and learned from, Mezirow and other project consultants.

Guided by Mezirow's thinking, I eventually enrolled for a Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) to study with professors Jack admired while teaching at UCB Extension. I gathered and analyzed observational and interview data from California community

colleges in the women's study, while learning grounded theory with Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser. Eventually, I joined Mezirow, Brookfield, Kasl and others as Teachers College faculty, and enjoyed watching Mezirow think in action as he developed his views on Transformative Learning.

Women's Movement: Context and Nuance

As Rose emphasizes in her paper, “the primary thrust” of the Women's Re-Entry study was to “promote the replication of successful programs and contribute guidelines for program evaluation” (Mezirow, 1978a, p. 1). Mezirow, however, emphasized Perspective Transformation (PT), even though interviews did not focus on life histories of women as did a later study of students returning to higher education in Europe (Fleming & Finnegan, 2014).

Mezirow (1978a) described “the feeling of discontent”—that Betty Friedan's “problem without a name” had identified—as key, “apart from the re-entry experience” to “exposure to the rapidly changing social norms” that affected women in the study (p. 7). Programs had embedded “consciousness raising, for many the heart of the women's movement” as central to examining assumptions and “becoming aware of hitherto unquestioned cultural myths (often internalized and reinforced by women themselves)” in finding “a new identity within a new meaning perspective entailing greater autonomy, enhanced personal control, and a sense of responsibility for their own lives.” Mezirow continued: While “re-entry programs seldom use the term ‘consciousness raising’ There is little doubt . . . that this is seen as their central educational mission and that their effectiveness goes far beyond that of the usual consciousness raising group” (Mezirow, 1978a, p. 8).

Mezirow was critiqued for inadequately contextualizing his theorizing of PT within the women's movement and consciousness raising. His emphasis seen above—and my personal recollection of conversations over the course of the study—suggest he did not ignore context, but perhaps took for granted that readers would understand the historical setting and socio-cultural milieu, and hence did not further elaborate.

However, re-reading my memos, I am puzzled at Mezirow's strong portrayal of programs as embracing consciousness raising in curricula. My memos suggest greater nuance, at least in California. For example, I wrote that it was “difficult to tell whether or not, and to what extent, this c.r. [consciousness raising] enters into building of self-concept since often c.r. relates to *group* goals of women's movement and not to individual growth *per se* [original emphasis] unless this happens to coincide with group growth.” I also cited evidence that there were “mixed feelings by directors of programs, but [they] generally shy away from calling classes c.r. *per se* [original emphasis].” One Director “said classes were ‘sort of’ like c.r.” However, “[a different Director] contradicts this in agreeing with me that ‘too much of this Lib stuff was threatening’.” Yet another Director “said she stays away from the things [a women's program] does in order to consciousness-raise about the role of women or otherwise hook into ‘liberation things’ because it is ‘dangerous’ and women are threatened by these concepts.” At another College, I noted that a “director believes program is ‘beyond consciousness raising’ in that it moves instead to transferring heightened awareness into skills to use in jobs, careers and community.” These examples show wide variation in embrace of consciousness raising.

Some staff based in Women's Studies (W.S.) saw consciousness raising as “definitely a political tool,” but overt identification with Women's Liberation varied. Teachers adjusted program stance to their own or local women's norms: “Not that we're radical feminists, or anything, but we felt we should make our presence known” as when teachers “organized ‘Alice Doesn't Day.’” There was disagreement about women's roles, e.g., arguments by women staff

about “calling women ‘girls’” or references to “women who still enjoy baking and cooking.” Programs also differentiated curriculum and focus for race or class, e.g., “black women at [a different college] were more tuned into black identity than women’s movement.” I concluded that “c.r. might be more apt to work in the W.S. programs than in the re-entry programs where women’s movement is not primary reason for the women’s return to school.”

Links to Self-Confidence Building

There was “evidence that some directors...consider one important goal of the program to be the building of self-confidence” which was “defined variously in terms of a generalized ability to direct lives, and specific abilities to cope successfully with...the college experience.” I saw the program logic as follows:

self-confidence relates to building of self-concept...in that it provides a minimum level of acceptance—by others and by the self; so that person can take risks and make decisions by self, & get feedback through the program,...the wider environment of the college, the family with whom living (while changing) and the broader working community and living community. The feedback can be handled safely, in a supportive environment..., so that the woman can then either lose or gain ground in the specific situation without being shattered.... Self-confidence for its own sake is not the real goal; but understanding of self so that woman can reach out intelligently for those things in life that will be good for her and are realistic.

Women’s issues were interpreted by educators to help women learn:

Different teachers handle women’s issues differently, but all are selected for their sensitivity to women’s perspective [whether men or women].... Effect of bringing out women’s point of view is to 1) make it safe for women to bring in their own experience, and not feel as if this is irrelevant; 2) aid in opening up life boundaries of women to wider issues of women in America and world; 3) at times, politicize women in becoming aware of their 2nd class citizenship in America.

Thus, programs trod lightly on what women *should* be, and instead helped women find what were uniquely their strengths—even though they sometimes did “replace old tapes” with temporary “group identity” as a transition from old to new identities.

Conclusion

Mezirow was influenced by his wife’s experience and his own intellectual interests, e.g., Dewey, Freire, community development, adult learning—as other papers here suggest. I was influenced by my stage of personal and academic life. We danced at the intersections of Women’s Re-entry Programs to different tunes. The 1978 report was choreographed, though it includes different melodies and dance steps— PT (2 chapters), program support/confidence building (2 chapters), as well as the funder’s purpose of program dynamics (4 chapters). My own gendered dance and life experience led me to focus on collaborative program micro-cultures supporting transition and the push for shift in collectively-held norms and practices. Mezirow focused on individuals directing their own lives for many reasons, perhaps including life circumstances growing up male to the music of mid-West rugged individualism. With roots in social action, Mezirow admired individuals who stood up for change. The newspaper picture in Tiananmen Square of a single Chinese man confronting a tank had pride of place on his office door—reflecting perhaps a key melodic theme he heard and developed through his work.

Dancing with Jack

Elizabeth Kasl

In introducing the first comprehensive description of his theory about the transformative dimensions of adult learning, Jack Mezirow (1991) explains his intention:

...There is need for a learning theory that can explain how adult learners make sense or meaning of their experiences, the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meanings, and the way the structures of meanings themselves undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional. These understandings must be explained in the context of adult development and social goals. A learning theory centered on meaning, addressed to educators of adults, could provide a firm foundation for a philosophy of adult education from which appropriate practices...could be derived. (p. xii)

Jack's desire to create "a learning theory centered on meaning" as a foundation for educational practice was taking shape in the decades preceding his 1991 book. I had the opportunity to be present. My personal relationship with Jack began in 1969 when I was a new doctoral student at Columbia University's Teachers College. Jack was my academic advisor and teacher.

In the mid-1970s, Jack created a seminar he called "How Adults Learn." Only six of us signed up, so we were privileged to engage in lively conversations. These covered an eclectic range of topics that attracted Jack's curiosity. In retrospect, our class was a cauldron in which perspective transformation was cooking. During the 1976 Adult Education Association meeting, I attended a panel of scholars talking about the state of the field. Jack spoke about the need for a theory of adult learning, using many ideas explored in our seminar. When he finished, there was immediate and sustained applause. I remember feeling surprised, "I haven't seen people clap with such enthusiasm after an academic paper."

Context for Theory Development

Mezirow's assessment about adult educators' need for a learning theory that explains meaning making is situated in the context of the 1970s. Three factors, which I have explored more fully elsewhere (Kasl, 2015), are especially relevant.

New fields of scholarship about adult development were emerging as psychologists became aware that development continued after adolescence. Of particular interest to Mezirow were the constructivists who studied meaning making—the epistemological developmentalists who followed the lead of William Perry (1970) and the psychosocial stage theorists, especially psychoanalyst Roger Gould (1972), with whom Jack studied during a sabbatical.

Since they were concerned with meaning making, developmental theorists pioneered innovative methods for analyzing interview data, countering the dominant psychological research practices that relied on hypothesis-testing designs and statistical methodologies. Similar protocols dominated adult education research. As an early advocate for qualitative inquiry in adult education, Jack dismissed statistical approaches with a shrug, "You don't find out anything worth knowing."

Another important contextual component was the content of adult education discourse. Two dominant topics—motivation to participate, and self-directed learning—were initiated by interview studies (Houle, 1961; Tough, 1971), but quickly redirected to large statistical projects. A third dominant topic was andragogy, energized by Malcolm Knowles with the 1970 publication of *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy vs. Pedagogy*.

Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning

Thus, Mezirow's professional context was saturated with discourse about participation statistics, frequency of self-directed learning, and the efficacy of educational program practices based on assumptions about uniquely adult needs. Mezirow considered this situation, found it wanting, and conceptualized an inquiry about adult learning that not only guided him for decades, but also changed the discourse in our field.

In addition to Mezirow's quest to understand meaning making, he valued knowledge from multiple sources:

A disturbing fault line separates theories of adult learning from the practice of those who try to help adults learn. Psychologists interested in adult learning often find themselves trapped within the framework of particular theories and paradigms.... Philosophers, linguists, sociologists, and political scientists also have legitimate interests in adult learning, but each group has a different frame of reference and a different vocabulary.... Few efforts have been made to develop a synthesis of the different theories that educators of adults can use. (1991, p. xi)

Jack's enterprise is his effort to develop such a synthesis. His voracious appetite for reading across a broad range of disciplines and his gift for integrating constructs from different frames of reference provide us with an adult learning theory that is transdisciplinary.

A Theory in Progress

Jack was always eager to engage in theoretical conversation. He often responded in writing to critiques of his thinking (Baumgartner, 2012), not as defense, but from desire to be actively involved in thinking with others about "how adults learn."

Jack's desire for ongoing dialogue was the driving force for creation of the transformative learning conference, which he initiated in 1998. He wanted to gather people who were interested in further development of transformation theory. He said during an early conference that he had contributed what he had to offer and now looked to others to expand and revise, so that the theory would always be "in progress."

The Man as Context for Future Directions

Any theory is the construction of its creator. Jack Mezirow gravitated most easily to the abstract thinking and rational discourse that embodies his writing and theoretical vision. But he wanted to be a continuing learner, to engage with others in thinking about adult learning and meaning making. As we think about the future of transformative learning theory and the conference that serves it, we can learn from Jack's openness to alternative perspectives that feel unfamiliar.

One of my favorite memories captures this openness. It is from an encounter Jack and I shared during the second transformative learning conference. This conference included plenary sessions that focused on one of the four ways of knowing described by John Heron (1992)—experiential, presentational, propositional, practical. The plenary representing experiential knowing used movement. Instructions were given to find a partner: Working in silence, each partner would communicate through movement a personal experience of transformative learning. In a second step, partners would mirror each other's movement. The pairs would continue mirroring until each was satisfied that the partner captured the essence of his or her transformative learning experience. Continuing in silence, partners would then create a new movement that synergized the elements of both partners' experiential knowing.

I happened to be sitting opposite Jack while the instructions were explained. I was pretty sure he would leave as soon as the activity began, so I was ready to bolt across the room to catch him. As he was slipping out the door, I stepped in front of him and smiled my invitation, “Please be my partner for the exercise.” He shook his head no, but I persisted, gently touching his shoulder. “Please. Let’s try. See what it’s like.” Ever polite, he reluctantly agreed. We worked in private out in the hallway. Both of us were uncomfortable with the activity, so our beginning efforts were awkward and shy. But something magical happened, and as we concentrated on mirroring each other, self-consciousness fell away. We created a synergized movement that ended with smiles and expressed appreciation, then walked together back into the conference space.

At the end of the weekend, I drove Jack to the airport, which was about an hour’s trip. We talked about his hopes for the future of the transformative learning conferences and about the California conference we had just experienced. He said he had learned a lot, so I asked, “What stands out for you as something you learned here?” He took a few moments to gather his thoughts and said, “People talk a lot about multiple ways of knowing. I think I have a better idea now of what they mean by that.”

In Jack’s later writing, he never demonstrated deep understanding about the transformative power of multiple ways of knowing; what I value is his realization that perspectives other than his own should be included and his effort to do so.

Dancing Minds: Mezirow and Habermas meet Honneth

Ted Fleming

From 1978 to 1980 Jack was my academic advisor at Teachers College. I researched for him a literature review of journal articles on critical theory. Later, as colleagues, we discussed the genesis of his theory, problems that had emerged and solutions. Since then I have written about the connections between Habermas and education. One question and a critique underpin this work. It involves the widely held notion that transformation theory does not include an adequate understanding of the social dimension of learning. Academic colleagues and students frequently repeat the critique that transformation theory has an overly individual oriented understanding of learning. Rather than join the critique I set about finding a ‘fix’ with generous support from Jack (Fleming, 2002).

The first step built on theoretical grounding supplied by Habermas who had a clear social dimension in his theory of communicative action. Critical reflection on assumptions is built most often on a community of rational argument. The second step was a more tentative study of Bowlby’s attachment theory as a way of understanding how frames of reference are developed in early childhood relationships of care and security. The parent-child relationship produces internal working models and meaning schemes (Fleming, 2008) that form the secure foundation for engagement with the world. The third and most recent step asked: If transformation theory is grounded in critical theory, what insights can be gleaned from recent developments in critical theory (Honneth) that may enhance transformation theory—apart from the Frankfurt School’s critique of neo-liberalism?

Context and Background: Mezirow and Habermas

Without being a critical theorist, but in order to give invaluable intellectual rigour to his work, Mezirow borrowed these ideas from Habermas:

The knowledge-generating emancipatory cognitive interest that informed the emancipatory learning of transformation theory;
Critical self-reflection modelled on the kind of critical explorations involved in Freud's psychoanalysis or Marx's critique of ideology;
The kinds of discourse described in communicative action theory that in turn—with its rules—gave transformation theory a facilitating methodology;
The understanding that distorted communication—including colonization of the lifeworld and the demise of the public sphere—best described the pathology of capitalism.

Each of these, in turn, is re-interpreted by Honneth giving the communicative turn of Habermas a recognition turn (Honneth, 1995) and, more recently, an emancipatory turn that together have reconfigured critical theory (Honneth, 2014). Axel Honneth is the successor to Habermas as Director of the Frankfurt School and Professor at Columbia University.

Crossroads: Honneth meets Habermas—And the Dance Continues

According to Honneth, the struggle for recognition is a human experience. Infants, when they express fear and anxiety, seek recognition for their feelings and a (good-enough) carer is prompted by the reciprocal dynamics of the carer-child relationship to provide reassurance. The appropriate carer's response produces in the infant a developmental prompt to grow, increase self-confidence and form an identity. The developmental struggle for recognition is not confined to infants or children but continues throughout life – a lifelong pursuit of recognition (like Bowlby's lifelong pursuit of attachment). The struggle for recognition drives social change and appropriate recognition of this struggle is a pre-condition for involvement in discussion, dialogue, critical reflection and democratic will-formation. Social justice and good parenting are connected and require each other. This suggests a new interpretation of the connection between the personal and the social (structure and agency). In this way the social and individual are inextricably linked. The political is personal.

Recognition has other domains and is also provided through laws. Communities and societies institutionalize recognition by including in laws the recognition of rights—to education, to the pursuit of happiness, to free speech, to a living wage, and especially the rights of people of color, disabled people and other minorities to equal treatment under the law. This is developmental, as individual needs are taken to a social and policy level and the deepest desires and needs of people are acknowledged.

Finally, in the realm of the economy and work through labour laws, regulations of the market place, consumer rights and trade union rights, recognition is given to the aspirations of workers and consumers.

It is not surprising that each of these three areas suggests corresponding forms of misrecognition—from child abuse and family violence, to laws that exclude, and work practices such as unemployment.

Honneth (2014) has reconfigured how critical theory understands emancipation stating that the three areas of intimate relations, laws, and work provide opportunities to realize emancipation. Freedom in any of these areas relies on its achievement in the others. This Hegelian shift gives an emancipatory turn to his work, in addition to the recognition turn.

In what ways can these successive “turns” have implications for transformation theory? The following aspects of transformation theory are re-interpreted as a result of Honneth's work. Critical reflection is best understood not as an individual oriented process but as a process requiring interpersonal recognition for its creation and realization. Indeed, the activity of critical

reflection, so often seen as an overly rational activity, is now softened as it is grounded in an interpersonal activity of recognition and respect. This is already clearly stated in both Habermas and Mezirow (2000).

New Steps: Mezirow meets Honneth about Transformation Theory

As part of the elaboration of phases in the process of transformation, disorienting dilemmas are key (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22). Now, in the light of Honneth, I suggest that the struggle for recognition is in fact a disorienting dilemma. In a recent EU funded study of adults returning to higher education it was the struggle for recognition that provided the most useful sensitizing concept in this longitudinal study informed by grounded theory (Fleming & Finnegan, 2014). The dilemma for prospective students was whether to remain in low paid, unsatisfying jobs or avail themselves of education that would give them recognition—of their intelligence and potential so often not experienced in early school years or at work.

The kinds of discourse that Mezirow suggested would support transformative learning are now not only (if they ever were) following rules of engagement but are significant moments of interpersonal solidarity and empathy (Kasl & Yorks, 2016). Empathy is both a pre-requisite for discourse and critical reflection, and an outcome. This captures Freire's assertion that "true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking" (1970, p. 80).

Identifying one's personal problem with a significant social issue (another step) can now be re-stated so that these interpersonal and social moments are dialectically connected in much the same way that Freire reconfigured such dualisms in his understanding of praxis.

Re-engagement with society on the basis of transformed meaning schemes can also be seen as infused with recognition and respect. Not only are new meaning schemes more inclusive and discriminating of experience and more open to further transformation, but they are now loaded with recognition. It would be unusual if disorienting dilemmas, which are struggles for recognition, did not result in increased ability to receive and give recognition.

The pedagogy of transformation and teaching is also now less abstract and rests not only on an ability to teach through critical analysis but see that this is grounded in respect and recognition. This may be what Maxine Greene meant when she described good teaching as being a "friend of someone else's mind." As a participant in the field of adult education that was endowed with practitioners but less so by theorists, Jack Mezirow added a clear path, agile footwork and steps for those excited by the learning of dancing minds.

Recollections and Reflections

What useful results might we highlight as a result of our recollections and reflections—apart from anticipating an interesting and thought provoking discussion at the symposium? We allude strongly to a transformative learning project that is still in process, to its incompleteness, and to potential yet to be realized.

The initial task set by Mezirow for himself and the field still remains an important starting point: a learning theory that describes how adults make meaning. In his creative and imaginative distilling of a lifetime of reading along with his own (and Edee's) life and learning experiences, he forged a living theory—giving expression to long-held interest in theory building. These ingredients of life experience and reading are strong influences not only on this theory, but also on all our work as writers, researchers and teachers. We might learn something worthwhile about our own perspectives and meaning schemes by paying attention to these aspects of our own minds, however more fascinating it may be to try exploring the minds of others.

As authors, we also want to affirm our understanding that transformation theory is deeply rooted in a view that education is for social action and social change. This was always Jack's intention, though not always clear from his published work. His explicit intent was to avoid overly individualistic notions of learning and instead to highlight the purpose of education as social change.

Many critiques of transformation theory have been made—and too often repeated—without further examining them or addressing the perceived weakness. There is always room for a re-think and Mezirow's open mind, if sometimes reluctantly, incorporated these into his thinking. One of the significant criticisms addresses the “magpie tendency” in his reading and publishing. We mean by this the eclectic gathering of ideas from many disciplines. This may have been an attempt to bolster his position with rigor, but it was also an expression of his interest in making connections with a broad range of ideas and different disciplines' frames of reference. However, if the borrowings were wide, they were also selective. He is perceived as borrowing ideas—for pragmatic reasons (for example from Habermas), without paying appropriate attention to the context of the ideas he borrowed.

We believe this “magpie” approach might be interpreted as an exercise in transdisciplinarity, although that is not a construct yet being explored when Mezirow was developing his theory. Transdisciplinarity has been described as a creative and imaginative drive to explore meta-knowing that is driven by curiosity about a question, to be answered by tapping into multiple disciplines rather than being constrained by the boundaries of one or a few (Montuori, 2005). As a result, one has a creative coalition of supporting ideas that transcends the paradigms of discipline-based inquiry. Or, as Mezirow called it, meta-learning.

Finally, we have tried to express in our dance, years of research, learning and teaching now distilled in a critical choreography that is already thoughtful but also ready to be refreshed by the swirl and movement and steps, so that the next journey along one road or another will carry the dancers into further and future adventures of transformation.

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Interrogating Transformative Processes in Learning and Education: Sustaining a Trans-Oceanic Conversation

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Abstract: The aim of this symposium is to provide participants with an opportunity for a meta- reflection on the impact, meaning, and challenges inherent in the use of transformative learning theory (TLT) from an international perspective, considering in particular the European context. It is aimed – more largely – at opening and enhancing dialogue among scholars in the Conference, who come from different continents, cultures, and traditions. Our own assumptions and worldviews shape the way we address and use TLT in our research. This conversation is therefore aimed at raising the level of critical reflection and facilitating deeper reflexivity around the way we ‘use’ TLT in order to build a good enough theory and practice of adult learning and education.

A Round-Trip: From North America to Europe and Back

This symposium gathers scholars from the ESREA (European Society for Research on the Education of Adults) new research network on “Interrogating transformative learning” to bring forward a conversation that started gaining traction in 2011 in Athens (Greece) and continued in 2013 in Berlin (Formenti & Dirks, 2014). More recently, the two first conferences – held in 2014 and 2016 in Athens – of this new network were quite illuminating about how TLT might be framed out of the context where it was born. Previous studies on the diffusion of TLT in Europe (Kokkos, 2014) and current conversations among European scholars signal an ambivalence regarding TLT, experienced as a sort of ‘disorienting dilemma’ that reveals specific frames of mind on both parts of the ocean, deserving thorough interrogation. In Europe, the recent conversations about TLT occurred at many levels. Some points for reflection: the discussion within ESREA about the title of the new Network, and its reasons; the particularities of popular education and collectivist traditions in Europe; the legacies of Plato’s *Paideia* and the German *Bildung* as models for *Formation*; and not the least, the perception of TLT as a ‘typical North American product’. At the same time, the history of the development of TLT in North America (e.g., Taylor & Cranton, 2012) displays features that may be conceived as inspiring and stimulating from a European perspective (e.g., Alhadeff-Jones, 2014).

From a European perspective, the theme of the conference “Engaging at the intersections”, resonates with the diversity and the heterogeneity that characterizes the ‘old continent’: languages, cultures, traditions, identities, etc. The ESREA Network “Interrogating transformative learning” is meant to be an agora (from the Ancient Greek ἀγορά, ἀγείρω = to gather, to meet –

and we met twice in Athens!), where people come together for commerce, debate, worship, governance, entertainment, socializing, protest and more, and alive with energy, activity, clash and chaos. But a continent also alive with struggles, wars, and denial of the other. A conference is an intersection of theories, practices, representations, and systems. It is also a meeting of real people. In our conferences, we are exploring ways to create new, creative, and inclusive spaces for dialogue and (transformative) learning. Disorienting dilemmas, the clash of frameworks, reflection and reflexivity need a good enough space to be sustained. We can explore our assumptions and the ways we engage the world, if we develop good enough conversations, i.e. by creating a collective space where we can play (in a Winnicottian sense) with TLT and related concepts in a critical, but also constructive and imaginative spirit.

The question in the Conference call “How can we be more intentional and creative in our interactions?”, for the sake of our own humanity, is a fundamental one in times when education is easily reduced to adaptation to labor markets, and commodified as a product. Any discourse of learning – be it lifelong, lifewide, transformative, reflexive, active, etc. – needs to be interrogated, and thoroughly, if the subject is constructed as highly individualistic, and complying with hegemonic cultural and social directives; or when these theories neglect collective learning, popular education, and social justice. As initially intended by Mezirow (1991), TLT carried an emancipatory aim. More recently, critical re-evaluation of this theory signaled the dangers of evacuation and reification: the former has to do with the term being used so often, and referring to different things, so as to lose any distinctive term of reference; the latter gives the term a quasi-mystical significance, beyond critical analysis.

From an international perspective, alternative understandings of what is ‘perspective transformation’ are offered, using conceptual frameworks derived from heterogeneous theories not the least to forward more explicitly emancipatory educational goals. All such views might contribute to better understanding of the complexity and stratification of learning, entailing an intersection of different dimensions: shifts in perspective, in fact, are individual as well as collective, cognitive and emotional, conscious and unconscious, social and biographical, relational, artistic, intuitive, performative, etc. The aim of the symposium is therefore to create a conversational space to interrogate TLT and question how we relate to a ‘theory in progress’ (Mezirow & Associates, 2000) in order to conceive and enrich its meanings.

Transformative Learning in the Company of Friends

Linden West

I was presenting a paper in a symposium on transformative learning, a short while ago, at a European conference in Berlin. We were asked to interrogate ideas of transformative learning, which I did through the frame of what I call auto/biographical narrative research using interdisciplinary psychosocial theoretical perspectives. We considered the relevance of transformative learning to contemporary debates about adult education in difficult, stressful times, where their purpose is too often reduced to instrumental labour market and consumerist ends. Was there something helpful in the transformative literature to enable Europeans to think more deeply and comprehensively about learning and education in late-modernity?

It was an important challenge given how educational systems, as Bourdieu starkly illuminated, remain stubbornly reproductive of the existing social order rather than facilitating transformation. (If anything it may be getting worse as a consequence of growing inequalities). If we are to use words like transformative, especially for the majority of peoples, we need serious conversations inter alia about diverse structural as well as psychological constraints, if our

preoccupations are not to degenerate into solipsistic individualism or complicity in deepening inequality.

There was certainly a buzz in Berlin about transformative learning but also anxiety that historical concerns, as in popular education, about drawing all the people into educational spaces, as part of a project to build an informed, active, questioning citizenry, have been marginalised. Of course there are educators who combine a critique of meritocratic assumptions with that of the banking model, most pre-eminently Paulo Freire. He worked among poor and marginalised people in Brazil with his radical pedagogy of the oppressed, influenced by liberation theology. Freire is at the heart of some of the discussions about transformative learning, which augurs well for those who want to construct more collective understanding of transformation and what it entails.

Notwithstanding, a distinguished colleague was unimpressed with my interest in transformative learning. ‘Changes in mind set’, ‘Mezirow’, he mused; ‘is there anything conceptually distinctive here in relation to rich European conversations about good education or really significant learning, individually or collectively?’ ‘Changes in mind-set? Is that sufficiently embodied or biographical?’ ‘How does transformative learning relate to the rich traditions of the Frankfurt School and questions as to why serious, critical thinking is difficult and constrained?’ ‘What does ‘transformative learning’ have to say about education in a neo-liberal world of growing inequalities, xenophobia, racism and fundamentalism?’ ‘What might Mezirow’s writing add to the rich historical traditions of popular education, in both North America and Europe, with authors like Raymond Williams or Edward Lindeman?’ They illuminated where resources of hope lie as part of a broader project to reinvigorate democracy itself, especially its participative dimensions.’ ‘Maybe we need new emphasis on collective struggle, over generations, to transform the social order, rather than worrying about individual mind-sets’. ‘Moreover, what of our work, Linden, on lifewide and lifelong learning, and a concept like ‘biographicity’ as the fundamental challenge we all face in late modernity; biographicity as the struggle to compose a life, and some agency, on our own terms, in the company of others, if never in conditions of our own choosing. Don’t these ideas take us into deeper relational, embodied and embedded territory?’ ‘All the talk about transformation can appear very individualistic, neo-liberal even, in a characteristically North American way’.

The conversation troubled me. I thought of how transformative learning has gained popularity in educational rhetoric. Even becoming a kind of consumerist fetish: ‘change and transform’ or you will be left behind as a dinosaur or Luddite, bringing echoes of social Darwinism and educational commodification. Transformative learning can degenerate into little more than a marketing slogan to enable educational institutions to sell their products. We are all transformative institutions now, proclaim colleges, schools, universities, or the corporate world of management training. The idea becomes all things to all people and evacuated of meaning.

The conversation with my colleague troubled me, reminding me of other challenges to the term in the educational literature (Newman, 2010). At the time I responded by saying that I join in conversations when they are interesting, with many people, in diverse academic communities, including psychoanalysis, critical theory, and even spirituality alongside transformative learning. Conversations about the prerequisites of profounder human and educational experience, which can encompass deeply disorientating dilemmas and hard fought changes in mind-set. All informed by an auto/biographical sensibility (West, 2014). Some writers in the transformative learning ‘community’ have similar concerns to mine, about for instance understanding more of the human condition and how education can appeal to and draw on our better angels. There are a number of colleagues who challenge the evacuation and the reification of the term, but continue to insist it

has utility (see Brookfield, 2000, for instance). In North America as well as Europe, there are ways of framing transformative learning as a critical element in struggles for social justice and for creating a democratic citizenry; framings giving emphasis to the social rather than the individual, or at least to their interdependence. Moreover, Mezirow was always open to learning and thoughtful about criticism, committed as he was to dialogue. He drew on a range of theoretical traditions to make his case, including critical theorists like Habermas with his notion of the ideal speech community, as part of a wider struggle for social transformation and building new forms of social solidarity.

Scholars like Brookfield have taken Mezirow's work firmly into the political and critical domain. Disorientating dilemmas can encompass, as Brookfield and Holt (2011) argue, collective, cooperative and democratic changes in mind set. The collapse of stock markets, economic depression and wars can disorientate us to the collective core and induce wider transformations of understanding; but of course they can also evoke reactionary thoughts and extreme xenophobic, even fascistic tendencies. We need to think, with others, about how and why this happens; maybe to challenge the frequent separation of mind and body, thoughts and feelings, in accounts of significant learning. They are a unit in which feeling is central to thinking, and creative responses to change are deeply dependent on our relationships and how these enable us to manage the emotional dissonance disorientation brings (West, 2016).

There are feminist scholars too, like Mary Field Belenky and Ann Stanton (2000), who challenge the neglect of gendered inequities, oppression, and power in writing about transformative processes. They note how the conditions for better and challenging forms of communication, in the spirit of Habermas, are too often understood in overly masculinist ways, with separate, competing 'rational' people in search of the most valid idea in the ideal speech community. They present an alternative, more feminist idea of connected, empathic and cooperative learners searching to make sense of why individuals think and feel as they do, perhaps in quite destructive ways. There are attempts to ground understandings of transformation in sensitivity to our relationships and how gendered, classed or colonialist assumptions can invade and poison these; and how consumerism can also poison our relationships to the planet. A breaking of collective mind sets is urgently required to appreciate the consequences of our actions – in building cities, holiday resorts or changes to landscapes, in ways that have calamitous consequences for many species, including ourselves. Shifts in mind-set can follow the profound disorientation of discovering that the loss of habitat and biodiversity risks leaving humanity itself seriously compromised. A new fruit fly may threaten crops and orchards but we could have eradicated its natural enemies, compromising our ability to fight off the invader (Wilson, 2016). Transformative learning can involve deepening, heart-felt, engaged, imaginative as well as critical changes in mind-set, which includes appreciation of systems of interdependence and of our capacity for solipsistic, mind-less destruction.

Processes of authentic transformation and serious thinking are, in these terms, elements in a larger struggle for new ways of thinking, being, seeing and interacting, encompassing body, spirit, mind and maybe soul. This can be a profoundly political project of learning to be and act in courageous, imaginative, interconnected and agentic ways. If our present world groans for more inclusive, relational, socially just, and even spiritually aware and sustainable understandings of transformative learning, there are many and diverse people who write in such terms in the transformative communities of North America and Europe. You can find many good friends in the literature.

There are other writers who have been stimulated and challenged by Mezirow taking us into quite different if related territory. John Dirkx and colleagues (2006), for instance, who focus

on the role of the emotions and the unconscious in adult learning, and of the necessity of soul work in any convincing human transformation. He writes, autobiographically, drawing on Jung, of characters in his internal world – and we need a focus on this too – who can shake our mind-sets to the core. Like the Trickster who tempts us into grandiosity or other false posturing, only to leave us exposed and feeling stupid. Trickster’s role is to make us aware of the psychological and moral work we have still to do. Like struggling towards doing what is good, right and socially just; to becoming, in the company of friends, a more agentic, thoughtful and compassionate person.

The Use of Art Within Transformative Learning

Alexis Kokkos

Introduction

Encountering works of art (aesthetic experience) is widely recognized as an educational practice that has an emancipatory potential. This argument is especially supported within the literature of transformative learning where the learning process involves a radical assessment and change of dysfunctional perspectives through critical reflection and alternative ways of knowing. This paper presents two pivotal views (Freire’s and the Frankfurt School’s) regarding this issue. Freire (1970) emphasized the way that specific stimulating factors, purposefully incorporated in sketches, may lead to a critical approach of social issues. The theorists of the School of Frankfurt, particularly Adorno (1970/1986) and Marcuse (1978), argued that the significant works of art, due to their unconventional character and the holistic quality of their structure, render themselves better to prompting insights that provoke rapture from stereotyped beliefs and the norms of the established social order. In the following paragraphs I discuss the theoretical views of Freire and the Frankfurt School regarding the use of art that aims at unearthing critical reflectivity on issues at hand. Within this framework, I focus on two aspects: First, which kind of works of art may nurture learners’ readiness for critical reflection; and secondly, how learners with various cultural backgrounds may get intellectual and emotional access to the process of exploring art towards perspective transformation.

Freire’s Holistic view

Freire (1970) aimed to facilitate oppressed learners in constructing emancipatory dispositions vis-à-vis their sociopolitical condition. To achieve this, he used sketches that portrayed situations that were relevant to the experience of the learners, in ways that could become incentives for critical analysis of social reality. Each sketch represented an aspect (sub-issue) of a major issue at hand. For example, (Freire, 1978), the major issue of ‘culture’ was composed by sub-issues like ‘human being - a creator’, ‘human relationships’, ‘ways of behavior’, ‘products of human work’, ‘culture as a result of human work’, ‘democratization of culture’, ‘fundamental democratization’, etc, and each sub-issue was represented by a relevant sketch. The context of each sketch contained multiple elements and symbols whose decoding was facilitated by the educator and performed through a critical elaboration of certain questions. For instance (ibid, pp. 130-131), the first sub-issue (‘human being - a creator’), portrayed in Figure 1, was tackled through questions like “Who creates the wells, the houses, the clothes, the tools of work?”, “Why he/she does so?”, “How?”. Furthermore, participants started exploring the aspect of relationships between genders. After grasping the meaning of the first sub-issue, learners would go on to discuss the second one (‘human relationships’), portrayed in Figure 2, through questions like “What does ‘communication’ mean?”, “How may human communication not become an object of domination?”, “What do ‘love’, ‘humility’, ‘judgment’, ‘creative spirit’ mean?”, and so

on. Insights from the exploration of each sub-issue were correlated to those that occurred from the others, with an aim to deepen learners' understanding. The facilitator would link the parts together, forming a whole. Finally, through the holistic process, the learners reconstructed their perception of the major issue.



Figure 1. Source: Freire, 1978, p.131



Figure 2. Source: Freire, 1978, p.133

It is apparent that one of Freire's criteria in choosing sketches was that their representational code might correspond to learners' schemata of conception in order for them to become familiar with it and able to decipher it. But it is worth noting that Freire was also preoccupied with the aesthetic quality of the sketches. He mentioned (*ibid*) that they were created by important painters, such as Francisco Brenand and Vicente de Abreu.

I claim in this paper that the aforementioned disposition of Freire is related to his overall interest regarding the quality of learning materials that should be offered to participants. Freire shows the same disposition regarding the good practices of aesthetic experience that he suggests to his readers. He steadily mentions works of significant creators, such as Zola (*ibid*, p.100), Pasternak (Freire, 1978, p.44), Ionesco, Villa-Lobos (Freire, 2000, pp. 50, 59). He even goes on (Shor & Freire, 1987) to make a clear distinction between being simple as an adult educator, namely empowering learners to gradually grasp the meaning of synthetic conceptualizations, and simplistic, that is to say diminishing learners by acting as if they are not able to think thoroughly.

For these reasons, it is my contention that Freire's view may be considered a pivotal theoretical framework regarding the comprehensive use of aesthetic experience in transformative education. Nonetheless, I think that in contemporary societies, where the social conditions are overly multifaceted, it is of greater significance to use – instead of ordered sketches – works of art that are not implemented to serve a preexisting educational scope, aiming to provide learners with the necessary triggers for a more open inquiry of meanings, assumptions, emotions and alternative interpretations.

The Frankfurt School

The scholars of the Frankfurt School were concerned with the liberating function of art and a critique of the instrumental, bureaucratized rationality that pervades the established order. They challenged the process through which dominant ideology serves to manipulate individual consciousness in a way that what appears to be as a commonsensical value or belief often masks

particular interests that constrain human emancipation. Within this theoretical framework the Frankfurt School theorists, most notably Adorno (1970/1986, 1969/1983), Horkheimer (1944/1972 – with Adorno) and Marcuse (1978) claimed that the works of art with high aesthetic value can contradict the ordinary, alienating norms of status quo. This may happen because the content of important works of art includes a multitude of anti-conventional aspects that are distanced from the routine ways of meaning-making. Along with this, the elements of the morphological structure of significant works of art (plots, themes, shapes, schemata, signs, images, symbols, lines, colors, shades, rhythms, sounds, gestures, expressions, metaphors, allegories, paradoxes, etc) are dialectically interconnected and in turn inseparably associated with the content, so that they altogether form a complete whole that encompasses multidimensional meanings. Therefore, artistic masterpieces acquire a holistic dimension and are capable of offering observers opportunities to experience deep and unexpected insights that are estranged from dominant meaning schemes.

But which are the works of art that the Frankfurt School scholars consider as ‘important’ or ‘significant’? Both Adorno (*ibid*) and Marcuse (*ibid*) state that the works of Baudelaire, Beckett, Brecht, Goethe, Euripides, Kafka, Proust, Rimbaud, Shakespeare, are of this nature. Adorno (*ibid*) adds references to Aeschylus, Bach, Bacon, Chopin, Dante, Debussy, El Greco, Ibsen, Klee, Mahler, Manet, Mann, Michelangelo, Mozart, Picasso, Raphael, Rembrandt, Schubert, Tolstoy, Van Gogh, Wagner, Wilde, etc.

Moreover, critical theorists had taken up the task of unveiling the role of ‘cultural industry’. They identified cultural industry as the production of artworks – particularly films, TV series and music – that are destined to be consumed by global audiences. Hence, by their nature, such works adapt themselves to an instrumental, commodified rationale and convey to receivers a standardized image of the social world. Moreover, since the products of cultural industry are designed with the purpose of entertaining a broad public they are resonant with meanings that are illuminating, simplistic and intrinsically oriented towards ‘positive results’ and ‘happy ends’. Through these mechanisms, the stated products impoverish our spirit and seduce us into assuming stereotypical attitudes and ready-made conceptual clichés. They render us more and more receptive to conformism and, in the end, towards the affirmation and consolidation of established values, perceptions and behaviors. Adorno stresses that the consumers of popular art “are encouraged to do what they are already inclined to do anyway” (1969/1983, p.52) and “are made once again into what they already are” (*ibid*, p.50).

Conclusively, the theorists of the Frankfurt School put forward criteria for selecting works of art that are capable of triggering the type of critical reflectivity that I attempted to identify in the first section of this paper. They also provided us with robust warning regarding the manipulating power of the all-pervasive cultural industry.

Furthermore, Frankfurt School scholars – probably because they formed their theory before the emergence of Bourdieu’s work (1979/1984) regarding the distinctive function of cultural capital – do not seem to take into account the challenges that some learners are likely to face concerning full access to the meaning of certain complex works of art, since they are deprived – due to their socialization – of the capability to decipher the message codes embedded in the structure of these works. Furthermore, critical theorists do not deal with the integration of their ideas into educational settings, which results in many unanswered questions regarding the tasks to be undertaken by adult educators.

The Pattern Which Connects: The Systemic View on Transformative Learning

Laura Formenti

“Break the pattern which connects the items of learning and you necessarily destroy all quality”
(Bateson, 1979, p. 8)

The image of a ‘pattern which connects’ was used by Gregory Bateson (1972, 1979) to conceptualize knowledge, learning and communication as *complex* phenomena, in an effort to question Western ‘epistemological presuppositions’ (Bateson 1972) on learning and life that produce ecological pathologies and shortcomings in education, by their linear, essentialist, and dis-connected perspectives.

This concern is still relevant, and even more urgent today, since education seems ruled by increasing dis-connection and separation instead of a sense of unity and complexity (Morin, 1999). The pressing feeling of fragmentation driven by dramatic socio-economic changes - including globalization, the increase in geographical mobility, the explosion of information, the pluralisation of life courses, the dominance of commodified lifestyles – has epistemological reasons, besides the social ones.

Socially, dis-connection is evident in the construction of material and symbolic walls between communities. The separation of disciplines and professions, of the younger and older generations, of social classes and groups, of ‘us’ and ‘them’ based on religion, ethnicity, ideology, or whatsoever, builds close communities, each creating its own understanding, language, and ways of doing. The need to define one’s own ‘field’ (a dominant metaphor of separation) nurtures defensive strategies vis-à-vis the other.

“The ‘contextuality’ of knowledge is becoming a fashionable phrase, with opinions being generated in ‘discourses’ hermetically sealed-off from each other” (Alheit, Dausien, 2000, p. 407). Epistemologically, dis-connection is rooted in dichotomy, the logical basis of Western epistemology; it is anti-ecological, in Bateson’s terms, because it destroys quality, life and meaning. In education, it reproduces discourse based on individualism, truth, and competing ideas.

The ‘knowledge society’ is built on isolated skills, individual competences, and forced adaptation to rapid change. The commodified learner is dis-connected: from others who are also learning and living in the same environment; from the natural, material and social context, and from her own body, feelings, and unconscious processes.

The systemic theory, on the contrary, defines the ‘unit of learning’ as a whole formed by *individual-and-environment* (Bateson, 1972). It also insists on ‘thinking in stories’ (Bateson, 1979), metaphors (Formenti, 2011), aesthetic epistemologies (Keeney, 1983), since complexity cannot be grasped by logical thinking alone. Seeking the ‘pattern which connects’ means to recognize interdependence and emergence as key characteristics of the living (Maturana, Varela, 1991; Varela, Thompson, Rosch, 1992).

Learning is an emergent feature of entangled levels of inter-action: within the mind/body unity, with significant and proximal others, with material objects and places, within and among organisations, and in the broader society. The biological, narrative, socio-material, embodied and embedded nature of learning as a life process should inform our theories and research (Formenti, West, Horsdal, 2014). The ‘pattern which connects’ is therefore an invitation to imagine an ecology of ideas and practices and to challenge the dominant view of learning as individual, cognitive, and cumulative; an invitation to open our ‘hermetically sealed-off’ communities and discourses to celebrate interdependence, uncertainty, and human fragility.

Who am I, Where do I come from? An Onto-epistemology of Dialogue

*A thing there is whose voice is one,
Whose feet are four and two and three.
So mutable a thing is none
That moves in earth or sky or sea.
When on most feet this thing doth go,
Its strength is weakest and its pace most slow*
(Athenaeus)

Dialogue begins with reciprocal presentations. If I do not know *who* is the other, I can only rely on *what* (I think) she is. I am Italian, a professor, a *pedagogue* (this word does not mean much in English, but my academic community relies on it to identify me), a heterosexual, married woman, mother of two, Caucasian (I was told once in the US that I am colored though, being ‘Latino’; that’s when I lost all certitude about my ethnicity). This tells nothing about who I am. To pass from the *what* to the *who*, we need stories.

Without effort or intention, any time and in every circumstance, we perceive ourselves and others as unique beings whose identity is narratable in a life-story. Each one of us knows that who we meet always has a unique story. And this is true even if we meet them for the first time without knowing their story at all (Cavarero, 2000: 33)

Conversations that are not guided by stories need to be guided by assumptions: we use our perspectives of meaning (more likely, prejudices) to frame others as Italians, academics, and women. We build universals out of details. In her book *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (2000), Cavarero critically re-examines Oedipus’ triumphant answer to the Sphinx: ‘Man!’ It will not save him from disaster, since it tells nothing about his own singular destiny. ‘Man’ is based on a universal idea: it ‘applies to everyone precisely because it is no one’ (ibid., pp. 8-9). The Italian philosopher develops an ‘ontology of reciprocal appearances’ – *Who am I for you? Who are you for me?* - where narration is the basis to ‘capture the fragile uniqueness of *who* we are’ (Jones, 2007, p.110).

How is this based on the pattern which connects? To see the ‘unity of a design’ in our life we need to meet our story in the eyes of the other. In the *Odyssey*, Ulysses cries grateful tears of meaning, recognition, love, and respect, when the blind bard Demodocus sings his life in public (Cavarero, 2000). He reveals both his identity and his deeper humanity. We need others to know who we are: contingency of birth (Formenti, 2014), incompleteness of memory, self-deception, one-sidedness of perception, and not least the dominance of unconscious processes in our functioning, are all good reasons for this.

The epistemological consequence of this ontological claim is that we discover having a perspective only when we meet otherness. Knowing, thinking, learning depends on relationships. Meeting the Other (even in ourselves) is the human way to learn how to play with the perspectives of meaning.

My Own Assumptions on Learning: Composition as a Pattern Which Connects

Bateson’s perspective on learning was based on ‘double’ or ‘multiple’ description: as in binocular vision, deepness is the outcome of intersections and juxtapositions of different views. ‘Everything said is said by an observer’ (Maturana, 1990): who is the observer of a certain ‘learning’, what are the criteria to define it as such? Besides, learning is layered in levels (at least 4 of them, following Bateson), as many other patterns in life: there will always be a ‘context’ that frames what happens and helps to give a meaning to it.

The idea of ‘composition’ (Formenti, 2008, 2011) shapes my understanding of TL (increasingly now, thanks to the ESREA network ‘Interrogating Transformative Processes in

Learning’) as a complex theory of learning. Mezirow himself drew a lot from Bateson’s work, but somehow his theory appears to me more linear and simplified. I can understand the ambivalence of some colleagues, especially when TL risks to be another commodified notion. Bateson was suspicious of what he called ‘dormitive explanations’ – ideas that are too easily used to simplify thinking. TL poses to me more wicked problems and disorienting dilemmas than solutions: an individualistic vs. relational understanding of transformation, a propositional vs. presentational/performative view of cognition, a conscious vs. embodied and unconscious process. Composition is a way to draw together these polarities, and seek their complementarity (Keeney, 1983).

**Differences in the Ways We Refer to Transformative Learning Theory:
Reflecting on Implications and Multireferentiality**
Michel Alhadeff-Jones

The cultural confrontation triggered by a European / North-American dialogue raises significant questions about the meanings of differences. Among them: how to interpret variations in the ways we relate to a theory? How to embrace the heterogeneity of points of view that participate to the descriptions of transformative processes? My contribution to this symposium is influenced by my research around the idea of complexity and the intellectual filiations it comes from. One of the original contributions of French educational theories is that, since the early 1970s, several authors (e.g., Jacques Ardoino, René Barbier, Marie-Christine Josso, Christine Lani-Bayle, René Lourau, Gaston Pineau) have integrated the idea of complexity in adult education theory, following in particular the influence of the French philosopher and anthropologist of knowledge Edgar Morin. According to a post-structuralist and complexivist position, one of their key insights relies on the fact that research and theory should not be considered as a ‘dry and cold’ process or a ‘sum of ideas’, but rather as something that ‘implicates’ us as human beings; they assume that the use of theories translates and reveals how we relate to the world and to ourselves. Moreover, the complexity of scientific research relies on the fact that theories are not only social constructs, but they must also obey specific epistemic rules. They rely on paradigms that define and legitimize how knowledge should be produced in order to establish some kind of ‘truth’ and avoid specific ‘errors’ in the scientific process (Morin, 1990/2008). Among the theoretical contributions that emerged in French speaking literature, the notions of ‘implication’ and ‘multireferentiality’ express well such a complexivist mindset. The questions they trigger reveal indeed possible differences in the way people relate to TLT, depending – among others – on their cultural background.

Why Referring to Transformative Learning Theory?

I believe that the value of TLT has to do with two main characteristics. First, despite the fact that Mezirow’s (1991) contribution has been legitimately criticized for the stress he puts on rationality, it seems to me that the rationality of his contribution, the order and coherence it provides, represent a strong attractor for researchers and practitioners who are often challenged by the multiplicity of theories and the ‘disorder’ of experiences that they are facing in their everyday life. TLT may provide them with some forms of coherence and stability that may fulfill to some extent a function of reassurance and makes us feel ‘safer’ about the ‘mess’ we are working with every day. For many scholars, what is valuable with this theory is located at its core; the nucleus of notions and the narrative that encapsulates its theoretical density. TLT provides us with a ‘critical mass’ of concepts that serves as a resource to deal with a ‘critical mess of experiences’. The main problem with such a feature appears when the apparent order of the theory becomes

reified and serves to hide the ‘disorder’ inherent to any educational praxis. The rationality of TLT becomes ‘rationalization’, a defense mechanism that serves to alleviate the anxiety raised by human concerns and relationships (Devereux, 1967). The use of TLT may therefore lead to its instrumentalization; in such a case, one of the unconscious purposes inherent to the use of TL theory becomes the reduction of the uncertainty experienced by the researcher- practitioner, rather than the formulation of new critical and challenging questions.

The second characteristic that makes this theory valuable is located far away from its core; it belongs to its periphery. As a living cell, it is characterized by a membrane that serves as a space of exchanges with its environment. The value of TLT comes thus with the permeability of its borders. It provides one with a framework that has a strong potential for establishing relationships, i.e., a capacity to be connected with heterogeneous practical, theoretical, epistemological and cultural referentials. When considering the proceedings of the 2011 TL Conference held in Athens (Greece) (Alhadeff-Jones & Kokkos, 2011), it is striking to see the diversity of contexts and domains in which this theory is used (e.g., community building, organizational learning, coaching, arts, peace, health, and environmental education, conflict resolution, spirituality, social work, etc.) At the theoretical level, the reference to TLT also brings together heterogeneous traditions of research that consider not only the cognitive, but also the embodied, emotional, spiritual, relational, aesthetic, or narrative dimensions of adult learning. At the epistemological level, TLT provides a loose framework allowing scholars to establish relevant connections between pragmatism, cognitivism, constructivism, ecology, neurosciences, psychoanalysis, complexity theory, critical theory, feminist, gender and racial theories, etc. TLT may not be a ‘revolutionary theory’, but its value may come from elsewhere: the whole body of theories and practices that literally ‘revolve’ around it, enriched by connections made at the frontiers with its own core contribution. From a complexivist perspective (Morin, 1990/2008), TLT promote to an extent relational thinking among those who refer to it (Alhadeff-Jones, 2014). However, such a feature also raises additional concerns. The main ones have to do with ‘colonization’ (Newman, 2012; Howie & Bagnall, 2013) and ‘eclecticism’ (Finger & Asún, 2001), as the articulation of TLT with other referentials may be operated uncritically.

The Concept of Implication

Studying transformative learning requires researchers to isolate phenomena, dissect them, qualify and hierarchize them, based on selective interests and the cultural and social context of scientific knowledge (Morin, 1990/2008). In educational sciences, doing so always involves human factors referring to meanings, values, behaviors and histories, which are never indifferent to the researchers who study them, maybe consciously or not (Devereux, 1967). Researchers and practitioners are therefore required to position their own contribution based on the expression of the affiliations framing one’s own beliefs, assumptions and practices. It requires one to constantly clarify the epistemological, ethical and existential issues, as they appear influenced by unconscious, emotional, cognitive, social, historical or political determinants. Lourau (1997) defined as ‘implication’ every aspect that intellectuals refuse, consciously or not, to analyze in their practice. Ardoino (1993) establishes a distinction between ‘libidinal implications’ (inherent to unconscious psychic life) and ‘institutional implications’ (inherent to the social, economic, and political status, ideology, etc.) In the United States, close to the concept of ‘institutional implications’, the notion of ‘positionality’ describes how the researcher/practitioner’s own class, ethnicity and gender influence one’s own research and educational practice (e.g., Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Taylor, Tisdell & Hanley, 2000). Considering researcher and practitioner’s implications corresponds to the heuristic intuition that it can be as much a source of knowledge than a factor of distortion (Ardoino, 2000). Questioning implications and positionality requires one to challenge

the normative dimension of research and education. Taking systematically into consideration practitioners and researchers' implications is difficult, not only because it challenges the assumption of neutrality deeply rooted in positivist epistemology, but also because it requires the development of research and pedagogical methods that valorize the practitioner's self-inquiry (Alhadeff-Jones, 2012).

Multireferentiality as a Strategy of Research

Acknowledging how much a complexivist way of doing research is embedded in the articulation between academic disciplines and theories, Ardoino's contribution around the concept of 'multireferentiality' stresses the need to identify what is constitutive of their heterogeneity: "*A multireferential approach promotes the adoption of a plural way of reading its objects (practices or theories), adopting various angles and involving as many specific looks [regards] and languages, appropriate to the required descriptions, based on distinct systems of references, acknowledged as explicitly irreducible to each other, in other words as heterogeneous.*" (Ardoino, 1993, p.15, my translation). Multireferentiality requires that researchers identify systematically the cores, boundaries, as well as the rules, logics and assumptions specific to the different disciplines, theories and concepts used to interpret transformative learning. The acknowledgment of multireferentiality is required in order to avoid the pitfalls of eclecticism associated with the incompatible mix of philosophies and epistemologies sometimes denounced in the literature on transformative learning (Finger & Asùn, 2001). Indeed, a complex method does not aim to merge, aggregate, or integrate theories in order to build unifying syntheses. It rather privileges the conception of their mutual relationships based on the recognition of their boundaries (Pagès, 2002). From a practical point of view, for instance, such a perspective invites practitioners and researchers to distinguish what is constitutive of heterogeneous realities (e.g., biological, psychic or social ones) in order to interpret their mutual relationships (Alhadeff- Jones, 2012). Exploring complexity does not only challenge disciplinary boundaries. It requires researchers and practitioners to acknowledge and understand the epistemological assumptions shaping how knowledge is created and organized among heterogeneous disciplines (Montuori, 2010) and theoretical fields.

Differences in the Ways We Deal with Differences

Based on my own academic experience and my participation to TL conferences since 2003, both in the United States and European countries, one of the key differences that appear between scholars with heterogeneous horizons has to do with how they relate to their mutual 'differences'. In the previous paragraphs, I described how referring to TLT requires one to position oneself, intellectually and as a human being, involved in the process of affecting others. It also requires one to clarify how we relate to the differences inherent to 'otherness', whether considered from an epistemic or an identity perspective. My assumption would be that the current international development of TL theory is reaching a threshold where such questions become more critical than before, especially given the risks of instrumentalization, reductionism, intellectual colonization and eclecticism among scholars and practitioners.

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Move Over, Descartes!:
Engaging the Intersection of Transformative Learning and Neuroscience

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Abstract: Cartesian dualism has finally been laid to rest by recent discoveries in neuroscience: *we feel, therefore we know*. Though Descartes questioned the utility of the body, we now acknowledge the essential role the “embodied brain” plays in construction of knowledge. In describing implications of emerging brain research on facilitation of adult learning, this symposium weaves together three theoretical threads. The first is transformative learning as described by Mezirow, in terms of discourse and critical reflection. The second examines adult learning from the perspective of brain science. Although *learning* involves *changing the brain*, many changes are informative rather than transformative. We explore characteristics of and theoretical justification for “brain aware” facilitation as more likely to encourage revising frames of reference. The third is Heron’s theoretical model and practice-based approach that integrates symbolic, nonverbal, embodied, and analogical ways of knowing and facilitates adaptive problem-solving toward greater human flourishing.

Background and Introduction

First, a caveat. Focusing on the role of the brain in learning does not mean we reduce human understanding to neural activity. Nevertheless, words commonly used to name what the brain does—*think, identify, feel, understand, imagine, decide, know, plan, distinguish, believe, remember*—describe what we experience when neural networks are activated in ever-changing patterns of connection. Thus, understanding how the brain learns—and when and why it does *not* learn—may promote more effective facilitation of transformative learning (TL).

“Learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future action” (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162). This is relevant in the context of emerging discoveries in neuroscience because it (1) frames learning as a *process* rather than merely an outcome; (2) places meaning making, which is the essence of TL, at the core of the process; (3) includes the role of prior experience and reinterpretation of that experience, which describes the brain’s constant revision of existing neural networks; (4) effectively describes the brain’s construction and reconstruction of knowledge, which are key to literally changing one’s mind. With this definition as backdrop, we examine how changes in the brain associated with TL occur.

First, we briefly describe how all learning occurs. *Learning* is the final step in a process that takes place throughout the body before we can discover that we “know” something. Most of us think about the brain in terms of conscious, reflective, self-aware, decision-making activities, but “the biological mind is, first and foremost, an organ for controlling the biological body . . . Minds are *not* disembodied logical reasoning devices” (Clark, 1997, p. 1).

Ever since Descartes declared, “I think, therefore I am,” Western philosophy—and therefore the Western cultural narrative—has focused on the disembodied mind as the source of knowing and rational action. But the brain is not just inside the skull like a walnut in a shell. It is a *body-brain*, connected with and responsive to every part of the body by extension of the peripheral nervous system. And every part of the body contributes to all the functions of brain.

Though *cognitive* focuses on knowing through perception and awareness as well as reason, hardly acknowledged—except in the “seat of cognition” sense—is how the brain achieves those outcomes. Missing is the piece that Descartes discarded, the body. Twenty years ago, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994) devoted an entire book to exploring *Descartes’ Error*.

This is Descartes’ error: the abyssal separation between body and mind . . . the suggestion that reason, and moral judgment, and the suffering that comes from physical pain or emotional upheaval might exist separately from the body.

Specifically: the separation of the most refined operations of mind from the structure and operation of a biological organism. (pp. 249-250).

In contrast to Descartes, current research finds that “we feel, therefore we know” (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). Between *perception* and *knowing* is the embodied brain busily constructing what we eventually recognize as thought—that is, meaning we are aware of and can attempt to articulate. *Learning is a whole-body experience*. “Cognition is embodied,” Kahneman (2011) states unequivocally, “you think with your body, not only your brain” (p. 51).

Learning activities that focus almost entirely on reading, writing, and speaking ignore aspects of somatic, tacit knowing that precede awareness. As Polanyi noted, “We know more than we can say” (Polanyi & Grene, 1969, p. 113). The rational, critical approach that Mezirow emphasizes as the means for clarification of meaning toward TL largely ignores the fact that “the source of cognition is not just the naked brain, but the brain in concert with the sensing, acting body . . . [as it] intervenes with the environment” (Clark, 1997, p. x).

The Embodied Brain

The early hominid brain’s operating instructions were unambiguous: fight or flee, *now!* This survival imperative still cautions us not to venture where dangers may lie lurking. The familiar is (presumed) safe; the unknown is best avoided. Though our modern brain can temper our more primitive emotions, they continue to affect our conscious and unconscious behavior. Consider the stress implicit in the *disorienting dilemma*, which can lead to “feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22). Under such circumstances, parts of the brain that can focus on discourse and rational reflection are on hold. The more fundamental the disorientation, the less likely to occur are the next phases of meaning clarification, coolly described as *critical examination*, *recognition*, and *exploration*. Though Mezirow acknowledges that “challenging one’s cherished beliefs [requires] a leap into the unknown [and thus may be] a threatening emotional experience” (p. 24), he seems not to fully grasp the enormity of the challenge. Moving from not knowing to coming to know and finally to understanding is uncomfortable at best, deeply threatening at worst.

The challenge of changing what has been previously known is inherent in the underlying process of knowing anything, at all. Though our subjective experience of thinking is something we can articulate, a thought originates in the embodied brain's activity of non-verbal analogical association. Brains link current experiences with prior understandings by analogy: *How does this new event or idea* (actually, stimulus) *connect to what I already know*? Neuroanatomically speaking: how do traces of earlier experiences, now part of countless neural networks, relate to this new stimulus?

Patterns and Metaphors

Embodiment is relevant in two ways. First, the portal between brain and world is the body's five senses; second, making sense of those sensations is a function of how we experience our body in relation to them—through analogy and metaphor. (Though grammarians may shudder, we use those terms interchangeably.) The fundamental process of learning is based on creating and elaborating networks of neural associations. Once a stimulus has passed the threshold of attention, the brain immediately categorizes it by comparing it to existing patterns; and, as neuroscientist Gerald Edelman (2006) explains, “pattern recognition involves metaphor” (p. 85).

This process begins at birth (if not earlier). “The newborn infant has only her own activity, and even the simplest act of recognition of an object can be understood only in terms of her own activity. Out of this she must construct the entire edifice of the phenomenological world . . .” by comparing each new experience (stimulus) to the “pregiven” world—that is, as it has already been experienced (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991, p. 176).

Thinking abstractly also depends on metaphor. “Our deepest and most abiding concepts—time, events, causation, morality, and mind itself—are understood and reasoned about via multiple metaphors” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 245). Because these analogical associations are the brain's primary references, everything we come to know and understand, including the most abstract concepts, originated with embodiment.

Patterns built up over a lifetime of (apparently) confirming experiences are the neural basis for what anthropologists and sociologists call *culture* or *worldview* and psychologists call *identity*, *life-scripts*, and *mental models* (Taylor & Marienau, 2016). Mezirow might call them *frames of reference* or *habits of mind*. From this perspective, any challenge to our way of knowing is an existential threat. When we are in survival mode, more than anything else, the brain wants *out of there!*—hardly conducive to realizing the potential power of the TL experience.

Hemispheric Lateralization

Counter to common knowledge, current research underscores the fact that the right hemisphere (RH) and left hemisphere (LH) consistently work together. Both imagination and rationality—colloquially, poetry and science—involve both hemispheres. Even so, each has (metaphorically speaking) a mind of its own and hemispheric lateralization plays a significant role in the analogical basis of cognition. Each hemisphere approaches their collaboration with different views of what is most important in how to achieve its own purposes. This is less about specific activities each engages in than what it attends to as it engages (McGilchrist, 2010).

In that sense, the RH sees the forest while the LH sees the trees. RH sees the big picture, takes in everything all at once. It reaches for the Other and what is not known, uses nuance and subtlety, and finds unexpected connections. This capacity to make sense of seemingly random patterns makes possible sudden creative intuitions that seem to come from nowhere. (Gutenberg's discovery of the missing key to the printing press after watching a wine press is illustrative.) On

closer, more detailed LH investigation, some RH insight may not pan out. For itself, however, LH will not look beyond what it has already established. It will continue its self-referential path, creating ever-deeper commitment to what it already knows. Thus, LH processing is quicker. RH needs more time to decode nonverbal images and other imaginal and symbolic input, or extended linguistic codes, such as poetry, puns, parables, and “ill-structured” word problems (Gilbert, Zamenopolous, Alexiou & Johnson, 2010; Tompkins, Scharp, Meigh, & Fassbinder, 2008)—its *métier*. Unfortunately, when LH—which is more verbal—quickly latches on to an interpretation of experience based on its areas of competence, the potentially more creative, profound contribution of RH, which can’t as easily speak up for itself, may go unheard.

Move Over, Descartes!

Given the power of Descartes’ dictum on the Western imagination, for centuries we have increasingly come to believe in rationality and logic. The irony is that we *believe* in logic. In fact, in the brain metaphor precedes logic. First the brain uses symbols and images; only then does it begin to construct words and a logical story.

Mezirow’s directive to engage the disorienting dilemma through critical discourse fails to account for the brain’s process of learning, which, Daloz (1999) cautions us, requires as much support as challenge. An important and largely ignored aspect of such support is to draw on non-cognitive aspects of learning: “the relation between learning, emotion, and body state runs much deeper than many educators realize and is interwoven with the notion of learning itself” (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 3).

Toward Transforming the Practice of Transformative Learning

Dean Elias and Paul Loper

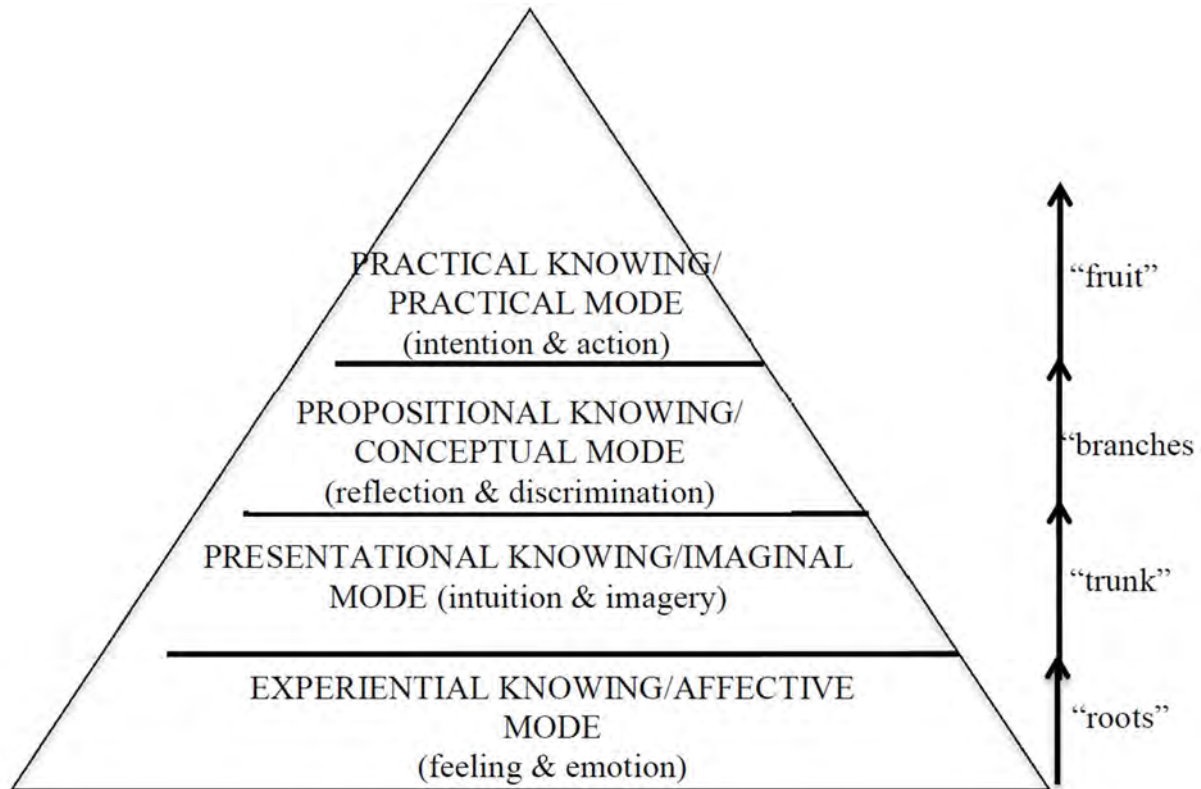
For Mezirow (1991), the overriding challenge, which he defines as *emancipatory learning*, is to liberate adults from distorted perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions that effectively limit their freedom to be responsible actors in the world. Such constricting *meaning schemes* are acquired “unconsciously in childhood through socialization” (p. 33) and often reinforced throughout adulthood. These well-established patterns construct a self-referential “reality” that is difficult to counter or dislodge. From the brain’s perspective, these neural networks are “default” patterns that manifest as *identity*, *culture*, and *worldview*.

Mezirow’s early formulations of the TL process focused on conscious meaning-making activities involving ideas, discourse, interpretations, narratives, critical reflections, and so on (1991, pp. 168-9). Dirkx (2000), a Jungian and depth psychologist, noted that this emphasis on reason and rationality largely ignores emotions, images, and artistic expression. Mezirow (2000) did eventually briefly acknowledge the role of such “alternative languages” as also relevant, but continued to emphasize cognitive and rational over tacit and imaginal (presumably irrational) ways of knowing.

John Heron (1992,1996) integrates both ways of knowing in his theoretical model and practice-based approach, which thus provide a useful counterpoint and complement to Mezirow. We will interweave and contrast both theorists’ perspectives in light of what we understand about brain function.

Overview of Heron's Extended Epistemology

Heron uses the image of a pyramid, horizontally divided into 4 layers, each layer indicating an experience, quality, or complexity of knowing.



Adapted from Heron (1999), and Paxton, (2003)

Building on his theory of four modes of the psyche, Heron (1992) describes an arrangement of epistemic branches, an "extended epistemology." He calls this an "up-hierarchy, a dynamic pyramidal process in which what is below supports, grounds, and empowers what is above" (Heron, 1996, p. 33). The foundational lowest layer is *experiential* knowing. It manifests as feeling the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process, or thing (the *affective* mode). Above that is *presentational* knowing, intuiting a pattern that is expressed in graphic, plastic, moving, musical, and verbal art-forms (the *imaginal* mode). The next higher layer is *propositional* knowing. It is knowing *that*, expressed in declarative statements (the *conceptual* mode). At the top of the pyramid is *practical* knowing, which is knowing *how*, expressed in the exercise of a skill or other suitable action (the *practical* mode).

Affective Mode/Experiential Knowing

According to Heron (1992), in the up-hierarchy model, “the lower [layers] are the more basic and the key to the higher. This yields the hypothesis that emotional confidence, fulfillment and positive arousal are the most important for effective learning; that they constitute its formative potential” (p. 228). Also from the perspective of the brain, a learner’s emotional, affective state is foundational to learning: *we feel, therefore we know* (Damasio & Immodino-Yang, 2007). Anxiety or fear will preempt capacity for new information to make it through the self-protective filters that are built up over time, thus impede establishment of new neural pathways (Taylor & Marienau, 2016, pp. 4-10).

Mezirow also speaks to how emotionally charged we often are when experiencing transformation of frames of reference (or meaning perspectives), usually naming it a life crisis. The “illumination comes only through a redefinition of the problem” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 94). This suggests that by this point, there has been sufficient increase in “emotional confidence” to calm the nervous system and damp down the fight or flight response. Otherwise little to no learning would be gained from the crisis.

As we facilitators invite elaboration of existing (or development of new) meaning schemes—“the specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions articulated by an interpretation [that] serve as specific habits of expectation,” Mezirow, 1991, p. 35—we cannot know the depth of disorientation learners are experiencing. Thus, in general, we are wise to pay specific attention to the psychological safety of the learning environment so that as our learners confront challenges to their meaning schemes, their “emotional confidence, fulfillment, and positive arousal” will remain enough for them to be open to stay with the redefining.

Deep worldview structures orient us to respond to new situations in ways that accord with prior neural “understandings.” Though Mezirow acknowledges the potential emotional upheaval of the disorienting dilemma, he seems to pass over what might be done to more successfully get to the place where new learning is possible. This is where Heron’s approach fills in some missing pieces. And while affect and emotion are primary in this base-of-the-pyramid mode, we are emotional beings throughout Heron’s four ways of knowing, so emotional support and capacity are still key, including when we are engaged in propositional and practical knowing.

If a goal of TL is to “produce interpretations and opinions that are more justifiable or true than would be those predicated upon other understandings or beliefs” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4), then getting more data from the original experience will help in building “more justifiable” interpretations. By urging cultivation of fuller respect for and engagement with experiential knowing as a way to gather more complete and nuanced data before building interpretations, Heron’s approach aligns with Mezirow’s intentions by strengthening the ground of the process out of which opinions and interpretations are made: “*Learning* is the final step in a long process that takes place throughout the body before we can discover that we ‘know’ something” (Taylor, Background and Introduction, above).

Imaginal Mode / Presentational Knowing

Building up from the experiential base of the pyramid, Heron next encourages embodied and tacit knowing to emerge. Though not part of Mezirow’s process, it is entirely in accord with the brain’s own (non-verbal, pre-conscious) process of analogical association and categorization. These imagistic forms empower *intuiting*, “the immediate, comprehensive knowing whereby the mind can grasp a field, a system or a being as a patterned unity [and] apprehend it in terms of figure-ground and part-whole hierarchies” (Heron, 1992, p. 17).

These are RH activities, as described above. As such, and given that RH processing is slower and relatively silent, effective learning requires an outlet for the more innovative,

contextual—potentially more complex—meaning that may have been made. Presentational knowing engages with a variety of symbolic expressions that correlate to and spring from the imaginal mode, while also establishing an initial basis for connecting with the more quotidian propositional way of knowing/conceptual mode so highly emphasized in most formal learning settings. Before that important next step, however, learners can give “voice” to what is usually neglected.

Presentational knowing, “in which a person creates a pattern of perceptual elements—in movement, sound, colour, shape, line—to symbolize some deeper pattern that interconnects perceptual imagery of this world or other worlds” (Heron, 1992, p. 165), taps into the analogic, metaphoric, and connecting dimensions of the brain’s processes. This pedagogical strategy affords knowing that is connected to emotion, more evocative of experience, and that clarifies and codifies experience (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 95) “en route” to language’s more abstracted use of signs that refer *to each other*—just as happens in neural processing. Thus there is more coherence between education and learning.

Conceptual Mode / Propositional Knowing

Heron’s inclusive approach to meaning-making through analogy and metaphor appears consistent with how the brain actually learns. By contrast, Mezirow seems more constrained, appearing to locate meaning-making primarily in propositional knowing. This would suggest that that identity and world view—aspects of one’s frame of reference—are grounded in the conceptual mode. Yet this contradicts what we know about how the brain’s deeply rooted patterns are rarely available to conscious awareness.

Although Mezirow acknowledges imagination as “central to understanding the unknown,” he describes it in terms of “the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by ‘trying on’ another’s point of view. The more reflective and open we are to the perspectives of others, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be” (2000, p. 20). This description of imagination seems less derived from the kind of creative, symbolic, intuitive, tacit understanding that is the RH’s *métier*, than like a more varied catalogue of cognitive LH options.

For Mezirow, the broad sets of assumptions enabling the expressions of points of view are *habits of mind*. “We change our point of view by trying on another’s point of view. We are unable to do this with a habit of mind” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 21). Creating a new habit of mind, “the most personally significant and emotionally exacting” of transformations, is done through “a critique of previously unexamined premises regarding one’s self (‘a woman’s place is in the home, so I must deny myself a career that I would love’)” (pp. 21-22). Given what we have come to understand about the difficulties inherent in changing one’s mind (that is, substantively altering long-standing neural networks associated with one’s world view), this critiquing of previously unexamined premises cannot be done via propositional knowing alone.

Mezirow’s theory did become more complex across time. Though in 1991 he notes, “Often understanding comes from finding the right metaphor to fit the experience analogically into our meaning schemes, theories, belief systems, or self-concept” (p. 80), he clearly privileged rational activity. Later however (2009), he acknowledged some justification for criticism “that his interpretation of transformative learning may have neglected ‘the role of imagination, intuition, and emotion’” (Taylor & Marienau, 2016, p. 276).

Enter Heron (1992), stage right: “Feeling determines the sweep of a person’s imaginative vision and thus provides the imaginal material out of which intellectual thought proceeds” (p. 94). The richness and reach of the conceptual depends on the richness and sweep of the underlying affective and imaginal mode. While propositional knowing “seems to align with what McGilchrist

identified as the LH's preferences: propositions, facts, generalizations, laws, theories, measurement, and language- and logic-based concepts" (Taylor & Marienau, 2016, p. 300), for Heron, it is deepened and enriched when it is engaged after active participation in the affective and imaginal modes.

Thus, the process that Heron describes to animate the transformation of consciousness differs profoundly from the classic perspective of Mezirow. While Mezirow uses the frame of *critical reflection* on our world of assumptions, Heron introduces the frame of *critical subjectivity*, which involves "engaging each of the four ways of knowing (experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical) autonomously and interdependently" (Paxton, Van Stralen, & Zweig, 2003, p. 3).

Adult educators experimenting with Heron's perspective can engage creative activity (drawing, movement, group interaction and play, music) that evokes right hemisphere activity to enable a learner to open new possibilities for propositional knowing. As Taylor & Marienau point out, this approach to adult learning enables us to reconnect "with those who have been poorly served by excessively cognitively-focused or behavior-focused educational assumptions. Of necessity, this means challenging hegemonic assumptions about adult learning that have effectively silenced various cultural groups and dismissed nonconforming educational paradigms" (2016, p. 305).

Practical Mode / Practical Knowing

Following Heron, each of the four modes in his up-hierarchy "emerges out of another below it, so the lower modes nourish and support the higher. Imagination that is grounded in the life of feeling is thereby enriched. Thinking that crops out of wide-ranging imaginative vision is empowered. Action fed by wise discrimination is fruitful" (1992, p. 21). The practical mode is the mode of choice and action in the world.

Mezirow's representation of TL attends less to the affective mode, the felt experience of learners, and the fund of imagery, pattern coalescence, and intuition. While he acknowledges the "feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame" that accompany a disorienting dilemma, he then shifts to a largely cognitive process—critical assessment of assumptions, exploration of new options, planning a course of action. Critical reflection focuses on a wide "range of concepts and their accompanying cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions." The transformation is presumably complete when the learner makes a discerning decision and acts on what she has discovered (2000, pp. 22-27). In his focus on the capacities of the LH, Mezirow appears relatively unimpressed by, or perhaps simply unaware of, the substantial contribution of the RH, without which the transformation would not be possible. Our premise is that explicitly engaging the RH is likely to enhance the transformative process, and perhaps even accelerate it.

While Mezirow offered an initial conceptual frame for exploring the transformation of consciousness, Heron's model aligns more closely with Taylor and Marienau's (2016) understanding of the brain and our challenge as citizens in an increasingly multiracial, multiethnic world: "As we interpret it, integration of analogical and embodied learning moves mainstream learning beyond information or skill acquisition. As such, it is a foundation for the kind of changes in feeling and understanding that lead toward greater complexity and commitment" (p. 301). As facilitators, we suggest that working with Heron's approach will help anchor the kind of learning we need to equip us to effectively engage the complex challenges facing our society and our planet.

Embodied Learning: Implications of Cultural Difference

Urusa Fahim

Focusing primarily on cognitive and verbal approaches is limiting because they take into account a certain form of learning that acknowledges only a singular way of knowing. It ignores aspects of learning related to the senses, the emotions, and the body. Our body and emotions are the first responders to a learning experience, followed by cognitions and reason (Kasl & Yorks, 2016).

Most often, teaching and learning happens in a unidirectional mode with learners as recipients of knowledge that teachers impart to them in their role as experts. This does not take into account that learning happens in different ways and more often through experience and a felt sense rather than logical thinking (Yorks & Kasl, 2002). In order for learning to be meaningful and relevant, the whole person has to be invited into the experience including their emotions, and for learning to be relevant and meaningful it has to become personal (Heron, 1992).

(My Embodied) Experience as a Practitioner

Having alternated living in two markedly different cultures over the last several years—the United States and Pakistan—I experience my own embodiment acutely. My body feels different in each place. I move and sound and gesture differently, not just because I speak a different language or wear different clothes, but because in each place my body has a distinct cultural memory of “how to be.”

Drawing from my own experience of learning as well as reports from many students about what impedes theirs, I began to experiment with learning activities that implicitly and explicitly engaged the body. Implicitly, I focused on the felt-sense, emotions, imagination, images, and analogical approaches (Dirkx, 1998). Explicitly, I engaged their bodies directly in movement and in physically creating artwork (including artistic verbal expression, such as narrative and poetry). Such activities transcend ordinary, declarative language and thus depend on the participant’s own context and meaning making scheme to break through blocks in learning and conceptual understanding (Lawrence, 2005). I have found that once learning is anchored at a non-verbal level it is much easier to introduce theoretical constructs at cognitive and verbal levels.

This is relevant to TL because the disorienting dilemma is not experienced only cognitively. By ignoring the role of the body and the senses we miss opportunities to support the process of transformation. Actively and explicitly engaging the body (as described earlier, the *embodied brain*) in the learning process can help uncover hidden assumptions and other factors that may otherwise impede learning and transformation.

Learning that is focused primarily on cognitive abilities—typically meaning “higher” mental activities of reasoning and problem-solving—also privileges what gets to be considered legitimate learning. It emphasizes linearity (a more LH approach) rather than a more complex and relational (RH approach) way of anchoring learning. Furthermore it marginalizes cultures that do not fit the dominant Western cognitive mold and individuals who learn in different ways, using all their senses and their bodies (Lawrence, 2005). To be fully transformative, learning must include the whole person (Kasl & Yorks, 2016) and an understanding of the context within which the individual learns, develops, and grows.

Specific Examples

In using this personal knowledge in my work with adult learners, I intentionally create situations that—sometimes literally—“shift perspectives.” Research has shown that seating preference in classrooms can be affected by many factors, some of which relate to learning styles or processing preferences (Harms, Poon, Smith, & Elias, 2015). When people choose the same

seat, often with the same small group, they may feel more comfortable with the familiarity, but be unconsciously avoiding novel experiences. There is an understandable desire for the feeling of safety that comes with familiar surroundings and with known people or peers. However, this avoidance of the “unknown” may carry over to learning new things, and perhaps affect how they engage with the content of the learning experience.

In programs where personal development is among the learning objectives, students may be unconsciously concerned about their inability to predict where that change might lead. The pull of curiosity toward new learning is inhibited by the push of anxiety away from what new learning may entail. Moving from either/or thinking to multiple perspective may lead one to question the familiar beliefs and attitudes one is comfortable with or grew up with.

As discussed above, the long-established neural networks called “culture” and “identity” are deeply rooted and difficult to dislodge. Shifting one’s place in a classroom can be an embodied metaphor for shifting one’s perspective more broadly. Thus regularly or periodically changing one’s physical location can be a somatic invitation to look at the world differently. As it unfolds in practice, when students get up, pick up their things, move a few chairs to the left or a couple of rows down, they literally “shift things” and appear more energized and ready to refocus when the class reengages. It is as if having the body always default to the same place allows the brain to do so, also.

The disorienting dilemma is essentially an embodied encounter. I have yet to hear someone describe it as simply questioning their prior assumptions and belief systems. Instead, as Mezirow (2000) acknowledges, the disorienting dilemma often quickly provokes emotions such as anger, outrage, disbelief, even despair. Given that our emotional states influence our cognitive abilities (Phelps, 2006; Meyer and Turner, 2006), it seems especially important to take them into account in such learning situations. This does not mean engaging in psychological counseling (which would be inappropriate), but rather providing opportunities for emotional content to emerge in constructive ways. Embodied learning experiences, such as Heron’s *presentational knowing*, offer such outlets.

For example, after reading thick texts on research methods, graduate students making decisions about their doctoral research often become anxious and overwhelmed about the variety and complexity of possible methods they must consider. Typical classroom discussions that unpack the many options available to them are rarely reassuring. To get them “out of their heads,” and without warning them in advance, I bring in an assortment of crayons and stacks of colored papers plus, at times, other supplies (markers, scissors, and tape or glue-sticks). Then I ask them to draw—or make a collage—of their *method*. Or of their *intentions for their research*. Or of the *feelings they would like to have while they are doing their research*—something that stands in for the impasse. But I ask them not to use any *words* in the construction. I want them to connect to places the embodied brain cannot yet verbalize. At first they look dumbfounded, but before long they are busily snipping and gluing.

The finished products are displayed as everyone, in turn, describes the inspiration behind the construction and any other feelings, thoughts, or intuitions that have arisen. The group as a whole responds with observations, appreciations, and insightful questions. Afterward, students tend to note that verbalizing the meaning of their creation unexpectedly highlighted aspects of their “stuckness,” or, more positively, of aspirations for their research they find energizing.

Moving from familiar rational/cognitive analysis to an initially non-verbal, symbolic expression invites them to perceive their research project in a visceral way. The notion of “research,” itself, seems to shift from being foreign, distant, and difficult, to something they can imaginatively contain and represent. In so doing, they begin to see the possibility to engage and

(eventually) master it rather than feeling the pressure to flee from or avoid it. The experience of connecting with what many identify as a pleasant childish activity also introduces a certain lightness and playfulness. This does not, however, diminish or compromise their intentions to do meaningful, high-quality research. Rather, it acts to dissipate much of the embodied anxiety and resistance that they have associated with it.

Diversity-work, Inclusion, and Intercultural Communication as Transformative Learning Donald Proby

Engaging in diversity-work, inclusion, and intercultural communication offers rich opportunities for transformation of self, others, and social systems. It also generates disorienting dilemmas. Primeval brains distinguished between “our kind” and “not our kind” to enhance safety. Today, our growing awareness that we need mutual understanding *across* difference must compete with these subconscious distinctions still active in our neural networks.

Facilitators of adult learning who understand the embodied nature of diversity-work can more effectively support the TL process. For example, before people can critically assess their assumptions, they have to find out what those assumptions are. Adults are only superficially aware of the embodied patterns formed over a lifetime of often self-confirming experience. Though Heron’s *presentational* knowing (above), offers a way to tap into the deeper levels of tacit knowing, facilitators must also anticipate the anxiety associated with “feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22) that accompany such discovery. Such stressful feelings often lead to restricted, shallow breathing as the diaphragm, chest, and shoulder muscles tighten defensively. However, less than a half-minute of deep abdominal breathing triggers the embodied brain’s *relaxation response*. Practices such as guided imagery or meditation help to soothe anxiety and facilitate awareness (Ratey, 2002), and are an effective way to initiate diversity-work.

Embodied Practice

Another aspect of what I call *welcoming the body into the room* includes setting the expectation that the group will use their bodies as sources of information and illumination. I may ask everyone to stand and stretch together, guiding them to listen to their bodies as they press gently against areas of tightness and resistance. (This is also an embodied metaphor for how we will approach exploration and learning throughout the session.) At intervals, I invite further somatic check-ins—“Where are you in your body right now?”—so we can monitor and respond to tensions that arise as we engage this challenging work.

Having the co-learners participate in establishing the group’s working agreements—such as normalizing ambiguity, not knowing, and feelings of awkwardness, silliness, difference, disagreement, and discomfort; and encouraging playfulness and freedom from needing to save face—also helps to construct a place of safety; thus, people are more likely to be alert but not alarmed when disoriented.

One imaginal activity that explicitly engages the embodied brain’s understanding of “self” and “other” involves pantomime. In pairs, people are invited to think about a typical activity such as *cooking a meal, meeting a friend on the street, or going through a department store*. (Each pair agrees on one topic.) The partners briefly pantomime their own experience. Their experiences vary widely enough that they often have to later explain aspects of their demonstration to their puzzled partners. For example, a White participant is likely to be confused when a person of color pantomimes being followed around the store by a security guard.

Performing and watching one’s partner perform these demonstrations has a more powerful effect than simply speaking, hearing, or reading about cultural difference. The physical enactment

appears to cross an empathic threshold, perhaps due to the action of mirror neurons (Lamm & Majdandzic, 2015). Laughter, which lowers cortisol (anxiety hormone) and triggers endorphins (“feel-good” hormones), is also frequently part of the presentation, thus tamping down reactivity to topics that might otherwise tend to stimulate defensiveness or anxiety. Dopamine also plays a role in reforming memory (Ratey, 2002).

Feeling and Learning

Debriefing the pantomime focuses first on feelings it aroused. Though ordinary language uses the words interchangeably, to neuroscientists, “emotions” are *body-state*—homeostatic adjustments that the brain controls and monitors in its task of self-preservation; “feelings” are the *conscious mind’s interpretation* of body-state (Damasio, 2000). Memory traces of an experience always include the associated body-state. These ancient reservoirs of emotional reaction continue to invisibly affect our response to Otherness.

Explicit attention to feelings is crucial, as we tend to disregard or avoid those that recreate discomfort or might be disorienting. First, partners are asked to physically demonstrate their feelings. This also may elicit wordless empathy; sometimes literally *feeling another’s pain*. Only then do the partners share aloud what they felt and what insights emerged. Finally, the entire group is invited to imagine and discuss how these discoveries might direct future action.

Diversity-work is cognitively and affectively challenging. Intercultural conflict mediation and diversity-work that focuses primarily on the cognitive is helpful in that any attention to this critical work is necessary. But given the brain’s preference for (apparent) safety, diversity-work that does not directly engage the imaginal, affective aspects of understanding are less likely to tap into deeply embodied, well-established neural networks that construct how we perceive and know ourselves, others, and the world. By contrast, embodied approaches that leverage the imaginal and affective aspects of learning speak more directly to the RH, which is known for its empathic outreach to Other (McGilchrist, 2010). By supporting movement from disorientation to appreciation that can then be woven into the fabric of the co-learner’s embodied experience, such approaches may greatly enhance the potential for transformative learning.

“We Feel, Therefore We Know”

Rather than Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am), Marton and Booth (1997) posit *cognosco ergo sum* (I experience, therefore I am), because learning “is an ongoing exploration of the world as experienced” (p. 156). Although experience constantly changes the brain, long-established neural patterns that comprise *frames of reference* are comparable to Grand Canyons of the mind, where rivers of experience have cut deeply into bedrock. These neural networks establish cultural norms and expectations that limit adults’ openness to new learning.

Neuroscience has only recently articulated the central role of feeling in knowing; in our view, at the intersection of TL and neuroscience we find the analogical, embodied brain. This underscores “the crucial importance of the unconscious, affect, and intuition in transformative learning” (Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000, p. 345). It also highlights why Heron’s approach (1999) supports and enriches the phases of meaning clarification that follow a disorienting dilemma.

As practitioners committed to learning that encourages adults to understand themselves and others in more complex ways, we propose that integrating embodied and analogical approaches will enhance development of “transformative learners . . . who [by countering] unexamined cultural norms in organizations, communities, families, and political life [may thus] become agents of cultural change” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 30).

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PAPERS FOR PANELS

Engaging Intersections: Mapping the Neuronal Underpinnings of Transformative Learning

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Abstract: Our lives are full of intersections: some mundane, others educative, and a few transformative. Each intersection brings some degree of recognition with otherness in the world, which our brains perceive as sensory stimuli. Our brains process such sensory stimuli selectively--the most compelling stimuli receive the most attention. Many intersections simply reinforce our existing habits of mind. But others challenge our meaning schemes, demand revision, and rewire our meaning perspectives for more accurate and inclusive thought.

Research informs us that the rational work of rewiring meaning perspectives is the result of three brain networks: one dedicated to alerting, another dedicated to orienting, and a third dedicated to executive rationality. Our lives' most profound and engaging intersections succeed in activating all three attentional networks, and in doing so, more robustly wiring the mind to observe, consider, and evaluate our habits of mind and meaning perspectives.

This essay uses the lens of Posner's (2009) National Science Award-winning human attention system research to map the relationship between perspective transformation—as a rational revision of problematic assumptions—and the neuronal underpinnings that enable such experiences. This essay offers examples and suggests paradigms for doing so in professional contexts.

I recently found myself at one of my favorite intersections—where the semester ends and break begins. So after posting grades, I shelved my laptop and grabbed my favorite hammer and a sturdy chisel. Relieved to be working more with my hands than with my head, I took a few deep breaths and began chipping away at the final stage of a bathroom remodel. Hours later, my hammer had freed the walls of their 1970s tile, and the manual labor had liberated my mind from the confines of the semester's academic demarcations.

For the better part of the ensuing week, my work life followed a new direction. My email idled. My courses became an abstraction. Even meetings didn't meet. Instead, the primary intersections engaging me were the geometric lines between the subway tiles that I slowly, therapeutically placed above my tub. The exercise was a remarkable reminder of how grateful I am to work in an excellent profession: rich in both mindful work and restorative breaks. This was not a transformative experience; it was just wonderfully restorative.

Transformative Intersections

And every so often, I encounter transformative intersections. I recently found myself at one. One week into that bathroom tiling job, I had pretty much exhausted my favorite musical playlists. And my brain felt ready for some mental floss. Something mindful, different, contemplative.

So I took a recent recommendation to listen to a set of podcasts by a Rabbi scripture scholar in Israel. I pressed play, and returned to my work. The Rabbi began explaining the symbolism in the Old Testament Book of Hosea. I was modestly interested. And then, after ten

minutes, like so many of my own students, I pretty much tuned out. And mind wandered back to its customary ruminations.

Then something happened. Something the Rabbi suggested interrupted my drifting mind and very concretely brought me back into the moment. The Rabbi juxtaposed a seemingly abstruse (and to that point, yawn-inducing) Biblical passage with a contemporary metaphor. Prophetic repetition, the Rabbi explained, works like a hammer and chisel on stone. The instruments open the stone—not on the first strike, but instead after many. And as the Rabbi so spoke, something in my own stony cognition began to crack.

I wondered if my habitual ways of thinking about teaching and theology were incomplete, or even incorrect. I puzzled as I reconsidered whether what I'd long disregarded as Scriptural didactics could possibly be the skilled work of assiduous teachers. My righteous adherence to constructivist paradigms and meaning schemes immediately seemed incomplete. I found myself attentive at a very engaging intersection. And my mind was lit up and searching for understanding.

Networks of Neurons

Learning has long been described as a light turning on in the mind. And evidence indicates that's part of it. Neuroscience research concludes that learning is indeed the result of neurons sending electrical signals to adjacent neurons--in order to create networks of connectivity. Posner and colleagues further clarified that learning is made possible by three separate and sequential networks lighting up in the mind. The first network is responsible for alerting the mind. The second for orienting the mind. And the third is responsible for executive decision making (Posner & Keele, 1968; Posner, 1981; Posner, 1994; Posner & Rothbart, 2005; Posner, 2010; Posner & Peterson, 2012). So, in light of Posner's National Academy of Science Award-winning research findings, perhaps a revision of the learning-light metaphor is something closer to what follows. Learning is: (a) a motion-detector light that alerts us of a change in the environment, (b) orienting ourselves to interpret our significance of our relationship with the stimuli, and (c) engaging in executive function to determine an appropriate course of action. And when networks of neurons fire together, they wire together--creating increasingly efficient and effective cognition.

Triggering the Alertness Network

Research from the field of neuroscience reveals the cognitive circuitry that enables such intersections to serve as trigger events that lead to disorienting dilemmas. And given the tragedies of violence and human suffering at the hands due to firearm triggers, I'll invite us as a research community to dialogue about our use of this expression. Disorienting dilemmas are the result of interruptions of our habitual expectations or meaning schemes. These habitual expectations arise in our brains due to neuroplasticity, or experiences that fire and wire our brain to brain to develop inclinations, predispositions, and patterns of perception--or meaning schemes (Mezirow 1978, 2000, 2009).

Posner and colleagues have determined that when we're engaged, our brains are making use of a neuronal network dedicated solely to alerting the mind of the presence novel stimuli (Posner & Keele, 1968; Posner, 1981; Posner, 1994; Posner & Rothbart, 2005; Posner, 2010; Posner & Peterson, 2012). In all learning, the alerting network must be activated. This alerting network is the first of three circuits that must be in on position for rational re-evaluation of existing meaning schemes. And when a neuronal network is active, it fires together and wires together--producing a physiological network based upon experience that tends to continue to fire and wire in the same patterns. Until it is interrupted.

In transformative learning, the alerting network must be sufficiently engaged to compel the learner to activate the subsequent orienting network. My alerting network was indeed interrupted up when the Rabbi offered a message that contradicted my existing meaning schemes that allocated minimal value to didactic teaching--especially in Biblical contexts. I felt compelled to stop, rewind, and review what I had heard.

Disorienting the Orientation Network

So I set down my trowel and rewound the segment. With grouty fingers, I replayed, and rewound, and replayed a minute and a half of the podcast. I found myself engaged and at the intersection with a powerful interruption to my existing assumptions. Something powerful, profound, and imbued with transformative possibility was taking place. (And I'm reasonably confident it was not overexposure to tile cleaning chemicals).

Posner and colleagues identify this as the brain's orienting network. It is the cognitive circuitry that interprets and assigns value to novel stimuli. The most novel stimuli receive the most attention. The most mundane receive the least. In the process of perspective transformation, the brain's orienting network is essential in assigning value to intersections that are incongruent with our existing meaning schemes and perspectives.

Engaging the Executive Network

Alerted and oriented that my existing meaning schemes were a poor match for this new point of view, my executive neuronal network started firing. I began wondering whether my meaning schemes were flawed. And in the ensuing days, as I wiped away the excess grout from the new tile, I began more deeply exploring the layers of bias I have developed over time against what I receive as displays of theological erudition and paternalistic hermeneutics.

As weeks passed, the project concluded and my reflection continued. Over time, the process of critically reflecting on my socio-linguistic, epistemic, philosophical, and psychological assumptions suggests to me that discrepant intersections can be remarkably engaging--and even transformative in terms of liberating ourselves from the faulty assumptions that shape our meaning schemes.

Critical reflection on the biases and assumptions that limit our habits of mind and frames of reference is a distinguishing feature of autonomous thinking--and a life meaningfully lived. Three unique neuronal networks enable such cognition. Each of the three plays an important role in perspective transformation.

Alerting our Daily Intersections

We encounter intersections daily. Traffic lights change from stop to go and go to yield—changing our opportunities and responsibilities. Semesters change from first days to midterms to finals—changing our academic considerations. Our time away changes—providing time for upkeep as well as more extensive renovation. And our intellectual space for mindfulness practices changes—from unreadiness, to readiness, and back.

The brain's alerting network is dedicated to detecting these intersections; it's a specialist of environmental perception. From encountering traffic lights to scripture symbols, when an active attention network perceives certain stimuli to be salient, it alerts the next attentional network. And if it doesn't, nothing else happens. The more frequently the alerting network's neurons detect salience, its neurons fire, the network wires; it's now experientially modified to do more effective work with less effort.

Posner's research has found that human attention is a delicate thing. So much of what we see, hear, and encounter leaves only a slight impression on our minds, as it activates only one the first of three independent attentional networks. Intersections with inviting, unique, novel, and gently disrupting stimuli are most apt to induce trigger events that activate subsequent networks

that challenge our longstanding meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, and habits of minds. Intersections that don't won't. Informed by Posner's research, we have opportunities to more fully understand our own experiences with learning, as well as opportunities to mindfully scaffold engaging intersections for our students.

Orienting our Daily Considerations

In terms of perspective transformation, gaining someone's attention and orientation is not the same as having their consideration of the significance or the executive thinking they might engage in. While the alerting network may be active, the next network—the orienting network—may remain inactive. Such intersections produce limited engagement and no critical reflection on our assumptions.

So it's a peculiar sort of stimuli that engage brain's orienting network. These stimuli productively disrupt our existing meaning schemes—or our habitual ways of perceiving and interpreting our intersections with the world around us. Posner's research clarifies that orienting stimuli are essential in activating executive, rational cognition. And rational cognition is essential in relinquishing problematic meaning schemes and devising more accurate ways of understanding the world.

We encounter intersections that activate the brain's alerting and orienting networks daily. As we approach traffic signals, as we open classroom doors, and as we hear colleagues speak. And still the most engaging intersections provide us with new experiences—those that disrupt anticipations and re-orient our awareness. These may initiate perspective taking—which takes place in the brain's executive network. These opportunities are ours to consider as we construct curriculum that engages the scholarship of transformative teaching and learning.

The significance of the executive network in our daily intersections

Rational dialogue has long been a central theme in Mezirow's scholarship (Mezirow, 1978). Integral to Mezirow's analysis of perspective transformation is the mind's role in examining the accuracy of the assumptions that guide our perception and interpretation. Perspective transformation, then, is achieved through critical reflection and rational dialogue. The centrality of rational premise examination may in fact differentiate transformed learning from other forms of significant development that preclude examining hidden assumptions, expectations, and judgments.

The critical reflection on rational dialogue taking place in the brain's executive decision-making network has a positive neurogenetic effect on thinking. Because neurons that fire together wire together, the critically reflective mind develops a more robust executive network. It's increasingly inclined to differentiate faulty assumptions from aware points of view.

The Rabbi's assertion required me to make room for a competing and compelling point of view about the relevance and applicability of the messages of Old Testament prophets in my own 21st century life. And in many ways, we possess the same opportunities as teachers and scholars. Ours is the opportunity to design curriculum rich in intersections that engage attention, disrupt assumptions, disorient, re-orient, and foster rational dialogue. Ours is the opportunity to employ our developing understanding of the neuronal underpinnings of cognitive function to foster perspective transformation.

Conclusion

Our lives are full of intersections: some mundane, others educative, and a few transformative. Each intersection brings some degree of recognition with otherness in the world, which our brains perceive as sensory stimuli. Our brains process such sensory stimuli

selectively--the most compelling stimuli receive the most attention. Many intersections simply reinforce our existing habits of mind. But others challenge our meaning schemes, demand revision, and rewire our meaning perspectives for more accurate and inclusive thought.

Research informs us that the rational work of rewiring meaning perspectives is the result of three brain networks: one dedicated to alerting, another dedicated to orienting, and a third dedicated to executive rationality. Our lives' most profound and engaging intersections succeed in activating all three attentional networks, and in doing so, more robustly wiring the mind to observe, consider, and evaluate our habits of mind and meaning perspectives.

This essay uses the lens of Posner's (2009) National Science Award-winning human attention system research to map the relationship between perspective transformation—as a rational revision of problematic assumptions—and the neuronal underpinnings that enable such experiences. This essay is offered in a spirit of evidence-informed inquiry and collegial dialogue.

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Researching Transformative Learning: Using the Typology of Transformative Outcomes as a Research Tool

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Abstract: This paper approaches transformative learning as an analytic metatheory that cuts across disciplinary perspectives. This presentation provides a tool for researchers derived from the Typology of Transformative Outcomes published recently in *Adult Education Quarterly*. The presentation demonstrates four levels of analysis using criteria for transformative learning and the typology of transformational outcomes; each level of analysis provides greater thoroughness and nuance of the transformative learning experience.

For almost four decades, transformative learning theory has been a popular lens through which to name, research, and attempt to understand the potential for learning to change people and society in dramatic ways. With this popularity has come a fair amount of diffusion; indeed, some scholars fear that transformative learning theory has suffered from *evacuation*, or the loss of any distinctive meaning (Brookfield, 2003). Most critically, scholars have defined the term *transformative learning*—and its associated learning outcomes—in ways that expand far beyond those articulated by Mezirow (Hoggan, 2016a). If taken too far, this diffusion of a theory and its constructs can eventually render the theory meaningless and therefore useless.

As it is used in the literature, transformative learning does not refer exclusively to the theory created by Mezirow. It is used, rather, to refer to a wide range of theories that address learning that results in personal, cultural, or social transformation (Hoggan, 2016a). It is therefore incorrect to claim that *transformative learning*, the way it is used in the literature, is a theory. Rather, it is a metatheory, which serves as an “umbrella under which several theories of development or learning are classified together based on their commonalities regarding human nature” (Aldridge, Kuby, & Strevy 1992, p. 683). In the social sciences there are two types of metatheories: synthetic and analytic (Wallace, 1992). Whereas a synthetic metatheory organizes underlying theories in categories (such as Taylor, 1998; 2007), analytic metatheory seeks to provide categorizations of components that are common among all the underlying theories.

The purpose of the components of analytic metatheory is to provide a common language scholars can use instead of their respective disciplinary jargon so that the disparate disciplines can work together better to generate practical knowledge and broader understandings. This ability is especially important in consideration of the intersectionality of TL theory. Scholars from an increasing array of disciplines are using the metatheory of transformative learning to describe profound change from the perspective of their respective disciplines. We need to apply set criteria, use a common vocabulary, and prompt ourselves to see phenomena that might usually be outside the scope of our respective disciplinary perspectives.

Using the Typology, Level 1: Criteria of Transformative Learning

In order to exercise clarity when researching transformative learning, a rudimentary assessment can help convey the extent to which a learning outcome is transformative. It is important to have criteria that provides parameters around what the term *transformative learning* is purported to address. The criteria that learning outcomes should have in order to qualify as transformative learning are: depth, breadth, and relative stability (Hoggan, 2016a).

- Depth refers to the impact of the learning outcome, or the degree to which it affects the way a person experiences, conceptualizes, and interacts with the world. Transformation implies something more than a minor change.
- Breadth refers to the range of contexts (e.g. work, home, different social groups) affected by the learning outcome.
- Relative stability refers to the permanence of the learning outcomes. Although former meaning-making habits are not miraculously forgotten, and future change is possible, learning outcomes must be more than just a temporary change to be considered transformative.

Using the Typology, Level 2: Categories of Outcomes

A deeper form of assessment involves describing with clarity the ways that learners change as a result of transformative learning. I have, for instance, studied the experiences of military veterans, cancer survivors, and first generation college students. In all these situations, some research participants could be described as having experienced transformation. However, the results of those transformations look very different. I would argue that they are very disparate things. As researchers, we need to exercise clarity about the phenomena we are describing, beginning with the outcomes observed.

As a tool to aid in this descriptive task, the Typology of Transformative Outcomes (Hoggan, 2016a) can serve as a structure. This typology proposes that there are six broad categories in which people change: Worldview, Self, Epistemology, Ontology, Behavior, and Capacity. Within these broad categories, specific learning outcomes can be enumerated. The Criteria and Typology combine to create the following basic structure (Hoggan, 2016b).

Transformative Learning Outcome	Depth / Evidence of Deep Impact	Breadth / Evidence of Impact on Multiple Life Contexts	Relative Stability / Evidence that Change is not Temporary
Worldview			
Self			
Epistemology			
Ontology			
Behavior			
Capacity			

Typology of Transformative Learning Outcomes

Using the Typology, Level 3: Subcategories of Outcomes

This structure is useful for understanding the meta-level of this approach to researching transformative learning, but it lacks the detail necessary for actually using the typology as a tool

for research. Specifically, the basic types of learning outcomes are too vague, and in their vagueness they imply that change within those types are uniform. Based on a review of the literature on transformative learning from 2003-2014, each of the broad categories listed above was presented as having several subcategories (Hoggan, 2016a). Instead of simply having “Worldview” as an analytic category, the structure is more useful when subcategories are used to expand it. As an example, the subcategories for *Worldview* expand the structure as follows.

Transformative Learning Outcome	Depth / Evidence of Deep Impact	Breadth / Evidence of Impact on Multiple Life Contexts	Relative Stability / Evidence that Change is not Temporary
Worldview: Change in Assumptions, Beliefs, Attitudes, Expectations			
Worldview: Change in Ways of Interpreting Experience			
Worldview: More Comprehensive or Complex Worldview			
Worldview: New Awareness or Understandings			
Worldview: (other)			
Worldview: (other)			

Typology of Transformative Learning Outcomes (Worldview category)

Similarly, the other categories need to expand to encompass, and thereby draw the researcher’s attention to, a range of possible subcategories. Subcategories derived from the literature review described above are:

- Worldview
(shown above)
- Self
 - Self-in-Relation
 - Empowerment/Responsibility

- Identity/View of Self
- Self-Knowledge
- Personal Narratives
- Meaning/Purpose
- Personality Changes
- Epistemology
 - More Discriminating
 - Utilizing New Ways of Knowing
 - More Open
- Ontology
 - Change in Affective Experience of Life
 - Change in Ways of Being
 - Change in Attributes
- Behavior
 - New Behaviors-Consistent with New Perspective
 - New Skills (necessary for implementing new perspectives, etc.)
- Capacity
 - Cognitive Development
 - Change in Level of Consciousness
 - Development of Spiritual Capacities

It is important to note that the subcategories developed in the literature review represent only the range of learning outcomes published in a particular literature base (i.e. articles addressing transformative learning in three North American, adult education journals). They do not represent an exhaustive list of all possible transformational outcomes. Nevertheless, the point is that it is at the level of these subcategories – and possibly at an even finer granularity – that the typology becomes useful for researchers.

When expanded to include all six categories with their full complement of subcategories, this research tool becomes too large to depict here, but its purpose is to prompt the researcher to use exactness in describing the types of change that they describe as part of the participants’ transformational experience. Obviously not every subcategory will be included in every instance of transformation. This tool leads to a depiction of transformative learning as a cluster of learning outcomes; the following examples are illustrative.

I was recently asked to demonstrate the difference between types of transformation that might be seen in students as they progress through higher education in comparison to what might be expected in the process of religion-based terrorist radicalization. Admittedly, these brief descriptions are more of a caricature or stereotype of these types of change; their purpose here is to demonstrate the use of this research tool.

The learning outcomes that might be expected of a first-generation college student for whom the experience was transformative might be depicted at a high level as the following cluster of outcomes.

- a. Worldview: More Complex,
- b. Worldview: New Awareness/Understandings,
- c. Self: Identity (“I am educated”; “I am a college graduate”; “I am an accountant”), d) Epistemology: More Discriminating,
- d. Epistemology: Discipline-specific (Math, Accounting, Artistic),

- e. Ontology: Discipline-specific Attributes (*Exactness* for accountants, *Caring* for nurses), g) Behavior: New Skills,
- f. Capacity: Development to Commitment-in-Relativism (in Perry's scheme).

In contrast, the learning outcomes that might be expected of religion-based terrorist radicalization might look like the following cluster of outcomes.

- a. Worldview: Change in Assumptions, Beliefs, Attitudes, Expectations, b) Worldview: New Awareness/Understandings,
- b. Worldview: Dehumanizing of the Other (people who are different in an important way),
- c. Self: Empowerment/Responsibility,
- d. Self: Personal Narrative,
- e. Epistemology: Utilizing New Ways of Knowing (Acceptance of External Authority as Valid Criteria for Truth Claims),
- f. Ontology: Attributes (possibly *Zealously Committed*),
- g. Behavior: New Behaviors Consistent with New Perspective,
- h. Capacity: Spirituality (Deepened Sense of Connection with a Higher Power),
- i. Capacity: Dualism (in Perry's scheme).

Using the Typology, Level 4: Nuanced Descriptions for Each Subcategory

For each of these subcategories, more detail would need to be provided, including descriptions for each one in terms of Depth, Breadth, and Relative Stability. If a researcher claims that a higher education graduate has been *transformed* in part because of a new epistemology learned in school, then that scholar needs to probe into exactly how the new epistemology changes the graduate's meaning making process (depth), to what extent the graduate employs that epistemology when making meaning in all the various lived contexts (breadth), and justify why it is apparent that the new epistemology is a stable part of the graduate's repertoire of meaning-making habits rather than something learned for class that does not continue to be used in the future (relative stability). All these descriptions help convey transformative impact of this one change (epistemology) on the learner.

Particular subcategories call for more nuanced descriptions. For instance, in the Radicalization description for Spirituality, there is a relationship that needs to be explored between the Deepened Sense of Connection with a Higher Power and a lessened sense of connection with and dehumanizing of other people. Similarly, both clusters of learning outcomes have Worldview: New Awareness/Understandings. It is necessary to describe the specifics for each.

Following is an extended example that analyzes a celebrity as if he was a research participant in order to show how one subcategory of learning and change might look. In this case, I am exploring how Dr. Stephen Covey, a bestselling author of many self-help and leadership books, demonstrates that he learned a particular epistemology and that it had a transformative affect on him. One of the most famous metaphors in his writings is called the emotional bank account. In short, Covey argues that in any relationship, you maintain an emotional bank account with the other party. Deposits are made into that account by keeping promises, being kind and loyal, listening, etc. Withdrawals are made by doing the opposite of those things, such as breaking promises and so forth. This metaphor demonstrates what I call an accountant's epistemology and shows that Dr. Covey applied this way of knowing in his thinking about relationships.

The metaphor he uses for relationship advice is helpful in many ways, but it certainly is not the only or perhaps best way of viewing relationships. It is an idiosyncratic way of viewing relationships that emanates from a particular way of thinking. Dr. Covey's undergraduate and graduate degrees were business management, and he was faculty in a business school for many years. It seems at some point that Covey learned an accountant's epistemology, which focuses on keeping track and maintaining balance. In short, when money flows into a bank account, the accountant must ensure that it is balanced on both sides of the balance sheet (assets and liabilities). For instance, an increase of cash in the bank (an asset) means that something else must be adjusted so that balance is maintained. If the increase in cash was from a loan, then the liability side of the balance sheet would increase—with the loan listed as a liability in the exact same amount of the increase in cash. Either way, assets and liabilities (or retained earnings, if we're being particular) must always be balanced. When used to inform his advice on relationships, this epistemology suggests that it is imperative that balance be maintained. Your relationship partners are keeping track at some level of all the good and bad things you do, and you are keeping track of the good and bad things they do. If you do more good than bad, then the excess is stored in the form of goodwill. If you do more bad than good, then the deficit translates into negative relationship effects. Either way, balance is maintained.

In terms of the criteria of depth, breadth, and relative stability: the fact that this epistemology tacitly informed the creation of his relationship metaphor shows that it had a deep impact in how he made meaning, his use of accounting epistemology when thinking about something unrelated to accounting (i.e. relationships) shows breadth, and that he created this metaphor in his middle years, long after his first exposures in business school, shows relative stability. The point here is that at some point Stephen Covey learned a new epistemology and it had a long-term, transformative affect on how he experienced, interpreted, and interacted with the world.

Conclusion

There are many epistemologies possible and that are currently employed in people's meaning making processes. And yet, to my knowledge there are no portrayals of those epistemologies in research reports. The same can be said for many or most of the subcategories in the typology. Although not all instances of transformative learning will necessarily yield change in all six categories, the typology prompts scholars to consider and articulate learning outcomes to which they might otherwise have been blind because of their disciplinary perspective or habitual expectations. If it is important to understand how someone (or a group of people) are making meaning and/or how they have changed in their meaning-making processes, then researchers need to provide much more elaboration in their descriptions and analysis of that meaning-making. Scholars can use this typology as a prompt and as a common vocabulary to discuss learning outcomes independent of disciplinary perspectives.

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The Neurophenomenology Roots for Transformative Learning

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Abstract: The contribution that Neurophenomenology (Varela, 1991) can propose to transformative learning relate to the premises from which “it is possible” and “it is necessary” to promote a transformative learning. The paper will carry on a theoretical discourse around the two vectors of the possibility and necessity of the transformative learning according to the biological perspective offered by the neurophenomenological approach.

The Conditions of “Possibility” for Transformative Learning: The Contribution of the Neurophenomenology

To be able to talk about transformative learning is necessary to investigate from a biological point of view its conditions of possibility. The bio-pedagogy showed over time reading models of the learning processes of autonomous and heteronomous kind (Stollo, 2003).

In the first case both the nature of the learning process that the possibility to intervene on it starting from the conditions of the training setting are very limited, because the process of learning is determined by the genetic predispositions of cognitive structures that select between the stimuli coming from the environment those most significant for the structures themselves. In the second case, however, the learning process even in part conditioned by individual predispositions, depends more on socio-cultural environment, paving the way for educational interventions aimed at the transformation. In physical and cultural contexts of belonging, man is never passive receptor of environmental stimuli that hurt him, but is an agent system set in relationships with other agents systems, modifying each other. The socio-cultural environment is the constructor and producer of mental structures, thus the educational process is not simply facilitated by environment products.

In line with a heteronomous type model, in the neurophenomenological approach (Varela, 1991; 1996), subjective schemes are not genetically determined, but they are definitely influenced by the types of beliefs and reasoning schemes available in the culture that surrounds the individual (Stollo, 2008). This, on one hand may anticipate the impact of contextual constraints, on the other opens the way for reflection on the transformative possibilities of educational practices, which may be dialogic interaction spaces where to revise mental habits, behaviors, taken for granted assumptions transversally to the multiple application contexts (Gordon, 2013). Varela (1979) defined the unity of autopoietic systems as organized networks of the processes of transformation and destruction through which the system continuously regenerated and realized the processes or relations that produced it. Starting from these conceptual premises, neurophenomenology (Varela, 1991; 1996) offers a meaningful contribution to support the conditions of possibility where transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000; 2003) may occur.

The core concept of the neurophenomenological reflection is the intentionality, which should be considered as the root of all human action, therefore, of the learning process and of the educational action. The central elements of the reflection on the intentionality find their theoretical roots in the phenomenology by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (Dreyfus, 1982), and their

empirical roots in the neuroscientific studies on brain functioning (Rudrauf, Lutz, Cosmelli, Lachaux, Le Van Quyen, 2003; Lutz & Thompson, 2003). Those latter besides using the traditional functional magnetic imaging resonance, adopting the virtual reality (Froese & Fuchs, 2012; Froese et al., 2014), which even if in experimental conditions, allows to identify with greater approximation the variables that impact on the process of action in contexts of real life. Considering these researches, neurophenomenology identifies the base of action modeling processes that are the principles of enaction, emergence and coevolution, which are rooted in Husserl's theoretical categories of the Constitution, Implicit and Intersubjectivity (Strollo, 2008; 2014).

The enaction implies that “the sensory-motor association shapes, but never in a deterministic way, the double endogenous activity representational and constructive in a time that it configures into meaningful world items in an unceasing flow” (Varela, 1999, p. 270). The enaction means that each human action (and each human action is an intentional experience) works only through sensory- motor acts.

The enactive approach to perception is not only constrained by the environment, but contributes to its effective activation, so that the body at the same time gives shape to and is formed by the environment. In terms of methodology, it is possible to trace the adoption of a process very close to that proposed by the phenomenological tradition, since the correlation between the subjective act and the objective data to which this act is aimed explains the separation between things and modes of manifestation of the things, the subjective perception of the acts explains the appearance of the independent reality of things, and vice versa. The starting point in the study of perception is not, therefore, a world that is given, independent of the subject of perception, but the sensorimotor structure of the cognitive agent, the way in which the nervous system connects the sensory and motor surfaces. The exterior, the environment, plays a disturbing function that resides at the origin of the activation of perception, but since it takes place in local situations and these are constantly changing, it is the sensory-motor structure that determines how that person can act and how it can be modulated by environmental events.

The emergency introduces the possibility of considering any action as characterized by the co- participation between different regions of the brain, which are functionally distinct and topographically distributed, and their sensorimotor embodiment. Recent surveys conducted in the field of neuroscience allowed to support the transition from a conception of the brain as modular, both from the topological that functional point of view, to one that sees it as active by means of the simultaneous action of fragments of modules communicating with each other for phenomena of ‘resonance’: the occurrence of a resonance between cognitive subsets that act simultaneously, even if dedicated to specific differentiated functions, brings out “the cognitive configuration of the subject at that precise moment” (Varela, 1990).

The result is the inability to reconduct a global process, such as the conscious behavior, only to local rules that govern brain function: emergency, the specific cognitive configuration, manifests itself as a construction dependent on a relationship between the organism in a whole and the environment. Consequently, the traditional notion of a cognitive agent, which collects information and makes decisions for subsequent actions is replaced by the concept of transient configuration that emerges “in a moment and disappears in the next moment, and this for every fraction of a second” (ibidem).

The coevolution, connected to Husserl's concept of intersubjectivity, concerns the ways of construction of models of actions: a reactive mode, a hedonistic mode and an eductive mode, reflecting the cognitive levels that are driving the evolution of the human gender. The difference

between the three constructive schemes depends on several cognitive factors that intervene in the processes of construction of actions: the reactive action does not require the use of particular cognitive strategies and allows to adapt to complex environments exclusively for very simple tasks. Sophisticated action carried out in an evolutionary environment require to process the action starting from one's own experience, making reference to a principle of pleasure/displeasure. This is the hedonist level: by virtue of processes of self-reinforcement, the agent works in advance and is able to build new strategies. But at the hedonistic level these action strategies are stiff and evolve slowly. The only way for an agent to change in real time unsuitable strategies is the education, which refers to the ability to mentally simulate future actions, without one's own direct experience or imitation, and from patterns of one's cognitive and symbolic dynamics, functional for the strategies to be implemented. The education means, then, agent's ability to simulate numerous cognitive trajectories, where it is necessary, and to realize a self-directed learning from these virtual trajectories (Stollo, 2008).

The limit for an isolated agent is, however, the possibility to use only models of action built on the basis of his own experience: the only way to build models, based not only on the individual experience, lies in the possibility of being able to make use of models built from the experience of others. This requires a new skill, the mirroring skill: thinking, modeling, reasoning in a given situation as well as the other would think, would model, would reason in the same situation. This is one of the main aspects of the concept of mirroring, essential concept to analyze the cohesion of human societies. In dealing with a new situation the human being does not build models only in function of what is observed but also considering the way in which the other would build models in the same situation. One of the key points of education in enactive key is thus intersubjectivity, the complementarity of self and other in the processes. One of the distinctive elements of the higher primates would, in fact, be to excel in providing an interpretation of the other's mind. This skill is a particular kind of intelligence, connected to the understanding of mental states, desires, intentions, and beliefs, based on the other's bodily presence. The other is learned, therefore, not as an object but as another similar subjectivity, an alter ego, who shares the same organic structure embodied in the same vital field: this double dimension of the body, organic and lived, is the basis of training and of the human evolution, so understood in terms of co-evolution (Stollo, 2008).

The learning process, therefore, in the neurophenomenological approach is always a transformative process: the conditions of possibility of learning reside in the ability to manage metacognitively one's own actions. About this conclusion the neurophenomenology has been working for years to build metacognitive strategies enabling subjects of experiments to report in first person (Diaz, 2013) what happens to them in the laboratory. One of the peculiar elements of neurophenomenology is criticism of the reports in third person and of researchers' reports, as a guide to the definition of what happens during the experiment (Varela, 1991; 1996; 1999). Hence the construction of paths that tend to form self-reflection about internal cognitive processes: these paths could be very interesting about the reflection on the possibility of a transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000) that makes individuals aware of their cognitive processes, acting on the emergent elements that regards the implicit and working as emancipatory element from cultural imprinting. We will discuss about these strategies currently in use as well as being tested in the Laboratory of Educational Epistemology and Practices in the end of our contribution.

How Neurophenomenology Supports the Conditions of Necessity for Transformative Learning

According to neurophenomenology, learning processes take place implicitly and are strongly influenced by the culture in which they implement, so we should reflect on how individuals are truly free in their choice of action. The condition of possibility of the process of freedom of choice lies in making explicit our own learning processes and in the emancipation from the cultural imprinting (Stollo, 2014). In this regard, neurophenomenology appears to present numerous connections with the theory of transformative learning: the input that generates the transformation is in fact intended in neurophenomenology as a kind of confused problem (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), as a perturbation (Varela, 1991) and as a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000).

Merleau-Ponty (1962) defines input as a kind of confusing problem: the body and the environment, sentient and sensitive, are not facing each other, sensation is not the irruption of sensitive in sentient, but is the outcome of a coupling, a synchronization between inside and outside, where the outside, the environment poses to the body of the living subject a kind of confused problem, for which the subject is called to find the attitude that will give him way to self-determine under this stimulus. Varela (1991; 1996) talks about inputs such as disturbance, perturbation, which triggers an autopoietic process of defense, which responds to the input renovating the subjectivity in its entirety. The concept of “perturbing input” exceeds the learning vision in mechanistic terms opening up to a more problematic interpretation of the person-environment relationship, according to which the environment, which also triggers strongly the dynamics of change, is “metabolized through a device certainly much more intricate and complex than the adaptive operation” (Stollo, 2006).

Mezirow speaks about input as disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000; 2003): the disorienting dilemma is a disturbing input that determines a time of uncertainty, estrangement, an “A-ha!” moment. The disorienting dilemma is something relevant to the mystery of learning, to that jump that when it is produced, requires the need to review our patterns of meaning. The disorienting dilemma is an acute, personal and internal crisis (Taylor, 2000), which refers to some problematic experiences, themed from current insights and reference frames. People feel a disorienting dilemma when they do not undertake an action or a change despite having experienced the transformation through the process of critical thinking and reflective discourse: in this case, they go through a gap between their values and reality. In the ten step precursors of transformative learning, the outcome is the commitment in new action, testing a road thus far never undertaken. Clearly, the growth of self-awareness, the discovery of the values, and the encounter with other people promote the mutual exchange of insights, perspectives and visions that can enhance transformative learning. The disorienting dilemmas are part of the common sense of the people, but they can not be solved without understanding the ways in which the perception, thought and action distorted the way in which people have defined the problem and themselves in relation to it, in order to increase the probability of transformation. This implies that individuals acquire an awareness of their ability to give shape to their lives and the ways in which they try to cope with the disorienting dilemmas that arise in their experiences. For both approaches, the condition of possibility for a transformative learning resides into an input aiming at a reconfiguration of the previous cognitive structures, through a cognitive conflict that has resulted in an acquisition of metacognitive knowledge of the ties that imprison people’s possibilities for action. In this regard the contribution of neurophenomenology can be further: neurophenomenology and its implications in pedagogy provide as well as a theoretical support

for the possibility and the need for a transformative learning, also practical strategies for its achievement.

These strategies are currently tested in LEPE (Laboratory of Educational Epistemology and Practices) as well as in a number of contexts in which it is adopted the neurophenomenological approach to the study of learning processes and include:

- Mindfulness as awareness and training strategy for first-person reports (for the clarification of the internal processes) used in both neuroscience research as well as in pedagogy (Lutz, Lachaux, Martinerie & Varela, 2002; Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013; De Simone, Stollo, 2014; De Simone, Stollo, Romano, 2014; Lancaster, 2015; Kass, 2015)
- Metacognitive paths on the topic of the awareness of personal process of cultural formation. In this regard, since 1999 it is used in LEPE a strategy designed to make users aware of the links between formal, informal and non-formal education, such as the hypertext: formal training means learning paths that take place in educational institutions and educational programs leading to the grant of recognized diplomas and qualifications; informal learning is a corollary of the experiences of everyday life, is not necessarily intentional and therefore can not be recognized even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills; non-formal learning means learning paths that take place outside of mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalized certificates. Non-formal learning is dispensed in the workplace or in the framework of activities of organizations or civil society groups (youth associations, trade unions or political parties) (Source Memorandum on lifelong learning, SEC, 2000).

The experience outcomes are reported in references sources (Stollo, 2008, 2014). Users through hypertext construction connect the three dimensions as starting point of the metacognitive awareness of the role that culture and environment play in the training process. Such awareness as appears from self-reports written by users generates awe and opens the way for a transformation aimed at achieving better management of the influence that culture plays on individual actions. This finds support in the reflection of the memes by Dawkins (Dawkins, 1976). The meme is an entity consisting of an information recognizable by the intellect (Stollo, 2008) on human culture, and that can be replicated by a mind or a symbolic memory support, for example a book, to another mind or support. In more specific terms, a meme would be a self-propagating unit of cultural evolution, analogous to what gene is for genetic, then an element of culture or civilization transmitted by non- genetic means, especially by imitation, in transgenerational sense. Memes are responsible for the trans-generational cultural transmission.

Hypertext, a kind of presentation of the connection between formal, informal and non-formal education on personal training story, is therefore understood as a disorienting dilemma from which to gain awareness of the role played by cultural imprinting on individuals' educational theory. The Laboratory of Educational Epistemology and Practices follows a different path than the most commonly used strategies as it does not depart from a biographical analysis of experience, but from a preliminary systematization of knowledge around the educational process by a synchronic and comparative analysis of the training models. This analysis is preliminary to the choice and the explication of a pattern of action, explanation that happens through the construction of hypertext, intended as a device of revision of people's educational work through the synchronic-comparative analysis of educational patterns of actions internalized.

Between Neurophenomenology and Transformation, Future Perspectives

The route presented intended to explore the contribution of neurophenomenology for transformative learning: the theory of autopoiesis (Varela, 1991) and of the embodied mind (ibidem) led to a paradigm shift in the approach to the complex relationship mind-body, understood as structuring elements of being in the world, in continuous autopoietic co-determination, which organize all human experience. We can therefore assume that the encounter between neurophenomenology and transformative learning would bring a mutual enrichment, considering neurophenomenology as a foundational element of transformative learning dimension and Mezirow's theory as an important instrument of strategies that enable precise first-person reports to be used in neurophenomenological trials.

Neurophenomenology, in conclusion, not only substantiates (rooting it in the body) the questioning of the prospects of meaning on which it focuses the transformative learning theory, but provides the incarnated dimension of the opportunity to experiment new roles, after the review process, and to add in individuals' conscious experience of new pattern of action. Therefore, our future recommendations is for a deepening of the links that connect transformative learning theory and the embodied-enactive conception of the knowledge, which is embodied in our body and embedded in our relations and in lived experience.

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“Where Philosophy Ends, Education Begins”: Engaging at the Intersection of Transformation Theory and Richard Rorty’s Philosophy

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Abstract: This paper aims at expanding Transformation Theory with Richard Rorty’s idea of frames of reference, which he conceptualizes as vocabularies. In order to distinguish between good learning and transformative learning and to counteract the critique of conceptual looseness I take advantage of Rorty’s idea of re-conceptualization. By doing this the tension between personal growth and social action can be utilized as a source of autonomy and creativity.

Introduction: Where Philosophy Ends, Education Begins

In an essay “problematizing the established silence between philosophy and education,” Arcilla asks us “Why aren’t philosophers and educators speaking to each other?” (Arcilla, 2002, p. 2). Following Arcilla, “the disciplines do belong together, and should listen to each other” (Arcilla, 2002, p. 3). Staying in his line of argument, one of the guiding assumptions of this paper is that “[p]hilosophers and educators need each other” (Arcilla, 2002, p.7). He goes on, saying that

without philosophy, educators will be in the dark about what they ought to be daring to build, with respect to what principal impediments their society has to overcome if it is to regenerate itself at a higher state of happiness. And without education, philosophers will never see their work bear fruit. (Arcilla, 2002, p. 7)

Therefore this paper engages “[w]here philosophy ends, [and] education begins” (Arcilla 2002, p. 7) in order to explore the intersectional potential of Richard Rorty’s philosophy (Rorty, 1992) and Jack Mezirow’s Theory of Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1991, 2000, 2012). The purpose of this paper is to first explore three theoretical voids within Transformative Learning Theory and to then suggest how Rorty’s philosophy might contribute to the Transformation Theory. In order to shed some light on what educators ought to be daring to build, using Arcilla’s words, which is to foster perspective transformation according to Transformation Theory this paper will begin with a brief overview on Rorty’s notion of “re-contextualization.” This idea of Rorty is especially fruitful for Transformative Learning Theory as it allows us to make a distinction between good learning and transformative learning, which is clearly needed (Newman, 2012) as well as to draw a line between change and transformation. As such it provides deeper understanding of the nature of meaning perspectives in general and the process of change in perspectives. This sets the backdrop for the second section, where Rorty’s thesis of contingency is going to be explored in respect to its educational implications or more precisely its implications for Transformative Learning Theory. In addition to that, this paper explores Mezirow’s (1995) limited perspective on Rorty’s work insofar as he uses his ideas to critique Habermas but is unable to profit from Rorty’s ideas any further than that. Concerning the fact that Mezirow follows Habermas without criticizing his notion of discourse it is even more interesting that Mezirow (1995) uses Rorty’s work to criticize Habermas. Therefore I am convinced that Rorty’s work has to be explored within and beyond Transformation Theory.

Transformative Learning, Good Learning and Rorty's Notion of Re-Conceptualization

Newman (2012) and Dirkx (2012) both criticize the body of Transformation Theory for its conceptual looseness. Newman doubts that there is “such thing as transformative learning; perhaps there is just good learning” (Newman, 2012, p. 37). He even “proposes that we abandon the term *transformative learning*, and adopt the straightforward term *good learning*” (Newman, 2012, p. 36). Kegan states that the notion of “[t]ransformation begins to refer to any kind of change or process at all” (Kegan, 2000, p. 47). Therefore he argues that there is a need to distinguish transformative learning more precisely and clearly from other ways of learning (Kegan, 2000, p. 47). Following Kegan, “[t]ransformation should not refer to just any kind of change, even to any kind of dramatic, consequential change” (Kegan, 2000, p. 49). In order to draw a line between change and transformation it is helpful to explore Rorty's concept of “re-contextualization.” Rorty conceptualizes transformation as re-contextualization of our self, similar to what Mezirow refers to as a perspective transformation. Dirkx sees “Transformative Learning as Self-Formation” (Dirkx, 2012, p. 402). Rorty's concept of changing vocabularies provides a framework which allows us to draw a clear distinction between the idea of change and the idea of transformation. Rorty's vocabularies are more than just the way of how we describe ourselves and the world we live in. Vocabularies are linguistic housings of certainty and clarity. They do not solely include what Mezirow calls a frame of reference as an inside perspective – in Rorty's words set of beliefs – but provides greater insight by an “outside perspective.” Rorty distinguishes final and changing vocabularies. While the latter ones are always tentative and open for change, final vocabularies are what Mezirow calls taken for granted frames of reference which are not critically questioned. According to Rorty, “[a]ll human beings carry about a set of words which they employ to justify their actions, their beliefs, and their lives. These are the words in which we formulate praise of our friends and contempt for our enemies, our long-term projects, our deepest self-doubts and our highest hopes. They are the words in which we tell, sometimes prospectively and sometimes retrospectively, the story of our lives. I shall call these words a person's "final vocabulary." It is "final" in the sense that if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no noncircular argumentative recourse” (Rorty, 1989, p. 73). Vocabularies are frames of reference that are brought into being through language. Re-contextualization is synonymous for perspective transformation or more precisely for a transformation in one's meaning perspective while a transformation in one's meaning schemes refers more to the idea of an *extension* of the vocabulary that is already in use. Rorty (1992) introduces the concept of irony: an attitude that *doubts* our own vocabulary in a radical and unceasing way. This specific attitude is going to be introduced as an attitude for the adult educator in order to foster perspective transformation. Having that attitude means that we are unable to take our ideas or frames of reference for granted because we are aware that the way we describe ourselves and our being in the world is always subject to change. Furthermore we are aware of the contingency and invalidity of our beliefs and final vocabularies, which might be helpful to remain critically towards our own guiding assumptions.

Rorty's Thesis of Contingency

One of the central assumptions of Rorty's philosophy is the notion that all language is contingent. His thesis of contingency “is premised on the failure so far of human beings to identify a convincing, necessary reason for why things must be the way they are. In response to that failure, the thesis holds that we should from now on settle for contingent reasons” (Arcilla, 1993, p. 201). Mezirow states, with respect to experiences and learning, that “[w]hat becomes

fact for us depends upon how we have defined for ourselves the nature of our experience. We produce facts rather than discover them; the “facts” that an adult learns thus are grounded in the orientation and frame of reference of the learner” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 25). Contingency, even in the context of a frame of reference, offers potential for change or even perspective transformation. According to Arcilla, “[c]ontingency stresses freedom by keeping open the possibility of metaphorical redescription” (Arcilla, 1993, p. 202). Following Arcilla, “Rorty observes that when it is understood that any reason we may offer for holding a belief is contingent, then it is always feasible and pertinent to ask, Would we prefer to redescribe metaphorically the circumstances of the belief such that the offered reason appears out of place?” (Arcilla, 1993, p. 202). This notion refers almost directly to what Mezirow describes as premise reflection in order to achieve a change in meaning perspectives: “Premise reflection involves our becoming aware of *why* we perceive, think, feel, or act as we do and of the reasons for and consequences of our possible habits of (...) judgment” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 108). For Mezirow, “[p]remise reflection is the dynamic by which our belief systems—meaning perspectives — become transformed. Premise reflection leads to more fully developed meaning perspectives, that is, meaning perspectives that are more inclusive, discriminating, permeable (open), and integrative of experience” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 111). Perspective transformation as the cardinal goal of Transformative Learning Theory “is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167). Mezirow’s conceptualization of premise reflection in order to foster a transformation in perspectives is very close to what Arcilla describes as an example of Rorty’s thesis of contingency:

For example, in response to the idea that we should institute standardized tests in schools because we need to raise the productivity of workers, one may redescribe the circumstances that make productivity, or a specific metaphor of “productivity,” a desideratum, and so make the above reason seem beside the point and a new practice seem in order. This freedom to redescribe one’s circumstances, he [Rorty] argues, promises to enhance each of our capacities to form both a more original, happier self and a more liberal, compassionate community. (Arcilla, 1993, p. 202)

Arcilla asks if Rorty’s thesis of contingency does have educational implications, in order to explore the intersectional potential between Rorty’s philosophy and Transformative Learning Theory we need to get a definite answer here, which Arcilla provides to the question he raised: “Clearly it does, for it paves the way for a promotion of ironic self-formation and compassionate communal solidarity as the two principal aims of an education that would support a liberal culture” (Arcilla, 1993, p. 203). This paper argues even further in promoting the attitude of an ironist as a goal for adult educators aiming at teaching transformatively, which Rorty conceptualizes as the following:

I shall define an “ironist” as someone who fulfills three conditions: (1) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered; (2) she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts; (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. Ironists who are inclined to philosophize see the choice between vocabularies as made neither within a neutral

and universal metavocabulary nor by an attempt to fight one's way past appearances to the real, but simply by playing the new off against the old. (Rorty, 1989, p. 73)

Rorty provides us with a theoretical background with practical implications for the adult educator's attitude. Our own vocabulary has to stay tentative, always open to change. It is through the constant process of re-contextualization that we are able to free ourselves from the governing metaphors of mind and knowledge, or to free ourselves from self-imposed limits. Transformative learning includes "learning how we are caught in our own history and reliving it" (Mezirow, 1978, p. 101) in order to emancipate ourselves from this history and to remain open to change our vocabularies if needed.

Between Tradition and Innovation: Rorty's Work Within Transformative Learning Theory

Though we re-contextualize in the private, we live not apart from the public. Rorty points out that it is important to diminish cruelty and this responsibility takes place in the public sphere (Rorty, 1992, p. 61f.). According to Rorty, Habermas and his notion of discourse belongs to the public sphere and not to the private sphere. Rorty refers to what he calls a liberal ironist:

I borrow my definition of "liberal" from Judith Shklar, who says that liberals are the people who think that cruelty is the worst thing we do. I use "ironist" to name the sort of person who faces up to the contingency of his or her own most central beliefs and desires—someone sufficiently historicist and nominalist to have abandoned the idea that those central beliefs and desires refer back to something beyond the reach of time and chance. Liberal ironists are people who include among these ungroundable desires their own hope that suffering will be diminished, that the humiliation of human beings by other human beings may cease. (Rorty, 1989, p. xv)

According to Rorty, "Jürgen Habermas is a liberal who is unwilling to be an ironist" (Rorty, 1989, p. 61). This second aspect of Rorty's work which might enrich Transformation Theory as well, is his distinction between private and public sphere which refers to one of the major problems in the field of adult education and transformative learning theory: the tension between personal growth and social action. Rorty's work is located in both fields. Instead of following the (modern) attempt to dissolve this paradox he conceptualizes it as a source of inspiration, creativity and autonomy. It is interesting, that Mezirow himself refers to Rorty's critique concerning Habermas' normative concept of valid arguments and traces only one small element of the discourse between both of them:

Rorty contends that the normative concept of "valid arguments" should be replaced with the concept of "arguments held to be true for us at this time." Habermas, in response, agrees that reason is inescapably situated in history, political culture, body, and language. Still, he holds that this does not warrant equating reason with what is acceptable at a given time or place. He sees this relativistic position as grounded in an "objectivist fallacy." (Mezirow, 1995, p. 56)

Unfortunately Mezirow stops short here and limits his perspective on Rorty's philosophy to his critique on Habermas' work. Instead of narrowing Mezirow's perspective on Rorty's work it should be broadened. Staying in Mezirow's (1995) tradition, the intersectional potential of Rorty's philosophy and Transformative Learning Theory needs to be broadened. Rorty's perspective allows us to develop the individual as well as the social dimension of Transformative Learning Theory within the field of tension, which Rorty (1992) strengthens through his distinction between private and public sphere.

Final Thoughts

The tension between personal growth and social action can be utilized as a source of autonomy and creativity by exploring what Rorty refers to as a liberal ironist in the context of Transformative Learning Theory. Therefore I am convinced that extending the work of Rorty within Transformation Theory enriches the body of theory and helps us to solve some of the problems within the theory. There has only been shed a little light on some aspects that might help the adult educator to figure out what he or she ought to do in order to teach for change. A more detailed elaboration of Rorty's contribution to Transformative Learning Theory is needed. Only then, it will be possible to see how his work bears fruit, to say it with Arcilla's words. If we take the idea of re-contextualization serious as adult educators it provides us with some guidance in our own practice, fostering transformative learning and in keeping our own vocabularies tentative and open to change.

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Exploring the Intersection of the Subconscious and Conscious Through the Use of Mandalas

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The individual is the only reality. The further we move away from the individual toward abstract ideas about Homo sapiens, the more likely we are to fall into error.

Carl Jung

Abstract: This paper explores the intersection of the subconscious and the conscious through the use of mandalas. This is a self-study, exploring pre-linguistic imagery by drawing, painting and sculpting mandalas at junctures along my PhD program to date. I offer grounding and analysis through transformative learning theory from the perspective of depth psychology supported by the work of Mezirow, Boyd & Myers, Dirkx, Hillman, and Jung. I present example mandalas that represent my heightened awareness of subconscious imagery and some points of transformative learning in my meaning making that arises from encountering these images. This is presented through the art, the description from associated memos, and the reflections that take place following the mandala creations.

Introduction

This paper will explore the intersection of the subconscious and the conscious through the use of creating mandalas during the course of my doctoral journey. I offer grounding and analysis through transformative learning (TL) theory from the perspective of depth psychology (DP) supported by the work of Mezirow, Boyd & Myers, Dirkx, Hillman, and Jung. My concern is in regards to the paucity of image exploration and image making as a means of bringing to awareness deeply held images that guide our ways of being and meaning making. My review of transformative literature to date reveals a number of practices that use imagery for aesthetic enrichment, expressive photography and the like; but few actually involve individuals or groups artistically presenting deeply embedded imagery as a means of extra-rational expression. Current practices primarily use linguistic forms of expression such as storytelling, auto-ethnography, and drama to unearth deeply held premises. Although these forms are important in coming to understand and expressing ourselves, I'm most concerned with the neglect of primary imagery; those first-born, unencumbered by language. Becoming more aware of, and then critically examining, these pre-linguistic images may be important in challenging the psychological assumptions that limit our potential for transformation. Mezirow understood the importance of the pre-linguistic forms in what he called pre-reflective learning.

Learning is not solely the function of language. Perception or prereflective learning is the learning that occurs prior to the use of language to form categories... ..Our 'executive' sense of agency – the capacity of the self to make decisions independent of socially imposed expectations, assessments, or conditions – is located in this prelinguistic domain. (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 15-16).

The question which I hope to begin answering in this brief study is how might the visual expression of subconscious imagery, through the mandala form, lead to transformative learning

within my doctoral journey? First, one might ask why the mandala form? I offer that the mandala form has been utilized throughout centuries to explore and represent the concept of wholeness, and I believe it is through that seeking of greater wholeness that significant transformative learning may occur for adults. There have been a few earlier studies, mostly in the 80's and 90's, studying the use of mandalas in psychotherapeutic work, both with individuals and groups. Two such researchers describe their support for use of the mandala in the following terms:

Inherent in the meditative, healing and integrative functions represented in mandalas is the existential attempt of man to orient him/herself in time and space with meaning. As such, the "making of a mandala is a universal activity" (Arguelles, 1972), and the person making the mandala is mapping a territory wherein polarities are reconciled and transformed into an integrative whole (Ireland & Brekke, 1980, p. 217).

It is this integrative whole in which I seek in this study which defines my goal in transformative learning. I will leave it to the future, and perhaps others, to argue the boundaries between this study, and similar forms of transformative learning practice, and psychotherapy.

Theoretical Grounding

This study is grounded, fundamentally, by the work of Carl Jung. Both the depth psychologists, and those in the field of transformative learning from which I draw, would either identify as Jungian or admit to being heavily influenced by his work. Let me first let Jung describe how important the unconscious mind is to our being and our potential development since it is a major supposition in my study. "The conscious mind is based upon, and results from, an unconscious psyche which is prior to consciousness and continues to function together with, or despite, consciousness" (Jung, 1939, p. 13). Jung goes on to say, "...the unconscious as a whole is far from being a relic of consciousness" (p. 13), and states "...it is autonomous; it has a law unto itself" (p. 13). I will also note that it is my preference to use the term subconscious in my study in replacement of unconscious. Subconscious is a term of more recent advent and better describes the underlying, ever active mind rather than a term that alludes to being unreachable, or at least contrary to consciousness.

Jung's emphasis on individuation, the integration of fragmentation, the seeking of wholeness, and the use of mandalas are key to my study. The process of integration towards wholeness was the essence of Jung's work. Jung describes this work as the integration of the personality, the active assimilation of all the disparate elements working towards the highest realization of the self. "Personality is an act of the greatest courage in the face of life, and means unconditional affirmation of all that constitutes the individual, the most successful adaptation to the universal conditions of human existence, with the greatest possible freedom of personal decision" (Jung, 1939, p. 286).

I call upon Dirx to explain the more recent evolution of Jung's theories through the work of his predecessors and himself:

The forces and dynamics associated with individuation are largely unconscious and manifest themselves, independently from the conscious ego, within the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of our lives. Images play a central role in Boyd's notion of transformative education. Research and theory in depth psychology provides some ideas about how to work with the images that might arise within educational contexts. This process, referred to as the "imaginal method," involves describing, associating, amplifying, and animating the images in order to foster learners' insights into their own perceptions and motivations (Dirx, 2000, p. 1).

It is this imaginal method that Jung himself pursued and which led him to begin a long journey of self-discovery using the mandala form. Jung began a personal journey of confronting his subconscious in 1913 after having a number of frightening visions and dreams that nearly drove him to madness. Rather than giving way to madness, he began deeply exploring these dreams and visions through both writing and drawing mandalas, unearthing deeply seated images that lay at the root of his soul. He continued this journey until 1930, with many of those explorations contained in his famous work *The Red Book*.

Hillman builds upon the work of Jung and deepens the field he considers “soul-making” (Hillman, 1975, p. 23). He views our being as composed primarily of images. “Man is primarily an imagemaker and our psychic substance consists of images; our being is imaginal being, an existence in imagination. We are indeed “stuff as dreams are made on” (Hillman, 1975, p. 23). In related work, expanding the context of individuation, Boyd and Dirkx teamed up in a study that draws from Jungian theory but with a critical social lens. In this small group work, which was psychotherapeutic in nature, they came to grips with power-laden, uncritically examined premises. “Political and economic premises have been part of our socialization and they have become reified. They have their counterpart in the reifications of social psychological suppositions” (Boyd, Dirkx, Kondrat, Myers, & Saul, 1991, p. 234).

It is my view that images may often carry these inhibiting reifications. Critically examining those may be key to fruitful liberation. The authors go on to say: “The bondage is of our own doing and it is structured upon our own individual unexamined life. We submit to external bondage; it is sought and surrendered to as our way of being in the world” (Boyd et al., 1991, p. 234).

So, given great fragmentation of self and the effects of our social milieu upon our identification, how might we come to grips with beginning to integrate these many disparate parts? I draw upon Dirkx to summarize how we might seek greater wholeness which I believe can be transformative in our lives.

These unconscious aspects of psyches are almost continuously seeking expression within our lives, often in unconscious and disruptive ways. The intent here is to deepen a sense of wholeness by, paradoxically, differentiating, naming, and elaborating all the different selves that make up who we are as persons. Engaging in dialog with these structures is a way of consciously participating in the process of individuation and integrating them more fully within our conscious lives (Dirkx, 2000, p. 4).

The form through which this greater wholeness is sought in my study is the mandala, the form Jung found so successful in his own life’s work and in the lives of his patients.

Methodology

This is an autobiographical self-study exploring pre-linguistic imagery by drawing and painting mandalas at junctures along my PhD program to date. I began these mandala creation sessions one year ago with specific problems in mind surrounding the continued study in my program. My hope at that time was to have the mandalas direct me in my scholarly pursuits. This early experience then lead me to a broader, deeper investigation of my own subconscious content with a hopeful outcome of transformative learning opportunities.

I began this exploration with what I would call a meditative approach that incorporated what Jung terms active imagination (MAI). These sessions begin with closing my eyes for at least ten minutes, clearing my mind of random thoughts, and allowing my mind’s eye to become

active. The images that come to mind I immediately translate to paper by drawing and painting, repeating the meditation and the image building until I feel it's a completed whole. I follow that artistic effort with a memo describing my image emergence. Afterward, I leave the mandala but return to it on occasion to reflect upon it, with the hope of integrating and assimilating the image(s). Even though my intent is not to interpret the images, this becomes unavoidable. At least for me, there is an innate sense to try my best to put the images into some kind of meaning perspective. These impressions I record as reflections.

As this work continued, I was drawn to begin building upon and modifying the process of image emergence. Dreams became a very strong influence, and many of the images emerging through dreams called for three-dimensional modeling (TDM). There were textures, form, and image sequencing that could not be easily communicated with pencil and paint. This began a subtle diffusion or disintegration of the traditional mandala circle although I often cluster the completed TDM images in a circular sequence pattern. Another image emergence process later arose through a moment of inspiration. I begin by first creating a painting surface with my hands in gesso that leaves random, raised lines and stipples on the surface. I then strike across the impasto surface with a graphite stick that exposes the chaos that my finger movements leave behind. I gaze upon this chaos over a number of sessions and draw out images and forms with paint as they arise. I name this a process of projection upon chaos (PUC). This method of image emergence is not unlike the Rorschach Test but without binary patterning.

Results

Overview

Ideally, I would present all the mandala work to date, in its entirety, for you to view and experience as you feel lead to in coming to better understand me or my perspectives. This would of course require you to have some desire to come to know me better or at least have a casual curiosity about my methods. In that experience of viewing or touching my work, you might begin to identify characteristics either familiar to you or perhaps somehow similar to you. I share with you here that I believe this process of sharing, especially imagery emerged from the subconscious, is extremely important for both the individual and the viewer. We come to understand ourselves in greater depth, from the roots of our soul, and come to understand others in this process in a much more meaning filled way.

I also share that I have come to learn that this process of subconscious image making is an ongoing journey, and one that will take a good number of years for full development which may come to fruition as a greater sense of wholeness. At the one-year mark in creating these mandalas, I can say that I have learned a great deal about my own meaning making in the world. I view this as transformative. In the following results I will share only a few insights that I would describe as impactful. There are others, such as coming to grips with a hierarchy of goodness and the influence of polarity and quaternary frameworks, which I hope to share in a future, more comprehensive paper.

Chaos

Mandala 8



Mandala 42



Mandala 13



Mandala 8 is an image I produced in the MAI method that depicts what might be described as chaos. This too became a theme and a vantage point in which differing methods of expression evolved. In reflection, I can only view the one round spot as myself amidst the disorder and powers at which I have no control. This helps me to understand how I view the world, as chaos. I feel as if myself, and the rest of humanity and other creatures/life forms of the world, are at mercy to the powers of the natural world and to the contextual and cultural constructs which mankind has created.

In Mandala 42, I see chaos in a most maddening form. This mandala is created in the PUC method described in my methodology. Here we see fragments of human and animal forms floating in a sea of energy with no centering or organizing tendency. On reflection, I see this as an image of insanity as we term it. Jung describes the fear of going mad in the process of active imagination and describes why the fear is misplaced. "...the reason why the involvement looks very much like psychosis is that the patient is integrating the same fantasy-material to which the insane person falls victim because he cannot integrate it but is swallowed up by it" (Jung, et al., 2009, p. 29).

In Mandala 13, another image produced through MAI, we see layers upon a mandala with areas of squares defined. To me, this represents our constructs that we project upon the world. I see my view as many layered, very complex, and fragmented, as I compartmentalize the chaos before me into pieces and parts that can be better named and shared. My meaning making creates order to allow me to make my way in the world and to prevent me from falling to the mercy of chaos which is at hand.

Fears and Tribulations

Mandala 16



Mandala 34



Mandala 44



In Mandala 16 I present a dream image of a car partially submerged in a river where the bridge appears to have collapsed. This is the dominant image of a dream sequence, or what I would call a vignette. On a journey, I was posed with the tribulation of whether to cross the river or not, given the difficulty of not knowing the depth of the water and whether I could make it to the other side. My car appears stalled in the midst of the river. I would not name this a nightmare but more a tribulation, an example of a dream where I am challenged, chased, or seemingly lost but not destroyed.

In Mandala 34 I show a circular arrangement where I have diffused the traditional mandala form and used TDM to capture three primary images in a tribulation dream sequence. I arrange them in the circle natural to their association and sequence. This is a dream where a large, gelatinous growth appears on my head that I subsequently pull off and it morphs into seedpod like shape. As I hold it in my hand to observe, it morphs into a rat like creature. I share with you here that I have been diagnosed in the past with two forms of cancer. Upon reflection, I view this image as a subconscious awareness that the disease is always at present.

In the final exhibit, Mandala 44, I present an image created through PUC. White figures dance about like ghosts in the darkness where three dragons or leviathans dwell. This image presents aspects of fear, delight, and fascination to me. Though fearful, I am drawn to these leviathans which I feel may present fear of the creatures (content) that dwell in the deep; perhaps the subconscious. In closing, I would say that this final image represents my current positioning in this entire process to date. I am becoming more aware of my elemental fears and frameworks but still drawn to explore and hopefully integrate them all into wholeness. I recognize I still have far to go, but I am encouraged by my progress and feel the learning that is taking place is transformational.

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The Shape of Oppression: Habits of Mind and Being in the Social Context

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Abstract: Butterwick and Selman (2012) argue that embodiment, or coming to embodiment, can lead to decolonization. This paper will propose that taking a somatic approach to transformative learning theory can make it more relevant to those from marginalized groups and can potentially provide a means through which internalized oppression can be unlearned. This paper will briefly explore the landscape of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000), the ways in which alternate epistemologies – namely somatics/embodied knowledge – contribute to this model (Amann, 2003; Fisher-Yoshida, 2009; Merriam et al., 2007), and how alternate epistemologies can contribute to the transformative learning theory. When the social context is explored within the realm of transformative learning, the role of systemic power and how it shapes the lived experiences for many surfaces (Schlattner, 1997). This paper supports the premise that social oppression occurs through the body (Johnson, 2007). Those who are marginalized and disenfranchised are targets of objectification and self-objectification (Zurbriggen, 2013) through felt impacts of microaggressions (Sue, 2010) and outright assaults. These microaggressions have the ability to shape one’s “habits of mind” (Mezirow, 2000), but more importantly, one’s habits of being. Haines (2007) calls this social trauma, which is similar to the process of microtrauma accumulation, which results in (capital-T) Trauma (Crastonopol, 2015). When external oppression is unknowingly internalized, it creates a colonized state of being. Thus, integrating the social context to an embodied transformative learning model may provide a means through which internalized oppression can be unlearned.

The Shape of Oppression

Embodiment is the process by which people come to their senses in the realm of somatics. This process includes integrating the whole self and coming to an awareness of how colonizing systemic forces have contributed to our fragmented states. This paper seeks to outline a way in which decolonization or at least partial decolonization might occur through embodied transformative learning. The paper will propose that embodied knowing can work in partnership with the transformative learning model to support transformation in a social context—one that involves a complex interplay of power differences. If a practitioner is intentional in integrating all of these elements and modalities of learning, then it is possible to promote a level of partial-decolonization for all who participate in social systems, thereby moving towards the dismantling of systems of oppression. This paper will briefly explore the landscape of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000), the ways in which somatics/embodied knowledge might contribute to this model (Amann, 2003; Fisher-Yoshida, 2009; Merriam et al., 2007), and the relationship of this proposed model to decolonizing pedagogy (Freire, 1979, 2000).

Discussion

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory is a good foundation for understanding the habituated state of being (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning is a theory that articulates the process by which adults transform their unexamined frames of reference (e.g., meaning schemes, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective. When these frames shift, it may be possible to generate beliefs and opinions that are congruent with a wider spectrum of reality and therefore more useful in guiding action. In the context of transformational learning theory, such shifts in frames of reference occur when a *disorienting dilemma* is mediated or precipitated in dialogue with others, such that one's habits of mind are challenged and can no longer be taken-for-granted. Ultimately, transformational learning occurs when there is a transformation in beliefs or attitudes (a meaning scheme), or a transformation of one's entire perspective (habits of mind) (Mezirow, 2000).

Alternate Epistemologies

Some critics have suggested that the transformative learning model as originally conceptualized omits important contexts in which frames of references are both shaped and transformed. For example, transformative learning theory concentrates primarily on the process of individual-level transformation, without necessarily addressing a systemic perspective (Clark & Wilson, 1991). Jarvis (2006) wrote that the model "omitted the place of the body, omitted the analysis of the nature of the person, omitted the centrality of the place of experience, and omitted the complexity of the social context of learning" (p. 175). Although Mezirow conceded that assumptions on which habits of mind and related points of view "may be predicated upon epistemological, logical, ethical, psychological, ideological, social, cultural, economic, political, ecological, scientific, or spiritual, or... pertain to other aspects of experience." (2000, p. 20) and suggested a role for other ways of knowing, he did not point to these directly.

Alternate epistemological perspectives provide opportunities for more diverse populations to contribute to the transformative learning theory. In the past 10 to 15 years, new research has expanded this theory to be inclusive of affective, somatic, symbolic, cognitive, spiritual, and cultural ways of knowing (Tisdell, 2003; Yorks & Kasl, 2006; Cranton & Kucukayadin, 2013), allowing for greater representation of various populations with different ways of knowing in the literature. For instance, Lawrence discussed the role of intuition as a preconscious state and its implications for adult education, and how this contributes to embodied knowing (2012). Cranton and Kucukaydin focused on the role of the Jungian unconscious, and argued for an *extra-rational* element to transformative learning that should be critically examined (2013). Through a pedagogical perspective, Yorks and Kasl (2006) discussed *expressive ways of knowing*, which are people's intuitive grasp of what they perceive through images, body sensation, and imagination. Tisdell focused on how affective, somatic, symbolic, cognitive, spiritual and cultural domains contribute to adult learning (2003). Many authors (Amann, 2003; Cranton & Roy, 2003; Freiler, 2008; Gunnlagson, 2005; Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014) have advocated for a holistic approach to the theory and have created openings for greater opportunities in research and discovery on the experience of transformational learning.

Social Context

While there are some populations from subordinated identity groups included in the transformative learning literature (Kaya, 2012; Herndon, 2015), it is important to continue to bring the stories of the marginalized to this area of academia. Moreia and Diversi (2011)

proposed that one way of expanding the circle of inclusion in education is by insisting on a pedagogy and representation of the Other that honors visceral, bodily situated experiences of exclusion beyond the colonized role of “samples and informants” (p. 247).

It is for this reason that it is of particular importance to understand how culture and systemic power differences relative to various social identities in a setting such as the United States might inform one’s habits of mind and one’s habits of being (Schlattner, 1997). Jarvis (2006) emphasized the role of the social environment in shaping an individual’s lifeworld, while Freire (2000) emphasized the need to include in the transformative learning model an understanding of the larger systems at work that shape one’s values, assumptions, and beliefs in the world. Mezirow’s (2000) primary focus on the process of individual-level transformation left systemic contexts out. Thus, the model is considered by some to be decontextualized and to ignore issues of power (Clark & Wilson, 1991). Clark and Wilson stated, “In an attempt to construe meaning from experience through critical and rational discourse, Mezirow systematically seeks to remove the very element which brings meaning to experience: context” (p. 76).

Paolo Freire (2000), one of Mezirow’s early influences, emphasized the importance of creating critical consciousness (*conscientization*), which can occur when we question what we take for granted as being true, especially when what we take for granted is also the result of systemic oppression. Mezirow (2000) and Freire agreed on the process by which *conscientization* / critical consciousness is arrived: through linguistic dialogue (Durakoglu, 2013). Mezirow believed that the disorienting dilemma is facilitated through dialogue with others in a way that directly places into question how assumptions are created in the lifeworld of the individual. New ways of seeing the world for both Mezirow and Freire require a dialogic relationship between learning cohorts to challenge these taken-for-granted assumptions that create one’s habits of being. However, without a felt sense of an internal shift in one’s own lifeworld, transformative learning and decolonizing pedagogy may have limits. In other words, if transformative learning depends only on dialogue, then its ability to change an individual’s sensory world (Jarvis, 2006), impact one’s habituated neuronal patterns that determine one’s relationship to the environment and situations, and create a shift in the individual’s ability to adopt new embodied ways of being (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014) is limited. Dialogue alone may not be enough to address the disembodiment that occurs on an unconscious level through systemic power differences that play out in the relational realm.

Multiple social forces work through the body to bring oppression into being (Johnson, 2007). Gunnalgsen (2005) argued that dynamics of “othering” (p. 348) can take place within one’s own being if one’s outward gaze is divided or split off from one’s interior realms. In other words, fragmentation of the embodied self occurs for various reasons, but due to various social differences and varying levels of access to privilege in America, it is possible to treat oneself as the “other” due to a process whereby many messages with motives that only serve the privileged become internalized as being true and real. Due to the history of imperialism and capitalism, this is a country where one’s formative years may be premised on forms of internalized colonialization, as well as internalized oppression (David, 2014; Williams, 2012).

Bartky (1990) argued that all modes of oppression, including psychological, political, and economic modes, as well as the kinds of alienation that they generate, serve and maintain a caste system of privilege on the basis of race, sex, and class: “every mode of oppression within the system has its own part to play, but each serves to support and to maintain the others” (p. 32). bell hooks (2015) wrote:

It is the western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority that is the root cause of violence against women, of adult violence against children, of all violence between those who dominate and those who are dominated. It is this belief system that is the foundation on which sexist ideology and other ideologies of group oppression are based; they can be eliminated only when this foundation is eliminated. (p. 118)

These belief systems on which the realities of structural oppression rest are especially relevant for people of color and other subordinated identities (e.g., those of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer community, undocumented immigrants, individuals with disabilities) who spend formative years in the United States. It is well-understood that people of varying social identities who have unequal access to resources—such as money, power, education, housing, and healthcare—are targets of macro- and micro-aggressions, and thereby arrive into their habits of mind and habits of being through the lens of an outsider (David & Derthick, 2014). To have a social identity that is neither White nor male in the United States in 2016 means one is likely to be subject to identification by the majority group as an “other,” and thus be a target of *microaggressions* (Sue, 2003) or outright assault. Microaggressions are “reflections of worldviews that are filled with ethnocentric values, biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that have been strongly culturally inculcated into our beliefs, attitudes and behaviors” (Sue, 2010, p. 41). The idea that microaggressions stem from cultural stereotypical worldviews deeply resonates with Mezirow’s (2000) habits of mind, which are broad-based assumptions that act as a filter for one’s experiences, and include moral consciousness, social norms, and philosophies, including worldviews. Systemically oppressed populations may therefore experience trauma without consciously understanding the sources of these experiences: “it’s just the way things are” (Mezirow, 2000).

The experience of cumulative micro-trauma is defined as the accumulation of occurrences in which one’s need for safety, dignity, and belonging are repeatedly compromised (Strozzi-Heckler, 1984), resulting in (capital-T) trauma (Crastnopol, 2015). Whether they occur through outright physical assaults, are accompanied by “good intentions,” or through the structures of inequity codified in laws, the unconscious biases of those who are sworn to uphold the power of these institutions, or the unspoken rules and assumptions in corporations, micro-aggressions play a role in the constellation. As the target of the objectified “other,” one is vulnerable to identity confusion, low self-esteem, anxiety, shame, depression, dissatisfaction with one’s own appearance, identity, self-hatred, attentional difficulties, isolation from one’s community, and lost time and energy to conform to the standards of the dominant group (Zurbriggen, 2013). These traumatic insults to the core of our identities also lead to disembodiment.

van der Kolk (2014), Levine (1997), and others have argued that the bodily experience of trauma is a contraction held within the body that becomes nonresponsive to our current time experience. Haines (2007) explained that effects of trauma are not only the result of acute stressors, such as hurricanes, tsunamis, or war, but of chronic, “persistent and often unrecognized impacts of homophobia, sexism, racism, and other types of social oppression, often seen as the norm” (p. xiv). Microaggressions “have a profound impact, leaving people and communities with lasting negative symptoms (Haines, 2007, p. xv).

Schlattner (1997) argued that Mezirow’s theory lacks a focus on how relations of power directly form self: body, thought and emotion (p. 32). She stated that in her own situation, a “personal sense of powerlessness came from . . . experiences [that] occurred within a particular

set of power relations around gender and authority” (p. 80). Bartky (1990) stated that the splitting or fragmenting of women’s consciousness that takes up the cultural sphere is apparent but because it is so pervasive in culture, if uncontested, appears natural:

and because it is natural, [it will appear] unalterable. Unlike a colonized people, women have no memory of a “time before:” a time before the masters came, a time before we were subjugated and ruled. (p. 25)

The social setting shapes the body. According to Johnson (2007), “How we move, speak, sit, and gesture reflect our social position and our relation to the social hierarchy. . . . This unconscious habitus becomes the medium for interaction with the social field” (pp. 43-44). The specific body language elements Johnson referred to include body boundaries, gesture, posture, expression, eye contact, touch, and body symbols (e.g., clothing). These differences in the form of body language across various social identities in relation to others would appear to be revelatory information about how differences of power are experienced on the embodied, neurological level, before any sense-making/story-creating occurs in the cognitive space. As mentioned previously, this dialogic model emphasizes the “meaning-making” aspect of cognition, without necessarily accessing the lived, emotional, embodied landscapes of individuals. One can intellectually be “bought in” with the appeal of certain principles and values of an egalitarian society that are verbalized, but without addressing the level at which structural realities lead to disembodiment, in practice, one may not really know how to inhabit a new way of being (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014).

Instead of enacting the old dyads/dynamics of the power-ful/power-less, how might relationships be re-formed/reformed, such that the need for safety, dignity, and belonging is honored for all entities (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014)? How might a person inhabit his or her body, in mood, actions, and other habits of being when engaging across complex systems of difference? What new practices and rituals might precipitate to reaffirm new ways of being in relationship in one another? Additionally, what new (embodied) narratives might one hold in terms of how one now relates with the system that once shaped him or her, as well as the system in which he or she is now seeking to co-create?

Freire (2000) argued that it is through decolonizing pedagogy that we can help the oppressed realize we/they have a voice, and have a sense of ownership in how we/they understand reality, instead of simply allowing the oppressors to define reality for this group. In addition, hooks (1994) argued that teaching is not liberatory unless it sets up students to *practice* freedom. If a practitioner can help students practice freedom, not just as a topic for the sake of intellectual discourse, but in terms of inhabiting the shape of liberation through the body, voice, style, then it can validate Butterwick and Selman’s (2012) argument that embodiment, or coming to embodiment, can be form of decolonization. This process requires an awareness on the part of the practitioner of the lived embodiment of oppression (the “shape” of oppression), as well as experiential learning that supports new experiences of empowerment and freedom.

It is through our participation with social systems and subtle forms of objectification of the body, as well as forces of self-objectification, that “colonization of the body . . . and other subtle dormant intelligences [shaped] by conventional rationality” (Gunnlagson, 2005, p. 346) take place. Johnson (2007) argued that if participation with the social world is mediated through the body, then it follows that the interventions to make people aware of their own experiences—the taken for granted frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000)—must also be mediated through the body (Amann, 2003; Horst, 2007; Johnson, 2007). Butterwick and Selman (2012) argued that embodiment, or coming to embodiment, can facilitate decolonization. If transformative learning theory and somatic/embodied learning are integrated as a model, and intentionally taught as a

form of decolonizing pedagogy, a person who was once disenfranchised and disembodied as a result of his or her relationship with an oppressive system may potentially arrive on the other side of a transformation as more self-aware, with a greater sense of ownership his or her embodied self.

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Unfreezing Habits of Mind and Body: Bodywork Practitioners' Contribution to Transformative Learning Theory

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Abstract: Throughout the last century, bodywork practitioners have proposed that all that we have learned and know consciously and unconsciously is connected to and expressed through the human body. When a movement, emotion, or opinion is well-practiced enough, it becomes habituated and identified with the self; in this way, what we understand as 'habits of mind' become habits of being. Bodywork practitioners can help individuals surface underlying embodied assumptions and help an individual co-create new ways of being in the world.

Those who work with the body believe that it is worthwhile to examine how sensory information is taken into the body and how one makes meaning from these bodily experiences. Specialists in the field of somatics (Hanna, 1989; Strozzi-Heckler, 2014) believe that habituation occurs through the nervous system, namely, the lizard brain and the mammalian brain, which suggests that transformation of human experience would necessarily involve a wider scope of processes of the brain than would be suggested by Mezirow's cognition-based Transformative Learning model (2000).

Additionally, practitioners have argued that one must be in touch with embodied knowledge that is hidden from one's conscious awareness in order to understand how it informs not only our habits of mind, but habits of being. Engaging the unconscious through experiential learning is a way to create awareness of the hidden assumptions that take shape in the body.

After engaging in these bodily experiences, people often speak of having a greater sense of choice and agency as they explore new options in their ways of being. Many also develop new beliefs, which continue to inform the bodily habitus. New moves, practices, and commitments support the integration of the whole self to a transformed state of being.

Discussion

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning (TL) is a theory that articulates the process by which adults transform their unexamined frames of reference (e, g., meaning schemes, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective. When these frames shift, it may be possible to generate beliefs and opinions that are congruent with a wider spectrum of reality and therefore more useful in guiding action. (Mezirow, 2000) In the context of TL theory, such shifts in frames of reference occur when a *disorienting dilemma* is mediated or precipitated in dialogue with others, such that one's habits of mind are challenged and can no longer be taken-for-granted. Ultimately, transformational learning occurs when there is a transformation in beliefs or attitudes (a meaning scheme), or a transformation of one's entire perspective (habits of mind; Mezirow, 2000).

Alternate Epistemologies

In the past 10 to 15 years, new research has expanded this theory to be inclusive of affective, somatic, symbolic, cognitive, spiritual, and cultural ways of knowing (Tisdell, 2003; Yorks and Kasl, 2006; Cranton and Kucukayadin, 2013), allowing for greater representation of various populations with different ways of knowing in the literature. For instance, Lawrence discussed the role of intuition as a preconscious state and its implications for adult education, and how this contributes to embodied knowing (2012). Cranton and Kucukayadin focused on the role of the Jungian unconscious, and argued for an *extra-rational* element to transformative learning that should be critically examined (2013). Through a pedagogical perspective, Yorks and Kasl (2006) discussed expressive ways of knowing, which are people's intuitive grasp of what they perceive through images, body sensation, and imagination. Tisdell focused on how affective, somatic, symbolic, cognitive, spiritual and cultural domains contribute to adult learning (2003). Many authors (Amann, 2003; Cranton, 2003; Freiler, 2008; Gunnlagson, 2005; Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014) have advocated for a holistic approach to the theory and have created openings for greater opportunities in research and discovery on the experience of transformational learning.

Bodywork practitioners contribute much to this conversation. Throughout the last century, Alexander (1918, 1932), Feldenkrais (1977), Rolf (1978), Hanna (1989), and Strozzi-Heckler (2014) proposed that all of life is connected to and expressed through the human body. When a movement, emotion, or opinion is practiced enough, it becomes habituated and identified with the self; in this way, what we understand as 'habits of mind' (Mezirow, 2000) are actually habits of *being*. Bodywork practitioners can help surface underlying embodied assumptions, in order to co-create choice and new ways of being in the world (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014).

Sensorium. Specialists in the field of somatics have posited that everything we sense in the world outside of our bodies and everything we feel inside of our bodies enters our brain through our sensory nerves (Hanna, 1988; Strozzi-Heckler, 1984, 2014). The sensory nervous system controls our perceptions of the world and of ourselves. Jarvis (2006) proposed that it is through the repetition of experiences through the sensory environment that we are able to make meaning: "The more often we repeat the same phenomenon, the more likelihood that we begin to generalize about it, and it is a short step from generalization to thinking in the abstract" (p. 21) Hanna (1988) would also agree with this, as he suggested that habituation is the simplest form of learning: "When the same bodily response occurs over and over again, its pattern is gradually 'learned' at an unconscious level. Habituation is a slow, adaptive act, which ingrains itself into the functional patterns of the central nervous system" (p. 53) Habituation of the senses appears to occur in the lizard brain and the mammalian brain, informed by motivations, such as survival. It encompasses social-emotional, learning, and memory functions, respectively (Durban, 2010). What is unique to the human species is the high-order reasoning and "meaning-making" cognitive activity that occurs in the cerebral cortex/neocortex:

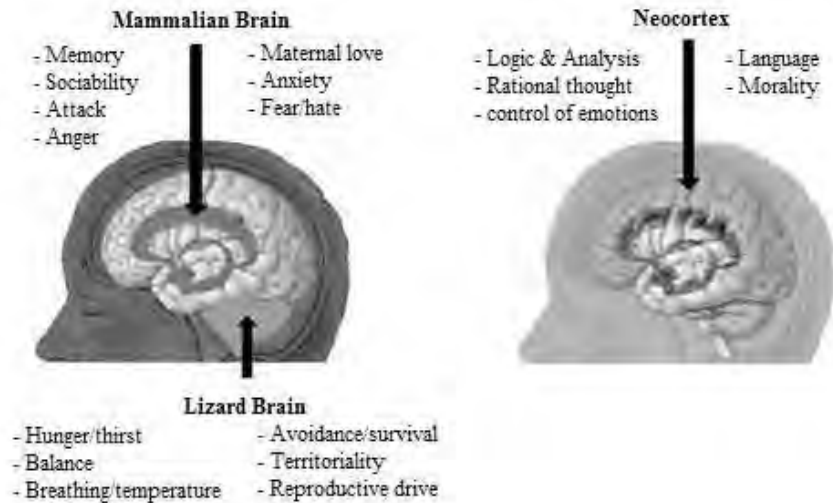


Illustration of lizard, mammalian and neocortex regions of the brain.

It is important to note that the above description of the brain is not intended to be exhaustive. It is merely to suggest that there is more happening in the brain, in relationship to the body, than would be suggested in Mezirow's model. Mezirow's (2000) TL theory and its premise regarding the possibility of transforming our unexamined frames of reference, including values and meaning-making schemes, seems to suggest that this transformation would largely occur at the level of the cerebral cortex- where higher-order meaning is made; Jarvis's proposition, however, asserts that the transformation of human experience would necessarily begin with the bodily domain and involve a wider scope of processes of the brain. In other words, such a transformation as espoused by TL must occur in the context of the body's sensory system, the whole brain- therefore, the whole human (2006).

Alexander (1932) explicitly discussed the way information passes through the bodily *sensorium*. That is, we initially receive a stimulus through something we hear, touch, or see. The nature of our response, whether it an actual movement, an emotion, or an opinion, will "depend on the associated activity, in action and reaction, of the processes concerned with the conception and with the sensory and other mechanisms responsible for the feeling we experience" (Alexander, 1932, p. 20). In other words, what Alexander referred to as the *sensory appreciation* illustrates the way in which the human being takes in information from the senses and makes meaning from these experiences. (Weiss, 2015)

Underlying this argument is that muscles are moved and are held as a matter of experience in relationship with the world. Feldenkrais (1977) pointed out that all negative emotional expressions are accompanied by a shortening of flexor muscles (p. 134). The connection between musculature in relationship to one's experience of reality was affirmed by Rolf (1978), who noticed that "about the time someone gets overly interested in negative emotion, he begins to get chronic shortening of the flexor muscles" (p. 134). Hanna (1988) similarly discussed the *red light reflex*, which is a response to distressful events. An example would be when the abdomen, shoulders, and neck cringe in apprehension, which is a protective response to a range of perceived threatening events, from vague apprehensions to gnawing anxieties, to covert dangers. Hanna argued that this red light reflex is forgotten by our conscious minds and thus becomes unconscious action.

Awareness. For many practitioners across the ages, coming to a “form” of awareness is coming to greater consciousness and awakening, which precipitates agency and choice. Strozzi-Heckler (1984) argued that our conditioned tendency, as well as the style in which we relate to the world, is naturally related to the life of our body. Our body both informs and shapes our experience. Strozzi-Heckler (1984) noted the physical body embodies or holds the “shape” of our experience—the emotional, the intellectual, and spiritual shape, as well as the physical one (p. 16). Strozzi-Heckler (1984) added, “Paying attention to our breath, we can learn about our emotional state” (p. 21). Many have argued that one must be in touch with embodied knowledge that is hidden from one’s conscious awareness (Lawrence, 2012; Snowber, 2012) in order to understand how it informs our habitus. Nieves (2012) specifically discussed how the body, like a container, holds “historical, cultural, and political memory that we strain to explain” (p. 34). Behnke (1997) referred to these as “ghost gestures,” (p. 181) which sometimes show up as patterns of “trying, bracing, and freezing,” (p. 181) as they “perpetuate certain styles of intercorporeal (interpersonal) interaction and sustain certain modes of responsivity” (p. 181). These long-held contractions are developed as survival strategies; they are a means to avoid or minimize emotional impact, which then causes a person to become numb in relation to the event (Haines, 2007). These held muscular contractions lead people to take on a “shape” in relationship to the world and to forget other possibilities in their habitus (Kennedy-Reid, 2012). People effectively become the shape of their experiences, and therefore become the shape of their worldview (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014).

While not the central topic of this paper, it is important to note that the way in which one arrives to a “shape” is very deeply relevant, especially when taking one’s social context into consideration. For instance, Schlattner (1997) discussed how power dynamics between men and women have largely shaped her life, her identity; she noted that the power imbalance resulted in a form of disembodiment. She stated that in her own situation, her “shaping” came from socialization as a woman in American society. Johnson (2007) also identified how the social setting shapes the body: “How we move, speak, sit, and gesture reflect our social position and our relation to the social hierarchy. . . . This unconscious habitus becomes the medium for interaction with the social field” (pp. 43-44).

Coming to an awareness of our bodily states in the world is a parallel process to becoming “critically aware of one’s own tacit assumptions and expectations” (Mezirow, 2000). To achieve this, practitioners emphasize the importance of an “internal observer” (Weiss, 2015) or a *witness self* (Jordan, 2000). Developing this witness self involves harnessing the ability to observe one’s own internal states without judgment. Weiss (2015) stated that the cultivation of an internal observer allows one to be present with the emotion he or she is experiencing and to report on it, instead of either being *high jacked* by the powerful emotional experience and/or relegating it to the unconscious. This awareness of the internal state, often called *interoception*, is the awareness of our subtle sensory, body-based feeling.

From the perspective of bodywork practitioners, the ability to come to such an awareness regarding our bodily states and our tacit assumptions and expectations (Mezirow, 2000) would necessitate an examination of the basic nature of our own bodily perceptions, practices, and their functions, as well as their role in co-creating lived experiences (Shusterman, 2004). An embodied version of a disorienting dilemma could be thought of as a *somatic opening* (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014), which involves the release of long-held contractions, emotions, mental constructs, and narratives. Referring to the somatic opening, Strozzi-Heckler (2014) noted

It is the disorganization/disassembling/deconstructing of one's historical "shape," so that another shape can come to life. This means dissolving the sets of habits, behaviors, ways of being, interpretations of the world, emotional range (or lack of), and literal contractions that we have embodied. (p. 66)

Effectively, Strozzi-Heckler (2014) argued that the disintegration of old beliefs, assumptions, and habits of mind involves a "disorganization" and an uprooting of the previous landscape of embodied values, habits of mind/being, and assumptions that correlate to muscle contractions. Wilhelm Reich (1972) would have called this phenomenon the release of bands, or *armor*, as a person in a previously habituated state might be holding contractions in various places on their body (examples include: eye, oral, cervical/throat, thoracic, abdominal, and pelvic), which disallows energy to flow through the body.

Choice and Agency. As one begins to develop an awareness of how one is holding one's own body-being in the state prior to the disorienting dilemma, the possibility of conscious choice in one's habitus is now available to the individual (Alexander, 1932). van der Kolk (2014) stated, "In order to change, people need to become aware of their sensations and the way that their bodies interact with the world around them. Physical self-awareness is the first step in releasing the tyranny of the past" (pp. 99-100).

Alexander (1932) referred to the ability to make conscious choices as *constructive conscious control*. In effect, it is used "to direct and organize our psychophysical responses to situations, with awareness of the way we use ourselves while doing so" (p. iv). Alexander (1918) went so far as to say that this form of self-realization is not necessarily available to other species of animals, and is ultimately *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. Hanna (1988) stated that sensory-motor remembering is an educational procedure, which is done by an active person that goes from inside the brain to the muscle system: "the objective is to unlearn what has been learned; and to remember what has been forgotten" (p. xiii)

Alexander (1932), Feldenkrais (1977) and Strozzi-Heckler (1984, 2014) argued that if a person can gain greater agency if they can listen to their own body awareness and detach from automatic reactions (their habituated state):

Awareness of our organic drives is the basis of man's self-knowledge. Awareness of the relationship between these impulses and their origin in the formation of human culture offers man the potential means to direct his life, which few people have yet realized. (Feldenkrais 1977, p. 47)

Kegan (1994) wrote that one of the greatest yearnings of human experience is to have a sense of agency. Mezirow (2000) stated that implicit in a state of agency is the ability to understand perceptively; such understanding requires the ability to become critically reflective of one's own assumptions as well as those of others, engage fully and freely in discourse to validate one's beliefs, and effectively take reflective action to implement them. According to Eckberg (1998), helping people to develop their sensory awareness is not only essential in renegotiating and integrating their past experiences, but also in creating in them a new-found sense of agency that they did not previously have.

Experiential Learning. The integral role that awareness plays in the transformational process is why it is important to surface unconscious, unstated beliefs that inform the organizing principle of the human body (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014) Kurtz, the originator of Hakomi somatic psychotherapy, stated that revising unconscious beliefs plays a powerful role in supporting transformation and that these beliefs are revised through powerful emotional learning when old formative memories are evoked (Weiss, 2015) As mentioned previously, Cranton and

Kucukaydin (2013) emphasized the role of the Jungian unconscious in transformation and argued for an extra-rational element to TL. Bodywork practitioners have suggested that it takes experiences to counteract learning from previous experiences.

Mezirow argued that a disorienting dilemma is a form of awareness that is mediated in dialogue with others, such that one's habits of mind are challenged and can no longer be taken-for-granted. (2000) Fisher-Yoshida pointed out that this model should take a holistic approach that incorporates the mind, body, spirit, and emotion/feeling. (2009) Accordingly, experiential learning is one way to facilitate this awareness and exploration of new ways of being in the world (Weiss, 2015). After an embodied disorienting dilemma, in which one's interior world has become disorganized enough to allow new possibilities to come forth, a practitioner may help a client experiment in new, novel experiences that can support new ways of being. This might take the form of working with clients through simple exercises or activities that are deeply relevant to his or her lifeworld (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). This may also include working with a client in a bodywork session when the client is in a regressed state and the held musculature connected to old habits of being are released (Reich, 1974).

Tisdell (2003) and Yorks and Kasl (2006) have argued that the affective domain (amongst others) offers a valuable contribution to TL. The emphasis on engaging a client's emotional self cannot be understated, because the learning arising from such an approach would expand the client's unconscious beliefs about the world and himself (Weiss, 2015). By making these old habituated ways of being conscious, one then has access to new actions in the world, shifting beliefs one holds about oneself. These beliefs then become encoded in the neural architecture—namely, the limbic system—when it is emotionally charged; they would then support the process of reshaping specific habitual, protective, and limiting patterns (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014)

The client effectively begins to take on a new “shape” as her working model of the world shifts as well as her expectations of the world and her organization of experience (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). This new “shape” includes posture, breathing, movement, gestures, cognition, emotions, interpersonal relationships, and more (Weiss, 2015); thereafter it follows that an individual's state of being in the world may become more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that new beliefs and opinions are generated that will prove more true or justified to guide action (Mezirow, 2000).

These elements that comprise one's state and one's shape become more ingrained as a person actively practices these new ways of being in the world. We are aware that sustained, well-practiced change and transformation has occurred when a person consistently occupies a shape that is informed by new beliefs (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). An individual's shape is the evidence that the person's cognition has integrated these new felt experiences and developed new narratives and meaning-making that supports this new way of being in the world.

The integration of embodiment and the other ways of knowing to the TL model is premised on one's ability to develop an awareness of and to examine one's taken-for-granted assumptions that are not only held in the mind but in the body as well. The next step is to come to an embodied disorienting dilemma, which is a form of disorganization of known ways of being in the world. People who move through this process are moving through a shift that holds implications for the structural premises that defines reality as they previously understood it with respect to their own narratives, beliefs, and assumptions, which shaped the bodily habitus. Through the process of surfacing these unconscious assumptions and practicing new ways of being in the world, a person will begin to take on the shape he or she wishes to occupy. This will

then inform their sense-making process, including the narratives they hold about themselves and the world.

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Maximising the Intersection of Voices in Next Generation Learning Spaces to Promote Transformative Learning in Higher Education

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Abstract: The changes brought about by technological advancement have heavily impacted university policy and strategy focussed on enhancing students' learning and experience. This paper aims to present examples of promoting transformative adult learning processes, both in students and their tutors, with the help of a 'next generation' learning space that fuses new and emerging technology with traditional teaching tools. The underpinning pedagogical framework of this work sees the learners' perspectives, dialogue and negotiated meanings as platforms for the creation of transformative learning processes and for pedagogical innovation. The paper therefore discusses the creation of learning spaces, including detail on the specific use of technologies, and case studies examples of pedagogical practice that are possible within this environment. These case studies depict situations in which learners become freer to express thoughts, perceptions and disorienting dilemmas faced during the learning process. This paper argues that next generation learning spaces have the potential to maximise the intersection of voices in the classroom, promoting the emergence of new ideas and perspectives that can lead to transformative learning.

Introduction

For some time Higher Education institutions (HEIs) have recognised that they need to “to cater for emerging patterns on educational involvement which facilitate lifelong learning, and to include technology-based practices in the curriculum” (Hicks et al., 2001; p.143). Furthermore, the convergence of classroom and online learning has moved past the point of being an “unrecognised trend” (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004) to become a key component of organisational thinking in Higher Education. This work highlights a further convergence of digital and physical learning spaces, as the emergence of next generation learning spaces (Ling & Fraser, 2014) begin to utilise online learning situated *within* the classroom.

This paper presents examples of promoting transformative adult learning processes, both in students and their staff, through the creation of learning environments that fuse new and emerging technology with traditional teaching tools. Our narratives arise from the newly created 'Learning Lab' at Liverpool Hope University, a next generation learning space, which utilises the latest wireless presentation technology to provide students with the potential to Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and contribute their own digitally created work in a hybridized digital and physical space. This hybrid space allows the tutor to not only control the discourse through verbal means, but also provides a unique level of control over the content created live in the classroom. This new pedagogical workflow enables the co-creation of shared meanings that is both mediated and supported by technology.

This work is a collaboration between Dr Mangione, the Chair of the LHM Student Experience Community of Practice; an academic engaged with the creation of new teaching practices in the Learning Lab and Dr Almond, the Director of Learning and Teaching

Development at Liverpool Hope University who has collaborated with Dr Mangione throughout an academic year with the broader remit of developing new pedagogical frameworks that support academic staff to make best use of the technological and pedagogical capabilities of the space. The contrasting backgrounds and perspectives on Education from Dr Mangione, whose research in adult learning and drama oriented pedagogy and from Dr Almond whose background in Physics and more recently Higher Education provides an interdisciplinary platform for the discussion, which melds conceptions of social and transformative learning with complexity theory and technology- enhanced learning.

The Liverpool Hope Learning Lab

Over the last two decades the activity of providing learners with meaningful blended learning experiences has become a fundamental part of academic practice. Blended learning provides institutions with the opportunity restructure and reshape teaching and learning practice to truly enhance student experience using both digital and face-to-face classroom experiences (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Traditionally, the term blended learning is used as a “thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences,” (p.96) where online learning is commonly thought of as a mode of learning occurring outside of the classroom. Now, a new generation of learning spaces marks a further convergence of online modes of learning and face-to-face learning, which allows online learning to take places seamlessly in the classroom environment itself. The Liverpool Hope University ‘Learning Lab’ is an example of such a space.

The Learning Lab aims to create a learning environment that maximises the potential for innovation, creativity and learning by allowing face-to-face dialogue and instantaneous synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated collaboration to occur *simultaneously*. By utilising the BYOD paradigm, the Learning Lab creates a space where open collaborative discourse can be captured and shared from up to 60 participants on seven centrally controlled display screens. Using new switching technologies, teachers can facilitate group, whole room and remote collaboration by taking control of the screens and the content wirelessly connected to them. In addition, these fringe technologies are teamed with 'old school' classroom technologies (e.g. whiteboards, physical media and adaptable furniture) to create an environment that is tuneable to a wide range of pedagogical scenarios.

The space was designed in recognition that it will be used in ways that were not thought of prior to its use. This includes recognition that acceptance of technology is variable (Rogers, 1995) and that in some cases it will be appropriate for the available technology to not be used at all. This attitude towards the use of technology in this space underpins the ethos of its design, which aims to support the development of innovative pedagogy, without explicitly enforcing the use of technology.

The Pedagogical Framework

The intersection of voices in both the physical and digital spaces that are created in the Learning Lab, calls for established modes of working and teaching in the physical learning environment to be adapted and evolved. Our approach to developing new pedagogy in this hybrid space is underpinned by an overall pedagogical principle, which sees the learners’ experience, voice, dialogue and the negotiation of meanings as key elements for transformative learning processes and pedagogical innovation.

Extending Mezirow's (Mezirow, 1996) work on transformative learning, Baumgartner (Baumgartner, 2009) and others recognise that the transformation learning is a nonlinear and complex process. By thinking of innovation and learning as an emergent feature of a complex system (Goldstein, 2005) we have driven our exploration of this space with the goal of maximising the potential intersection of ideas and perspectives. Goldstein (2005) among others use the term emergent, "as a description for the way creative ideas, images, and insights can arise unexpectedly and radically distinct from whatever inputs that may have served as a groundwork for the created product,"(p.3) and we propose that it is the integration of these emergent events that promote transformative learning processes.

Fauconnier and Turner (2008) expand on the concept of emergence to conceptualise creativity as a nonlinear and complex process of "conceptual blending", whereby the convergence of mental spaces generates new perspectives and meaning. Indeed, even meaningless or ambiguous "blends" of ideas, can often trigger the search and discovery of more meaningful ideas. Goldstein (2005) illustrates this idea, with a narrative that depicts the exploration of the seemingly meaningless compound term "computer dog":

"What exactly is a 'computer dog'? A new term for a persistent computer hacker? Or is it a hot dog prepared by some futurist "replication" device from *Star Trek*?" (p.4)

In this case, the lack of a clear unambiguous single meaning for the term stimulates a conceptual exploration and the discovery of new emergent features that cannot be attributed to either computers or dogs and one can easily imagine how this exploration could lead to new and creative ideas. This rather abstract example, explains how ideas converge and evolve in discursive spaces and lead to new meaning and insight. Further to this, the potential for radically new emergent perspectives increases with the combination of juxtaposing or contrasting perspectives (Rothenberg, 1989) or as Mezirow would say the resolution of cognitive conflicts (Taylor, 1998). From a pedagogical perspective, the now tangible trend away from transmissive modes of teaching towards more active and constructivist pedagogies (Biggs, 1999) represents a growing awareness that variability in the construction of meaning and interpretation of knowledge must be managed in an effective classroom. Ralph Stacey (2001) explores the intangibility of knowledge in his work through the lens of complexity theory. He proposes that:

Meaning is not first arising in an individual and then expressed in action, nor is it transmitted from one individual to another. Rather, meaning emerges in the interaction between them. Meaning is not attached to an object, or stored, but repeatedly created in the interaction.(p.5)

Using this principle as a guide, it becomes optimal to maximise the potential for diverse ideas to clash in plain view within the learning environment. To create meaning that is visible and dynamically constructed in the learning environment so it can be negotiated by the participants and mediated by the tutor. This process is maximised by facilitating participants in the classroom to inject their ideas and diverse perspectives into the learning environment, so that they can be presented in light of others.

Wegerif (2007) uses Bahktin's idea of a shared space to conceptualise how ideas and perspectives are augmented and developed through shared narratives and ideas. In these spaces participants engage in a process of 'inter-illumination' through which both mutual and self-understanding is generated. Wegerif goes on to argue that this transient space, can be operationalized as a 'dialogic space' with the use of technology.

The design of effective learning spaces therefore requires pedagogical approaches that opens up dialogic spaces and provides participants with easy access to that space, where they can

be engaged with and shaped by the tutor. For example, a student may chose to contribute their perspectives onto a shared digital space (e.g. Google Document displayed on a screen) using a provided laptop, or their own smartphone or by writing their ideas onto a moveable whiteboard and adding them to the shared space by taking a picture of it. Here, technology mediates the process of transposing diverse ideas and perspectives to a visible place within the learning environment so that they can be engaged with through social means.

Examples of Promoting Transformative in Next Generation Learning Spaces

Example 1 - A learner-led community of practice for evaluating Blended Learning

Using the principles of imaginative learning modes (Dirkx, 2001; Mangione, 2014) a collaborative evaluation of Blended Learning provision at LHU was carried out with nine students and their tutor. Reflections on technology were shared and it became clear that both students and tutors were all acting and reacting to the alien and unfamiliar ground of technology-supported learning. The students, who were mature learners and the tutor who was not familiar, or perhaps sceptical, of the pedagogical potential of a blended learning provision engaged with the issues of enhancing practice in this area.

The outcome of the dialogue, focussed on *'how to make a blended learning provision work more effectively'* for themselves and for other cohorts of adult learners. Dialogue was captured in a shared co-created virtual document, titled *"Creating a community of practice through a blended learning network: a recipe for a fountain of knowledge through a journey from practice to theory."* By imagining that the students and the tutor were making food for a blended learning party, they worked at a metaphorical level, which helped participants to become freer to express their thoughts, perceptions and *'disorienting dilemmas'* that they faced, without being rooted to their existing power relationships.

Using this shared virtual space, the students identified some fundamental *'ingredients'*, a *'method of preparation'* and the *'participation at a knowledge buffet'*, which were used to theorise effective blended learning and innovative teaching practices. This document, which brought about tangible change within the University, helped to further practice, but also highlighted the importance of including our students' learning experience.

Example 2 - Collaborative Writing and Formation of Academic and Research Literacies

Supporting students in the development of their academic literacy is critically important feature of academic practice for the developing student (Lea & Street, 1999). For a long time there has been a problematic and well-documented rift between the ubiquitously accepted importance of academic literacy development and its absence from the curriculum (Lillis, 2003). The unique environment of the Learning Lab provides the potential for the creation of collaborative pedagogies that promote writing in the classroom. Building on Almond's (2015) work on collaborative writing, a longitudinal learning event was designed to support students in the development of their research proposals for their final year dissertations.

With the aim of demystifying research skills and providing support for the development of academic literacies, the Learning Lab was utilised to build a learning environment in which six groups of 10 students worked as a team to develop collaborative research proposals on a shared and negotiated topic. Each team used a variety of devices over a number of weeks to systematically work through key components of the research process: formulating the research topic, aim and objectives, the literature review, the methodology and the research design.

This semi-structured, open and active approach unpacked the research and writing process for the students as they negotiated and struggled with the activity supported by the tutors.

The students utilised the shared digital spaces to develop their approaches to research and used a range of devices to share their current and developing perspectives on the research process. Over a period of weeks, these ideas were used to create collaboratively written research proposals with support from the whole class.

Example 3 – Virtual Poster Development and Presentation

Academic posters are an ideal assessment methodology for promoting the development communication skills and promoting peer assessment in Higher Education (Billington, 1997). The Learning Lab was used to support a cohort of 35 final year undergraduate Childhood and Youth students in the development of their group poster assignment. Rather than asking the students to develop their posters outside of the classroom, they were prompted to use Learning Lab devices to develop their posters collaboratively using the shared digital spaces.

Technology has been shown to have a positive impact on student engagement with peer assessment activities (Hepplestone, Holden, Irwin, Parkin, & Thorpe, 2011). In this case it was used to allow the students to present their posters on the digital displays to the whole class. A range of classroom response technologies were also used to allow the audience to ask questions digitally, as they observed their peer's presentations. This created an 'amplification' of the students' voices that would normally remain hidden from the peer feedback process.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The above examples demonstrate the kind of innovative pedagogical approaches that are possible in next generation learning environments. They utilise a range of technologies, but are fundamentally underpinned by the principle of bringing emergent ideas, perspectives and conceptions of the learning process into an observable, shared dialogic space where voices can intersect and create new perspectives. Each example highlights learning events that are usually hidden or take place outside of the classroom, but here are used to allow transformative learning experiences to take place.

In each case the intersection of mental spaces, created new platforms for learning to occur. In the first example, the tutor and students co-created an emotive metaphor to better understand how to better create blended learning pedagogies. Their conceptualisation of teaching and learning in a blended environment as an act of cooking with ingredients to '*catalyse and ignite knowledge*', is a wonderful example of the kind of divergent thinking that can arise from the clashing perspectives on the learning process that can arise between student and teacher.

It is increasingly important to generate students' digital capabilities and information literacies (Hicks et al., 2001) alongside the ever present need to form the core academic literacies of reading, writing and presenting generated work. The Learning Lab, allowed these activities to be carried out *within* the learning environment, whilst promoting the formation of the digital and research oriented skills needed to perform effectively in them Gourlay (2009) conceptualizes these contextually embedded activities as "threshold practices", using Meyer & Land's (2005) notion of 'threshold concepts' to explain the transformative and troublesome processes at play as students acquire these practices throughout a course of study. By bringing these activities into a dialogic space, the tutor was able to guide the formation of these threshold practices by using the emergent narratives from the students as a pedagogical tool, contrasting her own practices with those developing in the space. Witnessing this process and the intersection of diverse perspectives as they emerge provides a richer and more vibrant learning environment for both students and the tutor to learn in.

In all the examples presented in this work, a conceptual meta-level of understanding, is brought into formation which goes beyond the topic being taught. This co-construction enables learners to reflect actively and thus learn through the intersection of voices participating in a hybridized physical and virtual space. It also allowed participation and promoted normally hidden students voices, through a technology mediated ‘voice amplification’ process.

Pedagogical approaches constructed with the principle of supporting the maximisation of intersecting perspectives allows learners to become freer in the expression of their thoughts, perceptions and disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1996) as they face the challenges of learning and the construction of their academic practices. Although not restricted to next generation learning environments, the technology found in these spaces allows construction of extended shared dialogic spaces that facilitate the surfacing of these perspectives as they emerge so that they can shape and augment existing learners perspectives. A promising future for such spaces exists, however the principles of collaborative, active and transformative learning must be used to maximise their potential.

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Nurturing Living Systems Awareness: Engaging the Diverse Intersections of Community College Online Learning Environments

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Abstract: How can community college online learning environments become intersections of cross-fertilization in ways that motivate students as change-agents for a healthier world? Drawing from her experience teaching online humanities and philosophy courses at highly diverse inner-city community colleges, the author offers her framework of facilitating online learning communities that mimic ecological or “living” systems.

Based on her doctoral research that utilized transformative learning theory, ecology, systems theory, and related schools of thought, the author addresses several considerations in the design of online environments that nurture “living systems awareness.” These include:

- Utilizing nature’s pattern language (“living systems principles”) in learning experience design;
- Intentionally designing for congruency across multiple level of learning with special consideration of learning environment, rhythm and flow, and expressive ways of knowing;
- Designing learning environments that nurture a quality of heartfelt care, peer-to-peer encouragement and mutual support.

Having experienced living systems awareness on multiple levels, learners are more likely to develop capacities to perceive, understand, and love the world as a living system and therefore to take action as change-agents for a healthier world.

The earth which is spread out like a map around me is but the lining of my innermost soul exposed

(Thoreau quoted in Buhner, 2004, p. 269)

“Everyone is different and if we were to all get together and put all of our ideas together it could really be an amazing thing.”¹ At the end of each semester I have the pleasure of harvesting my students’ final reflection and course survey insights from the Human Values and Ethics class I teach at two urban community colleges in Oakland. I always look forward to this time because I invariably become surprised at the depth of shifts learners have experienced during the semester. After sixteen weeks of engaging at multiple intersections with self, other, and the world, learners share realizations that frequently bring me to tears or make my heart sing with joy. I celebrate these insights particularly because many of my students have experienced various levels of trauma in their lives and communities, from witnessing multiple homicides, experiencing the challenges of immigration or being a refugee, raising children alone, homelessness, felony records, or incarcerated loved ones. For several years, I have been documenting these insights and noticing some patterns of transformative shifts in learners that I am eager to share below. In my teaching practice, I am committed to helping learners discover

¹ End-of-semester student survey, Human Values and Ethics, Peralta Community College District. Fall 2015

what their deepest calling is and how they can become change agents for a healthier world. In my dissertation research, I developed a framework for designing learning experiences that feel alive, vibrant, and foster self-organizing, collective creativity, mimicking an ecological or “living” system congruently in learning content, process, and structure, for both classroom and online learning (Widhalm, 2011). Thus, noticing the patterns of insights in my students, I hope I am, in fact, seeing some fruits of intentionally designing for “living systems awareness” in the way I facilitate community college online environments.

Before I share a summary of learners’ key insights, let me briefly introduce the pedagogical framework I developed. The framework is based on nurturing what I have come to name “living systems awareness.”

What is Living Systems Awareness?

Living systems awareness refers to a deep recognition of being fully alive in this world as a co-creative agent, perceiving the interconnectedness with self, others, community, and all of life. This involves developing capacities of engaging “living edges” (Holmgreen, 2011): the multiple boundaries between outer and inner landscapes that mutually influence each other like the living edges between forest or meadow or river and riverbank. Ecological design approaches such as Permaculture intentionally create edges in landscape design to attract more abundance. What would living edges in online learning environments look like?

Based on my doctoral research that utilized transformative learning theory, ecology, systems theory, and related schools of thought, I have identified three design lenses that are useful to consider when preparing for a dynamic learning community rich in living edges. These include:

- Utilizing nature’s pattern language (“living systems principles”) in learning experience design;
- Intentionally designing for congruency across multiple level of learning with special consideration of learning environment, rhythm and flow, and expressive ways of knowing;
- Designing learning environments that nurture a quality of heartfelt care, peer-to-peer encouragement and mutual support.


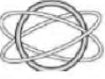



Let me elaborate on these three areas here:

Utilizing Nature’s Pattern Language in Learning Experience Design

Every ecological and social system is based on common organizing principles, such as networks, cycles, feedback loops, and the capacity to self-organize into something new. These “living systems principles” provide a language of relationships in natural, as well as social systems, and, as such, offer a pattern language for learning, as well. (Capra & Luisi, 2014; O’Sullivan, E. V., & Taylor, M., 2004). According to Volk & Bloom (2007), “metapatterns can serve in the process of learning as templates for understanding systems on a number of different scales, and thus for making connections between these scales (p. 37).”

Table 1 lists the principles of living systems as defined by systems scientist Fritjof Capra. Each of these principles describes an ecological function. At the same time, each of these principles also holds great pattern wisdom when exploring our inner emotional landscapes as learners.

Table 1.
Living Systems Principles and Corresponding Felt Sensations

<i>Systems Principles</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Felt sensation and state of awareness</i>
<p>Network</p> 	<p>All living things in an ecosystem are interconnected through networks of relationship. They depend on this web of life to survive.</p>	<p>Connecting across difference; learning through diversity; feeling part of the web of life.</p>
<p>Dynamic Balance</p> 	<p>Ecological communities act as feedback loops, so that the community maintains a relatively steady state that also has continual fluctuations. This dynamic balance provides resiliency in the face of ecosystem change.</p>	<p>Feeling seen & heard; compassion; empathy; honesty; transparency.</p>
<p>Cycles</p> 	<p>Members of an ecological community depend on the exchange of resources in continual cycles. Cycles within an ecosystem intersect with larger regional and global cycles.</p>	<p>Feeling attuned to the cycles and seasons of life: active (expressing – creating), resting (reflecting – integrating).</p>
<p>Flows</p> 	<p>Flows: Each organism needs a continual flow of energy to stay alive. The constant flow of energy from the sun to Earth sustains life and drives most ecological cycles.</p>	<p>Feeling open to change and being changed, open to new influences and ideas, and to letting go what is no longer needed.</p>
<p>Development</p> 	<p>All life — from individual organisms to species to ecosystems — changes over time. Individuals develop and learn, species adapt and evolve, and organisms in ecosystems coevolve.</p>	<p>Feeling open to new developments unfolding; appreciating that which was not there before: awe; curiosity, wonder.</p>

Note: From Center for Ecoliteracy. 2011. “Ecological Principles” was originally published by the Center for Ecoliteracy. © Copyright 2004-2011 Center for Ecoliteracy. Images and text in column 2 reprinted with permission. All rights reserved. For more information visit www.ecoliteracy.org. (Text in column 2 is from <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/nature-our-teacher/ecological-principles>.)

Congruency across Multiple Levels of Learning

I have found that learners are more likely to feel motivated as change-agents if I am intentionally designing for congruency on multiple levels: 1) how I set up the visible and invisible learning space (structural-spatial level), 2) how I pace learning components and allow for flow according to nature's rhythms (rhythmic-temporal level), 3) how I allow for creative expressions (expressive-extrarational level), 4) how I encourage the mind to understand and utilize systems analysis and systems design across disciplines (cognitive-rational level), and 5) how I help learners integrate this awareness in their real life practice (practical level). This multi-level approach to learning experience design was inspired by Heron's pyramid of multiple ways of knowing (Yorks & Kasl, 2006). I expanded on his model as part of my dissertation research to draw particular attention to learning flow (rhythmic-temporal) and learning environment (structural-spatial level) and to highlight the importance of the expressive-extrarational level (equivalent to what Heron refers to as presentational ways of knowing) as a way to tap into a felt experience of being alive in the here-and-now (Widhalm, 2011). In my dissertation, I mapped the principles of living systems across these six levels, offering examples on how to foster living systems awareness through intentional learning experience design strategies at each of these intersections (Widhalm, 2011).

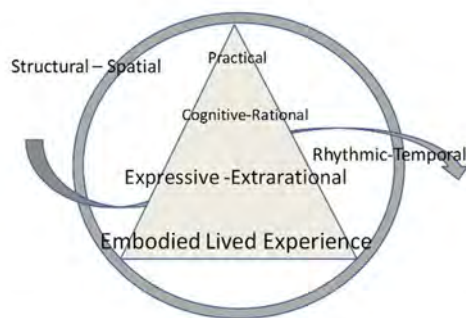


Figure 1. Multiple levels of learning experience design. (Figure created by author)

Living Systems as Loving Systems: Designing Caring Learning Environments

“Survival of the fittest” (Darwin, 1911) is no longer considered a driver for evolution among leading scientists. The key characteristics of living systems manifest through relationship and contact among system components and among systems. Ecopsychologist Fisher (2002) defines contact as “an activity of ex-change, transaction, meeting, fusion-across-difference, transmission, encounter, or engagement with the world – without which no life or experiencing would be possible” (p. 65). Fisher states: “Reality is most fully given or revealed under ongoing conditions of good, organismically satisfying contact: while we suffer a diminished and decaying reality under conditions of weakened or distorted contact” (pp. 65-66).

What would “organismically satisfying contact” look like in the context of online learning environments? All healthy living systems are, at their very essence, loving systems. In fact, life on earth as manifested in ecosystems and communities can be viewed as a deep expression of caring. Buhner (2002) highlights the tremendous capacity of all life forms to communicate and cooperate: from sacrificial plants dying so that the others may live, to different species warning each other about predators approaching, to plants sending healing chemicals through their roots when there is illness nearby – not just within the same species, but between species. It is this level of deep care that makes a living learning system come alive, as well.

Transformative learning scholars concur that a learning environment infused with care and nonjudgment helps learners become more vulnerable, curious, and risk-taking and therefore more willing to engage the edges between self, other, and the world (Bache, 2008; Lange, 2009; Thayer-Bacon, 2003; Yorks & Kasl, 2006).

Dirkx (1997) stated:

Learning is a product of neither the individual will nor the powerful forces of sociocultural structures. Rather, learning is understood as a process that takes place within the dynamic and paradoxical relationship of self and other. The “other” is anything, anyone, or any group we perceive as apart or separate from our individual natures. (p. 83)

How can we intentionally design living learning edges as fertile ground for these dynamic and paradoxical relationships to unfold, and how can creating an environment of nurturing and care support this process? I offer some ideas below.

Key Strategies to Nurture Living Systems Awareness

Drawing from nature’s pattern language, here are two overarching design meta-patterns that have served as a framework to integrative learning experience design in my teaching: 1) a nourishing container or “membrane” and 2) multiple opportunities for intersections or “patterns that connect.”

Membrane

A “membrane” is an energetic boundary in which the learning community can feel safe and nourished enough to explore intersections with self, other, and the world. In epigenetics, membranes have in recent years been identified for their critical function for life’s ongoing evolution (Lipton, 2008). They regulate the fertile intersections between the cell and its environment, allowing living beings to co-evolve. In the educational context, nurturing this membrane boundary helps nourish a sense of identity and belonging within the group. To facilitate this, I pay particular attention to how I frame and hold a learning experience as a whole, allocating time and space for opening and closing reflections, community celebrations, and creative check-in rituals throughout the course. In all my invitations and responses I try to model an atmosphere of non-judgmental, non-violent communication, active listening, and appreciation.

Here is an example of how I frame a check-out invitation online:

- What are three things that you are taking with you from this class?
- What is one intention you want to set for yourself for this coming year on how you would like to contribute to the world (on a personal growth, local, regional, or global level)? By offering this intention into this communal space, all of us can put our energies behind it and cheer for you. What resources and support will you need to nourish your intention?
- Imagine you are roaming around in nature and picking up an object that speaks to you: a branch, flower, shell, etc.; or imagine finding yourself in a landscape that expresses who you are right now or who you are aspiring to become. Please share this image of nature with us and connect it with your sharing above.

When I read the responses in our online check-out space, the sense of mutual caring and support among learners feels very palpable to me not unlike the felt quality of a big group hug at the end of an intensive face-to-face experience.

Patterns that Connect

In any living system, continuous flows of information, energy, and nutrients are exchanged in a dynamic balance of giving and receiving through multiple feedback loops. They form a complex network of relationships, from the cellular to the global level, which systems pioneer Bateson (2002) referred to as “patterns that connect.” These patterns can take multiple forms and shapes in online learning, mimicking each of Capra’s (Center for Ecoliteracy, 2011) living systems principles mentioned above. Here are some examples on how I facilitate this:

- Creative self-reflection and journaling spaces where peers are invited to offer supportive
- feedback: word clouds where learners summarize key learnings from the course; reflections on learners’ roots, branches, and fruits using the metaphor of a tree; values inquiry exercises;
- Collaborative story harvesting (Fenton, 2016): Learners share a story of a significant moment in their lives and others listen through specific lenses or story arcs;
- Interviewing and sharing how a personal hero has influenced learners;
- Researching and sharing about a local community organization or event;
- Viewing and reflecting on real-life case study videos highlighting both today’s societal challenges and inspirational success stories of people making a difference.

Each of these exercises invite continuous reflection at the intersections between inner and outer landscapes, between self, peers in the online community, and the local and global communities in which we live. Inquiry questions that use living systems principles help learners recognize patterns in their lives and communities that are life-affirming and those that are out of balance. Here is an example of the open sentence poetry exercise inspired by living systems principles. Learners have enjoyed playing with these simple prompts and have expressed how touched they have felt by each others’ poetry offerings.

- I am..
- I am part of....
- Is part of me...
- I belong to....
- The more..., the more...
- The more..., the less....
- I am connected to....
- ... Is connected to me....
- I draw inspiration, resources from....
- I draw energy from....
- I contribute to...
- I am touched by...
- I touch...
- I in-fluence...
- I flow with...
- I flow in....
- I let in...
- I let go....
- A growing edge for me is....
- is unfolding for me....

- I am becoming....
- ... is becoming....

As the two online assignments shared above demonstrate, I intentionally weave in opportunities for expressive ways of knowing, including poetry, storytelling, and the sharing of artwork. It is through creative expression that learners can tap directly into the felt experience of being alive in this world and share this experience with their peers, enriching their mutual living edges with life force even in an online environment.

What happens when a learning environment is designed as just described? In my dissertation I postulate that learners are more likely to develop capacities to perceive, understand, and love the world as a living system and therefore to take action as change-agents for a healthier world.



Figure 2. Integrating multiple levels of knowing and living systems principles in learning experience design.

(Figure created by author)

Patterns of Impact

As I read learners' reflections, here are some patterns I notice:

Relationship with self/inner landscapes:

- A greater sense of self-worth and self-love;
- Being in turn more accepting of others;
- Identifying one's own deepest values and aspirations;
- Recognizing one's own struggle as a gift;
- Appreciating the value of self-reflection as an ongoing practice.

Relationship with peers in the online community:

- Appreciating the level of understanding, intimacy and support from peers;
- Noticing the many commonalities across different countries, cultures and backgrounds and becoming more respectful of differences; suspending judgment;
- Becoming inspired by classmates' life stories and vulnerability; recognizing oneself in peers' stories.

Relationship with local community:

- Recognizing the power of community and becoming inspired by the many community initiatives that already exist;
- Becoming involved with a new initiative;
- Gaining a greater sense of self-worth as a result of helping others;
- Greater love for one's home town.

Relationship with global community and the planet:

- Recognizing the interconnectedness of everything and the intrinsic value of all living beings;
- Feeling more connected to the planet as a whole;
- New desire to engage in justice work globally.

In some cases, learners even reported that relationships with loved ones deepened as a result of their sharing of insights and practices from this class.

Summarizing learners' rich discoveries in bullet points cannot do them justice and can only offer a brief snapshot into their experience during this course. I would love to engage in a research project in the near future to allow me to learn from learners' insights further.

Harvesting Fruits of Hope

I learn a lot from students and classmates in my class. Many of them are from different cultures and background and share different stories of what is significant to them and was really interesting that no matter where we from the language of love and compassion will never changes.²

As I take in learners' voices one more time I find myself well up in tears of appreciation again. Noticing how compassionately peers have served as mirrors and inspiration for each other while engaging at multiple living edges together, I am filled with gratitude how much each of these learners have served as a mirror for me, as well. As a single mother, immigrant, and survivor of various forms of trauma, I see my own journey reflected in my learners' stories of transformation and I have derived strength from their courage and resilience to survive challenges much more heart-wrenching than mine. And I smile because I also know, as a systems theorist, that it is at the living edges where new life emerges. This is what gives me hope for a healthier world.

² End-of-semester student survey, Human Values and Ethics, Peralta Community College District. Spring 2014

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Technology Use to Promote Transformation for International Students: The Intersection of Emerging & Existing Identities

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Abstract: English Language Learner enrollment and technology use continue to increase at postsecondary institutions. In addition to navigating increased academic demands, these students must negotiate identity in an unfamiliar culture. Reliance on technology may provide support or limit acculturation. Our discussion seeks to engage around the results of a survey given to students in the United States and Switzerland to answer the question: How could technology help to facilitate transformation for international students?

Introduction

Increases in international enrollment and in technology use provide an important opportunity for English Language Learners (ELLs) to access support. As students negotiate the intersection of their existing identity and the emerging identities available in their new environment, the home support network may serve as an escape from the challenges to identity. In contrast, students may choose to use these technology resources for reflection, exploration, and support as they engage with potential new roles. The survey used herein seeks to explore student use of technology and language to generate a fuller exploration of students' experiences and how educators can support students in the transformative journey.

International students are recruited by colleges for financial reasons: they pay higher tuition rates and are ineligible for many scholarships that domestic students might receive. According to Choudaha and Chang (2012), international college enrollment in 2011 showed a 12% increase over 2010. From 2010 to 2015, the European University Association (Sursock, 2015) reported a 69% increase in international (non-EU) student enrollment.

Much of the research around ELLs focuses on language acquisition. While this addresses academic development, it is similarly important to consider how students navigate social and linguistic changes inherent in becoming a member of a new culture. The rejection or adoption of new roles can be explored with the lens of Transformative Learning Theory. According to Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991), when an adult is faced with a disorienting dilemma, such as moving to new country for educational studies, it challenges the assumptions that he or she has formed, his or her existing identity. Some students may choose to ignore or reject this challenge, seeking the familiarity of their home culture and support network. Others may use this same support network to engage with a critical exploration of their assumptions. Technology offers these students resources for information, social networking, and reflection during the process of trying on new roles. The ability to maintain contact with the familiar, existent identity while navigating these transformative stages into a new, emerging identity is increasingly available with the widespread use of technology.

As students negotiate the intersection of their existing identity and the emerging identities available in their new environment, the home support network may serve as an escape

from the challenges to identity. In contrast, students may choose to use these technology resources for reflection, exploration, and support as they engage with potential new roles. This survey was created in an attempt to quantify the prevalence of technology use among international students and its potential impact on engagement with academic tasks and social interactions. Further, investigating the language used by students in engaging with these tasks might provide insights into how students use technology to engage with home and with school.

Methodology

Student participants were solicited from three populations. Data was first collected in 2014 as part of doctoral data collection (Amos, 2015). Fifty students enrolled in Developmental Reading II at Urban Community College (UCC) participated in the initial survey. UCC is an open-enrollment public institution located near a major urban center in the northeastern United States. In spring 2014, UCC enrolled nearly 20,000 students. Of these, 45% were born outside of the United States. UCC students reported over 100 native languages and over 150 home countries. While students in the initial population were not drawn from ELL courses, 92% of them indicated multiple language use in their survey responses. Because the current study focuses on ELLs, the four English-only responses were eliminated from data.

For comparison with initial observations, the survey was re-administered in spring 2016 to ELL students in two additional populations. Suburban College (SC) is an open-enrollment public institution located in a mid-size college town in the southern United States. In fall 2015, SC enrolled just under 16,000 students, of whom approximately 2/3 were part time. Nearly half of SC students, 47.2%, were from the local community, and 87.4% were from the state. The students surveyed were enrolled in ELL courses prerequisite for credit-bearing courses at the college.

The survey was also administered in fall 2015 to first-year students at Ecole hoteliere de Lausanne (EHL) in Switzerland to allow comparison internationally. EHL is a university of applied sciences located in the French-speaking region of Switzerland. Its current enrollment is approximately 2600 full-time students consisting of 141 nationalities. There is an option for students to complete the program either in French or English, with approximately 60% electing for the English option. The students surveyed here were enrolled in a five-week introductory business English course that is required for students in the French section.

Students at each site completed a survey designed to gather information about participants' familiarity with different types of technology and their prevalence of use, the Device Ownership and Internet Usage Survey (Appendix A). The researchers designed the instrument based on two measures used by the Pew Research Center: What Internet Users Do on a Typical Day Survey (2012) and The Adult Gadget Ownership over Time (2012). Specific questions about online activities were included to determine participants' breadth and depth of prior online experience and their language use in each type of interaction. A focus group of ten adult education doctoral candidates familiar with survey design assessed the survey for clarity. A primary assumption of this study is that English use represents ELL students' exploration of new roles: use of a home language is a way of maintaining social and cultural connections with previous identity; use of English suggests assimilation into the new academic culture, and use of both indicates an exploration of new roles within the transformative learning framework.

Results

To generate useable data, survey responses were quantified. For each Device Ownership item, a number was assigned to indicate frequency of usage: I use daily: 4; I use weekly: 3; I use monthly: 2; I use rarely: 1; I have never used: 0. In addition to computing an average usage for each participant based on these values, the researchers also noted the number of devices on which each participant cited regular usage (a value of 3 or 4). For Online Activity, responses were assigned a numerical value based on activity performance and language used: 3: activity reported in English only; 2: activity reported in English and another language; 1: activity reported in another language; 0: activity not reported. For each group, the percentage of students participating in each task was calculated. Further, the percentage of these students reporting each language condition was noted. A table summarizing results from each study population is available in Appendix B. A sample of the itemized results is presented in Figure 1.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	
1				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
2			desktop	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	4	1	3	4	4	3	3	1	
3			laptop	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	
4			game	2	3	3	1	3	1	2	0	0	4	1	4	1	1	0	0	4	
5			eBook	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	3	2	
6			tablet	2	0	4	1	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	0	1	4	3	1	
7			smartphoi	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
8			average	2.403846	2.5	1.666667	2.5	2.166667	2.333333	2.333333	2.5	2	2.166667	3.5	2.333333	3.166667	2.166667	2.666667	2.166667	2.833333	2.666667
9			devices with 3/4	3.192308	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	5	3	4	3	3	3	5	3	
11	acad	email	used																	ema	
12			English	3	3	3			3		3		3	3			3	3			
13			other lang	0																	
14			both EN &	0			2	2		2		2			2	2			2	2	
16	acad	news	used			0				0										new	
17			English	0					3			3							3		
18			other lang	0			1												0		
19			both EN &	2	2			2	2			2		2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
21	acad	school re	used		0	0														schc	
22			English	3					3		3	3	3	3	3	3					
23			other lang	0															1		
24			both EN &	0			2	2	2		2						2		2	2	
25			9 total	8																	
28	social	personal r	used															0		pers	
29			English	0	3				3	3	3	3							3		
30			other lang	0															0	1	
31			both EN &	2		2	2	2	2					2	2	2				2	

Figure 1. Quantified Individual Results

Following creation of a full data set, the researchers sought to limit the results to those most relevant to the use of technology to explore new roles in the transformative learning experience at the intersection of existent, home identity and emergent, collegiate identity. In the table that follows, data descends from the most social activities which are likely supportive of the existent identity to the technology tasks that are most academic and thus potentially focused on student roles within the new community. In Figure 2, the sorted data is disaggregated by study site for comparison.

		UCC	SC	EHL
Home Language	Social Media	7.0%	26.9%	34.8%
	Video Chat	15.0%	38.1%	41.2%
	Videostreaming	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%
	Email	0.0%	0.0%	15.3%
	News	7.3%	11.5%	27.4%
	Personal Research	8.7%	4.3%	44.3%
	Academic Research	2.2%	8.3%	20.8%
Both Languages	Social Media	46.5%	65.4%	59.4%
	Video Chat	67.5%	52.4%	39.2%
	Videostreaming	47.6%	20.0%	57.1%
	Email	57.8%	53.8%	79.2%
	News	39.0%	70.8%	54.8%
	Personal Research	32.6%	52.2%	43.1%
	Academic Research	22.2%	37.5%	68.1%
English	Social Media	46.5%	7.7%	7.2%
	Video Chat	17.5%	9.5%	7.8%
	Videostreaming	45.2%	80.0%	30.4%
	Email	42.2%	46.6%	13.9%
	News	53.7%	16.7%	16.1%
	Personal Research	58.7%	43.5%	14.3%
	Academic Research	75.6%	54.2%	13.9%

Figure 2. Selected Technology Usage Data Disaggregated by Site

Analysis

Students' use of technology was explored in three populations using the Survey of Device Usage (N=46, N=25, and N=72). Significant among these findings was that students surveyed averaged a high use (daily or multiple times each week) for 2.85 of the six devices listed. Smartphones were by far the most frequently used of these devices, with only five participants reporting not using a smartphone.

In considering the data both across and between populations, there are a number of trends that appear to offer site-specific representations of ELL negotiation of the disorienting dilemma, gathering of data, and testing new roles in adapting to the collegiate environment. The selected activities are listed from the most likely to connect students to the home culture to those most likely to connect students to the new collegiate culture. The analysis and discussion below considers each activity, examining either consensus among sites or exploring discrepancies between sites.

While all study sites showed some level of bilingualism, EHL had an average of 57.27% across the categories compared to 44.74% at UCC and 50.3% at SC. This is particularly significant since the vast majority of the SC students, 84.6%, were enrolled in the final ESL course, approaching matriculation into credit-bearing courses. It is likely that this is because these students are reflective of the larger trends in Europe versus the monolingualism

more prevalent in the United States. The rate of individuals who report themselves as bilingual or trilingual is higher in Europe as compared to the United States. In a survey titled *Europeans and their languages* (European Commission, 2012), residents of the 27 member states of the European Union described their non-native language skills: 54% of Europeans are able to hold a conversation in a language other than their mother tongue, 25% are able to speak two additional languages and 10% are conversant in three languages. The United States is considerably behind Europe, with only 18% of the population reporting themselves as bilingual (Duncan, 2010).

In the area of social media, significantly more UCC students, 46.5%, reported use of English only for social media, than those at SC and EHL, each with 7.7%. Unique to this site is the variation in languages among the student population with only English as a common language. While EHL has a similar diversity of enrollment, many students speak French and thus may use that language more commonly than English in their interactions with the new college community. Likewise, the student population at SC is predominately fluent in Spanish, thus that language can still be relied on in student social interactions.

The use of video chat is fairly consistent across all populations, with the majority of students in all groups using their home language at least some of the time. English only use ranged from 7.8%-17.5%. While widespread use of this technology is a relative recent trend with the prevalence of Skype and FaceTime use, it is likely that this will increase in popularity as it is a simple and inexpensive way to stay in touch with family and friends in the home community.

Video streaming in English was much higher, 80%, at SC than at other institutions. There are many possible explanations for this behavior, but most apparent is the fact that the majority of these students meet in the computer lab for their ESL courses; using technology in class to learn English likely impacts this statistic. In contrast, prior research at UCC included interviews in which participants revealed a preference for using video streaming to view television shows from their home countries (Amos, 2015).

The responses submitted email use at EHL varies significantly from the results at UCC and SC, which were virtually identical. This is likely due to the unique nature of the coursework at the institution, which allows students to select a French or English language track. It is notable that 15.3% of respondents noted using only their home language despite enrollment in a business English course that includes instruction in composing formal inquiry email correspondence.

In news reading, there are consistently high rates of English-only access and use of both English and another language, which suggests that technology is being used both as a resource to gather information and a way to maintain contact with the home culture. However, specific breakdown in categories ranged widely among the study sites. UCC had by far the highest of respondents reporting reading newspapers only in English (53.7%), with an additional 39.0% reading in both languages. The potential reasons for this are twofold: the course curriculum at UCC requires students to read New York Times articles every week. Additionally, free English- language daily newspapers are available at both UCC and SC, encouraging students to read at least occasionally in English, a resource that is not available at EHL, which had 27.4% of students reading news only in their home language.

In the category of personal research, almost half of respondents at EHL, 44.3%, reported using a language other than English for interactions, compared to less than 10% in the other populations. This is likely because EHL is located in a French-speaking region, so items of personal interest like restaurants and local news would be in French. Likewise, for UCC and

SC students seeking to interact with the local community, English use—which was 58.7% and 43.5% respectively, would be the language of choice. Taken in the broader context of the local community rather than the immediate school environment, this inverse relationship suggests that each study population may be using the community language to explore their new environment and engage with their new roles towards identity transformation.

The results in the category of academic research at initially appear to be vastly different for the three study sites. At UCC, the vast majority of this work, 75.6% was completed in English, with only 2.2% of respondents relying solely on another language. Conversely, at EHL only 13.9% used English only and 68.1% reported a combination of languages, and a full one-fifth did not use English at all. These results again suggest the strong influence of the campus culture on the actions and language choices of students as they seek to establish a new identity. At UCC, use of English is strongly discouraged in class as professors seek to increase comprehensible English input for immersive language mastery. In contrast, the bilingual curriculum at EHL encourages students to explore, integrate, and draw from all linguistic resources rather than prizing English for academics.

Limitations

After review of the findings, the researchers acknowledge that there are limitations with this study. A significant limitation is that one of the research sites (EHL) is a bi-lingual institution. Students are permitted to select if they will study in English or French, and while they must study the other language, the flexibility to revert to their language of preference may impact their behavior. A second limitation is that all of the participants in the study were enrolled in an ELL course, where they were actively encouraged to use English for both academic and social communications. It is possible that the students responded to the surveys with their perception of accepted behavior, not actual behavior. Finally, while the survey indicated “in another language”, results have interpreted that as “in the native language”. With multilingual students, it is possible that they could have been referring to a third language choice.

Implications for Future Study

Based on the findings in this study, the researchers identified several implications for future study. The first implication is to refine the survey methodology to be more specific and include “language used at home” as opposed to “other language” for greater specificity. It is also necessary to provide simple definitions of the different technology categories to ensure that the learners are responding within the intended context.

A second implication is to explore the transformative learning with technology that occurs through community learning and integration, as opposed to the academic lens. The work in this study assumed that the language of academic study would promote transformative learning. Further study could focus on integrating into a new culture and society as a new community.

Additionally, future study could include European students enrolled in a degree program that is conducted entirely in English, as opposed to a program that offer more than one language stream in the curriculum. This would further refine analysis based on the different comparative populations.

Finally, further study must explore the opportunity for educators to facilitate transformation for international students, increasing reflective discourse, bridging existent and

emerging identities, and balancing the support of social and family networks while still encouraging students to transform into their new academic communities.

Conclusions

Technology as a Platform to Try Out New Roles

The digital platforms used across different technologies serve as spaces for ELL students to try out new roles while are actively learning in their non-native language. Technology enables these individuals to interact in real-time with friends and family both in English and their native language. It also provides learners with access to resources, both social and academic, in more than one language, giving them the chance to determine how and when they will immerse in the language of their studies.

Community Integration Influences Academic Integration

The culture and language of the area in which one is studying can influence a learner's motivation to use English as opposed to another language (their native language). One example of this in context is access and availability to materials in English. For the study sites in the United States, free newspapers were available on campus published only in English. In Switzerland, free newspapers were available on campus exclusively in French, the local language of the region. If a learner has ongoing access to materials in English, this could result in a shift in preferences for academic research and communication.

When a student moves to a new country and commences their studies in a new language, they are often faced with more than one disorienting dilemma. In this study, the researchers focused on the language as the catalyst for transformative learning, but acclimation to a new culture and larger community can also present as the disorienting dilemma for learners. The study findings report that many of the learners engage in both academic and social tasks in both English and another language. This aligns with the phase of the transformative learning process of trying out new roles.

Additionally, the value that a campus culture builds around use of a single, power language appears to influence the use of that language across many different activities. At UCC, the English-only emphasis in the college environment paired with the need to communicate with classmates from many different language backgrounds seems to have influenced the prevalence of English-only engagement, the highest percentage reported in five of the seven categories examined. Likewise, the encouragement of dual language use at EHL likely influenced the high rates of bilingual engagement as evidenced by the lowest percentage of English-only reported in all seven categories. Put simply, community and campus cultural values around language, both espoused and in action, seem to impact the language used to explore new roles in identity formation.

Intersection of Influences

Key among transformative learning resources are personal relationships. Student relationships are a strong influence on information gathering, for academic purposes and for meaning-making in students' everyday lives. These sources for support include peer and family networks which further impact student use of language, potentially delaying their mastery of English language. Seeking information can provide connections to the established identity at home, which could provide comfort in the transition to the college culture; however, it could also limit possibilities of transformation.

Appendix A-Device Ownership and Internet Usage Survey

DEVICE OWNERSHIP AND INTERNET USAGE SURVEY

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. Please answer all items to the best of your ability.

Please make a check mark to indicate your use of each of the following devices:

	I use daily	I use weekly	I use monthly	I use rarely	I have never used
Desktop Computer					
Laptop Computer					
Game console					
eBook reader					
Tablet computer (such as iPad)					
Smartphone (with applications)					

Think about your internet use in the last week—on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Please make a check mark to show if you have used the internet to do the following activity. If you have, please indicate the language you used when online.

Online Activity	IF YES, WAS IT...			
	I have done this within the last week	In English	In another language	In both English and another language
Sent or received email				
Looked up news information (such as on CNN or FOX News, video news networks, or an online newspaper or news magazine)				
Looked up information for school (such as research for a paper, vocabulary definitions or translations, or background information for a class)				
Looked up information of personal interest (such as weather, entertainment gossip, health information, "how-to", or repair information)				
Looked up information about a product, travel destination, or restaurant				
Connected with friends via Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Yelp or another social networking site.				
Viewed or uploaded personal video for entertainment (such as on YouTube, Vimeo, or BuzzFeed)				
Viewed streaming video online (such as a television website, Hulu, NetFlix, or another commercial site)				
Shared or streamed photos, music, or other media				
Made a phone or video call (such as on Skype, Vantage, or Google Plus)				
Played multiplayer action games (such as World of Warcraft, Everquest, Call of Duty, or Halo)				
Played word games (such as Scramble, Words with Friends, or Crossword Puzzles)				
Created content (such as a review of a product or restaurant or a blog post)				

Appendix B—Summary of Survey Results

Task	Percent participating in last week			Percent of these in English			In another language			In both		
	UCC (n=46)	SC (n=26)	EHL (n=72)	UCC (n=46)	SC (n=26)	EHL (n=72)	UCC (n=46)	SC (n=26)	EHL (n=72)	UCC (n=46)	SC (n=26)	EHL (n=72)
Word Games	42.9	30.8	25.0	61.9	25.0	33.3	4.8	25.0	33.3	33.3	50.0	33.3
News Reading	83.7	92.3	86.1	53.7	16.7	16.1	7.3	11.5	27.4	39.0	70.8	54.8
School Research	90.0	92.3	100	75.6	54.2	13.9	2.2	8.3	20.8	22.2	37.5	68.1
Blog Posting	51.0	42.3	40.3	52.0	72.7	17.2	4.0	0	13.8	44.0	27.3	48.3
Product Research	83.7	84.6	88.9	53.7	54.5	9.4	7.3	13.6	43.8	39.0	31.8	43.8
Personal Research	92.0	88.5	97.2	58.7	43.5	14.3	8.7	4.3	44.3	32.6	52.2	43.1
Email	93.8	100	100	42.2	46.2	13.9	0	0	15.3	57.8	53.8	79.2
Social Media	87.8	100	95.8	46.5	7.7	7.2	7.0	26.9	34.8	46.5	65.4	59.4
Post/View Video	70.0	73.1	76.4	42.9	15.8	14.5	0	5.3	20.0	57.1	78.9	61.8
Streamed Video	84.0	96.2	77.8	45.2	80	30.4	7.1	0	7.1	47.6	20	57.1
Shared Photos	68.0	80.8	66.7	29.4	28.6	18.8	0	9.5	25.0	70.6	61.9	39.6
Video Chat	80.0	80.8	70.8	17.5	9.5	7.8	15	38.1	41.2	67.5	52.4	39.2
Multiplayer Game	44.0	42.3	27.8	63.6	72.7	20.0	0	0	10.0	36.4	27.3	30.0

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The Online Intersection: The Experience of Incidental Transformations

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Abstract: This paper explores the nature of transformative learning as experienced by non- traditional learners undertaking an online degree and ways in which the online context offered an intersection that better meets their needs. While acknowledging an intellectual debt to Mezirow's work, a more unified theory of transformative learning is offered.

Introduction: Contextualising the Research

Due to widening participation and rising qualification requirements for employment, Scotland is witnessing a growing number of childhood practice professionals participating in Higher Education (HE). All those employed in this sector with management or leadership responsibilities are now legally required to be qualified to degree level. The Childhood Practice Degree (CPD) is the only degree that meets this requirement. A significant proportion of students undertaking the CPD can be defined as non-traditional learners and therefore represent the norm within this discipline. For the purposes of this paper I have defined non-traditional learners as being over twenty-one with a vocational training and work experience background.

The University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) is described as a collegiate organisation. It is based on a partnership of thirteen Further Education FE colleges, research institutions and a network of more than seventy learning centres spread across Scotland. The CPD offered at UHI is delivered totally online centred on a design of active and collaborative learning experiences. Online study addresses barriers to participation caused by geography or poor transport infrastructure. The online context offers a sense of relative anonymity which non-traditional learners may find appealing. The two dimensional, linear asynchronous nature of online discussions offers a less chaotic intersection which may encourage non-traditional learners to more actively engage and more easily establish their role in the institutional habitus of online education.

This paper offers an opportunity to share aspects of my doctoral research with a wider audience and contributes to the growing interest in the potential of the online context as a space for collecting qualitative data as well a space capable of fostering transformative learning (Mongiello 2015).

Transformative Learning: Towards a Unified Perspective

Since it was first introduced to the field of adult education by Mezirow (1978) the concept of transformative learning (TL) has been an enduring topic of research and theory. As a theory it has been viewed as a complex idea that presents considerable practical and ethical challenges (Dirkx 1998). The popularity of TL has to some extent been its downfall. The overuse of the phrase transformation to refer to a myriad of learning experiences has led to a 'conceptual uncertainty' (Illeris 2104, p.3). Hoggan (2014, p.9) notes that TL theory 'is suffering from evacuation'. There is a need to move beyond Mezirow's original work and in doing so recognise that it is possible to draw on a number of perspectives which have emerged in response to the critiques of his work.

While acknowledging an intellectual debt to Mezirow's work, this paper supports a more unified theory of transformative learning (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Dirkx (1997, p. 80) notes that transformative learning involves 'very personal and imaginative ways of knowing, grounded in a more intuitive and emotional sense of our experiences'. West (2014) draws our attention to the relational nature of transformative learning. As adult educators we should therefore remain mindful of issues related to trust, recognition and respect which are core to the educator-learner relationship, as well as creating space for doubt, confusion and relational anxiety (Murphy & Brown, 2012). We can widen the theoretical lens to include Honneth's (1995) theory of critical social recognition, in particular his thinking that a learner's identity is shaped through the establishment of mutual recognition. In order for learners to develop a relationship with themselves they require an intersubjective recognition of their abilities and achievements (Fleming, 2011). It is the establishment of reciprocal relations of recognition that have the potential to create conditions capable of fostering transformative learning and, I suggest, the online context acts as an intersection in which the development of these relationships can occur.

Online Context: An Intersection for Fostering Transformations

Online learning focuses our attention less on the physical and geographical distance between learners and educators but more on the potential interactions between learners and educators, between learners themselves and between learners and the online course content. As learners engage with the process of interactivity they may find themselves considering alternative perspectives. They may begin to ask 'Why?': Why am I feeling this way? Why do I need to consider these alternative views? What does this all mean for me and my learning? These questions are not restricted to the online course materials but may relate to the inner world of learners. As Dirkx (2001) suggests in pursuit of intellectual and cognitive growth learners may become more aware of their inner world, which has the potential to foster TL but often these transformations are incidental rather than the primary curricular aim. Taylor & Laros (2104, p.6) refer to these as 'by-product' transformations.

As adult educators we should remain mindful of non-traditional learners' biographies, their culture, their stories and ways in which these offer rich territory for incidental transformations. TL is not merely the process of meeting a course objective, achieving a certain grade or meeting the expectations of a board of examiners. While these are relevant the landscape of learning is made more vivid and alive as learners become more aware of, and work with, their inner world (Dirkx 2010). If, as Dirkx (2006, p. 128) suggests, we 'restore the *soul*' to the world of adult education incidental transformations would no longer be 'by-products' but would rather be viewed as part of the broader landscape of learning and as such would inform online course learning objectives and curricular aims.

Immediacy behaviours are significant in the online context but there are challenges. Online educators can no longer 'rely on sensory and expressive skills to establish and maintain relationships' with their learners (Major 2010, p.184). This means their affective online persona has to 'change in terms of non-verbal communication, intimacy, energy and humour' (Coppola *et al* 2002, p.178). As an educational intersection the online context has the potential and the tools capable of fostering TL. While human interactivity create the conditions capable of promoting TL, technology is the enabler. Therefore the process of interactivity and the technology are equally significant in creating the conditions capable of fostering a transformation.

Methodology

Nineteen childhood practice graduates were purposively selected to take part in the author's doctoral research. Adopting a qualitative approach based on a constructivist view of human knowledge, narratives were collected using semi-structured asynchronous email interviews. A total of three hundred and ten email exchanges took place over a six month period. The email interview allowed participants to take more ownership of the discourse. The space and time afforded by the online context enabled them to return to their narratives, edit and amend and redefine the phenomenon. The construction of knowledge therefore remained open to constant negotiation and collaboration. Recognising the inherent interplay between inductive and deductive data analysis I adopted a hybrid thematic approach.

An Extract from my Doctoral Research: A Transformed Self-view

A transformation of a self-view involves having to let go of previously held perceptions of self and therefore alters an individual's habit of being. This can be a threatening and painful experience which is often resisted. An individual will rarely experience a transformed self instantaneously. The role of social relations is significant during the transformative process. What follows is Charlotte's story.

Charlotte's story

During Charlotte's online studies her self-view was dramatically altered. She experienced a transformation that evoked a structural change in how she viewed herself. The virtual relationship that Charlotte developed with the CPD course leader played a significant role in creating a space in which Charlotte felt safe to consider an alternative self-view.

From a young age Charlotte knew she was different. At school she was ridiculed or ignored by her teachers and fellow pupils. She spent most of her school life being treated like a fool:

I think the challenges I faced were getting past everything I had been told....I was thick, stupid, lazy and not worth the effort....I was told it every day of my life from a young age.

In primary school Charlotte tested positive for dyslexia but her parents did not share this with her until she was twenty-one. It was at this point that she took her first step towards considering an alternative self-view. However, her transformation did not fully emerge until her studies at UHI. Charlotte was attracted to the CPD because it was online. This meant she didn't need interact with fellow learners face-to-face and there would be minimal opportunity for peer humiliation.

Throughout Charlotte's studies she was reluctant to join online chat sessions, and refused to post comments on discussion boards. Charlotte's main support throughout her studies was the course leader. She spoke positively about this virtual relationship, noting that the course leader was patient, calm and never made her feel stupid. Charlotte felt she was understood:

She got the fact that the way I learnt to deal with my problems was to look at everything and avoid anything that was not clear cut....She also understood why I could not go on to chat rooms or put work on the board.

Charlotte referred to herself using the following phrases 'not the brightest bulb in the box', 'thick as mince', 'stupid', 'lazy' and 'not worth the effort'. Having held this self-view for over thirty years, it was difficult for Charlotte to consider an alternative version but in her final year at UHI things began to change. For the first time Charlotte posted a piece of work on the discussion board:

Posting my work on the board was a huge step for me.....I wanted to prove I could put a bit of work up and not care if others laughed or made comments about it.....when you spend all your school life being treated like a fool you chose not to want to learn and hide when you can and posting on the board is the opposite of that.

Charlotte's experience of posting a piece of work online was a significant turning point. In exploring why she took this risk Charlotte reflected on the significance of her relationship with the course leader:

It was all thanks to one lecturer that cared enough to want to help. That simple gesture changed me, it gave me confidence and pride in myself two things I had never really had.

Charlotte's self-view was changing and this change was experienced in contexts outside of UHI:

[This] affected me forever as I was able to sit in a room with hundreds of people (something I would never do before) and then on top of that get up on stage in front of them all. All thanks to one person's kindness and understanding.

The virtual relationship between Charlotte and the course leader, which was based on trust, compassion, warmth, genuine regard, caring and empathy, created a space in which Charlotte felt safe to take a risk. This enabled her to experience a transformed self-view. A self-view which Charlotte embraced after her online studies came to an end:

My view of the world has changed....I no longer see myself as a waste of space as I have achieved something that others see as important.

In altering her self-view, Charlotte had transformed her habit of being; she experienced a subjective reframing. However, her transformation was not instantaneous. Charlotte still needs time to embody her altered self-view:

When I finished the course I had to start thinking about myself differently I could no longer believe what I had been told all my life as now I had proof that I wasn't thick; I have a degree. This was hard for me to believe but I am getting better.

As Charlotte was pushed out of her comfort zone she entered a liminal space in which she experienced a growing edge of knowing (Berger 2004). This was a troubling process for Charlotte. There was the urge to either hold on to old ways of being or embrace the 'edge emotions' which offered Charlotte the potential to transform (Malkki 2010, p. 49). The central aim was to resume a sense of stability. Once Charlotte exited the liminal space she needed time to fully embrace her transformation. Malkki and Green (2014, p. 15) refer to this process as 'a kind of ontological or existential shock'; it will take some time for Charlotte's 'conceptual understanding to "catch up" and align with this new modality'.

Discussion

Illeris (2014) defines transformative learning as all learning that signifies a change in the identity of the learner. As Charlotte entered the world of online academia she encountered experiences which presented opportunities for her to construct an alternative self-view and in doing so experience a transformation. Charlotte's self-view can be defined as how she looked at herself from the inside but this was not necessarily based on the truth but rather on a subjective perception of her life story (Illeris 2007). As defined by Cohen (1973, p. 63) Charlotte lived her life 'crouched and distorted' under a 'low-expectation ceiling'. Her life experiences and biography acted as filters through which she defined her self-view but these filters were not necessarily based on truth and therefore it was possible for Charlotte to construct a transformed

self-view. The online intersection offered Charlotte a context in which she felt supported and safe to explore and internalise an alternative self-view.

It is suggested that the institutional habitus can act to perpetuate the values of dominant culture (Thomas 2002). With this in mind it could be assumed that Charlotte did not have the required social, educational or cultural capital necessary to enter the world of academia. As a non-traditional learner Charlotte may have felt the need to return to a more familiar habitus. I propose that the intersection created by the online context enabled Charlotte to feel more at ease and therefore more able and willing to take a risk which ultimately led to her experiencing a transformation. The online context created a more level playing field which acted to diminish the mismatch between Charlotte's habitus and institutional habitus thereby fostering conditions more conducive to promoting a transformation.

West *et al* (2013) note that Bourdieu's work does not sufficiently explain how non-traditional learners become 'fish in water'. This led to an exploration of Honneth's theory of social recognition and Winnicott's concept of transitional space as alternative perspectives that would shed light on the relational nature of transformative learning as experienced by Charlotte. Honneth's theory of critical social recognition outlines the significance of 'social relationships to the development and maintenance of a person's identity' (Anderson 1995:x). Unlike Mezirow, Honneth distances himself from cognitive rationalism focusing more on the significance of intersubjectivity and the key role of recognition and mutuality. According to Honneth (1995) a person's identity is shaped through the establishment of relations of mutual recognition. Therefore, in order to develop a relationship with ourselves, that is, our self-identity, we require an intersubjective recognition of our abilities and achievements (Fleming 2011). We can see this reflected in the virtual relationship Charlotte developed with the course leader.

The concept of recognition is also apparent in Winnicott's (1971) work. It is suggested that early experiences of recognition lay the solid foundation for later life. Positive early relationships in which the child feels loved and secure have the potential to create a safe transitional space in which the child can play and engage in creativity (West *et al* 2013). Play therefore offers 'a transitional space in which fundamental negotiations around self, in relation, take place' (West 2011, p. 368). For Charlotte, the reciprocal relationship she developed with the course leader in conjunction with the relative anonymity the online context offered, created a transitional space in which she felt safe to 'play' and take risks and in doing so, was able to construct a transformed self-view. It was interesting to note the value that Charlotte placed on the views of others which connects with Honneth's concept of mutual recognition: '.....I have achieved something that others see as important'.

Conclusion

Transformative learning is not merely the process of meeting a course objective or achieving a certain grade. It is therefore necessary to consider ways in which the practice of fostering incidental transformations informs the design of an online course and influences course learning objectives and curricular aims. However, this does present challenges when trying to assess whether a learner has been transformed which raises a number of issues. Is it necessary to assess incidental transformations and if so how? Will all learners be expected to transform? How is transformative learning fostered online? What role does the online educator have in fostering the process? I propose that, conceptually, at the heart of TL theory is a way of being, an educational philosophy that requires adult educators to develop an awareness of their own biographies and ways in which these shape and influence their practice in an online context.

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Beyond “It Gets Better”: Supporting Seminarians’ Crises of Faith Beyond the Classroom

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Abstract: Research on transformative learning in seminaries has focused on classroom pedagogy. Transformative Learning Theory suggests that, though concepts are introduced in the classroom, much learning takes place beyond the purview of faculty management. Seminary staff interacts with seminarians encountering crises of faith but have few published best practices of how to support students’ disorienting dilemmas from a non-faculty standpoint. This study identifies such best practices and calls for collaboration between seminary student and academic affairs.

Introduction

Graduate theological education is a hotbed of transformative learning potential, situated as it is at the intersections of religion, politics, social justice, and education. Though changing through the simultaneous influences of shifting demographics (Pew Research Center, 2015), shrinking enrollments (Wheeler & Ruger, 2013), and digital pedagogy (Dart, 2013), seminary education (if done well) remains as relevant as ever. Religious knowledge matters, and it is clear that still today religious loyalty shapes societal life and culture, prioritizes values, and creates common – and sometimes clashing – worldviews (Diamond, 2008; Longo, 2007; Prothero, 2007; Todd, 2003; Wertheimer, 2015). The global society needs religious leaders who can help individuals and communities traverse the tremendous problems facing humanity in the 21st century, including environmental degradation, religious intolerance, and consumerist globalization. Seminaries who approach their instructional mission with an eye toward the transformational approach can shape critical thinkers capable of empathy, communicative learning, and reflective action in the world.

Transformational Learning Theory research has expanded to fields beyond education and now invites professionals of all sorts to participate in transformative educational practices. However, a review of scholarly published materials on Transformational Learning Theory offers mostly guidance for, and conversation with, those in educational classroom settings – especially articles on effective classroom management and pedagogies (Taylor, 2000). Spiritual development and contextual education opportunities, thought of as foundational for forming religious leaders (Foster, et. al., 2006), are formalized co-curricular efforts that often have faculty oversight, as well. Yet it is also clear that much student transformation occurs informally through conversations with peers or mentors, self-reflection, and personal experience (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

Personal Experience with Seminarians’ Crises of Faith

I am a clergyperson with a decade of experience as an admissions counselor in theological higher education. I became aware of Transformational Learning Theory after welcoming student after student to cry on my office couch when they were mid-faith-crisis. Initially concerned with retaining them as students, as I listened I became interested to hear the patterns within their stories, and how these mirrored my own journey through seminary. I

empathized, remembering my own unmoored feeling during first year. Biblical, historical, and theological studies had exposed me to questions that my religious upbringing could not answer. However, I did not yet have the theological nuance to develop new working models of faith and meaning. I remember the loneliness, anxiety, and apathy toward study that were hallmarks of my own faith crisis, even as I heard these same and other characteristics from the students crying on my couch.

Though I made it through my crisis of faith over time, I also remembered many colleagues in seminary who either lost their faith and became staunchly atheistic and/or religiously unpracticed, or who completed seminary and now serve religious communities without a personal well of faith from which to draw sustenance. As I sat listening to these students, myself a non-faculty with no formal knowledge of pedagogy, I sensed the “seminary crisis of faith” was a teaching moment for which I was untrained. And I knew I wanted more for the crying students in front of me than the “it gets better” cliché I was offering.

Transformational Learning Theory is Useful for Understanding Seminarians’ Faith Crises

Sharing my frustrations with a faculty colleague, she introduced me to the work of Jack Mezirow and Transformational Learning Theory, and I finally had a language – phrases like “habits of mind,” “disorienting dilemmas,” “challenging assumptions,” and “transformation” – that put structure around the seemingly chaotic experience of seminarians’ crises of faith. An institution committed to transformative learning seeks to shape its students holistically. The goal is not just to add to their academic knowledge, but also to shift the way they interpret the world (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Transformational Learning Theory assumes that students enter schools already formed with a worldview based in their knowledge and experiences, which Mezirow calls their “habits of mind” (Mezirow, 1997; Mezirow, 2000). This is the case with seminarians, as well.

Just like any set of students, seminarians’ backgrounds differ in myriad personal, psychosocial, and demographic ways. Students in seminary also bring to their studies their unique religious upbringing, faith or denominational affiliations, theological core beliefs, and sense of vocational calling. These additional frames of reference are challenged in the seminary classroom differently than they would be, say, in the field of accounting. Though any educational enterprise can employ Transformational Learning Theory, the unique nature of a seminary curriculum, which emphasizes the critical exploration of religious history and practice, is particularly adept at challenging students’ existing meaning schemes.

A student’s transformation can occur either through a sudden evocative encounter or progressively over time as they confront new knowledge and accumulate experiences (Clark, 1993). Mezirow offered 10 stages of transformative learning, which he called “phases of meaning:”

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2000)

From my experience of having navigated my own personal crisis of faith in seminary, and now regularly fielding other students' crises of faith, I suggest that Mezirow's phases of meaning provide an excellent framework to understand and respond to these student needs. Seminarians' crises of faith can be emotionally difficult times, and, as I have mentioned, can lead to academic retention issues and even lifelong spiritual struggle. However, seen through the lens of transformative learning, crises of faith should be embraced by seminary educators as a disorienting dilemma. With proper curricular and co-curricular support, a student can emerge transformed and better able to embrace the complexities of being a religious leader in today's complicated world.

Emphasis on Collaborative Support for Students Having Crises of Faith

As mentioned, there are many resources dedicated to Transformational Learning Theory in formalized classroom and co-curricular settings. Similarly, seminary educational theory has mostly focused on professors and their teaching practices. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the accrediting body for scholarly theological education in the United States and Canada, offers numerous resources for its faculty including a peer-reviewed journal and conferences. Seminary educators are also supported by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion and its own journal writings and research. Very little in these professional organizations for theological education addresses directly the informal experiences of teaching and mentoring that happen every day in the offices of seminary student affairs and student services personnel (SASSP).

This oversight is understandable, even if unfortunate. Faculty may assume that since many SASSPs are not trained theological educators they are unprepared to support students through crises of faith. To resist this critique I would offer that there is no formal survey of SASSPs to determine their backgrounds overall. I could imagine that while some find their employment in seminaries a professional coincidence, still others are deeply committed to theological education. An anecdotal survey of my own seminary SASSPs shows that 44% of our non-faculty staff has earned degrees from theological schools. These theologically trained SASSPs understand the seminary experience personally, and, with adequate professional development, could likely provide excellent co-curricular support for students.

Other faculty may feel uneasy imagining SASSPs as partners in education, rather than just functionaries for everyday processes and policies that keep the institution running behind the scenes. Yet the secular field of Student Affairs has long celebrated and advocated for SASSPs as co-curricular educators who provide learning activities for students beyond the classroom (ACPA, 1996; Keeling, 2004), often with faculty encouragement. After all, demanding faculty pressures in modern academia hardly allow adequate time to care for the comprehensive needs of all students. And the many-phased process of transformative learning is not a one-size-fits-all experience.

I suggest that the most effective efforts to move seminarians through crises of faith to transformative learning will come from collaborative partnerships between the academic and student affairs divisions of an institution. Over the past two decades, secular higher education's professional organizations have increased their emphasis on holistic student development in areas such as personal and social responsibility, spirituality, leadership, and tolerance alongside traditional academic growth (AACU, 2016; Adamson & Bailie, 2012; Grace, 2011; Lindholm,

et.al., 2011; Kuh, 2008; Keeling, 2004; ACPA, 1996). In doing so they have highlighted the importance of co-curricular learning, noting that what happens inside the classroom rarely stays just there. One example, *The Student Learning Imperative*, a foundational document for the secular student affairs profession today, reads, “the key to enhancing learning and personal development is not simply for faculty to teach more and better, but also to create conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities, both inside and outside the classroom” (ACPA, 1996). Certainly this resonates with Transformational Learning Theory.

Transformative learning differs from traditional “assimilative learning,” or teaching content that does not challenge a student’s existing worldview (McGonigal, 2005). Assimilative learning is rational whereas transformative education is often emotional for students as they encounter the limitations of their current habits of mind (McGonigal, 2005). For transformation to occur students need space and time to work through the integrative and emotional aspects of forming new perspectives – more space and time than might be available in one class session each week. Additionally, educators Parker Palmer and Arthur Zajonc suggest that modern-day educational institutions are often infused with scientific biases that declare objective truth is measurable and that education’s highest goal is the emotionless dissemination of that truth (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). Professors who have earned their credentials through the academy are sometimes ripe with this same “pedagogical fundamentalism” (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). This could make it difficult to convince some faculty members of the need to enter their students’ emotional lives to participate in the work of transformative learning. For all of these reasons, SASSPs could be tapped to take some co-curricular responsibility for transformative education efforts.

Summary and Introduction to Best Practices

Thus far I have argued that students often experience crises of faith while in seminary, and that current research and resources to address and support them is lacking. Additionally, I have suggested that it is helpful to understand crises of faith through the framework of Mezirow’s Transformational Learning Theory. In that context, crises of faith are not something to be avoided. Instead they are disorienting dilemmas that can be normalized and even cultivated for a student’s transformative seminary education. As such, I have called for collaboration between faculty and SASSPs, the academic and student affairs units within each institution, to work together and provide resources inside and beyond the classroom for students facing crises of faith. I will now identify several best practices for supporting students’ disorienting dilemmas from a non-faculty standpoint, drawn from my own anecdotal experience, and grounded in my nascent understanding of Transformational Learning Theory.

But before I delineate these best practices I will offer a necessary caveat. Seminarians’ crises of faith are as individual as those who have them. However, some institutions of theological higher education may feel compelled to respond to their students in a way that is standardized by theological leanings or denominational ties. I offer these best practices out of my own context, which is an ecumenical, mainline Protestant, university-based seminary. It could be that my pluralistic, urban, and academically focused setting may itself create increased instances of students encountering disorienting dilemmas. Some seminary SASSPs reading this article may find that few of their students show signs of experiencing crises of faith. In these cases perhaps the seminary curriculum reinforces their incoming students’ worldviews by sharing commonly held denominational doctrines or faith claims. Finally, it is important to note that the list below is

not comprehensive. In fact, this paper is just the beginning of a wider project aimed at interviewing both seminarians and SASSPs for a more thorough assessment of the student crisis of faith experience.

Some Best Practices for SASSPs to Support Seminarians' Crises of Faith

1. **Get to know students personally** – Students will not often share their crisis of faith with someone they do not know or trust. Make an effort to connect personally with them by walking the hallways between class times, or by organizing more formal gatherings. An example, the Dean of Students of our University calls entering students within two weeks of their arrival to campus, just to check in and establish a first connection. Students remember this and are more likely to seek his counsel when troubles arise.
2. **Treat every student as an individual** – If a student requests your support for their crisis of faith, listen well to their unique needs even if you have heard similar stories from others. Do not rush to compare them to previous students, especially not on the basis of demographic or dogmatic similarities.
3. **Rely one-to-one peer mentoring** – One of the most effective resources for students experiencing crises of faith are other students, perhaps farther along in the program, who also once struggled through a disorienting dilemma. It is very satisfying as an administrator to see someone who encountered trouble early in their program blossom later. Ask if such a person would like to be a peer mentor to another student. Remember that you must ask for permission before you pair them, and be sensitive not to overload a particularly stellar student with too many mentees.
4. **Emphasize Orientation** – It is difficult to overstate the importance of having a strong Orientation and first-year experience for the sake of student engagement and retention. You might include in Orientation events a panel discussion where returning students speak of their own crises of faith, and especially what helped them through.
5. **Encourage student self-care** – Crises of faith can be exacerbated by students' overwork and exhaustion. When you first encounter a student in crisis, ask about their living, working, and school habits. Ask if they are eating and sleeping regularly and properly. If they value spiritual practices, ask if they have had time to engage in their usual ones, such as prayer or going to church. If a student is clearly lacking self-care, ask why, and try to determine the root causes. Encourage them to take time for themselves, and, in some cases, perhaps encourage them to seek additional help – whether from an academic advisor for situations of curricular overwhelm, or even from student health services, should that be necessary.
6. **Encourage students' critical self-reflection** – You can point students experiencing crises of faith to tangible practices that reinforce the critical self-reflection phase of meaning. Such practices include journaling, contemplative meditation, drawing or creating in some way, yoga or dance, or even the burgeoning field of autoethnography. Narrative sharing also helps people engage in critical self-reflection, so be prepared to ask students questions about themselves and their experiences.
7. **Test for transformation** – It is important to test whether your actions are truly supporting students as you intend them to do. A simple assessment that you can put in place immediately is a password-protected, confidential spreadsheet that tracks

- students who experience crises of faith. Include as much information on the spreadsheet as you can gather – these students’ educational background and GPA, demographic information, and which classes they have taken thus far. Over time you can mine this data to determine if there are patterns to which students encounter disorienting dilemmas at your institution.
8. **Create safe space for emotions** – Transformative education takes place privately, within the individual learner, as well as socially alongside others (McGonigal, 2005). Since transformational learning can be an emotional process, it is important for your seminary building to include spaces where a student in crisis could go to cry, get angry, or otherwise express emotion privately. A quiet chapel might serve as this space, or even a lockable single-stall bathroom. If you have an office, consider stocking it with boxes of soft tissues and perhaps even a candy bowl or tea station where students can find “pick-me-up” refreshment along with, or even instead of, your listening ear. Students may seek your hospitality in a time of emotional need without expressing their issues directly.
 9. **Pay attention to your own transformation** – As an SASSP in a seminary you may not be familiar with secular student affairs organizations, but they have a wealth of information on transformative education, curricular and co-curricular collaboration, and other excellent resources. Avail yourself of this wisdom and perhaps even join these groups as a member and participant. But even as you become expert in fielding student crises of faith, guard yourself from becoming a traditional “assimilative” educator. Always try to embody the “co-learner” spirit described by Jack Mezirow in which the educator, over time, “works herself out of the job of authority figure to become a colearner [*sic*]” with those she serves (Mezirow, 1997).

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Creative Tension and Transformation through Cycles of Learning: Indigenous, Chinese, and Western Ways of Knowing

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Abstract: In the spirit of a more unified theory of transformative learning, the author proposes a model of collective transformative learning based on cycles of learning operating within a field of creative tension with roots in Western, Indigenous, and Chinese epistemologies. Both the vision and the understanding of current reality that together create a field of creative tension must have roots in diverse cultural and epistemological orientations in order to harness a broad spectrum of human experience.

Introduction

The field of transformative learning has grown well beyond the individual “disorienting dilemma” (Mezirow, 1991; Boverie & Kroth, 2009) and has found its way into a host of disciplines, each with a different perspective. Yet despite this diversity of disciplines, Western modes of thought dominate the field. In order for transformative learning theory to become more unified (Cranton & Taylor, 2012) its roots must grow to embrace a wider diversity of the human experience. This paper outlines a model of organizational and community transformation across diverse cultures and epistemological orientations drawing on Western, Chinese, and Indigenous worldviews. This model consists of cycles of action, reflection, and consultation drawing on the energy arising from a desire to create something new in the world and foster a process of individual and collective transformation. This paper explores the idea of transformative learning as collaborative, emerging from a consciously directed process of creating shared vision across diverse worldviews and epistemological orientations, and developing the capacity to bring that vision to fruition.

Worldviews

According to O’Sullivan (2012), “a worldview combines beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values, and ideas to form a comprehensive model of reality” (p. 164). Western, Chinese, and Indigenous worldviews differ in important ways. Western worldviews are generally linear and often fragmented while Chinese and Indigenous worldviews are circular. The premise of American Indian philosophies is “a circular worldview that connects everything and everyone in the world to everything and everyone else, where there is no distinction between the physical and metaphysical world, and where ancestral knowledge guides contemporary practices” (Brayboy and McCarty, 2010, p. 190). In the Chinese worldview there are universal patterns in the heavens, within ourselves, and in human affairs. As we come to discern these patterns, we become increasingly attuned to the moral principles that guide our decisions and maintain balance and reciprocity in our relationships.

Agency and individualism are prominent in Western thought. Western History is largely the deeds of individual heroes and villains whose traits are independent of context. But from the Chinese perspective, an agent cannot be extracted from his or her context; there is no “objective observer” as in Western science: “... to identify and isolate an agent is an abstraction which removes it from the concrete reality of flux, exaggerating its continuity at the expense of its

change. Human beings ... are interdependent with the world in which they reside, simultaneously shaping it and being shaped by it” (Lau & Ames, 1998, p. 20). As we change, the world around us changes more by virtue of our embeddedness in it rather than as a result of our actions as free agents; participation rather than agency is the central theme. The dualism of Western thought patterns is muted or absent in Chinese thought. “Agency and action, subject and object, are not contraries, but interchangeable aspects of a single category” (Lau & Ames, 1998, pp. 20-21). Distinctions between agent and action, subject and object, the doer and the deed, is just a matter of perspective.

Science, Inquiry, and Ways of Knowing

Western science generally sees “truth” as existing outside of time and space. The autonomous individual “is the locus of morality guided by individual conscience and private judgment, seeking no greater purpose than individual fulfillment” (Lange, 2012, pp. 200-201). From the Chinese perspective, “‘knowing’ is the unraveling and the coordinating of the patterns of continuity that emerge and persist in the natural, social, and cultural flux around us ... always practical, contingent, and moral: it is a ‘doing’ rather than a state of mind. Further, ‘knowing’ is meliorative – it makes a situation better” (Lau & Ames, 1998, pp. 21-27). Thus, knowing is not so much about agency as it is about participation in a larger cultural and cosmic framework. Rather than “truth” in any definitive or abstract sense, Chinese knowing is more concerned with continuity and coherence within the flux of an ever-changing present – an *unfolding*.

Einstein calls scientific reasoning one of the greatest achievements in human thought. It enables us to see beyond the limitations of our senses and challenge intuitive conclusions that may be wrong. Western science tends to decontextualize knowledge in pursuit of broad generalizations and clearly defined abstractions, valuing precision, repeatability, and verifiable causal mechanisms. Yet, despite great advances in Western science, human thought is by nature circumscribed. As Heisenberg reminds us, “... we have to remember that what we observe is not nature in itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning” (Heisenberg, 1958 p. 26). The positivists who dominated Western science in the 20th century view the non-material dimension of human experience as outside the purview of science, irrelevant, or non-existent. Yet Heisenberg and other architects of quantum theory viewed the dismissal of that which we can’t measure or empirically observe as an impediment to science. “As far as science is concerned,” Heisenberg warned, “if we may no longer speak or even think about the wider connections, we are without a compass and hence in danger of losing our way” (Wilber, 1984, p. 38). The rough sketch of a transformative learning model such as the one presented here may suggest ways to bring Western science in alignment with more ancient ways of knowing.

Indigenous knowledge is situated or *emplaced*. “Cradled in the context of specific landscapes, knowledge is raised. The landscape – the places where teaching and learning take place – is not just a blank backdrop for the journey, but the locus of the power to move through a knowledge-seeking journey” (Brayboy & McCarty, 2010, p. 187). What counts as knowledge, how we use that knowledge, the place where that knowledge is gained and where it is used, and how the community benefits from using it are inseparable facets of Indigenous science (Cajete, 1999). “Pursuit of knowledge and application of knowledge is one process anchored in moral values” (Green, 1980, p. 207). Ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology are facets of a whole (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). We are accountable for the relationships affected through our investigations (Wilson, 2009). The principles of reciprocity and balance require that we maintain an attitude of respect toward all the elements of our investigation. The powers of reason and

sense perception enable us to investigate reality and discover truth. But reason and intuition, the material and the spiritual, are inseparable. And there is a continuity with the knowledge of the past, cultural tradition and collective memory.

The *Great Learning* is an ancient Chinese synopsis of a way of life that seeks knowledge as integral to finding peace and balance within oneself and in human affairs. At its heart is the idea of the investigation of things. By observing the patterns and learning the principles operating in the universe, we extend our knowledge and clarify our thinking. This provides a basis for cultivating our moral qualities and bringing order to our families, our institutions, and the world. The truths that matter most are moral truths; scientific investigation deepens our understanding of both the physical world and how we ought to conduct ourselves in it. This *Way of Learning* does not seek to impose a truth from above, but rather challenges us to articulate our moral understanding based on our own investigation of things (Chan, 1963). Science is inherently axiological; self-knowledge is transformative. Independent investigation of truth – the use of our rational faculty – is a moral injunction. Collective investigation of truth to discover the right course of action is the basis of consultation.

Creative Tension

Consciousness of the gap between current reality and a vision of a desired future can motivate people to pursue a shared vision and generate creative energy to transform organizations and communities (Senge, 1991). A shared vision is not simply an abstract verbal expression of high hopes for the future, but rather an expression of shared aspiration that taps into deep wells of individual motivation and engagement within an organizational culture. Vision and values are inseparable and are central to organizational and cultural transformation. However there is an important distinction between *espoused* and *enacted* values – we don't always act according to what we say we believe. A key function of leadership in a learning organization is to understand the nature of the culture, including the gap between espoused and enacted values, and provide stewardship for a learning process to deepen collective understanding of current reality while continually seeking to clarify a shared vision as a force in people's hearts.

Conversation

Conversation is common to virtually all societies. Understanding conversation can help elucidate a broad-based theory of transformative learning. As social entrepreneur Lynne Twist expresses it, "... we don't really live in the world. We live in the conversation we have about the world ..." (Brown & Isaacs, 2005, p. 24). Conversation can take on various forms, including dialogue and discussion. Dialogue is a divergent process, an opening up to possibilities. Discussion is a convergent process, a narrowing down to a decision and subsequent action. Consultation brings these two processes together in the spirit of investigation of truth for the betterment of society. Its foundation is justice and wisdom.

Dialogue

William Isaacs (1999) proposed a comprehensive model for developing the individual and collective capabilities of dialogue – the art of talking together and thinking together. Dialogue is "a shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together ... a living experience of inquiry within and between people" (p. 9). Dialogue is not achieved by following a set of rules, but by allowing the "shared meaning and common understanding already present in a group of people" (p. 10), to arise from their interactions and give direction to shared action. Isaacs identifies three voices of dialogue: meaning, aesthetics, and power or "the pursuit of objective

understanding, the subjective experience of beauty, and the shared activity of coordinated and just action.” (p. 13). Isaacs maintains that these voices have been fragmented in our thinking and in our institutions and that we can re-integrate them through dialogue. Dialogue is “a conversation with a center, not sides. It is a way of taking the energy of our differences and channeling it toward something that has never been created before. It lifts us out of polarization and into a greater common sense, and is thereby a means for accessing the intelligence and coordinated power of groups of people” (p. 19). Dialogue comes naturally to human beings but “the habits of thought and quality of attention” (p. 30) called for in dialogue are rare. However, “by becoming more conscious of the architecture of the invisible atmosphere in our conversations” (p. 30), we may begin to rebuild our capabilities for dialogue.

Dialogue requires mutual respect among all its participants, empathic listening while suspending judgement, and the courage to voice our perspective irrespective of how we think others may respond. The spirit of consultation requires that this be done with courtesy and moderation. In dialogue, we take responsibility for our thinking and learn to inquire together to achieve new insights, to reorder our knowledge. Excessive abstraction and stubborn adherence to our own views can impair the process. Dialogue unfolds through participation, awareness, and collectively seeking threads of coherence. Isaacs (1999) describes the relationship among these ideas: “beneath the practice of listening is the principle of participation; behind respecting is the principle of coherence, behind suspending, the principle of awareness, and behind voicing, the principle of unfoldment” (p. 81). The principles of dialogue find practical application in the World Café.

The World Café

The World Café (Brown and Isaacs, 2005) operates on a set of principles “to improve people’s collective capacity to share knowledge and shape the future together” (p. 3). It evolved in pursuing two key questions:

- *How can we enhance our capacity to talk and think more deeply together about the critical issues facing our communities, our organizations, our nations, and our planet?*
- *How can we access the mutual intelligence and wisdom we need to create innovative paths forward?*

The World Café is a “conversational greenhouse” for nurturing collective intelligence and generating actionable knowledge. It builds on work in Appreciative Inquiry, dialogue, collaborative learning, intellectual capital and knowledge management, embodied cognition, and complexity science.

Brown and Isaacs (2005) identify a set of principles to foster authentic dialogue for creating actionable knowledge: set the context (purpose, participants, parameters); create hospitable space; explore questions that matter; encourage everyone’s contributions; cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives; listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions; harvest and share collective discoveries. There is an art to framing “catalytic questions for collaborative knowledge creation” (p. 90). Such questions focus our intention, attention, and energy, and tap into our innate wisdom. This process requires that we honor the diversity of thought within a self-organizing system in order to gain new insights and access collective wisdom. *Contribution* is held to be a higher standard of engagement than either empowerment or participation (p. 99).

The World Café learning process connects people and perspectives around a core question through dialogue. Through the interaction of individual contributions, collective

intelligence reveals coherent patterns of meaning, the whole becomes visible, and wisdom emerges. The effectiveness of the process depends on the strength of the question, an intimate and stimulating setting like a café, and the art of hosting (as distinct from traditional facilitating or group leading). The host continually considers a number of questions to help guide the process: “What can I do to make whomever I am with feel physically comfortable, emotionally safe, and intellectually challenged? How can I support members in discovering a deeper understanding and appreciation – for each other and for the questions we’re exploring? How can I engage the Café participants themselves in hosting each other and in discovering the magic in the middle of their conversations?” (p. 161). The host continually seeks to “nurture a spirit of authentic dialogue while creating the opportunity to evoke collective insight in the larger group” (p. 149). Organizational and community leaders need to develop the capabilities of cultivating a culture of dialogue. These capabilities include the ability to create a climate of discovery, to suspend premature judgement, to explore underlying assumptions and beliefs, to listen for unexpected connections between ideas, to encourage the expression of a wider range of perspectives, and to articulate shared understandings. Dialogue plays an essential role in cycles of learning.

Cycles of Learning

Collective learning oriented toward a vision of the future can be systematized in *cycles of learning*. Through cycles of reflection, action, and the collaborative discourse of consultation, increasingly accurate pictures of reality can emerge (Figure 1). At the center is the investigation of things and around the periphery a continual process of action, reflection and consultation. “Cycles of action and reflection can build cognitive awareness of self and others in relationship to goal achievement” (Watkins, Marsick, & Faller, 2012). In consultation there is a balance of dialogue and discussion, of advocacy and inquiry, leading to a decision. This process demands emotional maturity, an investigative mindset, pure intent, trustworthiness, and candor. Consultation can bring coherence to the aspirations of an organization or community to achieve “alignment of vision, shared meaning about intentions, and the capacity to work together across boundaries” (p. 377) thus building capacity for collective action.



Figure 1. Cycles of learning.

Cycles of action, reflection, and consultation powered by creative tension can drive a process of collective transformative learning, honoring diverse ways of knowing in probing

current reality in an ethos of reciprocity and balance, and embracing values common to a diversity of cultures such as those proposed by the United Nations. Figure 2 shows schematically how a vision of peace, prosperity, and partnership (United Nations General Assembly, 2015) in tension with current reality provide the motive energy to drive an iterative learning process to systematically transform current reality into the desired future. In this model, there is a balance of agency and participation in a collective learning process where participants reflect on actions and outcomes arising from decisions made in consultation. In an atmosphere of respect, openness, and candor, dialogue and discussion are balanced in search of a path of the collective wisdom.

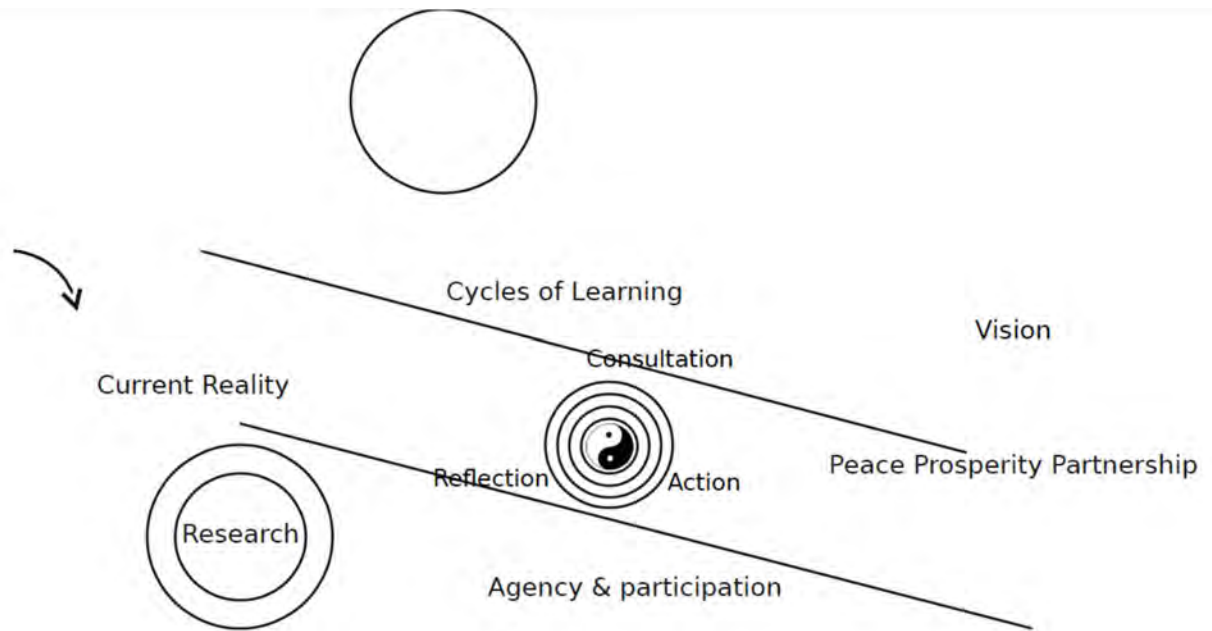


Figure 2. Transformation through Cycles of Learning

Conclusion

An examination of Western, Chinese, and Indigenous knowledge systems can help us triangulate on the phenomenon of human learning. Abstractions and generalizations as seen in Western worldviews can be useful tools but they can also interfere with our embodied experience of the world. Michel and Wortham (2008) found an opportunity to compare the cultures of two Wall Street investment banks. One of the banks adopted a traditional Western worldview characterized by individualism, internal competition for power and influence, and the application of abstract principles to a broad range of situations. The other bank was characterized by collaboration and the discernment of the uniqueness of specific, concrete situations; distinctions in status were downplayed or ignored in seeking an optimum outcome in complex financial transactions. The two organizations were comparably successful by objective measures, but the collaborative bank was more efficient in the use of its resources and levels of stress were significantly less. The collaborative bank diverged from the entrenched individualism of Western culture in the hard-nosed business of investment banking and succeeded within existing economic structures.

The World Café process has been used in business, education, government, and community organizations among diverse cultures and countries around the world. The Cycles of Learning model presented here draws on the World Café experience and theory of dialogue to

suggest a direction for extending a theory of transformative learning. This model embraces diverse cultures and ways of knowing at the level of the individual, the organization, and the community, and suggests a process for moving systematically toward a vision of peace, prosperity, and partnership.

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Exploring Transformative Learning Praxis and Dignity in the Training Context for Lower-Wage Workers

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Abstract: This paper uses workplace dignity theory to explore transformative-oriented training as a context for lower-wage workers. The analysis illustrates instrumental training context factors that threaten worker dignity and explain workers' resisting and esteem-protecting behaviors that inhibit learning engagement. These dignity threats are not completely mitigated by transformative learning design indicating the need for dignity to be intentionally addressed before learners can meaningfully engage in discourse and critical reflection. Trainers' acknowledging their role limitations related to practice, recognizing workers' instrumental competence, engaging workers in content assessments, and adopting a disposition of humility are reviewed as dignity supporting practices. A theoretical implication of this analysis is to consider worker changes in their points of view achieved with dignity support as substantive and fostering their disclosure of forms of thinking, meaning schemes and perspectives.

From a workplace learning perspective, transformative learning theory has been viewed as effective in helping both organizations and individuals learn in adaptive ways that serve both organizational sustainability and employee development (Watkins, Marsick & Faller, 2012). Transformative learning has been used as an explanatory theory for action learning sets (O'Neil & Marsick, 2007), collaborative learning groups (Choy, 2009; King, 2009) and the development of corporate and school leaders (Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan & Lahey, 2010). The substantive nature of change, characteristic of transformative learning, is conceptually aligned with more general workplace learning theories of double-loop learning (Arygris, 1982), adaptive learning (Heifetz, 1994) and expansive learning (Engestrom, 2011).

However, as Bierema (2010) noted, much of the workplace learning literature assumes that workers are skilled, well paid, secure in their work and willing to invest in their development and this critique applies to the transformative workplace learning literature as well. For low and lower-wage workers both the type of workplace learning made available and the saliency of the programs are contingent on the organizational context (Billett, 2011). Yet, we know very little about transformative workplace learning and organizational context for low and lower-wage workers.

In the realm of lower-wage work, particularly human services programs serving socio-economically disadvantaged youth and families, training programs are the most common form of workplace learning. In the training context, workers' positionality as lower-wage and the strategic aim to improve programs and practices increases their resistance to learning. Transformative-oriented training design has potential to create more optimal learning conditions and affect workers' epistemological beliefs about learning and their professional practices. However, we know relatively little about transformative-learning training contexts especially how transformative and instrumental aims influence learner engagement for lower-wage workers. A conceptual framework for examining threats to lower-wage workers' engagement in transformative-oriented training is needed to advance understanding of how instrumental and

transformative aims converge in the training context and further elaborate transformative trainer practices (Cranton, 1996; 2006; Taylor, 2009).

The purpose of this paper is to explore transformative-oriented training as a context for low and lower-wage human services workers using workplace dignity theory (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007, 2011). Dignity theory was selected as a framework because lower-wage workers status as a marginalized group, quality of workplace learning is associated with the organizational setting (Billett, 2011), and it incorporates the workers' subjective experience and contextual factors that influence resistance to meaningful learning engagement.

A general definition of dignity is presented followed by a brief review of workplace dignity theory. This theoretical framework is then used to describe dignity threats for lower-wage workers in the training context. Trainer practices that remediate dignity threats are then discussed. Finally, implications of this framework for transformative learning theory and research are briefly reviewed.

Definitional Components of Dignity

Dignity refers to the inherent worthiness of an individual reflecting one's intrinsic sense of worth, value, and esteem (Edlund, Lindwall, von Post, & Lindstrom, 2013; Lucas, 2015). It is an essential need of the human spirit (Bolton, 2007). Yet, as Sayer (2007, 2011) argued, the experience of dignity is also contingent, fragile and relational. Dignity reflects the subjective and evaluative experiences of the self in everyday life and as a need reflects humans' inherent personal and social vulnerability (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007, 2011). According to Sayer (2007), dignity has a situated character reflecting both one's sense of self-determination and treatment by others. That is, there are aspects of dignity that are influenced by one's sense of self-directed action, but there is also a dimension that is dependent on the relational treatment by others. This social vulnerability is a presupposition of dignity (Sayer, 2007, 2011).

Dignity manifests as innate human potential or capacity connected with an individual's sense making of their world and their place in it (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2011). As Sayer (2011) asserted, this sense making involves the action of reasoning including practical reasoning in everyday life. However, like many capacities, the nature of this reasoning and the fulfillment of its potentiality are affected by how one acts, treatment by others, and opportunity and social structures. The subjective experience of dignity is an outcome of a bidirectional interaction between self and others in context and in the workplace dignity is characteristically at risk (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007).

Workplace Dignity

Workplace dignity theory describes forms of dignity and explains factors that support, threaten and remediate threats and violations, conditions that affect worker well being (Lucas, 2015). In the workplace, inherent dignity is often challenged by the instrumental and exchange basis of the employment relationship as well as organizational structures and unequal distribution of power, role, status and control (Bolton, 2007; Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007). An instrumental relationship reflects that workers are valued as a resource or a means rather than as ends with inherent worth. Thus, many workplace features are characteristically at odds with achieving dignity in and at work (Bolton, 2007; Lucas, 2015).

Hodson (2001) identified four principal challenges to workplace dignity: mismanagement and abuse, overwork, limitations on autonomy, and contradictions of employee involvement. Of these threats, the threat to autonomy has direct implications for understanding dignity in training

programs. A threat to autonomy undermines one's sense of agency. As previously noted, one's sense of agency or self-direction is one component of dignity. However, workplace dignity also conveys a broader need than autonomy and that relates to the second component of dignity, the contingent, fragile and relational vulnerability of the worker's sense of worth. The opposite of autonomy is a sense of being controlled and an autonomy threat undermines one's sense of self-direction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In contrast, a dignity threat also encompasses a violation of one's inherent sense of worth (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007).

Inherent dignity is constrained in organizations through hierarchy as well as differentiated reward systems that manifest as earned dignity (Bolton, 2007; Lucas, 2015). In most organizations, dignity is accrued via one's efforts and contributions that result in the acquisition of resources, autonomy and status (Lucas, 2015). While this suggests one's efforts and self-determination result in earned dignity, these rewards are not available equally in organizations (Bierema, 2010). Those in lower-wage positions face greater threats to both earned and inherent dignity (Bolton, 2007; Sayer, 2007).

Both inherent and earned dignity threat provide an explanation for distancing and self-protective behaviors (Lucas, 2015). Common responses to dignity violations are cynicism, resistance, disengagement, and esteem-protective claims—actions explained as efforts to maintain one's dignity (Lucas, 2015). Given that dignity reflects individual vulnerability in the face of treatment by others, workers also look for others to help reduce dignity threat and remediate dignity violations (Lucas, 2015). For those individuals with greater power in organizations, supporting dignity means recognition of others' inherent vulnerability without taking advantage of it (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007). That is, to support dignity is to respect and affirm others inherent worth as an end and not a means. However, in efforts to remediate dignity, it is important to recognize that the individual worker is the ultimate arbiter of whether dignity has been affirmed or violated (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007).

Workplace Dignity Threats in the Training Context

Like workplace interactions in general, both inherent and earned dignities are at risk in training for workers earning low wages particularly in the field of human services where professional development is driven by clear instrumental or technical content mastery aimed at improving workers' practices. The instrumental character of the training context manifests in two ways. First, organizational culture paradigms of instrumental relationships, whereby the worker is valued as an organizational resource are brought into the training setting. Second, the instrumental training purpose means that learning mastery of new knowledge or content is valued. Importantly, whenever relationships are instrumental in character, dignity is at risk (Sayer, 2007). Transformative learning can remediate some dignity threat associated with privileging instrumental learning aims, but it has less impact on the instrumental character of the workplace that workers bring with them to the training context.

Another consequence of the instrumental training purpose is that it tends to manifest in transmission-focused teaching perspective (Pratt, 2005a) and the learning histories of low or lower-wage workers are generally not considered (Bierema, 2010). That is, the impact of workers' prior educative or miseducative experiences is often not addressed as a dimension of learning. Transformative learning practices overcome some of this dignity threat by engaging prior experience, but workers' beliefs about learning influenced by a miseducative learning history are often not fully considered.

These instrumental training context features explain worker distancing or resistance as an outcome of dignity threat. While resistance manifests in individual behavior, from a workplace

dignity framework it is explained in part by context effects. Dignity threats not remediated by transformative learning design imply that dignity support needs to be intentionally addressed before learners can meaningfully engage in learning especially engagement in discourse and critical reflection. These context features suggest a need to modify, within practical limits, current training structures and have implications for trainers employing transformative learning instructional design with lower-wage workers.

Workplace Dignity and Implications for Transformative Trainer Roles

The literature on fostering transformative learning indicates that educators can do much to mitigate the risk associated with discourse and critical reflection even though they occupy an authoritative and power based role, which is a dignity threat (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007). While this power cannot be given away, trainers can adopt actions identified in the transformational learning literature associated with learner empowerment, autonomy support, and holistic and affective ways of learning and knowing as means for mitigating power differences (Brookfield, 2001; Cranton, 2006; Pratt, 2005b; Taylor, 2009). There is also a practice ethic of eliciting and acknowledging learners' experience and prior knowledge and intentionally building respect, trust and safety (Cranton, 2006; Taylor, 2009). These transformative learning practices and adopting a stance of co-learner (Cranton, 2006) may indirectly support learner dignity. However, a workplace dignity framework suggests that there are aspects of the learning context, organizational status, learner's work status, experience and learning history, as well as the learning tasks of training, that require greater consideration and more direct trainer focus.

Trainer role and positionality awareness is particularly important because in human services training, the role of expert on practice contrasts with the trainer's administrative positionality, which generally means no engagement in direct service. From a workplace dignity standpoint, this hierarchical and practice gap is often met with worker skepticism and a sense of not being valued or understood, negatively affecting the worker's sense of dignity. As Lucas (2015) found, worker resistance and distancing are a means for workers to protect their esteem. Dignity protective behavior explains workers' inhibition to taking the risk of examining their practice.

Workplace dignity theory suggests that to remediate dignity threat associated with lower-wage workers' symbolic meanings of the trainer's role, trainers need to intentionally engage learners in assessment of the meaning and relevance of training content and practices for the direct purpose of dignity support. This action implies something more than empowerment, adopting a strengths perspective, or eliciting learners' prior knowledge; it suggest conveying the importance of this learning strategy for acknowledging worker competence and worth. Moreover, given trainer positionality, to reduce dignity threat, trainers must acknowledge the limits of their current role and experience. Intentionally soliciting workers' ways of thinking about practice is important for the trainer, not only for transformative facilitation, but as a way for trainers to understand current practice conditions. Of particular importance, is listening for issues that are new to or beyond the trainer's prior and current experience. Thus, dignity support implies a constant attunement to a worker's experience as well as their sense making efforts. Given worker and trainer roles, positions and experiences, it also implies dignity support through trainer expressions of empathy and acknowledgement of workers' earned dignity as they share their reactions, make assessments and contribute to translating new knowledge to their practice.

Reducing dignity threat as an extension of autonomy support is particularly important given that lower-wage human services workers find meaning in their work and their reasoning about their work as social justice underlies their practice (Baldwin, 2016). Encouraging the use

of training content to foster workers' self-reflection and assessment of their practice competencies will engage implicit and explicit values and identities. As previously described, if these instructional practices threaten workers' sense of dignity then esteem-protecting distancing reactions will inhibit engagement. In this case, resistance to learning engagement may be explained by the sensitivity of their value-based position to dignity threat, which impacts both their sense of self-direction as reflected in autonomy and their sense of worth as vulnerable to the views of others. The implication for transformative-oriented trainers is to both build on these workers' values and acknowledge their competence by encouraging them to assess the relevancy of training content.

A dignity framework for transformative training practices with lower-wage workers also implies rethinking of the reformist goals of transformative learning especially the meaning of the role of provocateur (Cranton, 2006). First, on a very practical level, low and lower-wage workers will have astute critiques of organizational power and distribution of resources in the workplace based on their experience. Second, a reformist standpoint may undermine workers' sense of instrumental competence that comes from living and working in oppressive social and organizational structures. When human services workers live oppression, engage regularly with clients experiencing oppression and do so as low or lower-wage workers advancing social justice, then a reformist or emancipatory aim risks failing to acknowledge the positionality and expertise of the workers. Again, the trainer positionality stands in contrast to that of the worker-learner.

Workplace dignity theory (Lucas, 2015; Sayer, 2007) and organizational leadership suggests that the dispositional standpoint of the trainer needs to be that of humble facilitator rather than emancipatory leader. Of particular importance is acknowledgement of workers' strengths, but principles of dignity also imply that trainers acknowledge their own limitations and vulnerability (Owens, Rowatt, & Wilkins, 2011; Sayer, 2011). Humility as a form of dignity support fosters learning engagement (Owens et al., 2011) that contributes to workers' sense of competence and worth reducing corresponding resisting, distancing, and esteem-protecting behaviors.

Workplace Dignity and Implications for Transformative Learning Theory

The analytical review of training for low and lower-wage workers from a workplace dignity framework identified instrumental context features as dignity threats that persist within a transformative learning design and suggest intentional use of trainer practices that leverage and extend those described in the transformative teaching and learning literature (Cranton, 1996; 2006; Taylor, 2009). The dignity threats and trainer dignity supporting practices serve to reduce worker resistance and distancing that constrain learning engagement especially participation in discourse and self-reflection.

Theoretical implications of this analysis include rethinking how trust is built in transformative learning (Taylor, 2009) and assumptions related to lower-wage worker learning (Bierema, 2010). Much of the transformative learning literature assumes a self-directed learner as a prerequisite to the transformative change process. However, substantive learner change can be associated with, and may actually begin more fundamentally, with states of mind and subjective experiences that remediate dignity threat changing workers' frames of reference that underlie resistance and distancing to learning. This developmental change is likely foundational to building the trust necessary for meaningful discourse such as disclosure of workers' forms of

thinking, meaning schemes and perspectives, which support clarifying subject- object ways of thinking and support the experience of a disorienting dilemma (Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 2000).

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Silenced Voices that Cry in the Night: The Transformative Learning Experience of Spouses of Wounded Warriors – Is it Transformative Learning? A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract: This study sought to better understand the transformative nature or *essence* of the experiences of spouses of junior to midgrade enlisted soldiers wounded in combat during the War on Terror, how they learned to make meaning of their new life circumstances as a result of profound and dramatic changes in their lives, and how society can better support them.

This qualitative study lays at the theoretical intersection of transformative learning and the feminist-inspired theory of women's development. The population included fifteen spouses of junior to mid-grade enlisted wounded warriors, representing a diverse group of African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian spouses from various locations. Their soldiers were injured in combat operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Syria, or Kuwait.

The study found that (a) *commitment* was the essence of the spouses' transformative experience; (b) their transformation was not linear as described in the preponderance of the existing transformative literature; (c) there is an alternative perspective on the development level of enlisted spouses in this contemporary environment; (d) the women's epistemology was context-based and depended on the challenge or situation to be resolved; (e) the women had to fight against the institutional constraints that *silenced* them as they negotiated for a more inclusive involvement in their soldiers' care and well-being; (f) their resistance to the institution served as a catalyst for transformation within the institutions; and (g) despite their personal challenges, their transformed perspective propelled them to strive to translate their moral commitments into positive action.

Section 1: Overview

Background

On September 20, 2001, President Bush delivered an inspirational speech to America that rallied support for the 'War on Terror' (the War) which led to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since its onset, the War has had a significant toll on enlisted members, reservists, their families, and their employers (Karin, 2009). To date, according to the Department of Defense, more than 2.6 million troops have served in Iraq or Afghanistan; 6,809 were killed in the war zone; 52,010 wounded in action, and nearly a million veterans have filed disability claims with the Veteran's Administration (VA).

The injuries sustained by these soldiers have affected thousands of families, impacted every U. S. state and territory, and should be a concern for our society. Improved body armor, explosive-resistant vehicles, "the enormous progress of battlefield medicine" and more advanced care at military treatment facilities "has created an unprecedented situation in which warriors [soldiers injured in a war zone] who would have died...in all previous wars now survive" (Geppert, 2009, p.2). According to Wood (2011), more Americans [soldiers] are being wounded and their injuries are more "severe and complex" (p. 1). Many warriors struggle with multiple

devastating wounds such as severe burns, dismemberment, and cognitive impairment, “and a high number have high levels of anger, hostility, and aggression” (Jakupcak et al., 2007, p. 946).

Problem

Traumatic events (like combat) are characterized by a sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury...or death (Geppert, 2009). Trauma is not only an issue for those who actually experience it but survivors, rescue workers, friends and family of survivors, or anyone witnessing a traumatic event can be adversely affected (Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). Invisible trauma, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) characterized by flashbacks, avoidance, numbing of responsiveness (including substance and alcohol abuse), persistent expectation of danger, constriction (dissociation, zoning out), and memory impairment has impacted roughly 1 in 6 of our veterans (“White House,” 2012). The higher prevalence of war related injuries and stress disorders has troubling ramifications for veterans’ families, especially the spouses who have assumed the additional responsibility as primary care-givers for wounded warriors. Another significant role transition many of these women face is that they must step in and become the formal head of household. Buvinic and Gupta (1997) claim that this particular role transition is worthy of special attention because it can provide insight into the dynamics that marginalize women, including poverty gender discrimination, and social isolation. Women like these and others who demonstrate profound and dramatic changes in their lives and life experiences as a result of caring for a wounded warrior are the focus of this study.

The majority of the wounded troops are enlisted soldiers, who are “the lowest ranking sectors of military communities” (Howell & Wool, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, their spouses are often young woman of limited means who must learn to face profound and dramatic changes in their lives. Empirically, very little is known about the nature of these women’s experiences. More knowledge of their experiences would provide developmental professions with insight into how to help these young military spouses, as well as other individuals who face a drastic and sudden change in their life circumstance. Understanding their experience and how they make meaning of their new perspectives will allow us to more effectively help them cope and thrive in their new roles. For many, transforming their worldview as a result of the traumatic injury experienced by their soldier may be the first step towards a strong family foundation that supports changing roles/responsibilities.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding or ‘*essence*’ (Creswell, 2007) of the transformative experience of spouses of junior to mid-grade enlisted soldiers wounded in combat operations in support of the War, to understand how these women learn to make meaning of their new life circumstances as a result of profound and dramatic changes in their lives and life experiences as a result of those injuries, and to determine how society can better support them. The study also endeavored to add to the ongoing scholarly conversation about the transformative learning experiences of women and how women know and learn.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework lays at the theoretical intersection of transformative learning and the feminist-inspired theory of women’s development. Transformative learning, introduced by Mezirow in 1978 in his groundbreaking study of women who returned to community college to continue their education, is rooted in the constructivist paradigm, an orientation which holds that the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense of experience is central to making meaning and hence learning (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning is founded on a

perspective view of the learning process (Dirkx, 1998). These perspectives are the “beliefs, values, and assumptions” that develop through one’s life experience, which are in turn used to interpret and to make meaning and gain greater control over one’s life as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4).

Women’s development theory, inspired by feminist pedagogy, is situated in the advocacy/participatory paradigm (Creswell, 2007) and allows the researcher to provide a voice for marginalized and often under-represented participants and to improve their lives. In their foundational research on women’s ways of knowing, also referred to as women’s development theory, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) identified 5 ways of knowing or knowledge perspectives that represent a different point in women’s cognitive development depending on concepts of self (*self*), relationships with others (*voice*) and understanding the origins and identity of authority, truth and knowledge (*mind*). To that end, a key assumption that underlies this study is that much can be learned from the stories of women (Jones-Illsley, 2001). Therefore, these two constructs served as the theoretical underpinnings for understanding and making meaning of the transformative experiences of the study participants.

Research Questions

This research question guided the study: What is the *essence* of the transformative experiences of spouses of wounded warriors? The following sub-questions were also examined: How does the process of learning enable the spouses to restructure meaning of a new perspective and what factors influenced their learning? What is the relationship between the women’s learning epistemology and how they engaged in critical reflection and discourse in their transformative experience? Are the spouses’ transformations indicative of a transformative learning experience as defined in this study?

Section 2 - Research Approach

Qualitative Methodology Applying Hermeneutics Phenomenology

This study used the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. Hermeneutic phenomenology is “grounded in the belief that the researcher and participants come to the investigation with forestructures of understanding shaped by their respective backgrounds, and in the process of interaction and interpretation, they cogenerate an understanding of the phenomenon being studied” (Creswell, 2007, p. 22), and allows the voice of the participants to be heard. An early feminist assumption was that research relationships were to be constructed as collaborations (Cook & Fonow, 1986). To that end, hermeneutic phenomenology best supported the feminist lens used to underpin this study in that it allowed the researcher to dialogue with participants in order to describe the experiences that shaped their meanings.

The Research Sample

This study employed a purposeful critical case sampling procedure that allowed the researcher to select individuals who could provide a deep description of their experience and thus “make a point quite dramatically” (Patton, 2001, p. 236). Because the community of spouses of wounded warriors tends to be interconnected, snowball sampling was also employed to help recruit “hidden populations, that is, groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies” (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 6).

Recruitment

To overcome the potential challenge of recruiting, the researcher used several strategies to cast a wider net than simply relying on one source of referrals. First, to protect the safety, privacy, and potential exploitation of the spouses, senior leader support was obtained from the

Army Secretariat. Second, the researcher obtained permission from the Installation Command Headquarters for Soldier and Family Support Centers (SFAC) to facilitate entry to the installation SFACs. SFAC Directors were asked to identify and refer spouses of wounded warriors who had transitioned through the SFAC and could potentially be interested in the study. Last, the researcher reached out to a number of Army Family Team Building spouse instructors who were part of her personal and professional network.

Participants

The study group consisted of fifteen spouses of wounded warriors who met the selection criteria, primarily spouses of junior to midgrade enlisted soldiers at time of injury. The rationale for selecting a population of enlisted spouses is that they are predominantly minority, predominantly female, and according to Harrell (2000) historically have had less access to resources and are often an invisible and underrepresented group.

The participants represented a diverse group of African American, Latino, and Caucasian spouse participants from each of the three service components of the U. S. Army – Active, Reserve and Guard. They ranged in age from 26 to 45 with a mean age of 37.6 and represented nine geographical locations within the United States. All the participants have some college; three have Associates Degrees, seven have Bachelor's Degrees, two have one or more Masters Degrees, and one has a Doctorate Degree. Five of the 15 spouses worked outside the home.

Their wounded spouse ranged in rank from E-3 to E-6 (junior to midgrade enlisted) when wounded or diagnosed and each suffers a multiplicity of combat-related injuries from amputations to blindness to PTSD; TBI; acquired brain injury (ABI); facial, knee and back injuries; and suffer from continuous severe depression, sleep deprivation, and suicidal ideations. Seven soldiers were injured in Iraq, four in Afghanistan, two in Kosovo, and one soldier each in Kuwait and Syria. Several could not pinpoint the specific time of injury because of the nature of combat and were diagnosed with PTSD and/or TBI several years after leaving the combat zone as a result of combat related engagements (mortar attacks, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), enemy gun fire, rocket propelled grenade (RPG) attacks, and more).

Data Collection

This study used a modification of Seidman's (2006) three-interview approach. Two interviews with each participant was conducted to minimize the time the women needed to devote to the study. The interviews were conducted between June and October, 2013 and lasted approximately 90 minutes. Five interviews were conducted face-to-face; 10 interviews were conducted via telephone to best accommodate the spouses' hectic schedules and maximize the researcher's resources.

The first interview established the context of the spouses' experiences and allowed them to reconstruct the details of their soldiers' injury and the process of becoming a spouse of wounded warrior. The second interview, which took place within the 3-week window as recommended by Seidman (2006), encouraged the spouses to reflect on the meaning their experience held for them.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed to develop a coherent depiction of how the participants made meaning of their lives. This was an ongoing iterative process. In keeping with the spirit of hermeneutical research, the participants were engaged in the interpretive process. A description of the process follows next and although it is depicted as linear, it was iterative with many moments of going back and forth between steps.

All 15 sets of interviews were professionally transcribed, reviewed, and provided to the participants for review, corrections, deletions, or additions. Each transcript was read several times and each audio recording reviewed to obtain an overall understanding of each woman's experience. Each transcript was coded via a combination of inductive and deductive coding. The coding schema was validated through an inter-rater reliability check involving two outside researchers. Once each transcript was coded, a cross case analysis was conducted to identify overall themes and patterns (Ayres, Kavanaugh, & Knafl, 2000). The initial set of 158 codes was grouped under 27 themes to capture the essence of the spouses' experience. Through numerous iterative reviews and consultation with the Chairperson, redundant and extraneous codes and themes were removed and realigned. The final review resulted in four themes and 20 subthemes/codes.

The codes and themes were set aside and the interviews and audio recordings were reviewed again as part of the reflective and iterative nature of the analysis. Using a modified "critical event matrix" schema (p. 113), as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), each interview was secondarily analyzed to bound the participants' stories to its most "critical, influential, or decisive" (p. 115) elements. Once the themes and patterns were identified, an individual case profile (vignette) was developed for each of the 15 participants to feature the women's experience and meaning making process. A profile "is a compelling way to make sense of the interview data" (Seidman, 2006, p. 120) and "provides insight into the subtle nuances of meaning that structure and shape everyday lives" (England, 1994, p. 243) of the women.

Section 3: Results – Themes

Although there were significant individual differences in the experiences of the 15 women interviewed, a collective set of experiences characterized the process of transformation. These commonalities were identified as key themes.

Themes

Four central themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Commitment to Relationships and Roles; (2) Negotiating and Resisting a New Normal; (3) Transformative Resources; and (4) Revised Commitment to Roles and Relationships. Each theme contributed in some way to the analysis of a specific research question.

The themes and subthemes were segregated amid two interrelated environs—the personal/interpersonal and the institutional¹ environs. Scott (2012) suggests that the personal/interpersonal environ relates to relationships, interacting, learning, etc.; the institutional environs is characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individuals "must conform [or at a minimum negotiate within] in order to receive legitimacy and support" (Scott, 2012, p. 132). Both environs had tremendous impact on the spouses' transformative experience. Together, the themes and subthemes explicate how the spouses made meaning of their transformative experience and are depicted in Table 1 followed by a brief summary of each theme.

¹ Institutional refers primarily to the US Army but also to the Veteran's Administration, and other military-affiliated institutional agencies the spouses had to negotiate within in order to obtain support for their wounded warrior or for their families.

Table 1.
Key Themes and Sub-themes by Domain

Theme	Subthemes	Personal/ Interpersonal Domain	Institutional Domain	Relevant RQ
Commitment to Roles and Relationships	Commitment to Soldier	✓		1
	External Commitments	✓		1
	Relationship with the Institutions'		✓	1
	Rebalancing Gender Roles		✓	1
	Accepting the Care Giver Role	✓		1
	Loss of Self and Sense of Normalcy	✓		1
Negotiating and Resisting a New Normal	<i>Silenced</i> by the Institution(s)		✓	1,2
	Challenging the Institutions		✓	1,2
	Power of Emotions	✓		1,3
	Self-Directed Learning	✓		1,4
	Transformative Resources			
Transformative Resources	Supportive Others	✓	✓	1,3,4
	Healing Conversations and Social Discourse	✓	✓	2,3,4
	Spirituality and Internal Strength	✓		3,4
	Coping and Coping Strategies	✓	✓	1,2,3
	Revised Commitment to Roles and Relationships	Reframed Commitment to Soldier	✓	
Loss of Trust in the Institution(s)			✓	1,3
Finding Voice, Validating Self, and Enacting a Sense of Agency		✓	✓	1,2,3,4
Transformed Perspectives		✓		2,3,4
Making Meaning of the Experience		✓		1,4
Commitment to Self		✓		1,4

Theme 1: Commitment to Roles and Relationships

Commitment and dedication were central facets of the couples' relationships. At the onset of the war, the spouses were highly committed to their soldiers and their role as an Army spouse. When they spoke of their relationship with the Army, most were proud to be or were proud at one time to have been an Army spouse and affiliated with the Army. Despite this, some spouses felt very strongly that, from the onset, they were treated as if *'invisible'* within their husband's unit simply because they were spouses of enlisted soldiers. The word *'invisible,'* in this context, is defined as the old axiom of *'being seen but not heard'* by individuals considered to be in a position of higher authority. As Pam put it "...*There always seemed to be this hierarchy of enlisted...and then you had your officers. So yeah, there was kind of that separation...a little bit like the Berlin wall. you weren't supposed to cross that line...*"

During routine deployments, the spouses acknowledged they had no choice but to “step up” as Nancy put it, and assume greater responsibility for running the household in order to keep the family together, functioning, and moving forward. Each spouse described the friction that typically followed a normal deployment however, as their soldiers returned home injured, with acute physical and emotional wounds of war, the spouses had to assume an increased level of responsibility on a full-time basis; Many were met with some level of resistance from their wounded warrior. They all described a loss of self and sense of normalcy and a profound disappointment they could no longer pursue their own professional and personal goals.

For example, Jean said “*To be honest with you I think...it’s a manhood thing...he wants to be in that lead role but he really can’t because he’s limited and it has to get done.*” Melissa said “*With his PTSD and anxiety, I’ve pretty much taken over like everything... We used to split the chores...now like literally I control everything...It was just a complete...permanent role reversal.*” MJ described the profound changes this way: “*And then he came home...angry and very sick and very needy...So my focus went from trying to manage all these kids to kind of having to leave the kids by the side of the road and just focus on him...I lost my job. I’ve given up my career... We’ve lost friends...He can’t drive; there’s a lot of things he can’t do on his own which means, I in turn have sacrificed a lot of my independence...*”

Army Values² require ‘selfless service’ of those who serve. Many of the spouses were subscribing to these values vicariously by providing selfless service to the soldier and, in essence, were observed creating their own ‘code of the military spouse of a wounded warrior’. For example, one spouse said “*I put myself in a second person type of role...I always try to put him first and make sure he’s ok. I have a tendency to overlook my needs.*”

Editors’ Note: This paper has been edited for length. The full paper can be found online in the All Academic searchable program.

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Academic-Practitioner Collaborative Research Projects: Intersections Where Diverse Professional Identities Meet, Providing Opportunities for Transformative Learning

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Abstract: My paper addresses the following question, “How do academic researchers and practitioners who engage in collaborative research create a space where transformational learning may occur?” Building on a previous study, involving 11 academic researchers and 10 practitioners, who engaged in collaborative research (Kowalski, 2015), I explore the learning that occurred as they encountered situations that tested the meaning structures and their professional identities. I also begin a discussion about applying the ideas Fleming (2016) raised about the connection between transformative learning and recognition to academic-practitioner collaborative research.

Academic-practitioner collaborative research projects create a space in which team members, having diverse interests, stemming from professional identities, work together to study a question that matters (Kowalski, 2015). When these diverse interests intersect, they create turbulence that they must confront and harness. These projects are ideal for exploring this conferences’ primary question – “How can we be more intentional and creative in our interaction at...points of connections for the purpose of transformational learning?”

Context and Background

Academic-practitioner collaborative research projects are a workplace (Kowalski, 2015; Solomon, Boud, Leontios, & Staron, 2001) where academic researchers and practitioners encounter challenges that management literature’s long rigor and relevance debates have discussed (Hodgkinson & Rousseau, 2009; Kieser, Nicolai, & Seidl, 2015). These include different institutional logics (Kieser & Leiner, 2009) and ways of viewing research (Keefer & Stone, 2009) as well as risks for academic researchers (Walsh, Tushman, Kimberly, Starbuck, & Ashford, 2007) and practitioners (Wasserman & Kram, 2009). In a recent study, I addressed the following question, “How do members of Collaborative Research Teams learn to deal with differences found within the research team itself?” (Kowalski, 2015, p.11) and found that the learning that occurred involved dealing with the diversity of professional identities. This paper builds on this study.

Literature Review

For this paper, I drew upon literature about collaboration, diversity, and adult learning theory.

Collaboration

For Gray (1989), collaboration is “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (p. 5). In collaborative research, the presenting problem provides a common focal point that the co-researchers address as they work

together to find solutions benefiting theory and practice (Mohrman, Lawler, & Associates, 2011; Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006).

Diversity

William and O'Reilly (1998) defined diversity as "variation based on any attribute people use to tell themselves that another person is different" (p. 81). What are the attributes that pertain to professional identity? Mannix and Neale (2005) the following categories of differences of which four apply to this discussion: (a) "knowledge or skills," (b) "values or beliefs," (c) "organizational- or community-status" such as tenure, and, (d) "social and network ties" such as community memberships. Excluded are "social" that involve gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disabilities and "personality" which includes cognition (p.36).

Adult Learning Theory

Adult learning theory provides a useful framework for analyzing collaborative research projects.

Workplace learning. The workplace is a "contested terrain" ripe for learning where individuals face issues that the intersection of such things as cultures, politics, and interpersonal relationships, involving individuals that different positions and affiliations create (Billet, 2001, pp. 6-7). Illeris (2004, 2007, 2011) noted that workplace learning involves both individual and social levels; at their intersection point, learning can occur.

Transformational learning. It is "process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open ... and reflective so that we may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2012, p. 76). Illeris (2014) stated that the "concept of transformative learning comprises all learning that implies change to the identity of the learner" (p. 40). Fleming (2016) suggested that "transformative learning and recognition rely on each other." As the individual encounters the environment, the "struggle for recognition acts as a disorienting dilemma," igniting transformative learning (p. 18).

The Initial Study

In my explorative, interpretive, evaluative qualitative study, I interviewed 11 academic researchers and 10 practitioners who had conducted academic-practitioner collaborative research and who had also shared their work through publications or presentations that they jointly developed with "their co-researchers from the 'other side'" (Kowalski, 2015, p. 70). I used semi-structured interviews (Robson, 2002) and an iterative, recursive data collection and analysis process (Seidel, 1998).

Participants

The majority of the participants were seasoned academic researchers or practitioners. All had worked also on the "other side." All of the academic researchers and most of the practitioners had published. All had presented papers, or organized sessions at academic or professional conferences. All of the academic researchers had received awards for their work; ten had served as reviewers and/or on editorial boards for professional publications. Among the practitioners, half had received awards; half had served as reviewers and/or on publication boards. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' backgrounds.

Table 1.
Overview of Participants' Professional Backgrounds

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND		PARTICIPANTS (n=21)	
		ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS (n=11)	PRACTITIONERS (n=10)
WORK EXPERIENCE	University	10 to 20 years (4 of 11) <20 or more years (7 of 11)	>5 years (3 of 10)* 5 to 15 years (3 of 10)** >16 years (1 of 10)***
	Business/ Management/ Consulting	>10 years (3 of 11) 10 to 20 years (3 of 10) <20 years (1 of 10)	10 to 20 years (1 of 10) <20 years (9 of 10)
Number of Publications/Papers		25 to 50 (2 of 11) 50 –to 100 (4 of 11) <100 (5 of 11)	>10 (2 of 10) 11to 40 (3 of 10) <40 (3 of 10)
Participation in Academic/Professional Conferences (E.g., presenting papers, workshops)		11 of 11	10 of 10
Editorial Work and Publication Boards		10 of 11	5 of 10
Awards (E.g., best paper/dissertation)		11 of 11	5 of 10

*adjunct faculty **adjunct faculty (1), research center staff (2) ***adjunct faculty to lecturer

My study found that the participants' backgrounds prepared them for working with their co-researchers and created tensions; they had to address their own "professional needs and interests" and those of their co-researchers. They explicitly acknowledged, confronted, and worked through these differences. The majority had a working knowledge of facilitation and/or group process consultation practices. They learned how "to balance tensions stemming from their own professional identities as they adapted and developed practices and structures tailored to the specific challenges they faced" (Kowalski, 2015, pp. 231-234). I modified Illeris' (2011) workplace learning model to illustrate how a research project's learning space involved the intersection of the individual and the environment (Figure 1).

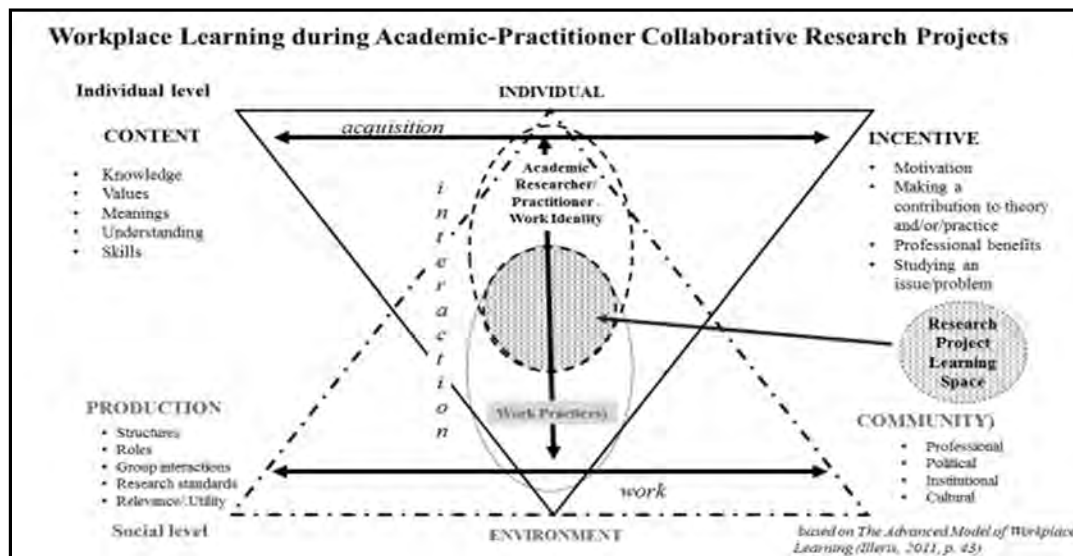


Figure 1. Workplace learning during academic-practitioner collaborative research projects (Kowalski, 2015, p. 222)

Moving the Study Forward using Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory and, in particular, Fleming (2016) provided a framework that I used to explore my original findings. I found that that the majority of participants described the situations which made them question frames of reference that they and others held as well as the practices that they used to help them alter their thinking. Two stories will set the stage for my discussion

Two Stories

These stories present a crisis that an academic researcher and a practitioner faced that challenged their identities and approaches to research.

The academic researcher. Margaret was a senior, tenured academic researcher with extensive publications and whose background and interests included organization development and change.

Early in Margaret's career, the principal at the school in which she was working, asked her to conduct a study. When she shared her findings and what she proposed to write, the principal became upset.

It became clearthat [she] had assumed it was going to be a success and she [had] wanted it publicized. When it wasn't, she couldn't figure out why I would want to write about it.... I shared everything with her before I published anything - if I quoted her...saying something like, "I'm going to do this"... she found it very offensive. There were two outcomes. Margaret lost her job, and she never published the article in an education journal.

This incident helped Margaret reflect on her assumptions about research practice and about how practitioners viewed and were impacted by research. Over time, she developed an approach to collaborative research that not only resulted in publications, but included engaging practitioners in framing a project's questions and design, in sharing research tasks, engaging in critical conversations about such things as how they would work together and what data showed, and in writing or presenting work from the project.

Margaret “learned to pay attention ... to things that would not be that important from an academic perspective, but [could] make a person feel trivialized, demeaned ... even if nobody” could identify them. Her approach resulted in research that, “decreased the probability the practitioner would feel disrespected” and gave them “the ability to have a considerable amount of say over the story told about their setting.” She wanted them to “feel that they [were] really an integral...part of the team” rather than feeling that “their thoughts” were disregarded.

The practitioner. Jim was an independent consultant with over 20 years of experience who had a global reputation for work involving the environment and strategy. He was part of a university-sponsored academic-practitioner research project team that he joined because, in addition to environmental issues, the team wanted to study collaboration. Jim was excited; as an independent consultant, collaboration “was one of the things that he was “striving to understand.” He hoped the project would benefit his own consulting business in terms of knowledge and profit.

Several of his co-researchers who were skilled in group process consultation helped the team use a collaborative process that involved reflection to monitor progress and inquiry to encourage “full...debate” with “everybody participating in every aspect of the project.” The process, which Jim considered “academic,” occasionally frustrated him; it was not time efficient. It did allow everyone to voice their views freely, which Jim found “exhilarating. He “could see how ...being open” to other perspectives improved outcomes.

As the project’s technical expert, he got tasks others could not do. He began to feel as if his “time ballooned up.” A crisis developed, stemming from his need to earn an income from his consulting practice and his need to contribute to the project. The team confronted him, since the team had weekly meetings where they monitored progress.

I was feeling very both pressured... they kept saying “[You] got to deliver this part of the work”I wasn’t really getting any extra ... recognition ...[for] being the subject matter expert.... all I was feeling was them saying, “Hey, you gotta do this. Your part is so critical. We need it!” And then, I’d be like, “Hey, this is... volunteer work!” He explained that without compensation, “you start looking for some ... acknowledgement” for your contributions, but this also seemed to fall short. He recalled a report on which he had worked. When it was published, he was listed as a contributor; he had thought after putting “in so many hours,” he “would be listed ... more prominently.” The team worked through the issues with him and provided support. He felt this crisis and their efforts helped him become “better” at collaboration “in terms of commitments ... and... not wanting to create false expectations.”

He still works with the research team members and has co-authored publications with them. As a consultant and as adjunct faculty, he shares his experiences about collaborative research, explaining that it is messy, takes a time to produce results, and benefits from practices that ensures accountability. This experience changed how he views himself. “I am a leader in learning how to be a person who is an effective collaborator.”

Discussion

These stories illustrate frames of references that academic researchers and practitioners face as they engage in collaborative research and describes practices used to shift frames of reference. Their stories also portray the tension between the personal and the social, and depict, as Fleming (2016) has suggested, the connection between recognition and transformative learning.

In articles about the rigor relevance gap, those opposed to collaborative research maintain practitioners do not understand research (Kieser & Leiner, 2011), and their interest in protecting

their reputations prevents them from engaging in critical studies about their organizations (Knights, 2009; Rynes, Bartunek, & Daft, 2001; Schmitt, 2014). The reaction of the principal in Margaret's story supports this view. Margaret was not successful. Throughout the interview, she returned to this incident, and, she reflected upon her work and the practitioners' reactions while she worked with them on other projects. She continues to publish and involves practitioners more directly in research and in making sense of what they were learning together. Over time, Margaret has shifted how she thinks about research with practitioners, and also, takes time to make it clear she values their work, views them as co-researchers, and includes them as authors of project articles.

Fleming (2016) has stated that the "struggle for recognition functions as a disorienting dilemma" (p. 22). The disorienting dilemma Margaret faced, involving her own professional identity and her principal's reaction, provided energy propelling her forward. Her interview focused on the shift she made as she critically reflected upon and assessed her work with practitioners. As a researcher grounded in organization development in which process consultation and facilitation are key, Margaret structured conversations and research projects that recognized practitioners' contributions.

Jim's story also reflects frames of reference found in the literature about theory and practice gaps. Research takes too long and does not provide fast results (Schmitt, 2014). Jim ran a business and had to earn money. He was needed on the team. He had the technical expert in environmental issues, while his co-researchers had expertise in management, business, and organization development. His crisis came when his desire to contribute collided with his need for compensation. The time he was devoting to the project did not provide him with compensation, which, for him, included acknowledgement for his contributions. The clash between his personal needs and those of the team provided the spark that helped him rethink his views of collaboration. His crisis also illustrates the "struggle for recognition that functioned as a disorienting dilemma" (Fleming, 2016, p.22). Jim shifted his thinking about collaborative research, because the research team had included inquiry and reflection in the research design. He learned to appreciate these practices' value to himself and to his business; they supported accountability, ensuring that work gets done.

Implications and Reflection

For Margaret and Jim as well as my study's other participants, process consultation and facilitation skills were essential. They helped the participants and their co-researchers test assumptions and reflect. Margaret was very familiar with these processes; Jim was not, but benefited from his co-researchers' skills.

Billet (2001) as well as Marsick and Watson (2001) discussed how learning in a workplace is more likely to take place if a structure is put in place. Work about engaged research (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006) and transdisciplinary research on science teams (Stokols et al., 2003) also stresses the importance of these skills. Fleming (2016) discussed the role that teachers who "are produced through and those with caring self-confidence" play in developing future educators. He stated that "a person who possesses self-respect (the capacity to know one's own rights) is in a better position to recognize the rights of others" and that "a person with self-esteem can better recognize the contribution of others" (p. 21).

Fleming (2016) helped explain the dynamic energy affected my participants' thinking. The rigor and relevance debates discuss who controls knowledge (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014; Knights, 2009). My study showed that academic-practitioner collaborative research is about sharing responsibility for knowledge creation and valuing contributions. Margaret moved beyond

her crisis, recognizing practitioner contributions. Jim dealt with a crisis affecting his self-respect and learned along with his team that once they acknowledged members' contributions, were accountable for meeting commitments, and recognized contributions, their work together improved.

Academic-practitioner collaborative research projects are stressful and occur at the intersection point where co-researchers can contribute to theory and practice if they have developed practices such as reflection and inquiry. I am not suggesting that we should expect every collaborative research project to result in transformative learning, I am suggesting that we need to ensure that these skills are developed in academic researchers and practitioners who engage in collaborative projects so that they are able to put in place the conditions where it can occur. There is work for both academic researchers and practitioners who are want to solve problems that matter to theory and practice, who are willing to invest time in studying how this occurs, and who will help project participants develop group facilitation and process consulting skills.

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Connecting Disciplines and Divisions – On the Ground with Transformative Learning

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Abstract: This paper describes a case study in which vision and serendipity intersected to create an operationalization of high-impact educational practices known as the Central Six of Transformative Learning at a metropolitan university. A strategic planning process began the journey clearly focused on helping students to transform their lives. Through an academically driven process, all university divisions became involved in what is a unique operationalization of transformative learning that involves students, faculty and staff. The history and the lessons learned along the way are replicable to any institution willing to openly engage in its own transformation and to make connections internally to help students. The institution is currently going beyond early imaginings with the implementation of a student transcript of their involvement in high impact practices embodied in the Central Six.

Disciplinary and Divisional Dots

In 1853 Henry David Thoreau noted in his journal that the Secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Science had requested to know the “branch of science” he was most interested in. In Thoreau’s inimitable manner, he noted that while he was unsettled by this request: “If it had been the secretary of the association of which Plato or Aristotle was the president, I should not have hesitated to describe my studies at once and particularly.” It was during this same time that a short distance away from Thoreau’s home in Concord in Boston, Louis Agassiz, the enigmatic Frenchman at Harvard, was successfully advocating for the professionalization of science. Indeed, today a scientist would have no surprise about such a question with his or her discipline now spanning many and varied sub-disciplines: molecular biologists, biochemists, neurobiologists, evolutionary geneticists, etc. Today, with over 47 major academic disciplines further divided into more than 1,700 CIP codes (Classification of Instructional Programs) it could be argued that higher education is more suited for divergence than for intersections.

If the divergence of disciplines weren’t enough, there have been repeated descriptions of the disruption and demise of Higher Education as we have known it during the last century and online education, along with other market options, has been a key component of this changing perception (Selingo 2012). As Mehaffy (2012) wrote:

The University of Phoenix and other for-profit providers hold a distinct advantage when competing with traditional higher education: their non-unionized and non-tenured faculty often earn lower salaries and possess lower qualifications than faculty in traditional institutions and typically do not have research obligations. As a result, these education providers can be highly competitive.

However, according to Allen and Seaman (2015), the most recent data are telling us that during the very time this quote was first being cited, distance education enrollment was actually decreasing in private for-profits, including at the University of Phoenix. In addition, the highest rate of increase of enrollment, as is in evidence on our campus, was in public colleges and

universities, in precisely the place where Mehaffy warned us it would be most vulnerable: the traditional higher education institutions. Why?

Divisions within higher education are not limited to academic program codes and diversifying modes of delivery. Keeling, Underhile and Wall (2007) suggest that higher education operates "...with ambiguous purposes in vertically oriented structures that are only loosely connected." Joshua Sean O'Connor (2012) advises in his dissertation that "the lack of such collaboration may be impacting the students' holistic experiences. Students' academic and personal development depends not only on the quality of the curriculum and classroom instruction, but also on the quality of another major division ... known as student affairs." Both from a learning perspective and from a fiscal perspective the dots need to be connected among these areas of expertise on a university campus.

These divisions are, perhaps, of special concern at a time when educational budgets are being challenged around the country. The Government Accounting Office (GAO, 2014) notes that state institutions lost state support of about 12% from fiscal year 2003 to 2012. This trend continues to the extent that some states are facing double digit percentage cuts within a single year. Can this disconnect continue, and at what ultimate cost to students?

One of the traditional strengths of higher education is the synergy of formal programs of study and experiential education within co-curricular frameworks. This wealth of diversity can inappropriately be established more like strongholds where other perspectives are kept at bay. Formal meetings and declarations are often more symbolic than grounded in the desire to create and support intersections. Strategic planning, while often intended as the process that creates healthy intersections, unfortunately misses the target and becomes the document filling space on the shelf (or is it now a cloud?) collecting dust.

What follows is a case study in which vision and serendipity intersected to create an operationalization of high-impact educational practices known as the Central Six of Transformative Learning at a metropolitan university: the University of Central Oklahoma. Our campus embraced the sense of place that inhabits the physical venue of a university by investing in student-centered, transformative activities like undergraduate research, service learning and other such high-impact practices. This transition was probably made easier by our historical mission of developing educators, with roots as a Normal School. Bringing that mission to the forefront and connecting it to the strategic planning process has allowed students, faculty and staff to incorporate Transformative Learning both conceptually and pragmatically at our institution.

Dots, Divisions, and Strategic Planning

This paper is borne of a desire to document a time in history at our institution when circumstances were right for a change in perspective on student learning. Leveraging existing practices such as leadership and undergraduate research, we were able develop six areas of emphasis across our campus by involving all major university divisions in the process. Here we describe the lessons derived from that experience and suggest key lessons learned that helped to operationalize the use of Transformative Learning for the campus as a whole and that now includes a Student Transformative Learning Record (STLR) for use by our faculty, staff and students. Central to this document is the early history of this process and how commonly isolated university divisions came together to embrace a core practice on the campus amid disruptive forces impacting higher education today.

Our early interest in leadership studies was part of a national phenomenon. Our President at the time, Roger Webb, and Provost, Don Betz, had long been interested in supporting leadership development efforts both within higher education and within the state of Oklahoma. A VP level position in Leadership was created to support the President's Leadership Council, student scholarship, a minor in leadership studies, programs for faculty and staff and also contributed to the strategic planning efforts that were university wide.

Within the same time frame, the university, and many other colleges and universities around the country were showing an interest in civic engagement. Through the leadership of the then Provost, Don Betz, UCO became an early member of the American Democracy Project and created a faculty-led program on campus to institutionalize the activities. An interest in Service Learning activities was also developing with support from the Division of Student Affairs which had created an office in this arena and worked closely with faculty members so that projects were associated with classwork, when possible, but also by actively involved student organizations in community work (Barthell et al. 2010).

A reorganization of scholarship around undergraduate research led by the, then, Provost began to make our campus a recognizable center for such activities, even at the national level (Hensel 2004), and our campus continued to play a role in hosting Oklahoma Research Day for many years (Wohlens et al. 2012). (Due to this strong practice, UCO will be the site of the 2018 National Conference on Undergraduate Research.) The movement around Undergraduate Research and its integration with the work of the Council for Undergraduate Research has had a great impact on our activities and focus. Understandably a successful program in terms of student retention (Crowe and Brakke 2008), it was also significant from a systems perspective as it enhanced the appreciation of research at the undergraduate level as well as the faculty engagement that was fostered in complete alignment with helping students learn. These activities enhanced the fiscal health of the institution as well as developing student-centered, faculty research (Barthell et al. 2013).

While global as well as cultural diversity and inclusive activities had been present on the campus, they began to take a collaborative approach manifested in shared space. The Student Affairs office had international admission and recruitment responsibilities. The Academic Affairs office had study tours and curricular responsibilities. Both of these efforts were expanding as globalization became a common point of discussion nationally and as the University's international enrollment crept up to over 10%. The increasing recognition of the effect of international experiences on retention is also more evident (e.g., Malmgren and Galvin 2008) and represents yet one more argument against the online experiences envisioned by others (although see the Minerva Model: Wood 2014).

It is perhaps ironic, that the entrance of health and wellness into the university's Central Six for Transformative Learning came from the Administrative division. That happened as wellness centers were rapidly becoming an expectation of new, traditional students and those facilities were/are managed by Administration. The somewhat coincidental emergence of advances in neuroscience that support the connection between wellness and the ability to learn was simply a great example of providence. The accumulating evidence in support of physical well being and enhancing learning capacity justified this activity as a high-impact practice, though not identified as such by Kuh (Kuh 2008, Gibbison et al. 2011).

Questions that Connected

New President Roger Webb, at the beginning of our journey, initiated a new strategic planning process, as is often the case with a new president. This occurred simultaneously with the growth in the various program areas mentioned above, and it was through the insight of the academic leadership and faculty that these programs came together. Amid a planning process that engaged multiple committees and potentially more than a manageable number of goals, a small group came together to discuss the potential to assess progress. It was within that eclectic group of faculty, administrators, and staff that the recognition occurred of the shared goal of transforming students through experiential learning. Simultaneously, the academic deans and members of the Provost's office were focusing on the superordinate goal of helping students learn as a broader and more formal academic mission statement. These two happenings became the impetus for a shared approach and understanding that has operationalized transformative learning on one campus.

The strategic planning process was welcoming to all divisions, and the connection between divisions came as a result of connecting these disparate programmatic areas with the central understanding that helping students learn through transformative experiences was primary. What evolved, and the final honing that occurred within the President's Cabinet, was to be called the Central Six of Transformative Learning. It recognized that for students, and faculty, the discipline or the major was primary, but the transformational experience also happened in experiential functions: Global and Cultural Competencies; Leadership; Health and Wellness; Civic Engagement; and Research, Creative and Scholarly Activities.

There was nothing here outside of the general higher educational horizon at that time, and this was before Kuh (2008) had come forward with the High-Impact Educational Practices model. What evolved was a unique intersection of these programs through Transformative Learning. The recognition that helping students change their lives was at the center of everything done in the institution became the antidote to all the otherwise divergent efforts. There is no singular process to credit with this change or happening, but rather the sharing of the institutional purpose that supported disciplinary and divisional synergy to promote transformative experiences for students.

It was noted earlier that with a new president comes a new strategic plan. When President Don Betz returned to the campus (having previously served as Provost during the early venture into Transformative Learning), he initiated a strategic planning process that led to the Vision 2020 plan. Four "pillars" were foundational to this vision, and one of those is transformative learning, continuing the focus that has been central for over ten years. The university mission has continued the focus: helping students learn by providing Transformative Learning experiences so that they may become productive, creative, ethical and engaged citizens and leaders contributing to the intellectual, cultural, economic and social advancement of the communities they serve."

It should be noted that the University of Central Oklahoma is recognized as the State's Metropolitan University. This distinction represents a commitment to the local area, the place, and to the concept of high-impact practices as mentioned earlier. Importantly, *this initiative has been institutionalized*, including most recently through a newly established Office of High-Impact Practices.

The Right Instrument for Connecting the Dots and Divisions

Transformative learning has been an essential connective tissue at our University. It has provided a conceptual framework that is readily understood by students, faculty and staff. While

there may only be a handful of individuals on the campus that can discuss transformative learning theory in depth, there is a basic understanding of perceptual/perspective change and an appreciation for exploration as a means of gaining greater understanding of self and the world around us. One colleague responded to a group visiting our campus and inquiring about its culture: “You are given the latitude to fail as you pursue new ideas”.

A noteworthy process has emerged within the past three years to take the institution further into an appreciation for transformative learning. Whether one looks at Mezirow or Kuh, there is an understanding that the process of transformation is not limited to the classroom. Across the nation there has been interest in documenting learning that occurs outside the classroom, and that interest has come from business and industry in addition to higher education. How do we translate student success through these learning practices into the workplace or graduate school?

In 2014 the University applied for and received a Department of Education grant that is referred to on campus as STLR (Student Transformative Learning Record). This grant has helped to create a system, an alternative transcript or portfolio, for students to document learning both within and outside of the classroom. Students, with faculty or staff sponsorship, can apply for small grants for a learning project. Staff can have a program, such as presenting at Oklahoma Research Day, “STLR approved” so that participants can add it into a sophisticated e-portfolio system (Barthell et al. 2014). Faculty can have a particular assignment, perhaps a service learning activity with a local community group, approved so that active students can receive recognition in that area as well gaining credit. This grant has allowed for greater exploration of and incorporation of transformative activities from all campus members in support of students taking the next steps in their careers after they complete their degrees.

Lesson Learned

The idea of perspective change is not only a part of transformative learning as it relates to students, but it is an essential component of connecting the dots for organizations as well. Establishment and protection of territory appear to be well established within the survival mechanisms of humans, especially true several thousand years ago! But hopefully we have surpassed the necessary instincts required in the days of the saber toothed tiger. To borrow again from Henry David Thoreau and his essay *Higher Laws*.

We are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers. . . . Possibly we may withdraw from it, but never change its nature. I fear that it may enjoy a certain health of its own; that we may be well but not pure...

As we have challenged students to be open to changing perspective, to reconsider long held beliefs, we have had to confront those primal features within ourselves. We must challenge ourselves to look beyond turf and to find the connective tissue. In our case, that connective tissue has been the student-centered practice of Transformative Learning. To accomplish this collective effort, one lesson learned has been the importance of creating teams who share a focus on learning and who can better set aside those territorial concerns and examine the institution as a whole. There is, therefore, a benefit in recognizing the importance of individual leaders and their willingness to become members of a team.

Early popular use of the concept of “strategic” planning involved constant monitoring and responding thoughtfully to environmental changes. It had nothing to do with the creation of a tome to fill space on a shelf, nor should it. The strategic planning process one pursues should be characterized as transparent, inclusive and continual. One division should invite others to

participate in the same process recognizing that each is only a part of a larger system and could probably not survive alone. This advances transformation.

Lastly, mission has meaning, if you make it so. In our case it is about helping students learn through Transformative Learning opportunities operationalized through our Central Six. Can all faculty and staff repeat a mission statement verbatim? Probably not, but most will be able to provide a sense of what it is and what it means to them in practice. Most importantly, it connects faculty, staff and students to a shared purpose.

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Exploring “Holding” In Groups: A New Model for Understanding Collective Learning in Organizations

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Abstract:

That’s it. That was the moment. They are not victims, and they were before. They shared an experience they hadn’t before. The group was never the same.
(Research participant)

Adult and transformational learning models include the potential for expanded perspective that increases capacity, efficacy, and development. Moments of insight and group level shifts in awareness are profound experiences; when they occur group members adopt broader perspectives of themselves, their roles and functions, their contribution to given circumstances and their organizational context. Transformational learning theorists explore conditions that support learning at the group level and the relational quality of effective learning environments. While we know about collective learning through participant experience; very little research has explored the experience and practice of those responsible for convening these groups. This study begins to fill that gap. Study results weave Winnicott’s theory of holding environments with Lewin’s theory of social fields together. The proposed model of collective holding includes 8 practices that shape social fields and 5 resulting conditions that can support transformational learning.

Introduction

Transformational learning focuses on emergence of perspectives that are more expansive and inclusive (Cranton, 2006b; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Mezirow, 2000). Some transformational learning theorists explore learning at the group level (Cranton, 1996; Fisher-Yoshida, Geller, & Schapiro, 2009; O’Hara, 2003) and the relational quality of effective learning environments (Cranton, 2006a; Fisher-Yoshida, et al., 2009; Hartley, 2008; Meyer, 2009; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). Key themes include support, safety and adequate challenge. Some theorists use the term “holding,” “holding space” and “holding environment” in reference to relational spaces that support shared learning and development (Hartley, 2008; Meyer, 2009; Schapiro, 2010). D.W. Winnicott coined the term in 1960’s to explore relational space between mother and child. He was the first psychoanalyst credited with focusing on the “space between” individuals and its impact on learning and development (Yogev, 2008). In a similar vein, other adult learning literature includes reference relational learning spaces as “fields.” Yorks and Kasl (2002) propose that a “field of empathic connection” supports learning. Kolb and Kolb (2005) propose that learning resides in a collective field of interpretation, experience and memory. Hartley (2008) identified transformational learning practices that “foster a field of learning.” Origins of the term “field” can be traced to Kurt Lewin’s field theory which suggested groups have a life space inclusive of but separate from participant life spaces (Lewin, 1951). Both theories emphasize the space between individuals and its impacts to learning. While relatively unexplored and undefined in transformational learning, both holding environment and field

theories offer insight into understanding collective transformational shifts. Research findings include a dynamic model that captures the emergent, relational nature of holding environments. At time of publication, this appears to be the sole model of holding in groups.

Among other places, adults face increasing complexity at work, and in their roles as leaders. Kegan (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), Torbert (Torbert, 1996) and others (Ciporen, 2010; McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Connor, & Baker, 2006) have defined leadership as fundamentally developmental in nature. Conceptualizations of self and context must transform to effectively conceptualize and address organizational issues (Ciporen, 2010; Debebe, 2011; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Shapiro & Carr, 1991). This need for learning is often collective in nature as multiple expertises are necessary to develop comprehensive perspectives. Organizations undertake these challenges collectively in dialogues, trainings and project teams. This paper argues that collective holding and holding environments enable both the *form* and *direction* of transformational learning necessary in organizations today. Understanding key attributes that determine the emergence and potency of holding environments will help practitioners and leaders support learning and development in themselves, others and organizations.

Methodology

Twelve organization development consultants (holders) were identified using a snowball method. Those included in the study reported intentional creation of relational learning spaces that included whole group shifts to deeper conversations and insight in organizations. Holders were diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, educational background, practice focus and years of experience. Semi-structured interviews explored themes derived from the holding environment literature which both legitimated use of the term in study findings and explored the concept from the holder's perspective. Thematic analysis was conducted in three rounds using NVivo software: open coding, a priori coding and consolidation of the two.

Theoretical Context

Holding Environments

It is through our relatedness to others that we develop and emerge with new conceptions of ourselves and our relationship to our environment. "Holding" is a psychological term encompassing much more than physical warmth, comfort, and safety (Winnicott, 1986, p. 256; 1989). Holding environments include subtle non-verbal communication, relational interplay, and the development of mutuality which implies focused and deep attention from caretakers. Caretakers balance challenge and anxiety with psychological attention and safety. Winnicott proposed that, as we develop, holding environments include families, schools, and other social spaces (Winnicott, Shepard, & Davis, 1989).

Shapiro and Carr (1991) and Kahn (2001, 2005) explore holding environments in organizations. Holding environments allow for exploration of multiple views through deeper connections to others and the subsequent undoing of current conceptions (Shapiro & Carr, p. 39). Key attributes include empathy, containment of difficult emotions, and enabling interpretation (Kahn, 2005, pgs 10-14). Development is enhanced through collective interpretation of mutually shared, confounding realities which, over time, can lead to transformational change.

Field Theory

Quantum and complexity science tells us that space is never without movement and relationship (Capra, 1997). At the quantum level, space is filled with sub-atomic particles that are more interconnections between things than actual things themselves (p. 30). Life at all levels is a network of relationships and the forces that give rise to those relationships. Social fields include unseen structures, occupying space and becoming known to us through their effects (Wheatley, 1992, p. 49). For mother and child, we can think of “love,” “attentiveness” and the “physiology of development” as forces underlying the parent/child holding environment. They give rise to actions and behaviors that we call attachment, attunement and nurturing.

Lewin proposed groups inhabit a “life space” or social field that includes all dimensions in their individual and collective lives at any given moment (Burnes & Cooke, 2013; Friedman & Sykes, 2014; Lewin, 1951, 1997). Elements within the social field are organized in relation to each other, and group level or social change is the result of *shifts in relationship* between elements (not within the elements themselves) (Friedman & Sykes, 2014; Lapidot-Lefler et al., 2015). Coordinated reflection and reflexive thought enlarges the space of possibilities within in a group’s social field. This paper argues that holding environments are social fields. Group level shifts in perception can be understood as shifts in the social field that include increased possibilities for individual and group level learning.

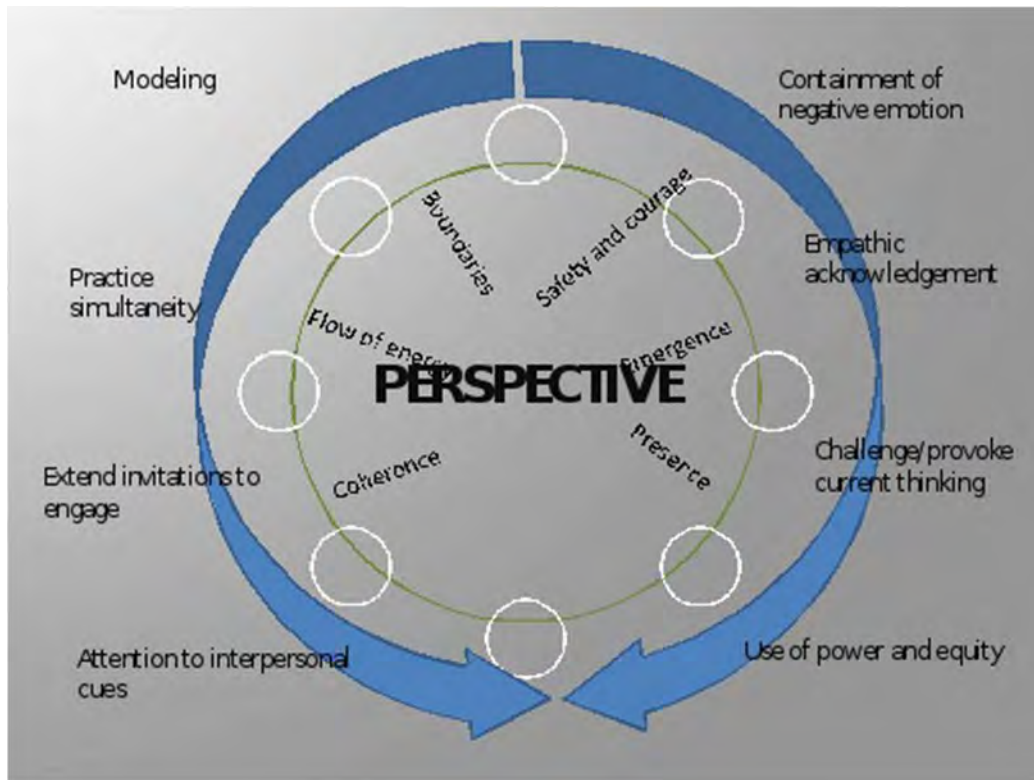
Creating and Maintaining Collective Holding Environments: A Dynamic Model

Study findings included legitimization of use of the term ‘holding environment’ for groups that shift to deeper level of thinking and listening. Holder descriptions were consistent with prior literature referencing holding environments from participant perspectives and experiences. Seven of the 12 holders used dance, music and breathing references to describe moving in concert with groups and their rhythm. These images portray holding environments as fluid, emergent and dynamic. They highlight that the holder’s primary relationship is with the social field. Holders did not focus on curriculum, individuals, or issues/challenges groups were convened to discuss. They engaged in 8 responsive practices that shaped the learning space and gave rise to 5 key conditions of the social field that, when present, could enable group level shifts. Practices and conditions are woven together and presented in the model below.

Preparation

Before participants arrive, holders fill the meeting room with their attention. Most holders prepare the physical space through attention to food, aesthetics, light, and room arrangement: all important elements of the emergent social field. They set a tone that includes preparedness, focus and attention. They actively welcome participants to the space. This early relationship building initiates safety. Most holders prepare their internal space as well. They walk, meditate, envision desired outcomes and engage in quiet reflection to ready themselves for holding others.

Preparation is represented by the two arrows surrounding the group space at the center. Like arms of a lead dance partner, they gently surround and ready the space for coming participants. Attention to physical and emotional space continues over the group’s existence.



Holder Practices

Thematic analysis revealed 8 holder practices for supporting holding environments. These listed outside the arrows denoting holder arms. Practices are forces that shape the space giving rise to conditions and experiences that support transformational learning.

Containment of negative emotion and empathic acknowledgement include holder acknowledgement of difficult, confusing and anxiety provoking situations. Previous work identifies these as hallmarks of holding in work relationships (Kahn, 2001; Shapiro & Carr, 1991).

Challenging/provoking current thinking. In service to perspective taking, challenge is often temporally related to containment and empathy. Most holders provoke the very anxiety they comfort as they introduce discussions of group dynamics, organizational issues and role related challenges.

Practice simultaneity. Holders stand apart from and are part of the social field at the same time. They watch the group, their impact on the group, and are with the group simultaneously. Holders often internally review their motivations for intervening or provoking perspective taking to ensure they act in service to the groups' learning versus their own need.

Invitations to engage include collective rituals that connect holders and holdees to their individual internal affective space, encourage presence, engender connection to each other, and build or contain energy. Examples include moments of silence, morning greetings, "get to know you" conversations, small discussion groups and expression of curiosity that explore participants' thinking and reactions.

Attention to interpersonal cues. Interpersonal cues include non-verbal behavior that provides insight into participant experiences of the social field. Holders attend to signals that reveal how individuals are relating to each other, the whole, and the work of the group.

Modeling. Modeling was among the most common of all holder practices. In a multitude of ways, holders set expectations through their interactions with individual holdees and with the collective. Most study holders believe their attention to the group influences group attention to itself and its own learning. Through the lens of social fields, modeling is not just leading by example, it is a force that sets interactive norms and shapes subsequent relationships in ways that support transformational learning.

Use of authority and equity. Some holders highlight strategies to promote equity while minimizing assertion of their authority. Holders state their intention to create equitable spaces by joining the group, reflecting on their own learning with the group and welcoming holdee assumption of responsibility for the learning space. At the same time, they describe protecting the space when they ascertain it is threatened and focus individual or group level attention to conversations being avoided or on skills not competently displayed. Selection of material is an exercise of authority based on holder interpretation of group need. Some holders potentially discount the reality of their authority and its impact on the social field, or risk relinquishing authority and contributing to the sense of loss and role confusion holdees bring with them into the room (Shapiro & Carr, 1991). In reality, most holders use both equity and authority in service to creation and maintenance of holding environments.

Conditions for Collective, Transformational Shifts

Holders stay alert for 5 experiences that tell them that the holding environment has been created. These are listed around the central helix, inside the holder “arms,” as they are shared experiences that can be understood as characteristics of a social field that accompany and support transformational learning. Their presence or absence give holders clues about the quality of the social space, and are signposts that help holders determine their next, responsive practice.

Ebb and flow of energy: The impact of field-level forces includes both movement and constraint. Dance metaphors include their experience of flow and missteps. Musical references include increasing pace, high notes, low notes, harmonic flows and discordant flats. In physics, field-level production or dissipation of energy is value neutral, suggesting that both the flows and the ebbs of energy in groups can be approached as predictable and useful. This includes the notion of resistance (Wasserman, Gallegos, & Ferdman, 2008), which holders often reframe as group-level learning opportunities.

Boundaries: Boundaries can be understood as differentiation, an element of Lewin’s social field theory (Friedman, 2011). Differentiation includes patterns of interactions that, over time, separate a group from the larger organizational social field. Within the group’s life space then, “parties perceive themselves as linked to each other in ways that distinguish them from other individuals or spaces around them” which include the shared experience of wholeness (Friedman, 2011, p. 238). Holders note that “this space is special” (study participant). They protect that specialness once it has emerged by managing outside disruptions and intrusions. .

Safety and risk: This is perhaps the single most consistent description of spaces created to support learning and development. Study holders discussed the importance of safety and support in relation to holdee anxiety. Multiple authors cite the need for safety and support as learners negotiate the anxiety and discomfort of facing what they do not know (Cranton, 2006b; Kahn, 2001, 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). Risk and support are mutually reinforcing field forces: safety engenders security that allows for interpersonal risk in sharing, questioning, and interacting.

Presence/Emergence: Holders all noted attention to patterns of interaction, deep listening, and suspension of their preconceived ideas for group topics/agenda in service to

collective emergence. Presence begins with acute attention, deep listening, and the internal sense of being completely focused on the present moment (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004). Emergence refers to clarity that comes through presence and directs attention to next steps, conversations that must be had, and shared collective futures (Scharmer, 2009, p. 165). For some study holders, emergence was accompanied by physical experiences that included tingling, heightened senses, rapid breath and a quickened pulse.

Coherence: Holders report experiences of heightened collective synchrony before and after shared perceptual shifts, described as moments of profound connection and awe. Neuroscientists state that individual physiological systems are internally coherent when they operate at the same frequency at which times people they report positive emotions (appreciation, compassion, empathy) and a greater sense of well-being (McCraty & Childre, 2010). Internally coherent individuals influence coherence in others (p. 19). Additional evidence points to the coupling of brain activity during communication (Hasson, Ghazanfar, Galantucci, Garrod, & Keysers, 2012) which can be linked to the emergence and creation of shared meaning making (Stolk et al., 2014). In addition, some holders note experiences they label “spiritual” or “sacred.” Spirit, as a force, was transient and appeared to arise from the social field (not within the holder). Capra (1997) defines the experience of spirit as a mode of human consciousness in which an individual feels a sense of belonging and connectedness to others and even to the cosmos as a whole (p. 107).

Final Comments

Collective holding supports creation of conditions that promote shifts to deeper levels of learning for groups. Holders weave in and out, both a part of and separate from the group. They assess and intervene to encourage learning and adoption of broader, more inclusive perspectives. This dynamic dance cannot be captured in a static model, nor can it be described in stages. It is neither predictable nor stable, but constantly moving and emerging. While teased apart for the purpose of exploration, the experiences and practices of holding operate synergistically. They harmonize in ways that create the recognizable, symphonic whole. The social field becomes an invitation for transformational learning. Holding is experienced as “reaching out core to core” (study holder), which adds a final note of richness to the power and potential holding environments to address the learning and change demands organizational life today.

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Factors at the Intersection of Collaborative Inquiry and Jungian Synchronicity that Reorganize / Transform Classroom Learning

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Abstract: This is an inquiry through a Jungian lens of qualitative research done examining factors affecting synchronistic phase transitions in creating and implementing teacher action plans that reorganize and transform learning in the classroom. It is based on research at the New Teacher Center, University of California, the mentoring work of Lipton and Wellman and quantitative studies by Mainzer, etc. on phase transitions in nature and the brain involving the breaking of symmetry in complex systems.

Introduction

For this paper, transformative learning is considered the conscious shift in a teacher's awareness and "increased capacity " (Kegan, 2000, p. 49) resulting in professional and personal growth that changes and expands best practices for teaching and learning in the classroom. It is in keeping with the work of King (2002) and Crandon (2006) regarding a fundamental change in perspective based on a limited view that is adjusted to accommodate a more expansive understanding of the world. The focus of this paper includes aspects of this perspective transformation phase process per Mezirow (1978), Cranton (2000) and Kegan (2000). Specifically included are research results and themes involving the phases of heightened interest, meaningfully charged experiences, self-examination, options for new ways of acting and interpreting experience, building competence and self-confidence, planning courses of action, acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing courses of action and assessing new roles in these courses of action that result in greater degrees of competency, individuation and autonomy.

Synchronicity in this paper is meaningful coincidence based on the work of C.G. Jung and is used in the context of the psyche emerging from it to break the symmetry of consciousness and create a larger whole. Synchronistic phase transitions are the specific stages or phases through which the emergence occurs (Cambray, 2009, XIII).

Collaborative inquiry in this paper is a cyclical, critically reflective, co-creative process of reciprocal discourse and dialogue between new and mentor teachers that fosters growth, learning focused thinking, ownership and assessment.

Purpose

"The calling to live by" (Herrmann, 2014, p. 57) described by Jungian analyst Professor - Dr. Steven Herrmann involves transformative learning dimensions in relation to one's vocation. He posits that the unfolding of this vocation is sensed through an energy resonance of synchronicity due to its intrinsic meaning to the unique structure or "compass reading" (James, 1987, p. 214) of one's psyche. The transformative learning process serves as a means to access and own/"have" (Kegan, 2000, p. 54) this compass reading of the psyche or what Hegel would call "spirit... ever giving itself new form" (Kegan, 2000, p. 69) in what I would call a sacred geometry of growth unique to each person.

For me, this vocational and spiritual compass reading is my work supervising, coaching and supporting K-12 teachers to realize their potential in ways that continually develop and

transform their teaching so that student engagement and learning are equally transformed and maximized within very challenging inner-city circumstances.

Rationale and Participants

While there have been quantitative studies on phase transitions in nature (Mainzer, 2013) and the brain (Freeman, et al.) involving the breaking of symmetry in complex systems, there have been no current qualitative investigations of such a transformative phase transition reorganization in the psyche, only case studies from the past and not in classroom settings. My research focus, then, was to examine this unexplored classroom setting. Specifically, I looked at the degree to which transformative learning was facilitated by synchronicity in the form of coincidences that produced activated mental states based on the meaningfulness of the coincidences changing structures in the psyche similar to the way activated states and phase transition reorganizations change structures in nature and the brain.

My research participants consisted of five K-12 teachers and factors of intrinsically motivated activities/goals, *a-ha* moments and associated synchronicity in the development of their potential as educators. The first part of my research involved phenomenological analysis of a collaborative, reflective inquiry between teacher and coach exploring the above factors in the creation of rubric embedded professional practice goals and inquiry action plans (research report available upon request). The analysis resulted in the following findings:

Findings: Part 1

- **Intrinsically motivating areas of the classroom can result in teacher *a-ha* moments of inspiration, meaning and ownership that facilitate transformative learning.**
- **Such moments can often be linked to unconscious/conscious synchronicity that occurs prior to, during and after these moments.**
- **Using tools that collaboratively focus attention and reflection on this linkage produces trackable, connective data points and insights for action plans and goals that transform learning in the psyche and classroom.**

The second part of my research consisted of a mixed method approach involving intuitive and grounded theory with triangulation components using direct and indirect interview formats, field note observations and mappings, written self-reflections and collaborative inquiry cycles. In this part, I looked more closely through a Jungian lens at what triggers and accompanies synchronicity phase transitions and reorganizations created by the breaking of conscious symmetry through the emergence and implementation of these teacher action plans. The transformative teaching and learning effects of this emergence were reviewed in relation to transformative learning theory as well. Analysis of the phase transition data resulted in the following findings:

Findings: Part 2

- **1 A repeated theme regarding the importance of the imaginal process which was slow/sporadic/pondering occurred for these teachers.**

This is in line with Baumgartner's (2001) analysis of transformative learning theory as viewed through the lens of Dirx and Healy regarding "the role of imagination in facilitating learning" (p. 18). Mezirow (1997) values as well the role of "imaginings to redefine problems from a different perspective" (p. 10). This role may be reflective of the need for the psyche to

imagine at both subconscious and conscious levels the process of emergence before it is actually realized or experienced. According to Carl Jung (1989), such a process “liberates itself from the concretism of the object and attempts to sketch an image of the invisible as something which stands behind the phenomenon” (p. 336). This imagining process results in a “rising up” (Jung, 1989 p. 292) or, in this research framework, an emerging into consciousness as the prospective function of the psyche. It seems that the importance of this inner imaging or active imagining and pondering is “prima materia” (Jung, 1989, p. 199) for the emergence of individuation and one’s vocation in the world. This mental fantasizing helps to clarify one's thoughts as well (Jung, 1989, p.174).

Taking this concept of images further, Jungian researcher J. Cambray (2002) states that when these images or “symbols are accessed by consciousness and experienced affectively, they often coincide with a sense of deeper purpose or function”(p. 417). Viewed through a spiritual-integrative lens as reported by Baumgartner (2001), transformative learning is equally facilitated when “further knowledge comes...through symbols” (p. 18). Additionally, both Mezirow’s approach and developmental ones to transformative learning affirm the importance of ‘meaning-making” (Baumgartner, 2001, p. 17) in the learning process. This may have been what happened when the teachers initially identified an area of the room they were drawn to and had heightened interest in that was then photographed (see session handouts). Exploring the choice of each photo through collaborative dialogue and inquiry, it was found that each one was reflective of a deeper interest as part of each teacher's own "individuation" that emerged in their action plans. This corresponds to transformative learning theory regarding a triggering event that may be the tip of a longer cumulative process of events (Baumgartner, 2001, p. 18-19). It could also be reflective at a deeper level of the teacher being predisposed or ready for a transformative learning experience as described by Baumgartner (2001).

- **1a A subsequent theme based on this first one is the way in which the phase transition emergence appeared. It was more often than not rapid/exponential.**

This fits with the research (Mainzer, 2013) that has been done in the natural sciences on the breaking of symmetry in systems and it also supports the Jungian view that the emergence erupts into consciousness rapidly and somewhat exponentially (Cambray, 2009, p. 64). This could be due, perhaps, to the imaginal formation reaching a saturation point. In natural science, this is considered concentration, overload or perturbation that forces the reorganization of the system by the breaking of an old symmetry to create a larger, less rigid, more varied and complex whole in keeping with the apparent nature of evolution in the universe that is often connected to exponential power laws (Mainzer, 2013). This phenomenon was easily seen in the room mapping diagrams (available upon request) reflecting one teacher’s need to continually ‘declutter’ (as he put it) the chaos of a room he inherited to allow his own reorganization to emerge.

The rapid phase transition process seemed to be dependent, as well, on timing when emergence was “right for it” (Jung, 1989, p. 307) or “ready” (Baumgartner, 2001, p. 19). Jung states that “there is unlimited knowledge present in nature... but can be comprehended by consciousness only when the time is right for it. The process . . . is like what happens in the individual psyche” (Jung, 1989, p. 307). This seems to mirror the process in nature when self-organizing is required due to chaos or intense concentration on the margins of the phenomenon (Hogenson, 2005, pp. 273-275). J. Cambray (2009) also looks at studies done on “self-organizing criticality” (p. 68), postulating an underlying commonality with nature in a power law relationship of intensity and frequency variables involving emergent properties of the field (p.

68). Jung reinforces this relationship to nature, stating that "our psyche is set up in accord with the structure of the universe and what happens in that macrocosm likewise happens in the infinitesimal small and most subjective regions of the psyche " (Jung, 1989, p. 335). Additionally, this breaking of symmetry in phase transitions, whether in the psyche or through perturbations in natural systems (Mainzer, 2013), can be compared to Jung's view on opposites which are always seeking to achieve a state of balance in the exchange of energy resulting from their collision (Jung, 1989, p. 346).

- **2 A second theme involved the following specific factors facilitating the phase transition process:**
- **2a Physical engagement with implementation elements resulted in significant phase transition actions.**

Actually doing the action or what Embree (2011) refers to as having the experience produces the most results in terms of the phenomenon emerging into a larger whole. Researcher Dr. Rick Hanson from the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley attributes this emergence to the neurological change in the brain produced by the close attention paid to the physical experience by the brain (Hanson in Spirit Rock, 2015).

Additionally, the neuroscientific work of Barton, Freeman, Mellani, Molle, Tononi and Varela reinforce the importance of brain self-organizing systems that can facilitate change and transformation. Such self-organizing systems involve information and stimuli both external and internal that are processed by neural assemblies in rapid, coordinated, synchronous and simultaneous bursting forth or firing of cooperative neurological connections, collaborations, computations and coalitions to result in conscious awareness and learning. This takes place through neurons linked by ever-ready, re-entrant loops and dynamics that rapidly and continually synchronize meaningful coherence of vibrational frequency oscillations, using carrier waves, chaotic attractors, etc. to self-organize, regulate, manage and assign informational meaning to increasingly complex structures/symmetries and relational, spacio-temporal patterns that result in behavior from which learning can take place. Relaxing the mental framework allows for higher degrees of freedom, interaction and integration among neuron assemblies to produce novel and innovative thinking, abstractions, generalizations, creative perceptions, insights and *aha* moments that further transformation and learning. In addition, learning is facilitated in an attractor landscape by focused observation, intention, reflection and brain search images. Such intrinsic brain dynamics and self-organizing systems work together in a reciprocal way to allow for increasing integration of information in meaningful context. In this case, the meaningful context was the focused physical engagement with the action plan elements. As a result of such self-organizing engagement, attention and integration in the brain and psyche, greater levels of awareness, understanding, integration, discernment, emergence and individuation of one's essential self, vocation, purpose and evolutionary direction in life can occur. In so doing, learning and wholeness that have transformative dimensions are facilitated in the brain and psyche (research report available upon request).

- **2b Increased motivational interest and insight resulted while attending to and engaging with the implementation elements.**
- **2c Interaction with unexpected and surprising aspects of one's own thinking and others encouraged creativity and continued investment in the process.**

Such interactions seem to be connected, as well, to aspects of emergent self-organization that "evoke a feeling of surprise" according to J. Cambray (2009, p. 107). This

concur with Mezirow's (1997) research on the importance of discovery in the transformative learning process.

- **2d Collaborative discourse and reflection supported emergent learning.**

This reaffirms Mezirow's (1978) view of the importance of critical reflection and discourse in the transformative learning process. This could be part of bringing into consciousness the slower/pondering imaginal process going on between implementation of action plan elements. In such discourse, there was possibly a collaborative or "Powers of Two" effect (Shenk, 2014) that was greater than each single person's experience and, in so doing, created more inventive, unexpected and surprising connections that saturated the system as it currently existed and propelled a system symmetry to be broken so that a larger whole could emerge. Additionally, MRI studies indicate that collaborative factors involving social interaction, empathy, emotional overtones, etc. activate various brain regions between people which often breaks the symmetry of old systems to create more complex ones that involve greater knowledge and understanding (Cambray, 2009, pp. 73-76). Such conditions point to the importance of interdependent relationships that build trust (Taylor, 2002, p. 307) and echo the need for primary conditions in the environment to be open, safe and trusting for transformative learning to occur (Baumgartner, 2001, p. 19-20).

Findings Summary

Jungian synchronistic phase transition theory is useful for understanding the emergence of new learning that is transformative for both teachers and students. Specifically, aspects of the phase transition process in the psyche that involve sufficient time for imaginal thinking, physical engagement, collaborative discourse and reflection, motivational interest, the unexpected and elements of surprise create the conditions for more complex and varied re-organized emergence in the classroom that transforms the environment and pedagogy there (see session handouts). These conditions produce meaningful, motivating information, connections and coincidences that increase pressure on current systems in the psyche reflective of processes in nature and the brain. As such, the symmetries of these systems are broken, allowing teachers to develop more of their own potential or, in Jungian terms, "individuation" involving meaningful resonance within each one's unique, internal *compass reading* that keeps them evolving, interested and excited to teach and learn.

It is important, however, to note the challenges within the psyche to allow these emergent transformations to occur. My research, in line with Baumgartner's (2001), indicates that transformative learning is not a linear process. My data reflects many starts and stops, sudden leaps forward and lagging resistance revealing synchronicity's *shadow* side or transformative learning's "feeling" side (Taylor, 2000, p. 292) indicating that the process is more individualistic and fluid. Such a process necessitates on-going reflection and training to manage "the dynamics of educational helping relationships" (Robertson, 1996, p. 48) as well as discerning where each is coming from and going to on the various learning "bridges" (Kegan, 2000, p.60) traversed. The New Teacher Center at the University of California does an excellent job developing materials and collaborative learning tools for K-12 districts to use training teachers and coaches in these helping, shared learning roles.

Conclusion

The intersection of collaborative inquiry and synchronicity can lead to an overall gestalt or guiding system for transformative learning to emerge. This emergence stems from the

meaningful resonance in the *compass reading* of one's psyche that points to one's purpose and transformative potential in the world. Meaningful coincidences and real life events that weave together in meaningful ways along with intrinsically motivated actions and *aha* moments provide points of intersection with which to explore this potential. Such intersections create the impetus to reorganize, transform, change and expand conscious brain activity, learning and behavior. It is important, then, to pay attention through a collaborative inquiry process to these meaningful points of intersection. The process involves attentive listening and discourse in a safe, nurturing, facilitating and trusting environment. Such an environment provides the opportunity to clarify, rephrase, question, probe, extend, critically reflect, discern, plan and conclude so that awareness and learning are expanded and reframed. Through this process of inquiry and working with meaningful moments, currents of momentum, physical engagement, imagination, spontaneous, unexpected surprises and discoveries within synchronistic and transformative learning perspective phase transitions, the potential for greater individuation and transformation can occur in a teacher's learning, psyche and frame of reference based on my research and literature review in this paper.

Scholar Session Discussion Question

How can teachers' transforming perspective, learning, self-autonomy and individuation support the same process in their students?

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Between Continuity and Discontinuity: Conceiving the Rhythms of Transformative Learning

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Abstract: Envisioning transformative learning from a temporal perspective requires one to conceive the articulation between the continuous and discontinuous aspects inherent to transformative processes. In practice and in research, it is not unusual to analyze those two features as distinct and separate from each other: transformation is often assimilated with critical events that constitute discontinuities (e.g., life crisis, disorienting dilemma); it is also traditionally conceived through on-going processes whose continuity is taken for granted (e.g., dialogue, critical self-reflection). Such a distinction remains however problematic. The aim of this paper is to propose a theoretical framework in order to elaborate more thoroughly the dialogical relationship that exists between the continuities and discontinuities shaping transformative learning processes, in order to rethink transformative learning, not only as a process inscribed in time, but more radically as a rhythmic phenomenon.

Organizing the Temporal Complexity of One's Life

The image provided by the idea of “intersection” helps imagining how change and transformation may occur at the crossroad between several influences, usually involving diverse people and heterogeneous experiences shaping the learning process, but also through the role played by the environment surrounding such an encounter. By referring to such a spatial metaphor, we should not however forget that transformation also requires time to unfold (Alhadeff-Jones, in press). Transformative learning (e.g., Mezirow, 1991; Taylor & Cranton, 2012) occurs indeed through space and time. From a temporal perspective, intersections may be characterized by at least two features. First, like a crossroad, they refer to more or less permanent attributes that make them recognizable: learning occurs through times that are framed by existing settings and institutions (e.g., the formal setting of a course; the instituted rhythms of work or family) displaying some form of permanence and continuity. Second, like in a car accident, intersections suppose the emergence of encounters, as discontinuous instants, determined by individual schedules or trajectories: such times appear as events that often occur randomly, and remain hard to anticipate or predict with accuracy. In other words, the temporal features that characterize intersections suggest one to conceive transformative learning through both, continuity and discontinuity, permanence and emergence.

Envisioning transformative learning from a temporal perspective requires one to conceive the articulation between the continuous and discontinuous aspects inherent to transformative processes (Alhadeff-Jones, in press, 2014; Alhadeff-Jones, Lesourd, Roquet & Le Grand, 2011). In practice and in research, it is not unusual to analyze those two features as distinct and separate from each other. On the one hand, transformation is often assimilated with critical events that constitute discontinuities (e.g., life crisis, disorienting dilemma). On the other hand, it is traditionally conceived through on-going processes whose continuity is taken for granted (e.g., dialogue, critical self-reflection). Such a distinction remains however problematic. The aim of

this paper is to propose a theoretical framework in order to elaborate more thoroughly the dialogical relationship that exist between the continuities and discontinuities shaping transformative learning processes, in order to rethink transformative learning, not only as a process inscribed in time, but more radically as a rhythmic phenomenon.

The Discontinuities of Transformative Learning

If transformative learning had to be reduced to one feature, it would probably be the “shift” triggered by the experience of a disorienting dilemma. It is not therefore unusual to assimilate transformation to the situation that encapsulates how such a change is initiated. It typically involves an event disrupting what would have been otherwise experienced as a more or less ordered or continuous sequence of actions. Such a discontinuity has been conceptualized referring to various ideas, depending on the theoretical framework mobilized. The notions of “epiphany” and “*épreuve*” (ordeal) concentrate well the meaning that may be associated with discontinuities occurring throughout the life course.

The use of the notion of epiphany tends to stress the psychological dimensions associated with the experience of discontinuity. The term itself derives from the Greek word “*epiphainesthai*” meaning to “appear” or “to come into view;” it generally refers to an experience of great revelation and a catalyst for personal growth (McDonald, 2005, p.11). In human sciences, Denzin (1989, 1990, as quoted in McDonald, 2005) has defined epiphanies as interactional moments that leave a mark on people’s lives and have the potential to create transformational experiences for the person. They are related to existential crises, whose effects may be both positive and/or negative. Epiphanies reveal someone’s character and alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person’s life. They also catalyze the perception of a new identity.

Sharing some of the key features associated with the notion of epiphany, the notion of *épreuve* (ordeal) provides us with additional meanings that tend to orientate the reflection toward the sociological aspects inherent to the description of formative discontinuities within the life course. The notion of *épreuve* appears closely related to those of “bifurcation” or “event” frequently used in social theory (Baudouin, 2014). For Boltanski and Thévenot (1991/2006), the notion of *épreuve* is used to refer to situations of conflict or disputes that disrupt the normal course of events and everyday routines. *Epreuves* may be experienced as critical because they test and reveal the values and qualities of the subjects involved in a situation, whose outcome remains fundamentally uncertain. Following a different perspective, Martuccelli (2006) conceives the succession of a series of *épreuves* as what constitutes the subjective experience and the singularity of someone’s life. They cannot be separated from the history of the subject and, at the same time, they constitute some kind of test through which the individual’s resources are evaluated within a socially and historically determined situation (e.g., passing one’s final exams in school, having to lay off a coworker, experiencing a divorce). *Epreuves* appear *de facto* as challenges and operations of selection (Baudouin, 2014). They articulate the social and contextual order that defines for instance an institution (education, work, family) at a specific time of its history, with the singular trajectory of a person.

From an educational perspective, *épreuves*, epiphanies, and more broadly ruptures and discontinuities appear as opportunities to question and challenge taken for granted assumptions and realities, as much as they may reveal hidden characteristics of the self. From that perspective, they often constitute a source of “disorienting dilemmas” (Mezirow, 1991) that may trigger transformative processes. *Epreuves*, epiphanies, and disorienting dilemmas appear as

discontinuities within the life course of the learner. They refer to events (e.g., encounter, accident, ordeal) that are constitutive of one's own biography. Their singularity is what makes them so significant as lived experiences. However, they rarely appear as totally disconnected from previous or further experiences: they are usually intertwined with situations, places, relationships or meanings that are already present into one's life. Moreover, despite being unique, such discontinuities keep emerging into one's life, even if they are different each time. To some extent, their repetition – even is never self-similar – is constitutive of one's life trajectory. They are part of the “plot” (*intrigue*) (Ricoeur, 1990), which is located at the core of the linguistic, psychological and social processes through which one learns to develop a “narrative identity.” It seems therefore misleading to conceive them as strictly discontinuous. As soon as they start being reflected or shared through a narrative, temporal fragmentation and lived discontinuities may appear as part of a larger movement that integrates them into the succession of fragments that constitute one's life.

The Continuities of Transformative Learning

If transformative learning is often reduced to the disorienting dilemma that triggers a significant change in someone's life, the transformative process that surrounds it typically refer to different phenomena whose continuity is usually taken for granted. Based on Mezirow's (1991) contribution, we may envision at least three types of elements involved in transformative learning, that are assumed as continuous features.

First, if transformative learning is envisioned as a disruption or as an emergence within a continuum, then continuity refers to the very phenomena that appear as disrupted. In Mezirow's theory, meaning schemes and meaning perspectives constitute the main entities whose stability is challenged by the experience of disruptive events. Their continuity throughout the life course is what provides the self a sense of identity, coherence, stability and predictability. For Mezirow (2000, p.16), a meaning perspective refers to “[t]he structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions ... It selectively shapes and delimits perception, cognition, feelings, and dissipation by predisposing our intentions, expectations, and purposes” Such frames of reference are thus made of “habits of mind” and “points of view” that mobilized “meaning schemes,” consciously or not, on an everyday basis. As much as a disorienting dilemma may disrupt the stability of meaning schemes and perspectives through time, transformative learning may also be conceived as the process through which such meaning schemes and perspectives are reconstructed in order to be more inclusive (Mezirow, 1991). Transformative learning theory suggests therefore that, once a transformation occurred, it leads to the stabilization of new ways of being, that will display some form of continuity and serve as a new base for the self to continue evolving in a more autonomous manner.

A second way to conceive the relationship between transformative learning and continuity is to consider the cognitive or the social processes that foster transformation; for instance, critical self-reflection or dialogue. As scaffoldings, such processes provide the learner with an on-going access to resources and mechanisms through which the learners can challenge, deconstruct, explore and rebuild the ways they interpret themselves and the world around them in order to reshape their meaning perspectives and their sense of identity.

A third way to conceive the relationship between transformative learning and continuity suggests one to envision the process of transformation itself as displaying features that are more or less permanent. Within Mezirow's theory, the process of transformation is conceived according to a developmental approach, structured around a series of phases (e.g., disorienting

dilemma, self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions, recognition that one's discontent and transformation are shared, exploration of new options, planning action, acquisition of knowledge and skills, trying new roles, building self-confidence, reintegration of the new perspective, etc.) (Mezirow, 2000, p.22). At the scale of the learner's life, transformation is therefore conceived as an on-going process that displays a structure whose features exhibit continuity. Such a structure is ultimately what provides practitioners with a sense of coherence for the work they do, as it allows them to position their contribution within a continuum that defines their purpose and the way they implement their educational strategy.

If meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, critical self-reflection, dialogue or the phases through which adults may transform themselves are all conceived through their continuous characteristics, it is nevertheless misleading to assume their permanence. Indeed, none of those phenomena displays a strict continuity. They are not mobilized every instant of one's life, they incrementally evolve through time, and they depend on situations which are never self-similar. In other words, it seems more appropriate to conceive them as patterns that are repeated through time, rather than static forms that would remain strictly permanent.

As suggested by Mezirow himself – even if he does not develop the theoretical implications of such an assumption – transformative learning is based on repetitions and what could be called “circular dynamics” (Alhadeff-Jones, 2012) (e.g., retroactive or recursive loops). Thus, meaning schemes and meaning perspectives are produced, reproduced, or eventually challenged and transformed through the repetition of experiences whose interpretations evolve. Following a hermeneutical influence, transformative learning theory also conceives the process of transformation through the circularities involved in dialogical situations, organized around circles of interpretations challenging the meaning given to the learners' experience through activities of reflection or reframing. Based on those observations, the feeling of continuity appears as a construct, that only emerges through the repetition of patterns of activity (interpreting, questioning, dialoguing, etc.).

Conceiving the Rhythmical Dimensions of Transformative Learning

Since Antiquity, the philosophical study of time has been animated by ongoing considerations around the continuous and discontinuous nature of time (Gonord, 2001). In the early 20th century, the contribution of Bachelard (1931) has shown the relevance of considering the dialogical relationship between continuity and discontinuity, focusing on the rhythmic attributes of living phenomena. Later, Lefebvre's (1961/2002) sociological interest for the rhythms of the everyday life demonstrated the heuristic and critical value of questioning the rhythmic nature of human activity. Inspired by those contributions, this reflection claims that in order to conceive transformative learning at its intersections, it is particularly relevant to conceive it, from a temporal perspective, through the lens provided by a rhythmic theory. Accordingly, transformative learning may be conceived through the rhythmic attributes it encompasses, as they evolve according to both continuous and discontinuous features (Alhadeff-Jones, in press). For Sauvanet (2000a, 2000b), three criteria must be considered in order to define rhythmic phenomena: pattern, periodicity and movement.

A pattern provides a rhythm with a specific organization or configuration. For instance, with auditory stimuli, it refers to four components: duration, intensity, timbre, and height; with visual stimuli, it is associated with dimension, intensity, material, and color (Sauvanet, 2000a, pp.167-168); with human activity, it usually refers to a configuration of actions (including discourse, embodiment, social encounter) that reveal some form of organization (e.g., scheme,

script, ritual). Meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, dialogical situations, the exercise of critical self-reflection, or the phases through which transformative learning may unfold, all those phenomena are characterized by specific patterns of activity. They are recognizable because they are organized, even if such an organization fluctuates through time.

Periodicity refers to the fact that a rhythmic phenomenon also involves repetition; it typically involves a period, a frequency, or a pace that define the rate of occurrence. Each of the patterns conceived above displays some permanence because it is repeated, either on a daily base, or throughout the lifespan. Meaning schemes and perspectives only appear through the repetition of situations where they are repetitively mobilized in order to act, feel and interpret experiences. Dialogue itself is a rhythmic relational activity (Alhadeff-Jones, 2016) that evolves through its own repetition. As a developmental process, transformative learning displays features that are repeated throughout one's life. One may thus suggest that emancipation is a rhythmic phenomenon that relies on the repetition of patterns through which people learn to develop their autonomy (Alhadeff-Jones, in press).

The third criterion, movement, refers to the singular aspect that characterizes rhythmic phenomena, i.e., the discontinuities that contribute to the fact that, even if there are repetitions, they are rarely repetitions of the exact same phenomenon, but rather the recurrence of something similar. When considering the production of a life narrative, the process of elaboration typically stresses the role played by single events in the 'plot' of one's life: epiphanies, *épreuves*, disorienting dilemmas. They highlight what makes a life be unique. It corresponds to what could be identified as the 'biographical movement' inherent to transformative learning.

Toward a Rhythmanalytical Conception of Transformative Learning

Life is more than just a succession of singular and unique events. It is also organized around experiences that tend to repeat themselves and form some kind of patterns. Such patterns and repetitions, as well as the biographical movement they belong to, are parts of the rhythmical dimensions of lifelong learning (Pineau, 2000). The assumption that frames my current research on the rhythms of emancipation (Alhadeff-Jones, in press) is that being able to identify and conceptualize such a rhythmicity is critical in order to develop one's own autonomy, in every dimensions of one's life.

As much as people display patterns whenever they interpret a new situation (e.g., by applying existing meaning schemes and perspectives), my own observations – using life history in higher education – make me believe that they also display idiosyncratic patterns in the way they organize their self-transformation throughout their life. In other words, strategies implemented – consciously or not – in order to reinforce one's autonomy tend to follow existing behaviors that repeat themselves. I do not refer here to Mezirow's phases of transformative learning. My assumption is that people start developing, very early in their life, ways of beings that constitute their own 'specific' ways of changing and dealing with transformation; they are singular and do not necessary correspond to common developmental stages, although they may be shaped by developmental features (e.g., biological age). I have for instance suggested one to pay attention to 'patterns of transgression', which contribute through their own repetition to emancipate a person, by providing her with distinctive strategies in order to develop and sustain autonomy (Alhadeff-Jones, in press). For instance, traveling or moving away from where one lives, learning a new language, or breaking away from significant others, may constitute patterns of activity that are repeated throughout the lifespan in order for people to learn to assert their autonomy.

If emancipation designates the opening of a space and time of rupture ... then transgression can be seen as a “scheme” constitutive of the process of breaking through limitations. From a temporal perspective, if emancipation requires some duration in order to unfold, then transgression appears as one of the basic “units” constitutive of its temporality ... From a temporal perspective, emancipation can therefore be interpreted as the moment of rupture emerging from the repetition of a pattern of transgression. (Alhadeff-Jones, in press)

Identifying the rhythmic dimensions of transformative learning is critical for at least two reasons. At the micro-level, it brings one to go beyond the biographical movement that characterizes one’s own development in order to take into consideration the everyday life. Thus, it brings one to question how continuity and discontinuity are experienced, day after day, in the banality of everyday forms of alienation (Lefebvre, 1961/2002). At the macro-level, it also brings one to question how people may get locked into the repetition of situations aimed at increasing their freedom. So much suffering come indeed from the incapacity of individuals to change the strategies they mobilized in order to assert their own autonomy. Whether one focuses on the everyday life or the lifespan more broadly, adopting a rhythm analytical framework requires one to pay specific attention to patterns, repetitions, and movement, in order to interpret how discontinuities and continuities shape the temporalities of one’s own existence and how they determine transformative learning as a rhythmic process.

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Mezirow's Conception of Critical Reflection: A Critical Review

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Abstract: In effort to provide a more in-depth understanding of essential components of transformative learning theory, the purpose of this paper is to review the empirical literature (2001-2016) that focuses on Mezirow's conception of critical reflection.

Introduction

Recently, concerns have been raised about an over-reliance on literature reviews of transformative learning theory (TLT), whereby researchers are not reviewing original studies and or exploring literature beyond the confines of a review (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). A consequence of this over-reliance is that transformative learning is seen by some caught in a "first wave" of theory building (e.g, Gunnlaugson, 2008) and continues to be bound by the dominant perspective of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991). A response to this concern is a request for reviews on essential components of transformative learning (e.g., experience, dialogue, disorienting dilemmas, relationships, critical reflection) (Cranton & Taylor, 2012) that might reveal a more detailed understanding. A component and purported to be one of the least studied in relationship to TLT is critical reflection (CR) (Brookfield, 2000; Hanson, 2013).

CR when defined in relation to TL has long been seen as the deepest level of reflection although originally it had many more facets than often discussed. In Mezirow's (1981) early publications about transformative learning theory, CR is referred to as critical reflectivity. It had seven levels of reflection, with the last three (conceptual, psychic, and theoretical) as the deepest levels indicative of critical consciousness, that of "becoming aware of our awareness and critiquing it" (p. 13). As a model it was seen as "too fined-grained" by some (Kember et., al, 2008, p. 372), although it is still being studied in this form today (e.g., Jensen & Joy, 2005; Meltiäinen & Väjämäa, 2013; Silvia, Valerio, & Lorezna, 2013). In 1991 Mezirow collapsed these levels into three dimensions of reflection including content (reflecting on what we perceive, think, feel and act) process (reflecting on how we perform the functions of perceiving), and "premise reflection [which] involves becoming aware of the *why* we perceive, think, feel or act as we do" (p. 108). This conception of CR fits predominantly within Brookfield's (2000) classification of psychotherapeutic reflection—questioning deeply held assumptions about how we making meaning of our world—which "emphasizes the way people learn how to construct and deconstruct, their own experiences and meanings" (p. 10) in relationship to questioning universal truths. This conception of CR left its deep roots in critical theory behind where it was associated with "social and political purpose and ideology critique and hence making it critical reflection" (Kreber, 2012, p. 324).

Despite some awareness of the complexity of CR it also has a strong instrumental and rational bias. Instrumentally scholars "implicitly characterize critical reflection as a systematic cognitive process that is targeted towards a specific ideal"(van Woerkem, 2010, p. 343).

Rationality is continually given primacy overlooking the inherent cognitive nature of emotions (Taylor, 2001). Furthermore, it is rarely deconstructed in-depth (e.g., Liimatainen et al. 2001, Cranton & Caruesetta, 2004, Kreber, 2004; Taylor & Laros, 2013) when used in the research about nature and practice of TL. There is a purported over-reliance on retrospective interviews, involving “participants to both recall from memory and verbally articulate reflective moments...that often operate at a tacit level” outside participants’ conscious awareness (Taylor, 2007, p.179). Also, promoting CR is inherently linked to specific teaching strategies (PBL, dialogue, journaling) with limited accountability and an overreliance on the written text. Insight into some of these concerns is explored in a recent review of Mezirow’s conception critical reflection, involving 12 studies, confirming that “researchers spend a lot of time on coding and assessing reflection, with often ambivalent results” (p. 18). Although, a very informative review, it is limited to a small number of studies, predominantly focusing on assessment and operationalizing CR, and overlooking other insights (e.g., methodology, practice) that might be revealed from a broader focus. In response to this review, the critiques associated with critical reflection and the need for reviews about particular components of transformative learning theory, the purpose of this paper is an in-depth review of the empirical research concerning critical reflection as defined by Mezirow (1991, 2000).

Methodology

The methodology for this review involved a search on several databases (e.g. ERIC, Wilson, Proquest, Medline, Lumina) using four criteria for selecting the studies on CR. Each study: a) defined CR from Mezirow’s perspective; b) had a methodology section; c) foregrounded CR, such that it had a major focus in the study; and d) it was published within the after the year 2000. This purposeful sample of studies allowed for a more consistent interpretation of CR, whereby all the studies were critiqued within a shared framework. In all, 29 peer-review studies were identified, although most used Mezirow’s conception of CR exclusively, at times other conceptions were discussed as well (e.g., Schon; Boud). Each study was obtained, read in its entirety and reviewed, with the analysis framed within CR (e.g., Mezirow, 1991; 2000).

Organization of the Review

The findings are organized by a synthesis of the purposes of the studies, research designs, and a thematic analysis of the findings. The themes include: a) the challenge of assessing CR; b) the lack of attention to the role of emotions; c) unquestioned association between certain teaching practices and CR; and d) the quantitative assessment of CR.

Purposes

The primary purposes fell within five predominant themes, including: a) validating instruments (audio-taped journaling, questionnaire, electronic portfolios, journaling, surveys) to assess CR (Bell, et al., 2011; Dantas-Whitney, 2002; Dunn & Musolino, 2011; Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010; Plack et. al, 2005; Wallman, et al, 2008; Wittich, et al. 2013a; Wittich, et al., 2013b); b); exploring ways to foster CR (curriculum, feedback, online education; journaling, modeling, program design, portfolios, problem-based learning, simulations & debriefings, web-based discussions, evidence-based strategies) (Bates, Ramirez, & Dritis, 2009; Bell, et al., 2011; Buzdar & Ali, 2013; Gulwadi, 2009; Gum, Greenhill & Dix, 2011; Jensen & Joy, 2005; Meltiäinen & Väjämäa, 2013; Okuda & Fukuda, 2014; Oosterbaan, et al., 2010; Oyamada, 2012; Rigg & Trehan, 2008; Silvia, Valerio, & Lorenza, 2013; Lim, 2009; Ziegler, 2005); c)

facilitators' perspectives of CR (Hanson, 2013; Sambrook & Stewart, 2008); d) the relationship of CR to specific issues (obesity bias, mid-career) (Ogle & Damhorst, 2010); and e) studies that focus on related aspects of CR (emotions, context, disorienting dilemmas, feedback, levels of reflection, developmental nature of reflection, instrumental learning) (Ambrose & Ker, 2014; Dye, et al., 2011; Duke & Appleton, 2000; Mälkki, 2010; 2012; Roessger, 2014). The general intent of the research is quite diverse, although large gaps remain which will be discussed further.

Research Designs and Settings

Methodologically a variety of designs are used including quantitative surveys, case studies and basic interpretive designs. Data collection for assessing CR relies predominantly on the analysis of written reflections through the use of journals and quantitative instruments. As opposed to the study of TL in general most research that looks at CR exclusively, retrospective interviews are used minimally. There is more reliance on electronic portfolios, journals, scripts, and reflective essays, which assist greatly in the assessment of CR, easing the means through digital analysis. However, they have limitations, the written expression of reflection can for some students pose a barrier and illicit resistance (Chirema, 2006). Sharing deeply emotional thoughts can discourage participation and quality of writing can decline unless regularly monitored (e.g., feedback) (Jensen & Joy, 2005).

The studies that used surveys predominantly were modeled after Kember and Leung (2000) questionnaire of four scales of reflection, framed theoretically within Mezirow's conception of CR. Participants in the studies, most often in small numbers, were generally college students from a variety of disciplines (e.g., nursing, medicine, business) within formal higher education settings. Further, CR is often engaged in a highly prescriptive manner, rationally focused, with little awareness or appreciation of the role of emotions and context. Only one study explored CR in a community based, nonformal setting. All the studies took place in developed countries (e.g., United States, Canada, Finland, Italy) with no exploration of CR in non-western countries. Overall, the most significant, methodologically concern, is the lack of a "standard" (written) indicating CR in relationship to other expressions of reflection, despite a shared conceptualization (e.g., Mezirow).

Findings

Findings of the studies offer insight into internal factors (motivation) and external factors (social dimension, job status, feedback, long-term consistency) that have an impact on the promotion, the degree and likely outcome of CR being engaged by the learner. There is also greater understanding revealed about the levels of reflection and differences found in CR in life-crisis events in contrast to more formal and facilitated settings. However, most significant are the challenges and inconsistencies found in the assessment of CR. The variations are numerous challenging researchers to find a shared standard of what it means to critically reflect. For example, studies that looked for levels/dimensions of reflection (e.g., non-reflector, reflector, critical reflection) (Chimera, 2006); (types of reflection-objective reframing and subjective reframing and related subcategories) (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2009; Meltiäinen & Väjämaa, 2013); and (dimensions of reflection-content, process, premise) (Silvia, Valerio, & Lorenza, 2013), used different interpretations of Mezirow's conceptions purported at different times in the evolution of CR. In addition to the varied conceptions is the lack of data for support. There are few examples in the descriptive studies of what is and what is not reflection, let alone critical reflection. There is little shared understanding of a discourse that delineates these various

levels of reflection. Despite these shortcomings Bell et al. (2011) offers significant insight into the coding process and examples of different levels of reflection through analyzing reflective journal based on Kember coding scheme. Most interestingly is the high degree of non-reflective writing that was found in the journals.

Secondly, despite the critiques over the years of its over emphasis on rationality and the essentiality of emotions, most studies continue to overlook the affective component of CR. It has long been known that the role of feelings creates patterns of salience among various thoughts and assumptions, determining what will and won't be reflected upon, and at times guiding or distorting the process of reasoning (Taylor, 2001). However, one study did foreground emotions and identified the importance of emotional intelligence (awareness, management) and confirms this inherent relationship, that "working through emotions is not only a stage in transformation... but also a prerequisite for reaching the problematic assumptions" (Mälkki, 2012, p. 223).

Third, when it comes to practice-based studies (fostering CR), there is a tendency to assume that CR inherently takes place with certain activities (e.g., PBL, learning contracts, etc.), because they are often associated with this construct in an instructional setting. Although, there is little effort to ensure that there is a direct relationship between CR and these activities. When fostering "critical reflection" a number of questions come mind, such that can it can it be assumed by the instructor and the learner(s) that there is a shared purpose (goal) of reflection and focus of what is reflected upon? Can the instructor assume that learners are reflecting on relevant and/or related assumptions? How do instructors make meaning of CR in practice?

Fourth, when reviewing the quantitative survey instruments, most are based on Kember and Leung's (2000) conception of Mezirow's four levels of reflection (habitual action, understanding, reflection, and critical reflection), and focus on asking participants to respond to statements of outcome (change of behavior as result of reflection). Although statistically these instruments are quite valid, the statements assume that if there is a changed behavior then CR was present, without really revealing an understanding of the relationship between the learning event (e.g., grand rounds, PBL) and CR and also the role of emotions. Also, research is needed on longevity/permanency of the assumed impact of CR.

Fifth, in most of the research the individual is predominantly the unit of analysis and the role of context of where reflection took place is often given little attention. "Transformative learning [and as such CR] does not happen in a vacuum, solely through the free will of an autonomous learner; rather, it is contextually bounded and influenced by relationships with others" (Taylor & Snyder, 2012, p. 44). The importance of the social dimension is seen where critical reflection is may lead to "new kinds of misunderstandings and disagreements with significant others, as previously views may also become changed" (Mälkki, 2012, 223). This research offers insight concerning the impact of CR in relation to others and beyond the classroom in the individual's everyday life.

Discussion and Conclusion

This review helps address the contested nature of CR, which as a construct is frequently confused and distorted with various meanings of reflection and critical thinking (Kreber, 2012). There is also a need to give attention to problems others have identified in the past with CR, such that practice and research are rife with "examples of poor practice being implemented under the guise and rhetoric of reflection...[and] that reality falls very far short of the rhetoric" (Boud & Walker, 1998) p. 192). More specifically, issues concerning CR, although rarely if ever discussed in relationship to transformative learning include, for example: a) treating reflection as

a technical activity; b) operating under the assumption that all reflection leads to learning, not recognizing that some students may not be reflecting in productive ways; c) the tendency to intellectualize reflection, downplaying the role of emotions in the process of reflection; and d) the poorly validated association between certain teaching strategies and CR. Further, this review helps identify areas for future research inclusive of the interplay of emotion and cognition, the role of empathy and CR (Taylor, 2014), the impact of practice on CR, and the secondary effects of CR, just to mention a few.

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Reframing Developmental Tasks in Later Life: Religion, Spirituality, and Paradox in Transformative Learning

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is primarily to discuss the developmental tasks of later adulthood of aging academics, particularly in relation to life transitions, transformative learning, and the construction of new knowledge in light of aspects of an auto-ethnographic dialogue.

Transformative learning (TL) has many potential intersections. In the years since Mezirow (1991) originally conceptualized TL as a 10-step (largely cognitive) process of negotiating a disorienting dilemma and critically reflecting on assumptions to develop a more inclusive worldview, the theory has undergone much critique and revision (Taylor, 2008). Numerous scholars have revised it to talk about the importance of emotions; the role of macro social systems of race, gender, and class in forming and revising a worldview, and the role of symbolic and spiritual dimensions in TL (Charaniya, 2012; Cranton, 2016; Dirkx, 2012; Johnson-Bailey, 2012; Tisdell, 2003). While there have been a few research studies on spirituality and TL, there's been little consideration of it in *aging over time* and its potential for ongoing TL in later adulthood, particularly among academics. Further, with limited exception, there's been little discussion of the role of TL in later adulthood overall. *Hence, the purpose of this paper is: (1) to consider the potential role of TL related to spirituality and religion among aging academics in light of the tasks of later adulthood; and (2) to engage in a potentially transformative auto- ethnographic dialogue about how each of us as co-authors and aging academics (60+) engage with the paradoxes and questions this context and life-stage pose.*

Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework is grounded in two inter-related bodies of literature. First is the spiritual/cultural perspective on TL (summarized by Taylor, 2008 drawing largely on the work Dirkx, 2012 and Tisdell, 2003), which accounts for Mezirow's (1991) notion of the disorienting dilemma and changed perspective, but also draws on the spiritual and cultural dimensions of human experience. Prior research on these spiritual-cultural perspectives indicate that many who value spirituality attempt to cultivate its development by engaging in various spiritual practices; some also re-claim the cultural and spiritual rituals of their ancestors, while others cross cultural borders to facilitate their spiritual development (Chararniya, 2012; Tisdell, 2003). But former studies of TL do not deal with the developmental tasks of later adulthood.

Hence, the second body of literature that informs this study deals with the developmental tasks of later adulthood about retirement (Atchley, 2000), and that highlights the role of spirituality and religion in positive aging (Atchley, 2011; Moore, 2002). To some extent it is rooted in Tornstam's (2011) data-based theory of gerotranscendence, which suggests positive aging includes the potential to move from "a materialistic and rational view of the world to a more cosmic and transcendent one" (p. 166). Together these bodies of literature explore the role that spirituality and religion can play in positive later adult development. While spirituality and

religion are not the same, they are inter-related for those who were socialized in a religious tradition (Wuthnow, 2000) and often relates to one's ongoing spiritual development, as we always spiral back and move forward.

Methodology

This paper is not based on a formal research study, but rather on our ongoing dialogue about the role of religion, spirituality, and symbolic forms of knowledge production and the many paradoxes of learning we've engaged with as aging academics. We approach this paper as "research in process" sharing aspects of our life history related to such paradoxes. This is a collaborative auto-ethnographic account that attempts to further theorize TL. Numerous qualitative methodologists have described auto-ethnography as "research, writing, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social" (Ellis, 2004). Our purpose is to encourage a dialogue in readers, so that we can further theorize the intersecting role of spirituality, religion, and paradox in the tasks of later adulthood for ongoing TL.

Auto-ethnographic Findings

"The end lies concealed in the beginning; but the opposite is also true. The beginning is hidden in all that comes to an end" (Meade, 2012. p. 3). Our dialogue below makes meaning of this quote that speaks to the nature of paradox that has become so clear to us as we age.

Shifting Priorities: Context and Questions as Late Career Academics

Libby: I turned 60 in November 2015. It was only a year-and-a-half since walking the torrid but tender journey of death with one of my closest friends, who perhaps taught me more about life than anyone has, in her paradoxical embrace of living while totally embracing dying. Mary Kay and I were born the same year. We met in the choir at the Unitarian Church, had both grown up Catholic and were each one of five children. Our cultural and spiritual similarities cemented our friendship, and were probably what enabled us to walk so meaningfully together in the final months of her life's journey. It was a journey that facilitated both my seeing the mystery of the beginning in the end, and experiencing a deep unity consciousness of how everything and everyone is inter-connected. It was more than transforming—it was nearly transfiguring in its profundity. Nevertheless, having one I loved so much who was exactly my age and who died of terminal cancer made the reality of my mortality ever more present. Further, it brought me in touch with the Big Questions of life: "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" And "What is the most important knowledge that I can share and create in the time I have left?" What does this mean for my own life and work as an academic and beyond?

John: Libby, the description of your experience with Mary Kay vividly portrays what a profound effect this experience had on you. As I read your account, I thought about my growing sense of loss, which feels existential, more embedded in the everydayness of my life. In May 2016, I celebrated my 65th birthday. In most respects, it was like any other day. But it was also hard to accept because, I still feel like I am a young man trying to figure out what this life is all about, planning for the future and thinking about how various projects will unfold, still playing the "long ball." Yet, at the gym the dominant conversations revolve around knee replacements and retirement. When I meet up with folks I haven't seen, the most frequent question is: "So how long are you going to work?" As I near the end of my academic career, I feel like I am in a transition unlike any that has come before. All the others felt like stepping-stones, part of a broader, grand design of my life, family, and work. They felt more malleable, more open to change and redirection. My sense of this current transition tells me that something now about this

game of life that feels quite real, that it is now for keeps. Perhaps my family has contributed to this shifting of perspective. When you are raising children, it is easy to regard them as a kind of “work in progress” and we all struggle with being “good-enough parents.” But as they grow and develop into young adults, one’s sense of control becomes more ephemeral, like wisps of clouds reflecting what you would like for them. But you know they will be making their own way. Marriage, too, contributes to this sense of needing to let go and you begin to appreciate in new and deeper ways the eternity that was embedded in the exchange of vows many years earlier.

Being the second youngest of 10 children, I often think of the years ahead and the funerals that we will be attending – my oldest brother is 82. A sense of impending loss hovers in my life, like Dickens’ ghosts of Christmas. I grieve for earlier losses of both parents and two brothers and for losses yet to come. Some things move me, catch me, evoke powerful emotions sometimes to the point of tears. I feel a longing, a sense of a life not yet lived. I know that I am grieving for my own ends as well – the end of my career and the end of my own life. I worry that it may be too late to live that which I missed. As I grow older, I see more clearly that grief is not a set of stages to work through and return to normal but a tender awareness that, as we age, must permeate and more fully become part of who we are.

Growing older feels increasingly sacred. I think about my participation in Catholicism when I was young; images of my youth, altar boy, reader, actively participating in the church, proudly standing by my mother as she directed the church choir through her playing of the organ. Like Moore (2002), my belief is grounded in a Catholic base but is increasingly adapted to my own vision that is informed by a number of traditions and practices. My experience of later adulthood seems somewhat concealed, as Meade (2012) suggests, in the beginnings of my life.

How We Interpret This Period in Our Lives: Liminal Spaces

Libby: John, that Catholic part of my background is so often revisited. I walked the Camino de Santiago a few years ago, the 500 mile Christian pilgrimage route from across Spain following a divorce. The divorce made me feel like I was standing in a liminal space; as a result I felt called to do something deeply spiritual and quite difficult, and to do it alone. This walking pilgrimage of Catholic-Christian roots made me revisit the symbols and rituals of the tradition in which I was raised. Ironically, Mary Kay helped me prepare for that journey. And just a year after my return, I helped her on her pilgrimage journey toward her death and resurrected self, guided in part by my Catholic roots, mixed in with rituals and music from Hindu, Buddhist and Sufi traditions. But I feel like it was our common Catholic background that facilitated our meaning making. We always spiral back, as we move forward!

Two years later, I feel I am still standing in a liminal space, as if I’m surrounded by light, coming through a doorway of possibility. It’s my sabbatical year, and I can retire in two years. So much possibility! But what really matters? I know that walking the journey with Mary Kay *mattered*—to her and to me, and to the intimate group of her family and our “festival of friends”. The knowing and being we did together transformed us: the sacred rituals we created together sparked tears and laughter; we transformed her pain and ours into hope and wholeness. We told stories. We sang, we chanted, feeling into the new energy space created by the magical vibration of sound on breath. We did poetry. We did massage. We created altars. We created sacred spaces in beloved community that vibrated each of us individually and collectively into a new resonance, a different wavelength. Just as adolescent voices change in the presence of new hormones, our community changed its vibration in the presence of the paradoxical embrace of LIFE in the midst of dying. To call it new knowledge almost seems to trivialize it: it’s coming into new knowing coming into Knowing into KNOWING, into be-ing into Being into BEING in

a new energy of touching into something bigger, while embracing a sacred emptiness (Moore, 2002). This IS that liminal space in which I find myself.

John: Your notes clarify for me the struggle in this present work. Why does it feel so difficult to think about this, to write about it? It seems something seeks a voice – something or someone, like trying to talk about how you feel in the here and now, as you are experiencing it. What is it? As I move deeper into the writing of this project, the work becomes more fluid, guided as it is by some inner sense of what needs to be represented in this space. The narrative of my experience of this phase of my life reflects a consistency with my interests. In a conference session, a colleague and friend once asked me why I focused on the negative, the dark side of experience. I *am* interested in what I might refer to as a spirituality of soul, a spirituality of the dark, troubled dimensions of our being, and how these experiences help us learn to connect more deeply with our own spirituality and our sense of the religious. It is moving towards the dark and, in doing so, paradoxically moving toward and experiencing the light. This latter phase of my life has increasingly evoked a sense of and respect for mystery. Gradually drawing closer to my own death certainly has something to do with this emerging awareness. Within that sense of mystery remains the pull of the everydayness of our being – the mystery of our lives, seeking to reveal what really matters. Like you, I am stuck in a liminal space—admitting the limits of my logos-lead life and leaving me feeling empty but also open to the newness of an emerging being.

Mystical and Symbolic Language and Knowledge

John: In this latter phase, a different kind of knowing seems to emerge, a knowing that seems more mystical than rational, a way of knowing not available to conventional forms of understanding, a sacred emptiness (Moore, 2002). It is a knowing with the heart and not the head—eros rather than logos. As the ending of my career, and perhaps my life, looms, I become increasingly attuned to images or symbols within this process that suggest a quiet renewal lurking beneath the surface of my life. Key aspects of this phase of my life are filled with emotion-laden images and experiences, suggesting a relatedness to my self and my being in the world that is less evident in more rational and logical descriptions of these experiences. This reliance on eros as a way of knowing certainly challenges the academic contexts that provide the cultural background for thinking and discussing late career experiences.

I admit the limits of a knowing that seems not up to the job of helping me understand the challenges and tasks of late adulthood. This admission leaves me unprepared to embrace the mystical way of knowing or being. A lifetime spent in the culture of the academy makes it difficult to let go of logos and to fully embrace eros as guiding images to deeper knowing. And, while one might interpret this work as navel gazing, I think it is more than that. The lives and voices of individuals have always been regarded as conduits for the soul of the world (Sardello, 2004). A part of the world is trying to find its voice through our experience, a world longing for deeper meaning, for relatedness, for connectedness, a world that wants to hear and learn from the mythic images in which so much of our lives is embedded. In the deeply personal resides the voice of the transpersonal, timeless and ageless.

Libby: Yes, I think the world *does* want to hear and learn from these experiences; mortality is everywhere, even for us aging academics! One thing I'm struck with is the limits of rational language in describing transformative knowledge that relates to mystical knowing, or that changes the energy in a room in the face of mortality. Metaphor, music, art, nature, or the use of symbol help, because these convey something rational words alone cannot describe, and help us get at irony and paradox. I find it ironic that I am literally sitting in the shadow of an open door to a yurt as I write. The door is symbolic, but so too is the yurt itself in its

representation of constant journeying! I also just realized for the first time that Mary Kay's untimely transition was 9.5 months from diagnosis to death, almost the exact time of gestation. Here she was transforming herself from this life to another, in about the same time it takes to make it from womb to world. That's almost a mystical realization!

I'm also struck here with the enduring power of religious roots and language, in making meaning of the soul's journey. We've both referred to our Catholic roots and referenced some of its ongoing meaning in the constructs we've intimated—engaged with the paradox of being both “not Catholic but somehow still Catholic”. The language and paradox of life-in-the-midst-of-death is Resurrection language. Saying I was transfigured by my experience with Mary Kay hints at the feast of the transfiguration, where Jesus and his accompanying apostles are never the same after their experience, and have a new sense of mission. These sort of “religious” images and language better capture the mystical-type knowledge we are discussing. I was so transfigured by touching into wholeness and holiness in such a tender way, and the paradoxes of gaining so much in the midst of loss, and finding so much life in the midst of death, that I have a new sense of mission—an urgency to do what *really matters* in the time I have left.

Implications for Transformative Learning

John: This is a good point of departure for a consideration of the transformative dimensions of our experience. Jung felt that we are constantly evolving, the Self gradually revealing itself to us through the mythic images of our everyday lives, the deeply affective or emotional experiences we have, our dreams. But our current language of TL fails to fully represent the dynamics of the kind of learning we are talking about here. Transformation, especially in the second half of life, involves gradually coming to know these different aspects of the Self, Jung's way of representing the transpersonal and collective nature of our being (Moore, 2002). In transformation, I come to recognize their presence in my everyday life, and how they are shifting my conscious experience of my Self and my being in the world. While others have written about transformative experiences in later life, few have sought to explore the deeply spiritual and religious aspects of the liminal experiences that characterize this time in our lives.

Libby: The notion of gerotranscendence seems so apropos to the further theorizing of TL in light of the tasks of later adulthood. Tornstam (2011) argues that gerotranscendence is about coming to a new understanding of life in the later years, shifting “from a materialistic and rational view of the world to a more cosmic and transcendent one.” We are certainly in the midst of that shift, and as Atchley (2011) suggests our religious roots and spirituality have been a part of and given deeper meaning to that shift.

Conclusions

This work represents a step to developing an understanding of the transformative dimensions of later adulthood as related to career academics. We have come to new understandings about the meaning of dialogue about mysticism and mortality that characterizes some aspects of theorizing TL. The dialogue itself has been quite rational, though the journey itself has been rather mystical. Here again we are faced with paradox. The poles of the mystical and the rational have pulled us open to new meanings that we hope will further guide the theorizing of the developmental tasks of later life, and the role of spiritual, religious, and mystical experiences in the transformative dimensions of this stage. While this discussion has just begun, it represents a part of the urge to continue to be pulled open, and to embrace our soul's journey. We look forward to continuing that soul's journey, to doing work that *matters* in

the time we have left, and to further theorizing, and living into the mysticism of TL at this point in our lives.

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Transformative Learning Theory: One Leg of a Theoretical Triad Grounding a Study of Personal Transformation

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Abstract:

Background: A myriad of factors can stimulate personal transformation, making the assessment of this phenomenon quite difficult. However, a theoretical triad from psychology (constructive-development theory), student development (self-authorship theory) and adult learning (transformative learning theory) was used to offset this ambiguity and provide a foundation upon which to study and articulate personal transformation in the context of learning. All three theories are concerned with adult transformation as seen in the evolution of *consciousness* and *sense of self* as *meaning perspectives* change.

Methods: The purpose of the research was to explore meaningful experiences of personal transformation and development of self-authorship in registered nurses (RNs) who recently graduated from a baccalaureate degree completion program (referred to as an RN to BSN program). Semi-structured interviews were conducted in a phenomenological approach with 14 RNs.

Results: In this sample, data indicated that *meaning perspectives* did change in the context of learning, with the evolution of *consciousness* and *sense of self*. Narratives fell into two categories: change in self and change in practice. Themes that emerged from the category of *change in self* included having gained 1) a broader perspective, 2) confidence and 3) awareness and clarity. The category of *change in practice* generated themes of 1) feeling more well-rounded as a nurse, 2) having more confidence in practice and 3) having acquired new skills.

Conclusion: Personal transformation in this sample was evident in a *lasting awareness*, an *increase in confidence* and *the application of new learning into practice*.

A myriad of factors can stimulate personal transformation, making the assessment of this phenomenon quite difficult. However, a theoretical triad from psychology (constructive-development theory), student development (self-authorship theory) and adult learning (transformative learning theory) was used to offset this ambiguity and provide a foundation upon which to study and articulate personal transformation in the context of learning. All three theories are concerned with adult transformation. This paper will describe this framework and the concepts that link the theory, the research methodology and the study findings.

Background

Regardless of the discipline, a college graduate today enters an intensely diverse, complex and rapidly changing world. In these postmodern times, little is static or predictable, requiring a degree of internal security to help navigate these challenging cultural conditions. In light of this, experts from the domains of psychology, college student development and adult education agree on the need for higher education to prepare students differently than has been done in the past (Kegan, 1994; Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2004; Mezirow, 1994). Much research has

been conducted on the impact of college on student growth (Arum & Roska, 2011; Arum, 2013; Astin, 1999; Astin & Lising Antonio, 2012; Buissink-Smith, Mann, & Shephard, 2011; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) reviewed initially in the pioneering work of Feldman & Newcomb (1969). The data indicate that cognitive outcomes, reflected in the measurement of knowledge and skills, are weaker indicators of sustainable learning than measures reflecting internal change in the individual student (Arum, 2013; Arum & Roska, 2011; Astin, 1999; Astin & Lising Antonio, 2012; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Hanson, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Essentially, these sources found that when a student *becomes* a critical thinker, the change is more lasting than when the student simply describes and demonstrates the critical thinking skill. Furthermore, there is a substantial body of literature that describes college as an opportune time to encourage personal transformation toward self-authorship, the inner security that will assist students in meeting the challenges they will face upon graduation (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1991). Education is one way to intentionally encourage transformation and the development of self-authorship. This transformational process has implications for the nursing profession and registered nurses (RNs) who are returning to college to complete the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree.

Implications for the Nursing Profession

The convergence of health care trends, federal and state legislation and compelling research demonstrating positive patient outcomes related to higher percentages of baccalaureate prepared nurses (Aiken, Clark, Cheung, Sloan & Silber, 2003; Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Lake & Cheney, 2008; Blegen, Goode, Park, Vaughn & Spetz, 2013; Kutney-Lee, Sloan & Aiken, 2013; Aiken et.al, 2014) is resulting in increased enrollment of RNs into post-licensure baccalaureate completion programs (AACN, 2012).

The RN who enters a baccalaureate completion program ranges from the new Associate's Degree (AD) or Diploma graduate with minimal clinical experience to the seasoned AD or Diploma graduate with years of diverse clinical experience. The only characteristic that is common to all is the nursing license. National Council Licensing Exam for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) tests "the competencies needed to perform safely and effectively as a newly licensed entry-level nurse" (NCSBN, 2013). Therefore, in relation to that one measurement, every RN at one time demonstrated the basic knowledge and skills necessary to begin professional nursing practice. As stated above however, research describing the impact of college on student growth, found that cognitive outcomes, reflected in the measurement of knowledge and skills, are weaker indicators of sustainable learning than measures reflecting internal change in the individual student (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Hanson, 2012). Therefore, this population of nurses presents a unique opportunity to learn about the internal changes that occur in the RN *beyond* the basic knowledge and skills needed to obtain a nursing license. This study explored that personal transformation.

Theoretical Framework

Measurement of transformation is an ambitious endeavor, considering how broad and ambiguous the concept. This phenomenological study focused on learning as a catalyst and context for personal transformation. Wade (1998) conducted a concept analysis of personal transformation and defined it as "a dynamic, uniquely individualized process of expanding consciousness whereby individuals become critically aware of old and new self-views and choose to integrate these views into a new self-definition" (p.716). This definition is consistent

with the constructs found in the theoretical triad consisting of constructive-development theory (Kegan, 1984), self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 1999) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1994). A brief description of each theory follows.

Constructive Development Theory

The overarching theory of constructive-development describes meaningful change of consciousness and the development of autonomy in adult identity development (Kegan, 1982). The theory describes five orders of consciousness based on an individual's capacity to construct and organize meaning. Kegan (1982) used the parameters of subject and object to frame the evolving relationship of the individual with self and the world in the development of identity. The fourth order of consciousness occurs as an individual becomes more self-regulating and independent. An elaboration of this fourth order of development is described in self-authorship theory.

Self Authorship Theory

Self authorship theory describes individual development as the regulation of consciousness shifts from external to internal authority (Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2001). This shift is not only a process but also a blend of outcomes, including a clear and stable sense of self and confidence in an internal voice.

Both Baxter Magolda (2007) and Kegan (1994) assert that those in higher education should focus on the development of students toward self-authorship to support graduates' navigation in a complex and rapidly changing world. Pedagogy to encourage this is found in transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991, 1997, 2000).

Transformative Learning Theory

Mezirow (2000) describes adult transformation in learning whereby prior interpretations are used to construct new meaning to inform future decisions. This occurs in a learning environment where students share discourse through dialogue, and critically reflect on their assumptions, thereby experiencing a transformation of consciousness (Mezirow, 1991).

The key principles in these theories are organized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Theories and Related Concepts

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK									
THEORY	KEY PRINCIPLES								
Constructive-Development	Meaningful Change in Consciousness and Development of Autonomy								
	Meaning Making			Evolution of Consciousness		Development of Autonomy			
	Epistemology	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Subject	Object	Flexible	Open	Complex	Accepting
Self-Authorship	Consciousness Shifts from External to Internal Authority Developing Lasting Change in Self								
	Trusting the Internal Voice			Building Internal Foundation		Securing Internal Commitments			
	Epistemology	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	One Lasting Coherent Identity		Transition			
	Awareness of -> Confidence in Internal Voice			Three Dimensions Meld into One Lasting Element		Understanding Internal Commitments			
	Dependence on External Authorities Following Formulas			Crossroads State of Disequilibrium		Reformulation of Internal Beliefs Leads to Autonomy and Consistent State of Being			
Transformative Learning	Disorienting Dilemmas Create Crossroads Experiences Resulting in Transformation of Consciousness								

	Goals			Activities			Outcomes		
	Contextual understanding	Critical Reflection on Assumptions	Validating meaning by assessing reasons	Dis-orienting Dilemmas	Shared Discourse Through Dialogue	Critical Reflection	Cognitive Dissonance	Change in Frame of Reference	Transformation of habits of mind

Summary

All three theories are concerned with adult transformation as seen in the evolution of *consciousness* and *sense of self* as *meaning perspectives* change. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the three theories and elements of the individual in the process of personal transformation in the context of learning.

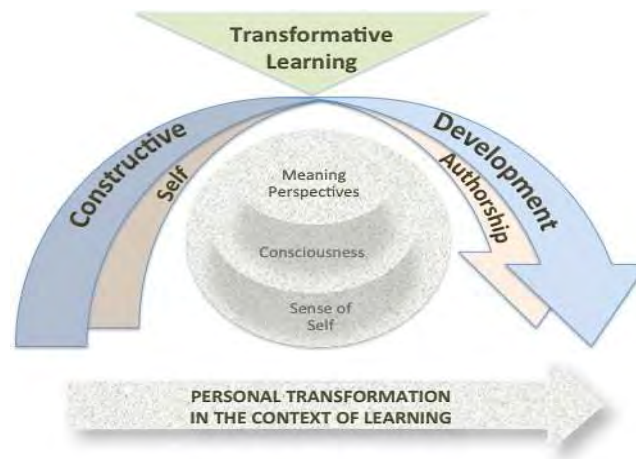


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework.

The Study

The purpose of the research was to explore personal transformation in RNs who recently graduated from an RN to BSN program. Specific attention was given to meaningful experiences of personal transformation and the development of self-authorship (Becker, 2014).

Methods

Semi-structured interviews were used in a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology seeks to understand the meaning of lived human experience (van Manen, 1990) and is consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of this study. The interviews were designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1 What are the experiences of personal transformation perceived by the RN who recently completed an RN to BSN program?
- 2 What are the experiences in the development of self-authorship as perceived by the RN who recently completed an RN to BSN program?

Participants were given an explanation of each concept (personal transformation and self-authorship) and in that context, were asked to describe themselves “now” compared to when they began the RN to BSN program.

Sample. The final sample (N=14) ranged in age from 22 to 64 with a mean age of 39.0 years. The demographic profile of the 14 participants represented a female, Caucasian with a mean age of 39.0 years, having an RN license for an average of 10.9 years, who graduated from an RN to BSN program within the past 12 months.

Data Analysis. An inductive content analysis of the data was conducted using NVivo Version 9 with the aim of identifying particular crossroads experiences and their meaning for personal transformation and the development of self-authorship in the participants.

Findings

Categories. Because meaning is generated from within the individual this suggests a kaleidoscopic picture. Generalities emerged from the data however, and meaningful change related to personal transformation (research question #1) and the development of self-authorship (research question #2) fell into two categories: *Change in Self* and *Change in Practice*.

Themes. In the category of *Change in Self*, the participants described having gained: 1) a broader perspective, 2) confidence and 3) awareness and clarity. Whereas, narratives that described *Change in Practice* included: 1) feeling more well-rounded as a nurse, 2) having more confidence in practice and 3) having acquired new skills.

Examples of Narratives. A more extensive report of data and interpretation may be found in the original study (Becker, 2014).

Personal Transformation

Evolution of consciousness was evident in narratives that described a *lasting* metacognitive awareness. One participant described this as, “Of all the classes I took, that’s the one that sticks with me the most” (004). The data that best represented this evolution fell into the themes of broader perspective and awareness/clarity in the category change in self, and well roundedness in the category change in practice. Evolution of sense of self was most evident in the themes of confidence (in both categories). Behavioral change was evident in the themes of well roundedness and skill acquisition in the category of change in practice. Thus, personal transformation in this sample was evident in a *lasting awareness*, an *increase in confidence* and *the application of new learning into practice*. Figure 2 depicts the relationship between the theories, the elements of adult transformation and the personal transformation that occurred in the sample of RNs who recently completed an RN to BSN program.



Figure 2. Personal Transformation

Implications for Education

Discussion

Attention to development. Like many studies that recommended attention to developmental context in professional development programs (Drago-Severson, 2008; Helsing, Howell, Kegan & Lahey, 2008; Lewis, Forsythe, Sweeney, Bartone, Bullis & Snook, 2005; Paul, 2008), this study suggests that educators be mindful of student development and the implications on the student learning experience. For instance, the sample in this study suggests that students in their early 20s are not unlike the traditional college aged student entering college at the third order of development. While students in the fourth decade, who enter the program with a degree of self-authorship, may develop greater security in their personal and professional identity and clarity regarding their future goals. The elder students (over 50) who struggle with the computer may benefit from an orientation to computer basics such as word processing and PowerPoint before starting class, but they offer a valuable perspective in the classroom and wisdom that comes from years of experience.

Adult learning principles. Considering the diversity of age and experience in the population of RNs, transformative learning theory is suitable pedagogy for RN education. The fact that the RN student population draws from a diverse context of nursing practice adds to the richness of the learning experience and calls for creative and challenging opportunities to broaden the RNs' perspectives. Activities from Transformative Learning that encourage cognitive dissonance, a change in the student's frame of reference and the transformation of habits of mind, include disorienting dilemmas, shared discourse through dialogue and critical reflection.

Assessment. Perhaps the most critical implication of this research is in the area of assessment of personal transformation. These early findings have been integrated into one online RN-BSN program evaluation and data are demonstrating consistency with the study results.

Implications for Research

The growing body of research that demonstrates improved patient outcomes with greater numbers of baccalaureate prepared nurses does not explain "why" this improvement occurs. The goal of this study was to explore the experiences of personal transformation and development of self-authorship in the RN who returns for the BSN, and gain insight on the impact of this educational experience. Before being able to link personal transformation to patient outcomes however, research needs to explore a relationship between personal transformation and professional practice in real time.

The RN to BSN student experience. This study could be replicated in different geographical locations and/or with more diverse populations to determine consistent threads or variations in experiences of personal transformation. Replication of the study with particular age groups could reveal additional insights into the age-related patterns specific to the development of self-authorship. Future studies with a population greater than 30 years of age could help explain the similarities and differences in the development of self-authorship beyond the age in which it traditionally occurs. The narratives from the 41-50 age group reflected power in potential, suggesting that students who further their education after having some degree of maturity and experience, may be in the best position to make powerful contributions to their profession.

Conclusion

Although each discipline (psychology, college student development and adult learning) has substantial bodies of research to support their perspective on personal transformation, this work is unique in its synthesis of these theoretical concepts. Integration of the three related theories provided comprehensive grounding for this study and language to assess and describe adult transformation in the context of learning with a specific population. Personal transformation was described as the evolution of *consciousness* and *sense of self as meaning perspectives* change and in this sample of RNs, was evident in increased confidence, gaining a broader perspective and applying new learning into practice.

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At the Intersection of Learning and Healing: The Productive Power of the Imagination

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Abstract: A complex theory of triple mimesis, narrative medicine and transformative learning inform my pedagogical practice of storytelling in the classroom. My students form an interdisciplinary class interested in learning about holistic health. It is at this intersection of learning and healing where the productive power of the imagination in transformative learning can promote a holistic perspective of health. The power of the imagination is employed to create stories in triple mimesis¹⁻³. Here I take mimesis¹ to refer to a story which is prefigured by the imagination; mimesis² means the story is configured; and mimesis³ means the story is reconfigured, or transfigured. In the end, this threefold process of the imagination aids learning and healing. For example, Rita Charon opens up the imagination, with threefold mimesis, for ‘narrative medicine’ which establishes the crucial role of reading, writing, telling and receiving of stories in clinical practice. Transformative learning theory supports the use of storytelling in instigating transformative learning outcomes. I contribute to the existing literature my experience with the pedagogical process of telling stories about one’s health which can help students become aware of their beliefs about healing, and encourage critical reflection, resulting in either an affirmation of those beliefs or a shift to new, perhaps more expansive beliefs. The discrepancies between writing one’s own story and listening to classmates tell their stories can create a disorienting dilemma, generate a critical perspective on healing and lead to transformative learning.

Health might be seen from a single perspective, or possibly, from the multiple perspectives of a holistic approach to healing. The multiple perspectives of holistic health are intricately interconnected and influence each other. Depending on the beliefs of one’s family and community a person might learn that if the physical body is repaired then one’s health is restored. Another person might believe that a spiritual connection is also needed for healing to occur. Both might be open to learning about additional perspectives, offering the possibility for transforming their previous points of view.

My intention in this paper is to demonstrate that the productive power of the imagination, at the intersection of learning and healing, can promote holistic health. At this intersection, a pedagogical process of telling stories about one’s health can help students become aware of their beliefs about healing, and encourage critical reflection, resulting in either an affirmation of those beliefs or a shift to new, perhaps more expansive beliefs. A complex theory of triple mimesis, narrative medicine and transformative learning inform my pedagogical practice of storytelling in the classroom.

In “To Look at Things as if They Could Be Otherwise: Educating the Imagination”, I developed the productive power of the imagination for learning about holistic health. In this paper, I want to develop the mimetic process of configuring and reconfiguring the worlds of healing for transformative learning. In both papers, my goal is to promote a holistic perspective.

To do this I, first, employ the power of the imagination to create stories in triple mimesis 1-3. Here I take mimesis1 to refer to a story which is prefigured by the imagination; mimesis2 means the story is configured; and mimesis3 means the story is reconfigured, or transfigured. In the end, this threefold process of the imagination aids learning and healing. I, next, explore how the productive power of triple mimesis functions for narrative medicine. Finally, I share my pedagogical experience of exchanging stories about healing in the classroom, in order to facilitate transformative learning.

Imagination

We engage our imagination when we write stories and when we read stories to recall the past or to imagine the future. The French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, describes how we in fact employ the mimetic capacity of the imagination both to configure and to reconfigure texts (1983, p. 46). The author engages the imagination in configuring a world (of the text), and the reader in reconfiguring the world opened up by reading that text. Ricoeur explains that the imagination, in creating the world of a fictive text (or story), allows a “free play of possibilities in a state of non-involvement” where “we try out new ideas, new values, new ways of being in the world” (1991, p.174). This creative process opens up the imagination of writers and readers to experiment with new ways of being in a world.

For example, Rita Charon opens up the imagination, with Ricoeur’s threefold mimesis, for ‘narrative medicine.’ Charon explains, “The mimetic act, suggests Ricoeur, contains within itself three movements, both sequential and simultaneous, each of which is required for the spiral toward creative understanding to occur.” (2006, p. 137). In narrative medicine the reading, writing, telling and receiving of stories, helps physicians “to understand the plight of another by participating in his or her story with complex skills of imagination, interpretation and recognition.” (2006, p. 9). As a physician herself, Charon developed the field of narrative medicine by establishing the crucial role of storytelling in clinical practice.

The mimetic capacity of the imagination also enables self-reflection: learners see not only how worlds are configured and reconfigured, but also how their world has been prefigured. Education in childhood or early adulthood instills values and beliefs - as prefigurations - which form character (Mezirow, 2000, p. xii). Beliefs are prefigured by family, community and other social institutions. In turn, these prefigurations become the basis for critical reflection. In adult education a person can engage in these cognitive processes thanks to the imagination and intuition. Learners should, as Kroth and Cranton explain, engage in the cognitive processes of critical reflection and self-reflection, intuitive and imaginative explorations of their psyche and spirituality, and developmental changes leading to a deep shift in perspective and habits of mind that are more open, permeable, discriminating, and better justified. (2014, p. 9).

Transformative Learning Theory

The mimetic process of configuration-reconfiguration can help explain formation-transformation in learning; that is, a shift from formative to transformative education is captured in mimesis2-3. Reconfigurations represent new interpretations of healing, while transformations generate new possibilities for learning. Mimesis1-3 represents existing habits of mind, a cohesive world and a shift in perspectives on health and healing. But what incites this process and shift in perspectives? “When educators deliberately foster transformative learning, there is one central facet to this process, regardless of context-learners are introduced, in some way, to points of view that are potentially discrepant to the points of view they hold. It is this discrepancy between

what can be and what is that leads to critical reflection, exploration, questioning, and possibly a shift in perspective.” (Kroth and Cranton 2014, p. 10)

So, it is the discrepancies in stories which generate a critical perspective on healing. The shift in perspective takes place when these discrepancies matter to the student; change happens in the process of moving from a configuration to a reconfiguration; shifting from a (childhood) formation to a (n adulthood) transformation happens because of the attraction of the new. To create a disorienting dilemma is crucial for Mezirow; and this is the key to transformative learning. Stories can “offer disorienting dilemmas, encourage dialogue where contradictions can emerge, lead to imagining alternatives, and allow for the trying on of different points of view.” (Jarvis, 2006, p. 76). Kroth and Cranton argue that stories “have the power to instigate” the key components of transformative learning particularly “increase self-awareness and openness, a deep shift in perspective, and sounder bases for the perspectives we hold” (2014, p. 11). Furthermore, Taylor and Swartz see that “Story telling effectively deepens learning, and can spark transformative learning, in a vast variety of configurations” (2012, p.11). Clark and Rossiter explain that “Stories draw us into an experience at more than a cognitive level; they engage our spirit, our imagination, our heart, and this engagement is complex and holistic.” (2008, p. 66). Holistic in this context relates to Mezirow and Taylor’s description of a holistic orientation that “encourages engagement with other ways of knowing- the affective and the relational” (2009, p. 10).

Finally, stories can reveal reductions in the larger narrative forming the dominant perspective of healing. Clark and Rossiter explain, “[Narrative learning] is critical in that it enables learners to question and critique social norms and power arrangements, but it does so by enabling learners to see how they are located in (and their thinking is shaped by) larger cultural narratives. We believe narrative learning opens us as educators and as learners to greater possibilities.” (2008, p. 65)

Intersection of healing and learning.

As noted already, I intend to promote holistic health at the intersection of healing and learning. It is at this intersection that the imagination is needed to create mimetic representations i.e. healing stories. Students can, then, look for discrepancies in their stories as part of their critical reflections on healing. My students form an interdisciplinary class interested in learning about holistic health. The vision of our program for students conceives health and healing as “patient centered with an understanding of the complex relationship of the physical body, emotions & thoughts, spiritual beliefs and rituals, cultural identity and practices, community interconnectedness, and environmental influences in the process of both creating and maintaining health” (Holistic Health Studies, n.d.).

The process of creating stories is critical to my holistic pedagogy. In the classroom I create opportunities for students to configure and reconfigure their experiences by reading and writing stories. My observations in class and student feedback in course evaluations focus on the mimetic and cognitive processes (as discussed above). The pedagogy includes students reading stories written by authors who have configured their own experiences into a text, but also students configuring their experience into a story. The potential for reconfiguration rests in opening up novel possibilities; discrepancies between writing one’s own story and listening to classmates tell their stories lead to transformative learning.

Students read texts written by people who have configured their life and work into new meaningful narratives for health and healing. These authors portray transformative learning in their interpretation of, and response to, their social contexts and the constructions of life. By configuring their experiences of healing they make the abstract of the health care system concrete. Each author offers their own multiple perspectives on health. For example, students read a chapter from *Kitchen table wisdom: A conversation that heals* by Rachel Naomi Remen, who is an oncologist, a storyteller, and a professor. Remen writes about her personal experience living with Crohn's disease and her work with oncology patients. Bruce Kramer, a musician, professor and college administrator writes about his experience living with ALS. Students read a chapter from Kramer's *We know how this ends. Living while dying*. Matthew Sanford, business owner, teacher and yogi writes about his experience of paralysis after a tragic car accident. Students read a chapter from Sanford's *Waking, a memoir of trauma and transcendence*.

Students also have the opportunity to write a story about a significant experience they have had with healing-for themselves, a family member, a friend or a patient that reflects their perspective of health and healing. By asking students to tell a story or write a story their thinking shifts from writing a more traditional academic paper to configuring their experiences. In the class discussion about the assignment students explored the following questions; Do I have a story of healing? Would others be interested in what I have to say? Is it ok for me to break family or cultural silences to tell a story about myself? Can we trust others to hear and respect our story?

After writing and submitting the paper about their healing, the students are asked to tell this story to another person in the classroom. Prior to this story telling we talk about the ability of the teller to choose what they want to share from their written story. We also talk about the role of the receiver of the story, it is important to listen without judgement and to simply be present to the story. This process of telling a story was significant both for the author and for the listener or reader of the story. In the class discussion after this experience of exchanging stories the students report that:

- Telling a story from authentic space can heal self and others.
- It is the first time 'telling' their story.
- It is the first time being heard.
- Through this process they feel a connection to the other person.
- They experience a release or relief- a sense of a burden being lifted.
- They feel peace.
- They develop an awareness of the importance of hearing another's story-listening without judgment or opinion.
- Telling your story breaks the silence imposed by family or community members.

Through the process of exchanging their configurations of healing, students had the opportunity to reconfigure their own perspective of health and healing. Students report how through the process of writing a healing story they become aware of prefigured values and beliefs. They realize that some of their familial or cultural perspectives are no longer true for them, while others are reaffirmed as crucial in their healing process. Regardless, they develop a new awareness about their own perspectives.

For example, students say that they become aware of:

- A shift from an assumption that the health issue is fixed by a health care professional to the need to engage in their own healing process.
- An expansion from a cultural message that the biomedical treatment is the only option to an appreciation for other systems and or approaches to healing.

- A change in perspective from needing to be strong and muscle through to embracing/accepting the need for support and being willing to be vulnerable.
- A move from feeling like the victim to a sense of empowerment.
- A modification from feeling the need to be positive to understanding the importance of embracing all emotions and the need to be validated for all feelings including grief.

Conclusion

A complex theory of triple mimesis, narrative medicine and transformative learning inform my pedagogical practice of story-telling in the classroom. Through this practice I facilitate the potential for the productive power of the imagination to open up possibilities at the intersection of learning and healing. In our capacities as teachers, we do not know the long term effects of our teaching. However, a pedagogical process of telling stories about one's health may engage student's imagination in critical reflection, exploration, reconfiguration and transformation. By facilitating this process in the classroom, storytelling can help students become aware of their beliefs about healing. In turn, seeing discrepancies in mimesis encourages critical reflection resulting in either an affirmation of their beliefs or a shift to beliefs which are compatible with their new awareness.

My pedagogy for exchanging stories in the classroom to promote holistic health, depends upon the productive power of the imagination both to function at the intersection of learning and healing, and to facilitate transformative learning.

A student provided the following insight;

Be more courageous about sharing my 'story.' This class really solidified my belief in the importance of storytelling as a way to not only heal, but to help others see a different perspective or feel more empowered and open to share their own stories. I have shared my recent health story with only a few people, because of fear and embarrassment, and not wanting others to feel sorry for me. However, my story is also one of empowerment, knowledge and healing, and I think sharing it can not only help me heal and not feel so alone, but it may also inspire others to feel more empowered or seek other ways of managing/addressing their health issues (2016).

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Caregiving as a Space for Transformation: Crucible at the Intersections of Life, Learning and Systems

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Abstract: Caregivers play a critical role in systems of care for aging baby boomers suffering with dementia. Many caregivers experience negative impacts such as emotional, physical and social problems. This paper integrates autoethnography and critical reflection to suggest new applications of transformative learning to intentionally support positive caregiver outcomes. Written from the unique intersection of my life as a caregiver, transformative educator and graduate student, this paper brings critical and feminist perspectives to inform caregiver support practices.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that there are 47.5 million people in the world with dementia, and those numbers increase by 7.7 million per year (WHO, 2015). “[As] baby boomers age, dementia is becoming a world wide health crisis” (Alzheimer Society, 2016). Informal caregivers play a crucial role in the socio-economic system of care. Bar-David (1999) asserted that the caregiver journey offers “an important crossroad that can prompt members of society to become caregivers for humanity and can pivot people either toward greater integrity, self-realization, relatedness, altruism and love or toward despair, stagnation, alienation, self-centeredness, and fear” (p. 195).

My husband was one of those people with dementia. He was 71 when he passed. I was his primary caregiver. I was 59. This has been a major disorienting dilemma in my life. Mezirow (2000) asserts that people need to make sense of experiences that threaten chaos. Given my intersection of life as a transformative educator, doctoral student, and caregiver, I use autoethnography and critical reflection to make sense of this experience. This view offers unique insights into the application of transformative learning (TL) to an urgent social challenge.

Inquiry Framework and Methodology

Feminist autoethnography uses the stories of the marginalized and our personal experience to bring a more fully human approach to the exploration of dominant sociological science (Allen & Piercy, 2005). It offers a way to provoke new understanding as individuals give voice to their experience. I have chosen reflections on my experience, selected literature that link concepts to my experience, and proposed ideas to support diverse caregivers of those with dementia. This individual experience is not generalizable. It is shared to suggest possible directions for cross-disciplinary praxis and research out of my unique intersection of life, learning and systems.

Alzheimer’s Disease and the Caregiving Journey

Caregiving for someone with Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) stretches over eight to ten years or more from onset of symptoms. The disease progresses from early issues with memory and more complex reasoning to severe difficulty with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, eating), possible aggression and other behavioral symptoms, ultimate loss of language, incontinence, mobility issues and death.

The multiple transitions experienced by the caregiver during the progression of the disease can be referred to as the caregiver “career” (WHO, 2012). People respond to the burden of the caregiver career in multiple ways. The negative impact of caregiver burden has been well documented and includes emotional, physical and social problems (Croog, Burleson, Sudilovsky, & Baume, 2006), and reduction in life expectancy, quality of life and economic security (WHO, 2012). The majority of caregivers are women (WHO, 2012). Wife caregivers and younger spousal caregivers have been found to report greater caregiver burden (Reed et al., 2014). Caregivers experience changes in self-identity, “changing who they were at their core, both in positive and negative ways” (Klink, 2013, p. 24).

Recent work looks at the concept of finding meaning in caregiving and positive effects of caregiving (Quinn, Clare, & Woods, 2010). Meaning making is “a cognitive transformation process that some caregivers undergo while enduring the demands of caregiving that changes a negative situation into a beneficial and meaningful experience” (McLennon, Habermann, & Rice, 2011, p. 522). Shim (2011) demonstrated the positive influence of spirituality in the process of finding meaning through caregiving. Herr (2010) identified the role of “sacred spaces” and social networks in the adaptation and transformation of self during the caregiving experiences. Sacred spaces were defined as “an outlet of caregivers and an opportunity to be in a space just for them, where they can process and cope with the various responsibilities and emotions they are experiencing” (p. 79).

A positive caregiving journey and meaningful life has also been associated with time perspective. Repeated cycles of adaptation and strength from dealing with past challenges supported meaning making in caregiving (Shim, 2011). Potgieter, Heyns, and Lens (2012) found that AD caregivers had difficulty engaging with a future that was meaningful for them during the extended course of the disease and accompanying grieving process. Developmental opportunities could emerge for the caregiver with support for a balanced time perspective and future plan. They can transition from caring for the care recipient, to caring for self, and then caring for others. Caregivers “expand their sense of self and ... awaken their altruistic self” (Bar-David, 1999, p. 193).

My experience points to the importance of the sacred spaces created by my learning community at Fielding Graduate University, cycles of adaption and a meaningful future with my work colleagues. I wrote:

My PhD studies provided an essential sacred space ... Rather than a purely intellectual experience of understanding, the space of learning with my colleagues, faculty mentors and assessors has been a container of love and acceptance that has allowed for a deep embodiment of my learning.

I also see a challenge at the intersection of scholarship and practice. Despite the knowledge that spousal and younger spousal caregivers experience greater caregiver burden, few of the education and support systems are designed to accommodate them. For example, day programs for care-recipients do not accommodate the working professional and no caregiver education considered adaptations regarding the work life of spouses. Little research on the factors that support positive outcomes has been integrated into the formal supports in our local health system. In critical reflection on this literature I realized:

There was nothing that would have invited me to consciously make meaning of this journey, make peace with the past or plans for my future beyond living well with the care recipient Conversations about maintaining a professional career were never mentioned.... What about me?

How could transformative learning theory offer possible new ways of thinking about how caregivers adapt and shift to a new level of being and doing?

Enhancing Learning through the Caregiving Journey

A common question asked in both caregiving and TL literature is “why do some people transform in positive and healthy ways and some do not?” (Kroth & Cranton, 2014; McLennon, Habermann & Rice, 2011). In the TL process people experience transformation of “frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 7–8). Illeris recently declared that transformative learning is “all learning which implies changes in the identity of the learner” (as cited in Illeris, 2014, p. 577). Whole person, feminist and emancipatory scholars offer multiple maps of development to inform support for caregivers and enhance the potential for a positive transformative outcome.

Freire used learning as a path to emancipation of the oppressed (Freire 2005/1993). I reflected about the darkest days of caregiving when my husband became aggressive:

I was told by the health professionals to call 911 if I needed help Still my body screamed “No” Three culminating experiences stand out to me that caused me to reassess my situation and take an alternative course of action ... the possible removal of my regular female respite worker after my husband was physically aggressive with her ... my body reaction when I dropped my husband off for respite for a week ... I didn't know if I could pick him up in a week ... the concern expressed by the health professionals ... that aggression with care staff might mean I would have to pick him up early. Regardless, I would have to pick him up in a week. I was close to cracking.

I looked at this situation through the system context and began to challenge assumptions about how these larger systems and our location in them impact us. Usher (2009) sees the potential for learning to be “both ‘liberating’ and ‘domesticating’, according to its contextual and discursive location” (p. 183). Brookfield (2005) describes how individuals learn the dominant ideas in their culture and internalize a type of disciplinary power that leads them to collude in their own control, i.e. hegemony. In linking my experience to these concepts I asked:

*Is it possible that the health education I received as a caregiver was actually domesticating or contributed to this oppression of self I am experiencing?
... Am I willingly colluding with government policies and gatekeeping practices that are not to my benefit? How am I contributing to this ongoing situation?*

Tennant (2009) and Brookfield (2005) both caution against adult education contributing to subjugation or oppression of the self and the need to address the broader issues of a more just society. This process of asking new questions led to a totally different future for both my husband and me. My reflections at the time:

I began to ask for help from a different place in me. I was clear that I could not do this alone and needed help. I began to assert my power, was clear with the system what I would and would not do. I was not willing to submit myself or my husband to the potential of harm any longer.

Freire (2005/1993) points out that as people begin to see how they contribute to their own oppression, they begin to see the possibilities to change that contribution and see the situation as one that can be transformed. Tennant (2009) posits that the self is situated, shaped by experience and in the process of becoming. Rather than uncovering a core authentic or pre-existent self,

people re-interpret or re-author themselves. Individuals “improve the capacity for personal agency in the pursuit of new possibilities” (p. 157). Learning from life experiences is liberatory if it exposes how social and cultural experiences have been embedded in our lives, and opens pathways to autonomy. With mindfulness of this cycle, attention can be focused on interrupting the cycle and creating new actions and outcomes, what Heron (2009) calls living-as-learning. I wrote: *“I know I acted out of a new place. I am not the same caregiver, nor the same person I had been.”*

Certainly my socialization as a woman and wife with duties of care were active here. Gouthro (2005) asserts that “learning that is connected to the homeplace is devalued and ignored” (p. 5). Both the market orientation to learning and white middle class male perspectives narrow the focus for lifelong learning and the potential to learn from nurturing and caregiving roles. Given 65% of caregivers are women, how are the diverse perspectives of women valued? By examining the social construction of identity, the learner’s capacity to act in the world can shift. I wrote of this experience:

Who am I as a wife, as a mother and grandmother, as a professional and business owner, and as a woman? I can see how I have tried to hold on to the identities that I have developed. Bit by bit those identities have changed.... I have been clear that as an older woman, I have a lot to offer the world and dreams yet to be lived. I have had to face my guilt for wanting to be more than a caregiver and have my own life and a future I am more.

Alheit (2009) describes how we can “redesign again and again, from scratch, the contours of our life within specific contexts in which we (have to) spend it and that we experience these contexts as shapeable and designable” (p. 125). We have the opportunity to discern the “potentiality of our un-lived lives” (p. 125) both individually and collectively. Randall points out that the possibility to make positive meaning out of the AD caregiver journey continues to exist and can be claimed at any point in the journey. Can this emerge in the context of what Cranton (2008) describes as “soulless teaching”? Sharing information about the disease and how to be a competent caregiver is useful but insufficient. In my critical reflections on the literature I noted: *“My ability to continue to see my life story as shapeable and designable created openings for life-giving and rich learning through the turmoil of transitions in caregiving.”*

Cranton & Roy (2003), following the work of Dirkx, go beyond the cognitive aspects of TL. They incorporate imagination, intuition, soul and affect into the transformative learning process. Tisdell and Tolliver (2003) call for us to engage learners “on the personal, cultural, structural, political, and artistic/spiritual levels” (p. 389). Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) assert that embodied or somatic knowing is an important aspect of meaning making for adult learners. “[W]e live in our bodies, and we learn about ourselves, about who we are, through what our bodies can and cannot do” (Merriam et al, 2007, p. 191). Belenky and Stanton (2000) add the importance of women’s ways of knowing including ‘connected knowing’ and the power of “personal experiences, feelings and narratives” (p. 89). Kegan (2007) calls for more purposeful and supportive environments to help learners make sense of challenges, see their immunity to change and develop new ways of knowing that are supportive of this re-storying. In my doctoral portfolio review I reflected:

In the naming of the social process in which I was embedded, I had a major moment of insight.... An old habit of mind in me had been seen. This cracked open a source of new energy and courage for action The development of agency involves much more than new knowledge. It is an intentional soulful journey that must meet people

where they are, attentive to their social location and invite them into the process of becoming. This change in identity is at the heart of transformative learning.
Out of this intersection in my life I began to wonder how a deeper form of learning could be offered to caregivers?

Possibilities for Cross-Disciplinary Praxis

The work of transformative educators offers many soulful ways to support positive self-formation and identity development during the caregiver journey. There are opportunities to incorporate more whole person approaches to caregiver education. From the integration of narrative, poetry, music, art and evocative experiences, to engaging learners on multiple levels of intelligence, there are many possibilities to bring the wisdom of caregiver/health scholars and transformative scholars together for the sake of caregivers. How can systems of support provide more options to make meaning of this challenging life experience?

There is also the need to recognize the unique challenges and social positions of caregivers by giving attention to age, relationships to the people receiving care, race, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation and other integral aspects of our beings as learners in a post-modern world. How can education for caregivers be emancipatory for those who feel victimized by the disease and the health system? How can a critical feminist perspective bring new possibilities to light for the caregiver journey?

Conclusion

What is needed to support the positive transformation of caregivers at the intersections of lived experience? As we age as a society and dementia becomes a worldwide health crisis, this question takes on new urgency. Transformative education that supports meaning making and identity development of caregivers creates the opportunity for more positive caregiver outcomes. As caregivers transform themselves, there will be a need for the systems and people within them to transform too. Significant discourse and dialogue amongst the diverse stakeholders in the system are needed to evolve and adapt our health system for the benefit of all. Perhaps, as Bar-David (1999) proposed, the caregiver experience can become an important developmental task in our society.

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Examining Transformative Learning in Narrative Medicine as an Intervention in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

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Abstract: Transformative Learning as a phenomenon in Narrative Medicine practice is investigated in a project proposed to assist women veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Integrating TL theory and NM interventions, subjects will obtain support to manage PTSD symptoms, and cope with of the aftereffects of combat experiences by developing and critically reflecting on personal narratives, thereby providing them with the means to deal with trauma.

Introduction

The psychological and physical effects of combat service severely impact the civilian lives and health of returning veterans. It has been estimated that “0% to 18% of [Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)] troops are likely to have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after they return” (National Center for PTSD, 2015). Women are found to suffer from PTSD at twice the rate of their male counterparts (Joseph, 2012). The experience of war stressors and challenges to return to pre-enlistment relationships, careers and lifestyles are inherently fraught with distinctive opportunities for meaning making. With this in mind, we propose that drawing on Transformative Learning (TL) as a framework for re-examining, re- interpreting, and re-positioning perspectives on the occurrences of military service that have distressed women veterans may be relevant and helpful.

Mezirow (1999) defined perspective transformation as “. . . the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand and feel about our world” Learning is the outcome of a shift in perspective. Consequently, practices related to individual learning in the midst of change may provide a platform to make the leap from insights to behaviors that uphold new perceptions of the nature of the person, of learning, and of change. The convergence of Transformative Learning (TL) and Narrative Medicine (NM) provides such a foundation.

NM is an area of scholarship that examines how health experiences take shape in the form of different stories, or narratives. NM underscores a more enhanced experience of illness and disease that emphasizes the ways people convey experiences of illness, disease, and health (Charon 2006). It has been integrated into medical education as a tool to help providers establish new understanding of patient health experiences and choices, with the goal towards promoting improved engagement with patients and changes in medical service provision. Likewise, patients write about their health experiences in an effort to make sense of and endure the challenges of illness. NM scholars endorse the idea that narrative writing makes accessible and knowable an aspect of medical practice and experience that may otherwise be closed off.

In this paper the authors examine Transformative Learning as a phenomenon in Narrative Medicine practice with women veterans managing the symptoms of PTSD. In a project that integrates Mezirow’s theory of TL and the interventions of NM, they describe a proposed

program that would provide veterans with support to manage symptoms of PTSD, and to cope with the aftereffects of combat experiences. Veterans would be helped to develop and critically reflect on personal narratives, thereby providing them with the mechanisms and means to deal with trauma. The authors suggest that NM can be a powerful tool for veterans to learn about, cope with, and communicate regarding their experiences.

The researchers intend to verify the efficacy of TL and narrative practice within a San Francisco, community-based organization. Among its offerings, Swords to Plowshares' Women Veteran's Program focuses on the needs of returning female military. A cohort of twenty veterans will be selected through a purposive sample from among voluntary participants. A psychiatric nurse practitioner will assist with all project phases to ensure veterans receive necessary mental health support. Participants will be introduced to NM techniques to create narratives reflecting on their experiences. These skills workshops will be conducted in space donated by San Francisco State University. Outcomes in veteran's shifts in personal perspectives and refined abilities to live with greater insight will be explored in the authors' final project report.

Combat Stressors and PTSD

PTSD is a severe anxiety disorder that often develops after an individual is exposed to traumatic events that are destabilizing and overwhelm one's ability to cope. PTSD may include re-experiencing the original traumatic event(s) through flashbacks or nightmares, avoidance of situations that an individual may associate with the original trauma, and experiencing heightened arousal. Increased or heightened arousal may include difficulty falling asleep, experiencing anger, or being hypervigilant. A diagnosis of PTSD requires these symptoms to have a significant effect on the individual's ability to function in important areas of life, such as work or social interaction.

Sources of stress to military service members range from direct combat events, sexual trauma, and indirectly witnessing events happening to others (National Center for PTSD, 2015). Additionally, women have distinct experiences from men participating in the military that contribute to traumatic experiences. While in the general population, women are more likely to experience PTSD than men, research from the Veteran's Administration (VA) suggests that PTSD rates are the same among men and women. It is estimated that up to 20% of veterans are likely to experience PTSD. Yet, only 50% of veterans fail to seek or receive assistance for PTSD from the VA, partly due to the stigma associated with PTSD and administrative delays in the VA (Hogue 2004). Moreover, women veterans may avoid PTSD support through the VA due to a double burden of PTSD associated with their military service; that is, they experience PTSD from dealing with war as well as from sexual trauma.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning (TL) is a means for achieving knowledge and behavioral change, which may incorporate cognitive and emotional characteristics. At the cognitive level, learning is integral to perspective transformation. By establishing or reestablishing understanding, belief and behavior, new learning occurs. At an emotional level, transformation may bring out a broad range of reactions that affirm and raise personal effectiveness. New insights, such as empathy, encouragement, confirmation, self-efficacy, happiness, peace or euphoria, can result from discovering new or deeper meaning within experiences or beliefs.

TL is a descriptive theory. As such, it maps an adult's journey in the process of gaining meaning and new conviction of beliefs towards more insightful life and work. As Cranton (1994)

explains, TL offers “a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience” Experiencing TL generally involves ten phases (Mezirow, 2000):

1. A disorienting dilemma,
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame,
3. A critical assessment of assumptions,
4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared,
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions,
6. Planning a course of action,
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans,
8. Provisional trying of new roles,
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships,
10. A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective.

All of the phases of TL bear direct connection to the learning of post-war, female veterans. However, the most pertinent of these are the four first which deal with a disorienting dilemma, self-examination and accompanying feelings, assessment of assumptions, and fellowship of discontent and the transformation process. This discussion, therefore, will be limited to those phases.

Within the context of their experiences and subsequent learning, women veterans face disorienting dilemmas – a cornerstone requirement of TL - catalytic experiences, as Cranton (2006) and other investigators have noticed, that are sudden, powerful and remarkable, or smaller, accumulating occurrences. The former are coined Epochal; and the latter Incremental. These are not exclusive categories, nor do they fully encompass TL’s temporal nature “. . . we can only assume that even the epochal experience is not one of sudden illumination, the light bulb appearing over the person’s head. Even if the precipitating event is abrupt, it seems to be followed by a process of unfolding” (Cranton, 2006). Types of trauma often related by female veterans during their recent service have included, but are not limited to both epochal and incremental disorienting dilemmas.

Mezirow (2000) confirms the place of NM in TL:

One practice garnering widespread attention is narrative medicine. Narrative medicine underscores a more enhanced experience of illness and disease that emphasizes the ways people convey experiences of illness, disease, and health (Charon, 2001; Charon, 2006; Pearson et al., 2008; Selzer and Charon, 1999; Vincent, 2015; Brady et al., 2002; Easton, 2016), an approach that emphasizes the importance of different stories in conveying health and medical experiences.

Individuals surface and process feelings, including fear, anger, guilt, or shame, with some difficulty in PTSD simply because re-visiting the experiences of trauma vividly brings those events to life once more. Zimbardo, Sword and Sword (2014) put this in context:

The term post-trauma says it all: the trauma is in the past, but sufferers are unable to leave it behind and move on. They relive the event over and over—in nightmares that make sleep impossible, in flashbacks that have them time traveling back to a horrible past moment, and in recurrent negative thoughts that they cannot stop. This waking nightmare leaves them stuck in time, always running from the trauma and never able to escape. . . It’s not surprising, then, that they are desperate to avoid anything in their present life that might remind them of the past trauma.

Additionally, veterans living with PTSD bear the burden of negative emotions as they are distressed by those roles and relationships they find themselves transgressing. Hence, participants willing to acknowledge and confront disturbing memories and associated emotions demonstrate an appropriate and necessary level of readiness for TL. With this readiness to open the door to their experiences, they are prepared to learn from them.

A reflective stance relative to one's tacit assumptions is essential to TL. Adults experiencing major life transitions often are unsettled in resolving the meaning of what life has instigated versus the belief systems that they brought to those events. Mezirow explains this convergence as disorienting dilemmas which inspire the passage through TL. "Disorienting dilemmas can be acute internal or external personal crises (Mezirow, 1978) or integrating circumstances which are indefinite periods in which individuals search for something that is missing from their lives" (Clark, 1991, 1993 in Taylor, 1998).

Varied challenges and barriers to reflection on experience (Boud and Walker, 1993) are ones which women veterans may likely encounter. To facilitate reflection, scaffolding might assist the process (Boud et al., 1985 in Boud and Walker, 1993):

. . . there were three key factors in reflecting on experience. The first was a return to the experience, in which the learner recalled the experience, in a descriptive way as it had apparently occurred, without judgement or evaluation. The second was to attend to feeling that arose out of the return to the experience. Obstructive feelings needed to be worked with so that reflection could take place constructively, and supportive feelings needed to be fostered to assist the process of reflection. The third factor was the re-evaluation of the experience, in which learners linked with this experience elements from their past experience (*association*), integrated this new experience with existing learning (*integration*), tested it in some way (*validation*) and made it their own (*appropriation*).

Sharing one's reflections, having a sense of openness and receptivity to information within and outside the self, and setting aside previously held positions are integral and essential to the reflective process. Nerstrom (2014) corroborates the presence of others, "Critical reflection is the ongoing process of consciously or unconsciously reviewing and evaluating assumptions to clarify the meaning of experiences both individually and collectively." In the process of sharing with other woman veterans these adults can confirm that PTSD, its symptoms, triggers, and underlying origins are not unusual given their circumstances and personal histories.

A supported group experience may assist sufferers of PTSD to adopt the anticipatory mindset Cooperrider (1990) suggests makes positive and hopeful images the backdrop for positive action. Additionally, Zambardo (2011) states:

A person may be stuck between a traumatic past experience (what we call "past negatives") and their hopeless present (what we call "present fatalism"). If they do think about the future, it's usually negative. In TPT we focus on balancing a person's past negatives with positive memories of the past; their present fatalism with some present hedonistic enjoyment; and we make plans for a bright, positive future.

The gap between hopeful anticipation and living the reality of the transformed life needs to be narrowed and approached with care and thought. The goal for these women veterans is living with confidence and security in roles and relationships that replace the terror of trauma with mindful living.

Narrative Medicine

Narrative Medicine (NM) is an area of scholarship that examines people's health experiences in the form of different stories (Charon 2006). This area of scholarship is a subset of medical humanities, which focuses on the importance of the humanities and arts for understanding the complexity of health care issues. NM has garnered increased attention in response to a concern that Western medicine has overemphasized the biomedical model and ignored experience and affect in the treatment of patients.

Narrative medicine draws from the literary techniques of literature, poetry, plays, and other forms of textual material. As Charon (2006) explains, NM initially emerged in response to health practitioners recognizing their limits in understanding patient concerns. Practitioners acknowledged that their medical training had not prepared them adequately for the skills needed to understand patient struggles. They began seeking advice from those who understood the complexity of the experience of illness, including teachers, writers and patients, who also understood the mechanics of storytelling as a narrative practice.

With its increasing recognition in medicine and elsewhere, the application of NM to diverse health issues and concerns continues to expand. While initially developed as an approach to help clinicians, narrative medicine is also being used to help patients, family members, and others coping with a challenging medical concern. One area in which NM is gaining traction is in the treatment of trauma (Simon 2008). Particular interest in the relevance of NM to trauma comes from trauma studies scholars who recognize the importance of narrative in framing traumatic experiences and memories (Caruth 1996).

Research on trauma suggests that experiencing traumatic events tends to interfere with the formation of memories. Most notably, scholars identify that traumatic memories tend to be less coherent than other memories that are less charged in nature. The memories of traumatic experiences tend to be fragmented or partial, since traumatic experiences typically exceed an individuals' ability to cope (Gilmore 2001; Brewin 2011). Mental health and narrative medicine practitioners have noted that one may be able to begin to reconcile or make meaning of painful memories by means of using a testimonial approach.

A number of lines of research suggest that survivors of trauma benefit from narrative as it offers an opportunity to make sense of a traumatic event (Simon 2008). Veterans with PTSD are just one community who use narrative techniques. The thinking is that through the act of telling a story about an event or related to an event, a person who has experienced trauma is able to externalize an experience and create distance. The practice of externalizing an event is seen as one way through which individuals experiencing trauma can enact changes in their thoughts and behaviors.

Methodology

This project will recruit 20 volunteer veterans from Swords to Plowshares. Since war veterans are a vulnerable population, this project will be conducted in collaboration with Swords to Plowshares and other existing veterans resources in the Bay Area to ensure veteran participants have peer and mental health support and are comfortable in volunteering and feel safe in sharing their stories. Moreover, a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner who has extensive experience working with veterans with PTSD and who works in Psychiatric Evaluation Services (PES) in the ER of the San Francisco Veterans Administration Medical Center (SF VAMC), has agreed to collaborate with the Project Director to ensure that veteran participants have adequate

mental health support. Participation of all veterans in this project will be strictly voluntary and all veterans will be instructed that they are free to withdraw at any point from the project.

Following their recruitment veteran volunteers will be asked to participate in an initial in-depth interview, to inquire about ways PTSD potentially informs their everyday civilian experiences. Veterans will be asked to discuss existing strategies they use to manage their PTSD symptoms. After the initial interview, participants will be asked to participate in an NM training workshop with three stages. The first stage will introduce skills developed at Columbia University's Program in Narrative Medicine: 1.) close reading; 2.) attentive listening; 3.) reflective reading; and 4.) bearing witness. These individual skills will be presented in one hour training modules, during which veterans will have the opportunity to ask questions, reflect, and apply the skills in specific exercises. The second stage will present a selection of four media approaches that may be used for conveying personal narrative including creative writing, poetry, photography, and comics. With the guidance of humanities experts and the Project Director, veteran participants will develop basic competency in these narrative approaches. The third stage will ask veteran participants to construct narratives relating to their combat-related experiences, based on a narrative approach of their choosing. Participants may choose to work individually or collaboratively. In each workshop the veterans will be carefully monitored to spot signs of distress, upon which they will be referred to the appropriate counselor(s).

This project will be assessed based mainly on participant responses in an anonymous voluntary survey. The survey will include questions concerning each stage of the project. Veterans will be asked about the structure and planning of each stage, their level of comfort, and their thoughts on achieving the main goals in this project. In addition, veteran participants will be encouraged to provide additional feedback or comments on the survey. The expected outcomes of the proposed project are: First, veterans will learn concepts and skills related to the production and implementation of narrative medicine. Second, veterans will produce personal narratives that provide an opportunity to reflect on the experiences and challenges they face in the aftermath of military service.

Conclusion

Few studies have integrated TL theory in this unique cross-disciplinary approach. This project intends to incorporate TL theory with qualitative research methodologies, as well as practice and skills from NM, to empower veterans to tell stories of their personal experiences with war and PTSD. To this end, the project aims to address how PTSD and NM may inspire transformative learning for veterans scarred by trauma.

Developing and discussing personal health narratives affords veterans the opportunity to reflect upon and share their voice through stories. It is well documented that veterans report that sharing their PTSD experiences is vital for their healing process. This project directly addresses the ways in which TL and NM may assist veterans learn concepts and skills that allow them to produce health narratives, and gain support as they explore their experiences.

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Exploring the Crossroads of Transformative Learning and the Family Experience of Terminal Illness

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Abstract: Learning theories provide an excellent lens for reviewing patient, practitioner and community health care experiences. A diagnosis of terminal disease creates an interruption to the routine of life and marks the beginning of an illness journey for patients and their families. Applying Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning (1978), the diagnosis represents a disorienting dilemma and a moment of critical reflection for everyone involved. Health-related disorienting dilemmas trigger critical reflection for patients, providers and family members. The transformative learning process for patients and providers lead to self-awareness and identity. This paper will explore the potential contribution of Transformative Learning Theory in framing a study on the family learning experience during the terminal illness journey.

Terminal illness is defined as "an advanced stage of a disease with an unfavorable prognosis and no known cure" ("Terminal illness", n.d.). Given current advancements in medicine, terminally ill patients and their families experience longer periods of anticipating the eventual loss. Nowinski (2011) referred to this as "contemporary grief." The diagnosis of a terminal illness represents an interruption to the life course of the patient and his or her family. An exploration of the literature reveals a strong connection between the transformative learning theory and medical education for end-of-life discussions (Brendel, 2005, 2009; Moon, 2008). In addition, studies have examined the transformative experiences of the individual patient (Foster, 2012; Hoggan, 2014; Kabel, 2013). However, limited research is available on the application of transformative learning theory for examining the family experience. The purpose of this paper is to present the conceptual framework for a proposed study on how families learn from and co-create meaning of the terminal illness experience. In addition, this paper discusses the potential explicative value that Mezirow's (1978) transformative learning theory adds to the framework.

Family and the Illness Journey

Health and illness are socially created; disease is not experienced in isolation (Massad, 2003; Newman & Goldberg, 1996). Meaning making of the illness is a shared process between the patient, provider and the family (Massad, 2003; Newman & Goldberg, 1996; Sakellariou, Boniface & Brown, 2013). Families represent dynamic and interactive social systems. During the terminal illness journey, how do families learn from and co-create meaning of an illness experience?

Families are considered social systems of interactive relationships (Broderick, 1993; Veach et al., 2013). The diagnosis of terminal illness diagnosis for one family member will impact everyone within the family system (Veach et al., 2013). In addition, the physical and emotional proximity of individuals within the social system of a family varies (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; McCarthy, 2012). The illness journey for patients and families is paradoxical (Rallison & Raffin-Bouchal, 2013) and intersubjective (Sakellariou et al., 2013). Research is limited on the family experience during terminal illness (Mehta, Cohen, & Chan, 2009).

The illness journey for the family is not linear. Rallison and Raffin-Bouchal (2013) describe it as a liminal space of “living in the in-between” where families wait for good and bad news, experiencing moments on paradoxical duality. These phases of uncertainty occur frequently throughout the illness journey (Rallison & Raffin-Bouchal, 2013). Lark (2014) explored the experience of dying from the patient perspective. She referred to liminality as the “land of the lost” where the terminally ill live in a state of disorientation during the human experience of dying. Understanding the liminal space of the illness experience is helpful not only for health care providers but also for the patient and his or her family.

Each family stakeholder experiences the illness in his or her own unique way. Patients are challenged to retain the sense of identity in the midst of the crisis (Kabel, 2013) while struggling with feelings of guilt and burden (McPherson, Wilson, & Murray, 2007). Family caregivers acclimate to new responsibilities (Northfield & Nebauer, 2010) within a family experiencing conflicting emotions (Lark, 2014; Lerum et al., 2015; Rallison & Raffin-Bouchal, 2013; Titus & de Souza, 2011).

The illness journey represents a relay race for terminally ill patients and their families. Like a baton, information and knowledge about the illness are passed between patient and family members throughout the race, allowing the players to co-create meaning. The journey includes three milestones for potential collaborative learning and meaning making: (1) a response to the diagnosis of terminal illness; (2) a recognition of the anticipated death; and (3) a realization of the future without the family member (Titus & de Souza, 2011). Understanding of how families co-create meaning at each milestone could benefit the patient and family members during the illness journey (Kabel, 2013; McPherson et al., 2007; Northfield & Nebauer, 2010; Titus & de Souza, 2011). In addition, health care professionals can benefit from the knowledge gained as they provide health-related information (Johnson, 1999) and facilitate the meaning making and the learning process (Davidson, Daly, Agan, Brady, & Higgins, 2010).

Transformative Learning Theory

Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning, originally called “perspective transformation” (1978), focuses on the transformation of “meaning perspectives” that frame one’s understanding of how to behave or act within a given situation. These frames of references are based on previous social interactions and provide the structure for a set of assumptions in which we understand our experience. Transformative learning occurs when a new experience challenges or contradicts an accepted truth as prescribed by a meaning perspective. An individual is forced to address an experience that does not fit his or her expectations. In an effort to resolve the conflict, an individual will try out a point of view from another person. As a result, the new experience is integrated, the assumptions are updated, and the meaning perspective changes (Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow, 1997).

Additionally, transformative learning reflects the process of understanding how we are caught in a cycle of reliving our past history (Mezirow, 1978). As our meaning perspectives change, we progressively move forward to a revised frame of reference and away from the old one. The recognition of an experience that does not fit the expectations that are outlined in the meaning perspective creates a disorienting dilemma and initiates action to find a solution – a different set of assumptions or a different perspective – that can help make meaning of the situation. Learning is the process of making meaning of one’s perspective and changing it into a new framework of meaning. In the process of resolving a disorienting dilemma, individuals assess different points of view through rational discourse (Mezirow, 1997).

In transformative learning, critical reflection plays a key role in restructuring the meaning perspective. The situation triggers a moment for critical reflection of unexamined assumptions that exist within their frame of reference (Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow, 1990; Mezirow, 1994). Mezirow proposed three different types of assumptions in problem-solving reflection. With content reflection, the individual attempts to explore the problem or experience to better understand it. Process reflection involves the description of the strategies or processes involved in the experience. Finally, premise reflection is achieved when the person recognizes and critiques his or her own assumptions, values, beliefs, and biases. It is the later that transforms meaning perspectives where the individual begins to consider alternative explanations and reflective action (Mezirow, 1990; Mezirow, 1994). Critical reflection is key in the transformative learning process as it is the way in which we become aware of the frame of reference that we live in. It is the mechanism for questioning one's perspective.

Transformative Learning and Terminal Illness

Diagnosis of a terminal disease marks the beginning of an illness experience. The patient, their providers and their immediate and extended family are all stakeholders in this phenomenon. Applying Mezirow's theory of transformative learning (1978, 2000), the diagnosis of the terminal illness would create a disorienting dilemma for everyone involved.

One reason to examine the transformative aspect of the illness experience for family members is the strong emotional bond between a patient and his or her family, especially a spouse or other immediate family member. In a methodological study on conducting joint interviews in illness experience research, authors examined the experiences of patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, and their spouses (Sakellariou et al., 2013). They found that illness experiences were shared and that both the patient and spouse expressed mutual feelings. In addition, the discourse between all parties involved was interconnected, providing multiple perspectives of the illness that came together in one voice (Sakellariou et al., 2013).

For family members, there are two moments along the illness trajectory where transformative learning might occur. Titus and de Souza (2011) noted that the process of grieving begins at the moment of diagnosis of a terminal illness and described two stages of grief. First, "anticipatory grief" occurred during the time when families wait for the eventual death of a loved one. Second, "loss grief" occurs after the family member has passed (Titus & de Souza, 2011). According to Moon (2008), palliative care and grief are mutually inclusive (Moon, 2013). Grief provides moments of reflection and meaning making within the chaotic condition and emotion plays a key role in process (Mälkki, 2012; Sands & Tennant, 2010). The social dimension of support as well as a lack of shared meanings with significant others also triggers reflection (Mälkki, 2012). In a study on family member grief from a loss due to suicide, Sands and Tennant (2010) identified three phases of transformation in the bereavement process. First, family members take on the perspective of the deceased ("trying on the shoes") to understand the intentionality. Second, they recreate the events preceding the suicide ("walking in the shoes"). Third, family members reevaluate the relationship with the deceased and reconstructed meaning ("taking off the shoes").

Literature provides useful insight for exploring their illness experience through the lens of transformative learning. Emotion is a common theme across studies that examine the illness experiences of families (Mälkki, 2012; Rallison & Raffin-Bouchal, 2013; Sakellariou et al., 2013; Sands & Tennant, 2010). Sands and Tennant (2010) challenged that the normal application

of the transformative learning theory in research tends to stress the cognitive aspect of the learning process. They proposed that emotion is at the center of the transformational experience. Terminal illness is a highly emotional experience for all of the stakeholders involved (Anderson, Kools, & Lyndon, 2013; Rallison & Raffin-Bouchal, 2013; Sakellariou et al., 2013). To help address the practical issues of the terminal illness experience, it is important to explore the role of emotion in the transformation of meaning perspectives of family members.

Sands and Tennant (2010) also highlighted the importance of relationships in the transformative learning process. The meaning making process among those bereaved by suicide involved the repositioning of relationships. “So instead of only posing the question, ‘What kinds of relationships foster transformative learning?’ we need to ask the additional question, ‘How are relationships changed, modified, reframed, or recast as a result of transformative learning?’” (Sands & Tennant, 2010, p. 116). This is a critical question to ask within the context of terminal illness for family members. As one considers the loss of a loved one, it is important to recognize the realignment of relationships within the family as roles change and adapt. Further information is needed on the reciprocal effect of transformative learning within the family.

Within the family, there are several individual stakeholders involved in the illness experience. The primary stakeholder is the patient, who is the most directly affected by the diagnosis of the terminal disease. In the midst of their illness, patients develop an identity of “patienthood” (Kabel, 2013). For terminally ill patients, this change in identity is particularly prominent as doctor appointments and ongoing treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation become routine. The challenge for patients is to retain a sense of personhood in the midst of the crisis.

For cancer survivors, the illness experience can be transformative. In a recent study of breast cancer survivors, patients described the illness experience as a process of learning and personal growth (Hoggan, 2014). The first stage of the process was characterized by crises. Patients felt intense emotions during difficult decisions and stressful situations. The second stage of the process marked a transition of coping with the illness. Patients reported focusing on survival and reaching out for social support. The third and final stage of the process involved patient engagement in accepting the illness. Patients made conscious efforts to change their thinking and refocus their attention towards others (Hoggan, 2014).

Another stakeholder in the family is the one who becomes an informal caregiver during the illness crisis, typically the patient’s spouse, partner or child. For the caregiver, the change in role has serious implications on their quality of life, family dynamics and emotional well being (Draper, Day, Garrod, & Smith, 2013; Kim & Given, 2008; Northfield & Nebauer, 2010). Caregivers face financial and time management difficulties throughout the illness journey. In the process, they might seek both internal and external support for themselves and for others within the family (Northfield & Nebauer, 2010). Some family caregivers reported challenges of providing quality end-of-life care at home. They experience stress of managing social roles and struggling to survive (Ward-Griffin, McWilliam, & Oudshoorn, 2012).

The third set of stakeholders includes the patient’s children, siblings and extended family. Families play a key role in how the patient processes the emotional aspect of illness (Draper et al., 2013). However, literature on the transformative experience for families of terminally ill patients is minimal. Most of the research that examines the illness experience is focused on the experience of the patient or the family caregiver. This emphasis within the literature is not unexpected given that transformative learning theory is focused on an individual learning experience (Mezirow, 1978, 1997, 2000). In order to examine the collective experience of the

family on a relational level of analysis, attention has shifted to the theory of sensemaking (Kellas & Trees, 2006; Weick, 1995) for exploration of the meaning construction process of families during terminal illness. However, how does the transformative learning of individual family members impact this collective sensemaking process within the family?

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 (see next page) illustrates a proposed conceptual framework for studying the family experience of terminal illness. A circle representing the family sensemaking lies within the context of terminal illness. Three smaller circles depict individual family stakeholders involved: the patient, the family caregiver, and the family member. The health care provider is represented by an additional circle. These stakeholders are part of the terminal illness experience and provide external cues to the family sensemaking process.

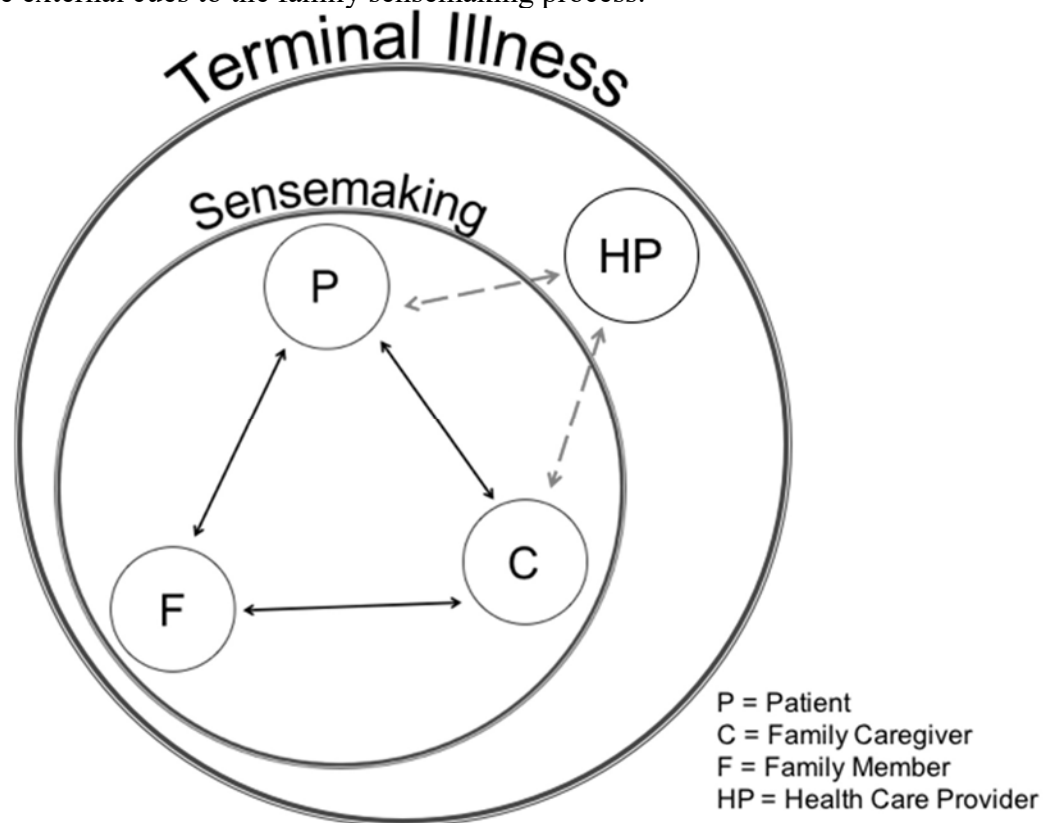


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework

Sensemaking is a key element in the conceptual framework. The process of making sense never stops (Weick, 1995); it is driving the learning process. During the terminal illness journey, families are continually facing paradoxical conditions that require evaluation and redefinition (Rallison & Raffin-Bouchal, 2013; Titus & de Souza, 2011). The terminal illness journey will continue to challenge families to generate new meanings in response to care transitions (Geary & Schumacher, 2012), ethical considerations (Gagnou-Savatier & Mercier, 2015), and treatment options (Mamykina, Smaldone, & Bakken, 2015).

Conclusion

While there is no model of transformative learning on the meso-level, the theory could provide insight on how individual-level change influences the dynamics of the family sensemaking process. Given the paradoxical nature of the illness journey (Rallison & Raffin-Bouchal, 2013), disorienting dilemmas recur providing opportunities for individual and collective critical reflection and rational discourse. The transformation of meaning perspectives for one family member could potentially create new cues that enact and/or contribute to the collective sensemaking of the family. At the crossroads of transformative learning and sensemaking, further research is needed to explore how both theories together enhance our understanding of the family experience of terminal illness.

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Riverspeaking: Transformative Learning Within a Relational Ontology

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Abstract: The co-authors perturb the modernist ontology of rationalism, cognitivism, progressivism, and the view of the self as autonomous that is predominant in current transformative learning theory. Entering into a co-learning relationship, one author as a scientist and the other as a social scientist, we have been exploring radical relationality as a new *ontoepistemology*. Through our stories of social and environmental transformative learning that we have had in relation to the rivers of the Rocky Mountains, we use the term Riverspeaking to explain this relational ontology and its importance for theorizing transformative learning. Informed by Indigenous ways of knowing and the work of physicist Karen Barad to further understand a relational ontology, we suggest that transformation is not just about ‘form’ but also about matter, process, and making meaning in (be)coming of the world. That is the meaning of the concept Riverspeaking.

Introduction

This paper emanates from our situated knowledge of the glaciers and rivers flowing out of the Canadian Rocky Mountains across the Canadian prairies, and the precious water resources in the Southern Rocky Mountains that feed the desert southwest of the USA. Rivers and water can speak to us about transformative learning within a relational ontology. In the space between cultural conditioning and the larger possibilities for our self, including our collective self as society, the process and dynamics of transformation flow. In this between-space, we can shake off conventional parameters and pull aside the veil of culturally provided thought constructs and frames of seeing reality, even momentarily. Rivers can help us to understand a relational ontology, if we listen to their speak.

While our theorizing builds upon aspects of Mezirowean and Freirean conceptions of transformative learning, their conceptions have been predicated on a conventional modernist ontology that includes rationalism, cognitivism, progressivism, and a view of the self as autonomous and unitary (Lange, 2004; 2012a; 2012b). Modernist forms of transformative learning also have an underlying androcentrism, ethnocentrism (specifically Eurowesternism) and anthropocentrism as well as maintaining a mind/body split and reason/emotion split which is already identified in transformative learning theory. Further, however, a mechanistic understanding of change considers entities fundamentally separate and change as causal, by tinkering with the properties of, or activities between, entities. In contrast, we build upon the New Science and relational views of reality and knowing, to examine understandings of change for transformative learning theory and practice.

We are a transdisciplinary team: an environmental scientist who is a surface water specialist and sustainability educator in higher education as well as a social scientist and educator of sustainability education in adult and community education. Over the recent years, the co-

authors entered into a transformative co-learning relationship in which we have been exploring and theorizing our way into a relational *ontoepistemology* (Barad, 2007). While this is a conceptual paper, it emerges from our experiential co-learning, related to the biographical and narrative turn in transdisciplinary sciences. Both authors will refer to their transformative learning processes related to their disciplines but also learning to really listen and watch the natural world. They enfolded their disciplinary perspectives: one author participating in shared practices and embodied ceremonies with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal colleagues while the other delved into her personal experiences with water against the background of scientifically validated knowledge on water scarcity, pollution and degradation in the Southwest United States. Both have been exploring complex natural and social issues in their respective bioregions of the Rocky Mountains culminating in their transformative learning around rivers and water as well as witnessing social and environmental healing.

A Relational *Ontoepistemology*

Just as rivers flow in a perpetual hydrological cycle, the convergence of the New Science and Indigenous ways of knowing tells us that the nature of reality constantly ebbs and flows. While the Western tradition veered toward logical empiricism, various Eastern and Indigenous epistemologies continued their focus on relationship, process and change. Ruiz (2000) explains the Toltec worldview:

Everything that exists is in an eternal transformation... Energy is always transforming because it is alive. Life is the force that makes the transformation of energy possible. The force of Life that opens a flower is the same force that makes us grow older... imagine how you used to look when you were five years old compared with now. It still is you, but the body is completely different... The trees and mountains — all of nature is changing because Life is passing through everything and everything is reacting to Life. (p. 119-120)

For Cree, Blackfoot, and the Stoney Indigenous peoples in Canada, the lakes, rivers and streams form a “sacred geography,” where the “deepest mysteries of creation and the hidden rhythms of the world” are accessible. As late Stoney Chief Frank Powerface claimed, “the landscape holds stories of transformation” inviting us to listen (in Kostash & Burton, 2005). Furthermore, rivers are the lifeblood of the continent and their movement is a visible materialization of the nature of reality.

This is consistent with findings and a new interpretation of quantum physics that describe the subatomic reality of the universe as interchangeable between matter and energy, part of a vast creative and living network (Barad, 2007; Spretnak, 2011). Building from living systems theory, Capra (2002) suggests that the entanglements of four elements need to be considered—form, matter, process, and meaning—which can co-emerge into new patterns so, the “form that transforms” (Kegan, 2000) is only one facet of transformative learning. In a relational ontology, matter is both human and nonhuman, overcoming anthropocentrism, so that the co-authors and rivers are fundamentally in relation, continuously active. O’Neil (2015) has adopted Barad’s definition of “performative” and adds to it, “transformation” as a process in which, “meaning is not a property of individual words or groups of words but an ongoing performance of the world in its differential dance of intelligibility and unintelligibility” (Barad, 2007, p. 149).

For Barad, relationality goes beyond ideas such as: *symbolic interactionism* where the self is the product of social interaction and symbols such as language that carry meaning; *social constructionism* where reality is construction of human thought; or *transactionalism* where

autonomous entities *interact* and influence the other. Barad refers to the iterative *intra*-activity as accounts of material-discursive performances. These discursive practices are not static linguistic representations, but rather multiple senses of meaning, being, valuing, and as a way of knowing and (be)coming of the world in its ongoing *intra*-activity (p. 184). This perturbs a Mezirowean interpretation of transformative learning which holds the process of reflection, dialogic representations and imagery of experience, at a distance. Rather, transformative learning is an entangled state of the material and the discursive. In this process, “human and nonhuman organisms, matter and things, the contents and subjectivities of students emerge through learning events” (Lenz-Taguchi, 2012, p. 289) which O’Neil (2015) calls “performative transformative learning.” A performative transformative learning process is one that occurs in-action, in-between and over time.

As Spretnak (2011) asserts, we have only begun to explore “the deeply relational nature of reality” (p. 1), part of a posthumanist “Relational Shift.” Barad (2007) says:

Existence is not an individual affair... To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Individuals do not pre-exist their interaction; rather individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled *intra*-relating. (p. ix; italics added)

Spretnak (2011) adds, “[i]nherent relationships with our bodymind, with other people, with animals, with the rest of nature all interact and infuse each other, making us what we are. It is not merely a matter of *having* relationships but *being* relationships” (p. 11). One way to understand this is the Haida view that without their ancestral land, they cease to be Haida (Gill, 2009). Going further, “*(be)coming* relationships” is an indeterminate, iterative, nonlinear evolving relationship. There is no steady state but dynamic balance and a performative state of (be)coming that merges past, present and future.

For transformative learning, our (be)coming *is* a constellation of relationships and our mind is a collective affair, largely opposed to what we have been taught in modern education. Thus, the most confounding feature of transformative learning is that the dynamics of change are also constantly changing. There is no universal or predictable process; it is sensitive, nonlinear, and self-renewing, part of the mystery of transformation.

Learning to Flow into Deep Relationality

Standing in the chill breeze and roaring stillness of massive limestone and quartzite hulks, I stare across the mammoth valley to a spider web of rivulets that emerge from the toe of Saskatchewan Glacier. This origin of the North Saskatchewan River in the Columbia Icefields in the Rockies flows across the prairies toward Hudson’s Bay. The shrinking of this glacial mass tears at me every time I see the diminishment. As part of climate transformation, the river patterns have been changing—earlier flow in spring, more melting in summer, and many flash floods with the added ferocious downpours of rain; a balance has been lost brought home by the flooding of my home.

For years I remained unconscious of the energy and voice of this prairie place below the surface, invisible to the eye. While I love the Rockies, I did not see the connection with the prairies as one ecosystem, a connected watershed. Through significant ancestral work I discovered that the bones of my ancestors lie under three different prairies globally. I have an intergenerational cellular connection to prairies; this particular river flows through my veins, deeply shaping me. This ancient storied land is now part of me and Riverspeaking enables me to hear this.

It is this relationship that First Peoples honor and mirror in their rituals and ceremonies, communicating to land and water as their kin. Water is the living presence of womb, woman and mother. Considering other species and elements as beings and teachers who speak and inspire how we live, was lost to my people centuries before in the shift from paganism to Christianity and then in the delicate negotiation with a scientific worldview. Their view of kinship became restricted to family, ethnicity and religion. While my pioneer grandparents approached land and water as a gift from God with respect for its sustenance, sacredness was limited to the human/God relation and the churches they built. Potawatomi biologist Kimmerer (2015) asserts the land is not only part of one's identity and sustenance but also sacred ground where we respond to what we hear.

For indigenous people, water is the connectedness between creation, animal life, and the flow of time. Prechtel (2012) suggests that intact natural people live *for* land instead of *off* or *on* land. The Maya speak by "talking into a mental field of vision" (p. 73) that emanates from their storied land. The traditional Maya believe their language came from the land and other species, forming a tonal ecology that was part of a *natureculture* matrix (Prechtel, 2012). They kept the world alive by the "beauty of the motion of their speech" to feed the spirits of the land, as all is enspirited (p. 72). This keeps the world alive, becoming.

My prevailing Western epistemology of static entities, representationalism, linearity, cause-effect and pre-determined categories has begun to unfreeze and slowly give way to an ontology of flow and relation. Humans are not the locus of ethicality as we are *already* ontologically entangled within responsibility, in "the becoming" in which all material forces, river, mountains, humans, and glaciers entangle to make meaning. Learning how to intra-act responsibly means understanding that we are not the only active beings and that we are inseparable from other beings and forces. The river is not only a metaphor or inanimate phenomena, but kin, compelling respect.

(Be)coming *with* Riverspeaking for Social and Environmental Healing

As a child growing up in the Southwest desert sun of Paradise Valley, Arizona (USA), the flow of any river was truly a paradise. My early memories *with* Riverspeaking were with the ones that were not really rivers at all; they were temporary river-like flows made during an infrequent storm event in my Sonoran Desert neighborhood. I could smell the dust filled rain droplets bounce off the thirsty desert Earth floor. That meant it was my time to jump on my bike and ride through the desertscape behind my house where I could find milk chocolate-colored rushing flows of water and deep puddles of mud. My day would conclude with my body and bike encrusted in the color of the desert, melding. Rainfalls never lasted long, but the flow of water in the street gutters continued to flow like spring runoff. I never questioned where the water came from or where water would go. I was too busy celebrating in my unconscious and perhaps uninterested state of being. All I knew was that water would flow for another couple of hours – long enough to summon my brother and make stick boats to race down the street curb "river." These were early memories *with* Riverspeaking; I had yet to listen.

Another early encounter with river was capturing rain drops before having a chance to become part of the river. Both sides of my family were peasant farmers of Mexico and Eastern Europe, so harvesting water in this manner was our lifeline. I spent many summer days with my grandmother learning lessons of the past; one day, in her broken Russian-English she told me how the rainwater we harvest would make the garden and chickens happiest. She did her best to impart her ecological wisdom. She listened, for survival. I had no choice but to hear her stories, but I had yet to listen.

Later, I chose to study environmental science which fostered my thinking of biogeochemical cycles of the Earth. It gave me the space to think about the interconnections of rivers to people and, in my graduate studies, specializing in surface water resources. I conducted my research in the urban portion of the Santa Fe River in New Mexico. The river in this reach is mostly fed by storm events; this means that the river and the species living within can suffer from erosion, sedimentation and oil slick pollution. I scientifically monitored river health to include (but not limited to) peak flow, pH, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solids, water clarity and water temperature—indicators of river health. Exceeding parameters meant the river and the organisms living in and around the river would suffer. Still holding myself separate from the apparatus, I communicated this science with stake holders to engage people in healing waterways. Yet, my objective scientific knowledge alone was not enough for them to listen. This is where we seem to fall short. How do we relate if we do not listen?

The UN's Water for Life Decade, like the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, is seeking ways to build an efficient and equitable ability to strengthen the resilience of social, economic and environmental systems (WWAP, 2015). As a sustainability educator, one of my questions is how to enact transformative learning for social and environmental healing. After a long journey of co-learning into a relational ontology, I am (be)coming *with* river in a way that demands I listen. As I entangle my material-discursive stories, I am conscious of Riverspeaking in Arizona, along with seven other states and the 40 million people (McKinnon, 2014) who share the Colorado River. The very water I played with in Arizona that at some point converges with my water studies many years later—they are both major waterways and the lifeline to human and non-human inhabitants of the Southern Rocky Mountains. Each of those storm events I so enjoyed as a child began to bring new meaning.

Riverspeaking can inform transformative practices of social and environmental healing. Today, more than 1.7 billion people live in river basins where depletion through use exceeds natural recharge, a trend that will see two-thirds of the world's population living in water-stressed countries by 2025 (WWAP, 2015). If we can gather and listen to our own many stories of Riverspeaking, let us listen. Now, I listen to the stories of my past relationship *with* river, my grandmother's lessons, and my scientific knowledge, and enfold them into meaning anew. Now, I listen as Riverspeaking manifests responses to rapid and unpredictable changing times.

Riverspeaking: Radical Relatedness in Transformative Learning

We no longer need to flow in the channel of Western epistemology and ontology but hear Riverspeaking with its profound transformative teaching. Riverspeaking is becoming conscious of flow between process thinking and analytical thinking. This new posthumanist *ontoepistemology* is no longer “morally mute” (Knutson & Suzuki, 1992, p. 124). It is living closer to phenomena, becoming conscious of the voices of kin, and actively engaging within cosmic responsibility. Riverspeaking expands our perceptual channels to hear the natural world speak and to recognize the intra-active agency of our kin. Riverspeaking is learning a new grammar with which to think and speak of our relations in a fluid reality.

Adapted from New Science, seeing the world does not lie in the eyes or mind alone; rather, the “subject” is the phenomena—with the river as the convergence of particles and waves, and not the extraction of particles from waves (Barad, 2007). Whether a scientist monitoring the river or a social scientist seeking the cultural and geographic implications of our ancestry or the ancient spiritual origins of Riverspeaking, human senses and emotion are a part of knowing and the knower is not separate from the apparatus used to measure or subject. An entangled, spiral

process is evident; the river and everything that surrounds river acts upon our thinking as much as our thinking acts upon river. “As humans, we need to understand ourselves as material objects of the world, just as any other beings and matter” (Lenz-Taguchi, 2010, p. 47). Transformative learning, therefore, is a material-discursive entangled state. While we transform rivers, rivers transform us. It is only then that this performative transformation (O’Neil, 2015) opens us to comprehend Riverspeaking, as the “world kicks back at us” (Barad, 1998, p. 112).

Just like a thriving river, fostering relationally-based transformative learning is to create disturbances (not casual interventions) in the water so that oxygen can flow and life will flourish. Just as a responsive riparian habitat surrounds a thriving river, educators can help trigger “stabilizing and destabilizing processes of iterative intra-activity” (Barad, 2007, p. 152). Albeit a potentially slow and unpredictable process, we must take the chance for that critical point of tension and instability of meaning to occur; there *may* be the creation of novelty, structural transformation and a breakthrough into a new state of order and process that can be more life-giving (Capra, 2002). This historic challenge to transformative learning and humanity is as significant as the shift from a medieval worldview to a scientific Enlightenment worldview. A richer perspective of transformative learning understands we are in an intra-active co-relationship with human and non-human species that involve form, matter, process and meaning-making of (be)coming the world. This is Riverspeaking.

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Teaching for Change: Transformative Learning Theory and Holocaust Education

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Abstract: Transformative Learning Theory and Holocaust Education are both concerned with teaching for change. While a common theoretical basis for the various practice-based approaches and theoretical reflections on Holocaust education has yet to emerge, the purpose of this paper is to explore Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow) as a theoretical framework and vocabulary for fostering change within the field of Holocaust Education. The intersectional potential of both, Transformation Theory and Holocaust Education is going to be explored along some of their central tenets.

Introduction

Passages point at least into two different directions. They interconnect two rooms. The purpose of this paper is to link two different rooms or more precisely two differing fields with each other, namely Transformative Learning Theory and Holocaust Education. What makes this idea valuable or promising? While a common theoretical basis for the various practice-based approaches and theoretical reflections on Holocaust education has yet to emerge, the focus of this paper is on exploring Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow) as a theoretical framework and vocabulary for fostering change within the field of Holocaust Education. The intersectional potential of both, Transformation Theory and Holocaust Education are going to be analyzed along their major premises. Central tenets that are going to be evaluated and compared to each other in both theories are the role of experience, critical reflection, autonomy and decision-making processes. Finally, this paper attempts to draw some conclusions about interactional potential and where both fields could clearly benefit from each other.

Transformative Learning and Holocaust Education: Engaging at the Intersection

One of the central assumptions of this paper is the idea that we as adult educators have to find a way to help learners engage in reflection even though learning, especially about the Holocaust, is “an emotionally difficult process that challenges core beliefs and assumptions (...). Indeed, if we hope to transform xenophobic attitudes, which can have connections to family beliefs, cultural practices, and even religious views, then understanding the emotional, affective and dispositional dimensions of transformational learning is imperative” (Stevick/Gross 2014, p. 67). Even though it seems that there already is a close connection between Holocaust Education and Transformative pedagogy it is surprising that there have been made little efforts to link both perspectives in a conceptual way to each other (see Eschenbacher 2015). Stevick and Gross argue that there is a theoretical void “[i]n Holocaust Education, for which a common theoretical basis has yet to emerge, the whole may not yet be more than the sum of its parts, but the parts are nevertheless rich indeed” (2014, p. 64). In order to find a theoretical framework that allows us to fill this void, this paper argues that we should take a closer look at a theory which dedicates itself to the question of change: Transformation Theory. By analyzing some of the central tenets of both fields we may explore possible points of connection between them in order to generate the

intersectional potential or more precisely how both fields, Transformative Learning Theory¹ and Holocaust Education² may contribute to each other.

Passages or Points of Departure

In order to discuss the central tenets of both fields I will focus on some of Adorno's major premises as well as some key elements of an approach which is located within Holocaust Education, the pedagogy of "Facing History and Ourselves" (FHAO) as one possible option³ out of a wider range of concepts. At the same time I am going to explore the same tenets within the literature of Transformative Learning Theory, from the perspective of Jack Mezirow. As all tenets themselves are intertwined it is quite difficult to discuss them separately. One of those key elements is the role of critical reflection, which is central in both fields and can be used as a starting point here.

For Adorno "education would be significant in general terms only as education for critical self-reflection" (1997, p. 12). Mezirow states that, "[b]y far the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involve critical self-reflection – reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting" (Mezirow 1990, p. 13).

Both premises are interwoven with the goal of autonomy. Especially for Adorno, who's premier demand upon education is never again Auschwitz (Adorno 1966), sees autonomy as imperative: He states that "[t]he single veritable power against the principle of Auschwitz would be autonomy, if I may use this Kantian term – power for reflection, for self-determination, and for not going along" (Adorno 1997, p. 13-14) as opposed to "[p]eople who blindly adjust themselves to collectives" (Adorno 1997, p. 16), extinguishing themselves as self-determined, autonomous beings. This perspective is not limited to Adorno's work. Following a practice-based approach Facing History and Ourselves wants students to "learn that violence and injustice begin with small steps of indifference, conformity, accepting one's environment uncritically" (Schaefer/Sleeper 2014, p. 161) and attempts to foster what Adorno refers to as education against indifference – blind identification with the collective as already mentioned above.

Transformation Theory focuses on "how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others – to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers" (Mezirow 2012, p. 76). According to Mezirow, chief architect of Transformative Learning Theory, becoming a more autonomous thinker is both a goal and an educational outcome of

¹ This paper focuses almost exclusively on Transformative Learning Theory by Jack Mezirow, making a particular point not to include conceptual literature that does not directly inform this paper.

² The perspective of the field of Holocaust Education lies upon the two differing academic discourses. Heyl distinguishes "Education after Auschwitz" from "Holocaust Education" (Heyl 1997, p. 20). The term "Education after Auschwitz" refers to Adorno's famous lecture "Erziehung nach Auschwitz," which can be seen as a central text within the German debate (Heyl 1999, p. 4) and provides the basis for more general theoretical reflections. "Holocaust Education" refers to a more pragmatic approach to solve the task of what and how to teach about the Holocaust, especially in the United States (Heyl 1997, p. 20f.). Even though both approaches are different from each other, they are very closely related: the question of how to teach the Holocaust lies upon the premises of what Auschwitz means for education in general (Heyl 1997, p. 20f.).

³ For a brief overview of alternative approaches on Holocaust Education see Plessow 2012, p. 11-30.

Transformative Learning (2012, p. 91; 2000, p. 28). Following Mezirow “transformative learning inherently creates understandings for participatory democracy by developing capacities of critical reflection on taken-for- granted assumptions that support contested points of view and participation in discourse that reduces fractional threats to rights and pluralism, conflict, and the use of power, and foster autonomy, self-development, and self-governance – the values that rights and freedoms presumably are designed to protect” (Mezirow 2000, p. 28). Developing critical thinkers is an overall goal for Mezirow, while becoming critically reflective of one’s own assumptions and those of others is a central tenet in the task of learning to think for oneself instead of identifying with the collective (Mezirow 1998, p.197). Becoming more liberated, autonomous, socially responsible and critically reflective is therefore key to Mezirow’s work. Instead of turning to tradition, authority or force, Mezirow insists participation in rational discourse is essential for Transformative Learning (Mezirow 2012, p. 80). These ideas are similar to those of Adorno mentioned earlier. FHAO argues that Holocaust Education is related to education for democratic citizenship: “Education for democratic citizenship means encouraging students to recognize that responsible participation grounded in ethical judgment can make a difference in the present and future” (n. d., p. 162). Therefore FHAO wants students to “develop such social-emotional skills and competencies as self-awareness, empathy, perspective-taking, conflict resolution and ethical decision-making” (n. d., p. 162). The focus is set on bringing the whole person within his or her historical context back into the discussion, not only as someone who has to survive history but someone who *makes* history. We “turn to the subject” (Adorno) in order to focus on each individual’s roles as well as his or her options and limitations concerning choices and actions (Heyl 1999, p. 5). “Facing History and Ourselves” (FHAO) promotes these theoretical reflections in its practice- based approach. Transformation Theory addresses the revision of meaning perspectives or frames of reference and has an individual as well as a social dimension (Mezirow 2012, p. 77). As we have seen earlier Transformative Learning Theory attempts to foster greater autonomy for the individual as socially responsible, democratic participants in our society. Similar to the premises of Transformative Learning Theory, on a practice based level FHAO promotes skills like self-awareness, perspective-taking, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making concerning both individual and group decisions (Schaefer/Sleeper 2014, p. 62).

One of the central tenets in the context of Transformation Theory is the role of experience. At this particular point Transformative Learning Theory can clearly contribute to the field of Holocaust Education. Therefore we need to take a closer look on the role of experience within Transformative Learning Theory. According to Taylor it “provides the grist for critical reflection” (Taylor 1998, p. 8). Experience is a crucial dimension for critical reflection, which is central to the pedagogy of Holocaust Education as we have seen earlier. For Mezirow “[o]ur need to understand our experiences is perhaps our most distinctively human attribute. We have to understand them in order to know how to act effectively” (Mezirow 1991, p. 10). According to him, reflection is a “turning back” on one’s experience and involves an awareness of thoughts, perception, or one’s habits of doing something (1998, p. 185). “What we perceive and fail to perceive and what we think and fail to think are powerfully influenced by habits of expectation that constitute our frame of reference, that is, a set of assumptions that structure the way we interpret our experiences” (Mezirow 1990, p. 1). Transformative Learning Theory goes beyond reflection and “attempts to explain *how* our expectations, framed within cultural assumptions and presuppositions, directly influence the meaning we derive from our experiences” (Taylor 1998, p. 6, italics S. E.). From the perspective of Transformative Learning Theory it is crucial to work

with existing assumptions, beliefs and habits of mind including stereotypes and prejudices. Plessow criticizes that even though we ask for existing knowledge (meaning schemes) when we teach about the Holocaust, we usually fail to work with already existing habits of mind (meaning perspectives). He claims that it is quite problematic when our attempt is to awaken an awareness against (antisemitic) prejudices while these are already part of those habits of mind (2012, p. 29). Given that every learner – in the case of FHAO students as well as in adult education in general - has developed habits of mind, we have to be concerned with the question of how to *transform* those existing habits of mind if they incorporate distorted assumptions, (antisemitic) prejudices, and problematic beliefs. For both Transformation Theory and Holocaust Education, critical reflection is crucial within this process. Mezirow distinguishes two forms of critical reflection: “Critical reflection may be either implicit, as when we mindlessly choose between good and evil because of our assimilated values, or explicit, as when we bring the process of choice into awareness to examine and assess the reasons for making a choice” (Mezirow 1998, p. 186). Within the process of reflection he draws attention to the process of decision-making. From the perspective of Holocaust Education it is interesting to explore why some people developed in a different way than others under the same political conditions (Adorno 1997, p.17). One point of departure might be to ask how the experiences and the interpretations of those experiences might differ within these groups. Or in the vocabulary of Transformative Learning Theory one might investigate how the habits of mind and points of view differ from each other. We can even go beyond that when we extend the focus of attention to those people who *changed* their affiliation with different groups during these times, when they were fellows at first for example and then decided to change their positions and become perpetrators or members of a resistance group (Heyl 1999, p. 8). Instead of focusing solely on the biographies of people during that time who belonged very clearly to one group (perpetrator) or another (rescuer) and investigate what affected them, we can change the focus on what *made them change* and *how* did they change, considering that humans are ambivalent and able to change (Heyl 1999, p. 8). Transformative Learning Theory offers an explanation for these changes in one’s frame of reference; therefore, we can clearly benefit from this theory in the context of Holocaust Education. In order to educate for change, we have to assist learners in articulating and identifying their circumstances and support them to change their frames of reference through collaboration in rational discourse (Ebert/Burford/Brian 2003, p.326) so they can *liberate themselves* from guiding assumptions that limit their perspectives by becoming critically reflective “so that we can ‘have it’ rather than ‘be had’ by it” (Kegan 1994, p. 34). For Mezirow it is clear that we have to become aware of uncritically assimilated points of view and habits of mind in order to transform our frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, and open. Following Mezirow, reflection refers to “the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience” (1991, p. 104). For Holocaust Education, all three processes of reflection are highly relevant. How do we get there? According to Meueler “[a]dult education must deliberately interfere, provoke, and demand arduous work” (Meueler 1998, p. 179, Translation S.E.). It should generate more questions than answers and, according to the “didactic aspect [making an effort] to avoid the unchanging, present the non-identical and unleash movement instead of promising reassurance” (Meueler 1998, p. 180, Translation S.E.). This might be even more challenging for the learner considering that learning about the Holocaust is “an emotionally difficult process that challenges core beliefs and assumptions” per se (Stevick/Gross 2014, p. 67). It even might be too demanding and too challenging for the learner. At the same time, teaching for change means trying to “disrupt the learner’s world view

and stimulate uncertainty, ambiguity, and doubt in learners about previously taken-for-granted interpretations of experience” (Tennant 1991, p. 197).

Conclusion

If we follow Adorno in his view that “incapacity for identification” (Adorno 1997, p. 18) and indifference to the fate of others were the most important factors that allowed Auschwitz to happen, our “aim is, or should be, to prompt as much of the general public as possible to prevent and not to be indifferent to mass violence and genocidal acts” (Bauer 2014, p. 179f.). Teaching for Change has to incorporate two different aspects. Besides initiating and catalyzing processes of critical reflection, challenging core beliefs and guiding assumptions in disrupting the learner’s worldview by stimulating ambiguity and doubt in perspectives we as adult educators have to foster unity in diversity. What sounds like a paradoxical idea is crucial to teaching for change within the field of Holocaust Education. “[T]he primary challenge of life is to increase our capacity to create unity in diversity within ourselves, our relationships, and the world at large” (Clarke-Habibi 2005, p. 40). Many times, history has shown that an abstract humanism is often limited to the group concerned (Levy/Sznaider 2007, p. 30). Instead, we have to put an emphasis on making clear that genocides are not accidents of history or a “lapse into barbarism” but “an aspect of ‘modernity’” (Bensoussan 2014, p. 177). They are man-made catastrophes which can be prevented (UNESCO 2013, p. 8). Genocides are, in general, identity-related conflicts, “stemming not from the mere differences between groups, but from the implications of those differences” (Deng 2012, p. 1). Therefore, we have to bring our guiding assumptions into a critical awareness and reflect on processes of *exclusion* and *inclusion* on both the societal and the national level, as well as on how individual and national identities foster democratic citizenship and are formed, and in formation influence our processes of decision-making in an implicit or explicit way (Facing History and Ourselves). We have to critically reflect on those processes of inclusion and exclusion that operate often outside our awareness. It is important to bring these processes into our awareness so that we can critically reflect on them. The question of inclusion and exclusion is closely related to the need of clarity and the often difficult and challenging feeling of ambivalence. Our lack of ambiguity tolerance is – according to Bauman (2012) – one important factor that led to the Holocaust. Therefore we have to support learners in finding a good way of dealing with ambivalences. Transformative Learning Theory might contribute to the field of Holocaust Education by providing a theoretical framework or vocabulary. This vocabulary can only be tentative, we have to keep our vocabularies tentative and open to change (Rorty 1992, p. 317f.). Transformative Learning Theory benefits from contributing to the field of Holocaust Education at the same time, as it “is one facet, though a very important one, in a general attempt to create a world that will not be ‘good’, but possibly slightly better than the one we live in now” (Bauer 2014, p.181).

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The Student as a Researcher. Fostering and Evaluating Students' Meaning Perspectives in a Collaborative Action- Research

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Abstract: Different perspectives have been developed starting from J. Mezirow's work and several experiences and reflections were born after 'Learning as Transformation' (1991). Some of these new interpretative points of view used a theoretical framework to study the impact of Freire and Habermas work in the Mezirow's thoughts (Fleming, 2016). Other researchers (Mezirow; Taylor, 2010) tried to translate in educational practices some of the ideas showed in TLT (Hoggan, Simpson, Stuckey, 2009) or used it as a background for planning researches in several contexts. Thus, TLT has been a generous and generative theory (Taylor, Cranton, 2012) so that it would be unfair trying to trap it. However, all these researchers seem to emphasise and stress the methodological impact of TLT in educational settings and in scientific research programs. However, in many meetings a transversal question seems to grow up: how does TLT support and/or develop professional practices, research activities or teaching processes? How does it inspire our work as researchers and professionals, and how can we evaluate the impact of this flair?

The experience described in this paper developed from the previous stated question. It is about a teacher's experience conducted in the Department of Education of the University of Siena in 2015 where the TLT has been used by a group of professors as a background to understand the ways a teaching process can change the perspectives of a group of students in a higher education program.

Introduction

Different perspectives have been developed starting from J. Mezirow's work and several experiences and reflections were born after 'Learning as Transformation' (1991). Some of these new interpretative points of view used a theoretical framework to study the impact of Freire and Habermas work in the Mezirow's thoughts (Fleming, 2016). Other researchers (Mezirow; Taylor, 2010) tried to translate in educational practices some of the ideas showed in TLT (Hoggan, Simpson, Stuckey, 2009) or used it as a background for planning researches in several contexts. Thus, TLT has been a generous and generative theory (Taylor, Cranton, 2012) so that it would be unfair trying to trap it. However, all these researchers seem to emphasise and stress the methodological impact of TLT in educational settings and in scientific research programs. However, in many meetings a transversal question seems to grow up: how does TLT support and/or develop professional practices, research activities or teaching processes? How does it inspire our work as researchers and professionals, and how can we evaluate the impact of this flair?

The experience described in this paper developed from the previous stated question. It is about a teacher's experience conducted in the Department of Education of the University of Siena in 2015 where the TLT has been used by a group of professors as a background to

understand the ways a teaching process can change the perspectives of a group of students in a higher education program.

The professors involved in this experience planned the course starting from a ‘students’ voice approach’ and a ‘collaborative research’ standpoint. They involved about fifty students of the program ‘Educational science’ (37 undergraduate and 13 graduate students) in a research process co-planned between students-professor and a stakeholder. The professors supported the students to conduct the research and reflect on their learning processes, providing procedures and examples useful to become more aware about their own perspectives and develop skills (researcher’ skills) useful to increase students’ employability. During the courses, the students were involved in different phases with the goal to show the results to the stakeholders in a public plenary meeting occasion at the Department of Education.

Theoretical Background and Practical Issues

Transformative Learning describes the learning process through which an adult transform his/her frames of reference in more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective perspectives (Mezirow, 1991). A frame of reference or a *meaning perspective* is a basic belief or assumption a person holds about how the world works. So, in accord with Mezirow, transformative learning is the outcome of a learning experience that occurs when an adult engages in activities that cause or allow him to see a different worldview from their own. In Mezirow’s theory, the learning process becomes transformative when adults integrate the implications of different worldviews into their own worldview. Linked to the previous theoretical background, the guiding principles that support the present research are:

1. Subjects can be considered as epistemic subjects capable to reflectively modify their practices and produce knowledge.
2. Transformation needs specific conditions to happen, such as transformative leadership (Brookfield, 2005), informal networks and action reflective settings (Marsick, Manigaulte, 2011), “community legitimacy” (Wenger 1999, p. 100), space to express once practices and experiences in different ways (Cranton, 1994).
3. Transformative learning can occur anywhere and without any instructional or teaching act; however, it can be promoted within a specific educational setting.

Therefore, we used TLT to inspire the planning of two courses at University of Siena even if we started from different frames of reference: the ‘students voice’ and ‘collaborative research’ approaches. In particular, TLT supported us to analyse the impact of these experiences in the students’ learning processes and to manage the meetings during the courses. But the courses were planned as training courses focused on research methodology and we used ‘collaborative research’ as a guideline to manage two courses: Pedagogy and Didactic. We had two challenges in front of us: an institutional one, and a scientific question.

Institutional Issue

As a Delegate for Continuing education and Director of the Department of Education of the University of Siena, two years ago we started to promote a deep change in the organizational and educational culture of our Department. In fact, this experimentation was fed by institutional and non-formal requests we collected from the students in different informal speeches.

For example, every semester we teach to students and they ask us to be more effective and to support their employability. They feel that the courses are sometimes far from the complexity of the work practices.

In other way, we were solicited by workplaces to define new strategies to manage and plan our curriculums and programs. Every year the Committee of the program in ‘Educational sciences’ of our Department meet companies and enterprises, which suggest us to support students to: work efficiently in a group, think critically, plan workflow, be autonomous and ethic. They ask us to take care of the competences and the skills that are not much connected with specific contents or disciplines, but rather with the students’ capabilities to stay into the ‘practices’. An other important recommendation comes from the Italian Ministry on Education that underlines the strategic function of the activities introduced into various university programs to develop social skills, transversal skills, soft skills (<http://www.anvur.org/>).

Scientific Interest and Questions

Some scientific questions that fostered our research were: can we support students to use more inclusive, discriminating, open, flexible, reflexive and autonomous perspectives? If so, how can we evaluate whether our methodological approach supported TLT in the classroom? How can we make students’ enhanced learning advantageous in organizational terms, for example for the Department of Education of the University of Siena? Often the students have good ideas to improve the quality of life of a Department.

A high percentage of students enter our courses without a ripe perspective on themselves and on their professional future. How can we improve their employability and social-citizenship attitude during our institutional courses?

Our courses can be favoured settings to try to solve some of these problems: the students could ‘help’ us to find ideas to think differently about our Department and to try improve it; we could try as professors to increase students’ employability using different teaching methods.

The Experience and the Methodological Approach Adopted

Using a ‘collaborative research’ approach we had the opportunity to:

1. use an ‘active learning’ approach in our courses and try to support a ‘transformation’ in the students’ perspectives asking them to plan and develop a research;
2. plan the innovation of the Department following a bottom-up strategy in accordance with the students.

The class was organized in groups of 5-6 students and each group worked following the procedure described in Table 1.

Table 1.

Processes	Requests to the students	Outcome	Learning setting	Time %
<i>Defining the problem</i>	Use your experience to identify a problem that concerns the Department or define a problem with an external stakeholder	A clear description of the focus and the purposes of the research work. Which problems exactly you want to solve?	Work in small groups, free debate Setting: in the classroom In an external context (family, workplace, etc.), interviews with the stakeholder. Setting: outside the classroom	5%

<i>Validating the research focus</i>	Share the research object with the professor of the course and the Director of the Department	A description of the research object aligned both with the students' needs and the Department needs or the stakeholder needs	Informal meetings with the Director or the stakeholder Setting: outside the classroom	5%
<i>Defining the background theory</i>	Chose a theory that can be useful to define the units of analysis, and to form your personal points of views	A short paper on the core concepts of the theory	Outside the classroom, small groups, free literature review	20%
<i>Choosing the methodology, sample, tools (interviews, questionnaires, ...).</i>	Read material provided by the teacher and draw a concept map	A mind map of the chosen methodological approaches	In the classroom, plenary sessions	15%
<i>Carrying out the research</i>	Contact the subjects, collect the data.	Qualitative or quantitative datasets	Outside the classrooms, individual or group activities	25%
<i>Interpreting the data</i>	Make sense of the data with the support of the provided examples	First draft of the paper	In the classroom, small groups	15%
<i>Tutoring</i>	Validate your research with the community	Final draft of the paper	Outside the classrooms, small groups with the supervision of teachers	10%
<i>Plenary session with 'stakeholders' or 'costumers'</i>	Learn how to show your research in 15 minutes	Power point presentation	Final contest, small groups	5%

What the Students Said

At the end of the courses, we sent an on-line questionnaire asking the students to give a feedback on their experiences in terms of impact of the undertaken program on their learning process. 29 students answered our survey. The survey was composed of 13 questions organized in 4 parts: gender and age, impact of the experience, evaluation of level of difficulty of the experience, problems found to conduct the research. In Figure 1 and Figure 2 we describe some of the data collected.

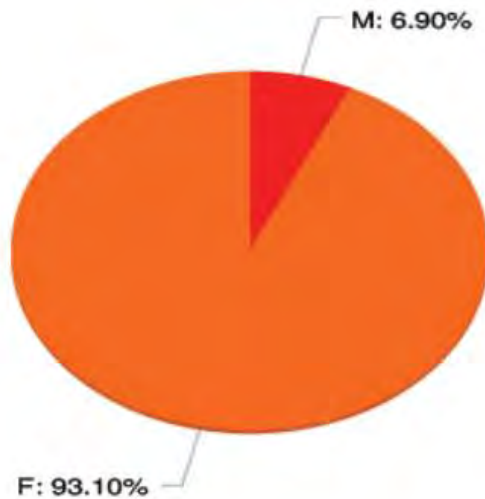


Figure 1. Gender

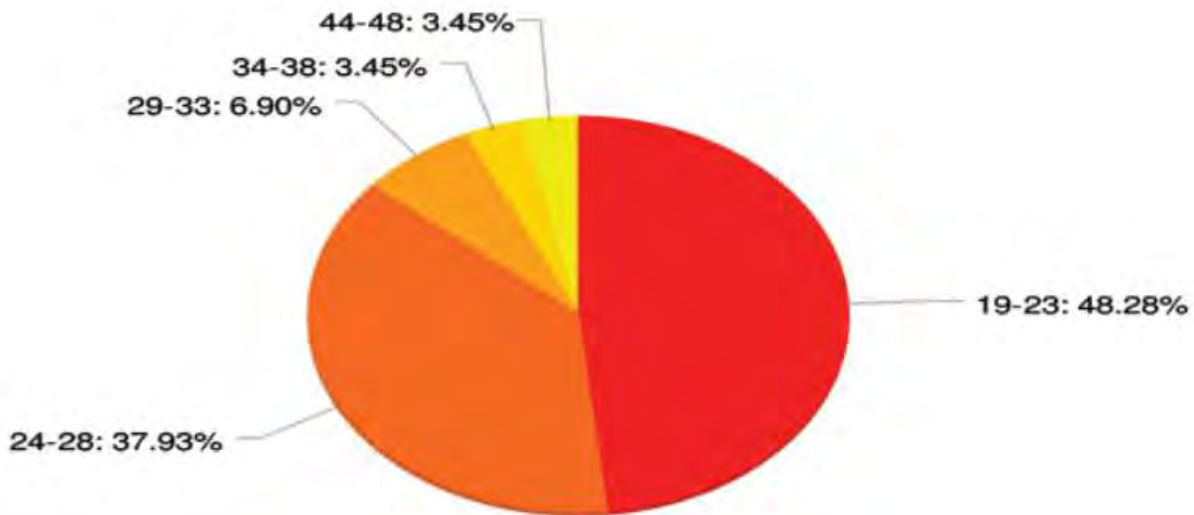


Figure 2. Age

In question n°. 4 we asked the students to give a feedback on the impact of the experience as regards their skills. Some of these skills are detected by European recommendations (...) and Italian reports on the 'skills required' by employers and enterprises. The students responded positively, underlining that the participation in this research experience during the course of Pedagogy and Didactic changed some of their skills. In particular, it emerged that the group learned to translate in practices what the professor taught during the course. On the contrary, the approach used by the professor had a low impact in the students' 'way of being', and this result can be interpreted as a non-significant impact generated in the students' life perspectives by the program. Overall, the data seem to indicate a deeper transformation in terms of dimensions connected to the professional identity or set of skills of a student than in terms of his/her life standpoints (Table 2).

Table 2.

This experience change my way of being	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	20,69%
Moderate	58,62%
Very much	13,79%
I don't know	6,90%
Grand Total	100,00%

This experience change my way of communication	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	6,90%
Moderate	51,72%
Very much	34,48%
I don't know	6,90%
Grand Total	100,00%

This experience understood me my limits	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	10,34%
Moderate	51,72%
Very much	34,48%
I don't know	3,45%
Grand Total	100,00%

This experience understood me my potentialities	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	3,45%
Moderate	41,38%
Very much	55,17%
I don't know	0%
Grand Total	100,00%

This experience understood me some problems showed during the lessons	
Scale	N°
Not at all	6,90%
A little	10,34%
Moderate	48,28%
Very much	34,48%
I don't know	0%
Grand Total	100,00%

This experience allow me to translate in practices what I studied	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	3,45%
Moderate	27,59%
Very much	68,97%
I don't know	0%
Grand Total	100,00%

In question n° 7 we asked the students to reflect about the skill area they believed had been mostly developed during the course. Many areas indicate a high impact. The data collected suggest that the students have detected a transformation but we do not know if their skills have really changed. Another research project conducted by our group in 2015, involved 1390 students (undergraduate and graduate) in a survey where we used the same question (how much did the experience change your capabilities in these areas?) to understand the impact of the apprenticeship in the students' learning processes. Even if the two samples are very different numerically, (29 students versus 1390 students), when we compare the two datasets, we find that the apprenticeship produce comparably low impact in the 6 areas defined in the Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3.
Students' answers after 'collaborative research'

Work in a group	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	0%
Moderate	37,93%
Very much	62,07%
I don't know	0%
Grand Total	100,00%

Problem solving	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	0%
Moderate	41,38%
Very much	58,62%
I don't know	0%
Grand Total	100,00%

Public communication	
Scale	N°
Not at all	3,45%
A little	6,90%
Moderate	34,48%
Very much	51,72%
I don't know	3,45%
Grand Total	100,00%

Writing a report	
Scale	N°
Not at all	3,45%
A little	10,34%
Moderate	34,48%
Very much	51,72%
I don't know	0%
Grand Total	100,00%

Take decision independently	
Scale	N°
Not at all	0%
A little	6,90%
Moderate	37,93%
Very much	51,72%
I don't know	3,45%
Grand Total	100,00%

Manage emotions	
Scale	N°
Not at all	3,45%
A little	10,34%
Moderate	44,83%
Very much	41,38%
I don't know	0%
Grand Total	100,00%

Table 4.

Students' answers after 'apprenticeship'

Work in a group	
Scale	N°
Not at all	11,50%
A little	24,20%
Moderate	39,80%
Very much	21,70%
I don't know	1,60%
Grand Total	100,00%

Problem solving	
Scale	N°
Not at all	5,40%
A little	15,40%
Moderate	47,70%
Very much	28,80%
I don't know	1,40%
Grand Total	100,00%

Public communication	
Scale	N°
Not at all	9,80%
A little	24,10%
Moderate	35,90%
Very much	27,80%
I don't know	1,30%
Grand Total	100,00%

Writing a report	
Scale	N°
Not at all	13,60%
A little	24,20%
Moderate	33,30%
Very much	25,90%
I don't know	1,90%
Grand Total	100,00%

Take decision independently	
Scale	N°
Not at all	9%
A little	20,20%
Moderate	40,50%
Very much	27,80%
I don't know	1,40%
Grand Total	100,00%

Manage emotions	
Scale	N°
Not at all	10,70%
A little	18,50%
Moderate	39,20%
Very much	27,90%
I don't know	2,60%
Grand Total	100,00%

Conclusion

The paper presents the results of a teaching experience based on 'collaborative research' and TLT, underling two kind of outcomes: a) the role of the surveyed data to evaluate the impact of the undertaken experience in the students' professional and life perspectives; b) the contribution of the students' research on the innovation of the Department of Education of the University of Siena.

The data of the survey show how using different approaches to plan our courses can improve a transformation of professional and social skills. This outcome is strategic for students' employability. Another interesting outcome is about the impact in terms of Department governance. For example, a research conducted by a group of students was focused on the 'everyday life in the Department'. In this group, the students wrote up a questionnaire and carried out interviews of other students. In their final report they underlined some needs emerging from the community of students: (a) the need to have social space to meet other students, relax and socialize; (b) have spaces in the library to work in groups and share ideas with other students; (c) enhance support for students with disabilities; (d) have more opportunities to meet professionals into the courses to understand what their future work will be. At the end of the research, all students' reports were read by the Director of the Department and other colleagues, who share with us the ideas behind this program. After a year, some of the students' proposals were achieved. A new Caffé with a space to socialize and with free *wifi* was opened. In the library, a new space called "Campus Lab" was inaugurated with open space library, round table for work group, and free PC available. A different and more demanding goal would be to enhance participation of professionals in the courses. This target goal requires probably more time, more faculty openness to change routines, practices and teaching methods.

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Transformation Intersection: Global Place-Based Experience and Transformative Learning Pedagogy

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Abstract: Pedagogy that involves students as active learners and participants has been shown to not only stimulate student interest, but to also generate insights, skill building, knowledge and offer the potential for long-term changes in behavior. This research outlines an innovative international place-based learning course which draws upon Transformative Learning Theory and Transformative Charity Experiences, and generates applied and real-world insights about business, global nonprofit operations, charitable giving, behavioral change and crowdfunding. Transformative Learning is the foundation of the course and project, and can be a wonderful lens for both design and execution of a potentially transformative experience.

Overview

A variety of forces continue to influence and shape education. Some forces impacting curriculum arrive in terms of the audience via the background and needs of a particular group currently filling the classroom (i.e., millennials). Other forces arrive in the form of opportunity, as new ideas and approaches are shared (i.e., innovative and collaborative pedagogy). Finally, some forces are external, shaped by regulations or encouragement of governing bodies (i.e., accreditation standards). This paper seeks to connect three seemingly disparate forces for educators, offering insight from a program that has been pilot tested and replicated over several years.

Intersection of Millennials, Engaged Learning and Accreditation

The Millennial generation is a group of learners born between 1982 and 2005 (Howe & Strauss, 2007). This group, currently a central audience for in institutions of higher education, prefers active learning opportunities (Howe & Strauss, 2007). Engaged learning (i.e., service learning) is different than volunteerism, and specifically service learning is intentional and facilitated, and includes meaningful activities tied to course curriculum (i.e., intentional and insightful) and intentional reflection activities (i.e., discussions, short writings, or presentations; Bringle and Hatcher 1996). Thus, engaged learning fits with millennial preferences, and even with calls from accrediting bodies. For example, in business schools, the accreditation agency seeks student learning that is rooted in three areas: (1) engagement, (2) innovation, and (3) impact. Interestingly, this type of pedagogy involves all three areas.

Theoretical Foundation – Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)

Learners can participate in experiential learning opportunities that shape or create a substantial shift in one's perspective. Consistent with the intent of a faculty-led global experience, Mezirow (1978) suggested that an experience can be a learning opportunity, and this can lead to transformation. According to Mezirow (1991), TLT offers insight to learners through a multi- step process. For students and participants of this course and study away pedagogical tool, the place-based transformation process starts with the international experience; the

collaboration with the community in an impoverished village serves as a disorienting dilemma, creating a type of shock to the system for student. This shock is followed by a process of sensemaking via self-examination, which is why consistent dialogue, reflection and writing are such powerful activities and tools. Consistent with interests of millennial learners, transformative learning can use societal change as the stage for the learning and the experience, and indeed societal change and personal learning are integrated and complementary as students “transform society and their own reality (Taylor 2009; p.5)” via a transformative experience.

Innovation – Pedagogical Design + Course Components

Via a unique and innovative course design, the course blends classroom learning with place-based learning; offers a “cause” as foundation for learning; offers an intersection for students from liberal arts and interdisciplinary disciplines; students serve as community educators and speakers; students design and facilitate a crowdfunding campaign; learning occurs in a course and/or internship structure; students work directly with in-country staff for training and insight; students become hygiene and sanitation educators; students facilitate construction of a well alongside nonprofit and community; sensemaking occurs through discussion, reflection and writing and communication to partners and supporters continues via daily reports while on site.

Outcome

The ripple effects of a course and project such as this are many. As an example of recent research, a Transformative Charity Experience (Mulder, Rapp, Hamby and Weaver, 2015) provides benefit to the triad of participants: (1) the community, (2) the volunteer/student, and (3) a partner nonprofit agency. For specific outcomes regarding this pedagogy and for reasons of length in this paper, we refer readers to this research by Mulder and colleagues (2015), and focus here instead on the design of the course and project and integration with a variety of forces and theory.

Discussion and Conclusion

Students are arriving in classrooms with common backgrounds and an appreciation for shared experience. Universities are seeking experiences which offer innovative learning experiences that go beyond traditional study away programs and harness the potential of a field experience which blends professional education with potential liberal arts foundations (c.f. Ernest Boyer’s New American University model with field experience, engagement, and connecting the disciplines with societal needs; Boyer 1994, 1996; Harkavy 2015). When done with careful design, preparation and mentoring, the outcome can be transformational. Perhaps most rewarding for educators and institutions are the moments where students work through 105 degree days and begin to realize just how much integration of their courses to date and their potential career path is manifested in the course/project experience. It will come in different places for different students, and as reflection and sensemaking offers a lens which is just as exciting as the initial experience. This is the gift afforded by a transformative and innovative pedagogy in action. Is the time right for your department and campus to consider something like this?

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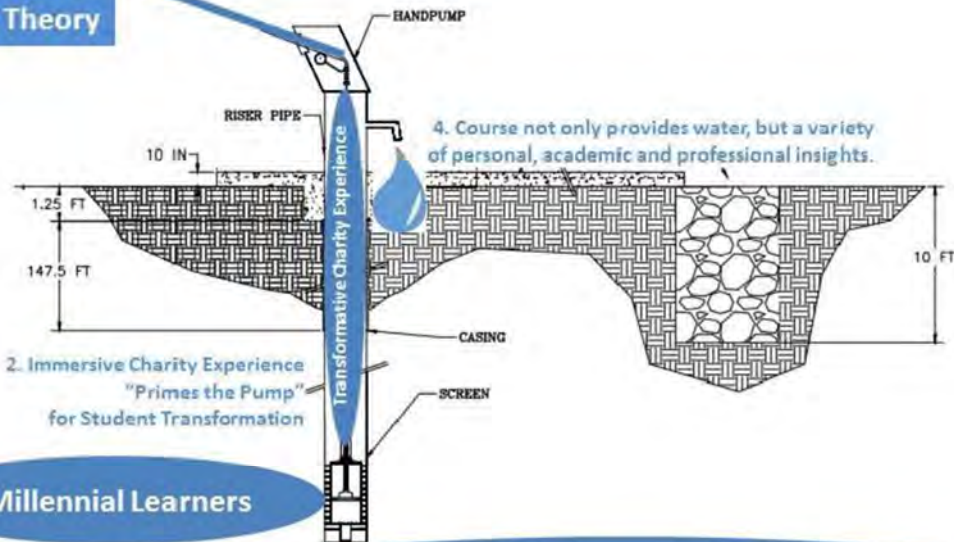
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Appendix A

ILLUSTRATION OF COURSE/PROJECT INTEGRATION AND TRANSFORMATION

3. TLT is the process by which transformation occurs. Collaborative effort creates disorienting dilemma, which is process and leads to insight and transformation.

Transformative Learning Theory



4. Course not only provides water, but a variety of personal, academic and professional insights.

2. Immersive Charity Experience
"Primes the Pump"
for Student Transformation

Millennial Learners

Active Learning/Engagement

AACSB Accreditation

1. Pedagogical "Aquifers" Drawn from in Course/Project

Image Source: Engineers Without Borders
<http://ewb.gtorgatech.edu/?q=uganda>

Becoming a Coach: The Transformative Learning and Hierarchical Development of Coaching Students

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Abstract: Some scholars have drawn links between transformative learning outcomes and hierarchical development. One place to explore this link is executive coach training. In coach training, personal development is as important as theory and skills training. Many coaches report their coach training as transformational, but whether these reports equate to transformative learning outcomes and lead to hierarchical development has not been explored. This study included ten students in the Georgetown University's six-month Leadership Coaching program. It combined two relatively new methods to gather three sets of data. Observation Oriented Modeling (OOM) was used in the data analysis to determine patterns often missed in quantitative research. Results indicate that all participants experienced transformative learning outcomes and demonstrated changes in hierarchical development levels. Preliminary findings indicate a surprising inverse pattern between three of four transformative learning outcomes and changes in developmental levels.

Introduction

In a single coaching session, a coach artfully coordinates a complex set of skills that come together in an improvisational conversational dance with the client. While listening closely, a coach must also simultaneously observe multiple data points beyond the conversational content. She observes subtle shifts in energy and affect in both her client and herself. She must also hold the client's agenda while staying open to what unfolds, make decisions about the next response that will have the most impact for the client, and connect multiple themes and ideas. She nonjudgmentally seeks her client's perspectives while observing her own. All this is done while being in the moment and fully present to her client. How does one embody this complex choreography?

Campone (2014) observes that coaching is more than accumulating knowledge and skills. It requires full presence, empathy, boundary awareness, somatic awareness, and ability to supportively challenge one's client (McLean, 2012). Choosing and coordinating these actions requires simultaneous reflexivity, informed judgment, critical thinking, and decision-making (Campone, 2014).

Many coaches report their coach training as transformational, but whether these reports equate to transformative learning outcomes has not been explored. Transformative learning is a process by which one actively confronts a limiting or problematic structure for understanding, and struggles to simultaneously disassemble and construct a new structure (Mezirow, 2012). The result is not simply knowing more, it is a new way of understanding (Dix, 2016). According to Mezirow (2003), this new structure is more "inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (p. 53).

In addition, Mezirow (1991) has contended that hierarchical development is at the heart of transformative learning theory. Hierarchical development occurs in a series of integrations of cognitive structures (Fischer & Bidell, 2006). Each structure builds upon the previous, resulting

in increased levels of abstraction and more complex understanding. Similarities between transformative learning and hierarchical development theories include a more complex and nuanced understanding that emerges as a result of a limiting or problematic experience. Over time, the individual actively struggles with the dissonance – either consciously or subconsciously – and reconciles it by constructing a new way of understanding. What is the relationship between these two theories?

While many have drawn conceptual links between transformative learning outcomes and hierarchical development (Garvey-Berger, 2002, 2004; Kasl & Elias, 2000; Kegan, 2009; Merriam, 2004; Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock, 2012; Taylor, 2000a, 2000b), the nature of the link remains unclear. Are they different aspects of the same phenomenon? Is transformative learning a precursor to hierarchical development? Does it facilitate hierarchical development? Coach training and new research methods provide new opportunities to explore this question.

Background

Numerous authors have documented the increased complexity in our lives (Bartunek, Gordon, & Weathersby, 1983; Kegan, 1994; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Weick, 1979). Some suggest a developmental divide, i.e. the majority of the population does not operate at levels necessary to manage such complexity (Garvey-Berger, 2012; Hooijberg, Hunt, & Dodge, 1997; Kegan, 1994). Dawson-Tunik and Stein (2004) empirically demonstrated this divide in a study of 500 managers in a federal government agency. As managers advanced, the gap widened between their development levels and the complexity required in their positions.

Some propose coaching may facilitate hierarchical development in those who are coached (Fitzgerald & Garvey-Berger, 2002; Garvey-Berger, 2006; Laske, 2004). Recent research demonstrates that to be effective, successful coaches function at the same or later level development levels as their clients (Laske, 1999a, 1999b; K. A. Perry, 2014). Yet, there is little research on the impact of learning coaching skills. This is interesting, given that personal development is a critical competency for coaches (Bluckert, 2005; Lee, 2003).

Three coach training studies found positive outcomes for training participants that align with transformative learning outcomes. Two studies found greater self-awareness, new perspectives, better interpersonal skills, and improved relationships (Beets & Goodman, 2012; Mukherjee, 2012). Campone (2014) found increased reflective learning and decision-making capacity in situational complexity. While Campone hints at a link between transformative learning and hierarchical development in coach training, she does not explicate the nature of the link.

One challenge to researching this link has been a primary focus among transformative learning scholars on constructive development theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994). Kegan synthesized the works of Baldwin (1906), Piaget (1975), (Kohlberg, 1969), and Perry (1970) and applied Baldwin's (1906) concept of subject-object relations to define five stages of differentiation and integration. His popular book, *In Over Our Heads*, made the concept of hierarchical development accessible to wider audiences, and is the most frequently cited reference on hierarchical development in peer-reviewed scholar-practitioner articles.

While Kegan's work has contributed greatly to general understanding of hierarchical development across disciplines, there are several issues with an exclusive focus on constructive development theory. The research Kegan (1994) cites is not published in peer-reviewed literature and is often second-order analysis. In addition, constructive development theory does not

accommodate the dynamic and recursive structural organization that occurs at micro-levels among actively engaged learners. This does not invalidate Kegan's contributions, but should give us pause about building future scholarly work upon this one foundation.

An alternative theory is Kurt Fischer's dynamic skill theory and dynamic structuralism model of development (Fischer, 1980). A dynamic skill is the capacity to dynamically organize and integrate a system of interrelated biological, psychological, and social processes within a specific context. Dynamic structuralism takes into account "continual interactions between person, context, and culture" (Fischer & Bidell, 2006, p. 417). Fischer demonstrated that change in any part[s] of the integrated system results in a shift in dynamic skill level. This accounts for dips and spurts in performance levels as learners disassemble and reconstruct dynamic structures, and may explain the disorienting dilemma described in transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1994). In addition, Fischer's universal scale has been found to measure the same developmental sequences as other empirically tested hierarchical models of development (Dawson, 2002).

Another challenge to researching the link between transformative learning and hierarchical development has been research measures. Up until recently, transformative learning research has been time-consuming, not scalable, and has used different measurement criteria. Measuring hierarchical development has been challenging because scoring systems are difficult to learn and scoring is labor intensive. In addition, determining the developmental impact of a specific program of less than one year has been problematic because movement described in many models requires one-to-three years of concerted effort.

Two relatively recent developments have created opportunity for researchers. Stuckey, Taylor, and Cranton (2014) developed the transformative learning survey that assesses transformative learning outcomes and processes. The instrument is relatively new, yet demonstrates acceptable reliability and validity (Stuckey et al., 2014). The second development is the Lectica Assessment System (LAS). The LAS is based upon Fischer's skill theory and detects dynamic skill development within .05 of a level across relatively short, three- to six-month time spans (Dawson, 2015). The LAS is the first to use computer-assisted analyses of narrative performances with .95 reliability with trained human scorers. It shows promise for scalable, cost-effective measurement of programs aimed at development, including coaching programs.

Research Study

This study explored the transformative learning and hierarchical development of ten volunteers from the Georgetown University Leadership Coaching program. The research questions asked in this study were:

1. Does participating in a coach-training program result in transformative learning outcomes?
2. Do participants' hierarchical development levels change over the course of the program?
3. Can a discernable link be made between transformative learning outcome and hierarchical development level data?

The sample included 8 females and 2 males. Ages ranged from 24 to 64 with 80% in the 35 to 54 age range. Eight participants are White, one Black, and one Latino. Nine participants have graduate degrees and one has a bachelor degree. These demographics align with demographics of coaches in the United States (International Coach Federation & PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2012).

A mixed method approach was used to collect three sets of data. Two sets of Developmental Levels (DL) were collected using the Lectica Leadership Decision Making Assessment (LDMA) prior to the first coaching class and again after the final class. Data on four transformative learning outcomes -- awareness, openness, action, and worldview – were collected from the Transformative Learning Survey. Qualitative data were collected from two open-ended prompts at the beginning of the survey.

Data analysis is currently underway. The qualitative data has been thematically coded and provide insight into the nature of transformations that participants experienced. The quantitative data are currently being analyzed using Observation Oriented Modeling (Grice, 2015), which keeps the individual at the center of the research.

Preliminary Results

This study asked three questions pertaining to coaching students' transformative learning and hierarchical development. The first research question was: *Does participating in a coach-training program result in transformative learning outcomes?* Results from the transformative learning survey affirm that participating in the Georgetown coaching program resulted in transformative learning outcomes.

The qualitative narratives provide rich descriptions of the types of transformations students experienced, including becoming more self-aware, integrated and open, acting differently, and experiencing a deeper connection with self and others. Most comments indicated increased metacognition, i.e. conscious awareness, monitoring, regulation, and agency of one's cognitive, affective, and somatic processes. Sample comments from the open-ended questions are:

I am both more fluid and more integrated in my being. I am attending holistically to others humanity integrating thinking, emotions, sensations (body), and spirit while being a freer, more alive person...

I am more easily able to recognize and hold multiple perspectives, as well as observe myself in action and notice what's going on for me in different domains.

I am more aware of the stories and assessments that I have and others have and can more readily challenge assumptions and make choices about how to respond.

...the greatest change in my way of thinking is that I am a more integrative thinker and I lead with greater awareness and curiosity.

My experience at Georgetown transformed my entire being... I have become more comfortable with skillfully moving through difficult moments in my life – self-doubt, a difficult conversation, being brave. My relationships have also changed. I feel like my closest relationships are far more deep and connected...

The narrative data appear to describe deeper, more profound qualitative shifts than the survey scores indicate. The survey scale for each outcome is comprised of 5 items. The highest possible score per scale is 20 and the lowest is 5. Each question offers four possible responses¹: mostly disagree (5), slightly disagree (6-10), slightly agree (11-15), and mostly agree (16-20). While all participants reported transformative learning as a result of the coaching program, the mean (13.83) and median (14) indicate “slight agreement” with transformative learning outcomes.

Three interesting patterns emerge from the survey data. The first is that despite the experiential, action-oriented nature of coaching, action scored lower in all age groups, except the 55-64 age range. The second is that mean outcome scores increased progressively in each ten-year age range by approximately a full point. The exception to this was awareness, which had

similar means across all age ranges. The third is that the mean scores across all outcomes for non-white participants were approximately two points greater than the mean for white participants in their age ranges.

The second research question was: *Do participants' hierarchical development levels change over the course of the program?* The data affirm that all participants' developmental levels (DL) changed. For context, the average change in DL during one year of college is .05 (Dawson, 2016). In this study, eight of the ten participants in this six-month coach program demonstrated increased DL, with a mean change of .07. Two participants demonstrated DL decreases, with a mean change of -.03.

The third research question was: *Can a discernable link be made between transformative learning outcome and hierarchical development level data?* While the data analysis is still underway, preliminary findings show an interesting pattern. Participants with higher transformative learning (TL) outcome scores demonstrated smaller changes in DL (Hi-TL/Low-DL); those with lower TL scores, demonstrated greater changes in DL (Low-TL/High-DL). The exception to this was action, which showed no discernable pattern. Of the two participants who experienced negative changes in LDMA scores, one appeared in the Hi-TL/Low-DL group; the other in the Low-TL/High-DL group. Further analysis is being conducted to determine patterns across different demographics, as well as to triangulate all three sets of data for each participant.

Discussion

The preliminary findings from this the study support the idea that the process of becoming a coach is transformative and developmental. All research participants experienced deep personal shifts, transformative learning outcomes, and changes in developmental levels. The narratives both align with three of the four transformative learning outcomes – awareness, openness, action – and indicate an increase in metacognition. Metacognition has been linked to both transformative learning and hierarchical development (Dix, 2016; Fischer, 1980; Mezirow, 2012; Tarricone, 2011).

While all participant developmental levels changed, two demonstrated negative changes. This may be accounted for by any number of personal and environmental factors that affect performances. However, they may also be indicative of the typical spurts and dips that occur in the systemic integration of dynamic skills (Fischer, 1980; Fischer & Bidell, 2006). This possibility, combined with the above-average, positive DL changes of the other eight participants, supports use of Fischer's structural developmental model.

Despite a common-sense, intuitive link between transformative learning and hierarchical development, results from this study indicate an inverse pattern between transformative learning outcome scores and changes in DL for these ten participants. Therefore, rather than providing more clarity about the link between transformative learning and hierarchical development, this finding creates questions for future studies.

¹ Score ranges for each category are indicated in parentheses.

Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future studies include replicating the study across different coaching programs, and using larger sample sizes. Longitudinal studies that follow participants throughout their subsequent coaching careers may also provide insight into the changing perspectives and development of coaches over time. The study design might also be replicated with students other than coaching students to see if similar patterns emerge. Finally, further research is indicated on teaching coaching skills to non-coaches to determine whether the impact is generalizable to other populations that do not intend to become professional coaches.

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Reframing Professional Challenges Through Action Learning Conversation in Medical Organizations

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Abstract: We will present three different case studies involving a variety of medical professionals and focused on different kinds of professional challenges and dilemmas in order to identify and track the transformative processes in term of new understandings and reframing of actions, plans and situations as well as new ways to play ones' professional role. Our working hypothesis is that action learning conversation is a powerful device to support professionals involved in medical organizations in reframing the challenges and dilemmas they face in order to plan more effective actions and responses. Starting from a professional problem defined as challenge presented from one of the participants we developed a conceptual framework using the ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretative and Decisional) framework (Marsick & Maltbia, 2009). The interactions between participants were transcribed and coded drawing on this framework, and adaptations were made to the framework when warranted by the data.

Critical reflection through Action Learning Conversation

In action learning conversation, individuals work upon real problems and projects in the organization, and there is an emphasis on co-inquiry, democratic process, and holistic understanding. The ALC process takes the problem-holder sequentially through recurring cycles of: (a) framing of the challenge as a question; (b) unpacking meaning through sharing information about the context and prior action; (c) peer questioning (to which the problem holder does not immediately respond) to unlock mental models that make one blind to other points of view; (d) identifying assumptions that underlie current ways of framing the challenge; (e) reframing one's understanding of the situation; and (f) making more informed decisions and taking informed action to address the challenge (Marsick & Maltbia, 2009). Organizations may transform on several dimensions: the nature of the environment, the vision of the organization, the management of the organization, products and services, the organizational structure, and how individual members of the organization see their roles.

The Objective, Reflective, Interpretative and Decisional Questions work as catalyst learning processes, facilitating movement of group development, negotiating boundaries and intersections between different professional roles and identities, building relationship within the group. The questions and the responses participants in ACL sessions may provoke a meaning-making circle, generalizing the meaning to other situations, actions/applications. The induced recursive story- telling generate dialogue and the sharing of experience and emotions, advancing emotional involvement and self-disclosure.

The workshops with the Action Learning Conversation: Three Case-Studies

Action Learning Conversation sessions with medical professionals is useful to examine and reinforce the professional identity of all participants (Walsh, Gordon, 2008), combining social and organizational identity, behavioral aspects related to work and individuals' perceptions of their role in the health care organizations that were involved. An individual's work identity refers to a work- based self-concept, constituted of a combination of organizational, occupational, and other identities that shapes the roles a person adopts and the corresponding ways he or she behaves when performing his or her work. The sessions were recorded and analyzed with the aid of a checklist for the analysis of the perspectives' changes (Mezirow, 1991) occurred during the experience and for all the "A-ha!" moments. A conceptual framework was developed from the research questions using the ORID framework (Marsick & Maltbia, 2009), the interactions between participants were transcribed and coded draw in.

First Case

Context: workshop within the national convention of the Italian Society of Medical Education in September, 2014 in Matera. The focus of the convention was on interprofessional work in medicine, and the workshop was aimed at exploring the possibility to learn and construct new knowledge and understanding through the encounter of multiple and different professional views on the challenges and dilemmas emerging from professional practice.

According to the ALC framework designed by Marsick & Maltbia (2009) the setting of the workshop involved a small group of medical professionals working together on a challenge highly meaningful and involving multiple implications in terms of meaning perspectives. The group has shown a great and valuable deal of diversity in personal and professional perspectives: a general practitioner (woman); a diabetologist (woman), a psychologist and trainer (woman); a gynecologist (male); a gynecologist (woman); a nurse (woman); two nurses (male); a midwife (woman); a pedagogist (woman) as coach.

The impact of the contexts and of the participants' different backgrounds is significant because it provided a multiperspectival frame of reference.

The ALC process has been articulated in three phases: (1) framing/ engaging, (2) advancing, and (3) disengaging and has been framed according to the ORID framework (Marsick & Maltbia, 2009). The problem-holder was a gynecologist, male, 60 y.o. who worked both in a public hospital in northern Italy as well as in the university as professor.

He framed his challenge as a question "How can it be possible to reduce the requests of caesarean section from pregnant women?" pointing out how this question was crucial for him and how he had been frustrated, over the years, in acknowledging that this seemed to be his own problem, not shared by his colleagues both in the hospital and in the university.

Invited to unpack the meaning of his question and the meaning perspectives involved, by a first set of questions coming from the other participants, he explained how he felt like "Don Quixote fighting against the windmills" and portrayed himself as helpless and isolated.

The issue was perceived as extremely challenging from the group, which explored it through the lens of epistemic, psychological and socio-linguistic perspectives (Mezirow, 1991) and highlighted its cultural, professional, organizational and societal dimensions.

Table 1.

Meaning perspectives and organizational dimensions of the problems

Meaning perspective	
Epistemic	<p>The choice to have a cesarean section is mostly determined by beliefs and information which orient the women’s decisions no matter their real condition and situation.</p> <p>In our culture pregnancy has become more and more medicalized while in Africa, women are used to live this experience in a very natural and slow way, and are used to deliver at home.</p>
Psychological	<p>Most women need to have control on the birth process in order to protect themselves from fear; women who have been accompanied during the pregnancy period by the gynecologist, fear to be “left alone” in the moment of the childbirth. General practitioners feel “expropriated” when their patients, who discover to be pregnant, turn to the gynecologist as the only and first reference for all their problems during the pregnancy.</p>
Socio linguistic	<p>The problem holder feels like “Don Quixote fighting against the windmills” and “isolated”.</p> <p>An “elderly primipara” should go to the hospital in order to deliver in a “safe” way.</p>
Dimensions	
Professional	<p>Midwife should be involved by the gynecologist in the preparation process, but it rarely happens in current practices and this could explain the frequent choice for cesarean.</p> <p>An interprofessional approach to the problem is required in order to support the enormous charge of responsibility and stress posed on the gynecologists, who often prefer to suggest a cesarean because it is less risky.</p>
Organizational	<p>Cesarean as a widespread phenomena which has several implications: it has higher costs and is therefore a source of income for the hospital and the doctors, it is less risky and therefore doctors feel protected against possible legal issues, it is painless and can be planned therefore many women feel reassured by this choice, even if it is not necessary. The choice is therefore not determined by medical conditions but rather by external elements that make a difference in the re-framing of the problem. There are different approaches to the problem and a series of practices worked out integrating and interconnecting professional competences and social resources. In these situations women rarely requested a cesarean</p>
Social	<p>Families play an essential role and of the social networks supporting the women during the pregnancy and it is necessary to involve them as agents and references in all the crucial moments of the process.</p>

During the discussion the participants identified a series of conflicting assumptions underlying the ways of framing the problem.

Table 2.

Assumptions

Assumption 1	Pregnancy is a personal and lonely challenge for women
Assumption 2	Pregnancy is a medical issue, which requires to be constantly controlled, monitored and managed in medical contexts by a specialized professional who has the entire responsibility for its outcomes
Assumption 3	Pregnancy is complex but natural process that requires to be sustained by a network of agents who play different but integrated roles in different moments.

The problem holder came back on the challenge reframing it in new terms (“How can we support women during their pregnancy and in their choice regarding childbirth?”) acknowledging that the challenge cannot be faced individually by a medical professional, but requires to be faced sharing the responsibility of the choice among different agents who have equal levels of engagement and responsibility.

Second Case

Context: workshop within an in- service training module for medical professionals organized by the local section of the Italian Society of Medical Education in collaboration with the regional training board, held in Fano (Marche).

The workshop was aimed at offering a sample of the use of a reflective practice to sustain professional development for in service medical professionals starting from the challenges emerging from their own practices. The participants of the ALC session, who had different professional profiles, were self-selected among a wide group of 60 professionals. The non selected professionals observed the sessions and took notes.

The problem-holder was the coordinator of the rescue emergency team, woman, 40 y.o. who framed her challenge as a question emerging as a self-reflection from her personal experience, and was very emotionally engaged in addressing it to her colleagues. “How can I re-motivate and re-construct a team working in rescue emergency which has become progressively detached and de-motivated?”. Invited to unpack the meaning of her question and the meaning perspectives involved, by a first set of questions coming from the other participants, she explained how she felt angry and embittered as she noticed that all her attempts to sustain the team had been unsuccessful.

The issue was perceived as challenging from the group even not all the participants had direct experience of working in a rescue emergency team and was explored through different professional and organizational perspectives.

Table 3.

Meaning perspectives and organizational dimensions of the changes

Meaning perspectives	
Epistemic	The team leader has the responsibility to keep the team engaged and motivated.

Psychological	“Something has broken is the team and could not be repaired anymore”; professionals in the team did not “trust” each other anymore due to a series of episodes and misunderstandings connected to some very challenging an stressful situations.
Socio-linguistic	“Once”, “now”, “something has broken”.

Dimensions	
Professional	<p>Emergency rescue professionals deal with situations that require to be managed in very short time but in some cases not all the members of the team have the same commitment and sense of responsibility; the team should work at the same pace and according to a shared script; working rhythms and situations in the hospital are very different from the ones in rescue emergency; an exchange of roles and experiences between doctors working in rescue emergency and in the hospital would be useful in sustaining a change in professional perspectives.</p> <p>A specific training for team working is very important for medical professional but it is not available at the university.</p> <p>The regular turn over for professionals working in rescue emergency teams who may experiment a burn-out condition</p>
Organizational	<p>Some of the members of the team could be substituted by others in order to restructure the group and its dynamics.</p> <p>The old team had to be totally replaced by a new one since the old one could not be reassembled.</p> <p>The team should not be replaced o re-constructed but rather needed to share dedicated time to reflect on the practices and the challenging situations that have determined the tensions and ruptures inside it.</p>
Societal	Medical professions are challenged by high social demands and are at risk of burn out.

During the discussion the participants identified a series of assumptions underlying the ways of framing the problem:

Table 4.

Assumptions of participants

Assumption 1	The team needs to be re-motivated and re-constructed on the basis of personal and relational elements
Assumption 2	The internal dynamics of the team are connected to contextual and external dynamics
Assumption 3	The protective elements of the team are professional self-awareness, reflection and professional development

The problem holder came back on the challenge reframing it in terms of a reflection on the situations that over the years have determined the state of the team and acknowledged the necessity to take into account a variety of contextual elements in order to address the issue in its implications and outcomes as well as the necessity to involve the team itself in a process of self-reflection on its internal and external problems (“How can we build up a supportive contexts for the rescue emergency teams?”).

Third Case

Context: a seminar within the Master course in Nursing, University of Turin.

The seminar was proposed as an elective activity aimed at offering a sample of the use of a reflective practice to sustain professional and organizational development for medical professionals starting from the challenges emerging from their own practices. The participants of the ALC session were mostly students but also practitioners and professors.

The problem-holder was a nurse, coordinator of nursing services in a public hospital (woman 55 y.o.) who worked both in a public hospital in a small town near Turin as well as in the university. She framed her challenge as a question emerging from her professional experience but useful as a case study within the Master program. “How can it be possible to take care of the nurses who have the task to coordinate the nursing services, supporting their motivation and reflectivity in whereas spaces and resources have been dramatically reduced?”

Table 5.

Meaning perspectives and organizational dimensions of the changes

Meaning perspectives	
Epistemic	The problem holder had identified the problem starting from a series of events and informal reports coming from different sources, which have highlighted a situation of discomfort and distress; she was expecting from the group some help in “codifying” the problem and have some suggestions of intervention. She points out how the present situation is the result of a process. The group suggests how it is important to collect measurable data to be used by the organization confronting better and worse situations.
Psychological	She framed it as “a situation of disaffection” pointing out how the problem is connected to a certain difficulty in “holding on”. She also points out the loneliness of the coordinator who is emotionally involved and faces these problems by herself. There are a “before” and an “after”; the issue is a “condition of difficulty in which it is necessary to support motivation”. Motivation is the

	lever for change, therefore one should consider motivation as a starting point and not as a goal.
Socio-linguistic	Slowly this situation “is precipitated” and now everything is “so heavy” (“nurses are with the tongue to ground”); When the problem holder had posed the problem had used the word “motivation” but what she had described can be rather understood as “uneasiness”; acting on motivation is a sort of “palliative”
Professional	The problem holder has been discussing the problem with the coordinators and with other colleagues. The coordinators, who are the main actors, are expected to work as “jugglers” in these conditions. It is necessary to establish an interprofessional alliance between nurses and doctors because fatigue is also a symptom in the work of the doctors. Professional development can be an opportunity to talk and reflect together on the problems emerging from practice.
Organizational	Are these motivational or organizational issues? The problem holder has tried to involve also the institution responsible for professional training and development, which has listened to the request and offered some proposals of professional development to support the nurses in their tasks but nothing specifically addressing the issues of discomfort and motivation. It is therefore necessary to map the different areas at risk within being useful to identify and “cultivate” protective factors.
Societal	The problem should be reframed taking into account the point of view of the patient. A possible solution could be an alliance with patients and families that should be understood as a political alliance, involving all the departments...

The problem holder came back on the challenge acknowledging the richness of the contributes and her learning from listening to the others but also from being supported and understood. She reframes the problem in terms of strategies and solutions that the organization should find and apply in order to contrast the discomfort of the professionals on the basis of a mapping and a documentation that should include also emotions and feelings, taking into account the professional climate. She plans to involve students in the collection and analysis of data as well as forms of systematic reporting, follow up procedures and interprofessional meetings.

The Outcomes of the Conversational Analysis of the ALC’s Sessions: Transformation in Communicative Exchanges

Our analysis started as an open-ended process of video watching, listening to the audio recordings, and developing detailed transcripts in a cycle typical of ORID Framework (Marsick & Maltbia, 2009). The problem posed at the beginning of the session is the stated dilemma, trying to foster reflective thinking, and provide feedback if needed. As you may see, there has been therefore a significant epistemic shift in the setting of the problem and in the role played by the different stakeholders and this indicates the advancement of a transformative learning process.

Table 6.

The ORID check-list for data recorded analysis (inspired to Marsick & Maltbia, 2009).

ORID Questions	Workshops 1	Workshop II	Workshop III	Elements of interactions	Transformative key-points
The problem:	“How can it be possible to reduce the requests of caesarean section from pregnant women?”	“How can I re-motivate and re-construct a team working in rescue emergency which has become progressively detached and de-motivated?”	“How can it be possible to take care of the nurses who have the task to coordinate the nursing services, supporting their motivation and reflectivity in whereas spaces and resources have been dramatically reduced?”	Interprofessional interactions Gender interactions Novice and experts interactions	Focus on the problem and questioning prior assumptions taken for granted
Objective questions (The “facts” about the situation, what is happening?)	“Did you engage your colleagues and institution?” “What is the percentage of cesarean sections in your hospital?” “Did you notice a shift towards cesarean sections over time?” “Who are the other stakeholders involved?”	“What are the differences between the situation before and the present situation?” “What are the changes the professionals involved in the team have experienced over time?” “What are the different roles and positions of the professionals working in the team?”	“How did you understand and explore the difficulties of nursing services?” Who are the stakeholders involved? What kind of interventions have been previously carried on? In which terms the institution is responsible for professional training? What do you expect from this group?	Organizational involvement, team and organizations managers interactions	Reframing the problems including the organizational dimensions and the impact of them on professional work identity Epistemological shift (shift of the focus, of the approach, of the methodology)
Reflective questions (How are you feeling? How are reacting?)	“How can we support women during their pregnancy and in their choice regarding childbirth?”	The problem has been framed using words such as “breaking” and “trust” which highlight a peculiar	“When you had posed the problem had used the word “motivation” but what you had described can be rather understood as “uneasiness”.	Commitment for actions, Dialogic exchange of possible solutions, reframing of the problems according to new	Assuming the viewpoints of the others and other perspectives.

		<p>meaning perspective.</p> <p>The focus could be posed on the structure of the group and its dynamics.</p> <p>Or the focus could be posed on the practices and the situations that have determined the tensions and ruptures.</p>	<p>Are these motivational or organizational issues?"</p> <p>It seems to be a "before" and an "after". Before the motivation was higher.</p> <p>"What about assuming the role of the patients?"</p>	<p>unexpected elements.</p>	<p>Reflection on new possible strategies of actions</p> <p>Psychological shift (in terms of agency, emotional implication, engagement)</p>
<p>Interpretative questions (What does it mean?, What are we learning?)</p>	<p>Pregnancy has been differently understood now as a complex but natural process which requires to be sustained by a network of agents who play different but integrated roles in different moments.</p>	<p>Assumptions underlying the ways of framing the problem: re-motivation and re-construction of the team assuming that the issue involved personal and relational elements to be worked out instead of contextual and professional elements.</p>	<p>The problem is the result of a consolidated wrong practice that has had as an effect the loss of motivation in the coordinators and that it is necessary to question the organizational choices. She insists that acting on motivation is a sort of "palliative" whereas the difficulties are "structural" and the issue is connected to the organizational "policy".</p>	<p>Exchanges of ideas and building up of different perspectives and viewpoints on the problem</p>	<p>New interpretations of the the original problem</p> <p>The problem is socio-situated and context-related</p> <p>Socio-linguistic shift (reflection on the terms, the sayings and the methaphores used to frame and re-frame the problem).</p>
<p>Decisive questions (What do I do?, How do I respond?)</p>	<p>The challenge cannot be faced individually by a medical professional, but requires to be faced sharing the</p>	<p>There's the necessity to take into account a variety of contextual elements in order to address the</p>	<p>Mapping and documentation that should include also emotions and feelings, taking into account the professional climate.</p>	<p>Co-construction of new solutions shared by participants</p>	<p>New strategies of actions, new roles to experience in professional contexts.</p> <p>Assuming a more inclusive and open perspectives</p>

responsibility of the choice among different agents who have equal levels of engagement and responsibility.	issue in its implications and outcomes as well as the necessity to involve the team itself in a process of self-reflection on its internal and external problems.	Involvement of students in the collection and analysis of data as well as forms of systematic reporting, follow up procedures and interprofessional meetings.	on the problem, considering organizational strategies of resolution.
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Editors' Note: This paper has been edited for length. The full paper can be found online in the All Academic searchable program.

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Transformative Adult Education in the Further Education Sector in Ireland

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Abstract: Intersecting forces are challenging both the face of the adult education and the further education sector in Ireland. Ireland has a rich history of leadership in literacy education and creative and transformative adult education. Recent government intervention has directed the change in the employability and expectations of further education instruction, placing new certification requirements on instructors. This disruptive event for required academic certification for employment in the sector has initiated serious inquiry and reflection into the curriculum taught in adult education preparation programs and in the direct teaching done by the further education instructors, particularly since in many parts of this profession where there are lower wages and high competition for positions. There is indeed opportunity where adult education preparation programs and their professional collaborative groups which are becoming more intentional and creative at these points intersection for the purpose of maintaining transformative learning, while expanding connections between teaching, theory and technology-enhanced teaching and learning. The baseline research was conducted in relation to teaching staff in the further education sector in Ireland regarding their use of technology also related to the barriers and enhancers of their use of technology. Research is in initial stages related to professional graduate adult education programs in Ireland. A model for expanding the research to investigate more transformative professional development engagement is also explored.

Authors' Note: Work conducted as part of a Fulbright Research Fellowship with the Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, Ireland, 2015

Intersecting forces are challenging both the face of the adult education and the further education sector in Ireland. Ireland has a rich history of leadership in literacy education and creative and transformative adult education. Recent government intervention has directed the change in the employability and expectations of further education instruction, placing new certification requirements on instructors. This disruptive event for required academic certification for employment in the sector has initiated serious inquiry and reflection into the curriculum taught in adult education preparation programs and in the direct teaching done by the further education instructors, particularly since in many parts of this profession where there are lower wages and high competition for positions. There is indeed opportunity where adult education preparation programs and their professional collaborative groups are becoming more intentional and creative at these points intersection for the purpose of maintaining transformative learning, while expanding connections between teaching, theory and technology-enhanced teaching and learning.

This paper describes work that is taking place at the intersection of teaching, theory, and practice in the adult education and further education sectors in Ireland. “To facilitate transformative learning, educators must help learners become aware and critical of their own and others’ assumptions” (Mezirow, 1997, 10). In Ireland, most of the adult education in higher education and in further education has been provided in face-to-face formats and has only recently begun using technology facilitated learning, primarily through blended learning. Adult educators themselves have questioned the appropriateness of technology for delivery of learning, and higher education programs have been reflecting on assumptions related to technology. The government intervention has driven educators to be more reflective about maintaining transformative approaches to education, but also considering the possible greater inclusion of technology.

The National Further Education and Training Forum (FET Forum) is a professional network of eight higher education institutions in Ireland that provide certificates and degrees at the bachelor’s and master’s comparable levels in Ireland in adult education for instructors in further education. The institutions include Waterford Institute of Technology, Dublin City University, National University of Ireland Galway, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Mary Immaculate College, National College of Ireland, Marino Institute of Education, and the National College of Art and Design. This forum has been developing professional guidelines and competencies for further education instruction in collaboration with the certification process of SOLAS (Further Education and Training Authority).

A 2015 Fulbright scholar research opportunity at the Waterford Institute of Technology allowed for focused planning and work with the FET Forum to do a baseline study on barriers and enhancers to the use of technology by further education instructors. Research is in initial stages related to professional graduate adult education programs in Ireland and the use of technology by instructors in the further education sector. The particular research investigated the role of the professional development for the adult educator in the further education sector. This sector includes instructors who teach in a broad variety of areas such as vocational education, literacy education, institutions similar to community colleges in the United States and college transition programs, and art or museum programs. Recent government directives in Ireland require instructors who want to teach in this sector to complete a certificate or degree in adult education (ERSI, 2014). While controversial, this directive has allowed for an active review of the role of professional development for the further education instructor. This critical examination about teaching is occurring in these eight institutions who are offering opportunities through certificates or degree programs in institutes of technology or universities for adult educators. Higher education faculty in these programs have designed transformative learning experiences that both respect the experience of these sometimes experienced and sometimes novice further education instructors but also stretch the examination of practice. The ultimate goal of these adult education certificate or degree programs is to improve the success of the vocational and literacy students themselves (SOLAS Further Education and Training Authority, 2014.)

One aspect of professional development has been the active exploration of the role of technology in the classroom practices of the further education adult educator. Surveys were distributed in 2015 related to the barriers and enhancers for the use of technology in the further education classroom in Ireland. Once the baseline data is assembled, a plan is in process to replicate aspects of King’s (2002, 2004, 2009) work using the Learning Activities Survey – Technology Form or a similar process to investigate more reflective practices. There are also

recommendations for improvements in higher education programs related to technology and for embedded workplace professional development. This paper shares some of the design and portions of the initial results of this study but also a discussion of the impact of the reality of the circumstances of the context of the challenges of teaching in a transformative way in this sector.

The higher education qualifications in Ireland are focused on education, which allows further education faculty to question and challenge discussions on critical further education improvement. This is taught through critical theory, reflective activities, and alternative approaches and perspectives on teaching practices.

There are intersecting implications for teaching, theory, and practice. There are also intersecting implications for graduate education, for policy and for the contextual environments of the further education teacher. Instructors who teach in this sector have complex contextual challenges as described in Fletcher (2007). The collaborative higher education adult educator group in Ireland, the FET Forum, will continue to address these contextual challenges with their graduate student further education instructors.

The research linking transformative learning and technology has been led predominantly by King (2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2009, 2013). King's work identified perspective transformation approaches in teacher education programs (2002a) and design for higher education programs (2002b, 2004). More recent work identifies perspective transformation through informal learning through social networking (2011). Kitchenham studied perspective transformation of elementary teachers through interviews of teachers in a professional development program finding that they do have transformations as they learn to use, adopt and teach educational technology. Whitelaw, Sears and Cambell (2004) studied a faculty development program in higher education related to transformative learning outcomes. The findings did not indicate evidence of transformative learning, but the researchers proposed future ways to both design the learning experiences for greater perspective transformations and also for better ways to get higher quality responses.

Models and recommendations for integrating technology for blended or technology-enhanced learning have been developed in Ireland (Wall, 2012, Wall and Ahmed 2006, SOLAS, 2014, ESRI, 2014). A particular challenge in further education is that professionals must have subject matter technology and pedagogy competence and also an appropriate pedagogical approach for the delivery of training and education (SOLAS, 2014). A comprehensive literature review was conducted by Attwell and Hughes related to pedagogic approaches to using technology for learning for Lifelong Learning UK (2010). A key challenge identified in the literature view was that there is an intersection between the instructor's use, confidence, attitude and access to technology which can reflect positively or negatively impact instructors and learners. The National Adult Literacy Agency of Ireland commissioned case studies for teaching reading in Ireland in collaboration with the Waterford Institute of Technology, which also gave evidence of technology's influence on teaching (Byrne, O'Grady and Roche, 2014). These case studies show that assessing the readiness of the learner involves discussion related to particular needs and the relevance of instructional technology resources.

The survey was developed based on these resources and previous studies of technology use by faculty and instructors in higher education in Ireland, particularly through Waterford Institute of Technology (Widger, personal communication, September, 2015). It was important to first contextualize technology within the larger frame of professionalization of further education in Ireland. Walsh (2014) adapted European materials on the professionalization of adult educators for the further education sector in Ireland. The FET Forum during a colloquium, put forth a proposal for a competency framework including technical, pedagogical and

interpersonal perspectives, noting multiple competing perspectives in the intersections of governmental intervention, competing theoretical perspectives on professionalization, and further research on professional identity and educator's self-perceptions.

Current students of the certification programs at Waterford Institute of Technology and Marino Institute of Technology were surveyed regarding the barriers and enhancers to technology-enhanced learning in their own teaching practices. One hundred and ten students were surveyed and thirty-five students returned the surveys, a response rate of almost 32%. Students will be surveyed at the six remaining colleges this fall.

Initial survey results indicate that further education instructors, while often working with sometimes little access to technologies for learning are quite inventive in pursuing ways to connect with students. Many of the experienced instructors previously worked in independent settings, such as for literacy programs which have now been converted to group settings, presenting new challenges for delivery. Some instructors are creatively using technology to connect with specialized learning resources, as described in the National Adult Literacy Agency publication (2014). The surveys also show the need for creating networks or learning communities to assist instructors in remaining current with the continually changing technology resources to support students.

Selected results from three of the questions on the baseline survey are shared for purposes of describing the initial results and for discussion of determining the next steps in the study. To ground technology in the professional aspects, the FET Forum's areas of professional competency were used. Participants were asked to self-report their ratings of the competencies to determine areas of strength or challenges related to participant's capabilities as educators on a scale from minimum capability to fully developed professional skills. The greatest strengths participants identified were in the following capabilities where the average rating was between good professional capabilities and fully developed capabilities:

- providing a supportive learning environment;
- using appropriate teaching to effectively foster new knowledge and skills with students.

The area of least self-identified capability of the seven competencies by the participants was rated between some capabilities and good professional capabilities:

- using appropriate media and technology to effectively foster new skills with students;
- using an appropriate range and balance of techniques to facilitate learning;
- attending to individual needs and differences.

It is also important to understand the barriers in the use of technology-enhanced learning and instruction. The greatest barriers identified by the further education instructors were for the following, rating an average response between moderate and large barrier:

- learner's financial situation and access to purchase technology resources;
- learner training not available;
- learners having proper access to equipment;
- time required to design and implement technology.

Of less concern as barriers to the further education instructors were the following, an average rating between small and moderate barrier:

- knowledge of blended and online learning;
- experience of using technology enabled in teaching;
- alignment with teaching philosophy.

Participants were also asked their level of agreement or disagreement with statements relative to technology based training on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The average ratings were at the agree level with the following statements related to technology- enhanced learning:

- broadens access to education for students;
- improves the capability for the instructor to individualize and personalize learning;
- increases student autonomy;
- allows for greater formative feedback.

Participants were not in agreement with the statement that technology enhanced learning reduces instructor control.

Creativity with the use of technology was identified in both the questions and the open comments. Further education faculty are actively using video and multimedia as well as mobile devices. Several learners suggest activities of having learners share the iPads and other tablet devices among students in small groups as illustrations.

While full results analysis is premature, there are clearly some developing patterns. Further education instructors are moderately concerned about their capabilities to using appropriate media and technology to effectively foster new skills with students and in using an appropriate range and balance of techniques to facilitate learning. But when listing barriers to technology enabled learning they do not emphasize their own particular skill set and experience, instead the barriers are more related to the learner's situation. Instructors also appear to have general agreement that technology has some positive potential for broadening access, personalizing learning, improving feedback and increasing autonomy. So instructors are willing to use the technology for improvement, if the learners have access. There was some concern about instructors having time to implement technology. This is particularly important in a field where instructors often work multiple part-time positions in different institutions.

In this baseline study most participants identified fairly instrumental approaches to utilizing technology, and the learner barriers were compelling in the challenge to instructors. The initial survey results as a baseline give little evidence of transformative learning in the workplace. In the open-ended commentary a few identified aspects of communities of practice and social networking as described by King (2011). The researchers anticipate a second stage of the research where interviews and surveys will explore further areas of technology enhancement and perspective transformation related to guiding the instructors own professional development related to technology. Under consideration is further work using the Learning Activities Survey-Technology Form by King (2002a).

During the Fulbright, the research scholar observed and participated with Irish faculty teaching credit seminars with further education instructors, with particular studies being offered in topics such as blended learning and technology-enhanced learning. These studies were predominantly being delivered face-to-face, but faculty were actively building components to connect learners through the Moodle platform.

During the Fulbright, the researcher observed and participated with Irish faculty who were co-teaching a cross-disciplinary blended professional development seminar for other faculty in the higher education institution. This course was co-designed by the Director of Instructional Support and five experienced blended teach faculty. Over the course of a term the faculty met five daylong seminars, covering themes such as teaching theory and teaching technologies; existing and emerging technologies; blended learning course design; learning in an in-between space; intercultural diversity in a blended space. The resulting projects gave evidence

of not simply revising face-to-face based studies, but truly re-conceptualizing approaches to teaching.

Each of the programmatic examples gave some indication of activities generally described in the transformative learning research such as perspective shifting and reflective activities (King, 2004, 2013; Kitchenham, 2006; McQuiggan, 2012). Lively discussions involved faculty and learners challenging and questioning each others' assumptions. Communities of practice were also begun, particularly in the professional development seminar for the higher education faculty. The small community of faculty continue to work together in small group meetings and online, nine months beyond the end of the seminar.

These activities help the participants critically reflect upon how they approach teaching and how they view technology. The approaches to co-teaching and going beyond the standard instrumental professional development approach with technology can be expanded with further education instructors. For example, a blended professional development opportunity could be offered in the workplace, where expertise and creativity could be shared. Social networking, as described by King (2011) or self-forming communities of practice as described by Gastic and Konecky (2016) also have potential.

This paper session will encourage discussion and collaborative research about technology-enhanced teaching practices that cross cultural and geographic boundaries. Collaboration is already in progress between researchers in Ireland, United States and Slovenia, (Widger, et al., 2016). The similarities and differences are also interesting to explore using the lens of transformative learning theory. Researchers in Ireland have expressed interest in further collaboration and exploration at this particularly important time of intersection between theory, practice and teaching.

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Transformative Potential for Physician Educators in an Adult Learning and Leadership Program

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Abstract: Realizing the large investments of time and money required to complete a degree program, there is both a need and an interest in creating programs that will increase access to meaningful learning experiences for educators in the health professions. A collaborative self- study of a small group of physicians enrolled in a doctoral program in Adult Learning and Leadership was conducted to better understand how this program impacted participants as practitioners and individuals.

Inquiry questions were addressed through six cycles of Collaborative Inquiry over a two- year period. Inquiry questions focused on (a) motivations for joining the program and expectations regarding the personal impact of the program, (b) ripe learning moments and critical incidents, (c) impact of particular content and delivery, (d) perspective and behavior changes attributed to enrollment, (e) envisioned ideal program design and (f) transformations both personal and professional over time.

While participants initially were interested in instrumental learning, they characterized their learning as surprisingly transformative, with evolution of perspectives, boundary crossing and identity negotiation. Curricular content, faculty, and classmates in medical and non-medical educational communities contributed to meaningful learning.

Introduction

This paper reports on findings of a “collaborative inquiry” (CI) (Kasl & Yorks, p.3) undertaken by a group of four, three physicians and a faculty sponsor. The physicians are participants in an adult learning and leadership doctoral program. Through a collaborative framework the group worked together generating cycles of inquiry, reflection, discussion and analysis, in an iterative recursive style. The questions generated sought to explore how, why, and in what ways the participants’ perspectives changed, if at all, through both the experience of being involved in the academic program as well as in the CI. The questions revolved around motivations, the content and impact of the program and perspective changes both personal and professional that occurred over time.

The final stage of the inquiry involved reviewing prior responses to the co-created questions and the ensuing transformative changes, explored both at the individual and collective levels. Interpretations related to content, process, demographic and disciplinary differences were unpacked, however due to space limitations they will be elaborated upon in a subsequent paper. Key elements of the program with notable impact for professional development of medical educators are highlighted. Catalysts for reflection including self-reflection on practice, and potential for community building within and beyond the academic program are considered.

The initial frame included “space,” both physical and intellectual as a critical factor in learning, as the program is situated outside the traditional hospital setting and incorporates other practicing professionals from other disciplines; hence the foregrounding of “intersectionality.”

Background

The adult learning and leadership degree program at the university in which it is delivered has transformative learning as its foundational core. The program incorporates in-person contact at the university. Distance learning opportunities are offered for a few courses in on-line or blended formats. Three of the four participants live locally while one member lives out-of-state. The program is not specifically targeted toward medical educators. A commonality drawing the participants together was a shared passion for medical education and a profound concern with improving patient care. Through this inquiry, participants hoped to explore the “multi-nexus” of multi-membership (Wenger, 1998) as each physician maintained a teaching and clinical practice in a different disciplinary specialty in a different medical institution. Through this “Community of Practice” (CoP) (Wenger, 1998) the participants communicated in person and virtually to share thoughts on identity development as educators and practitioners.

Physicians are concurrently adult educators and practitioners, whether this is part of their identity or lexicon or not, as physicians’ learners are other adults - providers, or patients, or the parents or caregivers of patients. While medical education occurs at every academic medical center, CoPs for medical educators and opportunities for constructive discourse about teaching and learning are not broadly accessible. Those with an interest in medical education have limited opportunity to engage with other educators related to their interests and ideas. The relative marginalization of medical educators compared to researchers and clinicians in academic medicine (Kumar, Roberts, & Thistlewaite, 2011) impacts identity formation of medical educators, thus potentially negatively affecting the pursuit of professional development related to teaching and learning.

Faculty development in medical education is frequently informal and varies widely. Offerings can contrast greatly in both format and content (Tekian & Harris, 2012). There is a lack of consensus regarding the importance of various pedagogical principles for medical educators and education researchers (McLeod et al., 2009; Kuper & Whitehead, 2013; Schumacher, Englander, & Carraccio, 2013). Adult educators recognize that format and group composition can impact receptivity in learning experiences. Shared interests and common goals can affect the development of constructive CoPs; these can in turn affect the trajectories of participating physicians as educators (Wenger-Trayner, Fenton-O’Creevy, Hutchinson, Kubiak, & Wenger- Trayner, 2015). This study describes a look inward by physicians in a doctoral program in adult learning and leadership, to learn more deeply about impacting the outer world of medical education.

Purpose

This ongoing CI and study aims to provide insight into the transformative potential of adult learning and leadership curricula for medical educators. The findings culminate with recommendations and implications related to the transformative potential of adult learning and leadership programs, informing ways to optimize “intersectionality” in constructing professional development programs for educators in the health professions. The final section revisits transformative learning theory in light of the collective understanding and interpretations.

Collaborative Inquiry Method

The CI cycles, six in total, addressed eleven sub-questions (Table 1) over the two-year period 2014-2016. Beginning in February 2014, the group scoped out shared interests and initial queries of common concern. Participants established a Google Site to facilitate rounds of question generation and sharing. The final journal (May 2016) addressed perceptions of the overall personal impact of the program and the CI itself.

Participants responded to the inquiry questions individually in journal entries of 1-2 pages. These journals, and other documents and resources, were shared on the Google Site with a calendar for due dates, group calls, and meeting notes. Individual analyses of the journals were posted for each CI cycle. The collective analysis of these journals formed the basis of this paper. Salient themes related to significant learning experiences as well as perspective changes and transformations follow; they are presented as corresponding to the organizing framework as seen in Table 1. The quotes included are identified with the physician participant indicated by letters A, B, and C. The initials JB indicate the faculty member.

Findings and Interpretation

Significant Learning Experiences

Introduction to disorienting content. All participants were impacted by course content, although each focused on different theories and theorists. Participant A saw *adult development* and Perry's concept of *duality* as key, providing insight to better understand others, accept personal limitations and the limitations of one's practice as a physician. Another participant indicated Mezirow's *transformative learning theory* and Schon's *reflection-in-action* seemed most influential, informing that participant's work with medical simulation (B). Another participant highlighted the impact of *critical theory* and *emancipatory learning*. This participant "never perceived the extent of oppression and dehumanization" in learning and its connections to the hierarchy that exists in academic medicine, but through coursework in the program identified "the need for supportive relationships between peers in order to bring about needed change" (C).

Participation in processes. All participants considered an online degree format as an opportunity to save time and minimize separation from family but concluded they would not feel engaged in this type of learning community; that a face-to-face learning medium would be more effective for the expectations of their studies; and that an online program would potentially lack the rigor and caliber needed to garner respect in medical communities.

Each participant enrolled in online courses offered within the program. Considering experiences in the program to date, each participant felt least engaged in on-line forums with virtual communities (A). "My ideas were never developed; my questions weren't always answered... the feedback was minimal. Waiting for responses, not being able to clarify my points, not being able to explore the affective domains of conversations" (B) did not seem to address participants' learning needs as well as other formats.

In-class sessions were most appreciated; these sessions provided participants with an opportunity to break away from the clinical demands of their workplace. There was a sense of accountability with the group. Sessions that met every week, or every other week, were perceived as successful, as they allowed participants the chance to complete readings, reflect, and apply concept to the workplace. Efficiency was important ("I had an inner impatience" [A]).

There was wide variability in the contexts in which participants felt the strongest sense of engagement. While one felt most engaged while writing reflective pieces to a professor ("I could focus and interpret and reflect and formulate my thoughts in text... this engagement was very

private and isolated” [C]), another felt most engaged in the facilitated conversations in an advanced class on theory and practice (“we were having one giant holistic conversation; a conversation that challenged me; and a conversation that pushed me to make connections I never believed could exist” [B]), and participant A experienced it in the culminating presentations from group work (“where everyone comes together and the job finally gets done, crystallizing something nicer than anticipated”).

In a class with students of varied backgrounds outside of medicine the “small size of the group was enough to make everyone feel comfortable to share his/her ideas. It was almost like a therapy session” (B). The varied backgrounds of other students were appreciated in this context as it supported learning. “Hearing how the theory applied to areas outside of healthcare helped reinforce the content” and as a direct result of this “I could make meaning of the theoretical applications to medical audiences” (B).

Participants expressed appreciation for learning even at times when each felt particularly distanced, whether it was about group dynamics or on-line courses.

Learning with others. Each participant was significantly impacted by personal relationships formed through the program.

Professors, classmates outside of medicine, and other medical educators contributed to feelings of engagement. While some participants hoped to develop such relationships when they enrolled in the program, these relationships were not always desired or expected from the start (“I was not here to make friends and I didn’t expect to meet people I would click with” [A]). While participants ultimately found group projects had the potential to stimulate strong feelings of engagement, some did not initially embrace small group projects. When the projects seemed artificial and there did not seem to be potential to make an impact participants felt less engaged. When others did not present well-formulated ideas, sense of engagement decreased. “Participating in small groups with participants from different career and academic backgrounds and at different stages of life did not seem fruitful a priori” (A). When a group lacked balanced heterogeneity and peers seemed dissimilar, a participant described challenges related to medical identity in interactions with classmates, “I was ‘the doctor’ and found I was either reinforcing or rebelling against the associated persona” (C).

One participant appreciated having coursework with other students **within** the medical field as this allowed deeper discussions of the coursework, and gave further meaning to the content. However, another highlighted class discussions with students **outside** the medical field as providing key insight into course material.

Participants commented on the impact working together on this collaborative inquiry has had on them, as this was an authentic collaboration, guided by friendship towards a common goal. New appreciation for the differences in perspectives surfaced in the context of shared backgrounds.

All three participants noted the impact of a particular mentor they developed in the program with whom they worked on this CI (JB). This individual was identified as a faculty member; advisor; colleague; and friend. She demonstrated interest in participants’ careers and projects and facilitated the development of a community of medical educators within the program. Her involvement precipitated an admiration in participants for all program faculty: for their constant presence, their knowledge, and their dedication to the program. Overall, a sense of engagement was stimulated by awareness that one’s activity was personally meaningful, contributing to learning, role or identity formation.

Perspective Changes and Transformations

The program resulted in surprising shifts for participants; “I didn’t expect this degree to promote a personal growth. I was supposed to get a degree that would make me more comfortable as an educator, and possibly advance my career. I have personally transformed” (A). The transformation for one participant was “stepwise, slow, and unconscious” (A). Assumptions “both personal and professional” were challenged (B). Transformation was described “in perspectives and in actions taken as a result” (C), in the ability to see the bigger picture (“looking past the trees and get a glimpse of the forest” [B]), and to move “away from a black and white interpretation of the world and of self” (A). In describing these transformations, the participants noted changes in their perspectives as educators, as clinicians, as researchers, and in their perspectives of themselves. The timing of this sustained CI, the two plus years, allowed participants to identify changes in behavior attributed to the changes in their perspectives (elaborated upon below).

Expanded competencies in practice. As clinicians, two of the participants described an increase in empathy (A, B) and a new ability to “hear others’ stories” (A), allowing them to be more “mindful of the experience of patients” (B), to be a better patient advocate (A), a “better colleague” (A) a “better communicator” (A), and a “better academic writer” (A). Participants described an increase in tolerance for ambiguity (A), being “comfortable with different paths to reach an outcome even if they’re different from” the participant’s (B), and being able to “appreciate the perspectives of others” (C). As a result, approach to curriculum, teaching and learning was fundamentally changed; “the ... curriculum ‘freed’ the way I think about curriculum ... [and had a] “profound influence on the way I now learn and teach,” as if working with a “new *operating system*” (B).

Reorientation of goals and activities. The participants offered their perspectives about their attitudes before enrollment in the program. For one participant, enrolling in the program was the “next logical step” (B) for an educator who felt part of the “medical education conveyor belt” (B). This step felt automated, prescribed, logical, yet an important step to “further ... studies as educator” (B). The participants recognized their approach to medical education prior to participating in the program as “instrumental” (A). Enrollment in the program was a means to obtain specific “informational knowledge and skills” (C) to be applied in designing “simulation-based programming” (B) and “to impart knowledge more effectively” (C).

As a result of participation in the program, two participants described feeling “charged” (B) with an “obligation” to promote a more collaborative environment (C), to “repair the training of the medical educator belt” (B) and to “change the culture of academic medical centers more thoroughly” (C). A “responsibility” to “be holistic” (B) in trying to understand problems was noted. Participants described a new ability and drive to “resist group think” (C), to recognize marginalization of learners and minorities in medical education (A, B) and promote the “emancipatory role” of education (A).

A shift in “educational philosophy as medical educator” (B) changed participants’ approaches to “power struggles” (A) and a participant redirected research projects to focus on promoting students growth rather than informational learning (C), departing from the instrumental approach of “filling buckets” (C) with knowledge and skills.

Evolution of identity. As a result of this program, a participant described a new identity as “an educator who practices medicine and teaches” (C) in a medical school. Participants described becoming “more aware of misconceptions” (A), and trying to avoid assumptions, “both personal and professional” (B). A participant described an increase in self-efficacy and

interest in leadership roles, along with a new outlook on leadership as “the act of caring for the growth of others” (C).

While acknowledging the transformation brought about by participation in the program, two participants noted that “maturity” (B) and the natural development process (A) could have played a role as well.

Conclusions and Directions for Practice

A major element that serves as a profound catalyst for the transformations of physicians in an adult learning and leadership doctoral program is the acknowledgement of the “intersectionality” of personal, professional and academic lives and the CoPs to which the participants belong or are ascribed to.

The participants arrived at this intersection generally looking for instrumental learning. It was through the program, however, that appreciation for transformative learning organically developed. Participants’ engagement was enhanced by a sense that their activities in the program were personally meaningful. Various educational philosophies resonated with the participants, but none of these focused on enhancing instrumental learning. This speaks to the relevance of broad curricular content.

Participants all found classes that met in person more engaging than those held entirely online, as they had anticipated. It is possible other physicians who do not have concerns about connecting with others online might not share this perspective, and other online courses might not be perceived similarly. Nonetheless, it is notable that the participants appreciated the tempo of longitudinal courses that met periodically, as these allowed opportunities between sessions to complete readings, reflect, and apply educational concepts in practice, with a sense of responsibility to classmates and promotion of learning through discussions in class.

In medical training it is emphasized that physicians have a professional responsibility **not** to erode the trust people have in physicians. This can potentially contribute to challenges in sharing with a group outside of medicine; in-person meetings may offer a safe space to establish this trust, and develop safe relationships for physicians’ authenticity and growth.

Transformations resulted in expanded competency in practice, reorientation of goals and activities, and evolution of identities as physicians and educators. As a result of their transformations, the participants collectively felt more critical of the assumptions that drive systems maintaining the status quo, and more empowered to challenge these assumptions as medical educators.

One shared interest in the group was to conceive of ways to continue to create and improve programs that would increase access to meaningful learning experiences for educators in the health professions and stimulate the development of ongoing CoPs. The participants are hopeful that these findings can provide insight into impactful experiences and the role of intersectionality in contributing to these changes and transformations in perspectives and more importantly to practices as educators and clinicians.

Implications for Transformative Learning Theory

Building upon the CoP theoretical literature and its initial conceptualization in the “multi-nexus” of memberships along with Wenger and colleagues’ more recent work (Wenger-Trayner, et al., 2015), this work expands our understanding of transformative learning and how it unfolds in professional practice. Key to these transformations is the situated dimension of dialogic interaction and participation occurring outside the traditional hospital and medical center setting

and the exposure and discourse with others who are practicing professionals from other disciplines. The adult learning and leadership curriculum and this CI encouraged and deepened self-reflection, particularly regarding insider/outsider knowledge and varying participation in various CoPs, as these physicians continue to explore multi-membership in CoPs as not only physicians but also educators, learners, colleagues, friends, and leaders.

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Table 1.
Collaborative Inquiry Questions

Inquiry Area	Specific Inquiry Questions
Motivation and Expectation	<p>Why did you join the program?</p> <p>What did you expect to get as a result of participation?</p>
Emotive to elicit ripe learning moments	<p>At what point in your experience in the program did you feel most engaged with what was happening. Who or what was involved? What happened? Why was it so engaging? What action did you feel was most affirming or helpful regarding the incident? Have your feelings about this changed over time and if so how?</p> <p>At what point in your experience in the program did you feel most distanced from what was happening? Who or what was involved? What happened? Why was it so distancing? What action did anyone take that contributed to your feeling confused, puzzled or disengaged? Have your feelings changed over time and if so how?</p>
Content and Delivery	<p>Which, and in what ways, has specific course content impacted you?</p> <p>In what ways have interpersonal interactions impacted you? (peers/professors/other students)</p> <p>How has the rhythm, cycles, space-location, technology impacted your participation?</p>
Perspective and Behavior Changes	<p>In what ways has your practice been impacted (if at all)? In what ways if any has your thinking been impacted? How has your conception of your role as a medical educator changed since beginning the program and if so how?</p>
Envisioning Program Design	<p>From participation to date, what if anything surprised you most? What if anything do you wish were different?</p> <p>If you were designing a program for health provider educator participants what do you think would be essential to include in terms of content and format?</p>
Perspectives and Transformational Changes	<p>In looking back over your participation in the program and the collaborative inquiry what if any perspective changes and/or transformations do you see in yourself both personal and professional, and to what do you attribute them?</p>

Beyond Dichotomies in Researching Transformative Learning: The Dialectical Relationship between the Social “Urge to Merge” and the Individual Quest for Authenticity

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Abstract. A pressing issue in recent discussions of TL is the emphasis on dichotomies (e.g. Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Mälkki, 2010; Fleming, 2016; West, 2014). For example, the individual and social dimensions are often presented as if they were disconnected or separate from one another. In this paper we offer a dialectical (Rainio & Hilppö, 2016) framework that integrates both the social and psychological aspects of transformative learning. This framework organizes four aspects of that dialectical process to reveal both how they may be profitably integrated and, further, how imbalances will result when one or more of these aspects is neglected. We view TL as a process driven by the twin engines of the psychological need for authenticity and the social need for recognition and belonging.

Introduction

In this paper we conceptualize individuals as existing within a force field of both psychological and social pressures. Interrogating the nature of this dynamic and shifting field deepens our understanding of the vicissitudes of transformative learning. Understanding those vicissitudes would go some way to help us to support those individuals undergoing transformative learning experiences. Seen this way our paper can be received as an alternative, or possibly an elaboration, of a central dichotomy prevailing in recent discussions of transformative learning, i.e. the separation between individual and social dimensions. For example, Mezirow's work has been repeatedly criticized for its individualistic emphasis at the expense of relational and social aspects of transformative learning (e.g. Clark & Wilson, 1991; Illeris, 2007; Mezirow, 2009; Taylor, 2007). Also earlier discussions on adult learning with its emphasis on self-directedness (Knowles, 1975; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) necessarily emphasized the individual dimension. On the other hand, there are TL scholars who accentuate the social or relational aspect of transformative learning, with their focus on the processes of recognition, love, belonging and connected knowing (Fleming, 2016; Belenky & Stanton, 2000; West, 2014). Whereas Mezirow's viewpoint can be seen to focus on the cognitive rational dimension at the expense of the social or relational dimension, the social point of view offered by these scholars produces only a partial picture due to their undeveloped treatment of the influence of the individual (see Mälkki, 2010). Even in everyday usage these perspectives are employed as if competing with each other. However, we hold that the relation between individual and social are not mutually exclusive, but rather similar to the relation between part(s) and whole (Livingstone, 2016), whereby none of them exist without the other. Thus, rather than referring to distinctive and competing issues, they represent different perspectives of a broader phenomenon (see Trigg, 2001; Alhadeff-Jones, 2014), similarly to the yin yang -figure or the way a frontdoor and a backdoor offer an access to the same house. To continue with the metaphor, we may see that

while it is useful to utilize both of these doors, and to acknowledge the differing viewpoints that they offer, further insight will be produced through the process of working towards an integration of these points of entry. This may be accomplished in at least two ways. Firstly, one may examine, then phenomenologically describe, how these two dimensions are intertwined in their practical manifestation. Thus, the focus is on their interaction, as if looking at the dance between two people where it is impossible to separate the leader from the follower. From this viewpoint we might be able to see how the development of the individual is dependent on how the social and psychological dimensions are either collaborating or in conflict. For example, the social urge for belonging can interfere with the need for autonomy or authenticity. On the other hand, the social need for recognition can also be the spur that encourages the expression of one's meaning perspective in language that is accessible to others. In this manner we learn to reconcile the need for authenticity with the need to belong. Secondly, one may approach the issue by making one of these dimensions the focal point while considering the other as its tacit coefficient (Polanyi, 1958)—the way the one dimension is always implicated in the other. Similarly as the relationship to one's beloved is active in individuals even when their other is absent. Its presence is signaled by their personal feelings of longing for their other.

In this paper we attempt to unpack the co-presencing of two important dialectically related phenomena, from the point of view of the individual subject. We will attempt to show how transformative learning processes are conditioned both inter- and intra-subjectively. Our central concern is the individual while we also consider how the social or relational aspect is already present in the individual, as an inseparable part of her.

Intersubjective

When looking at Mezirow's (e.g. 1991) work regarding the intersubjective dimension, we may see that there is an explicit focus on the individual as she works towards authenticity and autonomy. At the same time, Mezirow (2000) acknowledges the social dimension. For example, he notes that autonomy grows out of participation, and further, that critical discourse is vital for transformative learning. In addition he states that a safe and accepting learning environment is important in facilitating reflection (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow has not, however, explicated in more detail this intermix of individual and social dimensions. Thus, we turn to recent discussions on recognition (Fleming, 2016), so as to reach further understanding of this intersubjective dimension.

The notion of recognition is often seen as a social level phenomenon, that is, recognition is something that happens in the relation between two subjects. However, in our view this social notion has an opening toward individual viewpoint as well: *the individual* has a need for recognition, as a natural part of him. As West (2014) notes with reference to Honneth (2009), we humans are born premature and are fundamentally needy and cannot cope without the support of others. We have an innate need for belonging, to feel accepted, to be seen (West, 2014). However, for this need for social connection to be really satisfying, requires recognition of our uniqueness. That is, it is not enough for us just to be accepted or seen as such, as if as a part of a mass. Rather we have a need to be seen as someone specific and separate—someone who is uniquely and authentically me. Thus, within the need to be seen, there are two intertwined yet, often, opposing dimensions—the need to connect to others, and the need for getting in touch with one's uniqueness, to be seen as an autonomous person. Thus the social dimension (connection to others) and individual dimension (uniqueness, autonomy) are aspects of the same phenomenon in a dialectical relationship (see Rainio & Hilppö, 2016). We conceptualize the

resulting tension as intersubjective, navigating as it does between striving to connect with others and striving to separate oneself from the others. Stated differently, we are a part *of*, and apart *from* one's family.

Intrasubjective

While the intersubjective dimension can be seen as a component in Mezirow's thinking, there is also an intrasubjective dimension. Namely, Mezirow (2000) refers to the motive force that drives the transformative process. As he states, we have..”an urgent need to understand and order the meaning of our experience, to integrate it with what we know *to avoid the threat of* [internal] *chaos*” (p.3, emphasis added). By so doing he names the intrasubjective dimension, as it deals with the way individuals understand their experiences. The meaning perspective is the framework within which the experience becomes interpreted. There is a dialectical tension here as well, although Mezirow himself has not recognized or explicated it. That is, to understand one's experience requires two interrelated processes: On the one hand it involves making meaning to the experience within the light of the meaning perspectives, that is, to bring coherence to the experience by connecting it to our previous experiences and to what we already know. On the other hand it involves attending to one's private embodied experience, opening up towards the ways in which it is unique and something that one cannot just simply “label” with the help of previous interpretations, assumptions and expectations (Mälkki & Green, 2016). The former viewpoint may be seen to be emphasized in Mezirow's (1991, 2000) writings, while the latter may be seen to be more familiar within eastern philosophies and mindfulness-tradition.

Thus, the tension between striving towards connection and striving towards uniqueness, which we brought in view regarding the *intersubjective* level, is also manifested in the *intrasubjective* level. The analogous tensions in both intersubjective and intrasubjective level are depicted below in a matrix (see Figure 1).

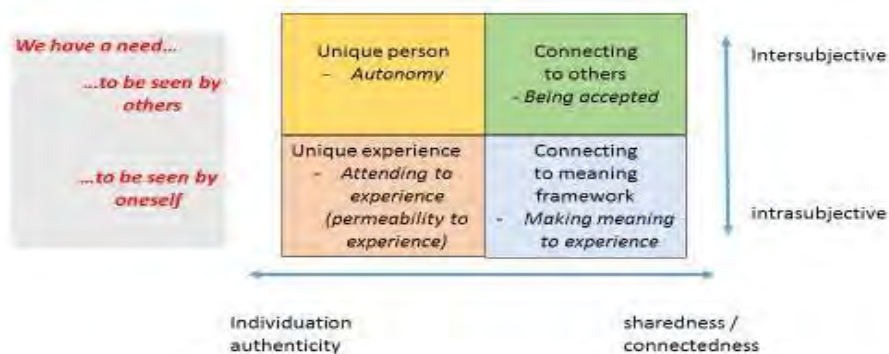


Figure 1. The grid of competing needs.

Whereas the tension at the intersubjective level was captured in the notion “need to be seen by others,” we may capture the tension at the intrasubjective level in the notion “need to be seen by oneself.” The meaning perspectives are the medium by which the experience gets recognized and assimilated. On the other hand, the meaning perspectives can be expanded or transformed through the process of attending to the unique aspects of one's experience—that which cannot be assimilated to one's previous meaning perspectives. We wonder if these processes are analogous to Vygotsky's (1978) claim that psychological functions are the

internalizations of social interactions (see also Fleming, 2016). For example, if angry children were shamed by their parents, would they develop into adults who would shame themselves in order to block any experience or expression of anger? This suggests that the intrasubjective need to be one's authentic self is a later development following the intersubjective process of striving to be seen by the other. That is, while the need to be seen by the other may never stop existing, we eventually have an intrasubjective need to understand our experience—to “know thyself” as the Greeks put it.

In a way we are suggesting that we've transferred *some* of our dependency on others to a dependency on our meanings. That is, we have an urgent need to understand our experience (Mezirow, 2000), or to state it differently, our embodied experience is the “one who needs to be seen” by these meaning perspectives of ours.

The Grid of Competing Needs and their Potential Imbalances

Above we have described the matrix in very theoretical abstract terms. Now we move to consider in what ways we may use such an analytical tool. As we noted above, rather than dichotomies, we suggest it would be helpful to see these different dimensions in dialectical tension, being part of each other, needing each other in order to be what they are. Consequently, there needs to be a certain balance among them, so that no one of the aspects is dominated by the other. To deal with these tensions in everyday life or in educational settings, requires sensitivity to each of these dimensions, and ability to facilitate balance among them. The consequences of losing the balance within these four dimensions will be considered next.

Overemphasis on autonomy. To overemphasize the dimension of autonomy would mean becoming so preoccupied with the need to be a unique person, different from others or an autonomous non-needy agent, that one would risk alienating oneself from one's communities. For example, people who've adopted a dismissive attachment style (Kietai, 2012) because of lack of responsiveness of their care givers, are often not able to navigate the give and take of intimate relationships and find it difficult to work as part of a collaborative team.

Overemphasis on connecting to others. To overemphasize the need to connect to others or to strive for acceptance, would mean submerging oneself in any relationship whether that be with one's partner, one's peer groups or one's community. One may wish to belong within a relationship so badly that one loses one's sense of autonomy and authenticity. This phenomenon occurs most clearly in intimate relationships. We offer the following hypothetical example: a couple is deciding what movie they want to watch in the evening. The wife may ask her husband what he would prefer. He states his preference and then asks her for hers. She finds that she is unable to get in touch with her desire once he has stated his. “Oh, yours sounds good,” she might reply. She has lost access to her inner experiencing in the presence of her significant other. This same phenomenon occurs as a distorted form of empathy, where one comes to respect the other's feelings to the extent that one is unable to respect one's own, for fear of hurting the other. Similar dynamics are operating in the phenomenon of “group think” or collective comfort zone where one gives up one's boundaries as the price of inclusion (Mälkki, 2010). Here again, individuals lose access to their inner experiencing and can only imitate other members of the group.

Overemphasis on connecting to meaning framework. Also adherence to one's meaning perspectives may become overemphasized. One may be tempted to “squeeze” experience into familiar meaning perspectives—forcing them into pre-existing expectations and interpretations. Consequently, one becomes resistant to any information that does not readily fit

to one's existing meaning perspectives, thus narrowing one's possibilities to learn through interacting and responding to one's situation. A child, for example, hasn't yet discovered that when they are tired, any minor frustration can quickly become a major aggravation. They assume that their reaction is a reasonable and legitimate reaction. They haven't yet developed a concept that would represent their internal state and thus allow them to compensate for their tiredness. Something similar can happen to an adult: one may interpret oneself as a strong and fully functioning individual to the extent that one fails to notice or willfully ignores all the symptoms and signs of exhaustion and burnout. Initially, when adopting this approach, life appears to be proceeding as normal; however, what is actually happening is that one has become untethered from one's actual embodied experience (see Mälkki & Green, 2016). With both the child and the adult, there is a lack of awareness of how one's internal state conditions one's experience—the surface meaning is the only meaning. Several results flow from this condition. Firstly, one doesn't "hear" the subtle signals that one has drifted off course, until the symptoms of disconnection become extreme. Secondly, as permeability to one's experience narrows or disappears, in favour of maintaining one's preferred meanings, one tends to become a closed system (Mälkki & Green, 2016). Such an individual would likely seek confirmation or validation by belonging to groups who share their world view.

Overemphasis on attending to experience. When there is an overemphasis on attending and opening up towards experience, one risks being overwhelmed by a sense of chaos (see also Mezirow, 2000). In this kind of case the experiences may run through one's body like a powerful river, but one has no concepts, nor navigational aids to make sense of those experiences. One loses the possibility of a coherent narrative for one's life (see Mälkki & Green, 2014).

Overemphasis on intersubjective. There may also be an overemphasis of the intersubjective dimension. That would mean that people would on the conscious level neglect the role and existence of the intra-subjective dimension, as if they would have no internal world of experiences and making meaning, but rather as if they would have an objective and unmediated relation to their environment and social encounters (see also Livingstone, 2016). Thus, the potential for deliberate development or reflection would be diminished, since one could not put one's experiences or processes of meaning making as objects of one's mind but would rather approach life and social circumstances similarly directly as a small child, yet with the adult's history of their previous experiences tacitly orienting their interpretations and behavior.

Overemphasis on intrasubjective. When there is an overemphasis of the intrasubjective dimension, one would be preoccupied with one's internal world of experiences and meanings to the extent that one would neglect and fail to fully develop an intersubjective or social understanding of one's existence. That is, one may generate an individualistic understanding of oneself similar to the implicit emphasis given by neoliberalism. In that way we have come to take for granted and neglect the ways in which one is fundamentally dependent on others, also in order to be autonomous (see Rainio & Hilppö, 2016).

Towards more integrated understanding of Transformative learning

Above we have disclosed some potentially competing desires that construct our subjectivity. In addition we've attempted to describe the risks entailed when some of these are overemphasized at the expense of others. Inherent in our discussion is the need to acknowledge the tensions involved when negotiating our psychological and social needs. These understandings can be usefully applied in the facilitating TL processes in educational settings. Our matrix or grid may be used as an analytical frame to attend to and foster the balance among

these relations. In doing this work, we are pointing to some phenomena that may account for some of the resistances to transformation. That is, Mezirow's theory has been interpreted as a paradigm that emphasizes the individual, the rational and the cognitive. In so doing, it has downplayed the the social, the affective and embodied aspects of existence— that are also sources of resistances to transformational processes (Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Finnegan, 2014; Mälkki, 2010; Mälkki & Green, 2016). To cite just one example, Mezirow emphasizes the goal of autonomy without sufficiently considering its interaction with the need to belong. Further, on the intrasubjective dimension, we suggest that Mezirow emphasizes the need to make meaning, to form coherent viewpoints, but without sufficiently considering the act of making meaning in the broader picture involving the need to mine one's meanings from embodied experience (see also Mälkki & Green, 2016). That is, Mezirow repeatedly emphasizes our need to be able to separate from, reflect upon and critique the pre-packaged meanings supplied by our culture. However, in our view, he doesn't emphasize enough the micro-processes required to develop our meanings from personal experience. In addition, we've hinted at, without developing the requirement that if our personally derived meanings are to be socially useful they need to be given a form that can be communicated in meaningful language to our fellow creatures. This could be an area for future research.

To conclude, while in research it is necessary to limit our focus as it is impossible to simultaneously focus in depth on all aspects of the transformative learning process, we nevertheless think that it is important to acknowledge the “cross currents” revealed by the big picture as well (see Trigg, 2001). We need both specialized research on limited aspects of transformative learning, as well as attempts to form integrated frameworks as if to build bridges across these differing viewpoints.

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Coaching for Emotional Resilience in Healthcare Professionals

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Abstract: The critical incident technique is an established method within transformative learning, there is however a caveat when using such techniques with healthcare professionals whose personal experience may harbour traumatic memories. In this paper the authors will explore an incident when reflection triggered post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in a participant. Using autoethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) as a means to investigate the incident from the perspective of the coach, the paper highlights how the development of emotional resilience in the transformative learning process can be facilitated through the application of coaching practice. The paper will offer an insight into the challenges of critical self-reflection in transformative learning, and a critical evaluation of coaching as a solution. The deeply reflective nature of transformative learning can bring those memories to the fore, and potentially cause harm. This research study examines the practical use of coaching as a means to facilitate the development of emotional resilience to mitigate harm and enable transformative learning.

Following recent catastrophic failings across certain hospitals in the United Kingdom there have been moves to establish increased levels of critical professionalism and leadership development within the National Health Service (NHS) (West, 2014). Transformation of this magnitude within a national organisation requires systemic and cultural change at the connections and intersections between departments, professions, individuals and in particular at the intersection of educators and professional healthcare students. In response, the authors as educators of nursing, healthcare and professional practice have enlisted transformative learning into their programmes of study to help health care professionals challenge underlying assumptions and foster critical self-reflection.

Through reflective practice, professionals can make sense of thoughts, words and deeds in the context of their individual perspective and the perspective of their community of practice (Appleby and Pilkington, 2014). Although Appleby and Pilkington were specifically looking at education professionals in this regard, the concept is equally applicable to public service organisations such as the NHS and local authorities, in particular social work professionals from adult and children's services. Within these professions, there is an established discourse around the development and use of reflective and reflexive practice. Reflective practice as defined by Schön (1983) is split into two types. Reflecting 'on' action, a cognitive process of looking back on an experience in order to formulate new understanding and develop new skills, and reflecting 'in' action, which relates to meaning-making whilst the experience is still unfolding, typical in the daily work of health care professionals. Reflexive practice is also a term frequently used in researching and developing practice (Freshwater, 2011), where "...reflexivity is concerned essentially with the role of the researcher in the research process" (p.185). Learning strategies,

tactics and techniques that have been developed and used to facilitate reflective and reflexive practice include portfolio development (Zubizaretta, 2009), reflective journal writing (Moon, 1999), and a popular method used in transformative reflection (Lawson, Blythe, and Shaw 2014) has been the critical incident technique (Brookfield, 1991; Tripp, 1993).

The critical incident technique grew out of studies in the Aviation Psychology Programme of the United States Army Air Forces in 1941 to develop procedures for the selection and classification of aircrews, one of the first being research on pilot training (Miller, 1947). The technique has developed and grown in the research of Flanagan (1954), however in the context of transformative learning, using the critical incident technique to explore assumptions was fully formed as a method by Brookfield (1991). Tripp (1993) summarises the process as asking learners to identify an event they consider to be critical, an event of significance and importance, from which they would hope to gain a better understanding. The event descriptions are usually written down accounts, and if written well they produce narrative descriptions of particular happenings, so graphic that the readers are able to visualise clearly the event described (Brookfield, 1991 p.179). The incident/challenge is then analysed, ideally in a group in order to explore and reframe assumptions in the light of other people's experiences and new formal knowledge (Tripp, 1993).

Reflective learning and the critical incident technique in particular can however have a psychological effect on participants. When used to challenge assumptions the technique is noted for being a painful and emotional process (Rich and Parker, 1995). Brookfield (1991) describes the process metaphorically as being explosive, visualising the demolition of a building where strategically placed dynamite charges are ignited at the structure's foundations to bring the building down. He likens educators who foster transformative learning to "psychological and cultural demolition experts" (Brookfield, 1991 p.178). Facilitators in the process have a duty of care to ethically provide a means of support for participants involved in programmes that incorporate transformative reflection activities. Whilst the authors have mitigated potential harm by providing access to a clinical psychologist and follow up coaching when incidents of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have surfaced, it has been in the practice of individual coaching that the authors have recognised increased levels of resilience developing in the coachees.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is identified in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), as a Trauma and stressor-related disorder. The essential feature of Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to one or more traumatic events....the clinical presentation of PTSD varies. In some individuals, fear based re-experiencing, emotional, and behavioral symptoms make predominate. In others, anhedonic or dysphoric mood states and negative cognitions may be most distressing. In some other individual's arousal and reactive- externalising symptoms are prominent while in others, dissociative symptoms predominate. Turnbull (2012) describes PTSD as being a normal reaction to an abnormal event, (Turnbull, 2012 p.101).

In this paper the authors have explored an incident when reflection triggered PTSD symptoms in Darren, as a coachee. Using autoethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) as a means to investigate the incident from the perspective of Ian the coach: The following passages (*in italics*) are excerpts from Ian's own reflective coaching logs, which he keeps as part of his own professional practice (EMCC, 2016). The analysis and evaluation are presented in an 'analytical-interpretive' critical style of autoethnographic writing (Chang, 2013), in which embedded

descriptive narrative passages of Ian's personal experiences are interpreted and critically evaluated using theoretical and conceptual literature sources

Darren appeared distressed, his obvious physiological symptoms were his face was grey, his brow was furrowed, and he seemed distant. I inquired as to his current state. Darren's 'I'm fine' response belied his external appearance. On reflection, I realized that Darren had not seemed his 'normal self' for a few weeks. I invited Darren to my office offering an informal coaching/supervision session to which he agreed.

This coaching intervention was initiated by Ian as a coach recognizing anxiety and stress symptoms displayed by Darren. Ian went through the standard coaching practice with regards to ethics and scope of practice (EMCC, 2016), then allowed Darren the opportunity to tell his story and ventilate (Turnbull, 2012).

As Darren was initially telling his story, Ian could detect from the timbre in his voice, the physiological signs such as the pallor of his skin, the hyper arousal, and the fact he was agitated, and he was applying a negative cognitive bias to thoughts and feelings about himself and others, this was indicating that the discussion Ian was having around work and home was maybe not the underlying issue.

I remained quiet, using silence and gentle questioning to allow Darren to share the story of whatever it was that was causing him anxiety and distress. During the session, amongst other things.....he stated, 'my BSc.....and with the kids being unwell over Christmas....I feel as though I am letting myself down and I know I can do better'. I began to realise that Darren was possibly presenting symptoms which were congruent with PTSD in DSM-5. A further discussion took place and Darren indicated that an incident from his previous paramedic practice was causing him to feel anxious, and in respect to the identified critical incident and Darren's current state of anxiety, I felt it appropriate to give Darren the opportunity to suspend the coaching session. He elected to continue. For psychological safety, I made some referral arrangements with a clinical colleague. Because the incident was particularly distressing I decided to utilize Transformative Reflection to explore Darren's current emotions and feelings in relation to his experience, rather than the incident itself.

Transformative Reflection is a conceptual model of reflection (See Figure 1 below) developed to create alternative reflective perspectives on an incident, in a liminal learning space (Lawson et al, 2014). The Transformative Reflection Model was developed for use in facilitating transformative learning in professional practice. Whilst initially used in group facilitation the model has proven to also work well in individual coaching. The process is designed to focus in on the reflection stage and extend it into a liminal space in which critical experiences can be critically reflected upon from various alternative perspectives to give greater insight and understanding of the underlying assumptions we hold in relation to how we make sense and meaning from the experience. In the first stage Ian created a safe liminal space in which the coaching conversation could be started, and diffusion can take place (Turnbull, 2011).

Stage 2a is free flowing exploration of the incident's content and process as seen through the perspective of Darren, and allows the opportunity to ventilate the associated effects and gain a perspective of the situation (Everly et al, 2000).

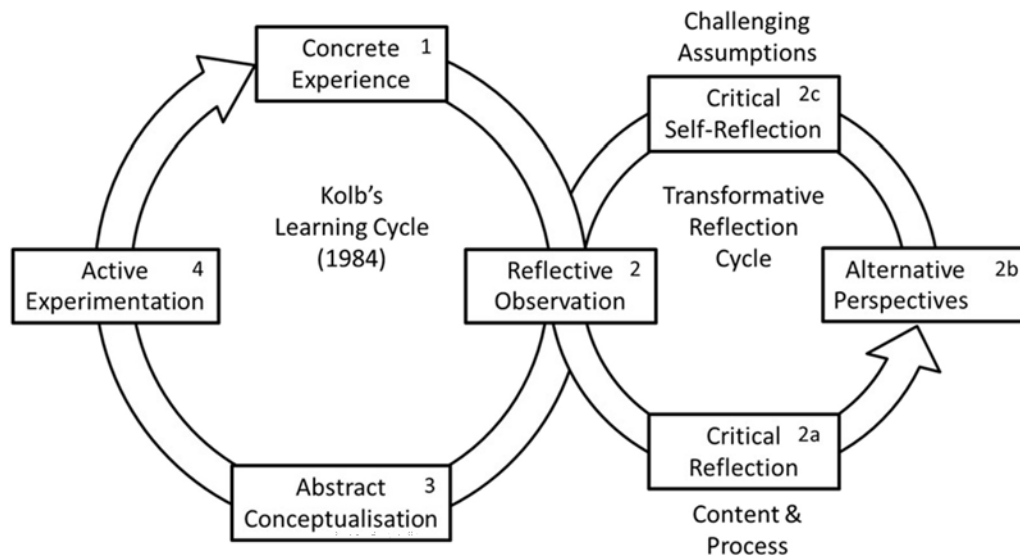


Figure 1. Transformative Reflection Model (Lawson et al. 2014)

In stage 2b I encouraged Darren to step out of his own thoughts and current frame of mind, completely disassociating him from the PTSD incident itself, focusing on the emotional feelings and negative biased thinking (that through his behaviour) he was applying to his own view of himself. I started by posing the question; how might someone else view the current description he has of himself. He chose to view this through the alternative perspective of a work colleague. The coaching continued... ..we explored his feelings around how he believed that he had let himself and other people down, and that he was wasting everyone's time', during the coaching session, we worked through these negative assumptions and limiting self-beliefs.Darren began to develop alternative perspective(s) based on a more positive attitude towards him, and the view of others, and from the conversation I could detect that he was beginning to better understand the underlying causes that had been contributing to his current state of mind.

In guiding Darren to Stage 2b Ian was careful only to suggest the changing of perspective, it is important for Darren to choose the alternative perspective. The main outcome of this stage of the coaching session was helping Darren to understand the fear evaluation structure that was supporting his negative biased thinking, (Banyard, 2015; Turnbull, 2012). Ian could see a change in Darren's physiology beginning to occur, the colour came back to his face, he was getting less agitated and he was beginning to regain a sense of perspective. As Ian began to move towards Stage 2c, he supported Darren with understanding the process of critical self-reflection. And through working with the alternative perspectives, Ian was able to coach Darren to begin to turn negatives into positives (Giglio et al, 1998).

As the coaching discussion took place focusing on the positive alternative perspective that Darren had developed during this session, particularly in relation to his own self-worth; and the positive reality of what he was achieving. Darren was showing positive improvement, developing a more positive view of himself and bouncing back from the setback; he was beginning to show signs of resilience'. Darren agreed to

carry out a post coaching task of undertaking some critical self-reflection and to utilise a reflective diary to capture his thoughts.

Resilience is referred to by Pemberton, (2015) as being, the capacity to remain flexible in our thoughts feelings and behaviours when faced by a life disruption, or extended periods of pressure, so that we emerge from difficulty, stronger, wiser and more able. Emotional resilience, according to Bharwaney (2015) is the capacity to survive pressured situations and to bounce back, and focusses on thoughts, actions and feelings and recognizes the importance of being intelligent about our emotions. The positive view that Ian saw Darren beginning to develop, is one of the factors identified by the American Psychology Association as a factor in maintaining resilience.

At the conclusion of the first coaching session, I refereed Darren to a CBT therapist for a follow up. One of my own personal reflections is that the fact that I have myself suffered PTSD, I believe that gave me a level of empathy and understanding that meant that I could develop the coach, coachee alliance fairly quickly, which I believe contributed to this first coaching session with Darren. This was the first of a number of sessions where I used my model of coaching.

Ian has been reflecting on the fact that he has himself suffered PTSD, and through the work of Turnbull (2012), he identifies with the assertion that coach and coachee alliance may have been developed quickly through the fact that an individual (the coachee Darren) who has been trapped by trauma is able to 'sense' how to escape to freedom by being with someone (the coach Ian) who'd also experienced trauma. At the time of writing this paper, the coaching sessions with Darren are continuing and he is making positive steady progress.

In conclusion, this coaching intervention has highlighted the issue of risk in transformative learning when used with healthcare professionals whose personal experience may harbour traumatic memories. The intervention brought into play two techniques of facilitating transformative coaching namely Critical Incident Technique and Transformative Reflection, and because of the extremely traumatic nature of the critical incident the coach refocused the conversation onto the current symptoms, emotions and behaviours. The shifting of focus and use of alternative perspectives in the coaching intervention enabled Darren to develop resilience. Whilst the positive shift in Darren's emotions and resilience is extremely satisfying and success of this type of coaching intervention shows promise in relation to mitigating the potential risk in transformative learning, it also highlights other variables that must be considered in further research, such as the coach's personal experiences of PTSD and did this enable him to identify the symptoms more effectively, and the refocusing of the coaching to the current symptoms rather than the original critical incident.

This research study has examined the practical use of coaching as a means to facilitate the development of emotional resilience to mitigate harm and enable transformative learning and in doing so has initiated a new direction in the doctoral studies and personal transformative learning of Ian the coach.

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Developing Crisis Leaders Through Transformative Learning

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Abstract: Crisis leadership operates under unique pressures: extreme uncertainty, complexity, time urgency, political pressure, and public scrutiny in a high consequence environment. Preparation of crisis leaders for this challenge has focused on related knowledge and technical skills, yet researchers' most frequently listed competencies for crisis leaders are not a function of knowledge and skill. They are largely dimensions of emotional intelligence (EQ), rarely taught, and never the focus of crisis training. Broad, critical competencies for crisis leaders are self-awareness, self-management, empathy, flexibility, and optimism. Importance of these competencies is not acknowledged in many public safety circles, although some of the competency subsets (decision-making under pressure, political navigation, stakeholder engagement, connected communication, adaptive leadership, and systems-thinking) are occasionally addressed in conventional training. Because typical classroom learning does not improve EQ, a transformative learning approach is proposed for the development of crisis leaders. This approach requires sufficient time for implicit learning to occur, space for self reflection and questioning one's own assumptions, and a supportive environment. This reimagined crisis leadership development program applies the principles of transformative learning to foster EQ growth. Support is provided through the relational learning of a cohort model, reflective journaling, and solicited feedback. Once this learning is integrated into their person and practice, crisis leaders are better equipped to navigate crisis and lead others through it.

Context of Crisis Leadership

Crisis leadership is leadership under such extraordinary circumstances that few leaders will ever encounter those situations. Crisis leaders are subjected to unique pressures: uncertainty, complexity, time pressure, politics, and the public scrutiny that inevitably follows crisis (Mitroff, 2004; Hadley, Pittinsky, Sommer & Zhu, 2009; Wooten & James, 2008). Crisis leadership operates in a high stakes environment, where the consequence of leadership actions may quite literally be a matter of life or death. In this, crisis leaders are distinguished from other leaders and require special preparation and development.

Traditional Preparation of Crisis Leaders

Unquestionably, planning and training are important anchors in the preparation of a crisis leader, and much attention has been given to this approach already (Ulmer, 2012; Campbell, Dardis, & Campbell, 2003; Wooten & James, 2008). In Crisis Management, Homeland Security, Emergency Management, Fire Science, Criminal Justice, and other public safety education programs, the mainstream curricula teaches mastery of the knowledge, skills, and procedural aspects of an emergency response. This carries forward into the world of implementation, where a focus on tactics and strategy comprises the dominant view of the crisis professions, particularly in the public sector (Boin & Hart, 2003).

A growing body of research indicates that current approaches are inadequate in preparing crisis leaders for the emergencies they will face. Simply doing planning, training and exercising for the response phase alone cannot equip the crisis leader to handle extreme events (Hutchins & Wang, 2008) and may actually inhibit creativity and flexibility. Excessive emphasis on the response phase of crisis leads to neglect of important pre- and post-crisis phases (Mitroff, 2004), which increases risk to communities and organizations. Even the command and control model, used among professional emergency responders, is particularly outdated and inadequate to address the complexity of crisis (Kayes, Allen, & Self, 2013). Tragedies of failed leadership under emergency conditions, such as the deaths of 14 wildland firefighter in the 1994 South Canyon Fire, continue to recur, pointing to the failure of traditional preparation methods for crisis leaders and responders at every level (Useem, Cook, & Sutton, 2005).

Desirable traits and capabilities in crisis leaders are not consistently produced from training to specific situations (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). For instance, practicing procedures does not necessarily increase the individual's ability to assess information and make appropriate decisions in an emergency, both of which are vital competencies for a crisis leader (Hadley, et al, 2009). Higher education has been asked to create learning programs that cultivate those capabilities in leaders (Collins & Peerbolte, 2011). However, a key element of that decision-making capability is how the leader is equipped to cope with imprecise information (Larsson, Ekenberg & Danielson, 2010), something which is not captured in checklists, formal plans, or executive playbooks, nor which can be apprehended through cognitive-based classroom learning.

In a meta-analysis of the crisis leadership research, current thinking indicates that the essential crisis leadership attributes are not primarily task-based but are more personal characteristics or a distinct mindset. The same themes appear over and over in tables and lists of those competencies. A new leadership development approach is needed that cultivates these competencies.

Emotional Intelligence Competencies for Crisis Leaders

The shift to describing crisis leadership in terms of personal qualities or competencies coincides with an expanding mainstream awareness of the concept of emotional intelligence, published as a psychological theory in 1990 (Salovey & Mayer). The emotional chaos of the crisis environment requires leaders to have above-average personal skills and social acumen in order to maintain their own stability, and also to manage others in the crisis. Crisis leadership competencies closely mirror certain qualities commonly understood as emotional intelligence dimensions, and this is the lens used here to explore the role of transformative learning in developing crisis leaders.

Themes of crisis leadership competencies that appear repeatedly, although sometimes under different labels, include self-management and impulse control, empathy and the ability to attune to others, flexibility and creativity, decision-making and problem-solving, optimism, and the ability to engage and inspire others (DuBrin, 2013; James & Wooten 2010; Kayes, et al., 2013; Lalonde & Roux-Dufort, 2013; Sweeney, Matthews, & Lester, 2011; Van Wart & Kapucu, 2011). Although it does not appear explicitly in most of the research, self-awareness should be added to the list of essential emotional intelligence competencies. One leading executive coach considers it so foundational that 97% of the other emotional intelligence competencies can be changed if self-awareness is mastered (Schwarz, 2015).

Unlike cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence can be significantly enhanced by conscious effort. Making changes in one's emotional intelligence takes place through an implicit

learning process whereby the individual “lives into” the learning over time and internalizes the self-growth lessons (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). In an atypical strategy for an MBA program, Richard Boyatzis incorporates emotional intelligence development into his curriculum with his students, and notes that positive changes have persisted when follow up is done up to seven years later (Boyatzis, 2009). Although awareness of the value of emotional intelligence is growing among some practitioners, formal crisis leadership training programs have yet to incorporate this notion into the curricula. Programs continue to rely on explicit learning methods to transmit knowledge in the classroom, but do not address the personal change that is necessary in order to increase the quality of leadership exhibited under extreme conditions.

Transformative Learning Principles Applied to Crisis Leadership Development

Transformative learning is the missing ingredient. This kind of learning requires the individual to expand his or her awareness, question assumptions, and be open to changing the self. The learning strategy for crisis leadership development proposed by Powley and Taylor (2014) includes both self-awareness and critical thinking, which feature prominently in transformative learning. To achieve this there must be an internal reflective process (Mezirow, 1990) and solicited feedback, ideally in a relational environment that provides support to the individual (Campbell et al., 2003). In this supportive environment, a safe space can be created to allow for the surfacing and incorporation of feelings related to the learning, which engages implicit learning, below the level of consciousness (Taylor, 2001). It requires a commitment to the necessary time investment in order for the student to have a chance to integrate the learning, as much as eighteen months (Boyatzis, 2006).

The reflective aspect of this process is essential, but perhaps the most difficult to teach or implement with crisis leaders. Engaging in reflection after an encounter with new information helps to integrate what was learned (Campbell et al., 2003; Mezirow, 1990). Over time, as the student prototypes and integrates the changes, the learning is cemented. Requiring the keeping of a learning journal or the periodic writing of reflective essays as a component of the crisis leadership program establishes this reflection step as a norm. Encouraging and normalizing the expression and sharing of emotional dimensions of the learning within that reflection process also deepens the learning (Taylor, 2001).

Structuring the crisis leadership program as a cohort model provides an environment that fosters the necessary trust in order to both share of the deep self with others, and to engage in relational learning (Drago-Severson, Helsing, Kegan, Popp, Broderick, & Portnow, 2001). In relational learning the student may become the teacher at times, and also expects to gain insights and feedback from their peers, not just the teacher. This approach directly contravenes the dominant view of the crisis professions, in which view the greatest expertise and authority resides with the leader in the command-and-control power model. The cohort model further allows for diverse perspectives from various disciplines to be incorporated into the learning. This encourages humility and curiosity in the participant, both of which open the mind to learning and increase the likelihood of having a transformative learning experience.

In a redesigned crisis leadership program that recognizes the centrality of transformative learning, the time investment is the chief stumbling block for participants, yet also foundational to the learning strategy. By extending learning over nine months instead of the typical one week intensive usually granted for a program, recursive learning is more likely to occur. The student encounters similar concepts in many different forms and in many different contexts, increasing the likelihood that the concept will be understood at its deepest level, and eventually become

implicit, embedded in the individual's daily life as a habit or practice that occurs without conscious effort.

Program and Curriculum Design Proposal

The proposed crisis leadership curriculum, program structure, and schedules are designed to facilitate transformative learning, instilling or augmenting the core skills and capabilities that every crisis leader must possess. The personal and reflective component of the program fosters the development of core cognitive and emotional competencies that contribute to success in any leadership role. Lessons are applicable to any leader who want to be prepared to handle crises or other traumatic changes when they arise, but are especially relevant to leaders in the crisis professions.

The program takes an interdisciplinary approach to leadership development and draws from research and theories in organizational science, leadership development, systems thinking, crisis management, social neuroscience, psychology (individual and group), and emotional intelligence.

The cohort meets in person one day every two months with the same classmates over a period of nine months. In the intervening month, cohort members are paired with a partner and exchange reflective essays and discuss their learning experiences. Optional follow-up sessions after program completion offer an opportunity to refresh or extend the principles that were learned in the primary program.

Five sessions are structured to begin with foundational concepts and build on them progressively:

Session I: Systems Thinking in the Crisis Context

Systems thinking underpins the discipline of crisis management. Key system elements and interrelationships are highlighted in this session to provide the context for crisis leadership. The role of the leader is described through several different lenses: the sociology of groups, individual psychology, and social neuroscience.

Session II: Self-Awareness, Self-Management

Self-awareness is the foundational skill for all other emotional intelligence competencies. Accurate recognition of emotions and their influence occurs through key physical and psychological clues. A number of tools and practices are introduced which heighten the individual's ability to track these subtle messages and influencers. The same emphasis on awareness is applied to cognitive processes, identifying and seeing the connection between how humans filter data, make assumptions, and draw conclusions. This level of self-awareness will enhance the ability to explain oneself and make sense of others' actions and thoughts. Within this context of awareness, self-management practices are also highlighted which help to bring impulses under control and contribute to positive, cooperative interpersonal relationships, more accurate judgments, and better decision-making.

Session III: Attunement, Engagement, Empathy

Crisis leaders cannot be effective if they cannot engage others, and they cannot do this without knowing how to connect with people. Practical, behaviorally-specific techniques are introduced to help read people more accurately, present the self in a non-threatening way, and improve receptivity to the leader. Organizational theory, individual psychology, group social dynamics and neuroscience explain what motivates people, how they find alignment with one another, and what the leader needs to do to establish or tap into that human connection before, during, and following a critical incident.

Session IV: Political Navigation, Decision-Making, Flexibility

Politics are part of every crisis. The crisis leader must understand and anticipate the influence of each stakeholder and skillfully navigate the associated power dynamics during decision-making. Participants learn just how to do this, recognizing and leveraging the politics and powers at play. A decision-making skills activity builds on the self-awareness, self-management, and attunement/engagement skills practiced in previous sessions. It emphasizes the cultivation of flexibility in the high-stakes/high uncertainty crisis environment by having participants engage with one another in dynamic, evolving scenarios. Cultivation of cognitive flexibility is introduced and explored.

Session V: Personal Presence, Optimism, Learning Organization

Command presence, often thought to be necessary for crisis leadership, is hard to teach, and some even claim it to be innate and therefore not learnable. It is defined in this class in a way that it is more approachable. Participants get in touch with their own core essence as a leader. They also learn how to cultivate an optimistic orientation appropriate in the crisis context. Coupled together, these aspects are used to inspire others in a way that makes them want to follow the leader. Leaders also analyze their own organizations and identify what steps might be taken to help them become more of a learning organization, one that is sensitive to warning signals, welcoming of input, and willing to taking meaningful action based on lessons learned.

Implementation

There are several requirements which must be present for a transformative learning crisis leadership program to be successful. The individual participants must understand the nature of the program and be ready for a transformative experience. Employees should never be mandated into this type of program. Participation must be voluntary so that the individual will be receptive rather than resistant to the personal changes they will undergo. The organization must allow for the employee's time commitment, and must also be committed as an organization to make changes. Because the program teaches the individual to think in systems and to question assumptions, the organizational practices may be called into question. A learning organization orientation should be in place before instituting a transformative learning program for crisis leaders so that the organization is prepared to support the crisis leader through all phases of the crisis.

Summary

Crisis leadership development is evolving beyond the traditional training and command-control models that have dominated the crisis professions in years past. The emphasis is shifting to personal development that highlights key emotional intelligence competencies rather than task-proficiency and learned behaviors. By using the principles of transformative learning rather than approaching crisis leadership development as a cognitive exercise, deep and lasting change can be achieved within individual leaders. This translates into crisis leaders of a higher caliber, and also an elevated quality of leadership that brings daily value to the organization.

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Individual Transformation Through Organizational and Societal Opposition

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Abstract: This paper applies transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) to the intersection of conflict between whistleblowers and organizations, based on an empirical study. It analyzes to what extent whistleblowers go through transformation and highlights tensions that grow out of their intersection with opposing views expressed by those in social, organizational and professional networks. We conclude by addressing shortcomings of our selected perspective, and implications for theory and practice

Introduction

Our focus is the intersection of the individual learning process of whistleblowers with organizations and society—defined vis-a-vis conflict between an individual's view of “what is the right thing to do” and opposition by organizations and groups in society motivated by profit without regard to ethical implications. Grounded in an empirical study (Wegmann, 2014) that investigated the personal experiences of 14 whistleblowers in the financial sector, we here report secondary analysis using a transformative learning (TL) lens (Mezirow, 1991) to make meaning of individual whistleblower experiences. The initial study indicated whistleblowers go through personal growth despite extreme crisis—experienced because of opposition from the organization, their social networks, and society at large. We wanted to investigate the nature of their personal growth process more closely using a psychocritical lens of TL (Taylor, 2005) to shed light on the quality of whistleblowers' learning and close a literature gap due to absence of application of TL to whistleblowing experiences.

We first provide a definition and general context of whistleblowing. To strengthen our argument vis-a-vis the intersection between whistleblowers and the organization and society, we highlight the common notion in the literature that whistleblowers —*regardless of the industry*— seem to go through traumatizing experiences as a consequence of speaking truth to power. We then introduce TL theory as defined by Mezirow (1991) and link it to the original findings of the study, *Discerning Moral Acts of Courage: An Inquiry Into the Whistleblower Experience* (Wegmann, 2014). Before concluding and drawing implications for theory and practice, we outline limitations of our chosen perspective.

Contextualization of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is commonly referred to as “the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action” (Near & Miceli, 1985, p.4). Despite popular opinion, from a systemic perspective, whistleblowing can be regarded a prosocial mechanism to prevent or stop legal and ethical wrongdoing in the private and public sector that might otherwise go unnoticed (Dozier & Miceli 1985; Glazer & Glazer, 1989; Miceli et al., 2008). In the financial sector, for example, whistleblowers have helped governments to detect serious corporate transgressions, which led to monetary and social value to our economies and society at large (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 2014;

Ensign, 2015). In ethical cultures, when the escalation and collaborative resolution of issues is encouraged, it can protect organizations from tremendous economic and reputational harm (OECD, 2012).

Despite reported benefits of speaking up, however, whistleblowers are treated with intense hostility and suffer from negative perceptions associated with the act (i.e. Alford, 2001; Miceli, M. P. et al., 2008; Weghmann, 2014). Speaking up against wrongdoing, in an organizational context, creates an intersection between the individual and the organization as well as society. Whistleblowers tend to be ostracized, retaliated against, and often publicly shunned by the organization, their social networks, and media despite their courage and personal sacrifices to serve the greater good (Alford, 2001; Weghmann, 2014). Whistleblowers suffer from serious retaliation, while in most cases, many lose their job, reputation, and social ties (Jubb, 1999; Near & Miceli, 1985). Additionally, research strongly suggests that most whistleblowers tend to suffer emotionally and physiologically from their experiences (Alford, 2001; Weghmann, 2014). Moreover, intimidation strategies and massive law suits are used by organizations to set an example of the whistleblower and to deter other employees from speaking up in the future (O'Day, 1974; Miceli & Near, 1996). Incentive structures in the financial sector and other industries also maximize monetary outcomes without much regard for ethical behavior (Weghmann, 2014; Meckenzie, et al., 2011; Sims, 1992)—which builds tensions between the whistleblower and organizations. While the whistleblower represents the value of “doing the right thing”, the organization tends to hold the value of “maximizing profit”, which often does not go hand-in-hand. Research shows that whistleblowers are mostly motivated by the principle of integrity and the obligation they feel towards their organization (Weghmann, 2014); the majority of whistleblowers report wrongdoing internally before taking it external (Ethics Resource Center, 2012; Public Concern at Work, 2013).

Findings of Whistleblower Experiences and How They Relate to TL

The statement “trouble transforms you” of one participant in Weghmann’s study (2014) triggered an interest in applying TL to whistleblowing experiences. Research suggests that trauma can potentiate opportunity for personal growth (Gould, 1978; Tedeschi, Park, & Calhoun, 1998). Furthermore, individuals have a chance to grow and make meaning of their devastating experiences (e.g. Gould, 1978; Mezirow, 2000; Pennebaker, 1997). Transformative learning theory specifically poses that a disorienting dilemma—that “exposes a discrepancy between what a person has always assumed to be true and what has just been experienced, heard or read” (Cranton, 2002, p. 66)—can create an opportunity for transformation (Mezirow, 1991).

In line with what TL research suggests, the findings of Weghmann’s (2014) study indicate that whistleblowers face this type of disorientation and a conceivable degree of transformation, which is initially triggered by the environmental opposition in consequence of speaking up, i.e. from family and friends, organization, social network, and society. Even those closest to whistleblowers struggled with giving support during the process. The research suggests that extreme opposition to speaking up is due to dominating and widely accepted cultural norms, such as monetary focus (i.e. greed) and self-interest (Weghmann, 2014). Such cultural norms shape what behaviors and thoughts are socially accepted in order to sustain a system and fit in. When speaking up, the whistleblower no longer fits into that system; they realize this through rejection and opposition. Alford describes the moment of opposition as a huge shock because the whistleblower learns “that nothing he or she believed was true” (Alford, 2001, p.20). While suffering that results from shock and environmental opposition is

harsh, the study indicated that 67% of participants reported personal growth as an outcome of their experience.

To illustrate the relevance of TL to whistleblower experiences in a visible way, we have created a table (see Table 1) that clusters Mezirow’s 10-step process into four stages: 1) disorienting dilemma, 2) critical reflection, 3) dialogue, and 4) action. See Table 1 for findings from Wegmann (2014). The table suggests experience of TL, even though we acknowledge need for that more data collection to extend and deepen the analysis.

Table 1.
Findings Illustrating TL’s Relevance to Whistleblowing Experience

Mezirow’s Stage of TL	Findings from Original Study	Representative Quotations
1. Disorienting-Dilemma “I thought I was doing my job”	Speaking up led to immediate opposition in organization - Individual is shocked and surprised as they think it’s their job to report - Shock continues by being ostracized, fired or demoted	“I felt I was doing my job...silly me! I thought it was my job to make sure everything was working the way it was supposed to work, and I found out it wasn’t” “I realized my goals were not aligned with the bank’s goals” “A month later the CEO fired me...I was standing on the street crying after I finally saw the shock”; “I was basically told not to come back to the office”
2. Critical Reflection “It was a tough experience” “I didn’t know until then that I was a whistleblower” “The way I saw the world changed”	Subjects reported psychological and physiological reactions, i.e. as insomnia, depression, fear, suicidal thoughts - Increased self-awareness and change in perception about the organization’s culture - Individuals did not identify as whistleblowers but as regular employees who did their job - Ultimately they “own” the label whistleblower and realize consequent marginalization	“I totally lost my mind...despair, total lack of self-worth, no confidence in any decision-making”; “I wasn’t sleeping at night. I had really bad insomnia” ; “I plumbed the depths of depression”; “Let me just f_____ end it...I aligned the pills and everything...” “I have never thought about myself as being a whistleblower”; “it was just weird because I started hearing the word whistleblower” “You are the only person walking on the street and someone is getting financially raped.”; “I think the experience has taken off the shadow of that [the financial sector]”; “I’ve just got unhealthy levels of cynicism now”; “one of the hardest things to deal with initially in this role as I departed from the firm was that I was hated by a lot of people...[participant crying]..to be hated by so many people...people who were your friends.”

Mezirow's Stage of TL	Findings from Original Study	Representative Quotations
<p>3. Dialogue</p> <p>"I wanted them to right their wrong"</p> <p>"I thought they were going to help"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dialogue with various stakeholders is key, i.e. lawyers, media, other whistleblowers, academics, spiritual leaders etc. - Some re-found their spirituality or other ideologies due to the exchange with others - Through exchange with others, individuals fully adapt to label "whistleblower" (even if acting in role for long time) - Their motives changed (from doing their job to changing the system) - Dialogue with others led to further opposition or support (depending on who others were) - Some individuals who reached out to governmental agencies, media or lawyers experienced further shocks and opposition (re-trauma) once they realized their core interests differed 	<p>"It became clear they (the regulators) wouldn't do anything..."</p> <p>"They (the lawyers) wanted me to change my testimony"</p> <p>"I talked mostly to my shareholder partner"; "I had my business partner and my lawyer, otherwise we would have never survived that"; "my spouse was never worried...so that's been very important"</p> <p>"They wanted me to break down...it made me stronger and made me want to fight to prove that they can't always win with the little guy...I had quite a passion for the idea that I'm representing not just me, but the people behind me"; "I knew I was doing it for other people"</p> <p>"The biggest lesson for me and what has changed in me is my faith"</p>
<p>4. Action</p> <p>"I can take on the world on my own"</p> <p>"I can use what I know to better the world"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those who reported emotional, legal/professional, or inspirational support sustained process of fighting for justice longer (more "successfully") than those who did not - Most individuals reported gaining new ways of being, knowing, and seeing the world - Many described "peak of themselves" and deciding they would never again work in similar industry/corporation - Certain behaviors/traits helped remain in process - Most individuals reported they would do it again 	<p>"I'm nowhere near accomplishing my mission"</p> <p>"The initial goal was...if something is wrong, I'm going to change it and make it better...my goal today is to make transparent how the system of banks and governments work...I turned into an activist to explain [everything] to society"</p> <p>"I knew how strong I was and that I was holding the world on my shoulders"</p> <p>"I wasn't always speaking my truth...the picture that went around me was happy...like I was the peacemaker...now I don't think that, I think that I'm using my energy to actively move and change things in the world; it's a better way to use that side of myself"; "it was much more about finding my authentic voice of...doing it my way"</p>

Limitations of Mezirow's Theory

With this paper we suggest the relevance of TL to whistleblower experiences and hence, close a gap in the current literature. Our secondary analysis indicates that TL seems to be a powerful lens to make meaning of whistleblower learning experiences at the intersection of organizations and society.

However, at the same time we are aware that Mezirow's theory heavily relies on rationality and critical thinking and assumes a certain level of development of any given individual. We do think that "speaking truth to power" requires a person to be developmentally self-authoring. Yet, Mezirow's theory seems to ignore the potential of learning from (and through) emotions, which ran high in whistleblowers' experiences. As one participant said, "It hurts to do wrong...physically, metaphysically, mentally...the empathy was too great of an emotion." In fact many participants (57%) reported in Wegmann's study that rationalization would have kept them away from speaking up. According to one participant, "blowing the whistle is not a choice; you do it. There's no debating and there's no worrying about consequences or anything like that. No, no, no, no, no, it's not the way this works. You don't debate morality".

Therefore, for future analysis we suggest applying theories of TL that are more holistic and include emotions as a vital part of the learning process, e.g., whole person learning (Kasl & Yorks, 2012) or soul work (Dirkx, 2012). Another approach could be Taylor's neurobiological approach (2001) to debate and emphasize the role of emotions in the process of transformative learning.

Conclusions and Implications for Theory and Practice

Returning to the intersection of individual and society, whistleblower research surfaces vividly the ways that whistleblowers suffer as a consequence of brutal opposition from peers, organizations, and society at large. Social norms need to change to appreciate the value whistleblowers bring by identifying wrongdoing. If only for self-interest, leaders need to model and reward ethical decision making.

Taking a further step, we propose facilitating an environment on an organizational and societal level that supports learning from whistleblowing. Organizations would benefit from a system-level learning process—for transparent sensemaking and as a "medium for moving new knowledge through the . . . organization" (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, p. 14). When there is dialogue—humble inquiry (Schein, 2013)—and confidence that concerns are heard, advanced, and dealt with constructively, internal whistleblowing could create transitional space to help organizations generate "new ways of working" (Yorks & Marsick, 2000, p. 254). These new ways of working could potentially guide future actions in regards to accepted organizational behaviors or organizational policy and systems, for example.

Socially-focused institutions can advocate for ethical practice; Kindergarten through University can build ethical development into the curriculum. Transformed social norms require civic leaders who also "speak truth to power", who model ethical behavior, and who influence policy, practices and mechanisms that reward the motivation behind whistleblowing and safeguard against risks such people take. A step in the right direction would be to ensure that laws now in place are ethically enforced, and that collusion with powers that be is not punished.

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Finding the Intersection of Corporate Governance and a Participatory Worldview

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Abstract: In this paper, *Finding the Intersection of Corporate Governance and a Participatory Worldview*, the author, Toni Aspin, PhD candidate at the California Institute of Integral Studies, explores the intersection of corporate governance and a participatory worldview. The purposes of this exploration are to: contribute to the dialogue as it relates to the vital need for new insights in corporate governance (Sonnenfeld, 2002); illumine ways in which the participatory paradigm (Ferrer & Sherman, 2007; Skolimowski, 1994) and the extended practice of reflexivity (Bolton, 2010; Heron & Reason, 1997) might contribute to these insights; and consider the potential to reframe boardroom interactions as a transformative learning project (Mezirow, 1991).

The author poses the question, *what if* institutions deliberately directed their tremendous influence toward shaping a regenerative society, defined by Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur and Schley (2008) as one in which life creates conditions for life? Aspin proposes that new insights desperately needed in corporate governance (Sonnenfeld, 2002) will emerge only through a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1962) from the limited thinking associated with control, domination, and hierarchy to a participative consciousness that embraces imagination and creativity, and fosters communities of inquiry (Reason, 1994).

Locating the Intersection

As never before, nearly every aspect of our lives is influenced by a web of institutions. Governmental and non-governmental, profit and nonprofit, health, educational, religious, energy, agricultural, and technological institutions shape our realities and interconnect humanity (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski & Flowers, 2004; Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur & Schley, 2008). The power and influence of institutions has burgeoned, yet the institutional mindset, by and large, remains entrenched in old patterns unfit for the complexities of life as a global community (Scharmer, 2009).

The design and function of institutions is rooted in a mechanistic worldview embraced by the scientific revolution and applied to social theory in the 18th century (Spretnak, 2011). This archaic framework foregrounds, above all, quantifiable aspects of institutions such as efficiency and productivity and, by and large, continues to dominate organizational thinking. Some scholars suggest that the universal challenges we face of resource scarcity, climate chaos, mass poverty, fundamentalism, terrorism, financial oligarchies, among others cannot be addressed until the web of institutions holding sway over societal systems is revolutionized (Scharmer, 2009, Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2008).

What will it take, beyond a crisis of legitimacy, for businesses to evolve to be in greater harmony with the larger living world? *What if* institutions deliberately directed their tremendous influence toward shaping a regenerative society, defined by Senge et al (2008), as one in which life creates conditions for life? *What if* institutions acted as catalysts to shift collective awareness to one that values human flourishing and serves the well-being of the whole (Heron & Reason, 1997; Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013)? *If* organizations are to embrace the opportunity to shape an

abler society, centuries-old collective patterns of thinking aimed to divide and control must shift to patterns of thinking that connect and open. I assert that this opportunity might be realized by revisioning corporate governance through a participatory mindset. Further, this shift must take root in the boardroom, through the initiatives of the most influential decision-making body in an organization, the governing board of directors.

What might corporate governance look like through a participatory mindset – a mind that recognizes it is both shaping and being shaped by the world? What if governance praxes valued learning rooted in experience rather than intellectual knowing maneuvered by the power of language? What if corporate governance was approached as a transformative learning project? While the intersection of corporate governance and a participatory mindset may, at first, seem implausible, the possibilities for generating new ways of knowing and being through this exploration are rich.

Corporate Governance

Corporate governance refers to leadership systems and other practices at the highest levels within organizations that give authority and mandates for action (McGahan, 2015). Systems of corporate governance are complex, involving a cross-section of legal, financial, and economic concerns tangled with a myriad of social issues (Turnbull, 2010). The complexities of corporate governance have proliferated over the past 150 years, as have the complexities of all social systems. Yet many systems have evolved and even flourished with increased complexity, while corporate governance seems to operate from the same hierarchical, objectivist, and mechanistic worldview on which it was founded.

The dominant theoretical framework that positions corporate governance is agency theory. It evolved out of the work of economists during the 1960s and 1970s and reflects the egoistic mindset of the time (Eisenhardt, 1989). Its premises are simple and reductionist for both the corporation and for human nature. The corporation is condensed to two participants – shareholders and managers – and human nature is shallowly depicted as unwilling to sacrifice personal interests for the interests of others ((Dalton, Daily, Ellstrand & Johnson, 1998). Hence, the so-called agency problem arises; one party (the shareholder/owner/principal) of the corporation delegates work to another (the manager/executive/agent), who performs that work (Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Agency theory presumes that self-interested executives, acting as agents of the company’s owners, need to be monitored and controlled to align the agent’s behavior with the interests of the owners (Todd, 2010). Corporate governance, through this lens, amounts to a set of mechanisms created for boards of directors to control executive self-interest (Daily, Dalton & Cannella, 2003; Miller, 1999). Even with this focus on control, the last thirty years are replete with examples of institutional fraud, scandal and failure that many attribute to weak and faulty systems of governance.

In spite of efforts to reform corporate governance, experts, scholars, and even directors and executives generally agree that its practices are fundamentally flawed (Turnbull, 2010), in need of new insights (Sonnenfeld, 2002), and therefore at a critical juncture (Lorsch, 2012). There also seems to be general agreement that great challenges exist in “...correcting the current flawed practices...” and that a “...more serious breakdown...” may be required for new insights to be forthcoming (Turnbull, 2010, p. 93). The disagreement arises as to *how* these flawed practices might be corrected. There is no shortage of remedies offered among scholars and experts in the field, but, by and large, the remedies are structural, as Sonnenfeld (2002) sees it, “concerned only with rules, procedures, composition of committees, and the like” (p. 3).

I assert that the basic problem with corporate governance is its positivist ontology and epistemology and subsequent theoretical suppositions of agency theory. Further, I propose that

new insights desperately needed in corporate governance will emerge only through a paradigm shift from the limited thinking associated with control, domination, and hierarchy to a participative consciousness that embraces imagination, creativity and fosters communities of inquiry (Reason, 1994).

A Participatory Worldview

The notion of participation, at least in the West, can be traced back almost twenty-five hundred years to Plato, who employed it as a solution to a philosophical problematic of how to sustain a relationship between the divine and human worlds (Sherman, 2008). Today, the expansive reach of the participatory worldview transcends disciplinary boundaries impacting fields ranging from consciousness studies to religious studies to quantum physics to organizational development and on (Abram, 1996; Bateson, 1972; Berman, 1981; Capra, 1997; Ferrer & Sherman, 2007; Gebser, 1985; Heron, 1992, 2006; Reason, 1994; Skolimowski, 1994; Tarnas, 1991; Torbert, 1991; Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1993; Young, 1976).

A participatory worldview connotes a deeply felt engagement with all beings and the earth, a state of interrelation and co-presence (Abram, 1996). It denotes a sense of mutual encounter (Buber, 1970) co-created by persons both shaping and being shaped by the given cosmos (Heron, 2006). A participatory paradigm holds that human thought does not and cannot mirror a ready-made objective truth in the world; rather, truth is birthed in the human mind (Tarnas, 1991). In contrast to an objectivist image of a fixed, predetermined universe, characteristic of the positivist paradigm, a participatory perspective holds that reality is both subjective and objective. What can be known is “subjective because it is only known through the form the mind gives it; and objective because the mind interpenetrates the given cosmos which it shapes” (Heron, 1996, p. 11).

A participatory worldview celebrates the vibrant fields of sensitivities that define humans as multifarious beings and who, through these sensitivities, can become self-transcending, spiritual beings (Skolimowski, 1994). It holds human flourishing as intrinsically worthwhile and advances a mutually enabling balance among persons that is vital to realizing an integrated whole (Capra, 1997; Heron, 1996; Spretnak, 2011). A participatory worldview fosters a *quality of awareness* that forgoes control and acknowledges the collective, establishing a pathway toward new insights (Scharmer, 2009; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2008; Sonnenfeld, 2002; Turnbull, 2010).

Reflexivity. This quality of awareness inherent in a participatory mindset is referred to differently by various scholars in diverse fields. For example, Mezirow (1991) uses the word reflection in transformative learning theory. Bruner (1986) calls it metacognition in psychology, Bateson (1972), a self-reflexive mind, Schön (1983), reflection-in-action, Torbert (1987), a reframing mind, and Langer (1989), mindfulness. Heron and Reason (1997) extend the essence of awareness and reflection to what they call *reflexivity*, considered a fundamental quality of a participatory worldview. Reflexivity fosters a mind that is able to articulate the paradigm that frames it, and in doing so, could “reach out to the wider context of the paradigm to reframe it” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 275). Reflexivity is the ability to grasp that our knowing is from a perspective and to be aware of that perspective, both of “its authentic value and of its restricting bias” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 282).

Practicing reflexivity is potentially more complex than being reflective. Reflexivity requires mindful assessment of circumstances and behaviors and their effect on relationships and social structures (Bolton, 2010). It can serve as a means of learning because it opens the opportunity to raise new questions, engage in new kinds of dialogue, and organize different kinds

of social relations (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). It demands that one stand back from belief and value systems, habitual ways of thinking and relating to others and, instead, pay close attention to *one's own* actions, thoughts, feelings, values, identity, and their influence on knowing and acting (Bolton, 2010). Engaging in reflexivity is recognizing that we shape and are shaped by the surrounding universe. Reflexivity demands a deep inward gaze, in the liveliness of each moment, as a way of learning and becoming vulnerable to transformation (Torbert, 2004).

In contrast, if we cannot or do not engage in reflexivity or, as Mezirow (1991) puts it, if we do not critically assimilate our presuppositions, our ways of knowing and believing may become distorted. In assessing and reassessing our assumptions, we may find them to be distorting, inauthentic or otherwise invalid and these old meaning perspectives may be negated and replaced or reorganized to incorporate new insights. This may then lead to alternative ways of interpreting feelings and patterns of action (Mezirow, 1991). How might the praxis of reflexivity uncover distorting or invalid assumptions that impel boardroom interactions? How might I understand the ways in which my actions, thoughts, values, and identity affect other board members and our interactions as a whole? What new expectations and new meanings might arise among a board through the practice of reflexivity? *If* we, as board members, held one another with mutual regard and interacted with empathy and reverence, might we be more apt to become aware of the limits of our knowledge? How might the global community benefit from boards of directors who bear in mind people, relationships, and situations as they make decisions for their institutions?

Arriving at New Junctions

A field in crisis is an indication, according to Kuhn (1962) that retooling an existing paradigm is necessary. Kuhn uses *paradigm* to refer to a collection of ways of seeing, methods of inquiry, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes that influence the conduct of scientific inquiry. The term has come to be used as a synonym for model, conceptual framework, approach, and worldview. Mezirow (1991) uses *meaning perspective* similarly to Kuhn's reference of paradigm or personal frame. A retooling or shifting paradigm for Kuhn (1962) is the process Mezirow (1991) calls perspective transformation.

Kuhn (1962) suggests that a crisis loosens the rules of problem-solving exercised by a paradigm in ways that opens space for new patterns and ways of seeing to emerge. Seeing in new ways becomes a revolution of sorts in the scientific world allowing scientists to “. . . see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before” (Kuhn, 1962, p. 111). These new insights often surface by a relatively sudden and unstructured event that has been described by scientists as flashes of intuition, after which a new vision through a different lens emerges. Following such a scientific revolution, measurements and controls associated with the old paradigm become irrelevant (Kuhn, 1962). This revolution can also create complete disorientation for those unwilling to relinquish the old paradigm.

Similar to the process that Kuhn (1962) describes as a paradigm shift, Mezirow (1991) depicts as a perspective transformation. This transformation is triggered by a *disorienting dilemma* and can result from an eye-opening discussion, book, poem, painting and other art forms or from efforts to understand a different culture that contradicts one's previously held assumptions. These events are challenging and can be painful as they may call into question deeply held personal values and may even threaten one's sense of self. These events may also elicit transformative learning, described by Mezirow (1991) as a conscious and intentional process “that begins with a dilemma and moves forward as distorted assumptions in meaning structures become transformed through critical reflection” (p. 148). In this process we confront

the unknown and are compelled to rely on imagination for alternative ways of seeing and interpreting. The more reflective and open we are to other perspectives, the richer the imagining of alternatives (Mezirow, 1991).

The crisis in which corporate governance finds itself has apparently, thus far, not been significant enough to instigate an overhaul in the underlying paradigm (Turnbull, 2010). Remedies offered to address the failing systems focus on structural fixes, including governing through more robust policies, or enhanced strategic plans, or developing more rigorous committee structures, but new insights so desperately needed (Sonnenfeld, 2002) seem elusive. Relationships are disruptive and can be a source of an “organizational predicament” as Schön calls it (1983, p. 328). Certainly, urging new ways of seeing and knowing in the boardroom – a paradigm shift – challenges the norms of that social structure. In a typical boardroom environment, boundaries and directions for discussion are tightly set and deviation from the agenda is highly discouraged. Directors are expected to bring expertise in a designated field and deliver such in their boardroom dealings. Directors may perceive engaging in reflexivity, for example, to be a danger to the stable systems of rules and procedures well established in corporate governance (Schön, 1983; Sonnenfeld, 2002). Departing from predominant reliance on theory and discourse to include other ways of knowing, metaphor and perception for example, may be seen as a threat to existing protocols and to the presumed expertise of board members (Schön, 1983). In many ways, it is easier to navigate within the existing paradigm without critically reflecting on its underlying assumptions.

Hence, the crisis of legitimacy in corporate governance persists and the opportunities for organizations to shape an abler society lay fallow. I assert that the reason these structural fixes do not create lasting change is because they do not address the root of the problem of corporate governance – an outdated set of systems that have not only failed to live up to their stated norms but have impeded organizations from living into their fullest potential as global leaders.

What if corporate governance were approached as a living inquiry, a transformative learning project, rooted in the tenets of a participatory paradigm? A participatory reality is part of the nature of our being and, according to Reason (2005), an ontological imperative. I use my imagination to envision board meeting interactions where we, a group of caring individuals, partake in our humanness, where I feel myself in a living interaction (Abram, 1996) with my colleagues. How might a board meeting be conducted if members interacted with a felt reciprocity and with a dynamic spirit-enhancing mutual regard (Heron, 1996)? How might the global community benefit from boards of directors acting on a bond of empathy, reverence, and responsibility toward other beings (Skolimowski, 1994)?

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Learning Cities Interaction: Connecting Lifelong Learning through Transformative Action Research

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Abstract: This paper focuses on transformative learning for its potential impact on societies. Combined with the emerging concept of learning cities, transformative learning can be experienced socially through the practice of action research and lifelong learning. As such, this paper merges the concept of learning cities, along with a collective transformation theory; thus advancing experiences of social values with practical policies and programs, such as the Lifelong Learning Act and Affordable Cooperative Housing that benefit entire communities.

Description

Collaboration has implications for helping us organize structures that support learning. The idea of learning cities, in fact, is an example of how learning through collaboration can take place (Scott, 2015). This includes governments, organizations, and entire communities supporting and nurturing learning for a lifetime. Transformative learning has contributed to supporting learning, but widely from a personal and individualistic perspective. This makes sense from the view that only individuals can learn. Yet an alternative view suggests that individuals as a collective group can learn, thus communities, organizations, even governments can take on the capacity of learning, such that these groups will also need ways for their learning to be supported.

Recasting lifelong learning for social transformation invites a broader interaction not only between or within individuals, but among and across groups and societies. Here is where implementing action research for social transformative learning, or collective transformation, would allow for investigating problems that impact entire communities. A clear example that can be demonstrated involves the assessment of social policy, especially related to lifelong learning across communities. Take for instance the Lifelong Learning Act, a forty-year legislation proposal intended through the reauthorization of Higher Education Act of 1965 (Christoffel, 1978).

The possible action research design to consider is historical and documentary research that intend to provide access to, and facilitate insights into, three related areas of knowledge about human social activity: 1) past history; 2) processes of change and continuity over time, including broader social, political, economic, and other relevant contexts; and 3) origins of the present, explaining current policies, structures, and relationships in light of recent and future trends (McCulloch, 2011). Different combinations of using primary and secondary data sources can be applied in a historical and documentary action research design, offering a means of promoting “methodological pluralism” that is appropriate in the diverse and challenging field of education (McCulloch, 2011).

Zuber-Skerritt (1996) presents an emancipatory action research model that involves a cyclical four-part process of planning, action, observation, and reflection that requires collaboration by participants who capture a sense of accountability and responsibility for resolving an issue of common concern. In the context of learning cities and their interaction,

these common issues of concern can be local programs and policies. In regards to action research that integrates historical and documentary research may offer productive outcomes such that Graham (1980) argues for the contribution of historical and documentary research to the process of policymaking that connects to its value to inform decision-making about issues, problems, and concerns. Weirisma and Jurs (2009) point out that although historical research is primarily viewed as qualitative in nature, quantitative methods can be used effectively in certain studies, especially involving data sets (such as census data). Given the broader focus on cities, regions, or municipalities, the action research design must include quantitative data that are relative to the communities involved.

Using a historical method of research called “historiography,” Weirisma and Jurs describe a four-step process of historical and documentary research, which can be matched with Zuber-Skerritt *process* of action research:

1. Identification of the research problem (formulation of questions-*Plan*)
2. Collection and evaluation of source materials (primary and secondary-*Act*)
3. Synthesis of information from source materials (quantitative and qualitative-*Observe*)
4. Analysis, interpretation, and formulation of conclusions (critical and transformative-*Reflect*)

In short, the Lifelong Learning Act is an important example of a policy that would require learning cities interaction, which involve planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on this historic federal legislation that did not pass but featured the central concerns of American federal programs, agencies, and funding that supported lifelong learning, continuing adult education, and vocational workforce training. Such a research would also include quantitative data sets including national education statistics, and sources related to lifelong learning. Syntheses and analyses would explain current policies, programs, agencies, and funding in the federal support of lifelong learning, in light of future trends for assessing learning cities in America and abroad.

Embarking on such action research would begin with a clearer understanding of the transformative learning aspects being promoted. The social and philosophical aspects of transformation theory focus on the collective values that many individuals share. These values have always been a part of transformative learning discourse, yet they must be further connected to the community, where real lives are collectively transformed through actions, policies, and programs.

Social & Philosophical Concepts of Transformation Theory

In order to understand transformative learning (TL) at the collective level, concepts that are social and philosophical must be elevated and considered. This is not a new consideration given how Mezirow (2000) clarified the core concepts of transformation theory and its overall connection to humanity. As Mezirow explains,

Full development of the human potential for transformative learning depends on values such as freedom, equality, tolerance, social justice, civic responsibility, and education...these values are basic to our human need to constructively use the experience of others to understand...the meaning of our experience (p. 16).

Mezirow (2000) considered these values as a part of an individual’s reflective discourse, yet it must also be regarded as a social and collective discourse where transformation through values such as social justice, freedom, or equality occur through active and collective participation. The social and collective discourse underscores the messy process of working together, sharing experiences, and finding solutions for the betterment of all. The social justice discourses, for

instance, Mezirow conceptualizes toward a “philosophy of adult education” where “adult educators are committed to efforts to create a more equal set of enabling conditions in our society...” (p. 27).

Discourses that are more social or philosophical in nature should not become too abstract without a target. Often these kinds of discourses are far removed from the real-life problems that exist among a collective society. Issues of public health and affordable housing in urban cities such as New York and Chicago should be ongoing topics for transformation theory.

It may be easier for scholars to conceptualize transformation theory at the collective level through values such as social justice, freedom, and equality, but they may turn out to be even harder when practitioners must operationalize them. In other words, the intentions necessary to think about transformative learning are different from the actions essential to bring about transformation on a social, collective, and societal scale. New forms of discussions should emerge using new terms and phrase such as “learning cities,” “collective transformation,” and “lifelong learning and education-for-all.” These new terms and phrases will be further described in this paper that tap into an emerging process that further expands education and learning across entire communities.

Still to be clear, the purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of collective interaction that can occur through viewing transformative learning even lifelong learning as a social effort. A good first step is to adopt action research for its practical value, thus making values as Mezirow describes, namely freedom, equality, social justice, civic responsibility, even education more attainable through collective progress and participation. From this understanding, we, as lifelong learners, can reach a collective transformation joined to higher values of learning.

This is what is truly meant by the expression “learning cities,” i.e., places within our collective society where we continue to learn together by learning from one another. The next section provides a general description of learning cities and how the interaction among citizens can bring about the collective transformation that brings our higher values down-to-earth.

Learning Cities Explained

The topic of learning cities may be a new idea in transformative learning, but it has impacted educational programs and policies in Asian and European countries (Longworth, 1999). One possible reason for this is that learning cities originated from economic development and the improvement of individuals as human capital. Only within recent years, have the discussion of learning cities shifted to a broader American perspective that includes adult continuing education and lifelong learning (Scott, 2015). Described as *civitas cognitionis* or the citizenship of learning, learning cities advances the notion of connecting people in ways more than individual purposes, but for collective ideals and action. Thus learning cities or the citizenship of learning advances the collective values of a community, “coming together as fellow learners, getting to know and becoming acquainted with their surroundings through reciprocal engagement” (Scott, 2015, p. 83-84).

With a focus on the citizens and members of a city or society, the adult lifelong learner takes its rightful place in the continual construction of education and learning. No longer should education only occur in schools, colleges, or universities, but also inside homes, within neighborhoods, and across physical and virtual communities. Likewise, never should learning be a private undertaking of time, money, and resources, but rather ought to be a public affair of collective resources through governments, municipalities, and social organizations. It follows that learning cities, in terms of transformative learning, must not only suggest an individual

private reflection of personal experience, but also demand a collective public practice of shared experiences that bring about action and participation. Thus, transformation becomes collective when my dilemma is your dilemma, or what disorients my senses is our overall humanity being at stake.

Connecting lifelong learning to collective transformation begins to make the shift from the emphasis on individual development and self-direction, toward civic and social responsibility, where a city continues to learn through its citizens. The trouble with connecting lifelong learning to transformative learning or collective transformation is the dominance of lifelong learning in blurring the lines between education and learning. I agree with others that education and learning should be treated as distinctive domains (Thomas, 1991), “both serving the person and the community, the individual and the society, the citizen and the city” (Scott, 2015, p. 88).

Unfortunately, the concept of lifelong learning, suggests the discretionary, private choice to pursue learning that presumably benefits only the individual. The concept of lifelong learning expanded to public responsibility through its legislative policies, require an overlooked aspect of continuing education that can be provided by governments and municipalities.

The demand for learning cities can bring about a collective transformation among citizens and reunite the long-awaited interaction of education-and-learning for all. As it has been stated, learning cities are built “by the changes of citizens demanding a continuance of education” (Scott, 2015; p. 89), they must be represented through practical policies and solutions to real-life problems.

If we, as an American society, value freedom, then what are we doing, as a society, to keep us free; similarly, if we, as adult educators, value collective transformation, then what are we doing that shows transformation is occurring? In my view, action research provides some of the tools for practice, but let us not forget policies such as the Lifelong Learning Act, or social programs such as affordable cooperative housing in bringing our values to life with continual progress.

Revising the Lifelong Learning Act for Action Research

Lifelong learning requires a comprehensive social education policy to address the overall education and learning of individuals within households, workplaces, and communities (Scott, 2015). Making lifelong learning policies sustainable across generations requires measuring existing programs, agencies, and funding. In 1976, Congress passed the “Lifelong Learning Act” as an amendment in reauthorizing the Higher Education Act of 1965. The ultimate purpose of the Lifelong Learning Act was to introduce federal policy that improves learning opportunities for individual citizens in local communities. The Act broadly defines lifelong learning that includes, but is not limited to:

Adult basic education, continuing education, independent study, agricultural education, business education and labor education, occupational education and job training programs, parent education, postsecondary education, preretirement and education for older and retired people, remedial education, special educational programs for groups or for individuals with special needs, and also educational activities designed to upgrade occupational and professional skills, to assist business, public agencies, and other organizations in the use of innovation and research results, and to serve family needs and personal development (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978).

The Act created a unique role and special project within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. At that time, federal support of lifelong learning existed within over 300 programs, across 29 federal agencies, and \$14 billion of federal funding (Christoffel, 1978).

Four decades after the Lifelong Learning Act, presents an opportunity for adult educators to repurpose this act for a renewed collective and social education policy, measuring its impact on disadvantaged groups, a more diverse workforce, and the future education and learning for citizens.

Considering Work & Employment as Action Research

Steps that advance collective transformation through action research can involve adult learners and their use of federal programs, agencies, and funding that support lifelong learning, continuing adult education, and even vocational workforce training. The area of work and employment in action research would help to examine potential educational and learning inequities, especially among disadvantaged and marginalized groups. The ultimate purpose of the Lifelong Learning Act was to introduce federal policy that improves learning opportunities for individual citizens in local communities, which should be advanced to consider individual citizens as a part of a collective community.

Thus, in relation to lifelong learning and inequalities in the workforce, there are concerns about work and employment within a knowledge/learning society. For example, on the topic of employment, White (1997) makes a distinction between two types of work: “autonomous” and “heteronomous.” Autonomous work is the best and preferred option to earn a living, even when no earnings are made. Heteronomous work, on the other hand, is considered “unavoidable and required” (White, 1997, p. 5-6). White suggests that the majority of work in society is heteronomous with further decisions according to being either personally significant or attractive, thus increasing an individual’s willingness to work (Yorks & Scott, 2013). A significant contribution to the discussion of work involves lifelong learning through a social and collective perspective. The White depiction of autonomous and heteronomous work has been grounded on the isolated individual and not as a collective undertaking that would involve fellow citizens and government supporting multiple forms of work, from paid employment to internships, apprenticeships, or volunteers. Still, the obvious challenge in offering alternative perspectives of work and employment is to construct policies and programs that address real unemployment and low-to-moderate incomes.

The perspective of education and learning in the context of “lifelong learning for all” involves practical discussions in the areas of the work and employment. Not only that, collective transformation can be accomplished through policy such as revisiting the Lifelong Learning Act and programs that address concerns of affordability and access.

Affordable Cooperative Housing as Collective Transformation

The topic of affordable cooperative housing serves as a real-life example of the kind of programs that transformative learning must address at a collective level. Affordability is an issue of concern that impacts our quality of life and way of living. One of the ongoing projects of LearnLong Institute for Education and Learning Research (LIFR), which is an independent educational think-tank that inform about ideas and issues pertaining to adult, higher, and continuing education, involve exploring programs addressing affordable cooperative housing using action research, such as the Illinois Assisted Housing Action Research Project (IHARP) (IHARP, 2011).

The history of housing cooperatives can be described as either being low-cost or luxury. The low-cost cooperative housing traces back to ancient Rome, also to France, specifically Rennes in 1720, when faced with a desperate housing situation (McCullough, 1948). Later in the 19th Century, co-operative projects of the apartment-building type appeared in England and many other European countries including Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Holland, Spain, Italy, and especially Sweden (McCullough, 1948).

In the United States, low-cost housing projects appeared in the twentieth century, however the presence of “luxury cooperatives” had been an American development established in New York City; and in Chicago, the first two cooperative apartment buildings were built in 1920 (NAHC, 2015; McCullough, 1948). In current times, the different types of cooperatives have also been described as “affordable or market rate” (CHMN, 2004). There are approximately one million cooperatives housing units in the United States across a range of housing needs and income levels that further help to distinguish coops between the low-cost/affordable/limited equity versus the luxury/market-rate distinction (CHMN, 2004).

The purpose of the housing cooperative has been to provide homeownership opportunities while giving residents control in the decision making process for owning and operating housing units. Housing cooperatives can exist as high-rise buildings, town homes, multi-family buildings or as a group of single-family homes. Affordable housing cooperatives offers long-term affordability for their members.

Having mutual and shared interest helps drive the networks created in cooperative housing and helps establish a true sense of “home” for members (LIFR, 2016). Examples of mutual and shared interest include: maintaining the cooperatives as a safe and secure environment, child care, planting a community garden or volunteering for a board committee. These networks are propelled by the overall structure of cooperatives, and may benefit communities beyond the confines of the cooperative.

It is important to note that these informal networks of shared interest provide broad potential for collaborative lifelong learning as well. Because members are engaged in such informal networks, providing additional opportunities to help advance other shared interests related to home, dependent care, work, or leisure could offer enormous learning potential. For example, in cooperative housing, members can become involved in all aspects of the leadership and decision-making process, such as serving an active role in screening and selecting prospective members.

Cooperatives also offer social benefits, such as inter-resident networks that provide a social support structure for members. Cooperative housing provides residential communities a sense of belonging and identity among residents through the provisions of educational, recreational and commercial facilities.

Concluding Points of Action and Collective Transformation

The major point for the discussion regarding transformative learning, lifelong learning, action research, and now, for collective transformation and learning cities is that the social values must be acted upon. The transformation theory that Mezirow presents includes the social and philosophical values of freedom, equality, tolerance, social justice, civic responsibility, and education, but arguably as only abstract experiences. These values needs to become real to each individual through a collective discourse.

The collective discourse promoted in this paper comes in the form of learning cities. Learning cities are practical places in society that feature the interaction of learning and

education on a broad societal scale. Learning cities, which also can be described as the citizenship of learning, requires adults to become lifelong learners. In other words, adults must continually learn, not in private seclusion, but in public, with active and collective participation. In this way, lifelong learning takes on a new meaning for a collective purpose and for solving collective problems and concerns. Action research that views such problems and solutions on a continual basis, defines abstract values of freedom or social justice through the forms of daily actions (through policies and programs) that occur and that are implemented.

Two examples of policies and programs are the Lifelong Learning Act and Affordable Cooperative Housing in the United States. Both policy and program can address real-life concerns and issues of work/employment and housing to low and moderate income earners. These kinds of practical discussions about what transformation at a collective level may focus on are far from our common discourse. While it will be important to make further connections between transformative learning at the collective level with action research, lifelong learning, and learning cities, this paper serves to get the discourse started and bring together all learners for the purpose of making good on the social values we collectively share.

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Micro-Transformations of Everyday Life: Addressing the Transformative Potential of the Intersection Between Our Meaning Perspectives and Daily Challenges

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Abstract: Mezirow's (1991; 2000) transformative learning theory focuses primarily on the major disruptive events that exceed the capacity of the person's existent framework. We argue, that to address the transformative potential of everyday life, we need concepts that draw from the transformative learning theory but that are more capable of grasping the subtle dynamics of these small-scale intersections—the ongoing interface between the person and their emergent circumstances. This paper offers an initiative towards such conceptual basis.

Mezirow's (1981; 1991; 2000; 2009) transformative learning theory focuses primarily on the major disruptive events that people experience. These crises exceed the capacity of the person's existent framework and, in so doing, can initiate a process to develop a more encompassing meaning perspective. Mezirow's choice to focus his theoretical research on major “disorienting dilemmas”, produced clear concepts which were foregrounded or made explicit relative to the tacit, implicit background of everyday existence. Our paper shifts the focus from the extreme examples that he employed to those moments that occur in daily living that also have transformative potential—those unrecognized moments which previously existed as the taken for granted background. We do so because previous depictions of transformative learning could be compared to tectonic shifts that generate earthquakes. We think that, such dramatic shifts are not an inevitable recurrent feature over one's life span, if we learn to make the ongoing corrections that daily life offers. However, we wonder if the concepts Mezirow developed to address major transformations may be as if sketched with a too broad brush to be useful for navigating day to day living. In these moments the inadequacies between one's meaning perspective and daily challenges that they are intended to address, are more modest and almost invisible, though they shape our paths in fundamental ways. Therefore, we argue, that to address the transformative potential of everyday life, we need concepts that draw from the transformative learning theory but that are more capable of grasping the subtle dynamics of these small-scale transactions—the ongoing interface between the person and their emergent circumstances. This paper offers a beginning towards such a conceptual basis.

Over the past decades, Mezirow's theory of transformative learning has been a stimulation for a notable body of research as well as for developments in educational praxis. At the same time, the theory has been subjected to criticism regarding what it emphasizes and what it neglects (e.g. Brookfield, 1994; Clark & Wilson, 1991; Illeris, 2007; Mälkki, 2011; Mezirow, 2009; Taylor 2007). In the development of the conceptualization presented in this paper, some of those criticisms and underdeveloped areas were utilized as sources for further elaborations. Layder's (1998) adaptive theory approach was used in order to integrate theoretical analysis and empirical and experiential research data, to reach a more nuanced understanding and depiction of these previously criticized areas. The theoretical analyses were based on rational reconstruction (e.g. Davia, 1998; Rorty, 1984; Habermas, 1979) and conceptual analysis (Ruitenberg, 2010).

The concepts developed in this work involve perceptual-action system, permeability to experience, edge-emotions, comfort zone, collective comfort zone and existential collective comfort zone (Mälkki, 2010; 2011; 2012; Mälkki & Green, 2014; 2016a; 2016b). These allow us to conceptualize the processes of micro-transformations as more than cognitive. Rather, both the major transformations and the micro-transformations refer to a change in the totality of our being— something produced at the intersection of cognitive, emotional and social dimensions of our *being*. Thus we are talking about the intersections of knowing and being, of the intersubjective and intrasubjective, of the individual and their environment, and most importantly, the intersection of our human urges to both change/develop and maintain. Due to the limited space, in this paper we focus on two of the concepts, namely edge-emotions and comfort zone.

In this paper we support our developing conceptualization with an example drawn from everyday-living. We unpack this lived experience by considering the subtle choices and positionings involved. The example we have chosen is that of conflict with one's significant other. Our reason for choosing this example is that virtually everyone has experienced struggles with an intimate partner. As a result readers will have access to this background of lived experience which will enable them to put flesh on the bones of abstract theory. In addition, this example is fruitful because it partakes of some of the existential intensity associated with transformative learning as well as illuminating the incremental adaptations required for everyday living. As Kegan (1982, p. 12) puts it, transformation involves: "the way that activity is experienced by a dynamically maintained 'self,' the rhythms and labors of the struggle to make meaning, to have meaning, to protect meaning, to lose meaning, and to lose the 'self' along the way." If we educators are to be effective midwives of the transformative process then we need to be able to attune to the learner's existential experience as described above by Kegan and experienced first hand in relationship conflict.

Edge-emotions as Stimulus for Either Micro-transformation or Rationalization

In the case of a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow 1991; 2000), the person figuratively speaking faces a wall as one is not able to go on one's life within the parameters of one's existing meaning frameworks. In this paper, however, we focus on the transformative potential of everyday life, *in contrast with those unleashed by major turbulences*. Indeed, as reflection and critical thinking appear as vital operations for transformative learning as Mezirow (1991) stated, we argue that they can be profitably applied to the micro-transformations of everyday life.

Mezirow (1991) suggests that critical reflection is mobilized when our assumptions are problematized. When our assumptions are inadequate for our circumstances, we may turn to reflection in order to question and revise them. However, as research indicates (see Taylor, 2007; Mälkki 2011), reflection is not easy or automatic for us. In other words, even when the results of our assumptions are not satisfying, this does not *force* us to reflect on our assumptions. To repeat: reflection is an ideal and not an automatic response to problematized assumptions. We therefore wish to examine the factors that might facilitate this ideal outcome. In the following we will explicate some concepts of our evolving conceptual framework to address the micro-transformations and the transformative potential of everyday life.

Comfort zone (Mälkki 2010; 2011) refers to the affective or experiential dimension of meaning perspective, i.e. to the pleasantness and comfort that we feel when we are able to carry on with our lives and interpret events, our social relations and ourselves unproblematically, i.e. according to our established meaning perspectives. The world appears as understandable, and

consequently we have confidence in our ability to survive. Although we may be aware of the possibility of multiple, alternate, interpretations we are able to maintain a sense of coherence and continuity as we apprehend the world via our expectations and previous understandings.

Edge-emotions (Mälkki 2010; 2011) refer to the unpleasant emotions (such as fear, anxiety, shame, guilt, frustration) that appear when our meaning perspectives are challenged—for example, when we are unable to understand the situation based on our previous experience or, when when our values, assumptions, or cherished viewpoints become questioned by others, or when our interpretation of that situation carries with it the risk of social exclusion and isolation. The unpleasant emotions that emerge when we are taken to the edges of our comfort zones, have a biological basis; they basically work to preserve our sense of continuity and equilibrium thereby maintaining a stable identity and a consistent worldview (Mälkki, 2011). Generally, emotions work in favour of survival by both informing us if our external environment is safe or dangerous, and, when the latter is the case, mobilizing us for action (Damasio, 1999). Similarly the edge-emotions alert us to the potential dangers that might reveal the inadequacy of our psychic organization or meaning perspectives (Mälkki 2010; 2011). When the latter is the case, we often have a natural tendency to avoid dealing with the issues that challenge our premises. We accomplish this by interpreting the situation in a way that confirms, rather than invalidating our assumptions. For example, we may blame the other for the situation, reinterpret the situation in the way that the potential threat to our meaning frameworks would be diminished.

Alternately we can use those edge emotions to access, then inspect, the problematized assumptions. That is, we may learn to embrace the edge-emotions, to accept them as natural - as opposed to considering these disturbing emotions as something shameful, because they've revealed flaws in our rationality. Quite the opposite, the edge-emotions can be seen as the path toward more rational thinking: When we are able to embrace, feel and live through the unpleasant edge- emotions, the resistance to reflection that they provoke, can be transcended. (Mälkki 2010; 2011.)

Micro-transformative Potentials in Intimate Conflict

With the help of the above concepts it becomes possible to grasp conceptually to the transformative potential of everyday life, and to explicate the dynamics of the micro-transformative potential of everyday encounters. In Mezirow's (1991; 2000) theory, the notion of disorienting dilemma is the threshold for transformative learning. The way back is no longer an option leaving the individual with little choice but to acknowledge the need for change. On the other hand everyday interactions, where matters don't work out as we had hoped, they *don't force* us to reflect on our assumptions. For that reason it is possible to bypass these moments. The question is, why do we bypass these moments of potential learning? And, how might it be possible to utilize the transformative potential of these moments when they display in a subtler way the defining characteristics of a disorienting dilemma—the *implicit* inadequacy of one's meaning perspectives to address the emergent circumstances? The theoretical tools we offer for addressing both questions stem from the understanding the role of edge-emotions (Mälkki 2010; 2011) as a defining threshold in these moments.

The mobilizing threshold here is the edge-emotions, the emotional dimension of the moment when our assumptions are being questioned. The edge-emotions may be seen as a signal or alarm warning us that the integrity of our meaning perspectives is at risk. They announce that we are outside of our comfort zone and activate a need to return to it. The simplest means to accomplish this is by denying the need to acknowledge the challenge and thereby *avoid* the

painful realization that something needs to change. Thus we are naturally inclined to pass by those moments where our assumptions become questioned, to dismiss their transformative potential. To work around this counterwave, we may learn to accept and embrace the edge-emotions. In this way we would acknowledge these unpleasant emotions as natural parts of our experience, which, can potentially can be understood, rather than dismissed as just an unpleasant experience.

In the following we will illuminate this approach to micro-transformations within the light of a real-life example. Most often marital or relationship conflict involves an incongruence between one's prereflective expectations for the other and their actual personhood and behavior. Phenomenologically this is experienced (at least initially) as "I blame *you* for not living up to *my* expectations!" However, the "other" is unlikely to accept that attribution and thus we have the potential for a micro disorienting dilemma. That is, one's meaning perspective is not producing results that resolve the conflict.

Ideally we would interpret the situation "rationally" as a conflict between two sets of meaning perspectives. That conflict could be a source of motivation to search for possible resolution. However, in actuality we tend to experience the situation as if resolution has been blocked...by the other. That is, the relationship has moved from a harmonious and pleasant one to one of frustration and distress. Because we have a fundamental need to make sense (Mezirow, 2000) our initial response is often to attribute this distress to some flaw in the other. This tendency may be seen as a defensive response to the presence of unpleasant edge-emotions; that is, edge-emotions automatically orient our cognitive functions to in such a way so as to avoid the threat to our own meaning perspectives; (the threat that we experience if our sense of continuity, sense of being accepted, or our values and assumptions are being questioned). If we "manage" to "find" the reason for our discomfort in the other's behavior, we avoid realizing that there's anything flawed in our perspective...thus releasing us from the need to change. Thus the edge-emotions can be quieted and we may return to the comfort zone.

To look at the situation more in detail, we will introduce another term, "attachment". We attach to that which appears to increase our survival chances. We attach to our partner and expect them to be a stable source of belonging or sense of acceptance. Similarly, we attach to our meanings as a reliable map to insure our continuing survival. When we are in relationship conflict both those attachments are threatened. One's sense of ontological security (Mälkki & Green, 2016a) faces a double threat. Perhaps our conflict will be so intense that one or the other of us will leave the relationship. Similarly, we might have to loosen our grip (attachment) to the meanings that are producing the conflict. If we sacrifice our meanings for the sake of preserving the relationship, our dependency on that relationship is amplified to compensate for loss of meaning. If we sacrifice our relationship in favour of our hard won meanings, then those meanings can become closed or rigid in order to compensate for the loss of belonging. It seems like either way some loss of ontological security is the risk entailed. No wonder the conflict can become so intense.

And, perhaps there is a third, transformative way opened up by the intense heat generated by this conflict. A way that refuses to automatically exit the relationship or discard one's meaning perspective. A way that welcomes this "news from reality" that the conflict represents in an unthematized form. The central issue here is the ability to refrain from immediate action despite the alarming emotions specifically trying to orient us to act, to fight or flight in this momentous situation of conflict that indeed may *feel* as if a struggle for survival. However, the unpleasant edge-emotions emerging in these situations are not as compelling as they may feel at

the first sight. If the partners are willing *to refrain from the urge to act upon the edge-emotions* and rather embrace the edge-emotions, to feel them and be with them, their compelling directive power can be rechanneled. Being conscious in the middle of those powerful emotions requires courage.

That is, as these unpleasant emotions channel our cognitive functions back towards the comfort zone, by attending to the emotions we may see that each of the partners' response is "merely" an effort to try to protect their own comfort zones, rather than representing some seriously considered statement considering their relationship or the other. Thus, by allowing the edge-emotions to run through and by accepting them, rather than trying to escape them, we may be better able to interrupt the vicious cycle of relationship conflict. Only after "taming" the heated waves of edge-emotions, by attending and surrendering to them, we may finally uncover the problematic assumption and the meanings that they produce: what lies behind these heated reactions —what is actually at stake here? Is the ground upon which I've been standing legitimate? Was it so in the past? Is my current relationship different than the one in which I established those "rules", assumptions and expectations? Are my rules adequate to the challenges that this relationship conflict is introducing? Or do they need to be revised in order to account for this news?

In this kind of relationship context the question of reflection is not only about the individual reflecting on their own assumptions. Rather, in a relationship it becomes a matter of synchronizing two sets of meaning perspectives, two sets of comfort zones. In consequence, the repeated patterns of a conflict may become to form a source of ontological security or stability to the partners. Thus, for one partner to become reflective of their reactions in these situations, may be experienced as threatening by the other partner. That is, the common routine that they used to share, is being broken down. The collective comfort zone (Mälkki 2011) of implicitly shared codes for action between them is being deconstructed. Although these implicit assumptions may have been detrimental to their well-being, they were nevertheless part of those patterns that offer stability, sense of control and sense of acceptance, and as such part of the system that offers us ontological security (see Mälkki & Green, 2014).

Conclusions

In this paper we have offered a conceptual basis for considering the micro-transformations of everyday life. To complement Mezirow's theory on major transformations, we believe there is a need for a conceptualization that grasps the more subtle and momentary instances of everyday life that shape our meaning perspectives and experiences in fundamental yet often inconspicuous ways. The small nudges to our meaning perspectives that we encounter in our daily interactions, may be utilized for reflection if we learn to pay attention to the edge-emotions.

The perspective of micro-transformations offered in this paper can also be utilized in thinking about applications of transformative learning in practice. Namely, rather than provoking disorienting dilemmas on learners in our educational practices, we – both students and teachers – may learn to attend to and utilize as seeds for reflection those edge-emotions that readily appear as part of our everyday interactions (Mälkki 2011). For the teacher this is especially essential, as the boundary where it becomes challenging for the teacher to follow their intended pedagogical approach in practice, is often where the edge-emotions appear (Mälkki & Green, 2016b). Thus, to learn to attend to, live with, and utilize edge-emotions is therefore vital also for the teacher.

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Social Labs as an Opportunity to Foster Transformative Learning

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Abstract: Social labs address problems that reflect the intersection of social, political, economic, and environmental forces that have resulted in intractable problems and human suffering. They are spaces where individuals with different, even opposing, interpretations of the same problem come together to reach common ground and collectively create solutions. Our paper discusses the points of intersection of social labs and transformative learning theory and proposes that social labs encourage individual and collective transformation to impact social change. This paper aims to contribute to the discussion of the learning that occurs in collective processes.

Introduction

Diverse organizations around the world, such as the World Bank and Oxfam are currently exploring social labs as a new way to address complex social challenges, such as child malnutrition in India (Hassan, 2014). To achieve this end, social labs bring together stakeholders representing the different parts of the system in which the complex social problem is embedded and guide them through individual and group activities. These activities are designed for the participants to reach a collective understanding of the problem and its roots, and create innovative solutions to prototype and test (Hassan, 2014). Although many theories and philosophical approaches have informed social labs, this paper focuses on only one of these theories, theory U, as it largely guides the action steps and offers a possible link to transformative learning theory.

In this paper, we first describe social labs and transformative learning theory. We then offer a synthesis of selected intersection points between transformative learning theory and theory U, such as humanism, pragmatism, individual transformation, embeddedness, and communicative learning. The paper concludes with implications for future research and a proposal that social labs could be spaces that foster a transformative learning process at individual and group levels.

Social Labs

Social labs address problems that reflect the intersection of social, political, economic, and environmental forces that have resulted in intractable problems and human suffering. They are spaces where individuals with different, even opposing, interpretations of the same problem come together to reach common ground and collectively create solutions (Hassan, 2014). Social labs leverage a “highly designed and expert-facilitated process clearly intended to support multi-stakeholder groups in addressing a complex social problem” (Westley & Laban, 2015, p.7) with the aim of transforming systems. A basic premise of social labs is that complex social problems arise from individual and social “blind spots” that lead to disjointed social systems and significant structural gaps and inequities (Hassan, 2014; Scharmer, 2007). Social labs challenge key stakeholders—of a particular system to explore the blind spots in their own thinking and in the structures within which they have influence. This new awareness, coupled with skillful

facilitation by the social lab initiators, leads participants to collectively address the problem in new ways.

Theory U underlies a social lab's action steps (Eisenstadt, 2010). When applied to practice, theory U is referred to as the U-process and consists of three main stages that start from the left side of the U, continue to the bottom of the U, and then rise back up to the right side of the U (Hassan, 2014; Scharmer, 2007).

Sense and Observe Current Reality

Lab members, i.e. stakeholders, start becoming aware of their own perceptions and assumptions acquired from the institutional context in which they are embedded. Lab facilitators ask and guide them to suspend judgment in order to start seeing other perspectives and take in the knowledge and information that other lab members share (Hassan, 2015; IDEO, 2015; Scharmer, 2007).

Retreat and Reflect

Lab members spend time alone to reflect, start connecting with the collective purpose, and continue letting go of their assumptions. They start reconstructing their frames of reference with regard to themselves and the system in which they are in, and begin to visualize new ways they can relate to other parts of the system (Hassan, 2015; IDEO, 2015; Scharmer, 2007).

Enact New Reality

With new awareness of themselves and of the system, the lab members begin to collectively brainstorm potential solutions and follow an iterative process of materializing the solutions into prototypes, testing them, and scaling up the successful ones. These prototypes reflect their individual and collective new frames of reference and allow the lab members to begin identifying the roles, processes, and technologies that would support these new discoveries (Hassan, 2015; IDEO, 2015; Scharmer, 2007).

Transformative Learning

The intense nature of social labs, in which lab participants become aware of their own mental paradigms, deconstruct, rebuild, and act upon them, suggests a deep level of individual transformation. Transformative learning theory provides a lens through which to understand the individual learning that could be taking place within the collective nature of social labs. This section provides an overview of transformative learning theory, which will serve to analyze theory U as a theoretical framework that also accounts for individual learning and transformation.

Transformative learning is, the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. This process involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7-8).

Transformative learning theory seeks to explain the adult learning process, by explaining the ways in which frames of reference are developed, maintained, challenged, and ultimately transformed (Mezirow, 2000). Generally, human beings resist new information that conflicts with their existing frames of reference; however, they also have a "strong, urgent need" to make meaning out of new experiences and must develop new viewpoints that are better aligned to those experiences (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). Due to the paradoxical relationship between an

individual's reaction to new information and their desire to make meaning out of new experiences, a “struggle [emerges] as old perspectives become challenged and transformed” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 23).

According to Mezirow (1994), our frames of reference, consisting of two dimensions, meaning perspectives and meaning schemes, play a significant role in our learning process because they function as the lens through which we view and make meaning in the world. Meaning perspectives are “broad sets of predispositions resulting from psycho-cultural assumptions which determine the horizons of our expectations” (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). These structures serve as codes, sociolinguistic, psychological, or epistemic, that determine the boundaries around our perceptions, feelings, and cognition. (Mezirow, 1994).

A meaning scheme, on the other hand, is a point of view that results from the broad set of assumptions that comprise our meaning perspective. For example, the belief that women should stay home to rear children would be a meaning scheme that flows from a patriarchal worldview. Mezirow (1994) argued that meaning perspectives can be altered as the cumulative effect of multiple meaning schemes being transformed or by transformative learning experiences. The latter begins with a disorienting dilemma that signals the deconstruction of previous frames of reference and advances to the reconstruction of new ones. Following the trigger of an experience that shakes the foundation of a particular meaning perspective, nine steps involving the deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning perspectives, solidified with the culminating stage of re-integration, represents Mezirow’s ten stages of Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 2000). The process from transformation of meaning perspective to reintegration contained in Mezirow’s transformative learning theory that offers the possibility to draw a parallel with social labs.

Social labs follow a similar process of deconstructing frames of reference and creating new ones. The next section explores this similarity between the two in more depth.

Synthesis of Theoretical and Philosophical Underpinnings

To determine if social labs provide an opportunity for transformative learning, it is necessary to first critically explore the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of transformative learning theory and theory U and identify any affinities between them. Because transformative learning theory and theory U belong to different fields, adult learning and collective innovation, respectively, identifying parallel ideas in both theories could lay the foundation for more critical, albeit normative, analyses of the ethical responsibility group processes have towards the learning of their individual members.

The link between humanism and transformative learning theory is clear, while the connection between this philosophy and theory U is not as evident. Humanism holds the assumption that “human beings have the potential for growth and development and that people are free to make choices and determine their behavior” (Merriam & Beriema, 2014, p. 29). This view on human nature is evident in transformative learning theory. According to Mezirow (2000), adult education aims “to help adults realize their potential for becoming more liberated, socially responsible, and autonomous learners” (p. 30).

In contrast to Mezirow, Otto Scharmer, theory U’s founder, did not explicitly turn to humanism as a framework to describe human nature and social phenomena. However, some of Scharmer’s views align to the humanistic approach that grounds transformative learning theory. Scharmer (2007) believed that “the key to addressing the multiple unfolding crises of our time—and the future course of human development—lies in learning how to access [the creative process and how we bring forth new realities] of mastery collectively” (p. xi). More so, he stated,

“Together we share a universal and deeply felt need expressed in the question: how do we confront these [disruptive] challenges and cross human developmental thresholds?” (Scharmer, 2007, p. 227). Scharmer’s belief in the possibility of individuals and groups reaching their highest potential can be interpreted as being firmly grounded in the humanist tradition. Although Scharmer did not refer to the humanist tradition as a philosophical foundation for his theory, his writings reveal an understanding of the individual and social human experience similar to Mezirow’s.

Another philosophical point of connection between transformative learning theory and theory U is pragmatism. Educational philosopher, John Dewey, argued that philosophy should not be separate from experience, and instead “philosophy should have an impact on the world” (Burke, 2001, xxv). Similar to Dewey’s pragmatism, transformative learning challenges participants to “see that philosophy has the power to influence social change through criticism and inquiry” (Burke, 2001, xxv). In transformative learning theory, pragmatism is most evident in stage ten when the individual has to “reintegrat[e] into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22).

Theory U, in contrast, is primarily underpinned by phenomenology, which highlights the first person point of view, intuition, and seeks to understand the nature of individual and collective consciousness and stands in contrast to the pragmatic scientific empiricist approach (Rosenthal & Bourgeois, 1977; Scharmer, 2007). Despite the strong influence of phenomenology, theory U still reflects pragmatic components in the “Enact new reality” stage of the U-process, specifically, for example, prototyping activities, which parallels Mezirow’s (2000) stage ten of transformative learning theory.

A third point of affinity between the two theories is the focus on the individual as the source of change. Throughout his research, Mezirow zoomed into the internal learning process of an individual and only brought the collective aspect, whether at the group or societal level, to explain the ways in which individuals receive input and produce outputs that may, in turn, influence the collective entity. Although Mezirow (2000) did not view social change as the final objective of transformative learning, he acknowledged that individual transformation is critical to social change because individual transformation allows for the alignment “with other like-minded people” that together could spark transformation at a societal level (Merriam & Berriama, 2014, p. 89).

Theory U also concentrates on the individual, but draws a more explicit connection between the individual and collective experience (Scharmer, 2007). Theory U is guided by the belief that “the success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener” (O’Brien as cited in Scharmer, 2007, p. 27). Following the humanist tradition, theory U focuses on developing the interior condition of individuals by striving to understand the “blind spot” that is “the part of our seeing that we usually don’t see. It’s the inner place or source from which a person or a social system operates...[and] is present every day in all systems” (Scharmer, 2007, p. 22). The notion of presencing is central to perceiving this blind spot and underscores the inextricable link between the individual and the collective experience. Presencing denotes a kind of individual and collective self-awareness in which the individual and the group connect with their “highest future potential” and therefore “begin to operate from a more generative and a more authentic presence in the moment—in the now” (Scharmer, 2007, p. 52). In practice, presencing is fostered through guided reflection activities and moments in silence and solitude to allow individuals’ self-awareness, intuition, perceptions, and assumptions to emerge to consciousness (Scharmer, 2007). Presencing could be said to mirror transformative learning

theory's steps concerning "self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22), only with a more explicit connection to the collective experience.

Another assumption found in both transformative learning theory and theory U is the notion of embeddedness. As an adult learning process, transformative learning theory understands adult learners to be embedded and influenced by the world around them. It is through this social construct that individuals make meaning of their experiences and can transform their perspectives (Mezirow, 2000). In theory U, embeddedness is understood as that notion that "all systems and knowledge are situated in context" (Scharmer, 2007, p. 106). Scharmer built upon old (linear and simple) systems theory and proposed that the current understandings of systems, i.e. non-linear, dynamic, and self-creating, view information, knowledge, and understanding in perpetual emergence and embedded in context, rather than as static, finite, and objective (Scharmer, 2007). Theory U also heavily borrows from Kurt Lewin's work in which an individual's social context is a "dynamic field that interacts with human consciousness" (Scharmer, 2007, p. 232).

Finally, both transformative learning theory and theory U identify communicative learning as essential to the reconstruction of frames of reference. Mezirow (1991) pointed to Habermas to underscore the importance of reflection and dialogue and stated, "meanings are validated through critical reflection and rational discourse and may be transformed" (p. 191). Furthermore, Mezirow (1991) asserted that rationality and the idealized conditions of learning exist within the generic processes of communicative action. "In communicative learning, involving conflicting questions of value, feelings, ideals and normative concepts, when the question of validity arises, it is consensually determined" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 191). These consensually determined concepts may be a synthesis of varied viewpoints or a compromise between them, resulting in "people tacitly agree[ing] to live with their own differences" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 191) or settling conflicting claims through "traditional sources of authority" (p. 191). When confronted with a disorienting dilemma that threatens the premise of a meaning perspective, individuals with "superior viewpoints," (Mezirow, 1991, p. 190), i.e. more open frames of reference, turn to, for example, rational discourse as an empirical medium through which to deconstruct their existing frames of reference and make room for new ones.

Like transformative learning theory, theory U also includes communicative discourse as central to individual and collective development. In essence, theory U uses communicative discourse for individuals to not only "re-enact what already exists and reinforce habitual patterns that are already present in the system, [but also to] forge a new shared reality that enables them to work together and understand one another in ways that were previously impossible" (Reos Partners, 2013, p. 30). Dialoguing within the context of theory U is "not an objective, external kind of listening, [but instead] a listening to what is going on inside of both 'me' and 'you'" (Reos Partners, 2013, p. 30). What is particular to theory U is the special attention placed on listening as part of the communication process necessary for critical reflection. Listening, according to theory U, is the reception and processing of internal and external, explicit and implicit information. A focus on listening also makes salient the difficulty people usually have in being truly open to taking in information, especially if this information clashes with the listener's existing frame of reference (Reos Partners, 2013).

Although transformative learning theory and theory U emerge from different disciplines, adult education and collective innovation, respectively, these two theories show several key similar philosophical frameworks, epistemological assumptions, and assign important roles to the individual process level, and communicative discourse. The above analysis of affinity between

the two theories is by no means an exhaustive dissection of Mezirow's and Scharmer's approaches to adult learning and collective innovation, respectively. However, the analysis of the intersection of these influential theories from these different disciplines can highlight the potential of individual and group processes in fostering social change.

Transformative learning theory and theory U are explanations of processes in which adults are the central actors, and there is enough evidence to associate both theories with one another, and inform their application in today's increasingly complex and dynamic society. Also, since both theories include social transformation as either a secondary or primary objective, the analysis of the parallels between the two theories helps build a foundation to understand the nature of individual learning in the context of social change, the latter being the purview of many organizations across different fields.

Future Research

Our paper lays the theoretical foundation for future empirical analyses of social labs. For example, future studies may seek to quantify and identify the degree to which transformative learning occurs in social labs and beyond. Since transformative learning theory assumes a transformation at an individual's core, a question arises regarding the existence of boundaries between personal and professional spheres. A further question would be whether and to what extent does the transformative learning that social lab members may experience affects the lab members' personal lives. This investigation would require follow-up interviews with members of current and past social labs to see what effects theory U-based activities have had in the different spheres of their lives. Additionally, future studies could improve our understanding of the nature of individual learning in social change and of social change itself. Another key point for further analysis and discussion is the ethical aspect of social lab facilitators deliberating creating the conditions for disorienting dilemmas to emerge, which leads individuals to experience emotional upheaval. Addressing these concerns would strengthen the connection between social labs and individual transformative learning. On a broader level, further analysis of the intersection of collective innovation and adult learning could provide insight into other types of learning and the extent to which they occur in other spaces of collective action.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of transformative learning theory and theory U at philosophical and theoretical levels reveals similarities in humanistic and pragmatic principles, the understanding of human nature, the inception of social change, embeddedness, and the role of communicative discourse. Since social labs offer a new way to address complex social challenges, they present opportunities for adults from diverse backgrounds and roles within a system to experience some degree of transformation. The extent to which this transformation occurs, however, is yet unknown, as it would warrant an analysis of a real social lab through the lens of transformative learning. However, because theory U shares similar philosophical and theoretical groundings as transformative learning theory, social labs could be spaces that foster the complete transformative learning process. Achieving Mezirow's final step of reintegration would complete an individual's transformation and signify a change in the personal sphere, and potentially at a societal level.

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Developing Trust and Empathy in Diverse Cohorts: A Collaborative Inquiry

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Abstract: This paper presents the findings from a collaborative inquiry (CI) on the topic of developing trust and empathy in a diverse educational cohort. Representing different races, ethnicities, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups, occupations, and religious affiliations, cohort members found it challenging to create a strong learning community during their two-year doctoral program and establish a support system for post-program dissertation work. A review of two theories of transformative learning, which focus on the affective and emotional dimensions of growth and transformation, indicated that trust and empathy in diverse groups could be established through the use of presentational knowing methods. Three cohort members completed four CI cycles of action and reflection utilizing photos, journals, video, music, and food to learn more about each other. They found that the diversity of their CI group provided an opportunity to widen their frames of reference, which led to greater trust and empathy between them. Three themes emerged from the data: (a) experiences mattered when it came to defining trust; (b) a cohort was not something to be assumed; rather, it was an ongoing process of becoming; and (c) the CI process was a powerful tool to strengthen trust and empathy.

A cohort in an educational setting can be understood as an intersection—a place where people with divergent backgrounds and experiences come together to learn with and from each other (e.g., Bitterman, 2008). This paper investigates how trust and empathy can be developed in cohorts with diverse representation. It presents the findings of a collaborative inquiry (CI) project conducted by the authors—a subgroup of an educational cohort—as part of a multisection course on learning communities. Similar to the broader cohort, we represented different races, ethnicities, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups, occupations, and religious affiliations. The goal of our research was to share insights with future cohort program participants and faculty as they seek to build strong learning communities. The primary inquiry question was: In what ways can trust and empathy be developed in diverse cohorts?

We first summarize the challenges our cohort faced, which sparked the initial interest in our research topic. Next we explore conceptualizations of trust and empathy as the foundation for a review of two approaches to transformative learning: emotion-laden images (Dirkx, 1997, 2006) and whole-person learning (Kasl & Yorks, 2015; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). We propose that these theoretical frameworks, which examine the unconscious and affective dimensions of growth and transformation, support the development of trust and empathy in groups. Finally, we describe how we structured our CI project and share our findings.

Several assumptions underpinned our research. We presumed that our cohort was diverse, although it might not meet all definitions of diversity, and we embraced the idea that trust and empathy are the foundation for growth and development in diverse groups (e.g., Yorks & Kasl, 2002). We also assumed that active participation of cohort members was a sign of trust and

empathy, although we respectfully acknowledge that several of our cohort members would disagree. Finally, we suggested that for a cohort to reach its full potential, it is insufficient for trust and empathy to exist only in subgroups; rather, they must be present for the entire cohort.

Background and Context

Adult Education Guided Intensive Study (AEGIS) XXIV, comprised of a diverse group of professionals working toward their doctorates in adult education at Columbia University's Teachers College, addressed issues of trust and empathy throughout the rigorous two-year program. Dealing with a range of competing commitments such as family and work, the cohort members often struggled to contribute to ongoing community learning. Periodic discussions with faculty about the importance of mutual commitment and support had limited effect; spurts of online discussion board activity were often followed by weeks of silence. Although smaller groups within the cohort did establish trust and empathy, faculty and cohort members alike continued to ponder how a thriving community of learners could be built.

It is worth considering the definition of the term *cohort* to understand first what happened in AEGIS. A Google Scholar search for *cohort* produced thousands of references to *cohort study*, a research methodology often used in medical research. The *Dictionary of Human Geography* (2009) defined a cohort as a “group of people with a common demographic vintage” or “groups whose life experiences and biographies can be analysed over time” (p. 92). In higher education, this notion of common demographics refers more to the program of study than the student body. Here, the term *cohort* describes a potentially diverse group of students who share a prescribed curriculum, sequence of courses, faculty, and learning activities (McCarthy, Trenga, & Weiner, 2005). Using the dictionary definition above, one might argue that the student group does not actually start out as a cohort; rather, the process of *becoming a cohort* as a result of the structure creates commonality for an otherwise diverse student body.

Cohort members may form a community over time by developing a “shared repertoire of experiences, thus history” (Bitterman, 2008, p. 316) and through evolving a set of group norms and unique culture. However, a cohort's expectations to establish group norms and develop a support system can possibly lead to resistance that might prevent genuine connections from evolving (McCarthy et al., 2005).

Trust and Empathy

Researchers broadly agree that trust is fundamental to sustainable and healthy human relationships (Hosmer, 1995) and is rooted in the concepts of faith and risk or vulnerability (Nooteboom, 2003). Based on a review of literature on trust, Hosmer highlighted five areas of commonality among researchers: (a) trust is associated with an optimistic expectation; (b) trust creates vulnerability; (c) trust is about voluntary cooperation with anticipated benefits; (d) trust cannot be enforced; and (e) trust comes with a moral or inherent duty to protect those who are trusting. Nooteboom characterized trust as a situated process and noted that the sources of trust are both rational and emotional. The “assessment of someone's trustworthiness, on the basis of observed or reported behaviour, is limited by uncertainty and bounded rationality, and is mediated by mental heuristics, in perception and attribution of motives and competences of people” (p. 2).

Empathy is undoubtedly linked to trust. Often described as an other-oriented emotion (Batson, 2009), empathy results from observing someone in need and imagining how that person feels. According to Batson, researchers have based their definitions of empathy on two

fundamental yet distinct questions. Cognitive theorists are generally drawn to the first question, “How can one know what another person is thinking and feeling?” (p. 3), in order to explore empathy as a discrete form of knowledge. The second question, “What leads one person to respond with sensitivity and care to the suffering of another?” (p. 3), seems more interesting to social theorists concerned with how a person acts on or is motivated by empathic feelings for another. Eight concepts of empathy emerge: (a) knowing a person’s internal state; (b) adopting the posture of another; (c) feeling as another person feels; (d) projecting oneself to another’s situations; (e) imagining how another is thinking and feeling; (f) imagining how one would think and feel in the other’s place; (g) feeling distress at witnessing another person’s suffering; and (h) feeling for another person who is suffering. Framing their definition of empathy in terms of Batson’s first question, Kasl and Yorks (2015) distinguished between cognitive and affective or emotional empathy, noting that the latter “is located in experiential knowing” (p. 3).

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning theory can offer important insights into how trust and empathy are established in cohorts. In particular, cohort members are likely to have developed different expectations and assumptions about how the world works. These frames of reference are shaped by a web of social, cultural, and psychological factors, making them extremely difficult to uncover and change. Members of diverse cohorts might find it more challenging to understand and embrace the frames of reference of others. However, as cohort members create shared meaning through collective program experiences, their frames of reference might become more permeable to promote an environment of trust and empathy.

Affective or emotional perspectives on transformative learning, such as Dirkx’s (1997, 2006) description of emotion-laden images in adult learning and Kasl and Yorks’s (2015) conceptualization of whole-person learning, can provoke a meaningful discussion on creating empathic connections in cohorts. Indeed, learning about oneself through the experience of others’ emotions can broaden frames of reference and enable other-oriented behavior. For Dirkx, meaning making happens through unconscious, imaginative, and extrarational processes and should be thoroughly explored as part of transformation. Using depth psychology as his underlying theoretical framework, Dirkx described emotion-laden images as the “affective, imaginative, and unconsciously created representations of our experience that arise spontaneously in awareness” (p. 18).

Emotion in learning can be interpreted literally or symbolically, the latter encouraging a form of premise reflection that can surface “the underlying personal or transpersonal issue that has been evoked by the learning processes” (p. 17). The use of emotion-laden images contributes to growth and transformation by triggering a process of individuation, in which a person develops a more complete awareness of the relationship between the unconscious and conscious. Emotion-laden images are evoked through stories that include artistic forms of expression such as metaphors, myths, tales, and rituals. In cohort development, these and other presentational knowing methods help individuals learn about the relationship between their own unconscious and the cohort’s conscious as part of an ongoing integration process. From there, one can see how a collective experience of emotion-laden images can lead to other-oriented behavior.

Yorks and Kasl’s (2002) theory of whole-person learning is about bringing affective knowing into consciousness so it can be integrated into processes of critical reflection. In a group setting, individuals engage in a process of “learning-within-relationship” (p. 185) as part of their own whole-person knowing and in “whole-person dialogue” (p. 182) with members of the

broader group. Conceptually similar to Dirkx’s relationship between an individual’s unconscious and conscious, group members share in each other’s experiential knowing and develop empathic connections, which fuel individual growth and help build group habits of being. Presentational knowing activities such as art, music, or storytelling create conditions in which individuals become willing to participate in activities of learning-within-relationship with other members of the group.

Key to being able to tap into diversity for growth and transformation is empathy (Kasl & Yorks, 2015). However, establishing an empathic connection is more challenging in diverse groups than in homogeneous ones even as diversity yields greater learning potential. Conceptualized as a series of interacting continua, empathy in groups is influenced by “three dimensions of difference” (p. 5). The first dimension, Continua of Relational Power, explores how empathy is affected by formal and informal hierarchical power. The Continuum of Hegemonic Embeddedness refers to how much an individual identifies with the dominant cultural norms. The third dimension, Continuum of Emotional Valence, describes the intensity of the reaction of an individual—positive or negative—to new learning. Examples from the authors’ practices showed that by incorporating expressive forms of presentational knowing into collaborative research projects, individuals developed a much greater appreciation of and empathy for other group members.

Research Methodology

Our choice of the CI methodology, which aims to “engage in inquiry with people rather than on them” (Bray, Lee, Smith, & Yorks, 2000, p. 7), was intended to stimulate our own development while exploring a topic of interest. Rooted in humanistic psychology, CI is a “fluid, not mechanistic” (p. 13) research methodology designed to foster transformation and learning in adults with diverse backgrounds. The framework depicted in Figure 1 shows how the CI process might unfold.

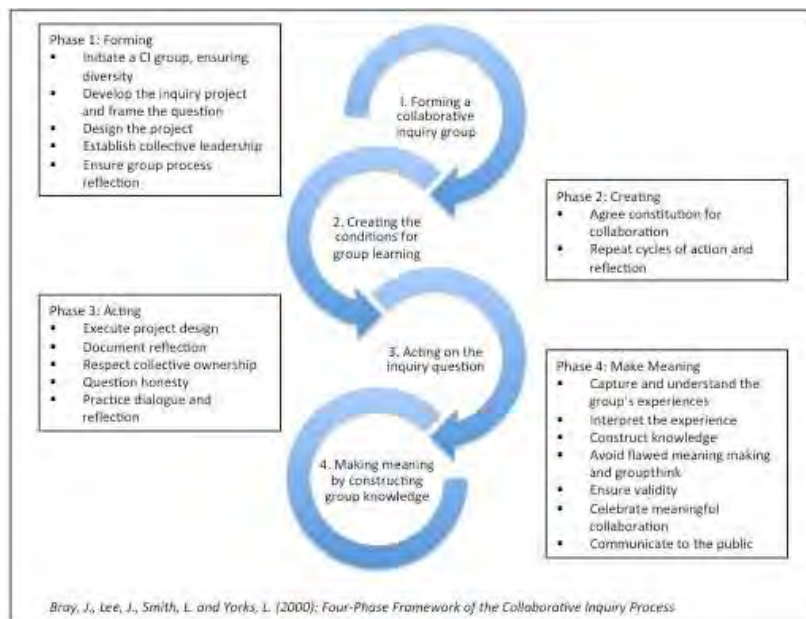


Figure 1. CI Process

We completed four cycles of action and reflection over three months using various forms of presentational knowing. Our first cycle began with individual journaling on our definitions of trust and empathy and then sharing our definitions to explore core similarities and differences. We also considered how the diversity of our CI group might influence those definitions. Next, we each wrote about our own experience in the cohort and later, in a face-to-face session, we shared our written stories, once again looking to surface what we shared in common and what was unique. Using the definitions from our first cycle, we reflected on how sharing our stories and diverse perspectives affected our trust and empathy for each other. In the third cycle, we shared stories, photos, music, and food that represented our diverse life experiences, and discussed the effect of the presentational knowing format on our feelings of trust and empathy.

We also reflected on how the different formats (e.g., dialogic vs. expressive knowing) changed our perceptions. In the fourth cycle, we individually drafted a journal entry describing our experience with the CI process itself. We then met virtually to discuss our journals and which, if any, of our perceptions of trust and empathy had been modified.

Findings

Our findings showed that the diversity of our CI group provided an opportunity for each of us to challenge our assumptions and widen our frames of reference and that our difficult—and sometimes disorienting—conversations were an important part of the process. This led to greater trust and empathy among us and, ultimately, to what each of us perceived to be a transformative learning experience. Using various forms of presentational knowing and having a strong positive emotional valence, we found we were able to identify and work through issues of relational power and hegemonic embeddedness to establish stronger trust and empathy. Three themes emerged from the data: (a) experiences mattered when it came to defining trust; (b) a cohort was not something to be assumed; rather, it was an ongoing process of becoming; and (c) the CI process itself was a powerful tool to strengthen trust and empathy.

Experiences Influence Trust

In diverse cohorts, the paradox of diversity can be exacerbated by different experiences with trust. Maria's definition of trust was grounded in the sense of responsibility she felt as a member of the Greek Orthodox community. To her, trust was associated with helping others; she commented, "If you do that, if you are in need, your needs will always be met because you're helping others." Rachel's experience led her to believe that trust is a very personal interaction between two people. She used the term *reciprocity*, noting that "someone is taking a risk on you." Andre's definition of trust also emphasized the element of risk, but was altered by his experience as an African American male. His feelings of trust were compromised to some degree when Rachel misinterpreted his explanation of trust. Her "comments signified to me the association with the oppressor. Due to the historical dealings I have had with White men and women, I lumped Rachel into this category." This painful experience fundamentally changed Rachel's perception of racial bias. We also identified a spiritual component to trust. Maria's assumption of trust was rooted in her connection to her Greek upbringing, whereas Andre's sense of trust was connected with a higher power. Rachel did not trust a higher power; for her, it "was a really big difference between us because I've never felt that there is something outside of this world that I would be looking to for trust."

Becoming a Cohort

Andre and Rachel felt as though AEGIS XXIV was not a real cohort at the outset, albeit for different reasons. Rachel expressed a feeling of separation during the cohort's early days,

perceiving a lack of a common set of demographics. She described the room, “which is set up in clusters and I see how people, as they enter, gravitate toward other people. I see an African American group and a White group with a few people who seem to move among groups.” For Andre, AEGIS could only be a true cohort if the program of study were to continue through the dissertation phase. We also discussed the faculty’s influence on the cohort’s sense of trust. Rachel noted, “They teach us to challenge our assumptions, but to what extent do they do the same? I often feel uncomfortable working for a bank in this environment. It makes me feel as though I am an oppressor.”

CI Builds Trust and Empathy

During Phase 1, Andre and Rachel realized they shared a commonality they did not know they had before—the value of education. Even though Rachel’s definition was theoretical and Andre’s was more instinctive and experiential, their dialogue about the different approaches led them to conclude they both deeply valued education as part of their life histories. Empathy developed during our conversations because we came to know each other and could vividly imagine where the other was coming from. In another example, a miscommunication led Maria and Rachel to feel as though the trust between them had been violated. After a difficult conversation, they realized their conflict was good for the group process and the trust they had built through the CI process was stronger than ever. In the final CI phase, Maria and Rachel agreed their own world views had become more permeable as the result of the conflict. We learned to appreciate that there are many different “right” ways of achieving the same goal.

Recommendations

Several recommendations emerged from the CI process. In the program’s early stages, the focus should be on enabling the group to become a cohort. Individual frames of reference are very powerful, and unarticulated assumptions can derail the group from becoming a real cohort. By introducing a set of norms or rules of engagement at the outset of the program, from posting requirements to surfacing issues, faculty can establish commonalities and lay a strong foundation. Over time, the cohort can evolve those norms by building collective frames of reference. More time should also be spent upfront helping students to become aware of their own world views using experiential learning and presentational knowing methods. Although the discussion of assumptions within the context of adult learning theory is an important part of becoming an educator, tapping into emotions can produce affective empathy.

Program designers should find ways to form and reform more intimate subgroup relationships. Small groups can collaborate for an entire semester across courses, connecting theory, research, and application while exploring their own group processes systematically and consciously. More broadly, incorporating social learning technologies (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) can engage students who may prefer not to speak in class. A flipped classroom model in which faculty create and share important content before class not only offers more time for meaningful face-to-face interactions but also creates an important set of reference materials.

Conclusion

Our thinking on how to develop trust and empathy in diverse cohorts clearly evolved as we challenged our assumptions over the three-month period. We questioned, for example, how diverse we were as a cohort and whether trust and empathy are even of interest to doctoral students. The diversity of our CI group—and our honest, sometimes difficult conversations—also provided an opportunity for each of us to expand our frames of reference, helping us build

empathic connections. The payoff was invaluable as we prepared to move on to the next phase of our doctoral journeys.

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Learning Within Diversity: Conceptualizing Triple-Loop Learning in Managing Diversity

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Abstract: In this paper, the author attempts to apply the concepts of single- and double-loop learning to explain the paradigm shifts in diversity management. The author further explores the definition of triple-loop learning and conceptualizes how organizations would look with this type of transformative learning.

Introduction

For about a half century, numerous initiatives have been made to understand and increase diversity in corporate America. Since our society began paying attention to issues related to diversity with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, such a historical societal movement has also gradually influenced many business practices (Anand & Winters, 2008). Today, when observing many global conglomerates, it is almost impossible to find those that operate without an understanding of diversity even though there may be some variations in the extent to which those organizations incorporate diversity into their core business functions. This trend of globalization is expected to accelerate exponentially in the future, increasing the need for an understanding of how the practice of diversity management has evolved and what organizations should do in order to further transform themselves in these contexts.

In this sense, this paper first uses the concepts of single- and double-loop learning to explain the paradigm shifts in diversity management. Then, the concept of triple-loop learning will be discussed, along with its implications for organizations that desire to learn within diversity. Thomas and Ely (1996) provided useful distinctions between the paradigms of diversity management, namely (a) discrimination and fairness, (b) access and legitimacy, and (c) learning and effectiveness. Above all, let's look at some key characteristics of each paradigm.

Three Paradigms of Diversity Management

Firstly, the discrimination and fairness paradigm is characterized by legislation of and compliance to diversity (Thomas & Ely, 1996; Dass & Parker, 1999). Influenced by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this paradigm views all individuals of different genders, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, religions, physical abilities, and so on as equal human beings. Discrimination based on these innate personal characteristics began to be prohibited by law in every aspect of human life, including operations in the workplace, from recruitment to hiring and firing, promotion, compensation, and training. Companies simply had to increase diversity and treat minority employees fairly to avoid accusations of discriminatory organizational practices. Diversity under this paradigm was seen as a marginal issue, which needed to be considered minimally and passively as related incidents occur. This strategy is described as the episodic approach wherein diversity initiatives take place as one-time events isolated from main organizational strategies and activities (Dass & Parker, 1999).

Secondly, the access and legitimacy paradigm is summarized as a market-based increase in diversity (Thomas & Ely, 1996; Dass & Parker, 1999). With the prediction made in 1987 by the Hudson Institute's landmark study, called Workforce 2000, that the demographic composition of the American workforce in the new millennium would include more women and minorities (Johnston & Packer, 1987), companies began to think about ways to effectively

assimilate these workforce members to their existing cultures and systems (Anand & Winters, 2008). In order to better cope with a diversifying workforce, companies hired and simply assigned them to customer service departments where their primary responsibilities were to serve customers with the same language background and ethnicity. Such an initiative was derived from an understanding of diversity that suggests making minority employees accessible to diverse customers would be the best use for them. This strategy is explained as the freestanding approach wherein employers acknowledge the significance of diversity, yet do not integrate it with core business strategies and functions (Dass & Parker, 1999).

Thirdly, the learning and effectiveness paradigm is characterized as the recognition of the full potential of diversity (Thomas & Ely, 1996; Dass & Parker, 1999). Since the late 1990s, diversity was started to be understood as one of the most important sources of companies' competitive advantages, and thus utilized in ways that could maximize its value.

According to Loden and Rosener (1991), the criteria for diversity under this paradigm was extended from primary dimensions such as visible demographic characteristics to secondary dimensions including education, function, or work and communication styles. Such an acceptance of all types of human differences now functions as the springboard for creativity and innovation. This perspective on diversity is significantly distinguished from those of the two earlier paradigms as it enables a fundamental shift in employers' beliefs, values, and assumptions about diversity. Dass and Parker (1999) described this strategy as the systemic approach wherein diversity initiatives are fully incorporated with key business activities and spread throughout all levels and parts of the organization.

Explaining Paradigm Shifts through Single- and Double-loop Learning

According to Argyris and Schon (1974), single-loop learning is defined as learning that attempts to solve a problem without any variation in methods or questioning of the logic or goals behind it. Thus, single-loop learning is a behavioral change focused on the effective completion of the task. In contrast, double-loop learning is a process of challenging assumptions that underlie the current task and redefining its goals (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Its interest is not in simply knowing how to find out a better solution but in questioning why the work is supposed to be done in a particular way. In this sense, a behavioral change that derives from double-loop learning is more powerful and transformative in nature than one from single-loop learning because it is accompanied by a fundamental shift in the mental model that governs our actions. It is a reframing of our cognition.

The shift from the discrimination and fairness paradigm to the access and legitimacy paradigm can be explained by the concept of single-loop learning. The motivation to change from passive compliance to greater accommodation was rooted in the search for an effective response to the changing demographics of the American workforce. In dealing with the same problem of diversity, a different approach was simply utilized without any questioning of the underlying assumptions or values about diversity. Diversity is still a side issue, and its potential values are not recognized. Greater accommodation is just a way to better cope with the surface problem.

Double-loop learning is a useful concept to apply to the shift from the access and legitimacy paradigm to the learning and effectiveness paradigm. Although companies attempted to hire more minority employees and help them integrate into the system, such minimal accommodative actions were based on the assumption that diversity is an inevitable trend in business environments. However, employers' mindsets towards diversity are completely

transformed through the learning and effectiveness paradigm. Through the realization of its economic potential, diversity is now viewed as something that is worth actively pursuing. By working with a growing number of minority employees, employers find some high-performers among them and question themselves about why they have been limiting their chances of contributing to business outcomes. Now, employers become active in creating an integrative environment where all members of the organization can bring their unique insights and talents to the business table in various ways.

Triple-loop Learning and its Organizational Implications

Although there exists a clear definition of single- and double-loop learning as presented above, the concept of triple-loop learning is an emerging area of research in the field of adult and organizational learning, and thus its definition still varies among many researchers (Bateson, 1972; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Tosey & Matheson, 2008; Tosey, Visser, & Saunders, 2012; Peschl, 2007; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013). Nevertheless, a review of literature on triple-loop learning shows that researchers seem to agree upon the idea that it is a level of learning that transcends single- and double-loop learning. As described as radical innovation by Peschl (2007), it is thought to have the power and potential to transform the most profound parts of ourselves. Tracing its origins, Bateson (1972)'s four levels of learning provided a meaningful starting point for conceptualizing triple-loop learning. According to Bateson (1972), learning III takes place during the process of a fundamental reorganization of one's characteristics, and the notion of self becomes one of the most important areas in our experiences. Such an emphasis on self and one's deep characteristics aligns well with some other theorists' explanations of triple-loop learning. For example, Nicolaides and McCallum (2013) stated that this change is a figure ground shift from one's epistemology to one's ontology. Peschl (2007) also discussed the extension of the domain of triple-loop learning to the level of existence. In short, if single-loop learning is concerned with our way of doing (e.g., a behavior revision, problem solving), and double-loop learning is related to our way of knowing (e.g., a cognitive reframing, questioning assumptions, goals, or logic), then triple-loop learning is focused on our way of being (e.g., an existential re-creation, changing intentions, motives, purposes, or visions) (Bateson, 1972; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Tosey & Matheson, 2008; Tosey, Visser, & Saunders, 2012; Peschl, 2007; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013).

Reflection-in-action is a form through which triple-loop learning takes place. According to Torbert and Associates (2004), reflection-in-action is a type of inquiry where we become continuously aware of our motives during our actions. While reflection-on-action is learning from experience, where we critically look back on the appropriateness of our past actions and their related thoughts, reflection-in-action is learning that occurs within experience (Torbert & Associates, 2004; Fisher, Rooke, & Torbert, 2003; Torbert, 1999). Reflection and action take place simultaneously. More specifically, Torbert (1999) stated that triple-loop learning allows us to seek a greater congruity between our intentions, thinking, actions, and outcomes in every moment of our lives. As we become more conscious of our present intentions, it frees us from the constraints of our choices in actions and opens up the possibility of generating new actions and outcomes. Such a moment-to-moment effort to engage in triple-loop learning is thus essentially transformative and emancipatory.

Then, what would companies look like in managing diversity with triple-loop learning? One significant limitation that double-loop learning in this context possesses is that diversity is

accepted for the utilitarian purpose. The realization of the economic value of a diverse workforce was transformative compared to the previous perspective of diversity as a marginal issue; however, such an understanding would not last steadily as business and economic environments change. If the return on investment in diversity initiatives fluctuates, companies would no longer want to see the promise of diversity. This is because the acceptance of diversity did not come from diversity per se, but from its profitability.

Although there could be many different possibilities that triple-loop learning can create within the organization, the most plausible scenario is the generation of a new meaning and purpose of diversity. As each employee experiences existential transformation in relation to dealing with diversity in every moment of their organizational lives, it would create a real-time community of inquiry, which is ultimately a learning organization (Fisher & Torbert, 1995; Torbert, 1999; Senge, 1990). Transformed from the utilitarian perspective of diversity where its value was determined by the degree to which it contributes to companies' economic performance, diversity is now the end in itself, and it becomes the core mission and vision of the organization. Economic fluctuation would not hinder companies anymore from continuing to invest in it because diversity is the reason for their being. As long as the company exists, diversity will remain at the heart of the business.

Conclusion

This paper examined the paradigm shifts in diversity management by applying the concepts of single- and double-loop learning. The concept of triple-loop learning was also discussed, followed by its organizational implications. The redefinition of diversity as the core mission and vision of the organization achieved through triple-loop learning is an ontological shift, which will continue alongside the existence of the organization.

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Understanding Empathy and the Paradox of Diversity as Forces in Transformation

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Abstract: Adult educators can maximize the potential of diversity as a force for transformative learning by assessing and influencing key elements in the learning environment: dialogue content and context, differences in relational power and hegemonic awareness, emotional valence, and empathic space.

Our view of transformative learning is rooted in Jack Mezirow's formulation of how the transformation of meaning perspectives is precipitated through dialogic encounter with perspectives that are different from one's own (Mezirow, 1991). Dialogue among people with diverse perspectives provides great potential for transformative learning, but bringing this potential to fruition often depends on the educator's skill in negotiating the *paradox of diversity*.

Diversity can catalyze learning through encounter with other perspectives, but can also generate obstacles that thwart this potential. When life experiences are so different that people seem to inhabit different worlds, they cannot understand how the other person's perspective might be credible. (Kasl & Yorks, 2016, p. 4)

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the utility of a model that adult educators can use in negotiating the paradox of diversity. Before demonstrating the model's use, we outline it briefly.

Model that Guides Our Practice with Diversity

The model, which we have described more fully elsewhere (Kasl & Yorks, 2016), includes four elements that educators can influence in order to maximize diversity's potential for transformative learning: dialogue, dimensions of difference, emotional valence, and empathic space.

Dialogue

Dialogue is an interchange among two or more people characterized by an inquiry mode, rather than advocacy for a personal point of view. Educators consider both content and context.

Content. Content of dialogue varies along a continuum of wholeness. At one pole, *whole-person dialogue* integrates emotions, ideas, and action; at the other, *partial-person dialogue* emphasizes idea exchange and critical analysis.

Context. Context is created by the dialogue group's intention regarding the level of human system it targets for learning and change—individual members, the group itself, or larger systems such as organizations or communities.

Dimensions of Difference

We use continua to describe two dimensions of difference.

Relational Power. Distribution of power among dialogue participants ranges from hierarchy to peer, with peer relations being most conducive to dialogic learning. Hierarchy can be informal or formal. In formal hierarchy, participants have roles with particular obligations; examples are manager and work group members, teacher and students, community organization director and volunteer staff. With informal hierarchy, individuals attain influence because they

have valued expertise or privileged social identities such as race or gender. Continua of relational power describe relationships among subgroups as well as among individuals.

Hegemonic Awareness. Hegemony refers to domination of society by values and practices of a subgroup, whose members accrue unearned privilege. The continuum of hegemonic awareness describes an individual's conscious awareness of his or her personal relationship to hegemony. At one pole, people are unaware that they have uncritically adopted culturally prescribed norms. They are embedded in hegemony, having internalized its norms as "the right way to be." The other pole locates hegemonic periphery, where people critically assess the impact of hegemony on their lives. People from both privileged and marginal groups are found at all locations on this continuum of hegemonic awareness. Dialogic learning is most impeded when participants are located in varying positions on the continuum. People embedded in hegemony reject the "other" as deviant; people in the periphery disdain the embedded as willfully unconscious or consciously destructive.

Emotional Valence

The model suggests assessing emotion for its valence, that is, the strength of emotion aroused by dialogue content. High valence is a force for attraction or avoidance, while low valence fosters indifference. When learners' prized principles or taken-for-granted meaning perspectives are questioned, both individuals and the group as a learning setting are vulnerable.

Empathic Space

Empathic space embodies conditions that nurture empathy. Empathy is the capacity to understand experience from another person's point of view. Neuroscience researchers distinguish *cognitive* and *affektive* empathy. The former refers to the process of building a mental model that represents the emotions and experience of others; the latter refers to experiencing the feelings of others vicariously.

Case Examples

We present six cases where dialogue is an important learning strategy and use our model to examine learning dynamics in each example. Because we can provide only cursory descriptions in this limited space, we chose examples described in rich detail in published accounts that are easily accessible. We urge readers to study those descriptions, to more fully appreciate dynamics analyzed in this paper.

Selected cases represent the three different systems levels that create dialogue context.

Individual Personal Growth

Two examples describe learning communities in higher education, where the primary purpose of dialogue is to support individual learning.

Residential Learning Community. This adult baccalaureate degree program includes a nine-day retreat at the beginning of each semester, where 40-50 students gather with faculty in a luxurious estate, the former home of a wealthy New England family (Cohen & Piper, 2000). Disengaged from other life responsibilities, students and faculty enjoy days that unfold organically, allowing boundless time for reflection and spontaneous dialogue. "The focus on education becomes central, uninterrupted..." (p. 212). Students work in small groups, sharing personal stories and learning to "contribute from his or her own situated knowledge by asking questions and making suggestions" (p. 215). This "flowing" process supports each student in creating a learning plan for the coming semester.

Student Interns. Faculty member Jackie Davis-Manigaulte took on the challenge of helping students dig more deeply into learning from their field placements so they could

integrate those insights with classroom curriculum (Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks, & Kasl, 2006). After two meetings with students, Jackie was dissatisfied, wondering how she could “make their reflections come to life” (p. 28) when she discovered Suzanne Van Stralen’s description of how she worked with nursing managers (see next case description). Jackie adopted Suzanne’s strategies for using expressive ways of knowing to create a calm, reflective learning space that enabled deep reflection about what students were learning and how they related emotionally to their field experiences. Students helped each other find meaning in their “art work reflections” and at the end of the semester created a list of “key learnings” that emerged from their reflections on experience.

Dialogue Group’s Capacity for Collaborative Knowledge Production

Dialogue’s primary purpose can be to develop a group’s capacity for collaboration. Our chosen examples are groups that began with an intention to collaborate on a task. In each case, the group rapidly discerned a need to focus on individual members’ personal learning before trying to proceed with its intended action.

Nursing Managers. Guided by an independent consultant, this management team of six nursing supervisors used eight cycles of cooperative inquiry to heal a sense of fragmentation and separation (Van Stralen, 2002). The group formulated a guiding inquiry question, “How do we communicate in order to promote a culture of mutual respect and cohesiveness?” After their first round of action/reflection, the managers realized they needed to shift attention “[f]rom ‘fixing’ their staff through a survey...to exploring themselves and their own work practices” (p. 17). The group met in the hospital and began each meeting with a guided visualization that helped the nursing managers detach from the rapid-fire demands of their hectic work environment. They crossed a bridge into a peaceful pastoral setting where they relaxed for quiet reflection. At each meeting, reflection was mediated through various expressive forms, such as drawing or clay sculpting, followed by interpretation through storytelling.

SASHA. Four African-American women who were friends began meeting to pursue their goal of writing a book “about black women in recovery from racism.... By recovery, we meant feeling the emotional control of internalized racism” (Johns, 2008, p. 476). After several months, the group realized that members needed to learn how to heal their own internalized racism before they could write their book. Thus began a ten-year journey, during which they created a dynamic experience that engaged learning at all levels of human systems—individual, small group, and larger community. The four women reached out to other African-American women and men to form a group of 14 that met monthly for years, engaging in deep learning aided by culturally relevant, expressive ways of knowing such as drumming, call-and-response song, music, somatic knowing through breathwork. The group created a systematic process that it taught to others, naming both the group and the healing model it created SASHA, for Self Affirming Soul Healing Africans.

Organization or Community that Dialogue Group Intends to Change

Two cases describe how stakeholders with different perspectives come together in dialogue intended to change an organization.

Inner-city, Nonprofit Service Agency. My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) is an independent nonprofit organization that provides programming and services to a struggling neighborhood in southwest Baltimore. Engaged by MBK as a consultant to help envision a 5-year strategic plan, Jo Tyler (2015) facilitated participatory action research that used visual art and storytelling to help diverse stakeholders formulate a vision and strategy. The process included two workdays with a group of 30, made up of MBK staff, board members, volunteers, local high school

students, suppliers, allied agencies, and guests. Interspersed among the workdays were smaller groups engaged with planning and implementation. In the first large group workday, “participants engaged in retrospective storytelling about MBK’s work, and their connection to it” (p. 331), then “organized themselves into pairs for prospective storytelling” (p. 332) to imagine MBK ten years hence. The group created a mosaic that embodied everyone’s vision, using iterative cycles of drawing in which each person expressed an individual vision, adjusted the drawing after group feedback, then helped integrate his or her drawing into one grand mosaic. The group refined a plan that actualized the vision embodied in the mosaic and reported it to the Board for action. The tile mosaic is installed in a public space at MBK, where all who come into the building can experience the community vision.

Veterans Affairs. This collaborative action research project, which spanned three years, was birthed in an effort to reduce stress and aggression in the workplace environment of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) (Kowalski, Yorks, & Jelink, 2006; Kasl & Yorks, 2016). It involved 11 pilot sites with over 7000 employees. The governing project team included a physician executive responsible for medical centers, three VA human resource managers, and four academics from different universities. While conducting its first action team training session, the project team confronted internal conflict precipitated by a university researcher who answered a question without consulting other team members. “The pilot site action team members saw the anger that resulted...as project team members not directly involved in presenting...engaged in side bar conversations in the back of the room—an action distracting at best, but ironically aggressive and rude for an ‘expert’ team trying to reduce workplace stress and aggression” (p. 504). The project team confronted its dissension that evening at dinner, using a “talking stick” to create respectful space for dialogue. The next day, the project team reflected on its aggressive behavior with the action team. Over the ensuing years, the team learned to use a number of expressive methods to uncover and confront emotions that were affecting its work; equally important, the team learned to “teach” site action teams “by embodying the practices ourselves, without prior explanation, demonstrating the learning we wished to convey” (p. 507).

Model as Interpretive Lens for Case Examples

All our examples illustrate successful learning that was transformative for individuals, groups, and larger systems. We examine factors associated with these successes, using elements from the model. Our intention is to demonstrate how educators can enhance learning by using knowledge about these elements to influence dialogue dynamics.

Dialogue Content

In all our examples, whole-person dialogue is key. Each group engages storytelling as well as a cornucopia of expressive ways of knowing that help participants become conscious of their own and others’ emotions, as well as to find patterns in their experience from which they formulate new ideas and actions. Examples also demonstrate how space contributes to wholeness. Expansive grounds provide the residential learning community with a luxurious physical setting that enhances quiet reflection and organically unfolding dialogue (Cohen & Piper, pp. 208-209). The interns and nursing managers use visualization to transport themselves imaginatively from hectic, rapid-fire demands of daily responsibilities to serene space for reflective learning.

Dialogue Context

Three of the examples (Nursing Managers, SASHA, Veterans Affairs) demonstrate interaction of learning among all three levels of systems. Teams focused on tasks realized that they must first develop members’ individual learning—nursing managers examine personal

communication styles and practices, the four SASHA initiators realize they must first learn how to heal their own internalized racism, and the VA project team recognizes a need for members to become more reflective and attuned to their emotions. As they support individual learning in the group, members create empathic connections, thus enhancing the group's capacity to collaborate. Ultimately, all three groups took actions that had an impact on larger systems—the hospital, the local African-American community, the VA workplace.

Relational Power

The cases demonstrate several strategies that move groups along the continuum of relational power, away from hierarchy toward peer relationships, which are more conducive to authentic dialogue that produces meaningful learning.

Facilitator/teachers deliberately divest themselves of role power. Judith Beth Cohen and Deborah Piper (2002) describe how learning community is enhanced when “the usual hierarchies...vanish” (p. 210). Jackie Davis-Manigaulte (2006) reflects, “I realized the very first time I led the interns in a guided visualization that I had to do everything with the students.... I didn't want them to think that I thought I was above it all.... I told the students that this was the first time I had done anything like this and we would be learning together” (p. 30). Suzanne Van Stralen (2002) explains that because nurses are “accustomed to expert models” she began her work by being directive, gradually shifting responsibility so that by their last two meetings, the nurse managers “assumed total responsibility for planning and facilitating” (p.19).

A variation on shifting power is illustrated by the SASHA women. They hired two white practitioners to teach the group how to use radiance breathwork and coached the white experts between meetings on how to work with African-Americans in culturally appropriate ways. “After two years...we ended our relationship...and began to facilitate our own sessions. We paid ourselves as we had paid [them]” (Johns, p. 479). The group used the money it earned to finance yearly retreats.

The examples also describe how groups addressed power inequities directly. At their first meeting, the nursing managers developed strategies for dealing with complexity created because one of them was boss of the other five. SASHA members confronted informal hierarchy created by skin color, which is a volatile cause of hurt and dissension among African Americans. The VA project team vested one member with specially designated role power: the university-based member with action learning skill functioned as the group's learning coach.

Jo Tyler (2015) explains how art activity, because it was unfamiliar to all participants, leveled hierarchy among MBK stakeholders. “The drawing and mosaic work...acted as a leveler. This was most evident in the unfolding of...exchanges between diverse participants.” Tyler describes an energetic and empathic dialogue relationship between a major donor and an MBK janitor. “...one can hardly think of any other circumstances in which these two gentlemen would find themselves sitting knee-to-knee, fully engaged in the ideas of the other” (pp. 334-335).

Hegemonic Awareness

None of our chosen cases illustrates one of the greatest challenges in negotiating the paradox of diversity—creating empathic space in a dialogue group where members are positioned at varying locations on the continuum of hegemonic awareness. The cases do illustrate other relevancies about the impact of hegemony.

For two of the groups, the focal learning task was to develop understanding about the impact of hegemony. SASHA's purpose was to learn about cultural hegemony related to race—how it manifests as internalized racism, how it affects participants' daily lives, how to become more skillful at recognizing hegemony, racism, and internalized racism in order to counteract

their destructive force on emotional well-being. The nursing managers were deeply involved in parallel tasks, but the hegemony they were learning to recognize was the culturally-sanctioned epistemology that creates fragmentation and separation—from self, relationships, and community—not only in the workplace, but in daily living. The VA project also raised awareness of epistemological hegemony. Rita describes how learning about multiple ways of knowing became her “rosetta stone.”

For years I had been coached to rely solely on objective data and being totally dispassionate. This approach...overlooked the fact that organizations consist of people with emotions and feelings. For any behavioral change project to be successful, emotions and feelings that drove behavior were central. We could not ignore their existence and impact, if we were trying to learn about ways to reduce workplace stress and aggression. (Kowalski, Yorks, & Jelink, 2006, pp. 503-504)

The VA case provides a second example of epistemological hegemony. The project team was composed of two subgroups, whose dual professional hegemonies created stress in the beginning because of contradicting assumptions about the project’s processes and values. Academics highly value propositional knowing that advances disciplinary discourse; managers prioritize practical knowing that produces organizational change. Over the course of three years, using multiple strategies for whole-person dialogue, these two subgroups learned to understand the value of each other’s contributions (Kasl & Yorks, 2016, p. 15).

Emotional Valence

In all cases, expressive ways of knowing helped individuals become more aware of their emotions and this awareness deepened their learning. To varying degrees in all but one case, strong emotional valence is connected to learners’ sense of self. Where self-identity was not a primary factor, the MBK project facilitator began with retrospective and prospective storytelling. This strategy heightened participants’ awareness of their felt connection to the organization, thus strengthening the valence that engaged them wholeheartedly in the visioning task.

Empathic Space

The greater the diversity among dialogue participants, the greater is the need for wholeness in dialogue if participants are to create empathic space in which they can enter each other’s lived experience.

We have defined the construct of whole-person dialogue as an interchange among two or more people, characterized by inquiry mode, that integrates emotions, ideas, and action. This characterization is an epistemological leap from understandings of dialogue that typify our adult education literature, where we are more likely to describe an exchange of ideas or meaning perspectives. We may wonder, “What does an interchange that integrates emotions, ideas, and action look like?” One glimpse of empathic space created by whole-person dialogue is the interchange between the VA project team and site action teams. The project team communicated “by embodying the practices ourselves, without prior explanation, demonstrating the learning we wished to convey.”

An overwhelmingly necessary element needed for the creation of empathic space is time —time for authentic interchange among people whose life worlds are different, time to accommodate vulnerabilities created by high emotional valence.

Concluding Observation

The published accounts of all our case examples describe in rich detail how the concepts and elements of the model discussed in this paper emerge in diverse groups along with learning

practices and processes that address them. Many cases such as these provide the foundation for the model.

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“Where are you from?” Shifting Identity Interrogation for Interpersonal and Social Transformative Learning

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Abstract: Have you ever been asked: *Where are you from?* If you have, what reaction have you noticed within yourself in response? Surprise? Warmth? Irritation? Openness? Anger? Happiness? Connection? Disconnection? In this paper, I use my own lived experiences and relationship to the question, *where are you from?* to examine the impacts of the polar experiences of connection or disconnection that the question can evoke. I characterize Identity Interrogation (II) as the experience of disconnection when biographical questions about identity are posed to me by near strangers. I found that Relational Connection (RC) on the other hand, has been my experience when I am asked those same questions in relational context. I make theoretical propositions to enable a shift towards personal and interpersonal transformation in the immediate context of an II experience. I also propose a narrative of inclusion to enable social transformation of the premises and dominant ideologies underlying II experiences. This inquiry is in service of addressing the meta-question: **At the intersection of worlds of difference colliding, what are the transformative possibilities?**

The Inquiry

“Where are you from?” “Where are you *really* from?” “What is your background?” “What is your story?”

Seemingly innocent questions. Each loaded with history, innuendos, and assumptions. I call this Identity Interrogation (II), the everyday experience, for me, of being asked biographical questions by strangers/near strangers. I can now sense these four or five word questions before they are asked. In spite of often being able to predict with precision when the question will land into the space between me and the questioner, I still cringe from the pit of my stomach, at once trying to compose and measure my reaction and then my response to the question. Shall I answer the question on the surface or the implied questions they are really asking?

“Who are you anyway?” “How did you come to be here?” “Why should I be talking/listening to you?” “Are you worthy of my attention?”

These are implied reminders, that in the eyes and minds of many, I am still different. In Canada and the US, I am still a black African, with all the assumptions and presuppositions that holds. In addition, these held assumptions and presuppositions are different every time, unique to the socially constructed space created and shared in the relational dynamics. This means that a multiplicity of dialogues are possible in the interrogation moment, including the possibility for transformative learning (TL). At the same time, I have found myself stumped for the right choice to harness and unlock the potential transformation for myself and others. That has led me to this inquiry: **at the intersection of worlds of difference colliding, what are the transformative possibilities?**

From the Vignettes of my Lived Experience: aka Autoethnography as Methodology

First, here are 3 vignettes as autoethnographical data that the inquiry is based on. These are examples only to illustrate the journey of this inquiry. I have had countless other encounters and experiences of Identity Interrogation (II).

Vignette 1: Circa May 1999 [Excerpt from a Previous Blog & Reflections]

I'd just arrived in Vancouver from war-torn Sierra Leone, via Conakry, Guinea where I'd taken refuge for about a year. I was relieved to be in a safe haven. A place where I no longer slept the fitful, restless, sleep of one uncertain and fearful of what waking may bring. I was thrilled to be in a place where I could return to university to complete my bachelor's degree that had been rudely interrupted. In preparing for back to university, I took weekend computing courses. There was a South-Asian looking lady in my class and we had exchanged casual smiles. Third class in, we ran into each other in the ladies.

“Hi,” she said.

“Hi,” I responded.

“Where are you from?” she queried.

I was amused and taken aback all at once, simultaneously wondering why she'd asked while fumbling for an appropriate quick answer. It occurred to me that while I had been curious about her, I hadn't thought it appropriate to ask, devoid of further connection with her about her background. Finally, assuming she wouldn't know where Sierra Leone was anyway, I answered, “West Africa.”

She retorted “I know you are from West Africa, but where?!”

In the exchange that followed, I learnt she had met and married a Nigerian and lived there for decades... This, my first exchange in being questioned about my lineage in Canada has never left me. It would be the first of many times I'd be asked the question and variations of “where are you from?” My personal favorite is – “where were you born?” Somehow, my response of “Germany” never seems to satisfy.

Vignette 2: May 2016

I am discussing this paper with a senior colleague, who I deeply respect. I describe the experiences forming the premise of the paper, biographical questions like “where are you from?” posed to me by near strangers. I notice my colleague looking increasingly puzzled as I share some of my inner experiences over time that have ranged from amusement to anger. He listens, lips tightening as I speculate that I have come to believe that a range of issues are in play in these encounters and that context matters. I say:

“At best, there is insensitivity and unconscious bias in the questioning.” He responds: “I don't believe you are asked these questions because of any of that in Canada. That may be different given racial politics in the United States, but I think in Canada it's just about curiosity because of your accent. Canada is so inclusive in my experience and though you say your accent is non-descript [I moved around a lot as a child] the average person won't know the difference between a Black African or Caribbean or your accent!”

I paused and took in a breath. I noted my heart pounding and heat rising to my neck. I'm triggered and motivated to allow my amygdala to take over and respond with an attack. After all, as much as I respect this colleague, he is... an older white male. What does he know about my experiences? Then I remember being in a ‘diversity’ conversation with this same colleague and others. I remember his outburst when another colleague, a mixed-race woman, implied what I

had just thought. Visibly angry, he'd noted: "This is why I hate these conversations! I have no voice! No status in them!"

I took another deep breath as two other thoughts now floated up to the front of my mind. I share them: "Okay, how do you explain a stranger walking up to me and saying: 'You're pretty, where are you from?' when I hadn't even spoken to them...How about my nephews, second-generation Canadians with very Canadian accents – why do they get asked the same thing?" I explain passionately how I used to pay little attention to race and race-talk and perspectives of internalized oppression. I shared how growing up in Africa had shielded me from some of the internalized impacts I've come to learn about from Canadian and US born 'blacks.' I note how II and the fact that our children are now growing up where they also experience it now has me paying closer attention.

He looks thoughtful. He says: "wow, I never thought of all that...I'm now thinking that people may perhaps be asking in an attempt at connection that in fact can be experienced as disconnection!"

Vignette 3: June 2016

I wonder if I made up my response about past encounters with II and about my nephews in response to my senior colleague. I decide to check-in with others.

I asked two of my older nephews – young adults.

"Hey, you know that whole *where are you from* question: do people ask you that at all?"

They both answer "yes" and "all the time!" almost automatically, somewhat absentmindedly. I note with despair that I didn't even have to explain my question.

I also told two of my sisters about this work. Again, they needed no prodding. We traded stories.

Toward Analytic Autoethnography

"What is most personal is most general." (Rogers, 1970)

"It is the job of good sociology to reveal the public issues inherent in troubles personally felt."
(C Wrights Mills in Skocpol, 1998, p. 642)

The above are quotes that have shaped my scholarship and partially led me to the inquiry at hand. I now turn specifically to analytic autoethnography as proposed and distinguished by Leon Anderson to further my inquiry:

analytic autoethnography refers to ethnographic work in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in the researcher's published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena... The five key features of analytic autoethnography that I propose include (1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis. (Anderson, 2006a, pp. 375,378)

I acknowledge the rigorous debate around this form of autoethnography relative to evocative autoethnography that focuses on the research end of the emotional engagement of readers with the experiences described (Atkinson, 2006; Denzin, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Vryan, 2006). The specifics of how this inquiry intersects with that debate is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it contributes, as Anderson stated in his response to the debate, an example of what analytic autoethnography could look like from a methodological standpoint (Anderson,2006b).

First, I review the intersecting literatures in light of the inquiry question. Second, I use analytic reflexivity to propose theoretical propositions for consideration by the research community interested in furthering this inquiry.

The Landscape: aka Intersecting Theoretical Grounds

What are the transformative possibilities at the intersection of worlds of difference colliding? I provide a very brief summary here of the questions, contradictions and possibilities for transformation inherent at the intersection of TL theory and identity, relationship dynamics, self as instrument and decision-making.

On Transformative Learning: How do I Transform II and more questions...

I follow the definition of transformative learning (TL) grounded in Mezirow and Associates' Transformation Theory. From this orientation, adults can transform our cognitive taken-for-granted frames of reference, grounded in our assumptions, to make them more open and inclusive (Mezirow, 2000, 2009). This process starts and is triggered by a disorienting dilemma. In light of II, questions that could then lead into TL include, what are the assumptions of the asker and the receiver of questioning? Which assumptions can be further challenged to evoke the TL process through critical reflection on assumptions? In addition, several aspects of TL are significant to unpacking the experience of II:

- Discourse – given the interpersonal interaction within which II occurs, the transformation potential exists right there in the moment and space of the ensuing discourse.
- Emotions – the affective experience and emotional aspects of TL are of concern in the context of II, given the range of emotional triggers that were evoked for me from openness to anger. (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006; Kokkos et al., 2015; Malkki & Green, 2014; Mezirow, 2000; Yorks & Kasl, 2006).
- Cross-cultural Encounters – the literature shows that there are significant transformative and identity formation possibilities in cross-cultural contexts and spaces (Fisher-Yoshida, Dee, & Schapiro; Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009; West, 2014). However, how can this be accessed in shorter-term interpersonal interactions, when the nature of II produces emotional triggers? As we know from decision-making theories, emotional triggers hijack responses and influence judgment and decision making (Lerner, Li, Valdesolo, & Kassam, 2015).
- Critical Emancipation/Ideology Critique – this perspective to transformation grounded in critique of dominant social narratives brings questions to the II experience such as: Who gets asked the questions? By whom? What discourses have informed and endorsed this line of personal questioning among strangers? What narratives need to shift to re-author this experience (Brookfield, 2000; Freire, 1970; Johnson-Bailey, 2012; Swart, 2013)?

On Relational Dynamics

As Ken Gergen stated in a talk I attended, building flourishing relationships is attained through a series of micro-affirmations in relational dynamics. This is important because being welcomed into a relationship, free from constraints, or in cross-cultural encounters the specific constraint of another trying to 'place' you too quickly, creates the impact of affirmation. Affirmation is critical, because it opens the door for mutual engaged participation (Gergen, 2009). How can that be achieved when the experience of II is affectively felt as a denial of affirmation?

Decision-making & Choice in the II Moment: Self as Instrument

Seashore et al (2004) proposed the concept of *Self as Instrument*, where awareness of impact of an experience precedes deliberate decision-making on choices available following triggering experiences. Facilitators of transformation can themselves become an instrument of TL and a model for others, by engaging in this form of agency (Curran, Seashore, & Welp, 1995; Seashore, Nash, Thompson, & Mattare, 2004). How can the use of self as instrument inform meaningful action to quickly shift and transform the dynamics of II?

Musings: aka Analytic Theorizing

I integrate all the above to conclude the analysis with inductive theorizing that yielded the following interpretations and propositions through the journey of this inquiry. I drew inspiration from related studies that concluded with thematic strands, analytical and propositional conclusions from the literature, and practice directions (Barbuto, 2000; Malkki & Green, 2014; Miles, n.d.; Plakhotnik, Delgado, & Seepersad, 2014; West, 2014).

Proposition 1: *Biographical questioning of identity differences can evoke either an experience of Identity Interrogation (II) or a polar experience of Relational Connectedness (RC).* The experience of the former is characterized by negative affect (e.g. disorientation, confusion, anger, withdrawal) and the latter by positive affective response (e.g. warmth, openness, happiness, connection). As Vignette 1 revealed, both may co-exist in a single encounter but my usual experience has been of one or the other.

Proposition 2: *A pre-existing relationship is the difference between biographical questioning that evokes an II or an RC experience.* This was an insight gained directly from the discussion in Vignette 2 and the literature on relational dynamics. Well-meaning intentions are not on their own enough for biographical questioning across differences to be appropriate outside of relationships. For example in Vignette 1, the exchange was still an II experience even though the questioner's intent was positive.

Proposition 3: *When biographical questioning results in an II experience, it can evoke the potential for TL because of the disorienting dilemmas it presents, relative to the identity of the receiver of the questioning.* Through the lens of critical TL, this line of questioning raises questions about the dominant ideology and assumptions about social belonging. Who is from here? Who is not? Who asks and who receives the questions and why? What popular discourses have made it okay to question others' identity? All this presents the potential for discourse that may lead to individual and social transformative learning.

Proposition 4: *The shift towards a transformational experience is dependent on the response choice of the person experiencing II.* As shown in Vignette 2, the reflexive capacity of the one having an II experience is critical to the ability to integrate awareness of impact, bypass a reactive response and engage in productive discourse.

Proposition 5: *A meta-shift in dominant social discourses is needed, away from a discourse of diversity as a metaphor for magnifying differences toward diversity as a metaphor for social inclusion.* As the critical TL literature shows, names, words and dominant narratives matter. Personal and interpersonal transformation is possible through the agency of the one experiencing II and ensuing interpersonal discourse. However, social transformation requires macro awareness of the underlying implications of the seemingly innocent act of strangers posing biographical questions to others across difference.

Where to From Here? Aka Discussion & Conclusions

Analytical theorizing cannot claim generalizability. Further qualitative studies are required to build and refine the propositions presented here prior to any further expansion of this work. A starting point may be broader inquiry to determine whether II is in fact a common experience among visible minority and new immigrant groups and examine the nature of those experiences. Further principles for practice are required to examine: what shifts are necessary to transform individual and collective dialogues such that we can respect, honor and learn from differences constructively...in everyday interactions? My hope is that these propositions will start the conversation about shifting towards mutual inclusion and relationship-building in cross-cultural encounters. I hope you will take agency to build your own and others' awareness, and make deliberate choices to engage in productive (albeit provocative and transformative) discourse should you encounter II experiences. I also hope you will work to raise discourse/collective consciousness of this phenomenon in the spaces where you lead, teach, work and influence.

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At the Intersection of Transformative Learning Theory, Systems Thinking and Learning Through Story-Telling

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Abstract: My paper focuses on the communicative dimension in transformative learning theory and the intersection with systems thinking and narrative learning. To explore this perspective we need to work with a model that reflects circular intrapersonal communication, as well as the interpersonal dimension describing the dialogue between the adult learner and the adult educator. This framework offers us new ideas on how to be more intentional and creative in fostering transformative learning processes.

Introduction

According to the ancient Egyptians, the tongue is the repository of the mind. The tongue functions as a type of rudder, which enables humans to navigate through the currents of the world. As the fundamental structure of humanity, language has two fundamental functions; it not only enables movement through the world but also determines direction and purpose (Retzer, 2006, p. 13). The peculiarity of language becomes clear at this point; it is a type of bridge that can connect the mind and communication.. In this socio-communicative process, language not only functions as an organ of perception for the abstract acquisition of a social reality, but also actively changes this reality in terms of a circular process – which is one of the central assumptions of systems thinking (Schlippe & Schweitzer, 2007, p. 118). The role of language within processes of change becomes a point of departure itself when we analyze the intersectional potential of transformative learning theory, systems thinking and learning through story-telling. By exploring the communicative dimension in transformative learning theory the focus of this paper is on how to enable perspective transformation through communication or more precisely through language.

Engaging at the intersection: Between tradition and innovation

Transformative learning theory is “grounded in the nature of human communication” (Taylor, 2007, p. 173). In order to expand transformation theory’s understanding of communication (Mezirow) which is based on two concepts that were originally developed by Jürgen Habermas (1973, 1981, 1984) this paper focuses on a theoretical framework that provides practical dimensions on how the adult educator is able to challenge the learner’s intrapersonal communication through interpersonal communication. While Mezirow (1991, 2012) aims at fostering ideal speech conditions (Habermas, 1981, 1984) in order to achieve perspective transformation, Habermas himself says that “[t]he expression ‘ideal speech situation’ is delusive, insofar as it suggests a concrete form of life” (Habermas, 1985, p. 161). Mezirow incorporates in his theory of transformative learning Habermas’ idea of distinguishing between instrumental, communicative and emancipatory learning. He focuses on communicative learning which he refers to as a kind of learning aiming at understanding what others mean while they are communicating. Communicative learning itself is located in the context of rational discourse for which ideal speech conditions are a necessity. Instead of limiting the communicative dimensions in Mezirow’s transformative learning theory on an ideal that can never be reached, it might be

promising to shift the focus on some other aspects within the work of Jürgen Habermas (1973). Habermas' ideas allow us to engage at the intersection of transformative learning theory, learning through story-telling and systems thinking. Within Habermas' work there is an aspect which opens up an extended space of possibilities for engaging at the aforementioned intersection. Habermas conceptualizes life stories at the junction of the vertical and horizontal level (Habermas, 1973, p. 196-197). According to Habermas, there is not only a need to integrate lived experience into one's own life story but to articulate the meaning of this life story within relationships (Habermas 1973, p. 193-194) in order to experience continuity and coherence. Therefore it is necessary to provide a theoretical framework that provides insight into the circular internal processes of how meaning is constructed and reconstructed in respect to the individual's frame of reference. At the same time this framework has to possess practical dimensions on how the adult educator is able to challenge these processes while interacting with adult learners. The purpose of the paper remains twofold: On the one side it will stay within the tradition of Mezirow's theory while it will extend the communicative dimension.

In search of a capable extension, it may be useful to consider the embeddedness of complex systems theory in transformative learning. Swartz and Sprow (Swartz, & Sprow, 2010) argue that transformative learning is related to complexity science, although Mezirow did not make this connection explicit. In order to improve our understanding of transformative learning, Swartz and Sprow identify several points of intersection, and mention Mezirow's use of systems thinking in his discussion of coherence. They also refer to his incorporation of ideas from the systems thinker and anthropologist Bateson. Besides linking transformative learning to complexity science, Tyler and Swartz also make a connection to storytelling theory (Tyler, & Swartz 2012, p. 455; Mezirow, 1991, p. 161f.). Clark and Rossiter work "from the premise that narrative is a uniquely human way of meaning making" and that the "nature of experience is always prelinguistic; it is 'languaged' after the fact, and the process of narrating is how learners give meaning to experience" (Clark, & Rossiter, 2008, p. 64). They also argue that the "construction of the narrative is necessary to make the experience accessible (that is, to language it), and how it is constructed determines what meaning it has for the person" (Clark, & Rossiter, 2008, p.64). This linguistic access to transformative learning theory allows us to connect both levels (intrapersonal and the interpersonal) to each other. When the focus shifts from trying to create an ideal speech situation to increasing the likelihood of achieving the goal of perspective transformation by irritating the learners' process of narrating instead, then the communicative dimension in transformative learning needs some modification. To expand Mezirow's theory we need to find a model that provides both aspects in storytelling as a form of human communication (Tyler, & Swartz, 2012; p. 455): narrated and experienced life and how both are linked to each other. The role of language as a fundamental structure of humanity is crucial for the outlining of the relationship between individual experiences, communication and transformative learning.

Engaging at the Intersection: Transformative Learning, Systems Thinking and Learning through Story-telling

When searching for ways to expand the communicative dimension of transformation theory (Mezirow) to achieve a more pragmatic and holistic approach to transformative learning in adult education, it is helpful to look at a model that has emerged from systems thinking. Retzer's model of communication, which emerged from psychosis research, allows us to focus not solely on the question of how learning leads to change, but also on how the adult educator is able to initiate and catalyze these changes through communication. It offers a framework to

better understand communication as the exchange of stories and the relations between persons in any encounter. I will explore its usability/practicability to expand the communicative dimension in Mezirow's transformative learning theory in a more holistic way.

One of the central assumptions of this paper is that there is a strong relationship between experienced life and narrated life. Experienced life as it is understood in this paper can be described as consciousness, psyche or perception. Retzer (1994, pp. 9-17) splits what he calls the experienced life into three functional areas which are description, explanation and evaluation. It is rather a process than a structure and all the elements have a circular relationship to one another. How an experience is perceived and evaluated depends strongly on the way it is described and explained. Through formative learning we do not solely learn certain contents but how to make sense of and give meaning to them and craft a coherent life story. Retzer (1994, 2006) offers a perspective that gives us a more in-depth insight on formal aspects: Instead of focusing on changes in what we know and experience (informative) he puts an emphasis on the question of how we know and experience (transformative) our life or certain aspects of it (see also Kegan, 2000). In addition to that, Transformation Theory (Mezirow, 1978; 2000; 2012; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009) is concerned with the question of change: "Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167)." Changing these structures means re-storying one's life story. Transformative learning can be described as re-storying (Randall, 1996). How are these structures or perspectives related to the process of narration? "Perspectives are constitutive of experience. They determine how we see, think, feel and behave. Human experience is brought into being through language. [...] Language builds up linguistically circumscribed areas of meaning. Meaning perspectives can incorporate fragmented, incomplete experience involving areas of meaninglessness" (Mezirow 1981, p. 14). When we are able to identify those areas of meaninglessness and incomplete experience, we are able to extend or re-write life stories to fill voids or build bridges between gaps.

Creating a relationship between Retzer's work and transformative learning theory enables us to gain greater insight into how prior experiences and interpretations are used to construe an interpretation of a new experience. At the same time we can explore ways on how to challenge those interpretations and their guiding assumptions as educators. For Retzer (1994; 2006) and Schumacher, the experienced life can be seen as an internal story – it has not been told yet – but it gives the individual a concept of his or her being in the world "a self-awareness of one's own individuality" (Schumacher 1997a, p. 71). If this internal story is told as a narrated life it can be re-storied. This process of restorying – as mentioned above – can be described as transformative learning by (Randall, 1996).

Narrated life as a second area of phenomena refers to interpersonal communication, or more precisely to everything that takes place as communicative action between people and includes but is not limited to linguistic elements. It also involves non-linguistic elements and all forms of behaviour or "performance" that are experienced (by someone else) as a meaningful sign within the social system. This is very important and provides an option for extending Mezirow's theory insofar as it is not limited exclusively on cognitive ways of knowing but involves expressive and embodied ways of knowing as well. Lived life, a category on its own refers to all biological, organic and physiological processes and states (Retzer 1994, p. 9). Even

though lived life is distinguished from other areas of phenomena like psyche and consciousness (experienced life) and narration (narrated life), it can interact with both areas and react with adaption if needed (Retzer 1994, p. 17). Here Retzer's model can clearly contribute to transformative learning theory. In addition to that, the strong link between what Retzer (1994; 2006) refers to as experienced and narrated life has already been made explicit by Clark and Rossiter (2008, p. 64): arguing that the "nature of experience is always prelinguistic; it is "languaged" after the fact, and it is through the process of narrating how learners give meaning to experience. Narrative learning is constructivist in character, but the construction of the narrative is necessary to make the experience accessible (that is, to language it), and how it is constructed determines what meaning it has for the person". According to Clark and Rossiter, "[n]arrative is also how we craft our sense of self, our identity" (Clark & Rossiter 2008, p. 62). Max Frisch writes that "[s]ooner or later, everyone invents a story, which – often under tremendous sacrifices – is held on to for life" (Frisch 1975, p. 45). As long as experience and storytelling are not perturbed, they mutually confirm each other. If this internal story is told and becomes externalized as narrated life it can be re-storied. This is important for the adult educator insofar as every inquiring, every comment, every supplement may have an impact on the narrative if the narrator reacts to them, so that the internal story (experienced life 2), the old frame of reference, might differ from the internal story before (experienced life 1) it has been told (narrated life) (Schumacher 1997b, p. 84). Therefore we have to not only figure out, where the connections for rewriting one's life story can be located within the narrative, but also what communication or, more precisely, what our linguistic practice has to look like in order to increase the likelihood of perspective transformation through dialogue.

What is the advantage of using narrative as a complementary concept for not only understanding but extending transformative learning theory? One reason to extend the communicative dimension in Mezirow's theory is that learning transformatively goes beyond cognitive ways of knowing, as it also involves embodied ways of knowing (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007, p.137) to mention just one other alternative way of knowing. The way we story our lives includes cognitive, affective, spiritual and somatic dimensions (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 215; Brooks & Clark 2001, p. 2). All of these dimensions offer a very rich potential for theorizing transformative learning theory: "Narrative offers us a window through which we can view the self, a self that is multiple and complex, a self that is dynamic and changing" (Brooks & Clark 2001, p. 3). Through the close relation between narrative and identity (or internal story or experienced life), stories (as narrated life) offer a rich potential for both: reflecting on continuity and changing perspectives. As soon as the internal story arrives in the phenomena of narrated life, it becomes possible to extend or re-write it. Narrated life becomes then a part of the dialogue between educator and learner.

Language and Communication – Or the Question of How to Make a Difference?

Retzer's (1994; 2006) model of communication sets the backdrop for the last section. This final section explores the work of systems thinker Bernd Schumacher on the use of language in consulting situations. His research leads to the conclusion that we increase the likelihood of change or perspective transformation if we focus on a linguistic practice that fosters variability. Like Brooks and Clark (2001, p. 2) he suggests that we should therefore focus on how the story is told, how the central elements are joined together and on the way coherence is constructed by the narrator. In addition to that Brooks and Clark invite us to do the same at the level of language by asking which metaphors are used, how the story is told (active or passive

voice), how the protagonists are characterized or how the themes relate to each other. They argue that the aforementioned approaches “offer us ways to interpret what the informant is experiencing and what meaning they are giving to that experience” (Brooks & Clark, 2001, p. 3) and invite us to focus on how the experiences within the story are described, explained and evaluated. By doing so, we are not solely able to better understand how the narrative is constructed and in addition to that, we might gain deeper insight in what the frame of reference might look like. Keeping in mind that every inquiring, comment, or supplement may have an impact on the narrative if the narrator reacts on them (Schumacher, 1997a), we have to find a way to challenge the intrapersonal communication within one’s frame of reference through interpersonal communication. The aforementioned findings of Schumacher’s study provide some guidance here. In the context of adult education or, more precisely, transformative pedagogy, we can use language in a way to increase the likelihood of change (within what Retzer (1994; 2006) refers to as narrated life and thus in the experienced life of the learner). Regarding the four verbal application dimensions, Schumacher (1997a; 1997b) suggests the following: In order to foster perspective transformation we should focus on discussing possible and or even already successful applied strategic solutions. In addition to that we should maintain within the focus of attention a rhetoric that is able to integrate the problem and solution at the same time (Schumacher 1997b, p. 111). According to the results of the study concerning the mode of language (indicative or subjunctive) we should foster playing hypothetically with thought experiments that are carried out in subjunctive (Schumacher 1997b, p. 111). Concerning the temporal dimension we should shift the focus from talking about the past to discussing possible futures (Schumacher 1997b, p. 111). And as a last finding Schumacher (1997b, p. 111) emphasizes the importance of the spatial dimension by bringing the context of adult education into adult education or transformative education – discussing the context within the context. All these findings increase the likelihood of changes in perspectives according to Schumacher. Even though his study is concerned with consulting situations, we can transfer his results to transformative learning theory. To explore the communicative dimension within the theory, in the context of adult education, we need to work with a model that reflects both, intrapersonal and interpersonal processes, which are interwoven. Building upon that model, we are not only able to describe and explain processes of communication, furthermore we are able to possess practical dimensions on how the adult educator is able to challenge these (communicative) learning processes while interacting in a way that allows the adult learner to develop a new meaning perspective that is less limited, more inclusive, discriminating and integrative of new (and old) experiences, thus expanding the learner’s range of options and to rewrite his or her life story. Staying within the tradition of transformative learning theory while expanding the communicative dimension at the same time through engaging at the intersection gives us ideas on how to be more intentional and creative in teaching for change.

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Creating Dialogic Conditions for Transformative Learning with Adult Women Students: Taking a Communication Perspective

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Abstract: Transformative learning is learning which transforms existing perspectives to be more inclusive, open and reflective. This involves examining one's beliefs, feelings, and values in a critical, rational manner. Due to their historically marginalized place in social discourse, women will arrive in transformative learning environment with a variety of ways of knowing and their capacities for participation in this type of critical reflective dialogue may be limited. Thus, educators need to be able to identify the basis for their students' thinking to support as well as challenge and stimulate their growth and development. To do this effectively, they need to pay attention to and appreciate what they are making in the communication process. This paper outlines the findings of a qualitative, descriptive interview study which describe the ways in which educators within an adult women leadership program take a communication perspective to hold the tension between care and critical reflection to support their student's participation in transformative dialogue.

Background and Purpose

Educational programs for adult women can be viewed as uniquely transformative. The students served in these programs may be mothers who have put off their own education to raise their children, or mid-career professionals looking for a way to advance their careers. Regardless of their individual stories, the socio-historical contexts of their lives create unique challenges to their development and learning (Hayes & Flannery, 2002). Due to these challenges, they often enter into the classroom with doubts about their capacity as active learners and knowers (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997). Educators need to provide these women with opportunities to learn about themselves, examine the social contexts that have shaped and restrained them, and develop new perspectives on their learning (Belenky et al., 1997; Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Hayes, 2001; Hayes & Flannery, 2002).

One way of doing this is to provide classroom environments that encourage transformative learning. Transformative learning is that learning which transforms the perspectives of individuals to make them more open and inclusive (Mezirow, 2003). Mezirow (2003) suggests that discourse involving critical assessment of one's own and others' beliefs, feelings, and values is an essential element to perspective transformation. It is through critical dialogue that interlocutors are able to find common meaning and assess the ways in which each justifies her interpretations or beliefs (Freire, 2000; Mezirow & Associates, 2000). Further research has suggested that care and connection is also important in the transformative learning dialogue process (Carter, 2002; McGregor, 2004; O'Hara, 2003).

When working with women students, the elements of care and connection are especially important to the transformative learning process (English & Irving, 2012; English & Peters, 2012). Educators in this context are confronted with the difficult and diverse tasks of establishing supportive environments, developing and maintaining positive relationships, and encouraging students to critically examine their experiences. This is in addition to fulfilling the important

duties of teaching content (Taylor, 2000a, 2000b). Researchers suggest several practical approaches to the ways in which educators might create dialogue to facilitate transformative learning (Brookfield, 1986; Brookfield & Preskill, 2005; Cranton, 2006; Vella, 2008). However, this literature falls short of explaining the ways in which an educator manages the moment-to-moment facilitation of a classroom environment. Moreover, none of these specifically consider the unique challenges of working with women students. Classrooms with adult women students are not immune to socio-historical context. Thus, there are women that will enter into classroom environments with a variety of ways of knowing. This includes some that will be silent and disempowered, which may preclude them from participating in critical dialogue (Belenky et al., 1997). Educators need to pay carefully attention to these epistemological differences to support women students in the transformative dialogue process (Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Stanton, 1996; Tarule, 1996).

My search for a more robust explanation of how to attend to the different ways of knowing of my own adult women students led me to consider communication practices. As hooks (1994) suggests, liberating education requires educators to focus on both the content and process of communication in the classroom. In this regard, it is important to understand the communication practices of those educators who support student's different ways of knowing and hold the tension between care, connection, and critical reflection to create the dialogical conditions for transformative learning. This paper outlines some of the findings of a qualitative, descriptive interview study that explored how adult educators communicate with their adult women students to create dialogic conditions for transformative learning in the context of an undergraduate leadership course.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that informed the study combined three theoretical constructs: transformative learning, women's ways of knowing, and communication through a particular perspective on dialogue.

Transformative Learning

As noted above, in this study transformative learning is defined as learning which transforms existing perspectives to be more inclusive, open and reflective (Mezirow 2000). According to Mezirow (2003), this involves dialogue that involves examining beliefs, feelings, and values in a critical, rational manner. A process that requires listening, empathy, holding off judgment, and seeking common ground by all participants (Mezirow, 2003).

Women's Ways of Knowing

Due to their historically marginalized place in social discourse, women will arrive in adult education environments with a variety of ways of knowing and capacities for participation in this type of critical reflective dialogue. Women's ways of knowing (WWK) provides a language to name and examine the different ways that women think based on their situational, social, and historical contexts (Belenky et al., 1997). This model highlights that while some women may come to the educational environment with well-developed capacities for critical reflective discourse, some women may not be used to stating their own opinions and have limited resources for critical dialogue. Others may have the resources, but lack confidence in their abilities to engage in the process. Thus, educators need to be able to identify the basis for their students' thinking and affirm while also challenging and stimulating growth. Their challenge is to draw out those that are silenced, while supporting received knowers to trust their own voice. They are further called on to help subjective knowers find ways to challenge their own and

others' assumptions, and to help those that are separate to connect with others in collaborative learning.

Transformative Dialogue and Communication Perspective

One way of meeting this challenge is to view dialogue as a relational and contextually situated process that aims to create new realities (Buber, 1958; Gergen, McNamee, & Barrett, 2001). Within this view, dialogue is emergent and requires educators to pay attention to and appreciate what we are making in the communication process (Pearce, 2007). When an educator monitors what is going on in the communication process, she has an increased capacity to attend to the different ways of knowing presented by the students. She will engage in episode work to enhance those conversational acts that support the conditions for transformative learning and disrupt those that do not.

Methods

The study used a qualitative, descriptive interview design including a variation of the critical incident technique. I used a semi-structured interview approach to solicit recalled episodes of educators' dialogue, which met the conditions for transformative dialogue as presented in the conceptual framework. The study's sample included educators who teach in a specialized leadership program within an all-women's university in Central Massachusetts. This program is designed specifically as a dialogue based course in which students reflect on their personal and professional goals, strengths, and issues related to women in the workplace. The educators that participated in the study had a minimum of one year teaching experience, and were able to recall a critical incident of face-to-face classroom dialogue.

Data collection involved a self-developed classroom dialogue description form and interview protocol. These were derived from the elements of the conceptual framework and validated in a pilot study. Through this two stage data collection process, participants identified and described the episode work they used to create a specific classroom dialogue episode involving critical reflection, collaboration and connection.

The data was analyzed using Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM). CMM is a practical communication theory which maintains a social constructionist view. What is unique about CMM is its emphasis on the process of coordination. It asks us to look at communication, not just through it to its resulting meaning. It provides several heuristics for the deconstruction of communication to appreciate the ways in which the participants are acting together to create meaning, and the resources they are using in the process. I used these heuristics to develop thick-descriptions of the recalled incidents of dialogue. I then looked across the incidents to identify patterns in the dialogue behaviors.

Findings

In summary, the educators in this study consistently demonstrated care in the ways in which they managed classroom dialogue and interacted with students. This included maintaining a high regard and support for students and appreciating their role as a facilitator. The educators in this study presented a willingness and ability to allow learning to emerge from student experiences, which they then summarized and related to their intended lessons.

Educators promoted critical reflection within this context of care and connection. Rather than challenging or defending perspectives, the educators used questioning or probing behaviors. These behaviors allowed for critical comparison in relationship with, rather than tension between

perspectives. They sought to gain an understanding of the other’s perspective to inspire an appreciation of the similarities and differences of the underlying logics.

The findings also demonstrated how educators respond in-the-moment to create and maintain environments where students were able to respectfully challenge each other. Through active monitoring of student exchanges, the educators were able to disrupt negative energy without shutting down important critical conversation.

The educators also demonstrated how through careful attention to the communication process they were able to support and respond to students’ with various ways of knowing. Specifically, guiding those with more silent ways of knowing to become more engaged and confident and connecting those with more received and separate ways of knowing with new ideas. With silent knowers, the educators modeled care and set small tasks and goals to help the students become more vocal. With more subjective or received knowers, the educators focused on extending the conversation between students. Overall, they demonstrated a capacity to adapt in the moment to a variety of ways of knowing styles. For example, providing a silent student with support while at the same time encouraging a more subjective student to reflect critically on their views using probing questions.

The table below provides a summary of the findings of the study, organized by the major elements of the conceptual framework.

Table 1.
Summary of Findings

Framework Element	Summary of findings	Dialogue Behaviors Observed
Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators consistently demonstrated concern for students’ needs and/or feelings • Educators consistently expressed feelings of regard or fondness for their students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling care in organizing classroom activities and managing classroom interaction • Approving of students contributions to class in verbal and non-verbal ways.
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators reflected high regard for student voices and embraced student experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending dialogue between students • Relating student comments
Critical Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurred in the context of care • Challenging occurred between students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probing and questioning
Episode Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators viewed themselves as facilitators of learning • Educators were attentive and responsive to students’ unique ways of knowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to student • Observing/monitoring the dialogue • Summarizing

Conclusions and Recommendations

In totality these findings confirm existing transformative learning literature, which suggests care and connection are an essential condition for transformative dialogue (Carter, 2002; McGregor, 2004; O’Hara, 2003). Care and connection behaviors were prevalent

throughout all the incidents. The findings suggested that educators “model care” in setting up activities, establishing expectations, and developing rapport with students in their classes.

This is consistent with a framework of dialogue focused more on empathy and understanding of others ideas rather than a point, counter-point deliberative style of communication. In each of the critical incidents, the educators demonstrated care as the highest level context informing the educators’ dialogue behaviors. This included critical reflection. As such, critical reflection looks much different than the hard, logical challenging one might expect. The educators supported critical reflection through the more subtle behaviors of probing, relating, and summarizing of ideas.

The educators encouraged students to interact with each other and said they believed their voices to be secondary to those of the students. They viewed their role as facilitators of learning with the principle task of guiding dialogue. The educators in this study consistently listened to and observed the dialogue, as well as paid attention to the students’ ways of knowing. This active monitoring of conversation (especially non-verbally) allowed them to respond well to critical moments in the dialogue and adapt to student’s ways of knowing. The primary behaviors noted were those that invited the more silent into the dialogue, relating ideas, and summarizing to make connections to learning objectives.

These behaviors match the ways in which hooks (1994) suggested transformative education unfolds. Influenced by the work of Freire (2000), hooks suggested that educators should embrace student experience in order to enact an engaged pedagogy that turns away from the “banking system” of education that merely seeks to deposit learning into students (hooks, 1994). In making this assertion, hooks recognized the importance of communication and especially the need to pay attention to the process through which we are making meaning. Specifically, who speaks, who listens, and why?

The educators in this study demonstrated this type of attention to the communicative process. They regularly stepped back to listen and observe student interactions. Through this process they demonstrated the capacity to acknowledge the voices in the room, while engaging those that are not. In essence, they were taking a communication perspective on dialogue, which supported their ability to deal with multiple ways of knowing in the classroom.

The educators in this study actively monitored conversation allowing them to act at critical moments of the dialogue. Their attention was not only on what was being said, but included non-verbal cues and the ways in which the students’ participated in the class. These behaviors match what Gunnlaugson (2007) calls generative dialogue. He suggests that a generative conception of dialogue is needed within the field of transformative learning. This conception of dialogue includes behaviors such as suspending judgment and presencing, or “whole body sensing and listening” to the emerging meaning that is being created. He suggested that the result of such practices is a meta-awareness that “opens a collective learning space where moment-to-moment attention can permeate the conversation (Gunnlaugson, 2007, p. 141).”

Gunnlaugson (2007, p. 142) also noted, “...that the educator alone cannot facilitate these conditions. Rather they are co-constructed and co-developed by participants who are willing to assume shared responsibility for collectively creating conditions that foster transformative learning.” While the educator’s behaviors were integral in modeling care, establishing connection, and supporting critical reflection they were not sufficient alone. The students had a place in creating conditions that foster transformative learning. This was evident in the findings of this study. The educators in this study embraced the diversity of students’ experiences in the class to help move students’ views of themselves and their place in the world. The findings

demonstrate how this type of student interaction was central to various changes in students' views of themselves and the way they interact in the world. Student feedback helped one student see herself as a leader, shifted another's confidence about work, and encouraged another to assess her beliefs more critically.

Of note, is that the incidents of dialogue examined in this study involved engagement between women students with mixed ways of knowing. Educators in the study acknowledged that some of the students in class participated actively with connected ways of knowing. While there were incidents that involved more silent knowers, in each class there were some students that were capable and confident in sharing their perspectives. These students served as partners with the educators in creating turns that inspired critical reflection.

The question thus remains as to whether students with more homogeneous ways of knowing would be able to create the same dialogic conditions without much active intervention from the educator. Would, for example, students with a less diverse age range have enough variety of experiences and ways of knowing needed to create the tensions that occurred in the dialogues between the women that varied in age from early 20s to 50s?

Finally, it should be acknowledged that a few of the critical incidents suggest that the students involved may have experienced a change in their ways of knowing, or how they view themselves in relation to the world. However, based on the limited information available this cannot be viewed as evidence that the dialogues observed resulted in transformative learning outcomes. Further studies combining an evaluation of the dialogue conditions with some more formal evaluation or screening for transformative learning outcomes among the students involved in the dialogue would be needed to make this claim. It would also be inappropriate based on the data to suggest that the existence of these dialogue conditions leads to transformative learning in all cases. Dialogue conditions are only one of the elements suggested by literature as necessary for transformative learning to occur.

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The Negotiation between Individual and Collective Identity of Being a Teacher in the Context of Cultural Transition

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Abstract: This paper concerns an individual transformation in relation to societal transformation. It investigated a complex identity challenge a person is faced with when encountering a sudden change of social demand and a cultural transition. The negotiation between an individual and collective sense of identity is uncovered to be a manifestation of the dialog in the intersections of the predominant norms of what a person as a professional should be and a new vision of this profession. Identity has been a theme in prior studies in transformative learning, but was mostly viewed as a summative product of transformative experiences. Through our analysis of teachers' transformative narratives in the context of a legalized reform that banned corporal punishment in schools, we developed a unique analytical view that considers identity as a constantly negotiation tool and site that entails the struggles or breakthroughs of the transformative learning itself. Our analysis suggests that in order to move a person from a one who deeply associated with a culturally accustomed use of corporal punishment into a one who would never pick up the stick again, it may require (1) a psychological experience in which one is able to differentiate oneself from a collective sense of being a teacher, which could be facilitated by narrative thinking with a presence of multiple views, (2) an autonomous examination of a new evolving self in new context, and (3) a critical view of considering one as a historical and sociocultural being that can shape and shift the collective identity.

Introduction, Background, and Objectives

In his book, *Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Paulo Freire (1974), drawing upon Brazil's case, argues that while a society is in its transition, not all individual persons are capable of critically grasping the new emerging themes and autonomously participating in shaping the direction of social transformation. For those who are not able to do so, they become simply onlookers who are "carried along in the wake of change" with little consciousness of the role they can play in their time. Pointing out this, Freire's intention is not stating that humans have two types. Instead, he further provides an analysis of what causes such differentiation and he advocates an educational means for turning an onlooker into an actor who transforms the self and hence contributes to the change of a time. Although what Freire concerned was the democratization of the whole Brazilian society, the process turning Brazil from a closed, colonized society to an open, democratic one, his observation of such differentiating responses of social members with respect to a call for change or reform can be found across societies of different sorts. Schoolteachers' responses when faced with educational change or reform can be one.

A majority of Taiwanese teachers have viewed corporal punishment as a necessary, effective strategy to improve students' academic performance and behavior (Chen & Lin, 1991; Chen, Lu, Hung, & Chen, 1980; Lin, 1994). Corporal punishment can be so extreme as to lead to serious injury and significant mental distress of students (Tsung & Fan, 2009). The movement against the punishment in Taiwan since the late 1980s led banning its use in schools against teacher protests in 2006 (Taipei Teachers' Association, 2005). The legislation did not wipe off the practice (Humanistic Education Foundation, 2012). Despite those most severe practices (e.g., slapping, hitting directly by sticks) have decreased, other coercive or humiliating means increased (e.g., incident rate of verbal humiliation: 10% in 2005 to 47% in 2012 in middle schools; HEF, 2012). Similar developments have been found in other countries which also banned corporal punishment by laws (e.g., Kenya and South African; Mweru, 2010; Naong 2009; Duma, 2009).

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has advocated globally that legal reform is a must, first-step means for protecting children from any form of violence including corporal punishment (CRC, 2006). The number of countries that banned school corporal punishment keeps increasing (from 98 countries in 2006 to 122 countries in 2014; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2006 and 2014). Prior studies primarily focused on either reporting the difficulties and struggles teachers experienced, or highlighted certain model nations, especially Sweden and Finland, to illustrate an increasing social health that is considered to be associated with a series of legal reforms banning corporal punishment of children in these countries. Between the former, the struggling stories reminding us that the legal ban's undesirable consequences, and the later, the successful story implying how a ban could contribute to the happening of a whole social transformation eventually, we know little about how individual teachers cope with their unease feeling toward legal demands and engaging in fundamental change that will make a collective social transformation more likely to happen. This paper aims to address this gap.

The following three questions guided our inquiry:

1. For those teachers who had determined to stop or had stopped the use of corporal punishment and actively sought for alternatives—in Freire's idea, those who became actors, what were their experiences of change?
2. What are the key characteristics of these actors' changes?
3. In what conditions, the desirable transformation is more likely to happen?

Methodology

Twenty-three middle school teachers were interviewed. Five teachers reported that they had never hit their students. Among the other eighteen: (a) Four stopped hitting before the legislation; (b) Nine recognized their decrease or stop was directly relevant to ban (four thought legislation was not the major motive; four feared being sued; one had mixed reasons) (c) Three decided to stop after years of legislation (two made the decision while attending a workshop targeting alternatives; one due to a negotiation with a student); (d) Two kept hitting students. School size ranged from 19 classes to 114 classes.

Teaching experiences ranged from 4 to 30 (Mean=13.22) years. School locations varied from urban, suburban, to rural areas.

The interview was semi-structured with a focus on collecting teachers' life stories regarding their experiences of changes and challenges influenced by the legal ban. Telling story is itself a sense- and meaning-making process of lived experiences (Riessman, 2008). Narrative data (Bruner, 1986, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1998; Barone, 2001) bear narrators' worldviews and perspectives that can be analyzed through examining how the narrators select the materials and create their plots in their own unique ways. As story is a goal-oriented narrative incorporating information about the agents' intention and motivation, the narrative data also can be used to analyze the narrators' goal, intention and motivation connecting to their acting and interacting with their surroundings and situated contexts. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed to identify themes regarding teachers' motives of changes and narrated change experiences using an inductive approach.

Findings

We discovered that for teachers who had started acting differently, disproving not only the practice but the ideas and values of corporal punishment, they experienced change related to a holistic sense of identity (re)construction, negotiating the conflicts between an individual and collective sense of identity. In our context, we define a teacher's *transformation* as he/she had determined and initiated a process *to moves the self from a one who were deeply associated with a culturally accustomed use of corporal punishment into a one who would never pick up the stick again*. Our analysis revealed that in order to engage in such transformation, it may require (1) a psychological experience in which one is able to differentiate oneself from a collective sense of being a teacher, (2) an autonomous regulation of the self as a learner who constantly examine a new evolving self in the new context, and (3) a critical view of considering one as a historical and sociocultural being that can shape and shift the collective identity. We elaborate on these three points.

An individual teacher himself/herself is a human phenomenon embodying the sociocultural norms, values or beliefs, of the majority of teachers as to why and how being a teacher. A teacher perceives the self not only a representation of oneself but also a representation of a particular social role, teacher, as a collective sense. It is usually the case, if not in a reform and transitional context, that the individual and collective senses overlap to a certain extent that allows teachers to serve as a socially qualified teacher while preserving to be a unique being. Refusing to practice corporal punishment, a social practice that has been traditionally attached to the role of teacher as a necessary and just means, challenges teachers' collective sense of identity. It is notable that a majority of teachers still continue the punishment regardless a legal ban. An individual teacher might feel uncertain or vulnerable when they consider thinking or acting differently because they could suffer from an immediate social doubt from other teacher members regarding whether this different self could no longer be considered as a qualified teacher.

Our analysis indicated that the breakthrough of acting differently than the norms could happen in a condition where teachers encountered, either discovering by themselves or guided to find, new ideas and values that deeply touched and convinced teachers but were conceptually incompatible with the underlying assumptions of the practice of being a teacher with corporal punishment. For example, while attending a teacher training workshop, teacher Tsu "discovered" and was shakingly "impressed" by the unbalanced relationship between adults and children hidden in a told life narrated example, revealed by a speaker. She had never encountered this kind of "mutual respect" between adults and children in her situated culture until then. She found

this lens irresistible, compelling her to examine all what she, as a teacher, had done to her students, not merely corporal punishment but all other practices without such quality. She was still navigating alternatives and sometimes still treated students with corporal punishment when defeated by overwhelming working load, but she had been determined and promised herself to become a teacher with such new element. It is notable that such change illustrated a holistic sense of transforming the self and a new vision in which corporal punishment cannot play a part anymore, instead of simply a change in behavior relevant to the use of corporal punishment. In such experience, teachers started focusing more on personal transformation, exploring ways and managing self to fulfill their new vision for themselves and gradually cared less if they should behave and think as their colleagues did.

Some of our interviewed teachers, however, had developed their own ideas in disfavor of corporal punishment before entering school becoming a teacher, but they struggled with transformation still. The surrounding people questioned their existing positioning in disfavor of corporal punishment. Faced with the fact that a majority of their colleagues hit and fought for the right and rightness of hitting, implicitly or explicitly, many of these teachers began hitting even though they were not initially inclined to do so. To what extent a teacher could follow their original belief of who they were and should be has to do with how capable they could handle students in alternative ways and whether they could keep their faith, against the huge social pressure. More, it has to do with developing a more autonomous perspective to relate themselves to other teachers. Teacher Han is an example.

Han's teacher-training program in university started challenging her by illustrating how her prior growing up experiences had made her a person who, Han described, did not know "how to think." She had accepted whatever the authority, the teachers and textbooks, said, including the necessity of corporal punishment. Her teacher training introduced alternative values to norms, required her to re-examine those beliefs built from old experiences by reconsidering them through new views, and equipped her with effective instructional strategies that would motivate students by boosting their motivation and interest instead of pushing them through punishment. She experienced a revolutionary transformation of herself in teacher preparation, but however was surprised to find, that when the first day entering the school being a teacher, the campus still followed the old model. Her being was perceived as threat to her colleagues. Her comprehensive training had prepared her to take the challenge, as others may not be able to. However, there were times she also doubted whether she could be wrong. A strong faith started growing in her mind when she recalled a beloved teacher she had in middle school, who had been a very different teacher and impacted her in a way no other teachers did. This reflection inspired her to persist and brought her a sense of moral responsibility of what it means by being a teacher. When being asked why she would never use corporal punishment, she answered, "because then one day, if my students become teachers, they will remember me, and they will never be a teacher who will hit students." In Han's case, she had moved beyond simply a personal transformation and struggle. She further considered the different self would contribute to change a collective identity, and her self was a seed to cultivate the next generation her vision.

Finally, our analyses found that transformative experiences were more likely to happen when teachers were involved in a mode of interacting with or experiencing narrative scenarios where their personal view of interpreting what had happened (which was usually previously unseen by teachers because teachers were often lived in these perspectives unconsciously) was able to be perceived by themselves while other alternative or competing views were also presented and perceived in these narrated stories—Being able to see two or multiple objective

views in dealing with what should- be-the-same happenings in the stories, or being able to see multiple objective visions of how they can be a teacher in a story allowed them to realize other possibilities to be a teacher.

Discussion and Significance

This paper concerns an individual transformation in relation to societal transformation. It investigated a complex psychological challenge a person is faced when encountering a sudden large-scale change of social demand and cultural transition. The negotiation between an individual and collective sense of identity is uncovered to be a manifestation of the intersections of the predominant norms of what a person should be as being a professional and a new vision of this profession. Identity has been a theme in prior studies in transformative learning (Taylor, 2007), but it was mostly concerned as a summative product to which the transformative experiences sum up to. We propose a unique analytical view, developed from our analysis of teachers' transformative narratives, to consider identity as a constantly negotiation that entails the struggles or breakthroughs of the transformative learning itself. And since a person is a sociocultural and historical being, the negotiation implies more than a struggle at individual level.

Here we discussed some prior works that have played key roles to inspire us to pursuit transformative experiences in this direction that considers transformation from a more holistic sense of self and identity. Transforming experiences have been studies to involve critical reflection and change of a person's meaning perspective, frames of reference, or habits of minds in order to reconsider or create life experiences in alternative ways (Mezirow, 1998, 2000, 2012), which were found in our participant teachers' transformative experiences. Mezirow has put an emphasis on cognitive transformation however his work was originally situated in a larger context that the women participants' transformation was in relation to both personal developments in relation to social demands.

Kegan (2000), in his article, *What "Form" Transforms?*, used the story in the closing scene of Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*, to explicate that the key of transformation is not that a person has rejected what they have believed, but that a person has rejected the assumptions of the worlds they previously had been *identified themselves with as truths*. Transformative learning is concerned here not as merely a change of any objective kind of epistemological perspective but a one that a person has subjectively taken as part of the self. As it is a taken-for-granted part of the subjective self, a person is not able to sense its objective existence and hence they could not question, examine, and further exclude it from the self. Kegan suggested a subject-object shift that is required for one to transform the unseen, and our analysis indicated this could happen while a person is engaging in narrative thinking with the presence of multiple views.

In Freire's conceptualization, transformation of the self involves consciousness- raising, a critical awareness of existing structures within a person's society that might have contributed to inequality and oppression of the life of that person and the lives of others. Freire (1970) advocated dialogues— "the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world (p. 88)"—to raise the critical awareness. A true dialogue, he argues, cannot proceed without critical thinking which allows for possibilities outside the current reality, in contrast to naïve thinking, which perceives only the 'normalized' today and values only that reality.

Illeris (2014) highlighted a feature that has been part of the development of transformative theories—it is concerned that through the transformation, a person as a whole becomes more ready for renew the self, more flexible in relation to their situated conditions and

demands that change more unpredictably and rapidly in our time. This feature is beyond the concern of the transformation of a specific meaning perspective, frames of reference, or habits of mind, and considers a qualitative difference in a holistic sense of becoming a self of more autonomous regulation.

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Citizenship Education: Personally and Professionally Transformative Teacher Education

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Abstract: This presentation discusses a project that aims to explore teacher education as a personally and professionally transformative process. The project is still in its preliminary stages, and the methodology is being developed. The research group consists of several researchers working to shed light on the research question from different perspectives.

The Research Project—Aim and Foundation

The research is undertaken in a teacher education institute, and the project intends to explore how students develop professional teacher identities through their education. The theoretical framework for the teacher educational institute is inspired by and grounded in democratic citizenship theory, with John Dewey's work as the theoretical core. We recognize that one of the main challenges in using democratic citizenship theories is that the work done in this area often disregards or does not consider the importance of integrating a learning theory in theoretical and empirical discussions and research. Thus, an overarching aim for us is to contribute to approaches and research on democratic citizenship that combine theories of learning with theories of citizenship education.

Transformative learning theory seems to be a suitable learning theory, especially since the scope of education is not limited to absorbing subject knowledge and skills. The role of the classroom and learning in Norwegian schools, for example, is considered vital for meaning making, perspective taking and the development of critical thinking. These are all core educational values for democratic citizenship. Our point of departure is that this makes it imperative for teachers to develop an identity and professionalism through teacher education that enables them to foster citizenship through their teaching. We therefore consider one of the main tasks for our program to prepare students for teaching citizenship and to equip them to integrate citizenship education in the planning, implementation, accomplishment and evaluation of their teaching activities.

The project aims to shed light on and develop knowledge about learning processes that contribute to fostering critical thinking, communication and deliberation skills and tolerance while broadening their understanding of other points of view and the ability to live among others in a democratic society. These capabilities can all be understood and conceptualized theoretically as a democratic citizenship. Indeed, the goal of citizenship education is that the pupils acquire skills and values needed to become participating citizens (Birzea, 2000). One important contribution to the field is to explore how teacher students can acquire these skills in a way that encourages them to develop, in turn, their students' identity as democratic citizens.

Integrating transformative learning theory as a part of citizenship education is associated with a liberal arts approach to education (especially in the United States) and "bildung" (in Europe), with the ultimate goal to realize the "liberation of the mind from too limited a view" on other people, their perspectives and life stance and our common world (Hart, 2015, p. 287). Both liberal arts and bildung are educational ideals for "training people to live and look at the world in a new way. It is an attempt to transform human kind" (Pierre Hadot,

1995, as cited in Hart, 2015). Using the terms of *bildung*, one might borrow the lines from a poem by Tranströmer (2001), who writes: “Two truths approach each other. One comes from the inside, the other from outside, and where they meet we have a chance to catch sight of ourselves.” Education is understood as an existential process and a whole– person perspective that is not limited to a process of qualification. *Bildung* is therefore a process of personal transformation through learning.

Methodology

There are several methodological challenges in researching democratic citizenship. One obvious example is that democracy and citizenship are contested concepts. Democracy and citizenship are embedded and situated in a cultural, historical and national context. In Norway, education is regarded as one of the main institutions fostering democratic citizenship, and the purpose of schooling has a strong normative justification. In this case, the visions for education are defined from a socio-political (democratic) and liberal-orientated point of departure.

The challenge Norway faces, like other western countries, is increased societal pluralism. Norway has a more diverse population today, which leads to some tensions and discussions on what values schools are expected to transmit. Are some values typically Norwegian? And if so, what kinds of values do we mean—and to what degree should the Norwegian educational system impart a different outlook on life and faith systems? To meet these challenges, Norwegian schools utilize a subject devoted to religion education, philosophy, ethics and Christianity. This is designed to foster democracy and citizenship. Social science is the other subject that nurtures democracy. These are the two subjects taught in our teacher education program, and therefore, the subjects on which our research focuses. How we prepare our students for their teaching tasks is not a straightforward process, especially compared to subjects like math and physics that are more easily evaluated through testing and student performance evaluations.

To gather information about student learning processes, we use qualitative methodology: observations, writing assignments and interviews. In addition, we try to implement learning situations that can strengthen student learning—especially those concentrated on developing students’ teacher identities. The essential part of this approach is to create a learning environment that invites and encourages students to develop existentially on a personal level. As a small institution with small student groups (between 15 and 30 pupils), preliminary experience indicate that we succeeded in making this a strength in our educational program. We also see, through written and practical performance, that students have developed skills, competences and educational values based on democracy and citizenship.

Seeking empirical evidence on what works in the educational program, we have considered the methodological challenges in exploring transformation in personal and professional teacher identity. The different aspects we have considered are:

- The syllabus. How do we design a theoretically relevant curriculum for students learning about their tasks as teachers? One important issue is the fact that many teacher students report that they do not consider theory relevant for their practice.
- The learning environment. How do we strengthen student learning through personally and professionally designed structures? How do we organize the

classroom, lectures, independent studies and cooperative learning to strengthen education?

- Co-learning and co-teachers. How can we guarantee that teachers and students develop as co-learners and co-teachers?
- Learning activities. This includes identifying the resources (citizenship sites) we can use in the local community to strengthen student learning.

In addition, we utilize evaluations, feedback, individual adjustments and adaptations. In this section, we focus on the last issue—namely, what kind of learning resources we have and how to use them. Two learning tasks are singled out for further exploration and research: fiction reading and excursions. Our aim is to use actionable research and interviews as our methodology to investigate reading and excursions as didactic methods for fostering critical reflection, broadening meaningful perspectives and developing an understanding of and confidence in teachers' role in democratic citizenship.

Hoggan and Cranton (2015) conclude that reading short stories may foster critical reflection and self-perception, which in turn can lead to transformative learning. In this project, we will expand this idea by using a single book title related to the theme taught. One of the themes in this study is the life of minorities and culture/religious diversity. We will use a two-step model where students are offered experimental methods. One group will be traditionally taught.

Group 1

Using the holocaust as an example, the students will read a single book about one actual person, coming from the same area in which we are situated, who was sent to Auschwitz and never returned. Through focus group interviews and a discussion, we can collect information on how students interpret and process this reading.

The next stage in the research process is to visit the Holocaust center, where the students a) will “meet” the character from the book; b) will contextualize that person in the actual context in which she was deported and murdered; c) will be educated about society's wider role (e.g., scientists and police) in this process; and d) be challenged to investigate modern hurdles inhibiting democratic coexistence. Later in the semester, we will visit other relevant institutions, such as Amnesty International (Norway) and a mosque, and observe a relevant discussion in parliament that is open to the public. The course will be evaluated based on a written reflection of today's challenges in light of historical experiences.

Group 2

Another student group will be presented with the same theme, but in a more traditional form: they will study the subject from a knowledge-based perspective, participate in discussions and complete tests. This learning approach is much closer to school teaching methods, and the students will be fully equipped to teach the subject. The next semester, we will organize the groups the other way around. Group 1 will receive group 2's prior teaching and vice versa.

Developing methodical categories to operationalize transformative learning is one of the tasks not described in this abstract. These categories will be developed in communication with relevant theories regarding citizenship education.

Conclusion

As noted, this project is one part of a larger effort. Using this single evaluation will only give us empirical data to support the development of our teacher program. However, we do believe that this type of small-scale project in combination with several others can yield useful

information. Also, it can strengthen citizenship education as a research field— especially in using a transformative learning theory alongside theories of citizenship education. Conducting this research is also important because it may lead to useful information for policy makers and other members of the establishment who contribute to developing curriculums and targets for subject competencies.

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Linking Transformative Learning and Controversial Issues Education

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Abstract: One weakness regarding the broader field of citizenship education is that both theoretical and empirical writings are too seldom put in conjunction with learning theory. The aim of this paper is followingly to theorize some links between *controversial issues education* – which I regard as part of the broader field of citizenship education – and *transformative learning theory*. *Dialogue* and *critical reflection* are the most important linking concepts. It will be argued that a dialogic method of teaching is essential for both objective and subjective reframing. Dialogue that gives space for critical reflection can create the conditions for what, building on the works of Hannah Arendt, is called *enlarged mentality* and *agonistic recognition*. Further, I argue that teachers hold an important role in the realization of the conditions necessary for this kind of reasoning, and that virtuous teacher practices may build on what can be labeled *Socratic midwifery*.

Introduction

Today we are seeing heightened awareness towards the importance of citizenship education. This leads to increased interest around both theoretical and practical perspectives on how citizenship education might be understood and carried out. One weakness within this academic field is that both theoretical and empirical work too seldom is put in conjunction with learning theory. In other words, there is a need for perspectives building on learning theory.

Related to this, the aim of this paper is to theorize some links between citizenship education – more specifically *controversial issues education* – and transformative learning theory. To approach this aim, a few concepts will be explained and elaborated. First, I will give a short introduction to controversial issues education. Secondly, there will be given an account of transformative learning theory. Lastly, I will discuss how controversial issues can be linked to transformative learning theory and try to show some of what this can add to the field of controversial issues education.

Controversial Issues Education

What constitutes a controversial issue is usually defined in one out of two ways, building on either an epistemic or a political criterion (Ljunggren, Unemar Öst og Englund, 2015, p.19-20). A much cited definition building on a political criterion was coined by Robert Stradling. He writes: “issues that deeply divide a society, that generates conflicting explanations and solutions based upon alternate worldviews are controversial issues” (Stradling, 1984, p.121). A similarly much cited epistemic definition belongs to Robert F. Dearden (1981). His point of departure is that when different views can be defended without being contrary to reason, an issue should be regarded as controversial. In other words, Stradling tries to define what is controversial in relation to political relevance and Dearden in relation to scientific truth. One central voice within the field of controversial issues education, Diana Hess, combine the two criteria when she writes that “controversial issues are open questions, meaning there are multiple and often strikingly

different answers that are legitimate – even though people frequently have strongly held and well-reasoned answers about which answer they prefer” (Hess, 2009, p.38).

Additionally, it should be noted that controversy bears a close relationship with *sensitivity*. For example, a qualitative study of American teachers show that controversial issues are understood by teachers as issues that can be intimidating, divisive and “disturb the peace” in the classroom. Issues that are named controversial are, perhaps not surprisingly, most often religious and political questions (Philpott, Clabough, McConkey and Turner, 2011, p.32-35). Following Gereluk (2012, p.89-90), it can thus be argued that it is useful to distinguish further between controversial issues and *controversial sensitive issues*; controversial sensitive issues being «both a matter of public dispute or contention and an issue on which people are easily moved to distress, anger and offence». This can be important for determining whether the teacher should make room for discussion or not; whether *a discursive situation* is at hand. A discursive situation can be said to exist “when there is a situated common frame of reference and where the fundamental conditions for understanding and respect are at hand, or can at least be developed in due course” (Englund, 2006, p.513). However, there are no fixed rules to help determine whether such a situation is present. This is rather a matter of judgement where the particularity and context of the situation plays an important role, a matter of *phronesis* (Englund, 2006, p.513).

Transformative Learning Theory

The purpose of the next couple of pages is to give a very brief introduction to transformative learning theory, and to explain some key concepts that later will be useful in order to theorize the link between transformative learning theory and controversial issues education.

Transformative learning theory is a constructivist theory of learning, focusing on the process of knowledge construction (Gravett, 2001, p.18); or as put by its chief figure, Jack Mezirow (1991), how meaning is constructed, validated and reformulated, and how social conditions affect the ways in which we make meaning out of experience. Relatedly, it is important to distinguish between *rote learning* (memorization) and *meaningful learning*. As Gravett (2001, p.18) explains, when we try to memorize something, we repeat the information until we are sure that we remember it. Consequently, rote learning can be understood as learning that does not require active thinking of the learner. In contrast to this, controversial issues education entails difficult questions and difficult situations, calling on our ability for active thinking. In other words, controversial issues education should be theorized as learning with *understanding*, a process in which rich connections are organized and structured in order to gain insight and make flexible use of knowledge (Gravett, 2001, p.18).

A central concept within transformative learning theory related to how we create meaning and understanding, is what Mezirow (1991) calls *habits of expectations* or *meaning perspectives*. Meaning perspectives can be understood as “perceptual and conceptual codes to form, limit, and distort how we think, believe and feel and how, what, when and why we learn” (Mezirow, 1991, p.34); filtering both perception and understanding. As human beings we start out by taking over and internalizing definitions, assumptions and typologies communicated to us by significant others in socialization. As creators of meaning, we are all “caught in our own stories”, in the sense that no matter how good we are at making meaning, we all operate within the horizon opened up to us by prior experience (Mezirow, 1991, p.1). Autonomy thus requires being able to make explicit the message system, while emancipation is about being able to articulate our own reality and speak with our own voice. This in turn presupposes that we learn to negotiate meaning, aims and values in critical, reflective and rational ways, as opposed to passively

accepting a social reality handed down to us by others (Mezirow, 1991, p.2-3). A concept closely related to meaning perspectives is *meaning schemes*. Meaning schemes involves “specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgements, and feelings that constitute interpretations of experience (Mezirow, 1991, p.5-6). They function as specific habits of expectation, while meaning perspectives denote groups of related meaning schemes (Mezirow, 1991, p.35).

Meaning perspectives and meaning schemes are important concepts because the idea that the more or less uncritically acquired perspectives and schemes acquired through socialization – and consequently the limited and distorted ways they make us see and understand the world – can be challenged and overcome through *critical reflection*, is at the core of transformative learning theory. *Development* can in light of this be understood as a process directed towards “more inclusive, differentiated, and permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning perspective[s]” (Mezirow, 1991, p.7). Relatedly, how we ground and validate communicated ideas and what previously has been learned is a crucial dimension of transformative learning theory. It is in the communicative process that problematic sides of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives can be discovered, challenged and exceeded. When we reflect upon content or process, it may lead to extension, creation or exceedance of meaning schemes. When critical reflection is directed against our own assumptions, it can lead to transformation of both meaning perspectives and the experiences that is being interpreted (Mezirow, 1991, p.5-6). Kreber (2012, p.329) conceptualizes this as *subjective reframing*, understood as reflection about self-reflection on our own assumptions, and *objective reframing*, understood as reflection directed against assumptions, content, process or premises communicated to us in task oriented problem solving.

Linking Transformative Learning Theory and Controversial Issues Education

Dialogue is a key factor in both controversial issues education and transformative learning theory. *Dialogue* here refers to a reciprocal and respectful relationship between teacher and students (Gravett, 2001, p.35). In this relationship all participants are regarded as active subjects, thinking and reasoning together. In other words, it is a form of education that is grounded in interaction and intersubjectivity. The realization of this form of education requires clarification of expectations, with regard to the teacher, the students and the norms of interaction. Teachers who want students to participate in dialogue needs to let students know that participation is desired. Some students are socialized into a passive existence in the classroom, and do not necessarily know how to or want to contribute to the conversation. This in turn points to the fact that the teacher needs to clarify what can be expected from him or her. While some students might expect from the teacher to dose out knowledge for them to consume, a dialogic method of teaching means that the teacher cannot be an unilateral authority. Students who hold this image of what a teacher is supposed to be might react negatively to a teacher who opens up for discussion. Further, students who hold such views might also believe that the teacher is the only person worth listening to. Consequently, they might also think that they themselves and other students have nothing to contribute with. Therefore, students also need to learn how to trust themselves and their fellow student’s ability to contribute to their joint learning. This however does not mean that the teacher does not have an authoritative role in the dialogue. Based on content and situation the teacher assist the students in different ways, either it is through lectures, summaries, questions, comments or elaborations of what students say (Gravett, 2001, p.35-38).

In accordance with transformative learning theory in general, Gravett (2001, p.36) suggests that dialogue should not be regarded as either content, teacher or student centered, but

rather as *learning centered*. *Learning tasks* thus becomes the centering point of education, serving as a mediational tool structuring the dialogue. As Gravett (2001, p.58) writes, content, actions, and learning goals should all be encapsulated in the task, putting students in immediate interaction with the learning content.

Such learning centered dialogue holds some characteristics. One such characteristic is that the dialogue has an exploratory starting point, meaning that an important aim of the conversations is to gain new insights (Gravett, 2001, p.36). Thus, education should be based on *intellectually challenging activities*. This in turn requires that we make active use of and reason about the learning content. One important reason to accentuate controversial issues education as an important aspect of democratic and citizenship education is because it can be characterized precisely as an intellectually challenging activity where an important aim of the conversation is to gain new insight.

To successfully implement intellectually challenging activities in practice, an *intellectually challenging learning environment* is required. Consequently, students need to feel safe about trying out their beliefs in the group, but also accepting having these beliefs challenged by others. The learning environment should be both positive, challenging, respectful and engaging, all at once (Gravett, 2001, p.32). This is important because such an environment invites students to take the risk it is to begin something and respond to these beginnings, still feeling safe at a psychological level. As also Hess (2009, p.108) notes, while some students thrive off “heated” discussions, most prefer “civilized” discourse, “which allows them to learn about each other as well as how to respectfully disagree.”

The realization of an intellectually challenging environment and intellectually challenging activities demand a plurality of perspectives. As Dewey (1997, p.75) writes in *How We Think*, good thinking – and fruitful dialogue, it might be added – depends on being able to withstand from drawing final conclusions too quickly and to treat possible solutions as just that, pending further evidence. This in turn presupposes alternate perspectives and explanations. Bruner (2001, p.16) similarly claims that education by giving form and expression to our experience can be the most important tool when it comes to limiting our minds, the guarantee towards it being a taste for alternatives.

Dialogue and critical reflection are closely connected concepts. As Mezirow (1991) notes, communicative learning should entail an effort to present and evaluate the validity of a broad specter of arguments and proof. As such, critical reflection might appear as a product of dialogue (Mezirow in Gravett, 2001, p.26), because the students can gain insight through the process of answering a challenging question *disturbing* his or her prior understanding. As Barnett (1992, p.27) notes, “true conversation means taking seriously the critical viewpoints of others, perhaps even entering a different world held open by others.” Consequently, controversial issues education holds the potential for creating spaces for both objective- and subjective reframing. Objective reframing because a plurality of perspectives should initiate reflection on content, and because the process of inquiry should involve possibilities for reflection on process. Subjective reframing, as that same process of communication also should open up spaces for coming into presence, taking what Biesta (2014) calls the *wonderful risk of education*, meaning the willingness to take a risk entailing that you might learn something that you did not intend to learn (Biesta, 2005). Thus, we risk disturbance, and in turn, learning something about ourselves. Following Biesta, accepting that democratic and citizenship education should entail such a risk, there is also a need to connect it to a theory of learning that explores how education gives room

for disturbance. This is part of the rationale for connecting democratic and citizenship education and transformative learning theory.

Related to problem solving, in this case gaining insight in and coming up with well-reasoned answers to controversial issues, reflection implies *judgement*. In theorizing judgement, at least two concepts are important to mention. One concept is what Hannah Arendt (1982) has named *enlarged mentality*. The ability of enlarged mentality depends on imagination. Imagination makes possible what Arendt (1982, p.65) calls *a visit*. Making use of our imagination, we are able to make present what is absent, put things in their right place, and to build bridges between us and the others – to visit a place that is not ours on our own terms (Biesta, 2014, p.142). Followingly, we can achieve an enlarged mentality when we as human beings in our full distinctiveness and plurality share perspectives on our common world. It is the sharing of perspectives that makes us able to gain greater understanding than we could on our own. The precondition for a plurality of alternatives is in turn that we uncover ourselves and our viewpoints, so that they can be tested and built upon. Thus, Arendt (1996) also highlights public discussion as the essence of political activity. Followingly, the political ability to judge can be understood as development, from an idiosyncratic perspective to one where we are able to take in a plurality of perspectives.

However, judgement is not only about being able to understand others. It is also about becoming more aware of ourselves; it should open up for what Mezirow (1991) calls self-reflection. This could, I would argue, be seen as the flip-side of the same process. Ljunggren (2010, p.20) relates Arendt intersubjective understanding of thinking to selv-understanding, arguing that imagination also can bring forth an *agonistic recognition* of the selv, «a recognition that necessitates withdrawnness of a certain kind called ‘thinking’ and where the agonistic aspect in that thinking means a provocation with the world that always is a response to our own appearance and self-understanding as well». In other words, the communicative process of reciprocal disturbance should not only make us learn to understand others, but can also be understood as a process where we learn to become an independent political person (Ljunggren, 2010, p.21) – developing a political identity, where we learn to understand how we are different from others. Taking agonistic recognition in education seriously, Ljunggren (2010, p.23) argues, means to prioritize a form of action that makes the selv open and present not only to others, both also to ourselves: “the simple but at the same time complex question inherent in such education is not just to ask how to present action in a way that can be understood by others but the question “what are your arguments to yourself to do what you are doing; to say what you are saying?”.”

The notion of judgement – and more specifically the concept of agonistic recognition – should be understood as a crucial part of the communicative process. While the ability to tolerate others and the willingness to grant rights to others who are different (for example freedom of speech) are often put forth as important reasons for including controversial issues into the curriculum (Hess, 2009, p.16) – and they are indeed important, it should also be emphasized that the notion of tolerance itself entails judgement. As one scholar writes (Furedi, 2011, p.73), commenting on the works of Arendt: while she “regarded the ability to understand other people’s opinions through dialogue as the principal task of public life”, she did not uphold diversity as a value in its own right. Rather, she regarded “diversity as means to attain a greater insight into the human condition.”

Relatedly, one important question for educators both in theory and practice is how to support students in their development of the capabilities of reflection and judgement. Arendt (1982, p.41-42) interestingly points to Socrates, and the concept of Socratic midwifery, as the

origin of critical thought. In the same spirit, Furedi (2011, p.29) argues that Socratic dialogue harness “the spirit of tolerance for the pursuit of clarity and truth”, conversing in an “open-ended, tolerant way so that those who are party to the dialogue are free to develop their argument in whatever direction they deem necessary”, sensitizing us to the strengths and weaknesses of our arguments. What Socrates did in his dialogues can be said to entail both a constructive and a destructive element. The constructive element consists of making comments and asking questions that helps the other to use his or her imagination, bringing hidden or latent implications of statements forth; similar to how a midwife helps to bring the child forth into the light for inspection (Arendt, 1982, p.41). The destructive element consists of the fact that this in turn helps us to deconstruct erroneous assumptions and statements, potentially transforming our meaning schemes and meaning perspectives.

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The Theatre of the Oppressed as an Imaginative Metaphor for Transformative Learning

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Abstract: The paper will explain the findings for the empirical research *Transformative Potential of the Theatre of the oppressed* (Romano, 2014; Romano, 2016), which aimed to demonstrate that the experience of the Theatre of the Oppressed with students and teachers promoted transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000; Marsick, 2015). The data were gathered through the adoption of qualitative (logbooks, narrative self-reports) and quantitative tools (Learning Activities Survey and the questionnaire on the Theatre of the Oppressed). The Theatre of the Oppressed is a learning experience that, starting from a reflection on the constructed meanings and inequality that are the background of the individual educational, social and professional life contexts, can promote complex thinking. The research, therefore, is itself an opportunity for transformative learning, seeking to promote the redefinition of people's meaning perspectives in the name of the shared construction of broader, differentiating and differentiated, more inclusive perspectives. Through the power of dialogue and problem-posing, learners develop awareness of structures within their society that may be contributing to inequality and oppression, and that is reflected in their dialogues. Our interest is to show how the Theatre of the Oppressed could be a transformative practice under the aegis of transformative learning: it offers a possibility of democratizing relationships and of re-inventing narrative and corporeal languages, preserving their educational and formative purposes.

The Research Questions

The paper explains the findings for the empirical research *TOTP: Transformative Potential of the Theatre of the oppressed* (Romano, 2014; Romano, 2016), which aimed to demonstrate that the experience of the Theatre of the Oppressed (TdO) with students and teachers promoted transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000; Marsick, 2015). The research questions are the following:

1. Does the experience of the Theater of the Oppressed promote transformative learning?
2. If yes, what happens?
3. If yes, how does the process go?
4. If yes, what kind of elements, factors, perspectives, attitudes, beliefs, change?
5. If not, why?

The research hypothesis of the project *TOTP* is that the experiences of the workshops with students of the Bachelor's Degree in Psychological Sciences, students of the Master's Degree in Clinical and Community Psychology, the teachers involved in PAS certified courses during the academic year 2013/2014 promote transformative learning in the participants.

The project *TOTP: Transformative Potential of the Theater of the Oppressed* moves from practical experience. The workshops were scheduled in four meetings, each of them lasting two hours. The participants were divided into three groups:

- 145 students of the course in Pedagogy of Learning Processes of the Bachelor's Degree in Psychological Sciences of the Department of Humanities
- 87 students of the course in Social Pedagogy of the Master's Degree in Clinical and Community Psychology of the Department of Humanities
- 100 teachers being enabled with the Certified Special Course.

The sampling was an intentional rational sampling (Creswell, 2003; 2007). The theoretical/purposeful sampling attempts to select research participants according to the criteria adopted by research purposes: in our case, to belong to three distinct natural groups facilitated the data collection process according to the intentional stratified sampling, having three groups of subjects who fit the search criteria to have had an experience of Theatre of the Oppressed, and which belong to three different levels of education. The stratified purposive sampling is a theoretical non-probabilistic sampling, whose aim is not to select random units from a population, to create a probability sample suitable to put generalizations and statistical inferences. The data were gathered through the adoption of qualitative (logbooks, narrative self-reports) and quantitative tools (Learning Activities Survey, King, 2009; the questionnaire on the TdO, Vittoria, Strollo, Romano, Brock, 2014).

Overview of the Methods

Phenomenological analysis was conducted of all journals preparing a panel of three independent judges who analyzed the categories emerging (see Chart 1), and first worked separately and then comparing their work. The analysis identified the core categories, measured the frequency and occurrences for each category. The author used the software NVivo, which allows coding in vivo for the text, the collection of the first codes in knots and the conjunction of conceptual issues in analytical categories. Besides selecting by analyzing phenomenological categories of logbooks, I have carried out a new analysis at the individual level for each participant, in order to investigate for each subject the presence of the four criteria for transformative learning. Later, I analyzed for each participant the questionnaire LAS in order to demonstrate quantitatively the change in perspectives of meaning, and the questionnaire on TdO, in order to understand the subjective experience of the process of the Theatre of the Oppressed, the subjective perception of what happened during all phases of the laboratory. Participants were thus divided into three groups of subjects, rated by the scoring of the PT-Index -Perspective Transformation Index- (King, 2009):

1. High Level of Transformation: people who submit all four criteria of the transformative learning
2. Low Level Transformation: people with only two of four criteria of transformative learning
3. No Transformation: people who do not show any transformation.

Thus, the PT-Index indicates whether the learners have experienced a transformative learning experience.

Research Findings

The Findings from the Phenomenological Analysis Among Group

This phenomenological study focuses on the original phenomenon of the experiences lived by participants of the Theatre of the Oppressed Laboratories. Starting from the analysis within group for each group of participants (Bachelor's Degree Students, Master's Degree Students, Teachers), I found the core categories for their narratives based on those identified by

the panel of independent judges: labelling the categories, the description, the indicators, the absolute and percentage frequencies for each of them. Then, although the experience and the subjective perception of each participant is unique, they can be found some common themes embodied in their stories.

Comparison of categories between the three participant groups

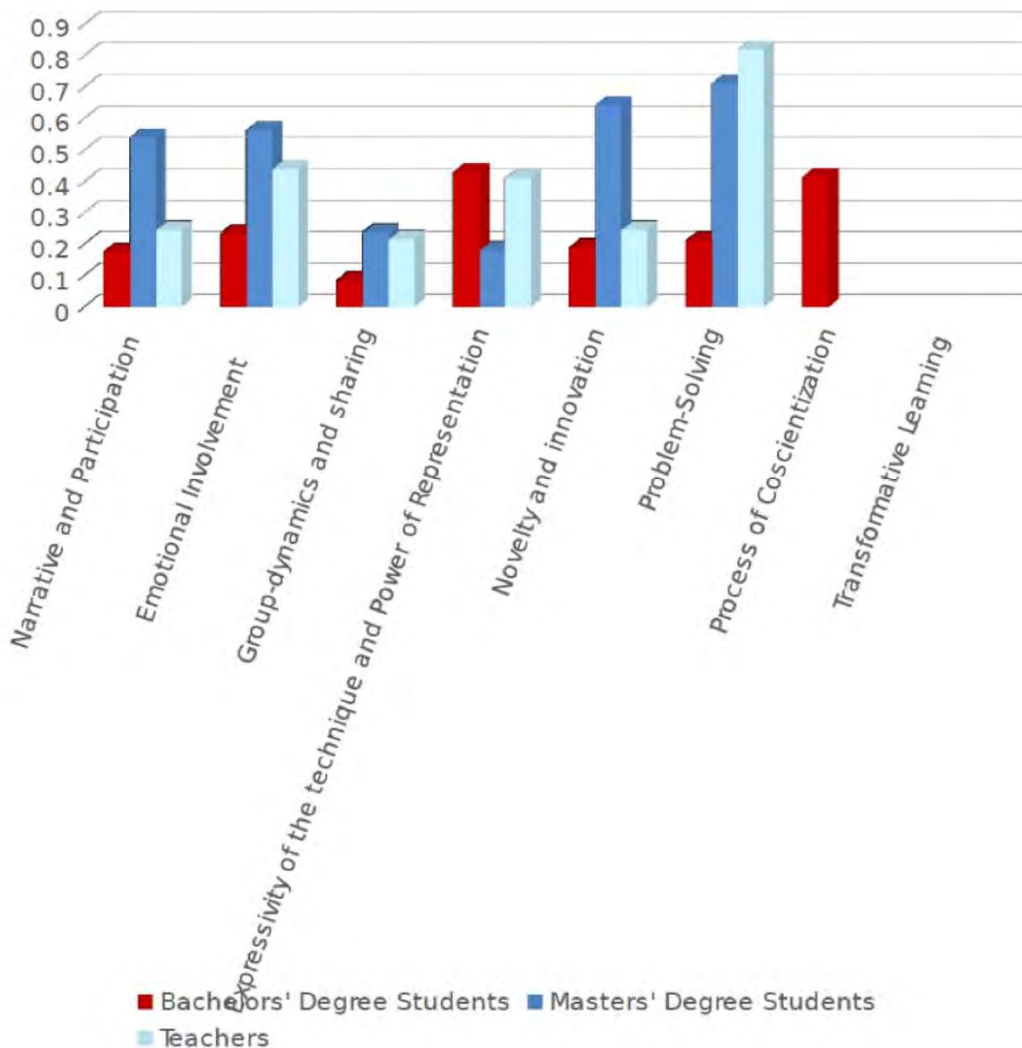


Chart 1. Comparison of the percentages for the frequency of categories for the three groups of participants in the among-group analysis.

The Process of Consciousness is the category that is missing in the journals of the teachers. The Process of Consciousness has to do with the imagination, where «Imagination lies at a kind of crux where perception, memory, idea generation, emotion, metaphor, and no doubt other labeled features of our lives, intersect and interact» (Lake, 2013, p. XIX). The imagination, in fact, permeates every aspect of life, and helps the development of political and personal awareness in students such as teachers in order to look over what we take for granted, to question the normal, customary, to develop different ways of know, hear, see, and create positive social change. The imagination itself becomes a metaphor of agency and the construction of meaning

for the subjects, because it is planning, time to come, projection into the future that transcends the present, the here-and-now, in the moment of consumption the same time of its recognition. Consciousness is in part defined by the way it always exceeds towards a completeness and a fullness that can not be obtained. If you could get a full consciousness, it would lose its very essence, there would be a cancellation of the internal voltage and no need to the research (Lake, 2013, p. 449). Why is this category missing in the journals of PAS teachers group?

The Process of Consciousness that is observed in the students' words of the Bachelor degree and the students of the Master's degree course, in the case of teachers becomes a process of reworking of the injustices and oppression experienced as humiliations in the everyday practice.

Below some sentences taken from the logbooks of the teacher group:

10 PA¹: It allowed me to empty myself of so many humiliations and to represent my idea of professor and director who is not founded on the power games but on dialogue with respect to roles. I lived a real catharsis.

19 PB: I felt as if I were experiencing a déjà vu. The experiences I have had, they did so to find myself both in staging history both in revisions, to correction of oppressions spelled with the staging. [...] The group in this experience has played the facilitating function of interpretative comfort, in comparison with the function on the slice represented and compared with the actual experience of each of us. [...] The actively assist in the staging has evoked memories about myself, not only as a teacher but also as a student. The resurgence of these memories allowed me to understand the state of mind of students and teachers when they suffer or exercise oppressive behavior [...] The Theatre of the Oppressed is a very interesting educational tool: allows you to work on the development of shared collective problems deepening them, looking for the critical points and proposing possible solutions.

The identification element is very strong, because the scenic representation activates autobiographical experiences related to their professional identity and to their working world, encouraging their elaboration in an analytical way.

22 PA: The theater of the oppressed allows us to transform the unease hidden in explicit conflict, allows us to make "visible" the daily oppression, raising immersion consciences and allowing removal from their discomfort; create a unifying symbolic object, a social ritual of community, to get used to react to discomfort with the change; give a solidarity and collective dimension; create links, being able to move in the places of people's lives; emotional and energetic activation, as well as the intellectual side, are roiling other resources to address the problems and activates a secure testing of possible changes; projection into the future through visions, can reveal and shake what is the individual and collective imagination, powerful means of prefiguration of the future.

¹ I adopted a system of nomenclature to guarantee participants' anonymity. The Bachelor's Degree students were indicated as T1, T2, T3, T4 [...]; the Master's Degree students were indicated as M1, M2, M3, M4 [...]; the Teachers were indicated as PA1, PA2, PA3, PA4 [...] and PB1, PB2, PB3, PB4 [...].

The process of Conscientization regards, therefore, in this case the personal history of each of the participants, who appreciate the cathartic function and transformative methodologies that have experienced.

38 PA: We imagine, build and realize all about experiential reflection, then make autonomous educational action, conscious and critical in the management of plural and alternative practices aimed at awareness building on the experience of thought and socio-educational action.

The most prominent category and in the three groups of participants remains Change in perspectives and disorienting dilemma, occurring category in 82% of journals of PAS teachers, in 70% of journals of Master's degree students and 35% the journals of Bachelor's Degree students: this is the strongest evidence in the narratives of the protagonists transformative learning occurred in these. Freire (1970) shows the cognitive interest to make explicit what is implicit, and to discover what is not yet discovered. Implemented in the distinction between action and free will such as integration and adaptation, Freire (1998) asserts that integration is the ability to adapt himself to reality as the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality. Adaptation, however, is a dehumanizing response that mostly is constituted as a self-defense: if a human being is not able to change reality, it suits itself. Only through the perception of the gap, the difference between the existing and the possible can project a better social order and try to transform the real. This can happen anywhere, in school desks, in university classes, in the streets, in the squares, and the Theatre of the Oppressed is the instrument through which reality becomes fiction stage to be subject to critical reflection and can be simulated in the representative reality of the present. All of our cognitive abilities and imagination allow us to give credence to alternative realities: this allows us to break with what is taken for granted and go ahead in the tortuous path of endless signification.

30 PB: During the various scenes I arrived with other consciousnesses, my point of view is totally changed. Thanks to the comparison with the other guys in the group I realized that I could do anything in my little to cope with that situation, I could transform the class and be the agent of change simply by changing myself.

The Power of the scenic representation leads to a reflexive awareness that goes beyond the forms of instrumental and technical knowledge that is taught in school and university classrooms through the sequential and systematic use of other forms of knowledge presentational, such as the scenic art, the metaphor, the dramatic action, followed by the writing of metacognitive self-report and the discussion, the students and teachers challenge their perceptions, making them explicit and subject to review and processing through the critical and complex thought. This transformation is never just cognitive, it is also always affective and emotional, partly empathetic considering the specular inter-subjective connections with their colleagues. The provocative questions of Joker (facilitator of the workshop) follow existential questions which arose between the participants, some with fear, fear, partly with the courage to look inward and look at their own history.

From the outcomes, the Theatre of the Oppressed is recognized as disorienting moment just by PAS teachers, who are the most adult age group, more defined by professional and occupational identities. An interesting case is that of the category of the Power of representation, which is not apparent in the journals of PAS teachers, while it is a very frequent category in journals of students at bachelor's degree and master's degree. Among the hypotheses for this finding, the most plausible seems to do the difficulties and resistances that PAS teachers tell in their self-report, in relation to put yourself at stake and to let go in a participatory perspective to

the play. It is, in fact, a group of individuals with very structured from the point of view of identity and professional development, preset on formal roles, unaccustomed to questioning in a dialogic and stage automation.

The Findings of the Phenomenological Analysis Cross-group

The cross-group analysis is aimed at a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants:

332 participants are divided into three categories:

Cross-group analysis

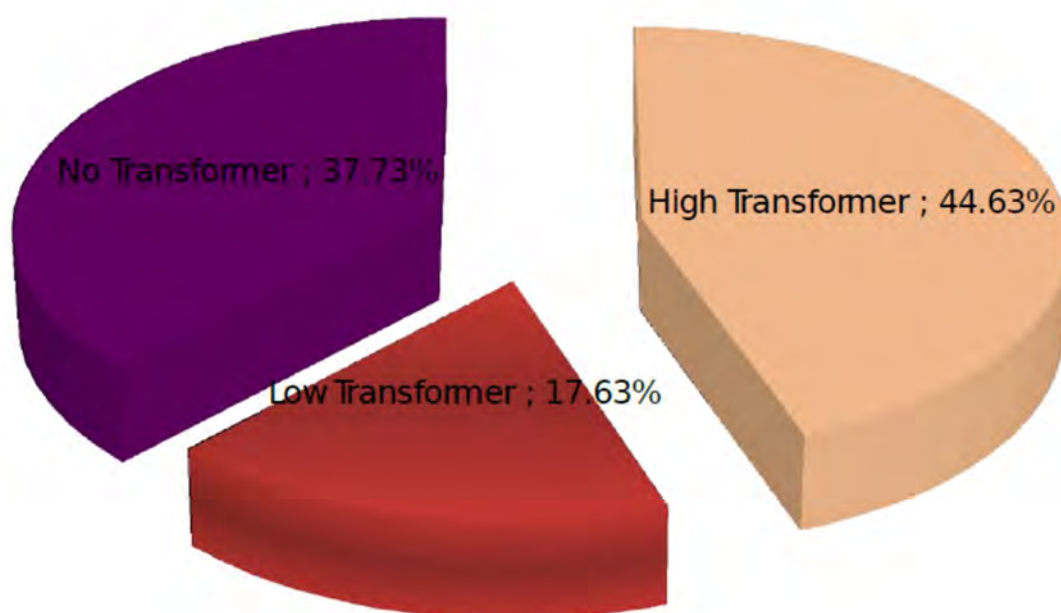


Chart 2. Percentage of the three High Level of Transformation, Low Level of transformation, and No Transformation compared to the size of the total sample

The High Level of Transformation (N= 151, 45, 48% of the total sample) are participants that present in their journals the indicators for all the four criteria for Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 2000). The four criteria are:

- Presence of a process of questioning, and of critical reflection
- Presence of a change of meaning perspectives
- Showing renovate, more inclusive, more open and differentiating perspectives
- Showing new pattern of actions thanks to this transformation.

The participants rated with a high level of transformation have scoring 3 PT-Index Questionnaire to LAS (King, 2009) and describe the Theatre of the Oppressed in their questionnaires (Romano, 2014) as a analysis of the premises previously unquestioned, try of new strategies and approaches, access to a new understanding of values, beliefs, assumptions about themselves and their world. Through the Theatre of the Oppressed, these participants, the students and teachers, experiment with new ideas that may impact on their assumptions about society, relationships of

power and politics. Eventually it changes as a result of this bias between understanding and learners' perspective.

Using the Data Summary Table (King, 2009), a spreadsheet in which the variables for each Item, where are shown the relative frequencies and percentages for each type of learning and change, in order to observe the transformation that occurred in participants.

What, then, say the participants in the research whose experiences meet all the criteria of Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 2000) and have been categorized in the subject band with High Level of Transformation:

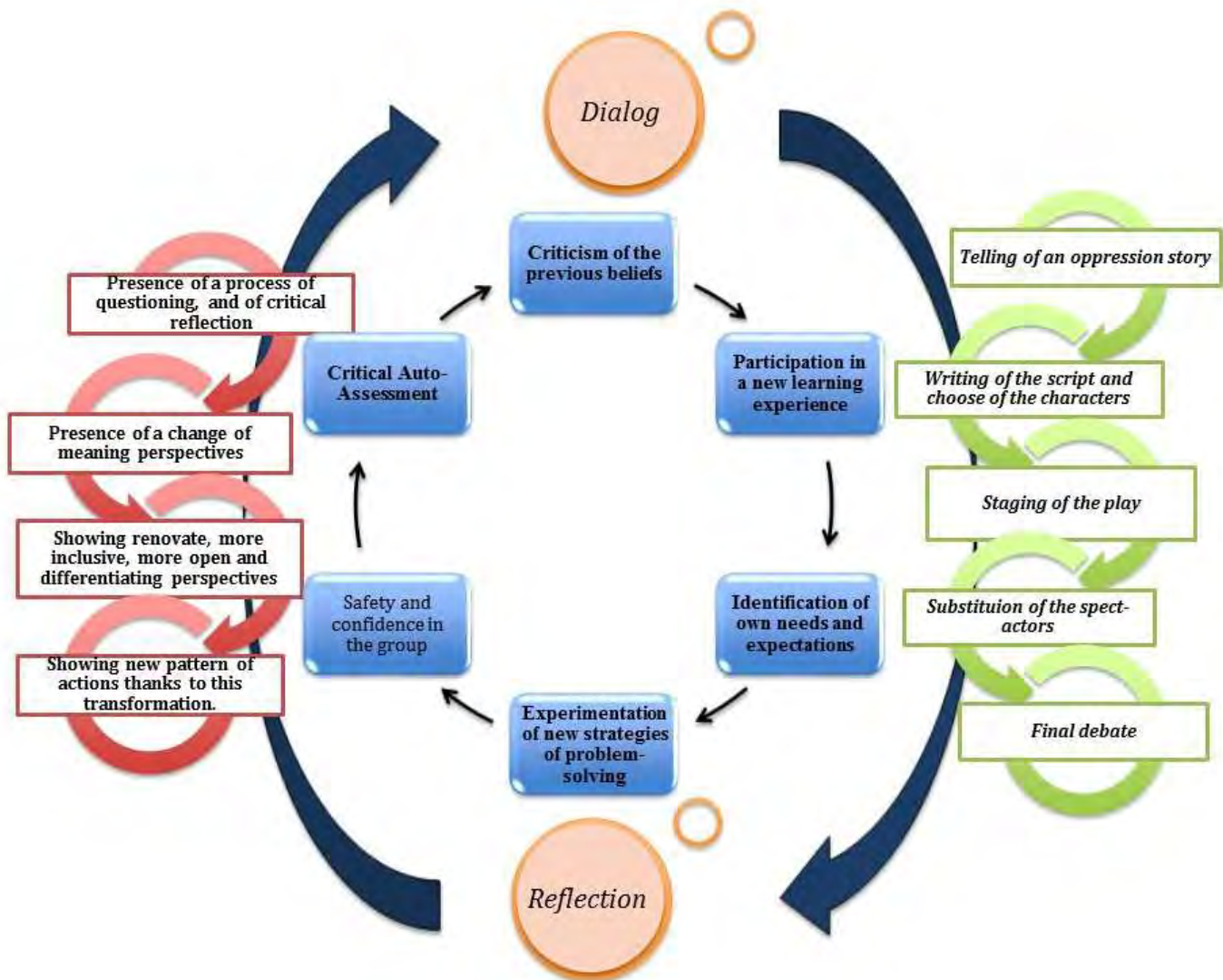


Figure 1. The process of change of the perspectives of meaning in the Theatre of the Oppressed

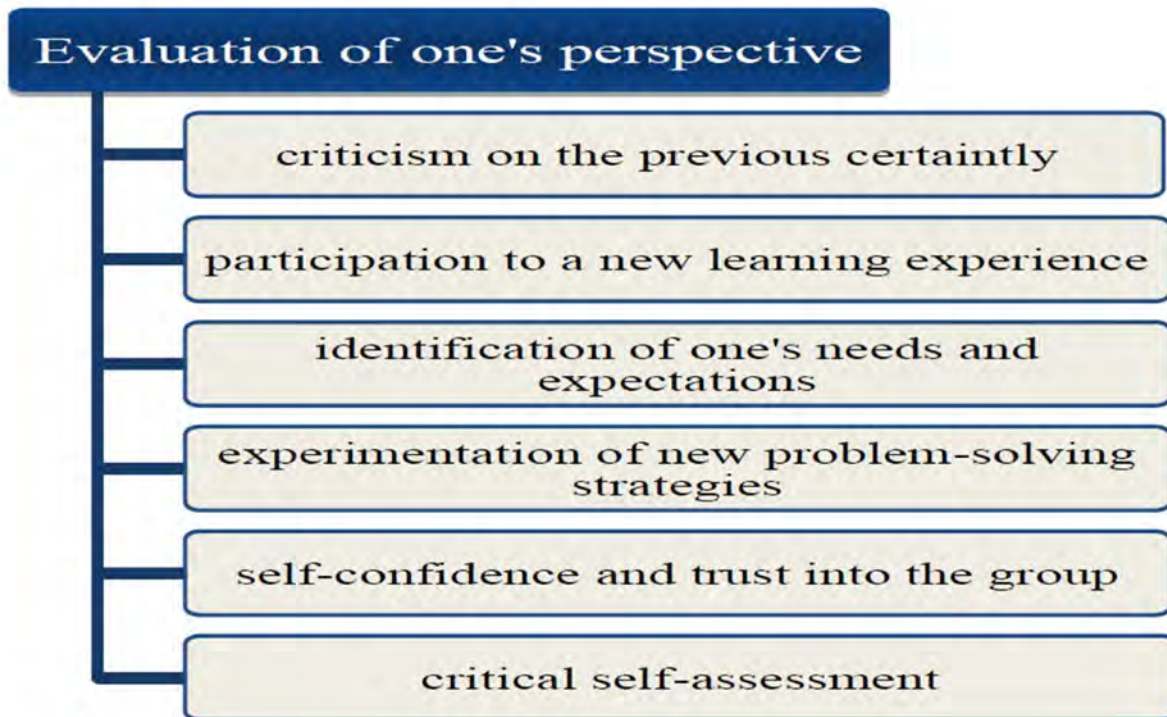


Figure 2. The features of the evolution of one's perspective in a transformative learning process

The group of Low-Level of Transformation, who gained a score of 2 PT-Index Questionnaire to LAS (King, 2009), is the smaller group (N = 53; 18% of the total sample). These are participants whose stories do not meet all the criteria in order to consider this a Transformative Learning, or who do not bear new patterns of actions. These subjects put into question their meaning schemes, their world views, but do not speak in the logbooks of new, more open, inclusive and permeable prospects of meaning. They also do not show attempts to create new social roles and new patterns of actions due to perception of the experience of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Also fall into this group the participants (N = 10; 3% of the total sample) describing in their journals the experienced process, but for which the LAS questionnaire does not confirm the presence of transformative learning.

The group of No Transformation, with a score of 1 to PT-Index Questionnaire LAS, is the second group by number (N = 128; 38.45% of the total sample). They are participants who do not describe a complete transformation process in their logbooks. These participants do not show anyone of the criteria for Transformative. It needs a second distinction between those participants who do not show any change (N = 101; 78.91% of the group No Transformation) and those subjects who do not show a change in meaning perspectives in their logbooks (N = 27; 21.09% of the group No Transformation). For the latter minority, Transformative learning Questionnaire (King, 2009) confirms that there is a learning experience that can be considered a transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000), but it is not reported in their journals changes or challenges in their meaning perspectives.

Conclusions

The results of empirical research conducted with qualitative and quantitative tools encourage an affirmative answer, pointing out that the entire workshop experience of the Theatre of the Oppressed is characterized as a disorienting dilemma. The workshop undermines people's certainties, and determines the development of new models of action in interaction with the world. The elements that facilitate the change of individuals' meaning frames are interconnecting with their personal autobiographical experiences, with the group dimension and with the sense of sharing and belonging that participants develop, and last but not least, with reflection in and on action stage. The impact, therefore, in terms of knowledge of the *TPTO research: Transformative Potential of the Theatre of the Oppressed* is to arrive at theoretical explication through an empirical procedure as adults learn by and in the experience, develop a workshop teaching model that helps teachers and educators in understanding how to promote transformative learning and use methods of TdO with different participants and different social and cultural environments as transformative learning device (Mezirow, 2000).

Referring to Boal's dramatic art of the Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1985), the Theatre of the Oppressed is an imaginative metaphor for the journey of perspectives' transformation. Imagination permeates every aspect of life experience and helps to develop personal and political awareness in people who look beyond what they take for granted, questioning the normal. The imagination is the metaphor for making possible social and educational change. The free exercise of imagination can be suggestive of new ideas, while the raising of consciousness opens people to possibilities and to the unknown explicating the implicit constrictions they undergo. The theatre makes active the audience and serves to groups of spect-actors (Boal, 1985) to explore, to stage, to analyze and to transform reality that they themselves live. The methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed provide analysis tools, liberation and awareness through a dialogic relationship, which deconstructs the aspects of violence. According to a maieutic approach, without giving answers, the questions are asked for finding collective solutions.

The changes and transformations (Mezirow, 2000) are achieved through the development of self-criticism, awareness and reflection on oneself and on others as well as through the development of a capacity of ethical behaviour, and of reflective processes on the dynamics of oppression suffered by the participants, and the recognition of different and varied forms of oppression that act at all levels of the ecological metaphor. Understood within this context, the Theatre of the Oppressed can help groups and organizations engage in essential debate over strategy and process and to work for social change and collective perspective transformations.

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Transforming Passion to Action: Youth and Community Leaders as Agents of Change

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Abstract: There are youth around the world who are taking up informal leadership roles in their communities to make a difference. Some of this work transforms their lives and those of friends, families and neighbors that have been affected by violence. There is a determination to take individual and collective action rather than relying on or waiting for local and state level government actors to intervene. The case being explored here is in a community setting in Medellín, Colombia. One of our goals with these youth leaders is to support them in their work on transforming conflict and creating healthier communities. The focus of this examination is exploring the intersections and interfaces of scholarship, practice and activism for transformative learning. We grounded the collaborative work we are doing in taking a communication perspective using Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM).

Introduction

The focus of intersection in this year's conference shows up here between scholar practitioners from the developed world (US and Europe) engaging with youth leaders on the ground in difficult neighborhoods of Medellín, Colombia. Our approach was not to be top-down or taken as imperialistic; the youth leaders have local knowledge and we believe that is equal to if not greater than our practical and academic knowledge. Their socio-economic status keeps them away from better quality education or from completing their higher education in a timely manner and they were hungry for knowledge. This paper will focus on the work we have collectively been doing in Medellín over the past two years emphasizing the learning and transformation that has come about from our figuring out how best to work together (Fisher-Yoshida, 2014).

Setting the Context

Colombia has been racked with violence for 50+ years. Most of the population has suffered directly or indirectly and a large percentage of families have been displaced, uprooted from their homes and forced to settle elsewhere due to local violence. In fact, Colombia was the country with the largest number of displaced persons (more than 6,000,000) until recently when Syria moved into the number one slot (IDMC, 2015). Some families manage to make better lives for themselves after years of struggling from relocation. Other families continue to feel like outsiders. This happens more frequently for fathers causing them to leave their families and return home even in the face of the violence they initially left behind.

In spite of these seemingly endless difficulties, there are pockets of hope and resilience from youth and community members and leaders. These youth leaders use the tools available to them and these include the arts. We have worked with hip-hop artists, graffiti artists and dancers. Some have encountered Freire's (1986) theories on social change and are sharing those concepts in their communities with other youth. They understand that knowledge is power and they recognize that there are many ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy & Goldberger, 2008)). Their

focus is reaching youth-at-risk before they become involved in violent lives and developing them to transform local violence into creating neighborhoods of peace.

Our Approach

Our approach is based on taking a communication perspective and we use *Coordinated Management of Meaning* (CMM) (Pearce, 2007) concepts and practices. We all live by the stories we tell about ourselves, others and our social worlds. Some of these stories are generative, while others keep us trapped in destructive cycles. In CMM these are referred to as *unwanted repetitive patterns* or URPs. Our choices are fateful and if we continue to make the same poor choices we are doomed to repeat the same scenarios. Taking a step back to see patterns of behavior is an eye opener and where transformation comes to play. When we notice our situations from a third person perspective we are able to detect the patterns of our behavior and decide the changes we want to make to lead more constructive lives (Kegan, 1998).

We use participatory processes so participants are heard and engage in analyzing, synthesizing, recommending and implementing solutions to the identified problems (Fisher-Yoshida, 2009). Burns and Worsley (2015) developed an integrated model built on three foundational principles: include participants in decision-making and implementation; identify the changes needed, desired and possible; and develop relationships and network building that create a foundation from which to take the appropriate actions decided. These principles lead to a strong sense of ownership by the participants, stimulus to take action, opportunities to innovate and adapt as changes are being made. In all, it sets conditions for scaling interventions and for sustainability of the changes desired. When participants are actively engaged in addressing their issues they demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness boosting their self-esteem through exerting their agency.

Participants engage in mapping exercises guided by *Dynamical Systems Theory* (DST), which in essence posits that our social processes are parts of systems and subsystems and that these are dynamic (Vallacher, et al, 2013). Some movement within these systems is habitual and predictable with ripple effects to any location in the system affecting other areas as well as the area of direct impact. Participants are asked to visualize their worlds of people, places and events over time and to identify the significant ones. Mapping their systems gives them access to understanding the most important relationships within their worlds. Those identified people, places and events are named as attractors, which are “stable patterns or tendencies in systems that draw us in and that resist change” (Coleman, 2011, p. 73). These attractors within systems create dynamics between them.

They identify the challenges these attractors present, as well as, the attractors that are positively influencing the system dynamics and how these reinforce or inhibit each other. They draw lines connecting the various attractors they identified. Lines can be different colors in the case of complicated visualizations, or marked with a + or -. The + represents a reinforcing feedback loop because it feeds into and escalates whatever attractor it is connected to. The – feedback loop, on the other hand, diminishes whatever is identified in that attractor. The + and – in the case of marking the feedback loops do not represent whether the attractors are positive or negative, rather the effect they have on strengthening or weakening the influence of one attractor on another and the overall dynamics of the system (Vallacher, et al, 2013).

They identify energy hubs, which are the attractors that have the most feedback loops connected to them, and constructive or destructive, feedback loops to more clearly depict how

the attractors feed into each other (Vallacher, et al, 2013). By doing this they are able to focus attention and subsequent action on the leverage points where they can make the biggest impact or at least get a foot in the door to begin the change process. We strategize actions plans, identify areas of capacity building and through these exercises and them demonstrating their agency they transform their stories from conflict and despair to narratives of hope.

Our Value Added in Supporting Youth Leader Initiatives

We have small funding for seed money for projects and initiatives. We also have access to additional resources than the groups with whom we are working. We have techniques, concepts and skills that we have collected from a variety of locations that the youth leaders do not have. The educational and knowledge base access they have is more limited and predominantly local. They are very knowledgeable about their communities on a variety of levels and can benefit from seeing their situations from other lenses. We add value by sharing with them a variety of resources that enhance their knowledge of other ways of knowing (Belenky, et al, 2008) and seeing and doing that have the potential to transform their perspectives (Fisher-Yoshida, 2012b).

We are very conscious of being from outside these contexts and our intention is not to impose our knowledge or will on these populations of people, rather support and enhance what they are doing. We want to ensure that our focus and intentions are in keeping in accordance with the principles and values we espouse (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Writing Proposals

We asked our partners to reach other youth leaders to gather proposals for projects needing small funding. Basically, they reported back that the proposals they received were poor in quality. We questioned them to find out why they were poor. We realized that the proposals were for one-off events without any connection to a longer-term strategy (or even a short-term strategy more than one encounter) and were not situated in a schema of social change or leadership development. We discovered that the people submitting these proposals had never been asked to develop something more than a one-time event. We are not against having some one-time events. We do know, however, that in the bigger picture this will not develop them as leaders, develop others as leaders or provide for community change.

We knew we had to take a step back and work with youth leaders to develop longer-time goals and strategies. This in itself is a transformation of perspective. It assumes there is a future for which to plan and that they will be around to enact these plans in this imagined future (Daloz, 2000). There is a process of differentiation and integration that happens by engaging the other in an incremental process toward transformation. Daloz (2000) identified four conditions that set the stage for this process: (1) the presence of the other; (2) reflective discourse; (3) mentoring community; and (4) opportunities for committed action. In our work with these youth leaders we realize we fit these four criteria in our work with them.

Role in Developing Proposals

We are using *Coordinated Management of Meaning* (CMM), as a methodology to conceptualize a project or initiative. The advantage of using this flow that we developed is that the concepts and tools of CMM are very useful in deconstructing the complexity of the context and identifying the goals and focus of the interventions. It guides the leaders to articulate the scope and focus of their projects. It provides structure to guide them on how to transfer their passion into planning. This is very important because they have not had opportunities or reasons

to be future-oriented to the degree we are asking. The guided process provides structure that will take them step-by-step through a process.

Once this process is done it also helps them more carefully articulate what they will need to provide when they are seeking funding, partnerships or other resources. They can identify the measures they will use to track progress and determine the effectiveness of their projects and interventions.

This is the CMM proposal-planning model we introduced.

1. Select a situation/scenario of an “episode” (intervention) you want to create. Episodes are framed periods of time that have a beginning, middle and end.
2. Who is the target audience of this episode? Who needs to be involved both directly and indirectly? We want them to begin to identify those who are involved indirectly through giving a type of support, for example.
3. What CMM tools will you use to understand the situation better? (Daisy, Serpentine, LUUUUTT, Hierarchy) Here are brief discussions of the models:
 - a. Daisy - the “speech act” being explored is in the center and the petals represent the influence on the center. A good use is if we want a group to get to know each other better they can write a daisy of major influences in their lives and then share their daisies with one another.
 - b. Serpentine - captures the flow of a conversation or series of events. Through this we have a chance to see the critical moments when perhaps a different turn could have been enacted with a different, more desirable outcome.
 - c. LUUUUTT - this is a storytelling model that unpacks the layers of stories in any given situation. The letters stand for stories lived, untold, unheard, unknown, untellable, told and the act of the storytelling.
 - d. Hierarchy - this captures the different layers of context and which context is elevated having more influence over and providing the framing for a given situation.
4. What are the logical forces happening that you want to change? To create? There are four logical forces that are in motion and these develop from the “shoulds” and “should nots” we learn as part of our socialization process from a young age. These forces are:
 - a. Prefigurative - this is when a situation calls forth certain behaviors in response. For example, if you see people waiting on line you will also wait in line, if you have been socialized to do so. Making this a more conscious process means that in the planning of events they can think through the design that will lead to eliciting particular behavioral responses from others.
 - b. Practical - these are the specific actions we take to create the prefigurative forces. If we want participants to be relaxed then we set up the space to create that type of environment, maybe we provide snacks and so on.
 - c. Contextual - there are certain types of behavior expected in specific locations. Being in school compared to being at home or being in church.
 - d. Implicative - this is what happens as a result of the different forces at work, the implications. It is also what we pay attention to when we want to change dynamics. We may have different practical forces in a context that are different from usual to create something different. An example could be of school violence

and we want to create forces that prevent violence and encourage safety and cooperation.

5. Map it out using these tools. The use of visuals, aid us in seeing what we cannot see with words alone. This is also being mindful that we learn and understand using different sensory channels. Visuals can enhance understanding.
6. Describe the episode you are creating.
 - a. Purpose
 - b. Beginning
 - c. Middle
 - d. End
7. How will you know if you are successful? What are the indicators you are seeking that shows you are on track and achieving what you set out to achieve?
8. What are some possible critical moments you anticipate might happen? It is useful to identify the potential resistance points to change for example and prepare for them as in the next question.
9. How will you address them?

Developing Youth Leaders in a Parallel Process

In the process of preparing youth leaders to work with their communities, they individually and collectively benefit and grow. They are developed in the process of learning how to develop others. It is critical that we model the attitudes, skills and manner in which we would like them to work with others. Some of this can be very subtle. Using reflective discourse techniques provides the space for us to hear concerns and for these youth leaders to develop the capacity for critical self-reflection that they will benefit from and in turn can model and teach to others (Brookfield, 2011).

Critical self-reflection will provide them with the lifelong skills of the capacity to learn. It posits that while we grow and develop on a regular basis there is no time that this comes to an end. This means no two situations are ever exactly the same and so there is always a possibility for learning. It keeps learning alive and connects the leaders with the learners on a more empathic level. It implies that while we develop expertise on subject matter and processes we use, we are not the only experts in the room. It honors the unique contributions anyone and everyone has the potential of making.

Their Learning

One of the effects is that it changed how the youth leaders think about themselves and their communities. They previously had a much narrower scope of beginning and end usually encountering one or a few sessions. They did not expect their projects to continue indefinitely or scale up and make larger scale impact. We are asking them to think through and plan for a longer period of time and this is causing changes in the way they think about their work, the outcomes and the impact on others.

Our Learning

We introduced this model through a series of workshops and worked with project teams to adopt this model as a planning tool. It causes them to take a step back and examine their underlying assumptions of what they want to do, how they conceptualize progress and how they think about themselves and others (Brookfield, 2011). This project and process has been and continues to be a truly transformative learning experience for all involved. We came in with a certain set of assumptions about the conflict situation in Medellín, what social change and

conflict transformation entails and became engaged in ways we had not anticipated. It caused us to ask ourselves questions in reflection, such as “what constitutes knowledge?” and “how can we work in partnership to impart knowledge and skills to these social change agents in ways that make sense and are actually effective?” (Bolton, 2014; Fisher-Yoshida, 2012a). Once again we were reminded about and appreciate the ongoing learning that takes place when working with others in partnership and how it leads toward transforming perspectives (Mezirow, 2000; Cranton, 2006).

Next Steps

We are at different stages of project planning processes and rolling out programs with different groups of youth leaders. The youth leaders have felt the effects of planning and being rewarded with support in carrying out their projects. We have relished watching them succeed in their endeavors.

Our goal is to continue documenting with them what they have done and what they want to do going forward. We are all learning as we go along. As we document success and address the struggles, we are also identifying funding for bigger more impactful rollouts of their initiatives. We are viewing all of these initial efforts as pilots to scale up as they make progress and we learn more about what is needed to ensure they are successful for scaling and sustaining those changes. Our bigger imagining is that we share this on a wider scale and transfer these successes to other locales for others to benefit as well. Youth leaders coming together and sharing around the world their best practices can only have positive outcomes.

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Evidence of Student Transformative Learning through a Campus-Wide Student Learning Record

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Abstract: Our campus adopted a focus on transformative learning as a goal for our students in 2007 and began pushing its integration into class pedagogies and co-curricular events shortly thereafter. A gathering of our faculty staff in 2008 to discuss these issues led to an annual spring conference on Transformative Learning (TL). By 2013, we began planning a university-wide initiative to authentically assess and formally record student transformative learning across experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom. At this session, we will display our Transformative Learning rubrics across our Central tenets of TL, show examples of student work, and highlight the student dashboard that tracks their TL progress. In light of our goal of increased retention of target populations, we will provide preliminary results of this initiative from the 2015-2016 academic year, provide opportunities for participant feedback, and workshop methods of replicating the initiative in other learning contexts.

Paper

In 2007, our four-year, metropolitan University adopted as a core value and set of learning emphases 6 Tenets of Transformative Learning:

- Discipline Knowledge;
- Global and Cultural Competencies;
- Health and Wellness;
- Leadership;
- Research, Creative and Scholarly Activities; and
- Service Learning and Civic Engagement

The Provost directed each department to work to infuse Transformative Learning further into campus culture through inclusion of at least one tenet-related activity in every course offering. Similarly, campus co-curricular groups began intentional inclusion of a wide array of tenet-related programs and services.

In 2011, the university community began to address the gap between Transformative Learning as an idea on paper versus an authentically assessed framework for student learning. Starting in the spring of 2013, a collaborative committee with representation from Academic Affairs, Information Technology, and Student Affairs began meeting to further this work. The initial project framework included creating and sharing general descriptions of the 6 tenets mentioned above as well as the creation of associated rubrics to measure growth in each tenet. These rubrics were created through the modification and editing of the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics as well as the creation of VALUE-like rubrics for tenets where no AAC&U VALUE rubric existed (i.e., for Health & Wellness). These rubrics gave our faculty and staff guidance to assess student artifacts as showing evidence of exposure to the tenets, integration of the tenets, or complete transformation in their understanding and behavior related to the assessed tenet(s). The rubrics were, and are, vetted by

both faculty members and professional staff Subject Matter Experts, further creating collaboration at the intersections of our campus. Through use and ongoing review, the rubrics are updated as needed to reflect our best effort in assessing student learning with alignment to our understanding of the tenets.

Efforts to institutionalize, assess, and track student transformation were accelerated in the fall of 2014 through the support of a U.S. Department of Education Title III grant in the amount of 7.8 million dollars over the course of a 5-year implementation cycle. The university committed to carrying on the work of this Student Transformative Learning Record (STLR) by the end of the funding period. Another major milestone in our campus' institutionalization of TL was our adoption of our official definition of Transformative Learning. Quoting our institution's website, "Transformative Learning develops beyond-disciplinary skills and expands students' perspectives of their relationships with self, others, community and environment" (University of Central Oklahoma, <http://uco.edu/tl>). We based this definition on the work of Mezirow (2008), emphasizing the facilitation of disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection (Brookfield, 2005), and discourse to help students make meaning of their experiences.

Through partnership with campus Information Technology, our campus' already-adopted Learning Management System, Desire2Learn, was chosen as the platform through which students' Transformative Learning artifacts could be uploaded, assessed, recorded, and displayed to the students and future employers. This system was adopted because of its wide use across campus (over 80%), its existing tie-in to our Student Information System (Banner), and its available tools (rubrics, competency structures, ePortfolios). Because one goal was to measure and display student transformation both inside and outside the classroom, we sought to develop a new technology interface, called the student dashboard. This dashboard was to be the physical manifestation of STLR, like an app, displaying student growth across their entire academic career across all classes and tracked activities. Brightspace by D2L built us this dashboard, including in it not only TL achievements in our Central 6 Tenets, but also student grades and calendar events across all courses during a given semester. This product allowed us to intersect with a large educational technology company and was released in the fall of 2015.

We are also using the STLR achievements from the student dashboard, along with other student engagement and demographic data, in predictive modelling that will allow our campus to refine and target interventions for students. In particular, we will be able to identify students most at risk of withdrawing and funnel resources their direction. This project allows further intersection both with another large, educational technology company and with a cross-campus collaborative team.

On campus, STLR is creating conversations at the intersections of students and faculty, faculty and staff, and Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. One place we see this is through faculty/staff training, taken voluntarily with a stipend available. Faculty are learning how to create, modify, or setup assignments, with potential for student transformation, in D2L. Staff are discussing the setup, modification, or tagging of student executive boards or co-curricular events through which students can swipe-in or submit reflections to be assessed with the VALUE-like STLR rubrics mentioned above. Faculty, staff, and students are applying for funding for existing projects, or proposing new Transformative Learning Projects funded by the STLR grant. All of these are allowing more disorienting dilemmas, personal reflection, and guided feedback which we are confident will increase the frequency and magnitude of student TL experiences (Mezirow, 2008). These TL student projects conclude with at least one artifact, with supervisor feedback, for them to incorporate in their ePortfolios as evidence of learning.

To further bring value to our campus' efforts, and to fulfill grant goals, we formed a STLR Employer Advisory Board in August 2015 to ask their input on the skills and experiences they most valued in recent-graduate hires. Further, we asked them to give input on student ePortfolios. Specifically, we asked the feasibility of their inclusion of ePortfolios in their recruiting and hiring processes—something that national surveys had revealed employers said they'd find helpful (e.g., Hart Research Associates, 2013). We also asked for their feedback on the quality, content, and layout of upper-division students' ePortfolios, developed through an Integrative Knowledge Portfolio Process (Peet, et al., 2011). Additional students will soon be attending ePortfolio training to learn how to best reflect upon and convey their Transformative Learning experiences and skills to potential employers. This intersection of our campus with our surrounding community continues to be fruitful.

Fall 2016 will mark the first time we will be able to assess the retention of students involved in STLR during the fall 2015 launch compared to un-involved students. Results are not available at the writing of this paper, but will be shared at the 2016 International Transformative Learning Conference. Goals of the grant include increases in retention, persistence from fall to spring, graduation rates, successful graduate employment, and in particular, increases across these areas for target populations (minority, first generation, lower socio-economic status). Data from our pilot year 2014-2015 revealed increases in retention, persistence, successful completion of more credit hours, and higher GPA of those with involvement in one or more STLR assignments or activities.

Our efforts to integrate the assessment and tracking of Transformative Learning across our campus lead to our inclusion in a national cohort of 12 diverse, higher education institutions who are implementing a comprehensive student record. This AACRAO/NASPA Comprehensive Student Record Project is funded by the Lumina Foundation. Our "combined transcript" is a formative and interactive actualization of the STLR dashboard that includes both TL achievements and traditional academic records (courses/grades) which students can customize and utilize for employment and graduate school applications. This summary of their learning will allow a detailed view of achievement across the tenets. The inter-university cohort experience is giving us access to expert guidance with consultants, while allowing us to contribute our progress to the national conversation. We will continue to grow, through this guidance and other partnerships, as we finish out the last three years of our grant-funded implementation plan of Transformative Learning tracking at our institution.

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Reflections on the Outcomes of a Service-Learning Course

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Abstract: This qualitative study describes and analyses the ways in which working with people in the community transformed the frames of reference of a group of 17 students at a small liberal arts college in suburban Tokyo, Japan. In the first semester in 2015 these students took a service-learning (SL) course that aimed to introduce them to the concept of SL and to the ways in which they could contribute to society as citizens, as well as helping them to learn about themselves through a process of reflection. It provided all of them with a meaningful and transformative experience, and reflecting on their interactions with people in the community significantly changed their frames of reference.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the ways in which working with people in the community can transform the frames of reference of students. A group of 17 students (four males and 13 females) took my service-learning (SL) course in the first semester of 2015. It aimed to introduce them to the concept of SL and to explore how they could contribute to society as citizens, as well as helping them to learn about themselves through extensive reflection. Such outcomes would not have been possible in purely traditional lecture style course, so in this instance SL proved anew its perhaps unique capacity to create stronger human relationships, and to engender self-confidence in students through a transformative learning experience, as revealed in their reflection papers and presentations.

SL, an activity that engages students in charitable activities and combines this with academic literature, research, and reflection, can do much to promote intellectual insight, human compassion, and intercultural competence (Cress et al., 2013). Outside Japan, SL is widely accepted as a transformative (Freire, 1972; Mezirow, 1991) and an experiential (Kolb, 1984) learning process that can change individuals' perspective. But while the constructivist approach has already been introduced to Japanese education in the shape of active learning or project based learning, SL has not been widely adopted in post-secondary education in Japan, largely because it is not considered to be properly academic. Relatively few faculty members in institutions of higher education in Japan accept SL, and overcoming this barrier is made even more difficult by the fact that such courses need to involve not only students, faculty and other members of staff, but also the wider community; working effectively and collaboratively with these other stakeholders is a vital prerequisite for success. Many more examples of successful SL programs will have to be provided before it can secure its proper place in academia in Japan.

Background and Rationale

According to research findings by the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) in 2005, 18 percent of undergraduate students in Japan participate in volunteer work, and almost half of them have previous experience of it (JASSO, 2006). Furthermore, SL is now an essential component of citizenship education in Japan (2011, Takeda). However, a significant proportion of university faculty continues to resist the incorporation of volunteer work into mainstream higher education curriculum in Japan. They still believe that knowledge-based learning, the

traditional banking concept of education (Freire, 1999), is the only authentic and appropriate teaching methodology; activity-based, collaborative and co-creative learning (Dewey, 1938; Piage, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978) is discounted. Today, though, the world is increasingly at the mercy of unpredictable, destructive events (natural disasters, terrorist outrages, economic collapse – the list is endless). It would seem completely obvious, therefore, that students need to acquire not just knowledge but also the communicative and collaborative skills that allow them to move beyond their own culture, and expand their frames of reference to take account of our global society.

Adults are self-directed and experiential learners (Knowles, 1984). The SL method encourages self-direction by students and this is exactly what society in Japan needs today. Self-direction is enhanced in good relationships where people work together, as is their energy, self-esteem, self-awareness, ability to take action, and desire for further connection through community involvement. These qualities, “The Five Good Things” (Jordan, 2010; Miller & Stiver, 1997) have been identified as crucial in relational cultural theory (RCT), an approach first developed in a therapeutic context in the 1980s by Jean Baker Miller and her colleagues. RCT has since proved to be a very useful tool for pinpointing the kinds of issues that foster students’ transformative learning in an academic environment.

People construct knowledge through interaction with the world around them (Vygotsky, 1978), and true learning requires a complex involvement in social and individual life (Freire, 1999). SL allows students to interact with people, and to face and deal with problems that help them to learn about their society and to develop autonomy. It requires them reflect critically on themselves as individuals, as part of a group and as members of the community (Ash & Clayton, 2009). By practicing critical thinking (Brookfield, 1989) and reflection (Schön, 1983), students can change their frames of reference and deepen their learning and understanding of the community.

The SL course that I offered was a one semester, 15-week program. The first 10 weeks were given over to lectures: the next two weeks were devoted to actual volunteer activities at different venues like kindergartens, senior citizen’s homes, and child daycare centers; and the final three weeks were taken up by student presentations and reflections. I utilized Kolb’s (1984) learning style model to orchestrate these various leaning approaches. This embodies four distinct learning references; concrete experience (CE), abstract conceptualization (AC), active experimentation (AE), and reflective observation (RO). Kolb explained that we internally decide whether we wish to watch (RO) or do (AE), and at the same time we decide whether to feel (CE) or think (AC). It proved helpful in creating lesson plans and in clarifying my expectations as a teacher of the desired results of students’ learning.

I had several goals for the first six weeks of the lecture segment; to convey to the students the concept of SL; to impress upon them the need to be aware of their own frames of reference in terms of gender, physical abilities, age, etc. when encountering people from different cultural backgrounds; and to develop in them the communication skills and manners that they would need to contact volunteer coordinators, communicate with people while volunteering, research social issues relevant to their particular volunteer activity, and create PowerPoint presentations.

I then invited four different local government social workers to speak to the students over the course of the next four weeks. One of them brought along some wheelchairs, eye masks, and white canes to simulate the experience of blindness. In the tenth week, the students listened to an intercultural trainer from the U.S. who was herself very experienced in volunteer activity. These

guest speakers provided the students with concrete examples of SL. The activities provided in these lectures and classes utilized all four learning styles outlined above.

Methodology

I fixed on my 2015 SL course for analysis through case study methodology (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003, 2006). My research question was: “How has working with people in the community transformed the frames of reference of the students?” The participants were 17 students (four males and 13 females) at a small liberal arts college in suburban Tokyo, Japan. 10 of them were first years (two males and eight females), six were in their second year (one male and four female), and there was one female third year student. I chose to focus on the members through “intensity sampling” (Patton, 2002), looking at each and every individual rather than at the group dynamics to analyze how working with people in the community transformed their individual frames of reference. Data was collected from observation of the students in class and from their reflection papers. Anonymity has been preserved in the handling of the data.

Findings

The findings reveal that the students learned much in a collaborative and relational working environment. In order to provide that kind of environment, I needed to give them a lot of support, since more than a half of them were in the first year. Some of the most difficult issues sprang from the immature attitudes of some of the first year students. I experienced such problems when the students visited kindergartens, senior citizen’s homes or child daycare centers as volunteer workers. I did not accompany them, but had them write reflection papers that focused on what and how they had learned.

The 10 first year students always sat and interacted together. Eight of them were women. They wore clothes of similar fashions thick makeups and high heels. They talked loudly in class until I stopped them. Two men spent much time text messaging their friends or chatting together at the back of the classroom. So I mixed them with the older students, which helped to quiet them even though they did not like it, but this eventually worked well and they started to mingle naturally with one another. The first year students learned from the senior students, and this created a supportive environment.

One incident that particularly shocked me was coming into the classroom one day to find there (Misa, Kana, and Nami) who were supposed to be at their volunteer venue, a child daycare center. At first, I was really scandalized, but I realized that they needed extra support in order to pursue even basic tasks like making a phone call to the volunteer center. I talked with each of them and found that they had failed to make an appointment with the volunteer coordinator because it was the first time they had ever had to do anything like this. They were simply too nervous. I gave them a second chance and had them call the child day care center immediately. A volunteer coordinator there was supportive and re-scheduled their visit. The three made it the second time and interviewed some mothers there and reported on this in class.

Another first year female student, Yuko, failed to keep her appointment at another child day care center. She had simply forgotten. I had her call the center to apologize and ask for a second chance. She also made it the second time, and found she actually liked working with children. She reported that the staff members at the center were nice, and that she had enjoyed talking with the mothers and children in a cozy *tatami* (Japanese style floor) room. Yuko wrote good reflection papers about how much she had learned by connecting with people and working at the center, noting that she could not have had this experience without the support of the staff

members. She also told me that she would register as a volunteer during the summer break. Yuko clearly valued connecting with people in the community.

Two first year male students, Kenta and Yasu, who volunteered at a kindergarten, reported that the “teachers at the kindergarten were very nice and relaxed us.” Neither of them had looked at all energetic at the beginning of the course, but both reported how much they had enjoyed their volunteer work, helping children to dig for sweet potatoes at the kindergarten. Kenta said that he had found it very hard to accompany the children from the kindergarten to the potato field, since he felt so responsible for their safety as they walked at the side of a busy road. In his reflection paper Yasu wrote that he was interested in working with kids in the future, noting “Those kids are so smart, smarter than me! They can name many stations name on *Yamanote* line.” The attitude of these students changed after their experience of volunteering at the kindergarten. They were more confident, focused, and relaxed in class, so it had clearly been a really good experience for them.

A second year female student, Ayako, who had volunteered at a senior citizen’s home, reported that she was impressed by the rich experience and knowledge of the elderly residents. She cooked Japanese *yakisoba* noodles with them to eat together. She observed that each of the elderly people had different physical problems. Some of them had to walk with canes or use a wheel chair, while others looked in good condition. Ayako wrote that the number of elderly people is increasing rapidly in Japan, so we need more support from volunteers in the community since centers rely on such efforts. More than 100 events were held at the center, including a music festival, cooking, magic shows, along with more mundane activities like folding towels, taking exercise, making craft goods and so on. All of these were only possible because of contributions from volunteers.

In addition to such volunteer work in the community, the students had the experience of using a wheelchair and walking blindfolded with a cane on campus. I invited three senior volunteers from our local government offices. One of these, Ms. Hayashi, instructed us in the use of wheelchairs and helped the blindfolded students to walk. All of the students experienced using and pushing a wheel chair on campus and reported that it was not easy to do this, since the paths were bumpy and very uncomfortable in places unless one went round such spots. Assisting people using a white cane was also not easy; students said that without building trust between themselves, it was dangerous to walk around, especially in busy places. Students emphasized in their reflection papers how important it was to have a trusting relationship when walking with blind people, since otherwise they could not support them properly. All of us also practiced going up and down stairs between ground level and the fifth floor, and learned that this required a lot of energy in both directions.

Discussion

There were clearly problems in implementing the initial stages of the process, but once I had surmounted these difficulties, I found positive changes in the students after their experience of volunteer work in terms of their energy levels, self-esteem, self-awareness, ability to take action, and desire for further connection through community involvement. They learned from their mistakes and became aware of how irresponsible they had been. The whole experience brought about transformative changes in their outlook. Just putting knowledge into their heads wouldn’t have changed their attitudes and behavior in the same way. They really needed to have experience in order to be able to empathize with others.

When students come to university, they require a lot of support. Mine needed help to learn how to write reflection papers, take notes, and improve their research and presentation skills, including the creation of PowerPoint slides. I found that there were many things that I needed to teach them step by step before I could send them out into the community. Since the 1970s, Japanese government guidelines have gradually reduced the amount of class time for content teaching in order to cultivate aesthetic sensibility and emotional development. Class hours in primary and secondary schools have been reduced drastically. This policy is called *yutori* (literally, “relaxed”) education. Children born between 1987 and 2004 were educated in this *yutori* system (Monbu-kagaku-shou, 2016). There are pros and cons here, and it may have spoiled some children.

Transforming instructional approaches like SL learning in community contexts are needed to enhancing students’ creativity and autonomy (Cress, 2004). Even though SL courses are still not common in Japan, the evidence presented in this study shows that they can significantly enhance students’ energy, self-esteem, and self-awareness. Experiential learning leveraged their ability to take action and stimulated in them a desire for further connection. These outcomes confirm other findings that students enjoy a very rich learning experience through involvement in serving others in ways that meet their community’s needs. Students researched the reality of life in child day care centers and senior citizen’s day centers, and presented their experiences at the end of the course.

Students learned about and experienced volunteering by going through four learning styles outlined above: concrete experience (CE), abstract conceptualization (AC), active experimentation (AE), and reflective observation (RO) (Kolb, 1984). According to Kolb (1984), when we process our emotional response to a “transforming experience,” we fall into either feeling (RO) or thinking (AE). When we approach a task, a “grasping experience,” we fall into either watching (CE) or doing (AC). According to Yamazaki (2005), Japanese students’ learning style is likely to be RO rather than AE, since Japanese collectivistic culture tends to avoid taking risks. In fact, Japanese students feel uncomfortable taking risks in class, such as speaking out about their opinions (Hayashi & Cherry, 2004). But using these all four learning styles can develop their abilities and enhance creativity, breaking existing cultural constraints. Thus the students enjoyed their discussion with the guest speaker from the U.S., Susan, using both Japanese and English.

In SL, by going through all of the learning styles while practicing critical thinking (Brookfield, 1989) and reflection (Schön, 1983), students can change their perspective and deepen their learning and understanding of the community. Engaging in reflection can lead individuals to insight and understanding (Cress et al. 2013) by enabling them to reconstruct their experiences and create constructive meaning (Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan & Lahey, 2001). SL is not easy to facilitate, but the experience it offers can release students’ potential in countless positive ways that we as educators cannot predict. Learning is really made possible when people are connected.

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The Fruits of Transformative Learning: Uncovering Pathways and Potential for Adults with Disabilities

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Abstract: When transformational learning has occurred, and the learner has acquired a new frame of reference, there is the general expectation that something very positive has occurred. Unfortunately, defining the benefits may be diverse and complicated to explain for each adult learner. For postsecondary students with disabilities, however, there appears to be evidence that two valuable outcomes may result: the discovery that (1) typical barriers that threaten accessibility can become pathways and (2) unknown potential is tapped. These outcomes were common results of several interventions applied as part of an innovative approach to serving students with disabilities at one postsecondary institution. Qualitative analysis of findings suggests that more attention may need to be given at intersections of transformational learning and disability.

Disability and Barriers

In most cases, a person with a disability experiences a life-long encounter with barriers. However, those who are able to enroll in and find success in higher education have in many ways demonstrated success in dealing with barriers. These students have often become proficient at knowing what resources are available to them under various federal and state laws as well as college policies. Nevertheless, challenges abound. For those with learning or emotional disabilities, access to aids and services may not be as adequate as those that were provided under a different set of laws that apply at the elementary and secondary levels. Those who are blind or low vision may find certain courses that rely on graphics or visual aids problematic. Most who are deaf may have insufficient oral language exposure to fully grasp complex concepts that are not easily conveyed in American Sign Language (ASL). Those with physical disabilities may find mobility around large campuses a factor in delays or equal access to available experiences. An accumulation of these and other types of barriers or challenges can create frustration and sometimes lead to failure.

Interventions Beyond Auxiliary Aids and Services

To address these challenges, postsecondary institutions provide disability service offices that may not only provide auxiliary aids and services but also develop other ways of addressing challenges. Some schools have developed experimental interventions to improve outcomes (for one example, see White, Summers, Zhang & Renault, 2014). At one large community college in South Florida, the disability service office was permitted to provide additional programs with the expectation that these would improve student academic success, retention, completion, and job placement. Two of these programs became interventions that included repurposing a computer-training program and a student organization. Each of these programs, which served between 15 and 20 students each semester, was redesigned to provide experiences that could be transformative in that each began with the following assumptions: (1) students with disabilities may not always be aware of their own potential to address barriers, (2) students with disabilities need to be given more experiences that challenge them outside of typical course work, and (3)

experiences that are service-oriented provide opportunities to demonstrate potential which may result in greater personal satisfaction and worth, which could also lead to a more motivated student.

The Digital Media Studio Intervention

The original computer-training program had for many decades provided students with disabilities an opportunity to be trained in the kinds of technology that was intended to improve job placement. It involved numerous courses, and these were provided exclusively for students with disabilities. Over many years, and as most college students became proficient in computer technology, the students with disabilities did not enjoy the same advantage they once had and so job placements decreased. Consequently, this program was repurposed as a digital media technology studio program that was open to both students with disabilities and (depending upon space available) students who did not have disabilities. The digital media program was not taught by an instructor, but students received help with class or personal projects by collaborating with part-time staff that included a web designer, graphic artist, film editor, photographer, and a musician. The justification for this program was that digital media tools would enhance both course work and job skills in modern markets. In many cases, the digital media staff were also students and individuals with disabilities. Participation ranged from parts of a semester to an academic year or more. The program resulted in products such as PSA's on disability issues, flyers, brochures and posters for college or community events, logos developed for associations and much more. As the studio enrollment expanded and resulted in sophisticated products, external organizations began to provide scholarships and entrepreneurships that expanded the program.

The naturalistic and inclusive nature of this intervention was intentional. The assumption was that a program available at convenient times, giving choices among digital media activities to pursue without grades or particular expectations would remove cognitive barriers and promote new learning opportunities. Most of the "ideal" conditions described by Taylor (2000b) were evident (e.g., openness, trust, student-centered, and problem-solving activities, p. 5). There were no *formal* activities that involved "critical reflection" or "rational discourse" but the experiences themselves may have provided the stimulus for critical reflection and interactions with staff, and the program manager may have fostered the necessary rational discourse in view of Mezirow's statement that "[E]ffective learning does not follow from a positive experience but from effective reflection," (1991, p.162).

Although transformative learning outcomes may include "threatened worldviews," "critical self-questioning," and "psychological upheavals," (Hodge, 2011), there was the expectation that the intervention would result in many positive and perhaps dramatic changes in thinking and behavior. In fact, actual outcomes went beyond academic success. In the majority of cases, students began to see or understand their relationship to barriers and their potential very differently. The experience appeared to affect change in personal and academic directions for many students. Some changed majors and career goals as they observed their strengths differently, found new talents or a new voice to use in accessing goals. As examples, a student who had previous training in graphic arts discovered a new talent for video editing, and a student musician found strength in composing music rather than performing it. These changes often paralleled greater interest in helping others with disabilities. There was less a sense of being individuals who must cope with barriers every day, and more a sense of strength with which to

reshape personal goals or incorporate the interests of others, suggesting some transformational learning had occurred.

The Student Organization Intervention

The second intervention involved repurposing a student organization for students with disabilities. An important assumption was that these students needed opportunities to show their potential by taking the lead in purposeful activities rather than expecting inclusion within groups of peers without disabilities. Instead, the non-disabled peers would be welcome to join them in their organizational activities – an approach referred to as “reverse inclusion.” About the same time, a grant became available to promote service-learning among students with disabilities. Others have noted the positive fit of service-learning with transformational learning (Fahrenwald, Eschenbacher, Porter, and Donald, 2014). The group was composed of students with varying disabilities. Over several years, the group elected presidents who were deaf, physically disabled, or had mental health impairments. One year they elected a leader who was not disabled. With each semester, students who had been focused upon their own needs now became uniquely absorbed in the needs of others. For two years in a row, this organization received a national award for community service hours that were greater than any other service group from any of the many campuses at this college. For the majority of these students, changes did appear transformational: there were observable changes in attitudes, personalities, and in life directions. Extensive and continuing involvement in community service was the visible manifestation of these new frames of reference.

Foundations for Types of Transformative Learning Outcomes

The two interventions seemed complimentary. For some students who were drawn to creating, the digital media studio served as an important catalyst. For students drawn to the student organization, their ability to use their strength and energy on behalf of others proved effective for them. Both interventions provided challenges outside of the classroom and usually some form of service for others. Surprisingly, after 10 years of tracking, many of these students have built upon their new frames of reference. A student with a learning disability who was trained as a graphic artist is now working to obtain funding for a documentary on individuals with disabilities. A student who is deaf became a web designer employed by the studio and but also continues to volunteer time to maintain a website for a disability association. Four others (one who is hard-of-hearing, one who is blind, one who has a physical disability, and one who has a learning disability) became employed in the department and are still there serving other students with disabilities. A student with a traumatic brain injury who is a musician continues to devote some time to helping others with disabilities. A former president of the student organization is now the chair of the county’s Commission on Disability Issues and has become a manager in one of the county’s largest disability agencies. The student who was not disabled but became the president of their organization is now completing her masters and volunteers a considerable portion of her time with a disability association.

It is important to note that positive outcomes were not always associated with retention, completion or academic success at college, but with a redirection in life, a commitment to do something for others, particularly others with disabilities, and to improve or change the community in some positive way. Some students did not complete the academic programs that they began, but moved on to new opportunities that seemed to better capture their interests and personal objectives. The four who accepted employment in the department seem to want to stay

connected to the environment that nurtured their own sense of worth and value even though they have completed degrees and are qualified for more advanced positions in other fields.

The Fruits of Transformative Learning for Individuals with Disabilities

There are two important ways in which the outcomes may be described. First, the students were able to find new pathways in their college experience that challenged or ignored barriers rather than just accommodate for them. In the studio experience, many students took on *extra* work and projects that were not always related to their coursework. In numerous cases, the quality of their work resulted in part-time employment in the studio, particularly if their work there directly affected the success or involvement of other students coming into the studio. One participant with a significant physical disability was transported from another county to get more experience with building a database in the studio. He became so proficient, he eventually replaced the department's database manager. The student organization members also demonstrated that they could take on a challenge regardless of the evident barriers or the quality of the accommodations that could be provided at some community locations.

The second important outcome appeared to be the discovery of unknown potential. The fact that these were students enrolled in higher education, suggested that they possessed a considerable degree of potential. However, it was striking to note potential that was unexpected. One example involved the transformation of one student with a learning disability and mental health disorder from a reticent and hesitant individual into an outspoken and dynamic leader of the organization. Another student who had not been particularly successful in his academic program, became the person who led the group to compete with all other student organizations in community service and achieve their goal as top group for two years in a row; his academic performance also improved. Discovering new potential became a common thread. Generally, the organization as a whole found itself taking the lead in volunteering when previously many in the group had been discouraged by their instructors from needing to participate in service-learning. The studio group also found previously unknown potential. A student who was employed in a sheltered workshop became adept at creating and writing about digital comic book characters with disabilities. His work was featured on video screens on campus, he became more successful in his academic program, and was eventually accepted for a position by an AmeriCorps agency. A student with autism whose major was communications found a passion for video editing in the studio and became a top student in film production. A student who was deaf developed exceptional skill as a photographer and also became an on-camera presenter for PSA's in sign language. In some cases, undiscovered potential was less dramatic in terms of undiscovered talents or abilities than resulting qualities or personality changes such as acquiring a commitment to a goal or a passion for a new area of interest, or a new dedication to serve others.

Since student epistemological views were not measured upon entry, it cannot be said with confidence that frames of reference changed as a direct result of the two interventions. In fact, one longitudinal research investigation following students with learning disabilities into adulthood found that a positive outcome trajectory may be established if these individuals have or can acquire certain "success attributes" such as self-awareness, proactivity, perseverance, appropriate goal setting, use of social support systems, and emotional stability (Goldberg, Higgins, Raskind, & Herman, 2003, p. 224). Students with other types of disabilities may also have diverse life experiences depending upon the nature of programs in elementary and secondary schools that may have fostered positive outcomes. Family environments, early language experiences may also be major factors in adult learning and college success.

Nevertheless, the frequency with which shifts in life directions were apparent subsequent to the studio and organization experiences seems to suggest that the interventions contributed to transformative learning in general. Students who were usually guided to these programs were those who were experiencing some kind of difficulty or challenge. Students entered the interventions with one direction in mind and a significant number changed direction in terms of academic programs, career paths, or incorporated service components in their lives. However, these new directions did not always include all the kinds of “success attributes” that might be useful for other positive outcomes. The students in the studio were in a multicultural environment and there were problems with communication issues across language groups. Some students wanted to provide leadership but did not always draw followers. Some competed with other students for time and attention. Nevertheless, these difficulties did not interfere with the very positive outcomes that appeared transformative in nature.

At the Intersection of Transformative Learning and Disability

It is important to recognize that transformative learning may not be that unusual for persons with disabilities. In the aforementioned department, it was not always necessary to have students experience the studio or student organization in order to affect significant changes in thinking and behavior and direction in life. At times, encouraging a student with a disability to take on a new experience or to take advantage of opportunities to test potential seemed to provide an impetus for a new direction. One student who struggled in his academic program was encouraged to take a photography class that was not part of his program. He discovered a passion for this field, and became so skilled that the department created a gallery to feature his work. Quite a few students who were not able to join the student organization were still encouraged to take on community service opportunities, and in quite a few instances this led to employment at the agency using them as volunteers. These changes were not just changes in direction but appeared to be changes in attitudes and actions.

Seeing pathways instead of barriers and discovering unknown potential among other fruitful outcomes is not unusual for many individuals with disabilities. One well-known example is Hugh Herr who was a rock climber caught in a freezing storm and who lost both legs (Osius, 1991). He was told that he would never climb again and was fitted with painful prosthetic devices. He enrolled in a community college to get the knowledge and training necessary to do something about the prosthetic devices. Although he believed he was not good at math and science, he actually discovered in his coursework an exceptional talent and passion for these subjects. He became so accomplished in his studies that he was eventually accepted at MIT and Harvard. He helped to develop the prosthetic devices that allowed him to return to rock climbing. His research has opened up new avenues for many with disabilities. Although his story was dramatic and now well-known through his presentations on TED Talks, engaging barriers as challenges and creating new pathways and discovering hidden potential may be more common than we think among persons with disabilities. For Hugh Herr, as in the case of many others with disabilities, it may be the disability condition itself that triggers transformation. This may be likened to Mezirow’s “disorienting dilemma” described by Taylor (2000a). However, in other cases, there may be a need for additional learning experiences (e.g., the aforementioned interventions) for transformations to occur.

The two interventions described in this paper may offer some useful ideas about transformational learning. As others have suggested, the interventions support the notion that the environment must be supportive for transformative learning to occur, that community service or

service- learning may provide the necessary engagement that fosters critical reflection. However, at the intersection of transformative learning and disability may exist some new information that has a much broader application to those without disabilities: How many of us without disabilities still see barriers? How many of us without disabilities have enormous potential that lies dormant? These questions might be answered with the creation of more challenging and innovative programs or opportunities that test our human potential and ability to see and understand life and daily living in new ways.

The Bi-Directionality of Transformative Learning for Persons with Disabilities and Its Application to Those Without Disabilities

One of the most interesting outcomes of the interventions is perhaps the most positive aspect of transformational learning: a shift from self-focus to the service of others. Since many of the participants are still engaged in service activities many years after their first exposure to the interventions, there seems to be something very good that has been found, valued, and sustained by them. However, for individuals with disabilities in general, transformations may be bi-directional; the stress of dealing with or acquiring a disability may be negatively transformative, causing one to become more focused upon self and one's battle against barriers. Certainly lack of access and confrontation with barriers may be real in some postsecondary environments, but in others access/barriers may be more attitudinal. The better alternative seems to result in minimizing or ignoring barriers and discovering sources of personal strength and abilities previously unknown. More research needs to be done to see how the intersection of transformational learning and disability may result in greater movement in the direction offering the most positive outcomes, not just for persons with disabilities, but for any adult.

This investigation is currently being applied in new ways at another postsecondary institution with students who may not have disabilities but may encounter barriers related to the interplay of learning in first and second languages. Community service opportunities have been developed to foster learning as a process of both acquiring knowledge and utilization of it. Investigation is underway to examine changes in epistemologies, changes in behavior and attitudes, and the discovery of unknown potential.

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“Society Likes to Put People Into Socially Constructed Boxes”: Exploration of the Liminal Space Through Undergraduate Students’ Critical Reflections of Disability

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Abstract: This paper details a study conducted with an undergraduate Disability Studies course to examine the liminal space of understanding and meaning making as students learn disability-related concepts. Disability Studies in Education and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) frameworks were applied to this study. Qualitative methods were used to code reflection assignments assigned throughout the semester. Results uncovered themes related to the process of residing within a liminal space, which included challenging preconceived assumptions, moral obligations, and connections to pedagogical decisions such as in-class discussions and course assignments.

Introduction

The sociocultural frameworks used in the field of Disability Studies (DS) engage issues of ableism, equity, and inclusion. Disability Studies utilizes a social model of disability to determine how disability develops through sociocultural barriers and recognizes ableist realities (Slesaransky-Poe & Garcia, 2014; Dewsbury et al., 2004). Courses in DS ask students to develop a critical lens toward disability. Initial perspectives of medicalized and positivistic ideologies about disability are often challenged in such courses. Instructors are tasked with the development of courses to introduce novel DS concepts to students (Jarman & Kafer, 2014; Vidali, Price, & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2008).

This study seeks to understand how undergraduate students perceive DS concepts when presented throughout a DS course. This research was conducted over two semesters and explored how undergraduate students make sense of disability while completing a course about DS concepts, and the inter-relationship with pedagogical methods utilized by the course instructors. The course intended to challenge students to reconsider disability policies and topics related to employment, healthcare, education, community living, and relationships/sexuality. Disability Studies in Education and Transformative Learning Theory frameworks were applied to this study.

Literature Review

Disability Studies in Education

The field of Disability Studies in Education (DSE) focuses on the sociocultural constructions of disability in educational contexts (Connor, Valle & Hale, 2015). DSE is necessarily ideological to promote an emancipatory paradigm that incorporates and values the lived experiences of people with disabilities (Baglieri et al., 2011). At the postsecondary level, much scholarship has examined teaching DSE concepts at the university-level within teacher education programs (e.g. Pearson et al., 2016; Connor, 2015; Erevelles, 2015; Llavani & Broderick, 2013; Hulgin et al., 2011, Baglieri, 2008).

Several studies discussed how students change their perspectives of disability. Several studies discussed how students change their perspectives of disability. Connor (2015) discussed pedagogical methods in an inclusion course framed by DS/DSE theory, which led to students

experiencing shifts in their perceptions of disability. In a study with higher education administrators Erevelles (2015) “argue[s] that disability studies can radically intervene in higher educational contexts.” (p.173) Reflection has been used as a mechanism for teacher education candidates to make meaning of disability and inclusive schooling concepts (Baglieri, 2008). The incorporation of DSE concepts in higher education contexts has potential to result in a transformative effect on how students view aspects of disability (Pearson et al., 2016).

Transformative Learning and Critical Reflection

Transformative learning theory as developed by Mezirow (1990, 1991) inquires and examines how adult learners undergo changes in ideological perspectives. Critical reflection assists learners with making changes to their meaning schema and can even assist in triggering a transformation (Mezirow, 1990). Mezirow (1990) stated “Transformative learning involves a particular function of reflection: reassessing the presuppositions on which our beliefs are based and acting on insights derived from the transformed meaning perspective that results from such reassessments.” (p. 18). As such, critical reflection is connected to challenging preconceived assumptions one learns in formal and informal outlets. The critical nature of such reflection is also connected to postmodern understanding of power relationships within the social and political realms (Kreber, 2012; Brookfield, 2005), which are salient areas to consider when framing disability within a sociopolitical DS framework.

Mezirow (1990) stated “Reflection enables us to correct distortions in our beliefs and errors in problem solving. Critical reflection involves a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built.” (p.1). A student embarking on a transformation may have uncertainty in their transitioning thought processes. Critical reflection assists with the development of such changes and the struggle to understand new perceptions. Critical self-reflection requires the awareness and upheaval of preconceived assumptions, which may end a personal transformation on one’s worldview (Mezirow, 1998). A burgeoning ideological transformation, or the liminal space, could be better understood through analysis of critical reflections (Snyder, 2008).

The Liminal Space

Malkki (2010) discussed the mechanisms of reflection, determining it is a holistic process incorporating social, biological, and emotional components. The “comfort zone” and “edge emotions” are aspects contributing to the process of reflection. As individuals embark on changing their meaning perspective, their reflections are multi-dimensional (Malkki, 2010). When faced with new ideology individuals reflect upon their prior assumptions of their worldview and reside within a liminal space while making sense of the new meanings (Berger, 2004).

In her study of teacher educators, Berger (2004) discussed the concept of students being on “the edge of knowing”: “I began to think about the kind of reflection that seeks to create new forms of thinking, new discoveries—reflection that takes us to the edge of our meaning. It is this kind of reflection that we believe has the most power to be transformative—to move outside the form of current understanding and into a new place.” (p 338). Bailey, Stribling, and McGowan (2014) concluding “teachers look more critically at their identity; refresh their awareness of how knowledge is created, maintained; and passed on, and absorb ideas around discomfort” (p. 261) while they are within the liminal space. The current study similarly seeks to acknowledge and further explore the experience of the liminal space through analysis of undergraduate student’s reflections about DS concepts.

Research Questions

Two research questions were developed for this study: 1) How do undergraduate students make sense of and understand disability while completing a DS course? 2) What pedagogical decisions made by the course instructors seem to promote undergraduate students' development of new understandings of disability?

Methods

This research applied a qualitative case study analysis of a DS course offered at a public mid-Atlantic university. As a researcher, I observed two semesters of the course in the Spring and Fall of 2015. The course consisted of weekly guest lecturers and division of the class into four discussion sections that met at separate times. I observed the weekly guest lecture and two of the discussion sections. All instructors were included in the research team as peer debriefers. This study underwent Institutional Review Board approval. 131 junior and senior students from various majors around the university (e.g. teacher education, health science, cognitive science, exercise science, etc.) were enrolled during the two semesters studied. Students provided consent for analysis of their work samples and in-class discussions.

Data Collection

Narrative assignments. Reflection assignments were submitted on a weekly basis, with a total of 13 reflections completed per student. Reading Reflections asked each student to respond to one of four questions pertaining to that week's reading assignment. The questions were designed to prompt students to synthesize ideas across the assigned readings and course themes. Learning Reflections asked the students to write a brief reflection during the final 15 minutes of about every other discussion section. This reflection corresponded with the conclusion of a course theme.

Observations. I completed participant observations of course lectures and in-class discussions documented with descriptive field notes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of the reflection assignments began during the first semester using an *a priori* coding scheme based on common concepts from DS literature. Following the conclusion of the courses, the open coding process was completed with line-by-line axial coding in order to determine broad categories (Creswell, 2012).

Results

The results reveal students had myriad understandings of disability. Themes relating to the research questions revealed how students process reflecting on disability through their own assumptions and realizations and their moral beliefs about disability. The students often commented on the in-class discussions and the guest lectures, along with reacting to assigned readings. Preconceived notions of disability were often challenged and sorted out in these reflection assignments.

The process of reflection

The themes pertaining to the first question included: unearthing realizations, identifying problems and solutions, and development of solutions in connection to moral obligation.

Realizations. The students reflected on aspects of disability by coming to new realizations about their preconceived notions. Mindy stated her insights about society and her new assumptions:

...there are many underlying social values that I have noticed. First, society likes to put people into socially constructed boxes. These boxes relate to one's gender, sexual preference, etc. By placing people into these socially constructed boxes, society is easily able to understand how others should act. When someone does not fit into these social constructs, society pushes against their thoughts.

Emotional responses to new realizations were one way to better understand the concept. Fiona's emotions about accommodations is stated:

It is baffling that people who are blind may not have access to braille or large print, depending on their needs, or that some locations are not wheel chair accessible which is also illegal anyway...I was shocked to read that studies have shown "much lower rates of screening mammography and Pap tests among women with disabilities than among those without," (Iezzoni, 2011, 1950-1951). How is this still going on? This has to be considered malpractice and illegal!

Monica, a special education major, stated her disagreement with the information presented in the course readings:

I have a lot of experience with special education. I love special education and it is a passion of mine. I really questioned some of the things the authors wrote in their articles. I disagree with one of the ideas presented in the article...I do not believe that LRE is the general education classroom for all students...The whole idea of special education is individualized goals and instruction to meet each student's needs. Just because a student is in special education, does not mean they will all have the same LRE.

Ariel, an exercise science major, agreed with the content and outlined her conclusions about disability education policy:

I agree that the term "appropriate" here can lead to segregation in an unfair way for a child with disabilities. Something that is appropriate changes from situation to situation and from thing to thing. The problem is who is defining the appropriateness of the environment is the IEP team professionals. Parents have to fight and work with the IEP team to try and get their child what is actually appropriate for them... IDEA does segregate students into different classroom types depending on the severity of their disability. This means that the Brown decision that separate is not equal has been negated. I don't believe that this was the intention but IDEA needs to be redefined to provide a more inclusive education for children.

Problems and solutions connected to morality. The students discussed the problems and a corresponding solution to issues related to disability. These solutions were viewed as a moral obligation to society as issues related to stigma and unfair disadvantages. The moral imperative of inclusion and providing accommodations to people with disabilities was evident in the student responses.

Diana provided a rich discussion about disability stigma and the intersection with minority populations:

Taking the step to get rid of stigmas is similar to the step taken to better the healthcare for people in general with disabilities. In both situations, stigmas must be taken away in order to ensure that the minority group, whether it be race or someone with a disability, gets the same necessary care that others get. On the other hand, it also differs, because the stigmas that need to be taken away are different. In reference to healthcare for minorities with disabilities, the stigma that must be

stopped is that minorities do not need as good of care, or that they do not deserve as good of care as the white population.

Within an educational context, Christy commented on how students need to be included in general education: “Every child learns and acts differently, and having a diagnosis of a disability should not change whether or not they can be in normal class setting.”

Pedagogical references

In their reflection assignments the students commented on pedagogical methods used in the course (e.g. in-class discussions, guest lecturers, and assigned readings). And used those methods to further their understanding of disability.

Andrea remarked on the in-class discussion, “In our class discussion today, we discussed a lot about how SSI and SSDI both do not inspire workers to reach their full potential.” Terry referenced a short video watched in class:

And what surprises me the most about the issues with transportation is the fact that they keep occurring. The woman in the video claimed that there have been thousands and thousands of complaints regarding that specific transportation system, and nothing has been done to improve it.

Christy used several methods to promote her perspective of special education policies:

Based on all of our readings, presentations, and discussion I think one way in which discrimination manifests in special education policies or practices is by race. I saw this a lot in the one reading that talked about disproportionality in special education. It discussed how it is typically seen that African American students are more often placed in restrictive environments, which isn't always their least restrictive environment, where they deserve to be. We also talked a lot about race in discussion today in terms of seclusion and restraints. It was discussed how it may be more typical for people of a minority race or lower socio-economical background to be put in restraints, most of the time, undeserved.

Discussion

In processing their reflections of disability, students came to new understandings of how disability is perceived in today's society and sought to better understand this new viewpoint. As students came to these understandings emotion was evident in their writing. Malkki notes the myriad dimensions to reflection including emotional, social, and cognitive (Malkki, 2010). According to Dirkx (2001) emotion can be a tool to assist with better understanding of one's world and contribute to one's ideological transformation. Mezirow (2012) determined that emotion is a necessary aspect to transformation. The students were concerned they had not been privy to the alternative views of disability that were presented in the course. While unearthing their realizations the students embodied many emotions including: shock, frustration, agreement, and sadness.

The moral/ethical understanding of prior and novel assumptions is one component to critical reflection (Mezirow, 1998). The ethical inclination toward understanding disability has been explored in higher education settings, with the students purposefully deconstructing their ethical perspectives of disability (Erevelles, 2015). In their reflections the students described their moral concerns and connections to common assumptions about the disability experience. Students demonstrated a strong sense of morality when discussing which services, supports and/or accommodations should be in place for disabled people to thrive. The moral imperative of inclusion and accommodations to people with

disabilities was evident in the reflections. Through situating within the context of a problem with a corresponding solution students made sense of their new assumptions.

Pedagogical mechanisms promoted working through uncertainty. The course reading assignments served as a springboard for further processing of DS concepts, with students offering their personal insights in response to the readings. The students' experiences at the liminal space were marked by their conscious struggle to understand the new information presented to them in the course, and were guided though with thoughtful narrative reflection and in-class discussions.

Conclusion

The results from this study can assist faculty with development of transformative methods in DS courses and provide further nuance to the understanding of pedagogical methods. Also, Snyder (2008) called for further exploration of the liminal space. This study serves to continue to illustrate the process of critical reflection within this area.

For many of the students in this course the DS orientation of the concepts presented them with a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991). As suggested by Snyder (2008) this study sought to identify how the students reflected and worked through their experience on "the growing edge" (Berger, 2004). The themes developed from the deep analysis of students' reflections sought to provide a snapshot of the experience of residing within the liminal space of transformation.

This study did not seek to determine if a student had transformed their meaning perspective. Rather, the purpose of this study was to serve as an observation of the liminal space. The students' emotional reactions and relationship to their moral consciousness suggests their struggle with new assumptions about disability. An environment that promoted queries and concerns with preconceived notions about disability supported the students while working within "the edge of knowing", as described by Berger (2004). Berger (2004) provided recommendations to facilitators working with students in a liminal space by: "1. helping students find and recognize the edge, 2. being good company at the edge, and 3. helping to build firm ground in a new place." (p. 346). Critical narrative reflection combined with discussions assisted those residing in the liminal space of awareness of new assumptions and incorporating them into their preconceived worldview.

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Internet Political Memes and Transformative Learning: A Conceptual Approach

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Abstract: This paper examines Internet Political Memes as a form of public political discourse, with potential for fostering transformative learning. The concept of meme is explained, criteria are identified, and memes are interrogated to consider their potential.

Introduction

Social media sites are a burgeoning virtual “town square [. . . an] intersection where people come together for commerce, debate, worship, governance, entertainment, socializing, protest, and more” (“Engaging at the Intersections”, para 4). Recent Pew Research Center studies illustrate the growing use of social media by adults. Consistently 60% of American adults now use some form of social media, as do 89% of adults between ages 18-29; 36% of users rely upon social media to stay informed about political news, and 38% of users like, post, share or promote political material online. Political memes are one form of such material on social media sites like Facebook (FB), and are particularly popular with politically-oriented organizations like Occupy Democrats (OD) (occupydemocrats.com) who have a strong presence on Facebook—2,197,449 people like or follow the page and receive multiple posts from the group every day, as of 2/1/16; as of 7/22/16, that number is 3, 373, 404. When this paper is presented on the eve of the 2016 presidential election, those numbers will be updated again.

For now, let us treat the above as identifying a “who,” a “what,” and a “where,” as per Mezirow (2000): Individual adults communicating with memes on social media sites like FB, through a politically motivated host site of production and distribution in OD. In the sections that follow, we will briefly clarify what we mean by “Internet Political Memes” (IPM), identify criteria for critique, and then interrogate some political memes to discover how we can employ them to help foster transformative experiences. That is the purpose of this conceptual paper.

What are Internet Memes?

What are memes? The term meme originated with Richard Dawkins’ coinage, in 1979, with *The Selfish Gene*. Most commonly, it is an artifact of culture that is transmitted from person to person. The concept of the Internet meme is one more scholars have begun to examine, as it possesses certain qualities that make it unique. For example, studies have examined definition and characteristics of memes (Diaz, 2013), cognitive features (Bacalu, 2014), and physical features (Brideua & Berret, 2014); memes as visual argument (Hahner, 2013), visual rhetoric (Jenkins, 2014), vernacular discursive practice (Peck, 2014), information dissemination tools (Sagun, 2013), neutralizers of political dissent (Hristova, 2014), possessing a cultural logic (Shifman, 2014), and contributing to a collective consciousness (Brkich & Barko, 2013). Studies have examined social media and memes regarding specific events, including the Occupy movement (Huismans, 2014; Levinson, 2012).

For our purposes, Diaz (2013) provides a comprehensive and inclusive definition of Internet memes, drawn from other disciplines, including communication studies. That the following selection is a just a piece of the definition should imply the complexity of the IM, but also describe enough for us to understand:

An Internet meme is a unit of information (idea, concept or belief) which replicates by passing on via Internet (e-mail, chat, forum, social networks, etc.) in the shape of a hyper-link, video, image, or phrase. [. . .] An IM depends on both a carrier and a social context where the transporter acts as a filter and decides what can be passed on. It spreads horizontally as a virus at a fast and accelerating speed. (p.96)

Davison (2012) suggests three ways of looking at memes: the *Ideal* (intent) determines the *Behavior* (creation, production, distribution), at which point the meme becomes a *Manifestation*, something with attributes that can be communicated meaningfully to others (p. 123). Shifman (2014) provides three more terms to help us understand: *Content*, “ideas and ideologies;” *Form*, “physical incarnation;” and *Stance*, the position with which one engages with the multiple parts of the text (p. 40).

Many of the memes created and distributed are meant to be silly or humorous, trivial even; they are not our concern in this study. Jenkins, Green, & Ford (2013) explore why people choose to share and choose to not share such material on social media platforms, and contend that these are, in fact, deliberate actions, as opposed to the prevailing idea of memes as “viral” and spreading uncontrollably; there is, rather, intent behind the creation and distribution of online material, such as memes, all kinds of memes.

What are Internet Political Memes?

We are interested in those memes that are deliberate efforts to influence people to political action. Shifman (2014) provides three descriptions of the roles played by IPM: Memes as forms of persuasion or political advocacy; Memes as grassroots action; Memes as modes of expression and public discussion (pp. 122-3). “Shifman also suggests that in reality, these functions are intertwined: *political memes are often used as amalgamation of all three* [italics in original]” (p. 136). So, we have units of information in deliberately created Manifestations that are deliberately distributed on social sites like FB, with the intent of persuading or advocating, encouraging action, or contributing to public discussion. Let’s look at three, each from a different site, and construct a possible model of interrogation, applying the terms discussed thus far.

Figure 1, *Forms and Manifestations of Internet Political Memes: Interrogation 1*, is an example of a potential exercise of interrogation practices. It presents three examples of commonly and widely disseminated memes, along with a series of queries drawn from our terminology. Each of these units of information (Diaz), was produced from an *Ideal*, to use Davison’s (2013) term; there is intent behind each of these memes. Following Shifman’s (2014) idea of *Stance*, each meme suggests a particular position on a particular issue, the evidence of which is found in the *Content*, again using Shifman’s terminology. I would suggest that we take stances with these texts when we engage with them, whether we engage with them routinely or incidentally. The purpose behind this exercise is to (a) become familiar with IPMs, and (b) become more aware of how we engage with and respond to IPMs. Following this preliminary exercise, we migrate to an interrogation based in a desire to foster transformative learning.

Internet Political Memes and Transformative Learning

The substance of this line of interrogation is drawn primarily from two articles: Mezirow (2000), *Learning to Think Like an Adult*, and Brookfield (2000), *Transformative Learning as Ideology Critique*. We will address each, in turn. Mezirow informs us that

Understanding in communicative learning requires that we assess the meanings behind the words; the coherence, truth, and appropriateness of what is being

communicated; the truthfulness and qualifications of the speaker; and the authenticity of expressions of feeling. That is, we must become critically reflective of the *assumptions* of the person communicating. [. . .] The meaning of the words the stranger uses depends on his or her assumptions. (p. 9)

We began this process in the exercise of Figure 1. We now shift our attention to Figure 2: *Forms and Manifestations of Internet Political Memes: Mezirow Interrogation*. Notice that we are using the same memes from Fig. 1, with the purpose of expanding and refining our critique. The first question draws upon the answers from our first set of questions, but also from Mezirow: “Assumptions include intent; sometimes implied as a subtext; what is taken for granted” (p. 9). Ideally, performing the interrogation in Fig. 1 provides sets of assumptions for us to consider. How are we going to consider them in a more deliberately transformative way?

Mezirow also distinguishes between objective and subject reframing, both of which can lead to transformative learning (p. 23). If we consider the memes as narratives of their context, then when we critically reflect “on the assumptions of others encountered” in this exchange, are we practicing objective reframing? Do our assumptions of the other change as we consider the information provided, how it is being delivered, who is providing it, and for what purposes? Mezirow indicates that the process of “subjective reframing involves critical self-reflection of one’s own assumptions about [. . .] a narrative—applying a reflective insight from someone else’s narrative to one’s own experience” (p. 23). I submit that IPMs do function as narratives within the environment in which they circulate, or rather more like a PowerPoint slide highlighting what the relevant and compelling aspects of the narrative are, to the producer and distributor that make it worth sharing. As such, they provide assumptions for us to reflect upon, and for us to reflect upon our stances in regards to those assumptions, to use Shifman’s (2004) meaning, opportunities to practice both objective and subjective reframing.

The third line of IPM interrogation intended to foster transformative learning is critical interrogation. While I suggest that each of these exercises constitutes critical inquiry, I do so in broad terms. These exercises are similar to exercises I have employed in humanities-level critical thinking and reading classes for general education students, so they have emerged from a practice of an inclusive meaning of “critical.” Brookfield (2000) contends that this is not the “critical” of the Frankfurt School, nor is it necessarily indicative of transformative quality. He explains:

For something to count as an example of critical learning, critical analysis, or critical reflection, I believe that the persons concerned must engage in some sort of power analysis of the situation or context in which the learning is happening. They must also try to identify assumptions they hold dear that are actually destroying their sense of well-being and serving the interests of others: that is, hegemonic assumptions. (p. 126)

The questions in Figure 3 attempt a beginning of this sort of inquiry. We begin questioning criteria of judgment (Brookfield, p. 127), legitimizing of power (p. 129), and how ideologies might be influencing our actions (p. 129).

Shifman (2014) suggests that included in the content of a meme is the ideas and ideology of the producer behind it. Brookfield defines ideology as “sets of values, beliefs, myths, explanations, and justifications that appear self-evidently true and morally desirable” (p. 129). Figure 4 provides an opportunity to examine how dominant ideology might function within a conversation, perhaps a discourse, of memes, and thus an opportunity to practice identifying taken-for-granted elements influencing us.

WHEN TRUMP SAYS HE WANTS TO "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN"
HE MEANS HE WANTS TO TAKE AMERICA BACK TO A TIME WHEN WOMEN STAYED IN THE KITCHEN, WHEN BLACKS, MEXICANS AND ASIANS KNEW THEIR PLACE, AND GAY AMERICANS STAYED IN THE CLOSET.

SAID "YOU DON'T NEED AN ID TO VOTE BECAUSE IT'S A RIGHT"
SO WHY DO WE NEED TO SHOW AN ID TO BUY A GUN??

HATES RACIAL STEREOTYPES
THINKS ALL WHITE, SOUTHERN REPUBLICANS ARE RACIST

How would you describe the ideal that inspired the manifestation of each? That is, what is the intent behind these? (Davison, 2012, p. 96)

Why would you want to share these memes? Why would you not? With whom?

What is being communicated?

What are the ideas, concepts, and beliefs manifested in each meme? (Diaz, 2013, p. 96)

Do these memes function as forms of persuasion or political advocacy? As grassroots action? As modes of expression and public discussion? Or as an amalgamation of the three? (Shifman, 2014, pp. 122-3, 136)

Based on the content in these forms, how would you describe the stances of the creators? Describe your stances to these and their creators? (Shifman, 2014, p. 40)

What is your emotional response to each of these?

Figure 1. Forms and Manifestations of Internet Political Memes: Exercise 1

WHEN TRUMP SAYS HE WANTS TO "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN"
HE MEANS HE WANTS TO TAKE AMERICA BACK TO A TIME WHEN WOMEN STAYED IN THE KITCHEN, WHEN BLACKS, MEXICANS AND ASIANS KNEW THEIR PLACE, AND GAY AMERICANS STAYED IN THE CLOSET.

SAID "YOU DON'T NEED AN ID TO VOTE BECAUSE IT'S A RIGHT"
SO WHY DO WE NEED TO SHOW AN ID TO BUY A GUN??

HATES RACIAL STEREOTYPES
THINKS ALL WHITE, SOUTHERN REPUBLICANS ARE RACIST

Based on your answers to the questions in Fig. 1, describe the assumptions of the those who created and distributed these memes?

How do the words and images of these memes influence your assessment of their intent?

Why does what is communicated matter?

Who is providing the diagnosis? Is the one giving direction authorized to do so?

Are these strangers on our bus just passing time? Trying to sell us something? Proselytizing? Trying to pick us up? (Mezirow, p. 9)

Which parts of this analysis are objective reframing? Which parts are subjective reframing? (Mezirow, p. 23)

How can we practice "critical self-reflection of our own assumptions" about these as Narrative? A system? Feelings and interpersonal relations? The ways we learn? (Mezirow, p. 23)

How might these relate to Mezirow's (2000) list of ten phases of meaning becoming clarified? (p. 22)

Figure 2. Forms and Manifestations of Internet Political Memes: Mezirow Interrogation



Figure 3. Forms and Manifestations of Internet Political Memes: Brookfield Interrogation



Figure 3. Forms and Manifestations of Internet Political Memes: Critical

Conclusion

When I began this research, I was angry with what I perceived as a low quality of discourse for issues that, in my mind, deserved better than oversimplify arguments to a single "relevant" point of contention, a single "correct" interpretation, and a single "rational" course of action, akin to propaganda. These memes construct a black and white discourse in which there seem but two sides—"left, liberal, Democrats" and "right, conservative, Republicans"—in which

right and wrong are easily identified and clearly labeled, indicative of conditions Tannen (1999) examines in *The Argument Culture*. And the discourse is not effective.

And yet, as political texts consumed in the social and public spheres, they offer us, as researchers and as educators, the opportunity to interrogate in different ways. In identifying key elements of Internet Political Memes, we open the door to practices of objective and subjective reframing, along with the potential for developing a practice of ideology critique. More memes will be interrogated during the presentation.

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Intersections Between Law and Education for Transformative Learning Based on Cultural Contamination

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Abstract: In mafia families, children are educated in violence, revenge, and gender stereotypes. Recent judgments of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria, have mandated the revocation of parental responsibility in all cases in which serious injury to the child is proven. These limitations to parental rights have the principal purpose of allowing institutions to stop this system of behavior and giving these guys a good alternative cultural. So cultural contamination and knowledge of another context become the transformative learning places. According to many studies cognition is a biological phenomenon, therefore the experience of cultural contamination affects the cognitive ability of these guys, transforming it. The removals experience makes learning and can change the minds of these young people and be the instrument to save them from a final criminal structuring.

I. Introduction

Assuming that the objective of education is the emancipation of the subject in formation, this research addresses the problem of compatibility between the educational models popular among families belonging to the mafia and educational models seeking to create free, emancipated, and autonomous persons. Bauman (1999) argues that center of the current crisis of the political process is not so much the absence of values or the confusion generated by their plurality as it is the absence of an institution powerful enough to produce legitimate representatives, to promote and strengthen any set of values, or to implement any range of consistent and cohesive options.

Man acquires morality from the environment in which it grows, but the true evolution of morality can be accomplished only through the critical skills learned during the complex phenomenon of training. In other words, only if one learns to be critical can one participate in the common good. Spadafora (2010) illustrated this point as follows: 'Democracy, before being political technique to modify and adapt to social and economic changes, it is basically a way of life that only a critical pedagogy can favor.' However, if families educate their children using values opposite those of democracy, legality, solidarity and the common good, how do you guarantee children the right to education and the right to become informed citizens who are integrated into their social context?

During my research on this subject, I examined the recent judgments of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria, Southern Italy, where a judge is pioneering a program to help children of mafia families escape from a life of crime by taking them away from their parents at the first sign of trouble. The objective of these judges is to allow children who are growing up in similar contexts to learn about other realities in order to undermine the educational models inherited from their families of origin.

By applying the educational theories of Piero Bertolini (1965) and Jack Mezirow (1991, 1995), I believe it is possible to deconstruct deviating training models through experience. Training models should be aimed at the rehabilitation of persons who, for whatever reason, have

introjected internal dysfunctional models and are incapable of developing appropriate relationships with others or society in general; such models need to begin with the epistemological foundation of the rehabilitation pedagogy. This is the case of the work of two great academics of the phenomenon of experiential learning who have worked to implement this transformative movement: Bertolini (1965) in Italy and Mezirow (1991, 1995) in the United States. Both researchers have claimed that every experience that crosses a human being's path causes more or less significant change.

For this reason, is very important to begin with the epistemological foundation of the rehabilitation pedagogy to build the most appropriate educational interventions for children removed from the 'Ndrangheta families by order of the juvenile courts. Such a foundation can only be traced through the intersection of the perspectives of Bertolini (1965) and Mezirow (1991, 1995): Experience underlies learning, and it is capable of inducing deconstructions and new constructions of the self and encouraging the processes of transformation that facilitate the departure of children belonging to mafia families from their contexts of origin.

If we accept the theory that cognition is a biological phenomenon (Bateson, 1973, 1980; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999), we can also assume that cognition "is not a representation of an independently existing world, but rather a continual bringing forth of a world through the process of living" (Capra, 2002, p. 36). This implies that any study of the mind and consciousness needs to incorporate the whole body experience in its field of investigation.

It follows that 'transformative learning' "as any irreversible (emergent) process of sufficiently deep creative change in the mental structure and consciousness of any living system" (Amend & Benne 2012). So, transformative learning is an evolutionary process, "an on-going process of creative emergence through which we become who we are: whole and connected to everything that is" (Amend & Benne 2012).

II. Context and Research Question

In mafia families, children are educated in the violence, revenge, and gender stereotypes that underpin the real strength of the clans, which are organized by families to control entire territories through intimidation and oppression. Clans are based on blood ties and on strongly hierarchical and patriarchal family models: Men have the power to make any decision concerning their wives and children, and women have the task of handing down this familiar pattern. The bond of blood is the real core of the mafia, since clans close themselves within their household, leaving out the outside world and its rules.

The strength of blood ties makes it particularly hard for security forces to penetrate clans. While the Sicilian mafia has been undermined by the so-called "Pentiti," who have collaborated with the police and informed on their fellow criminals, the 'Ndrangheta has not. In the case of the 'Ndrangheta, no one helps the police because the mafia is structured on the strength of ties among families, who transmit their codes from one generation to the next.

However, children who grow up in such contexts are entitled, like all children, to be educated about the principles of legality, solidarity, human dignity, and alternative standpoints. Italian regulations, including Civil Code Art. 315 bis and the international conventions to protect children (including the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was signed in New York on November 20, 1989) recognize children's right to education.

Thus, the research question of this study is: How can we ensure the right to education of mafia children? One possible answer could be the path chosen by the judges of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria, who mandated that, in cases that could be considered parental abuse of

children among mafia families, the children can be taken away. The purpose of removal is to allow these children to meet new realities and so develop a critical capacity towards a lifestyle diverted.

At this stage, in my opinion, it can be applied the Jack Mezirow's theory on transformative learning. Although the experiences of transformation are not necessarily easy or joyful, can still allow the subject to develop high capacities coping.

The transformation due to removal can be also useful to understand the thinking on trauma, with its effects and learning potential. In this sense Levine (1997; 2010), observing the trauma from the somatic point of view, both as a biological event that as psychological event, shows that the brain is an entity stratified and, as such, capable of continuously renegotiate the meanings of the experience.

For these reasons I consider essential the experience of removal from mafia families, just to allow these guys to try to renegotiate the meanings of reality, otherwise difficult to change.

The methodological approach used to pursue this question is the case study and review of recent judgments of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria, Southern Italy, where Judge Roberto Di Bella is pioneering a program to help children who belong to mafia families escape a life of crime by taking them away from their parents at the first sign of trouble. To develop a comprehensive answer, I examined these judgments and the relevant psychological (e.g. Bruner 1986), pedagogical (Bertolini 1965; Mezirow 1991, 1995), and sociological (Bandura 2000) literature.

Judge Di Bella's approach stems from the need to find a way to break the mafia cycle, which transmits negative cultural values from father to son. The region of focus, Reggio Calabria, is the heartland of one of the country's most terrible mafia groups: a criminal network known as the 'Ndrangheta, which is also the largest cocaine smuggling group in Europe. The sentences arise from an analysis of statistical data conducted by the judges of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria, which, in the last twenty years, has treated over one hundred prosecutions of mafia-associated crimes and more than fifty cases of murders and attempted murders committed by children, many of whom were subjected to harsh prison terms, were killed during family feuds, or have assumed leadership of the 'Ndrangheta.

The judgments are novel for two reasons. First, they are the first to use pedagogical criteria in developing judicial decisions aimed at showing mafia children a world different from the one in which they grew up. Second, they draw parallels between classic assumptions of child abuse (e.g. beatings, psychological and physical violence) and cases in which children are exposed to violence, expected to follow the strict rules of the family, educated in killing and revenge (if they are males), or taught to perform the duties of wives and mothers (if they are females).

Education is seen as the only possibility of deconstructing these children's deviant educational models, and the law may be the only way to support this principle and the value of the educational function. This is particularly true if we reflect on the danger of the transmission of negative cultural values from one generation to another, following gender stereotypes useful to the consolidation of a criminal force.

The family's critical role in consolidating the strength of the 'Ndrangheta is demonstrated by the group's practice of arranging marriages among individuals from different clans in order to strengthen relations among mafia families. Marriages, in fact, have a high symbolic value and are infused with the idea of the family as a nucleus impenetrable from the outside. For this reason, marriages have been repeatedly used to sanction the end of a feud. The 'Ndrangheta

began as a structured organization of families, each of which had full power and control over the territory in which it operated. These families confidently managed both licit and illicit monopoly activities.

In my research, I highlighted the danger that exists for children who grow up in ‘Ndrangheta families, which stems from the unwritten codes through which these families transmit negative values to their children. Because of these codes and values, the sons of mafia bosses, particularly the first-born sons, are predestined to follow in their fathers’ footsteps. Similarly, daughters are sometimes compelled to marry the sons of other bosses, thus binding separate clans together through blood relations.

The removal from similar contexts, followed by the personalized educational project, thus allowing these guys to confront a reality that otherwise would never have known, considered the close family environment from which they come.

III. Methodology

The methodology used in this research was a case or document analysis, conducted using the judgements of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria. From a scientific point of view, these judgments can be framed as documents. A document analysis is a valid method of investigation in empirical research, especially when it is integrated with other methods (Gibson & Brown 2009 p. 65). However, since there is no consensus on what can be considered a document (Flick 2014 p. 377), it is important to specify. Here, a document refers to:

...information material on a particular social phenomenon that exists independently of the researcher. It therefore is produced by individuals or institutions for purposes other than those of social research: this however you can use it to take possession of their knowledge purposes. (Corbetta 1999: 437)

One of the main benefits of document analysis is that it avoids potential problems related to the relational dimensions of other research methods (e.g., in cases of interviewers and interviewees: the interviewee looking for approval, the interviewer exerting influence, etc.). At the same time, however, in a document analysis, the researcher is unable to explore beyond what is written (Corbetta 1999). For this reason, it may be useful to combine document analysis with other types of investigation.

I chose to examine the Italian legislation on the right to education, as expressly expressed in Article 315 bis of the Civil Code, and the international law recognizing the same right (i.e., the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was signed in New York on November 20, 1989). The studied judgments pertain to the principles of the right to education in both Italian and international law.

I also chose to cross-examine the given documents (i.e., the judgments), which show the dysfunction of family relationships in mafia families, with the historical foundations of so-called amoral familism. The origins of the familistic culture reside in the history of Southern Italy in general and, in particular, in the history of Calabria. The latter was a land of conquest dominated by foreign powers. In Calabria, this conquest by foreign powers produced different reactions; however, too often, conquered populations shared an atavistic resignation, which is an unconditional surrender to the ruler in power. As a result of this history of conquest by foreign powers, the Calabrian region lacks the prerequisites for the construction of a culture of the State, especially as expressed through an ethos of shared values and justice for all. One symptom of this situation is the fact that a significant proportion of Calabrian families pay ‘protection money’ to the ‘Ndrangheta, but do not pay taxes to the State.

Editors' Note: This paper has been edited for length. The full paper can be found online in the All Academic searchable program.

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Rights-based Transformative Learning in the Intersection of Various Forces in Rural Cambodia

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Abstract: From the perspective of transformative learning (TL), this study explores how the rights-based approach (RBA) by a Cambodian NGO has influenced rural citizens' agency in fulfilling their rights to development in the intersection of various forces such as decentralization, the authoritarian and hierarchical social structures, and resource scarcity. I employed critical realism to situate TL as people's reflexivity against such forces of the social in relation to claiming their rights from local government. In line with this critical realist ontology and hence to investigate both people's perceptions and social structures, I utilized a grounded theory ethnographic study inspired by critical realism. As there is a lack of TL research that addresses the interplay between structural forces (the social) and perspective transformation (the personal) in a rigorous and accentuated manner, this study, which is based on critical realism ontology and epistemology, contributes to filling such a gap. This study reveals that rural Cambodians, who face various structural forces, can incrementally go through TL through rights-based empowerment. In order for this to occur, a number of enabling factors—such as a collaborative relationship with local government under decentralization, material and economic betterment, the creation of community-based organizations, and efficacious human rights education, as well as high caliber staff who can facilitate all these interventions—are required. This casts a doubt as to how replicable is the kind of TL which this well-funded NGO facilitates through its 'Rolls-Royce' RBA under the rather favorable context of decentralization reforms, for other resource-scarce NGOs and more challenging political and policy contexts.

Introduction

From the perspective of transformative learning (TL), this study explores how the rights-based approach (RBA) by a Cambodian NGO has influenced rural citizens' agency in fulfilling their rights to development. In order for such rights to be fulfilled, RBA aims at empowering rights-holders (that is, normally citizens) to claim their rights from duty-bearers (in many cases, governments), while it aims at supporting and lobbying duty-bearers to be more accountable to such demands from rights-holders. For rights-holders, RBA essentially aims at transforming their perspectives on claiming their rights from duty-bearers, namely, through TL.

The study was conducted in the *intersectional context* where there have been decentralization reforms, the authoritarian and hierarchical social structures, the legacy of conflicts such as passivity and shattered human relationships, the fatalistic Buddhist notion of *karma*, the dearth of education, and the scarcity of resources. In the arena of TL, there is a lack of research that addresses the interplay between such forces of the social and the personal and hence a more accentuated and rigorous engagement between the social and the personal in empirical research is called for (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). In particular, among the small amount of research on TL in non-western contexts, there is even less research that analyzes cultural

influences on TL (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). In addition, Mezirow (2000) suggests a variety of preconditions—such as safety, economic security and emotional intelligence—for TL to occur, which at least some people in developed countries can afford. In contrast, poverty-stricken and post-conflict Cambodians face daily a variety of socio-political and material-economic impediments (rather than preconditions), which seem to make TL unaffordable for them. Therefore, this study also inquires as to how political, economic, social, cultural and material contexts have influenced people’s learning in their move towards fulfilling their rights.

Transformative Learning and Critical Realism

The TL theory has been critiqued for demanding the preconditions in which TL is likely to occur. Mezirow (2000) sets a rather high standard for such preconditions, particularly for participation in reflective discourse, including “elements of maturity, education, safety, health, economic security, and emotional intelligence. Hungry, homeless, desperate, threatened, sick, or frightened adults are less likely to be able to participate effectively in discourse” (pp. 15-16).

Mezirow (2003) explains that age and education matter for critical reflection, and Merriam (2004), through reviewing empirical research, identifies TL, in particular critical reflection and reflective discourse, as being likely to require a certain cognitive maturity, which can be developed by education and through age progression.

Partly against this kind of determinist view of agency supposed to exist in TL on the one hand and partly against the agential and reflexive view of agency paradoxically also implied in TL—as the strong word ‘transformative’ indicates—on the other, I situate TL within the more moderate critical realist perspective. Critical realists argue that there exist definite structures or generative mechanisms in the world, as Mezirow himself uses such words as “safety,” “economic security,” “hungry” and “homeless” above. Such structures influence the reflexivity of people (Archer, 2003), and again Mezirow appears to be aware of it as he uses such words as “maturity,” “emotional intelligence,” “threatened” and “frightened” above. On the other hand, although not to the degree to which TL theory supposes, critical realism sees that people as reflexive agents can act against or influence structures or contexts. Archer (2003) argues that people exercise reflexivity in relation to structures and such reflexivity is manifested as an “internal conversation,” in which:

We survey constraints and enablements, under our own description (which is the only way we can know anything); we consult our projects which were deliberately defined to realize our concerns; and we strategically adjust them into those practices which we conclude internally (and always fallibly) will enable us to do (and be) what we care about most in society. (p. 133).

So the important aspect of the inquiry should be the extent to which, in Cambodia, structures have exercised powers of constraint over people’s reflexivity and the extent to which they have been able to exercise reflexivity against such powers in relation to claiming their rights from duty-bearers.

Methodology

I spent four months on ethnographic fieldwork in two rural provinces in Cambodia in 2012. In order to explore the context-specific yet multi-scalar phenomenon of the agency and structural relationship, I utilized a fresh analytical approach of a grounded theory inspired by critical realism (Oliver, 2012).

Working with Government in the Context of Decentralization

Rather than taking a confrontational stance, which is connoted in the western conceptualization of RBA, with local government, the NGO takes a more collaborative stance through humble engagement and by building the capacities of commune councils (CCs)—local government above the village level. By doing so, the NGO has been able to further open up democratic spaces made available through decentralization reforms. The NGO has provided specific training as well as facilitating the creation of the participatory spaces where the capacities of both the rights-holders and duty-bearers have been increased through their interactions with each other. For example, the NGO regularly encourages commune councilors to attend various village-level meetings. Moreover, through RBA training, CCs became more aware of their duties and started fulfilling them.

Moreover, the decentralization reforms at the commune level, which includes the election component, granted people electoral power, and they have started perceiving that their electoral power does make a difference to election results. This has been increasing their confidence in dealing with their CC.

According to Mezirow (2000), safety is one of the preconditions for TL, and hence threatened and frightened adults would not be able to go through TL. Nonetheless, because of their closer relationship with local government and their awareness of electoral power, beneficiaries are not as frightened by the status of CC as before or have heightened their reflexivity in relation to the structure of the oppressive political context of Cambodia. In other words, their internal conversations (Archer, 2003) have tipped the balance towards the reflexive side, hence enabling them to exercise their agency in claiming rights.

Material Basis for Transformative Learning

The areas in which the NGO has been operating are resource-starved and it sees that a certain level of economic development is necessary prior to people claiming their rights. The NGO's community developmental approach, which is partly aimed at the beneficiaries' economic self-reliance, plays a key role in this regard.

Mezirow (2000) identifies the material-economic preconditions for TL, especially reflective discourse, to occur. Such preconditions include health and economic security, and thus, as stated earlier, “[h]ungry, homeless, desperate... adults are less likely to be able to participate effectively in discourse” (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 15-16). From this perspective, it makes sense that before or as people embark on TL in their move toward claiming their rights, their immediate and minimal needs have to be met. In fact, a study on farmer field schools (FFSs) in East Africa by Duveskog, Friis-Hansen, and Taylor (2011) indicates that in resource-starved rural areas, the transformation of farmers' perspective of enhanced agency needs to occur simultaneously with their economic and physical improvement through the instrumental learning of new agricultural techniques.

Continual Presence of Facilitators

The NGO's facilitators stay at their assigned villages during their working days, leading to their increased interaction with beneficiaries, and thereby bringing about a repeated process for empowerment. Such repeated attempts at empowerment were necessary in order to empower beneficiaries to deal with the oppressive structures of Cambodia.

From the perspective of TL, emotional support (Berger, 2004; Fetherston & Kelly, 2007) and authentic and trusting relationships with teachers and among peers (Cranton, 2006; Taylor,

2001) are known to foster TL. The facilitators' continual stay on the worksite on weekdays helps to facilitate the establishment of such meaningful relationships with beneficiaries.

'Learning by Doing' for Transformative Learning

The NGO's 'learning by doing' approach has a pertinence to TL for claiming rights. First, beneficiaries' roles and involvement in community-based organizations (CBOs) helped build their confidence and capacities to claim their rights. In particular, their roles forced them to speak in front of other people. In addition, on numerous occasions such as CBOs and rights-based training, I observed that facilitators encouraged beneficiaries to speak out. The FFS in each village is divided into geographical sub-groups, one of whose leaders said:

I dare [to speak in front of people]. Before, I was illiterate and did not really dare to speak to other groups; I did not dare to speak at all. After I participated in FFS and the NGO, I was frequently invited to join the meetings. I now have some guts to speak. You could say that after they asked me, I dared to answer and spoke better than before (Interview, comments in brackets added).

Confidence in speaking in CBOs is the beneficiaries' first step toward claiming their rights. The NGO fosters this kind of confidence so that their voices can eventually be heard, for example, in meetings for formulating a village development plan and, as a result, part of their rights to development may be realized.

Their roles as CBO members may, however, stretch their confidence and capacities to the limit. Such experiences could cause a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000) or the edge of knowing (Berger, 2004) in relations to TL. On the edge, people often need support initially: Berger (2004) states that "perhaps the best technique for supporting people at their growing edge is simply to provide openings for people to push against the edge and then be company for them as they stand at the precipice; once they are there, the growing edge is its own teacher" (p. 345). The facilitators' continual presence in villages and thus frequent contacts with beneficiaries are considered to provide such emotional support.

Furthermore, by engaging with local government itself, people reinforced their perspective transformation toward enhanced agency. More specifically, belonging to CBOs (particularly of village development committees (VDCs)) helped beneficiaries grapple with CCs and district offices. This was because part of their responsibilities as CBO members required them to constantly engage with local government. One of the VDC members stated:

Before, I had not worked [as a VDC member]. [At that time] I did not dare to communicate or talk with the CC. After I worked as a VDC member, I dared to speak and communicate with them because it is relevant to my work. So I must dare to speak and ask (Interview, comments in brackets added)

Increased Rights Understanding for Transformative Learning

People's increased understanding of human rights led them to their TL to claim rights. In particular, the NGO conducts rights awareness training by utilizing 'applied' exercises. During the training on climate change and RBA, facilitators asked participants how climate change is related to human rights. A few examples of their answers are as follows:

- Climate change affects people through floods, which relate to human rights [rights to life and security].
- Climate change causes illness and so is related to health [rights to health] (Field notes, comments in brackets added).

Note that the beneficiaries did not explicitly mention particular rights related to the consequences of climate change, listed in brackets (such as rights to health). They did, however, show they understood that climate change affects their various rights, even though they could not express this in technical rights terms. This exercise shows that the NGO tries to help beneficiaries connect their realities with pertinent human rights. Such a method is likely to bring about TL (Hansman & Wright, 2009; Weimer, 2012), since it helps “the learners to develop a critical consciousness about themselves and the context and society in which they live” (Hansman & Wright, 2009, p. 124).

The NGO also conducts rights-based training by utilizing dialogical processes. On a number of occasions, I observed facilitators posing questions to bring about dialogical processes with beneficiaries during rights-based training. Weimer (2012) asserts the power of questioning in TL: “questioning can be learner-centered and transformative when...the questions offer learners the chance to figure things out for themselves” (p. 447).

An understanding of human rights led to the beneficiaries having increased confidence. The following beneficiary indicated that while she still feared local government, she tried to cling to rights to overcome such fear:

Research Assistant: What do you think, aunty? For those who do not have any idea yet, what do you think? If you, aunts or sisters, have to approach the CC and the district office, like the example we just gave, what do you think?

Participant: I am afraid to approach them, but if there is any real urgent matter, I will go, go to ask for help from them and they will solve it.

Research Assistant: Why are you afraid of them?

Participant: Because we are poor, that’s why we are afraid.

Research Assistant: Because you think that you are poor?

Participant: Yes, but no matter how poor we are, there are still the laws and they will solve it for us (Focus group, a female FFS member).

Existing TL research shows that TL in non-rights-based participatory approaches such as FFSs can bring about social engagement; for example, in the form of questioning local authorities (Duveskog et al., 2011). However, the added value of RBA is that the explicit knowledge of their rights provides something that people can cling onto in exercising such rights.

Collective Learning

The collective learning environment created by the NGO, such as training sessions and CBOs, seems to provide peer support from fellow beneficiaries. One of the VDC members mentioned her participation in the NGO’s training courses:

Before, when I had not joined training courses, I didn’t know anybody, so I felt afraid, not that afraid, but felt really shy, partly because I didn’t understand [those courses]. After I went through many courses, I got to know and became close to many people, so I was not feeling afraid. Whether what I say is right or wrong, I still dare to speak (Interview, comments in brackets added).

Such emotional support (Berger, 2004; Fetherston & Kelly, 2007), authentic and trusting relationships among peers (Cranton, 2006; Taylor, 2001) and social recognition (Nohl, 2009) foster TL. In addition, Bridwell (2013) and Wilhelmson (2006), based on their empirical research, infer that the issues of the preconditions (Mezirow, 2000) and cognitive maturity (Merriam, 2004) required for TL, which are hard to find among the marginalised like rural Cambodians, may be addressed by such spaces for dialogue and relationships whereby

participants are enabled to take part and support each other. Pearson (2011) argues that the creation of safe spaces is of particular importance in the light of the collective nature of Cambodian society: “Asking people to let go of their deeply held beliefs in order to change can create great stress, especially if the people around them are not involved in the same change process” (p. 180).

The NGO has been advising beneficiaries to increase their community solidarity in order to deal with duty-bearers. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) suggest that reflective discourse fosters solidarity toward collective actions. However, in order to bring about social actions in the context of RBA, TL is likely to need to be supplemented with other types of capacity-building such as community organizing and mobilisation, so that people will be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for taking social actions.

I need to emphasise here, though, that collective learning, peer support and community solidarity are not something to be taken for granted in the Cambodian context. In particular, the trauma from conflicts, especially the memory of forced collective labour during the Khmer Rouge regime, has continued to inhibit people from trusting each other and working together. In this sense, the NGO’s attempt to create safe spaces through CBOs is one of the indispensable components for building trust, fostering learning and enabling people to claim their rights collectively.

Gradual Process of Transformative Learning

As seen in some of the interview quotes presented, the beneficiaries generally went through a gradual process of perspective transformation. The cognitive maturity (Merriam, 2004) required for TL is generally absent in Cambodia, due to a dearth of education, and the nature of it. In addition, the authoritarian and hierarchical social structures, coupled with the legacy of conflicts and the fatalism derived from the Buddhist notion of *karma*, have prevented people from being proactive and taking risks, hence “the status quo...is preferable to risking change that could attract more troubling, difficult and painful circumstances” (Pearson, 2011, p. 41). All these have exercised the powers of constraint over people’s reflexivity. Yet they have started understanding human rights and practicing speaking out, enabling them to act more reflexively and agentially, or their internal conversations (Archer, 2003) have tipped the balance towards the reflexive side, hence enabling them to exercise their agency in claiming rights. If I use the vocabulary of TL, a disorienting dilemma or the edge of knowing takes place in the *intersection* between structures and reflexivity.

‘Rolls-Royce’ Operation

In summary, it does appear possible for TL to gradually take place for rural Cambodians, who are struggling with the various structural forces as well as the socio-political and material-economic impediments to TL for enhanced agency, through rights-based empowerment. Yet, as seen, numerous enabling factors need to be mobilized in order to compensate for the lack of the various preconditions for TL, which has been theorized mostly in the more affluent and less oppressive contexts of North America. It is natural, but in a way ironic, that in order for such ‘Rolls-Royce’ TL to occur in Cambodia, a massive amount of resources need to flow there from the West (for such activities as material and economic improvement and the labor-intensive process of creating/facilitating CBOs) and high caliber staff need to be employed to create the conditions conducive to TL (through, for example, working with government and facilitating dialogical processes with people), as evidenced in the well-funded, large- scale and complex

operation of the NGO and its top-quality staff within the NGO industry in Cambodia. Moreover, there have been supportive decentralization reforms that grant people democratic spaces. This poses a doubt as to how replicable the kind of TL and RBA which the NGO facilitates are for other NGOs, particularly those with limited resources and/or that work in less favorable political and policy contexts in Cambodia or elsewhere in the world.

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The Intersection of Business and Ethics: Transformative Learning as a Facilitator of Ethical Behavior in the Financial Sector

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Abstract: This paper seeks to spark a dialogue on how transformative learning can promote the development of ethical behavior in the financial sector. Broadening current discourse on the role of finance in society and applying our own research on ethics and sustainability, we posit that emotion-based approaches to transformative learning are key to “catalyzing a sustainability worldview” and facilitating a “merger between business and ethics.” Introduced in the 1960s, the efficient (rational) market hypothesis has enabled and validated the abdication of ethical responsibility in the financial sector, creating a chasm between business and ethics. Moreover, insights from behavioral science tell us that incentive structures and other formal organizational processes have reinforced this paradigm of “rational supremacy” and legitimized unethical behavior. At the same time, the “three-pillared” concept of environmental, economic, and social sustainability since the late 20th century has served to stimulate and focus a growing concern to redress the perceived antithetical character of ethics and business in the modern capitalist world. Accordingly, a sustainability worldview could be impelled in the financial sector by the application of emotion-based transformative learning theories to build a bridge between the economic rationality associated with business and the positive emotionality of ethics.

This paper explores how transformative learning can promote the development of ethical behavior in the financial sector. Broadening current discourse on the role of finance in society and applying our own research on ethics and sustainability, we posit that emotion-based approaches to transformative learning are key to “catalyzing a sustainability worldview” and facilitating a “merger between business and ethics.” We begin with a summary of ethical challenges facing the financial sector since the 2008 financial crisis, arguing that the prevalent efficient (rational) market hypothesis has led to an abdication of ethical responsibilities in finance, creating a chasm between business and ethics. Insights from behavioral science tell us that incentive structures and other formal organizational processes have reinforced this paradigm of “rational supremacy” and legitimized unethical behavior. Next, we discuss sustainability theory and explore how transformative learning can promote the development of a sustainability worldview. We then review emotional perspectives on transformative learning, which augment Mezirow’s cognitive view to build a bridge between the economic rationality associated with business and the positive emotionality of ethics. We conclude that the financial sector can evolve a sustainability mindset by embracing emotion as a vehicle for learning.

Implicit in the notions of “catalyzing a sustainability worldview” and the “merger of business and ethics” is perspective transformation, a core concept in transformative learning (e.g., Mezirow, 1994). When individuals question their deeply held values and beliefs, they may

experience a qualitative change in how they perceive the world. This “revolution in the mind” often begins with a disorienting dilemma and is followed by a period of critical reflection to examine the assumptions and beliefs that framed the initial perception of the experience. Rational discourse, a dialectical process in which people come together to weigh evidence for and against a viewpoint and assess assumptions critically, increases self-awareness as the foundation for developing a more inclusive and discriminating worldview.

Ethical Blindness in the Financial Sector

The financial sector is fertile ground for the application of transformative learning theory as banks face increasing pressure from regulators and the general public to create more ethical cultures. With over \$300 billion in fines since the 2008 financial crisis, unethical conduct in the financial sector appears to continue unabated (e.g., Group of Thirty, 2015). Nonetheless, significant changes in the regulatory environment have created a disorienting dilemma for financial institutions and resulted in an opportunity for transformation. The first step in the transformation process is to examine critically the values and beliefs that contributed to ethical blindness and allowed unethical behavior to flourish.

One such belief is the subscription to an abbreviated form of rational thought known as the efficient market hypothesis. The financial sector has remained firmly committed to the assumption of rational markets (Fox, 2009) since the hypothesis was introduced in the 1960s. Defined as an imposition of “rational, mathematical, statistical decision making upon financial markets” (loc. 153), the financial markets and, by extension, bankers were always right and “doing God’s work,” according to the CEO of Goldman Sachs (*New York Times Dealbook*, 2009). In conjunction with the deeply embedded Western value of individualism and mental models such as short-termism, the efficient market hypothesis enabled bankers to take significant risks with a potentially huge personal financial upside, despite a potentially massive social financial downside.

Rational market assumptions have been found to legitimize and reward unethical behavior. Research on whistleblowing in the financial sector showed that ethical breaches were often condoned by organizations. As one whistleblower put it, “in order to do a good job, that means I would have to technically do a bad job” (Weghmann, 2014, p. 93). In another case, money laundering officers—whose job is to prevent illegal transactions—were encouraged by compliance executives to close alerts from sketchy transactions without further investigation (Taibbi, 2013). Weghmann’s (2014) whistleblower study also suggested that incentives in the financial sector were designed to maximize monetary outcomes with little concern for ethics. Moreover, behavioral science literature has shown that reward systems can shut down an individual’s sensitivity to issues and reduce her ability to reflect critically (e.g., Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011). The end result is a slippery slope in which employees become increasingly ethically blind to and acquiescent about their own bad behavior. Comments like “everyone is doing it” or “it’s not my responsibility” are not uncommon.

While such truncated, “blind” economic rationality dominates the financial sector, Weghmann’s research found that positive emotions were a powerful driver for ethical decision making. Several whistleblowers expressed how their feelings of empathy toward others compelled them to speak up. One whistleblower commented: “You don’t debate morality, you just do what is moral, that is it. Don’t think, just do it. Don’t think” (2014, p. 123). Another whistleblower felt “physical pain” (p. 206) when thinking about customers who were

“financially raped” (p. 102). Unsurprisingly, the whistleblowers were consistently ostracized by their organizations for speaking up and, even worse, often ignored by regulators.

Tversky and Kahneman’s Nobel prize-winning work on behavioral economics reminds us that there is no such thing as perfectly rational, efficient markets due to the influence of biases and emotions (positive or negative) in decision-making processes. More recent studies have also indicated that decisions cannot always be rationally predicted (e.g., Kahneman, 2011). Furthermore, studies investigating ethical decision making in the financial sector have found that behavior is often emotionally charged in pitting one set of values or beliefs against another (e.g., Thiel et al., 2012). Ethical issues are, by their very nature, conflict-ridden and tend to produce emotional rather than rational responses.

Transformative Learning as a Critical Pathway to Sustainability

The increased development and implementation of the concept of corporate social responsibility since the 1960s, and the “three-pillared” concept of environmental, economic, and social sustainability since the late 20th century have served to stimulate and focus a growing concern to redress the perceived antithetical character of ethics and business in the modern capitalist world. This concern has coincided with the rise and application of transformative learning, including in the financial sector. Debilitating issues ranging from financial malpractice to climate change have accentuated the need to educate relevant decision makers, not only on site in their corporations, but also off site, in academia and other nonprofit organizations, often watchdogs. In this context, transformative learning can appear as a critical pathway to actionizing the newly framed ethics, most recently those of sustainability.

The potentiality of transformative learning in this regard does not imply that important analytical and ethical questions about it have been resolved. There is still considerable analytical dispute over how such learning works, and particularly whether it operates primarily by and on reason (rationality) or emotion (sensitivity) (e.g., Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006). This dispute is all the more relevant in that the objective is a merger of economics and ethics, despite the recurrent though rather artefactual association of rationality with economics and sensitivity with ethics. Teaching “ethical reasoning” may be viewed as “mis-educational” if, in any relevant situation, behavioral outcomes result from “ethical irrationality,” or social and individual practices and preferences or intuitions; but for the very same reason, such teaching may be viewed as important (Maxwell, 2016). At the same time, teaching meant to induce ethical behavior may be seen to require attention to the “emotional dimensions” of unethical behavior (Kretz, 2015); however, the “sensitivity” needed to alter such behavior may be sensitivity to “reasons” themselves (Mower, 2015). Beyond such analytical issues, three ethical issues regarding transformative learning include: the elicitation of free prior informed consent to an externally induced transformation; the presumption that beneficial rather than harmful ends will ensue from the transformation; and the possibility that a promising means of transformation could be applied by unethical actors without consent and with harmful results.

Despite these unresolved matters, transformative learning may constitute a pathway to sustainability, together with the corporate ethicality it implies, by generating a sustainability outlook or worldview. Schumacher College, located in Devon, England, is a center wholly devoted to courses offering “Transformative Learning for Sustainable Living” (Blake, Sterling, & Goodson, 2013). Four main features of the learning experience offered by the center have been identified as community living, diverse pedagogies, co-creative collaboration, and epiphanic space. Those who attend courses at the center may be assumed to have a preexisting

inclination toward sustainability; by comparison, those who work in finance may have a preference for monetary acquisition. Among at least some of these, a concern for ethics can certainly be presumed to exist: whistleblower tips to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (2015) grew in number from 334 in 2011, when the whistleblower program was instituted, to 3,923 in 2015. These data could be understood to imply ethical motivation, but the behavior of whistleblowers may be induced by monetary rewards: the Commission paid 22 whistleblowers an aggregate amount of over \$54 million since 2015. Moreover, the extent to which the effectiveness of transformative learning depends upon a predisposition toward the intended result is unclear, as is the extent to which the experience primarily involves reason or emotion. Nonetheless, the potentiality of transformative learning for catalyzing a sustainability worldview may serve as a pathway to transformed and transformative economics, or to ethical economics together with ethical finance.

Merging Business and Ethics Through Emotional Theories of Transformative Learning

To offset the financial sector's preoccupation with rational market theory by way of emotion-based transformative learning, Dirkx's (1997) soul work and Kasl and Yorks's (2002) whole person approaches could be applied. Both approaches offer holistic views that reflect the "intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions" of being (Dirkx et al., 2006, p. 125). For Dirkx, deep learning integrates the subjective experiences of a person's "shadowy inner [unconscious] world" (p. 126) and her outer conscious world. This psychodynamic approach to "learning through soul" (1997, p. 80) suggests that the interaction "between texts and our inner lives" (2006, p. 127) is necessary for perspective transformation. Self-actualization is a deep exploration of the relationship between unconscious and conscious being.

Soul work examines emotions as a language for learning and transformation. Emotion-laden images, as "affective, imaginative, and unconsciously created representations of our experience that arise spontaneously in awareness" (Dirkx, 2006, p. 18), are meaning-making vehicles that support the integration of the inner and outer worlds. Dirkx proposed a four-step "imaginal method" to help learners identify emotion-laden issues. An individual begins by surfacing emotion-laden images through careful observation and description, utilizing a process of association to connect the images to other similar experiences. The process of amplification, as the expression of the image through music, literature, dance, and other art forms, helps to expand on the meaning of the original image. Analogies, in which similar experiences are shared with others, contribute to a sense of belonging and a collective consciousness. Finally, the original image is animated or engaged to link the unconscious inner world with the conscious outer world.

Similarly, Yorks and Kasl's (2002) theory of whole person learning brings affective knowing into consciousness to integrate it into processes of critical reflection. Experience is a process—not an event—to be *felt* first and then reflected on. Based on Heron and Reason's phenomenological modes of psyche, whole person learning emphasizes "multiple ways of knowing" and explicitly challenges "the hegemonic force of an epistemology that privileges rationality" (2002, p. 184). Knowing manifests itself in four different, yet fully congruent, ways. Derived "from embodied resonance with phenomena" (Kasl & Yorks, 2015, p. 3), experiential knowing is "feeling the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing" (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 182). Presentational knowing represents the "intuitive grasp of the significance of imaginal patterns" (p. 182) and, similar to Dirkx's amplification, is expressed through various art forms. Primarily focused on "observable evidence" (Kasl & Yorks, 2015, p. 3), propositional

knowing refers to the translation of the imaginal to the conceptual (i.e., the point where emotionality and rationality intersect). Practical knowing is about developing skills for taking action. In contrast with Mezirow's cognitive description of perspective transformation as "habits of mind," Yorks and Kasl embrace both rational and emotional dimensions of learning and describe their theoretical framework as "habits of being." They also note the difference between cognitive empathy as a predominantly intellectual process linked to propositional knowing and affective empathy, which is situated in experiential knowing.

Returning to the discussion of the artefactual association of economic rationality with business and positive emotion or sensitivity with ethics, it is evident that deeply held organizational values and beliefs can actually drive bankers to divorce themselves—consciously or not—from issues of ethics. The question becomes how this can be changed by the application of emotion-based theories of transformative learning in the financial sector. Rather than suppressing positive emotion, financial institutions can begin to accept the role of transformative learning as a driver of ethical behavior. Soul work theory and whole person learning can offer a meaningful way of bringing supportive emotions to the foreground and allowing people to experience them first tacitly and then through presentational knowing forms such as theater, music, dance, and storytelling. Individuals can connect with the emotion of an ethical dilemma by amplifying it and sharing analogies with others to form a collective understanding. Groups can then use propositional knowing to name their emotional experience and to reflect on the dilemma with a new perspective. This process of learning through positive emotion can serve as the foundation for a reframing of organizational values and beliefs.

Conclusion

If applied to promoting a sustainability worldview and the practice this entails, transformative learning would presumably help to achieve change in all relevant domains, including primarily the environmental, economic, and social. The meaning and content of sustainability are extensive in depth and scope, as evidenced by the seventeen new Sustainable Development Goals unanimously adopted with a "thunderous standing ovation" by the 193 member states of the United Nations on September 25, 2015 (United Nations, 2015). However, sustainability can be modeled in simpler terms for the purpose of transformative learning applications by subdividing each of the three primary pillars into three recurrently envisioned and piloted types of initiatives meant to redress past, present, and future damages attributed to "business-as-usual." Initiatives to advance the environmental pillar include ecosystem restoration from past degradation, adaptive redesign for present use, and biodiverse preservation for future resilience. Initiatives to advance the economic pillar include affirmative recompense for past contributions, fair labor standards in the present workforce, and economic development for future progress. Finally, initiatives to advance the social pillar include eradication of marginalization from the past, community uplift in the present, and intergenerational provisions for the future.

Whether transformative learning for sustainability would be more effective in focusing on "reason" or "emotion" may depend significantly upon the circumstances. Generally, however, as Aristotle elucidated in the *Ethics*, and as frequently continues to be argued (e.g., Thagard, 2015), both cognitive and affective functionality are vital to ethics. It may be that "negative" emotion (e.g., hostility) can most readily be transformed into "positive" emotion (e.g., empathy) with the intervention of "genuine" (e.g. truthful) reason, while "pseudo" (e.g., deceptive) reason can most readily be transformed into "genuine" reason with the intervention of "positive"

emotion (e.g., Gardner, 2015). Such interventions may be more effective because they are perceived as less obviously oppositional than attempts to counter negative with positive emotion or pseudo reason with genuine reason. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of transformative learning for sustainability may be enhanced by validating whistleblowing, not only for economic damages but also for environmental and social damages.

We strongly advocate the application of emotion-based transformative learning theories as a new, powerful way to (a) facilitate ethical behavior in the financial sector and (b) promote a sustainability worldview. Through empirical research in the financial sector, we have identified a fundamental tension between ethics and business, which stems from an environment dominated by narrow profit-driven rationality and short-termism without much concern for ethics or supportive emotions (sensitivity). At the same time, increased regulatory and societal pressure are creating a disorienting dilemma for the financial sector, which constitutes an opportunity for the industry to examine its presumptions. We hypothesize that the intentional integration of positive emotions into business outlooks and attitudes can support a critical revolution in both mind and heart that would lead to a more sustainable worldview. We hope to promote a dialogue on how affective theories of transformative learning can foster a meaningful intersection between business and ethics.

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Figurations of the OTHER - Self-Other-World-Relation

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Abstract: Transformative learning can *occur* as an adaptive reaction to critical life events (Mezirow, 1991). But as pedagogical professionals we prefer to give rise to situations wherein processes of transformation are *initiated*. We argue transformation is an intersubjective phenomenon. We have to take into account its triadic structure when analyzing transformation.

Background of Our Present Theoretical and Empirical Interest

Learner and educator are two positions of a dynamic inter-relation with different but nevertheless interdependent characteristics. The inter-relational dynamic between educator and learner can result in a wide range of either fruitful or less work relationships. Against the background of transformative learning the questions of how dynamics between these two positions can provide a fertile ground for transformation arises. If transformation initially has to deal with falsification we demand an *accompanied falsification* which constitutes pedagogically relevant situations; Cranton & Wright (2008) speak of *learning companionship*. But a relational, dialogic pedagogy is more than mere passive company of the educator for the learner. There are different layers dialogic pedagogy manifests itself. In addition to the inter-relation (inter-personal) of educator and learner there are intra- and extra- personal relationships constituting relational, dialogic pedagogy (Lysaker & Furuness 2011: p. 189).

In order to find out more about facilitation of transformative learning in pedagogical situations we suggest to take a socio-psychological look at the initial state the learning individual (as well as the teaching individual) brings in when (transformative) learning is in question. In our view the individual has to be captured theoretically in terms of *self-world- relation* (Koller, 2012). The individual develops typical ways of meeting claims and tasks that life contains. These typical ways are developed ontogenetically as well as preformed culturally. In this way the individual learns to interpret the world and its position in it by means of its particular *figurations of self-world-relation*. Undergoing critical situations / crises self and world and its interrelations have to be re-organized, in our terms re-figured. In a previous explorative study (Neubauer & Lehmann, in press) we tried to take a clearer look at the process of transformation against the background of theory of transformation of self- world-relations (Koller, 2012). We identified three manifestations of change of self-world- relation (addition, substitution/highlighting, transformation). We came to subsequent hypothesis that these types of change which we firstly treated as mere descriptive categories could also be indicating a *progress* from addition to transformation. But how can such a progress be facilitated?

By the educator of course! Relational, dialogic pedagogy, takes a look at the interplay between educator and learner. It can be described as an intersection sphere and so do we. In the following we try to carve out our understanding of relational, dialogic pedagogy within self-world-relation of the learning individual. We try to elucidate our position by analyzing particular sediments of relational, dialogic structures 'in' the individual. What exactly does happen to the individual when transformation takes place? Our study deals with the attempt of tracing particular figurations of these sediments, especially in terms of 'the other'.

Self-World-Relation as Basic Conceptualization for Understanding Individuals' Being-In-The-World

Individuals' being-in-the-world in the sense of their fundamental constitution cannot at all be traced back to mere physical processes in a depiction natural science inheres. Much more we have to refer to an irreducible dimension of meaning and desiring (Waldenfels, 2002). Individuals are *per se* embedded in and in relation to its surrounding world which means something to them (see also Merleau-Ponty, 1986, 1966 [1945]). Self-world-relation even on this fundamental layer of existence must actually be conceptualized within a framework of a certain 'field theory' such as Merleau-Ponty's (1986, 1966 [1945]): self and world can be understood as two positions to which certain perceptions are ascribed. The self in this way is first of all a position to which affections are ascribed (Merleau-Ponty, 1966 [1945], pp. 277) whereas at the same time the world emerges as the *not-me*.

Adjustment of the Term Transformation in the Direction to Approximation of Self and World

Considering self-world-relation as analytical perspective for elucidating processes of transformation, particularly against the background of an inter-subjective pedagogy, we have to proofread this conceptualization with regard to Kegan's (2008) question of "what form transforms?" Answer: It is the self-world-relation. Self-world-relation implies affective aspects because of its fundamental dialectical relatedness to the (affected) individual. The individual which gives meaning to its existence in terms of self-world-relation would fade away from meaningful existence if categories of self-world-relation would be eliminated – a crucial dialectical insight of German philosopher Waldenfels (2002)

Self-world-relation connotes a kind of *homologous relationship* between each other – which we want to reject. Borrowing insights from studies of infant development that consider *attachment* as basic need for human development (Bowlby, 1983; Schore, 1994; Fonagy, 2002) we can accentuate an aspect which we consider very crucial to studying processes of transformation. Attachment theory suggests looking at human behavior (originally infants) under the topic of searching proximity to primary care givers when being in emotionally overwhelming and subjectively dangerous, unknown situations (Ainsworth, 1970). For our present purpose of elucidating our understanding of transformation (of self-world-relation) we want to lay stress on one particular aspect: Attachment theory points to what we want to grasp as *fundamental asymmetry of self and world*. Attachment theory says that security of one's own is of higher value than exploration of the world. "Safety first" one might say. In the first place the world is too dangerous to explore it self-reliantly. There first of all has to be built basic trust (Erikson, 1950). The individual's fundamental process of splitting up its affective and physical existence into self and world which was addressed few lines above has to be conceptualized as an asymmetric order with superior value of the self over the world.

As we mentioned above contact of self and world can occur by accident so that in consequence the individual is forced to adapt to such demands. But as pedagogical professionals we do not let learners be confronted with such unforeseen events. We claim to initiate situations in which individuals are offered spaces wherein approximation can go securely and smoothly at its own pace. Transformation of self-world-relation within a pedagogically professional setting does not occur by accident it much more is facilitated by perpetuating a secure ground on which the individual can walk – and in case of doubt fall down softly. The role of dialogue between

educator and learner is therefore of highest significance. Dialogue does not only mean conversation between two individuals. Within pedagogical contexts it much more implies an intersection sphere in which the pedagogical professional brings the self nearer to a particular subject matter (world). This is what we want to address to our research question on inner figuration of the other – which is regarded as dialogically constituted.

The Intersubjective Setting in Pedagogy and its Effect on Learners' Self-World-Relation

In our view the term *emancipation* serves as the pedagogically relevant issue to which professionals should refer when trying to enable transformation. But how can this pedagogically relevant process of approximation be conceptualized?

In its simplified reading pedagogical settings consist of two individuals and a content to be learnt. Hence we can outline pedagogical constituents as follows: learner, educator, content. Pedagogy appears as triangle of these three aspects (Klafki, 1991; Prange, 1983; Illeris, 2002; Kansanen, 2003). Lysaker & Furuness (2013, p.189) characterize relations between the three pedagogical constituents as inter-relation (educator -learner), intra-relation (self-awareness) and extra-relation (learner-subject). Applying their differentiation to the pedagogical triangle we state that the inter-relation between educator and learner *first and foremost establishes* the extra-relation between learner and content as well as the intra-relation in terms of self-awareness. Inter-relatedness between two subjects (learner and educator) in pedagogical settings serves as prerequisite for all approximation of self and world and subsequent emancipation in consequence of which transformation can happen.

To briefly sum up: We are interested in the particular phenomenon of transformation. Against this background we demand the conceptualization of self-world-relation as analytical instrument in order to observe transformation. Self-world-relation as individual's un-/pre-/conscious attitude(s) in its being-in-the-world can be re-figured – which we denominate transformation. In our view self and world metaphorically have to get in contact with each other if genuine inter-action shall take place. Self and world are not two equivalent categories; they much more build an asymmetric relation. Approximation of self and world is a precondition of transformation. Remarking this triadic relationship we consider the internalization (mentalization) of this structure as genuinely relevant for transformation because of its possibility for *protected approximation* (learning companionship) and subsequent emancipation from one's dependence on the significant (or generalized) other. In the following lines we now can present our understanding of dialogue within the pedagogical setting and its fundamental role in an emancipatory process of transformation.

The Role of Pedagogical Dialogue in Transformation of Self-World-Relation – Research Question

Learners find themselves in situations where they are confronted with unknown, new contents. It is the educator's task to provide situations (intersection sphere) wherein learners can approach contents free from inhibiting issues. From the standpoint of the learner the content is re-presented by the educator who offers a particular approach with a kind of *deictic gesture*¹.

The educator shows content to the learner. This is what we wanted to carve out by taking the concept of didactic triangle (Kansanen, 2003) in. The *deixis* of the educator can manifest

¹ A Term which we borrow from research on infant development (Tomasello, 1999)

itself in various forms; there actually can happen both good and bad pedagogical *deixis*, but hopefully *good enough*. Anyway, it is the educator who decides (more or less consciously) how the learner's approach to the content happens.

Such *other-dependent* self-world-relation can happen in an authoritarian (Baumrind, 1967) style so the self really is dependent on the other; here the self is handled as an object and not really as subject. Pedagogically other-dependent self-world-relation can also happen as discourse with the educator through which the learner produces its understanding of the content. In this way two genuine subjects with two respective intellectual (and affective) standpoints generate an understanding (which admittedly) was pre-formed by the initially knowing person, i.e. educator.

Although the term dialogue connotes presence of two individuals we want to lay stress on its triadic structure. Dialogue implies two individuals and a content their interaction is about. The way how the learning individual experiences the other and respectively itself within this pedagogical dialogue is at the same time the particular way learner's approach to the world is memorized. The vagueness of the concrete realization of pedagogical dialogue is one particular aspect which makes pedagogy kind of precarious. Its effectiveness and efficiency cannot be scheduled in detail. This is what makes *pedagogical dialogue* interesting for us. Our present research interest is about the question of how transformation can be facilitated. As we carved out so far, (genuine) approximation of self and world serves as precondition for transformation. Pedagogically induced transformation – in contrast to accidental transformation through critical life events – has to aim in *enabling contact of learner's self and world*. Pedagogically induced transformation furthermore implies a triadic structure of learner, educator and content. This very triadic structure – which is internalized through pedagogical dialogue – has to be focused when studying *accompanied transformation*. Our question which we want to address in our empirical study reads as follows:

How does the third instance, namely the other or the educator or the pedagogical professional, manifest itself in individuals' (learners') approach to a particular content (world)?

Study

The present study was conceptualized as intervention study. As we tried to find out about certain figurations or sediments of the other through pedagogical efforts we implemented our study in a university class wherein a certain concept had to be learnt. This concept then offered the chance for us to ask about it both before and after the class. Our intention was to find out about appearances of a third instance within representations of a specific content. We explicitly decided not to ask about how students experiences pedagogical professionals, we much more assumed that this pedagogical professional would appear in their representation of the learnt content.

Students had to write an essay on the question “Tell us your understanding of the topic ‘Bildung’?” first before the class started (t1). The same question then was asked four weeks after the class (t2). We decided to let the students write two essays so we could reconstruct changes in their understanding of the concept which has been asked for. As we referred to our first study where we carved out three types of changes (addition, substitution/highlighting, transformation) we presumed that third instances in representations of a concept would play a role in these changes.

15 the students only wrote the first essay. These we did not take into consideration in our analyses. All in all we analyzed six cases, each with two essays (before and after the class).

Method

Analysis of our data was carried out with ‘documentary method’ (Bohnsack, Nentwig-Gesemann & Nohl, 2001). Analyzing essays in the direction of our question set the task to carve out latent structures of referring to others when talking about a specific content. Documentary method claims to make latent structures visible by methodically controlled interpretation of written documents. Besides the focus on *what* has been said *documentary method* highlights the specific way *how* an individual has generated its (written) document. We remained with the concrete case before cross-case comparison took place. As individuals’ essays differed not only in their content but also in their latent structure of producing these contents we had to work on each single case individually. Intra-case comparison (from t1 to t2) allowed us, firstly, to classify types of changes (addition, substitution/highlighting, transformation) and, secondly, to make visible changes in manifestations of a third instance in consequence of a pedagogical intervention. We paraphrased the specific relations of self and other within students’ writings on a specific subject. Cross-case comparison then allowed us to generate heuristic common structures in students referring to others / third instances. All in all we differentiated between relations with dyadic references of self and world – individual and the specific subject – on the one hand and triadic references of self, other and world – individuals referring to others in describing a specific subject. Within these triadic relations we found different ways of reference which we want to address now.

Results

Students displayed different forms of referring to a third instance. In addition there could be found cases wherein students did not refer to such an instance – they exhibited dyadic relations, in contrast to those cases in which triadic relations could be carved out. It became clear to us that students with triadic relations featured different ways of referring to the other when describing the content (essays question). All in all they differed in what we grasped as initial position of activity. This means that individuals displayed movements of action which either happened out of themselves (1. identification, 2. Generating distance) or occurred to them in the sense of external activity which addressed them (3. Being influenced):

- Dyadic reference
- Triadic reference - 1. Identification (a) dependence (b) subsumtion); 2. Generating distance; 3. Being influenced

We correlated these forms of reference to our types of change and came to the results that the additional type came along with dyadic as well as triadic relations. Transformation (type of change 3) featured a triadic relation with an emancipative reference to the other:

- three times *type I addition* which had a dyadic as well as triadic reference
- two times *type II substitution* in a mixture of dyadic and triadic reference in one essay T1 and T2.
- One time *type III transformation* as we can describe as an emancipation process from a triadic reference.

Against the background of our initial intention of finding pedagogical sediments in form of the other we could not trace back explicitly pedagogical figuration in terms of pedagogical professionals which were responsible for the class.

The overview below lists our results ordered by type of change and the distinction of dyadic and triadic relation to which the cases were assigned:

Table 1.
Overview study results

Cases survey date	Analyze Code	Type of Change	Dyadic-Relation	Triadic-Relation
C1		I addition		
T1			Descriptive-theoretically	
T2			Descriptive-theoretical reference	
C2		I addition-highlighting		
T1			Self-reference	
T2				appropriation of theoretical terms, de-alienation
C3		II substitution		
T1			Mixture of dyadic and triadic (repulsiv) Own decision, against the "third/other"	
T2				Not similar to T1, less self- more world, stepping back, passive
C4		I addition		
T1			passive-sustainable	
T2				active critical for the "third/Other" to delimit someone
C5		III transformation		
T1				Change of perspective, passive-sustainable-> active- create
T2				Crises, emancipation, thinking of "we", alienation of "we", force the "I"
C6		II substitution		
T1				subsumtion appropriation.
T2				
survey date T1: beginning of semester				
survey date T2: end of semester				

General Discussion

The assumption of our study was that a dialogue can be seen as an interaction between two subjects about a content. We assumed that of a *pedagogical other* could play a vital role in supporting transformation. So that aspects of facilitation, companionship and connection between content and lecturer can be seen as one opportunity for transformation. We tried to carve out figurations of 'the other' in written documents in order to get a picture of different manifestations of self-other-world-relation.

The results of our study can be summarized in three different kinds of reference: 1. identification (a) dependance (b) subsumtion), 2. generating distance and 3. Being influenced.

We found cases in which transformation occurred through generating distance to the third. In other cases dyadic relation was maintained. The two points in time differed in their theorizing distance compared with t2, i.e. students were affectively captured by the topic they discussed in the first essay while in the second one they built up distance to the content. This we denominated *disengagement* in order to capture change in *dyadically* referring to the same content in t1 and t2. In this very case transformation occurred; at least a direction to transformation was possible to

find. Another interesting aspect we realized was that a process of change was initiated by irritation (crises) and not – as expected before – by companionship and support of *pedagogical other* (lecture of the class).

Pedagogical others could not be found in essays. An explanation for this observation which we initially assumed could be because of the specific role the lecturers played in the class. The didactical structure of the class can be described as an ‘open discussion class’ with less monologue/speech of lecturers and more parts of discussion within the study group. So contents had to be acquired actively by the students and lecturers stepped back into a background. Against this background transformation occurred in triadic and dyadic relation. Transformation might have to be differentiated / divided into two forms: emancipative transformation and assimilative transformation. The first could be connected with triadic relation while the latter might occur in dyadic ones. Emancipation must be grasped as building distance to a third and establishing contact between self and world autonomously without dependence on representations of the content on the third. Within a dyadic relation individuals per se are in contact with the world and have to get along with whatever they are confronted with. Assimilation (not in its pejorative reading) could then be the method of choice.

It might be possible that crises are necessary condition for transformation not only in dyadic relation but also in triadic ones. This contradicts an assumption which we made before when we stated that learning companionship might serve as substitute for mere occurrence of crises in transformative learning. Pedagogical professionals of course function as companions but crises still occur regardless of the pedagogical effort that was applied before.

Future research might also explore transformation on a base of dyadic and triadic relation. This kind of view could help to explain transformation more detailed. One of our most significant findings is that the nature of pedagogical dialogue lies in *enabling individuals to generate distance to a third* in order to facilitate transformation. Pedagogical dialogue does not have to look like a lecture where students listen and have to reproduce the contents/subjects. There are different ways how a ‘self’ refers to a ‘pedagogical other’. Emancipation can be understood as generating distance to a third when the self approaches the world. Initial dependence on representation of the world through a third has to be abandoned by the self in the sense of independently building contact to the world.

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Interfaith Dialogue and Perspective Transformation: Promise and Possibilities

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Abstract: Religious conflict is an enduring problem in the 21st century and interfaith encounters are not likely to lessen in the near future. For many scholars of interfaith studies, interfaith dialogue with a goal of mutual learning and understanding is the desired method to reduce or solve religious conflict and promote peaceful coexistence between members of various religious traditions. Yet, being able to converse with others across areas of difference can be challenging and disorienting. When challenges are met, interfaith dialogue has the possibility to encourage participants to be more open toward the beliefs and values of others. This conceptual study focuses on primary aspects of transformative learning theory and the role they play in understanding adult learning through interfaith dialogue between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim adults. It examines the importance of learning from experience, critical reflection, desiring a changed viewpoint, empathetic relationships, and in creating an atmosphere of trust. Such an atmosphere may encourage engagement with ambiguity during an interfaith encounter supporting the creation of, and space for, new and more permeable frames of reference. Within this space, if someone can engage with their own assumptions and make meaning from their new experiences, as well as have empathy and a desire to understand the experiences of others, participation in interfaith dialogue can be a catalyst for the process of developing of new frames of reference which may then lead to the transformation of perspective toward the religious other.

According to Pew Research Center's study on religious hostility across 198 countries worldwide, "religious hostilities increased in every major region of the world except the Americas" from 2007 to 2012 with the sharpest increase being in countries in North Africa, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region (Grim, 2014, p. 7). These hostilities include government restrictions, harassment of religious minorities by individuals, organizations, and social groups, conflict and terrorism, and mob violence (Grim, 2014, p. 9). Many involve members of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Although religious violence increased elsewhere, it is not absent from the Americas. Recent examples of violence in the United States in particular include the shooting of three Muslim students at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in supposedly anti-Muslim based violence in February of 2015. In San Bernardino, CA two Muslim assailants left 14 dead and 21 wounded in a mass shooting outside a social services center in December of 2015. In June of 2016 in Orlando, FL 49 people were killed in a nightclub by a Muslim man pledging allegiance to ISIS. What this reveals is that such religious conflict is not only a worldwide phenomenon, it also occurs close to home for many Americans.

Western nations are becoming increasingly diverse leading to interfaith and intercultural encounters both in person and online. These interactions are not likely to lessen in the near future and learning how to coexist is essential for the success of a global society. For many scholars involved in interfaith relations and studies, interfaith dialogue is the favored method to educate people about their religious other and help resolve religious conflict. In interfaith dialogue people

of different faiths gather together to discuss alternate religions in a safe environment. Yet, interfaith scholarship shows that interfaith dialogue is not without its challenges leading to both perceived successes and failures. Even with its difficulties, the rewards of interfaith dialogue can be great and may include a change in perspective in regards to alternate faith traditions (c.f. Boys & Lee, 1996; Helskog, 2014a, 2014b; Swidler, 2006).

In this paper, I use Agrawal and Barratt's (2014) definition of interfaith dialogue and apply it to the context of dialogue between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim adults. Agrawal and Barratt (2014) define interfaith dialogue as "an *intentional* encounter between individuals who adhere to differing religious beliefs and practices in an effort to foster [understanding], respect, and cooperation among these groups through organized dialogue" (pp. 571-572; emphasis in original). Dialogue involves engagement with another in such a way that one attempts to relate to another's tradition and understand what they find meaningful, what their experiences are, and how they understand the sacred within their tradition (Takim, 2004). As such, "an essential component in dialogue is the willingness to reexamine one's own faith in the light of how others relate to their tradition" and dialogue should "empower us to 'see through' the faith of others" (p. 346). Avakian (2015) calls this ability the "turn toward the Other" which requires an "understanding and transformation of one's own faith-tradition" and "an unrestrained acknowledgement of the Other" (pp. 80-81). Perhaps one of the most highly desired outcomes of interfaith dialogue is that of perspective transformation (c.f. Abu-Nimer, 2002; Boys & Lee, 1996; Swidler, 2006). With this in mind I consider the possibility and promise of transformation through the intersection of multiple religious beliefs created in the interfaith encounter of dialogue.

Within a setting of interfaith dialogue, connecting with and learning from differing religious traditions can be "radically disorienting" (Fletcher, 2007, p. 546). This disorientation is often a result of coming into contact with foreign worldviews as dialogue participants may or may not be able to incorporate beliefs vastly different from their own into their own view of the world. Anxiety, turmoil, and disorientation have been historic characteristics of interfaith encounters. In Christian, Muslim and Jewish encounters specifically, a rocky history coupled with a multitude of different understandings of what the goals of interfaith dialogue are pose a challenge. For example, Ibrahim (1998) presents this lack of clear goals and intentions agreed upon by both sides in dialogue as one of the major weak points in Muslim-Christian dialogue today (p. 17).

Looking at the history of interfaith interactions does not reveal an encouraging story. For Jews and Muslims a history of conflict in the Middle East can strangle dialogue (Young, 2002). For Christians and Jews differing theological and historical understandings of Jesus Christ can cause animosity. Muslims and Christians are challenged by ignorance, prejudice, and stereotypes. History is riddled with examples of interfaith contact which had the goals of conversion or oppression of groups viewed as having inferior and/or dangerous beliefs. Until very recently, the best interfaith interactions one could hope for were those swathed in indifference while hostility and violence was the more common atmosphere (Swidler, 2014).

Yet, disorientation and inner turmoil caused by this history and interfaith encounters can serve as an opportunity rather than a detriment to interfaith dialogue, as it is with this disorientation that the opportunity to develop a new perspective or "frame of reference" (Mezirow & Marsick, 1978) begins. Much of the literature on transformative learning discusses the necessity of a disorienting dilemma as a catalyst to perspective transformation (c.f. Mezirow, 2012; Cranton, 2006). Further, the desire to change was found to be an integral component of

transformative learning, as an individual needs to be willing to engage with experiences that may lead to transformation (Taylor, 2007; Taylor & Cranton, 2013).

The process of perspective transformation through engagement with ambiguity can begin with experiences with alternative beliefs during interfaith dialogue. In fact, Mezirow (2012) suggests that transformation is most likely to occur through discourse. Mezirow (2003) defines discourse as “dialogue involving the assessment of beliefs, feelings, and values” (p. 59). As guidance, Mezirow’s (2012) provides these rules for discourse:

- More accurate and complete information;
- Freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception;
- Openness to alternative points of view: empathy and concern about how others think and feel;
- The ability to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively;
- Greater awareness of the context of ideas and, more critically, reflectiveness of assumptions, including their own;
- An equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse;
- Willingness to seek understanding and agreement and to accept a resulting best judgment as a test of validity until new perspectives, evidence, or arguments are encountered and validated through discourse as yielding a better judgment. (Mezirow, 2012, p. 80)

When compared to Swidler’s (2006) widely referenced and utilized rules for effective interfaith dialogue, the similarities are striking. Swidler’s (2006) rules that directly reflect Mezirow’s are:

- The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn, that is, to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality, and then to act accordingly;
- Each participant must come to the dialogue event with complete honesty and sincerity. Conversely – each participant must assume a similar complete honesty and sincerity in their partners;
- Each participant must define himself. Conversely – the one interpreted must be able to recognize himself in the interpretation;
- Dialogue can take place only between equals;
- Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust;
- Persons entering into interreligious, interideological dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious or ideological traditions.

Both Mezirow (2012) and Swidler (2006) state clearly – in order for dialogue to be effective and lead to transformation, participants must be aware of, and comfortable in, who they are, representing this to others in the dialogue group with honesty and sincerity. All participants must be open to learning about and accepting alternative points of view. They must have a willingness to reflect upon their own worldview. There must be equality and trust between dialogue participants. Finally, dialogue participants must be willing to build a relationship with, and have empathy for, others.

Even with these guidelines, interfaith dialogue, or dialogue across any type of difference, can be difficult for both participants and facilitators. Keeping in mind the guidelines above, learning from experience is a necessary component of interfaith dialogue. For many, this component is both an important aspect of good practice and one of the greatest challenges (c.f. Fletcher, 2007; Gopin, 2002; Keaten & Soukup, 2009; Pons-de Wit, Versteeg, & Roeland, 2015). Mezirow (2012) indicates learning is “the process of using prior interpretation to construe a new

or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action" (p. 74). Learning creates frames of reference, and to transform a frame of reference, participants critically examine *habits of mind* and resulting *points of view* to understand and take ownership of them which may result in more awareness of "values and sense of self" (Mezirow, 2012). Learning is complex and happens when an individual reflects upon and understands an experience, makes meaning of that experience and integrates that meaning into their understanding of reality and/or comprehensive worldview (Boucoulalas & Lawrence, 2010).

Tennant and Pogson (1995) identified four levels of experience that impact learning: 1) prior experience; 2) current experience; 3) new experience; and 4) learning from experience. Prior experience helps form connections between new concepts and what is already known. With reflection on prior experience one creates "a bridge between the unknown and the known" (Boucoulalas & Lawrence, 2010, p. 39). Interfaith dialogue attempts to create bridges between what someone knows about their own faith and what is unknown about a different faith. Interfaith dialogue is also the new experience from which an individual can learn. Learning from the experiences of others is also essential. Many scholars insist it is important that participants not attempt to understand another's experience only in light of their own, but to also attempt to understand their experiences through the eyes of the other (Fletcher, 2007; Keaten & Soukup, 2009; Swidler, 2006). Listening to the experiences of others can help build connections with another and lead to re-examining one's own assumptions in regards to the other's experience (Boucoulalas & Lawrence, 2010; Kinch, 2007).

Interacting with possibly conflicting beliefs and values is commonplace in interfaith dialogue and learning from traditions different from one's own can be difficult and challenging. But an atmosphere of openness and patience allows participants to engage with ambiguity and disorientation and encourages them to honestly admit and reflect upon doubts, beliefs, being critical of both themselves and their own traditions (Boys & Lee, 1996; Keaten & Soukup, 2009; Properzi, 2011). Here, people may reflect upon, analyze, and examine their experiences so they can be learned from and incorporated into their worldview (Properzi, 2011). This critical examination should alternate with moments of "deep encounter and exchange," (Properzi, 2011, p. 258) which is, ideally, what interfaith dialogue creates.

On reflection, consider John Dewey's (1922) analysis of reflective thought. For Dewey (1922), reflection was a critical and rational thought process and could be differentiated from other forms of thinking. Reflection was useful if it led to new and intelligently informed actions. Dewey explained reflection as a way of thinking based on experience that transforms experience "from a confused and uncertain state to a clear and coherent condition" (Dewey, 1922, p. 31). Thus, reflection is the process by which a person creates meaning from their experiences. Echoing Dewey, Dirkx and Mezirow (2006) insist participants in dialogue must be willing to perform a "critical assessment of epistemic assumptions" (p. 125) to make their current frames of reference permeable. This permeability would accommodate other religious worldviews. Without this, it would be unlikely for interfaith dialogue participants to think critically about perspectives and viewpoints vastly different from their own and makes learning from the experiences and opinions of others unlikely or even impossible. Because of this, time is an important factor for transformative interfaith dialogue, as participants need a pace that allows for understanding and absorption of the stories of others (Boys & Lee, 1996).

New experiences can change a person internally and this in turn changes how they interpret necessary interactions and behaviors in the outer world (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006). The consideration of internal dynamics is integrally important to understanding transformation

through a spiritual lens. Dirkx (2006) explains an extrarational dimension of transformative learning and Charaniya (2012) expanded the theory by discussing the cultural-spiritual perspective. Specifically, this understanding of transformative learning integrates the “experiences of the outer world...with the experience of our inner world” (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006, p. 126). When transformation integrates all aspects of a person it “it is a change that ultimately redefines the individual’s place in the world” (Charaniya, 2012, 232). It involves all dimensions of a person as culture and spirituality impact thoughts, feelings, actions, and beliefs.

Taylor and Cranton (2013) report the capacity for empathy important for reflection, as it “provides the learner with the ability to identify with the perspectives of others; lessens the likelihood of prejudgment; increases the opportunity for identifying shared understanding; and facilitates critical reflection through the emotive valence of assumptions” (p. 37-38). In interfaith dialogue, an empathetic relationship allows someone to build connections and enables him/her to bond with someone across religious differences (Charaniya & Walsh, 2004; Kinch, 2007). In order for interfaith encounters to have a transformative outcome it is crucial that interfaith study be an ongoing process which allows for the creation of empathetic and emotional relationships between participants (Gopin, 2002). Additionally, several scholars of interfaith dialogue believe that a desire to change can be cultivated through positive interfaith encounters (Keaten & Soukup, 2006; Properzi, 2011; Swidler, 2006).

When empathy, a desire to change, and critical reflection on assumptions and experiences are combined, it is likely that interfaith encounters can promote transformations of *meaning perspectives* (Mezirow & Marsick, 1978) in regards to one’s religious other through the creation of new frames of reference. According to Mezirow and Marsick (1978) meaning perspective “refers to the structure of cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated to – and transformed by – one’s past experience. It is a personal paradigm for understanding ourselves and our new relationships” (p. 101). When an individual moves toward more mature perspectives their former perspectives are transformed into new ones more appropriate for new relationships formed in life. These perspectives are not only influenced by the relationships we hold with other people in our lives, but they also define our opinions, understandings of, and relationships with others. The importance of empathy and developing relationships of the religious other is seen here, revealed in meaning perspectives’ reliance upon personal relationships.

Such a change in perspective may inspire a participant of interfaith dialogue to see another’s faith as a valid belief system, even if it is different from their own, becoming more tolerant, discerning, and accepting. Abu-Nimer (2002) explains that in order for dialogue to lead to a perspective transformation of the other it needs to involve: (1) a cognitive element in which alternative religious views are presented; (2) a “positive emotional experience in meeting the other through the construction of a safe and trusting relationship;” and (3) cooperatively working together in a task or activity (pp. 16-17). Such a transformation during interfaith dialogue opens a participant’s own belief system to be more tolerant, discerning, and accepting of alternative worldviews (Neufeldt, 2011; Pons-de Wit, Versteeg, & Roeland, 2015).

New, more tolerant and diverse points of view can be generated when in interfaith dialogue participants examine their perspectives and worldviews in an attempt to understand what assumptions underlie them and how those shape their thinking and beliefs (Cranton, 2006). Integral to this process is the development of autonomous thinking, in which someone becomes aware of, and honest about, their own beliefs and how their relationships with others impact their thinking. With this ability, participants of interfaith dialogue can learn from and critically reflect

on encounters with their religious other. When these conditions occur, it is possible that an individual's worldview can become more permeable, with frames of reference developing that support new and more accepting perspectives of the religious other.

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Transformative Learning at the Intersections of Family, Faith and Urban Ministry

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Abstract: In an interconnected, urbanizing world, ministry leaders in the city seek to be equipped to face increasingly complex challenges in their practice. As such, making sense of the intersections of faith, family, and urban ministry is critical. This paper describes the longitudinal impact of a non-degree urban ministry certificate program in New York City on students who participated with their spouses (either at concurrently or in a subsequent cohort), particularly exploring changes in perspective on ministry, marriage and the city. Major themes that emerged included space for conversations and establishing a common vocabulary, influencing a re- framed, mutual vision for living and ministering in the city, and renewed commitment to practices such as listening, reflecting, and being open to others' perspectives. The implications are the need to further study other aspects of "family" - parenting, sibling and extended family relationships, as well as the impact on married couples whose spouses did not participate in the program. From this study, envisioning seminary preparation for urban ministry as a family-based endeavor versus individual-based may become an important factor in designing relevant and responsive urban theological education for the present and future.

Introduction

In an interconnected, urbanizing world, ministry leaders in the city seek to be equipped to face increasingly complex challenges in their practice. As such, making sense of the intersections of faith, family, and urban ministry is important for effective preparation. Typically, theological education is seen to focus on the individual, equipping a single person to engage in theology and ministry (for example, as a leader in a parish setting) during a season of formal instruction. If the family relationships of students were taken into account, particularly if they were engaged in learning concurrently or sequentially with spouses, siblings, parents or children, the impact of this preparation might be exponential, with regards to relevance, influence, and transformative change.

How could there be more intentionality and creativity in understanding how and where faith, family, and urban life and/or ministry connect for the purpose of promoting transformative learning? This paper describes a qualitative study of the longitudinal impact of the Ministry Fellows Program, a non-degree urban ministry certificate program, held at City Seminary of New York from 2009-2016. In particular, the study examines family relationships in the cases of students who were spouses participating together or in a subsequent cohort, and the potential for transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). Related research is also being done to understand the impact on siblings and parents and adult children.

Context

The Ministry Fellows Program was initiated in response to a growing need for affordable, accessible and quality training for a changing demographic of urban ministry practitioners, particularly those from, but not limited to, immigrant church communities (Gornik & Liu Wong, 2015). Since 2009, a learning community of almost 180 Ministry Fellows representing 72 different churches from all over New York City and the metropolitan area has grown. Students range in affiliation from Pentecostal to Presbyterian, African Independent to Apostolic, Baptist to Episcopalian, live in every borough, and come from around the world. They are men and women, ages ranging from early 20s through mid 60s, pastors, church leaders, missionaries, church planters, community developers, and Christians of various occupations whom desire a foundation in applied theology and mission. They speak English, Spanish, Yoruba, Twi, Swahili, Hindi, Malayalam, Korean, Indonesian, Mandarin and more.

Furthermore, many are not simply individuals attending a course for professional ministry development. They are families – couples, siblings, and parents with their adult children – who have had a transformative experience in the program. Recruitment has been mainly by word-of-mouth, through family, church and ministry networks, and students are inviting their family members into the learning community, indicating there is something more to understand about the relevance of the intersections of family, faith and urban life.

Relevant Literature

As a way to frame this study, experiential learning and transformative learning theories provide an entryway into understanding program design and participant experiences. Experiential learning – which emphasizes a continuous, reflective and holistic process grounded in experience and nuanced as an adaptation to varying interactions with the world rather than a focus on outcomes – is at the heart of the Ministry Fellows Program (Kolb, 1984). The city itself is the context for learning, and the potential for transformative learning – which can occur when one’s frame of reference becomes more “inclusive, differentiating, permeable...critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience” – is cultivated in the intersections of action, reflection and celebration, as students spend time inside the classroom and out on the streets (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19).

Taylor (2009) posits transformative learning may be leveraged through integrating individual experience, critical reflection, and dialogue with others in learning design. Holistic orientations to teaching, cultivating authentic relationships, and raising awareness of socio-cultural context also support the potential for transformative learning (Taylor, 2009). The Ministry Fellows Program is built on such intersections through authentic relationships cultivated in a diverse cohort of typically 12-18 students, beginning with norm setting and recognition that socio-cultural contexts and experiences can be widely variable. Assumptions about terms like “respect” are interrogated as such, and space is made to appreciate and be open to difference in perspective. Cohort-based programs typically intend to build a supportive network for students to work together and share ideas towards this end (Santicola, 2013).

In a holistic approach, students engage with each other through different ways of knowing such as experiential, presentational propositional and practical (Heron, 1992). Conceptualizing “experience” as a verb rather than a noun, Yorks and Kasl (2002) posit that presentational knowing - grounded in intuition and imagination and expressed through music, verbal, moving, visual and plastic art forms - has a pivotal role to bridge experience with propositional knowing, the mode of discourse dominant in higher educational settings, creating

pathways for empathetic connection (p. 188). Thus, expressive ways of knowing are emphasized for students to both explore and share new ideas and personal reflections, and build empathy for others.

This study aims to better understand not only the possibilities for transformative learning for individuals, but the program's impact on families and in turn, their ministry contexts. How does engaging in this type of diverse community extend the learning process through informal and nonformal engagement beyond the classroom into family relationships and ministry practice? Although several studies have examined outcomes of ministry impact on family relationships (Burns, Chapman & Guthrie, 2013; Garland, 2012) or the impact of theological education on families of individual students (Ball, 2013), there has not been much done to measure the impact of participation in theological education *as a family*, nor to understand the potential of contextual urban theological education on transformative learning for the individual and the family unit.

Methodology

This study investigated the impact of the Ministry Fellows Program on family relationships and urban ministry. The participants in the study were spouses, siblings, parents and adult children who attended the program from 2009-2016. This paper focuses primarily on participants who were married couples, who either participated concurrently or in subsequent cohorts. Of the total number of possible participants (56), 85% of participants were spouses. The 18 couples were from a mix of backgrounds (Asian-American, Hispanic/ Latino, African/ African-American, and bi-cultural (African-American/ Caucasian).

Data collection involved an online survey, two focus groups, review of student applications and course assignments (eg. application, pilgrimage reflection paper, "Ministry Manifesto"), and notes taken from subsequent informal conversations. Questions were designed to draw out stories of change in family relationships and urban ministry. 32% of the couples participated in the online survey (some opting to participate only in the focus group rather than both the survey and focus group). The two focus groups held involved six (2 couples, 2 individuals representing couples) and nine (4 couples, and 1 individual representing a couple) participants respectively, for a total of 9 couples' perspectives engaged. Thus, more than 50% of the sample was included.

The data was coded for emergent themes and for transformative learning indicators, in order to gain insight into the qualitative experience of participation in the program as family members, and to gauge the longitudinal impact on their relationships and ministry practice. The summary of findings is outlined below, followed by discussion and implications for further study.

Findings

The themes drawn from multiple sources of data corroborated patterns of transformational change in spousal relationships and perspectives on the city and ministry for a majority of the participants. The tables below summarize key data found from various sources.

Table 1.

Summary of Emergent Themes

Emergent Themes	Indicators	Source
Personal Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * CT reflected how the experience “took a seed and made it grow.” * IC “needed others to speak into (her) life...” and realize she was part of something bigger * RY’s perspective on service changed: “As a result, I looked for individuals to grow together and serve together.” * PA started to see his workplace as “ministry.” * “I became more sure of my calling and desire to pursue seminary/working in ministry full time.” 	Focus Groups
Impact on Spousal Relationships: Dialogue as Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *JC: “We’re glad to be able to do this as a couple, and in close dialogue with a diverse cross-section of the city’s faith community.” * AnH, AbH, AY, DH and ML shared about now having a common vocabulary about the city and ministry, and the space for continual conversation on their engagement in practice. * MA and PA: “It helped to create space to reflect as a family,” to debrief, talk and listen. * “Gave something important and valuable to both of us talk about” *“Created a common language for ministry” 	<p>Application</p> <p>Focus Group</p> <p>Survey</p>
Impact on Spousal Relationships: Mutual Calling and Shared Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * LP: “From early on my wife and I have believed we are called to serve in NYC.” * EdH: “Taking this program with my wife has been a big step.” * EsH: The pilgrimage “encouraged me as I continue to encourage and support my husband in our ministry together.” * AbO: “We were seeing ministry as the “same” together. I didn’t want to be left behind.” * “Learning tools for ministry together helped us to support each other's ministries better as well as communicate and grow in areas together.” * “Afforded us the opportunity to spend more time together.” * “It gave us similar vision and understanding of God's kingdom.” * “Confirmation that we are called to minister as a family.” 	<p>Application</p> <p>Focus Group</p> <p>Survey</p>

Influence on Ministry Practice: Involving Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * EdH: “I plan to implement the practice of Sabbath...with my family.” * BS: “I take Saturdays off with my family, and we try to take our kids to different fun things around the city.” * “My wife has greater input and participation with different aspects of ministry in my life. I was giving a conference yesterday and she gave some amazing insight to what I was talking about. It was great being able to work with her in that capacity.” 	<p>Focus Group</p> <p>Survey</p>
Influence on Ministry Practice: Application in Other Contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * CT, RY, AbO, AdO, MA, AY and MY introduced the PBB exercise and investment into local community mentality back to their respective church/ ministry communities (children, youth and adults) * “I think it prepared us for intentionally serving our community and serving each other as well.” * “The MF program significantly changed our perspective on the importance of reflection and repose.” 	<p>Focus Group</p> <p>Survey</p>
Re-framed Perspective on the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * AbH: “It generated a love for city and reignited my passion,” and purpose for staying in the city. * PA and AbO shared that visiting other churches helped them to appreciate the wider body of Christ, to pray with other traditions, and help put ministry in context. * “I began to see the city differently as a result...before I didn’t care much.” 	<p>Focus Group</p> <p>Survey</p>

These are fairly strong indicators of the importance of shared learning leading to personal and mutual growth and change in perspective about spouses, ministry and urban context. The following table identifies transformative learning themes (Mezirow, 2000).

Table 2.
Summary of Transformative Learning Indicators

Transformative Learning Themes	Indicators	Source
Inclusive	* Visiting other churches encouraged PA to pray with different traditions and recognize the importance of the “Ephesian moment.”	Focus Group

Differentiating	* Before, IC used her husband DC as a “crutch,” but now she was gradually finding her own voice. * “I am aware of my need to grow with the city seeing that the city is in a constant state of flux.”	Focus Group Survey
Permeable	* PA brought “the fire” back to his own church as a minister, extending learning * RY and CT said this changed the way they experienced learning: building community not sitting in a classroom	Focus Group
Critically reflective of assumptions	* AY and AO’s negative perspectives on the city became more positive and open because of the PBB assignment * “Good to get other people’s perspective. My views can be narrow and biased.”	Focus Group Survey
Emotionally capable of change	* AbH and AnH found purpose and reason to stay in the city, more open to committing to and renewing their passion for their ministry in Brooklyn. * “That I need to slow down and soak in what’s around me in my community, relationships, and just life in general.”	Focus Group Survey
Integrative of experience	* CT, RY, AbO, AdO, MA, AY and MY brought the PBB exercise back to their respective church communities (with children, youth and adults) * CT and RY challenged their small groups to serve in the local neighborhood together	Focus Group

An additional nuance to note was whether spouses participated together or in subsequent cohorts. For some, the challenge for attending together was schedule conflicts (particularly if childcare was involved) with additional work/family/ministry commitments. Those who participated separately also noted schedule conflicts, but one did share: “If we were together, it may have posed a problem since we often resist being associated and want to have our own identities, but we were separate.” One couple started together but because of family circumstances, one spouse had to step out and join a subsequent cohort. This worked out for them to have their own space in each cohort, and reflect on similar yet different experiences.

Discussion

What these tables above indicate is a movement for participants in perspective in the areas of spousal relationships, ministry practice, and urban life. While transformative change can never be presumed in learning experiences, it is encouraging to see that for these families, their experiences in the Ministry Fellows Program led to long term impact beyond the time during or immediately following their participation. The following unpacks these themes in further detail.

Individual Growth and Change

The Ministry Fellows Program was designed initially to bring together a diverse cohort of individuals from various churches, cultures and traditions to engage serious Christian believers and ministry practitioners in a journey broadening and deepening their understanding of and purpose for being in the city (Gornik & Liu Wong, 2015). While the data indicates that perspectives on living in and serving in the city were challenged and expanded for individuals and couples, it seems that having a conversation partner during this process of change (seeing the data on impact on spousal relationships) was a powerful factor along the way.

Foundation Building for Work Together

The learning yielded a foundation not only for spouses in their family lives (“my family knows me better than anybody else and that the environment in the home speaks loudly about my personal faith”), but also in their ministry beyond:

My husband and I have put into practice what we have learned. We have also gotten evolved those who work alongside us in ministry and have taught them to embrace and love the city as we share with them all we have learned. (survey participant) By providing a common vocabulary and framework for spouses and bringing them alongside other like-minded (yet diverse) new friends to journey with, the program laid the groundwork for extending this transformative learning experience.

Roles and Relationships in Family

An interesting observation is that of gendered expectations within marriages, and how culture, age and tradition may have played a role in the expectations of husbands or wives to play leadership roles in ministry. Some saw ministry very much as a mutual endeavor together, while others saw the opportunity as encouraging and supporting the other in their respective calling. It would be interesting to take a deeper dive in looking at the nature of family relationships for Asian-American versus African immigrant, or bi-cultural African-American and Caucasian couples. What generational distinctions might also occur?

Re-framed Perspectives on the City and Ministry

Considering indicators of transformative learning are broadened, more inclusive and differentiating perspectives, the data indicates that students took away re-framed perspectives on the city through the PBB assignments which involved research, local engagement, and embodied prayer. This helped students to “understand how the city functions...know the needs and challenges of urban life” (survey participant).

Not only was there change in perspective on the city itself for a number of participants, there was also a movement towards embracing inclusivity in the Church, engaging individuals to be more open to other traditions, interpretations, worship songs, and multilingual worship. PA began to pray more with others in different traditions, and such change led to re-affirmed renewal of personal and family commitments to ministry in the city together for couples like AbH and AnH, PA and MA, and CT and RY.

Space and Time for Reflection: Practices of Ministry for Life

The Ministry Fellows program became a powerful container for transformative learning potential by providing time and space for reflection and discourse. It changed the way participants engaged in practices of ministry - cultivating the disciplines of listening, reflecting, journaling, hospitality, gratitude, and Sabbath, amongst others. For example, one survey participant shared: “We spent more time together, had different and deeper conversations about ministry, looked at our community and friendships differently.” Another wrote: “Listening really

stood out to me. Instead of trying to create new things I have stepped back to listen to what God is doing and what our city is saying.”

Patterns of urban life and ministry were disrupted by the time and space spent with others, inviting students to re-interpret and re-engage in new patterns and rhythms. This was in turn brought back into homes with regards to time spent with family, activities shared at church (leading others into PBB activities in respective communities). It is best stated by one survey participant: “It made me more aware of how important these practices are, not only for ministry, but also in our everyday life.”

Conclusion and Implications for Further Study and Practice

New possibilities emerge out of this study with regards to curriculum revision and program expansion, as well as leading program facilitators to re-examine their assumptions around family involvement in the program. This study may provide a better understanding of how best to serve participants that are learning together with family members, as well as suggest enhanced recruitment strategies. By examining the intersections of faith, family and urban ministry in the Ministry Fellows Program and beyond, we have found the potential for transformative learning in and beyond families raises more questions for the impact of urban theological education, as it responds to the challenges of the present and the future.

Possible areas for further study include exploring the following:

1. Impact on spousal relationships for those who did not also go through program;
2. Relationships between siblings and parent/adult children;
3. Impact of ministry on family with regards to pressure, stress factors, etc.;
4. Maintaining resilience in family relationships when coping with multiple responsibilities and roles (in ministry/ work and community);
5. Ways to embed data collection in pre-course, one-on-one and Ministry Manifesto assignments in order to systematically assess and revise curriculum; and
6. Nuances in understanding “family” as a concept and family relationships in diverse cultural communities.

The implications for further study and research mean working towards a sustainable, relevant and responsive model of urban theological education that can meet the needs of students of today and the future. The lessons learned can be valuable to other efforts to build a more inclusive and hospitable urban world with families engaged in shared vision.

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Transformative Learning (TL) at the Intersections of the Psychosocial: Comparing an Islamist and the Good TL Group

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Abstract: This paper explores more collective, group as well as intimate dimensions of transformative learning, drawing on auto/biographical narrative as well as historical research and using interdisciplinary psychosocial analysis. It is suggested that some groups, a Jihadi one, for instance, offers transformative possibilities and self-recognition for individuals, but at the eventual price of closure to the other in intersectional space. In the final resort, this evokes alienation from self as well as the other. The good group, on the other hand, grounded in cultures of equality, respect, openness, trust, and dialogue, encourages engagement with otherness, on which transformative experience and democratic health ultimately depend. The case study of what were called tutorial classes, in workers' education in the last century, in the United Kingdom, is an example of the good, open and transformational group, but one that also struggled with the seductions of fundamentalism, total truths and imaginative closure. In this paper, I focus on the nature and values of transformative learning (TL), and what facilitates or inhibits profounder forms of learning, by reference to specific groups. These groups are or were situated in intersectional space between different cultures and people, between old and new ways of interpreting experience, and between the interplay of the global and the local. My interest is in the processes nurturing innovation, play and risk in groups, especially in relation to the other and otherness – what I term psychosocial openness; or, at times of disruption and change, the factors that disrupt learning and encourage retreat and closure. The historical example of the good transformative group is workers' education at the beginning of the last century in the United Kingdom; the closed group in today's world is an Islamist one.

Starting Points: Distress in the City

The paper, in interrogating such issues, draws on contemporary as well as historic narratives from a distressed post-industrial city in the United Kingdom, where some have turned to racist or Islamist groups (West, 2016). Historically, the city was a location for “an experiment in democratic education,” a place of transformative learning for many ordinary people in workers' education at the beginning of the last century (Rose, 2010). Encounters then with the other and otherness, including in the symbolic order, became, over time, a source of both personal and collective transformation. By way of contrast, it is suggested, fundamentalist groups can transform aspects of lives, but at the cost of profounder educational change. Such groups do offer forms of recognition, and individuals may feel “seen,” understood, and find roles, meaning and legitimacy in the world. There can even be “divine” purpose given to fractured lives. But the process is impregnated with misrecognition of the other and self.

I was troubled by the rise of racism and fundamentalism in the city of my birth, Stoke-on-Trent, in the English Midlands. In 2008/9 the racist British National Party (BNP) was strengthening in the city and a mosque was pipe-bombed. It seemed that racists would form the

majority on the Municipal Council by 2010 (West, 2016). There were frequent incidents of racial violence and outbursts of Islamophobia. The economic base of the city had unraveled and its politics were in chronic crisis with low levels of engagement in voting. The traditional economic base of the city – coal mining, iron and steel production and pottery - had either disappeared or drastically declined. Long-term structural unemployment was endemic (West, 2016). The financial crisis, from 2008 onwards, and consequent austerity, including cuts in local government funding, added to feelings of distress.

Recognition and the Power to Illuminate

I undertook auto/biographical narrative research, some of it longitudinal, with over 50 people in the city, from different ethnic groups, to chronicle the stories they told about a troubled place. It was important, in interpreting the narratives, to connect larger historical forces (such as deindustrialisation) with the meso or intermediate levels of human experience in institutions and groups as well as at the micro, intimate relational level. I sought to illuminate how and why xenophobia flourishes and to think seriously about its antidotes. On a predominantly white working class estate in the city – the place where I was born – there is a pattern of narratives of lost worlds and feelings of abandonment and disrespect by authority. In contrast stories are told of the BNP listening to local people and offering forceful as well as sensitive representation of the kind that other parties failed to provide. In Muslim communities there were stories of Islamophobia, and of anxieties about pockets of Islamism among young people.

There were particular theoretical friends – Dewey, Winnicott and Honneth – who helped me make sense of the stories. Using Dewey reminded me of our need to engage with the other precisely because of the limitations, despite our best efforts, of what we can ever know. The other, in short, has an actual importance for the quality of our own psychological and symbolic life; diversity matters in the groups of which we are a part, whether scientific or community-based, for the quality of our thinking and actions; and for the cultivation of what we can call democratic subjectivity – or the cosmopolitan psyche – as a prerequisite for wider human well-being (West, 2016).

Such subjects may be more or less agentic and political in quite a basic sense: the nurturing of children – or adults for that matter – is a political as well as an emotional act. It is about cultivating relationships in which individuals feel legitimate and able to question the taken-for-granted without experiencing paralyzing anxiety. This can involve finding space for imaginative play, in Winnicott's language: for the playfulness of ideas and the imagination; or, at an opposite end of a spectrum, the space becomes one of defensiveness and narrative closure with one truth and nothing but that truth. Such individuals easily don false mantles, needing to please or appease powerful others for fear of displeasure or abandonment. The intimately personal is deeply political and potentially democratic in these terms. Axel Honneth (2009) refers to Freud's anthropological idea of how we are born prematurely in comparison with other mammals and depend absolutely on the other for survival and well-being; and on feelings of being loved as a basis for human flourishing (Honneth, 2009; Winnicott, 1971). The love on offer, however, may not be good enough, and survival can come at the price of self-annihilation, if the other, for instance, has constantly to be appeased. Honneth adds the sociocultural into these more intimate dynamics of self-recognition. This includes the role of groups in providing self-respect, in enabling people to feel accepted and that they belong, with rights and responsibilities. Self-esteem, Honneth's third category of self-recognition, is nurtured when individuals feel recognized as making important contributions to a group's well-being, which

provides a potential to better recognize others in building social solidarities (Honneth, 2007; 2009). But this analysis is not enough: we need to make more explicit the normative dimensions of profounder educational experience at the intersections of self and otherness.

Islamism in the City: Recognition and “Transformative Learning”

People of South Asian origin settled in Stoke from the 1960s onwards. They mainly came from Pakistan and Bangladesh, and now make up about 50 per cent of the city’s ethnic minority population. In 2011 they numbered just over 9000 (West, 2016), at a time when the city’s white population had been in decline. In one district in the north of the city, over 30 per cent of its residents are from ethnic minority communities (West, 2016). Some people of South Asian origin talked in the research about disrespect and everyday experiences of Islamophobia: targeted at taxi drivers, for instance, told too frequently to ‘fuck off home’ by white clients. This sense of everyday disrespect was amplified by stories of actual physical violence as an Asian man was killed and others injured while mosques were violated. Such a reality can produce insecurity, vulnerability and defensiveness – paranoia even – and reinforces the tendency for people to congregate among their own, away from intersections.

Culturally, as occupational structures have fractured, relationships between the generations suffer too, as male initiation rituals between fathers and sons, in the workplace, are lost. Narratives of the “Christian” neglect of white Muslims in the Bosnian conflict, in contrast to the “Christian” (that is Russian Orthodox) support for the “Christian” Serbs, fill some of this economic and intergenerational vacuum. In the 1990s actions by the West, standing back as Muslims were slaughtered, as at Srebrenica, were essentially seen as anti-Islamic rather than racist, given that the Muslims were white. Certain young people inwardly digested stories of Muslim humiliation, collective trauma and “Christian” hostility, and the need to fight back. This was then fuelled by the toxicity of Islamophobia.

A community leader, who I call Aasif, (the names used are pseudonyms) talked about some of the above:

... you had groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir taking advantage of the situation in Bosnia ... with what’s happening with the Muslims ... arms not being allowed to get to the Muslims to defend themselves where Russia is providing the Christian Serbs; it was a them-against-us kind of debate with groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir ... talking about the male Muslim section of Muslim community at that time; the youth, low education achievement, low aspiration ... no job opportunity... perfect audience... you can recruit easy ... It’s nothing to do with the colour of your skin; this is not racism; this is a target on the Muslim community because these Muslims are white ... I can remember some of these Hizb ut-Tahrir members who in the early ’90s, pulling the youth away from the parents as well ...

From this perspective, Bosnia was a trauma in which scales fell from eyes: it led to increased politicization and provided a mythic rationale for fundamentalism. A group like Hizb ut-Tahrir (or Liberation Party) – ريرحتلا بزح, in the Arabic – could exploit such feelings. Hizb ut-Tahrir is an international pan-Islamic political organization commonly associated with the goal of all Muslim countries unifying into one Islamic caliphate, ruled by sharia law. Hizb ut-Tahrir was founded in 1952 as part of a movement to create a new elite among Muslim youth. The writings of the group’s founder, Shaikh Taqi al-Dine al-Nabahani, lay down detailed descriptions for a restored caliphate (West, 2016).

Raafe

I want to use narrative material from individuals close to particular jihadists to paint a portrait of someone I call Raafe. Raafe in Arabic means companion and he was radicalized, “transformed” in the words of a number of people and sought to radicalize others. Raafe, I was told, was an individual “who had a very troubled upbringing.” He along with other “radicalizers,” as they were called, targeted young people. Particular mosques provided space for his work, apparently without the elders or imams knowing.

Another community leader, Aatif, told me about the weaknesses of mosque management and how this was exploited by Raafe and others.

... Raafe didn't have a very good relationship with his father ended up in crime ... was sent down to prison ... Came out of prison and he was within a few weeks... transformed into somebody who was a practising Muslim now to hear him ... later on when we realized he was part of Hizb ut-Tahrir, but at that point to see somebody change so dramatically was wow, he made a real positive change ... your parents who came in the early '60s ... came when they were young ... so very little ... religious... education ... so they didn't have...opportunity to question the imams and learn something; so they couldn't pass that religious knowledge on to the youth, to their children; so the parents relied upon the mosques to offer that ... so that's where the communication barrier helped groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir. We can offer you Islamic information in your language ...

Radicalization transformed the lives of particular individuals, providing meaning, purpose and self-recognition. Raafe's own transformation seems to have depended on feeling understood, listened to and respected – recognised in short – by radical groups in prison. This could be interpreted as a form of ‘transformative learning’ but of an ultimately perverse and anti-developmental kind. The pedagogy of radicalization seems to work by emotional, imaginative appeals to the past constructed in the light of the present. It involves stories and appeals to action, rather than textual hermeneutics. Narratives of twelfth-century victories supported a call for similar jihad now, requiring toughness and heroism. Jihad, or struggle, becomes constructed as a heavy responsibility that requires brutality to demoralise a more powerful opponent. The victory of the Muslim armies, led by the King of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan, against the Crusaders in the twelfth century's Battle of Hattin, is interpreted as the outcome of a long process of small-scale, hard hitting attacks in various locations. Past struggles get reinterpreted in the light of the present in the struggle against the new crusaders of the West and its client states. Heroism and martyrdom are called for in what is a very different pedagogical process from rational, textual analysis of the Qur'an. Muslim clerics may speak in the language of theory, the jihadi groups act through stories and doing. But this can provide meaning and purpose in lives (Hassan and Weiss, 2015). But debate, dialogue, enquiry and self- as well as knowledge of the other get stifled.

An Experiment in Democratic Education

Mezirow (2000, pp. 8-9) thought the ideal speech community was characterized by communicative rather than instrumental learning, as in the good university seminar. Instrumental learning sought to control and manipulate the environment or other people as in task related problem solving activities designed to improve performance. Communicative learning, on the other hand, has to do with learning what others might mean when they communicate with us. It can involve feelings, intentions, values and moral issues. The tutorial classes, I suggest,

represent a good model of communicative learning that provided the means for both individual and collective transformation. They offer us a profound case study of transformative learning in its more collectivist as well as intersectional dimensions.

Workers education, in the form of tutorial classes, once thrived in the city. The first ever university tutorial class took place there in 1908, when 30 or so worker students met each Friday evening over a period of years with their tutor, R.H. Tawney, a subsequently distinguished economic historian, representing the University of Oxford. The classes were free from prescribed curricula, and its members could explore issues in their working lives from the perspectives of history, politics, economics and literature. Fortnightly essays were required, and the standard of some of these was high, although by no means all. There were no formal examinations or qualifications due to a desire to eliminate competition and vocationalism from the classroom (Rose, 2010). The Marxist Social Democratic Federation made up the nucleus of students who were potters, miners, clerks, shop assistants and school teachers. Many students were from non-conformist religious backgrounds, from families, in short, that encouraged them to think for themselves.

Tawney himself thought the tutorial class ‘movement’ and the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) a successful “experiment in democratic education,” which had a profound, transformational influence on individuals and in the development of British social democracy.

Jonathan Rose (2010) has drawn on diverse forms of life writing illuminating the importance of relationship and recognition in workers’ education: between tutors and students, and among students. But also in relation to the symbolic world, in challenging bigotry and fascism, for instance, and for cultivating agency and the possibility of transformation at individual and collective levels. Such education offered working-class people avenues into leadership roles in local and national politics, and served to radicalize and motivate them in personal as well as political ways.

Space for Dialogue and Recognition

The classes themselves created space to question and challenge racism and other forms of bigotry in transformational ways. In one telling account, Nancy Dobrin, born in 1914, writes that the study of literature had revolutionary consequences. She grew up in a home where learning was not valued, where there was either “a row or an order.” She read little but later joined a WEA class, read avidly although admitted that she went to the class partly in search of a man. Nancy became a writer herself. She described working for a German Jew during the Second World War, wondering what on earth he was doing there and why couldn’t people like him go home. Later, in another class, she met her future husband, a German Jewish refugee who described himself as a Christian Communist. This was a relationship forged in the spaces of workers’ education, where literature – from Lawrence, Tolstoy and James Joyce – enabled her to question her own bigotry. Such experiences shaped her relationships with her children and family, and impelled her to question aspects of their schooling. Agency can take many forms: in the everyday, in families and on the wider democratic stage (Dobrin, 1980).

But dogmatism existed in the intersections of the tutorial classes too, rooted no doubt in human fragility. It is interesting that the worker students frequently admired tutors like Tawney, who remained steadfast as well as respectful even when harangued by a fundamentalist student. We can think of fundamentalism, like its variant Islamism, as ordinary – when we feel out of our depth we may grab at things that seem to offer narrative certainty, an answer to everything. Leftist fundamentalists sometimes from the Social Democratic Federation and later the

Communist Party, though not exclusively so, would quote from texts like *Das Capital* with religious fervor. The other students admired how Tawney remained respectful in the face of agitation. One recalled a particular Marxist – the SDF could dominate the first tutorial classes – challenging point after point and referring to classic Marxist texts. Tawney took it in his stride but insisted that there were other points of view. The student accused the tutor of hopping around from twig to twig, like a bird, and a sense of bad temper pervaded the room. Tawney insisted that everyone, including his challenger, take tea together afterwards and tell stories, read poetry and sing songs. This enabled the group to re-establish some shared humanity and fraternity (Rose, 2010: 266).

There is a wider re-evaluation of Tawney's contribution to theorizing the role and practice of inclusive, transformative university education in building a more effective political democracy and social solidarities (Holford, 2015; Goldman, 2013). Tawney emphasized the moral and spiritual in human betterment, which could be embodied in the tutorial classes in ways inspiring ideas of fellowship and service. The aim of the tutorial classes was to make university education available to all people in their own localities: very different to today's assumptions about the purpose of higher education for individual social mobility. Holford suggests that Tawney offers a localist critique of the current emphasis on developing global skills and mobility. Communities should not be privileged or discounted because of their wealth or poverty and universities can be active agents in communities via, for instance, adult education. Moreover, Tawney represents a more constructivist view of knowledge: the classes were classes, not lectures, and ideas were explored and developed in discussion (Holford, 2015).

Conclusion

The research helps refine Honneth's concept of recognition in thinking about processes of transformative learning and to illuminate the role of the group in intersectionality, in encounters with the other. But recognition can lead to destructive ends, while the idea of transformative learning requires a clearly identified normative framing. John Dewey (1969) observed that the good citizen, and, in effect, processes of transformative learning require democratic association so as to realize what we might be: we find ourselves by participating in family life, the economy and various artistic, cultural and political activities, in which there is free give and take. This fosters feelings of being understood and creating meaning and purpose in the company of others. Dewey suggests that good and intelligent solutions for society as a whole stem from open, inclusive and democratic types of association. In scientific research, for instance, the more scientists can freely introduce their own hypotheses, beliefs and intuitions, the better the eventual outcome. Dewey applied this idea to social learning as a whole: intelligent solutions are the result of the degree to which all those involved in groups participate fully without constraint and with equal rights. It is only when openly publicly debating issues, in inclusive ways, that societies or educational groups truly thrive (Honneth, 2007: 218–39).

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Ancient Future: Paradigmatic Intersections and the Spiritual Turn of Transformative Learning Theory

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Abstract: The authors present the results of independently conducted doctoral research that revealed a spiritual turn in transformative learning theory. By spiritual turn we connote the significance of spiritual shift in learners' social engagement. One research focused on the integration of global consciousness subsequent to a critical global service-learning program, and the other sought to understand the worldview of non-dual global activists. Both researchers discovered that sustained social engagement occurred in non-dual states of consciousness while dualistic analysis of the world was continued to be held without contradiction. The first study revealed three overlapping themes: (a) the centrality of grief in the integration process; (b) ancient future, the search for home reflects an ontological struggle to overcome alienation and refers to a recognition of a cosmic ecosystem and acceptance of the world as it is; and (c) being informs doing, activism becomes an expression of love and care rather than a goal driven reaction to systems of oppression. The second study echoed the latter two themes, and further illuminated that the transformation of consciousness from dualism to non-dualism played a pivotal role in the beginning and/or sustenance of social engagement. Together these studies explore the paradigmatic intersections between spirituality and social engagement where dual and non-dual ways of thought and being cross.

The fact that transformation does not necessarily lead to sustained social engagement continues to frustrate scholars and practitioners of transformative learning (TL) theories who are concerned with social justice and environmental sustainability. We are called to understand how, when, and under what conditions do deep transformations occur. The authors' present findings of two independently conducted doctoral dissertations reveal a spiritual turn in transformative learning theory. One study focused on the integration of global consciousness subsequent to a critical service-learning program in Danang, Vietnam, and the other sought to understand the worldview of global social justice activists.

Previous research reported that while perspective transformation occurred for individuals engaged in critical global service learning experiences, post-sojourn dissonance made it difficult for individuals to turn their transformation into sustained social action (Kiely, 2004, 2005). Global justice activism tends to consist of reactionary stances that emerge out of the dualistic standpoint of antagonism and demonization (Sugihara, 2015). The authors sought to understand alternative ways to think about sustained social engagement and heeded the call to explore non-rational, non-reflective, and spiritual ways of knowing as they engaged their research projects. Both researchers found that sustained social engagement occurs in non-dual states of consciousness while dualistic analysis of globalization is held without contradiction.

In the sections that follow, we situate our research in the literatures that informed our studies, present the findings of our studies, and discuss their implications on transformative

learning theory. Paradigmatic intersections are shared between dualistic and non-dualistic consciousness and the crossroads between spirituality and social engagement.

Literature Review

The early days of transformative learning theory (e.g., Mezirow, 1978, 1991) stressed the cognitive-reflective processes in acquiring a new frame of reference. According to this view, adults change the way they make meaning of their lived world through cognitive processes triggered by a disorienting life event. Such experience followed by critical reflection on previously held assumptions leads to exploration and eventual adaptation of a more fully developed, more functional, frame of reference than before.

This focus on cognitive processes was critiqued by later transformative learning theorists, and the scope of the TL theory expanded dramatically to include experiential, emotional, societal, cultural and spiritual elements (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; O'Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor, 2002; Taylor, 2008; Taylor & Cranton, 2013). Yet, consideration of the spiritual elements is still relatively limited.

Along with TL theory's initial focus on cognitive-reflective processes, early transformative learning theorists placed a great deal of emphasis on the psychological, and therefore personal, transformation; it was often assumed that persons whose awareness is raised would naturally act for social transformation (Schugurensky, 2002). However, as Daniel Schugurensky (2002) challenged, "involvement in social transformation is not something that arises automatically or naturally from a new critical consciousness" (p.63), especially when such consciousness raising is limited in the cognitive and rational arena. Stephen Brookfield (2000) also pointed out, "critical reflection's focus on illuminating power relationships and hegemonic assumptions can be the death of the transformative impulse, inducing an energy sapping, radical pessimism concerning the possibility of structural change" (p. 145).

The authors' observations prior to our dissertation research concurred with this disconnect between perspective transformation and social engagement. Further, the intersection between spiritual transformation and social engagement seemed not yet to be fully explored by TL theorists.

Spirituality and Social Engagement in Transformative Learning Literature

Elizabeth Tisdell focuses on the role of spirituality and TL and adult education, (e.g., English & Tisdell, 2010; Tisdell, 2000; Tisdell & Tolliver, 2003). Through her study on women adult educators, Tisdell (2000) found that spirituality is "about personal belief and experience of a higher power or higher purpose" (Tisdell, 2000, p. 309) and that "the more one has a sense of spirituality as connection, the more one's behavior is affected" (p. 320).

Similarly, John Miller (2002), describes spiritual learning as "transformative in that it allows us to see the world anew. We begin to see the interconnectedness of life at every level of the cosmos. This leads to natural compassion" (p. 100). However, whether such compassion leads to social action is unclear, though implied.

Jessica Kovan and John Dirkx (2003) explored the connection between learners' transformation and their social engagements more explicitly than Tisdell and Miller. In their study on environmental activists, Kovan and Dirkx concluded that it is the *individuation* fostered through transformative learning that leads individuals to activism and further sustains their commitment. Individuation is a Jungian term that refers to a process of "becoming who we truly are... through recognition and integration of conscious and unconscious elements of oneself. Jung referred to this shift of consciousness as 'being called awake' or learning how one is apart from

yet intimately interconnected with the collective in which one's life is embedded" (p. 102). In his later work, Dirkx (2012) further elaborated the relationship between spiritual transformation and social engagement within Jungian psychology framework.

Richard Kiely's research (2004, 2005) on students' experiences in an international service learning program in Nicaragua revealed that each student experienced profound shifts in perspective in one of six dimensions: political, personal, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and cultural. He also determined that the overall pattern of perspective transformation occurred in three overlapping domains that he called emerging global consciousness: envisioning, transforming forms, and post-sojourn challenge to integrate transformative experiences into daily life that he calls chameleon complex (2004). This model noted five dimensions of student learning, including contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing, and connecting (Kiely, 2005). The dimensions of personalizing and connecting identified non-reflective processes within transformation. Kiely noted that spiritual transformation for the students in his study reflected existential explorations and the need to connect with and/or find solace from the dissonance they experienced when confronted with human suffering. It also signified a need to find the strength to sustain their commitment to social justice efforts. Still unanswered was the way out of the chameleon complex and the idea that as long as systems of oppression continue to exist, there will be tensions both within the post-sojourner and in the social world.

The authors concur with some of the points that Tisdell, Miller, Kovan, Dirkx, and Kiely advocated and offer some additional insights. In the sections that follow, by way of introducing our dissertation findings, we explore the spiritual turn of transformative learning theory as it relates to social engagement.

Where is the Spiritual Turn of Transformative Learning?

Our first study by Susan L. Herrmann (2016) specifically extends and expands the works of Kiely (2004, 2005) and focuses on the integration of global consciousness subsequent to students' participation in a critical, global service-learning program. Her study participants defined global consciousness as an individual's systemic, ecological awareness of our human place in the world. Global consciousness is an embodied way of *being* that acknowledges and is mindful of multiple perspectives. Characteristics of global consciousness include authenticity; self and ecological awareness; connected knowledge; and efforts to renew, sustain, and build ecological health for all the inhabitants on Earth.

Herrmann's research revealed three overlapping themes that suggest a spiritual turn of transformative learning theory: (a) grief is central, (b) ancient future, and (c) being informs doing. These are detailed below.

Grief is Central

Susan Ross (2008) and Herrmann (2016) note the centrality of grief in post transformative travel. Herrmann further found that her participants accepted grief as a constant companion in the integration journey and part of the human condition. They identified that to love is to grieve. While grief is present on the road to integration and it is central to the human condition, joy is also evident through the act of accepting things as they are. Grief, joy and love are the primary characteristics of integrated global consciousness and manifests in non-dual consciousness. Former sojourners discovered that surrendering to the pain of alienation was a liberating factor in their movement towards integrated global consciousness.

Ancient Future

Ancient future is a term Herrmann borrowed from Indigenous music to capture the experiences of her participants. The term came to Herrmann after participants unsuccessfully struggled for the right words to describe the power of yearning and knowing that we as a human family belong to something much greater than our immediate lives. It took both participants and Herrmann to reach inward to the place of pre-verbal knowing to finally identify the most suitable expression.

Ancient future contains three elements: (a) the search for home place, or longing to return to something already known deep inside oneself; (b) the recognition of a cosmic ecosystem in which human beings are interdependent and aware of all life forms; and (c) cosmic consciousness is non-dual acceptance and surrender to what is.

The first element speaks to the participant's sense of alienation from authentic living. The second is the recognition that humans are interconnected with all life forms. The third is the surrender and acceptance of suffering as a basic fact of human life. Non-dual ways of thinking are central to the second and third elements. Taken together, ancient future is a visceral, intuitive sense that the cosmos has a wisdom that humans can utilize to make the world a better place. It speaks to origins, authenticity, and to be courageous students of history so that we can engage the challenges that face our Earth.

Non-dual acceptance and surrender became evident through participants' suspension of right/wrong and acceptance that to be human is to suffer. They also described intent to make the world a better place as central to our human responsibility. Non-dual is defined as a spiritual perspective where "compassionate knowing which arises from the recognition that we are part of an interconnected universe...we see that we are part of everything and that everything is part of us" (Miller, 2002, p. 99). Cosmic consciousness seems to better describe Herrmann's participants' experiences integrating global consciousness as there is strong spiritual aspect to their respective processes. Participants recognized that all human beings are a thread in a universal or cosmic tapestry and are all connected. Participants perceive that we, as humans, are only a part of a larger complex ecosystem, and therefore, care of the earth is an important aspect of integrated global consciousness.

Being informs Doing

The three faces of being that inform doing are: (a) activism takes an inward turn, (b) activism is expressed through being versus doing, and (c) doing becomes an outward expression of Being rather than a goal or accomplishment.

This study revealed a significant change in participants' orientation from consumer based culture towards a caring consciousness. The inward turn suggests a purpose driven versus accomplishment driven way of life. The purpose identified by post sojourners is to make the world a better place.

Woven throughout the narratives of the participants is evidence of an inward, spiritually focused turn that emphasizes the importance of mindful participation in life. This resonates with Robert Boyd and Gordon Myers (1988) as Herrmann's participants attended to aspects of transformative learning that have been in the margins of research. Specifically, Herrmann noted affective, visceral and embodied experiences during the grieving process. "How do I *be* with this" became a central focus for post sojourners. As time progressed, they noticed that their activism became more of an expression of their true Selves rather than a reaction to social injustices.

Post sojourners in this research did not place their greatest value on their career, but rather the manner in which they live their lives. This study revealed a pulling away of materialism and consumer consumption in favor of relationships and meaningful work, which may or may not generate income. Many of our participants decreased consumption, invested in vegetable gardens, solar power, and electric cars.

The next segment discusses the findings of Sugihara's dissertation that inadvertently revealed significance of spiritual transformation in the development of global justice activists.

Non-dual Consciousness and Global Justice Actions

The second dissertation research by Megumi Sugihara (2015) focused on understanding the worldview of participants who self-reported having experienced non-dual state of consciousness and being engaged in global justice actions. While this research was not intended to study the process of transformative learning, in-depth qualitative interviews of eight participants revealed that all participants experienced a deep structural shift of consciousness from dual to non-dual. Furthermore, it was overwhelmingly clear that such shift played a pivotal role in their commitment to global justice efforts.

For the research participants who were not previously engaged in social issues, such shift was an unexpected and dramatic beginning of their commitment to global justice. Similar to the findings of Kovan and Dirkx (2003), once the participants' "heart was opened" or "the gap between their lives as corporate lawyer and human Truth was recognized," they could no longer ignore the authentic voice they heard through their spiritual awakening to non-duality. Yet, unlike Kovan and Dirkx' explanation, their urge for action did not come from the process of individuation. Rather, the participants' move was characterized as dissolving of egoic individuality into a unified existence of all.

In contrast to the participants whose social engagement started with spiritual transformation, lifelong activists considered their shift to non-dual consciousness as an evolutionally benchmark. Looking back in time, they recognized limitations they had experienced when they looked at the world in dualistic terms of good and evil, and acknowledged increased creativity and effectiveness in their activism as they accessed non-dual consciousness. In addition, they were less prone to burnouts (Sugihara, 2015).

Regardless of how spiritual transformation contributed to their social engagement, all participants expressed their comfort in holding a dualistic analysis of world affairs while embracing the sense of non-separation. Unlike what classic transformative learning theories suggest, this group of global activists did not renounce their former dualistic worldview after they had acquired a non-dualistic sense of the world. Instead, they held both dualistic and non-dualistic views simultaneously and without contradiction. As Schugurensky observed (2002), what we see in the experiences of these activists may be better considered assimilative or expansive learning rather than transformative learning. Yet, Schugurensky affirms that "important personal and social transformations can occur through learning process that are more assimilative and expansive than 'transformative' and that emotional learning experiences are as important as rational ones, especially in relation to collective social action" (p. 71). Based on her research, Sugihara adds spiritual learning, in particular that of non-dual consciousness, as one of the critical factors for social engagement.

Expressed in different terms, Sugihara's and Herrmann's findings share similarities. While Sugihara's participants did not identify grief as the central theme, they lived with radical acceptance of what *is* as their life principle. By using such terms as "knowing the Truth,"

“opening of heart,” “accessing the Source awareness,” they described the elements of discovering ancient future. Their narratives illustrated the integration of global consciousness, through their visceral knowing of oneness that lies under all apparent separations. Together, Sugihara and Herrmann present the implications of our research below.

Implications

In this paper, the authors applied the learnings from their independently conducted dissertation research to explore such questions as “what compels behavior changes and leads to social engagement?” and “what does integrated global consciousness look like?”

The collective insights suggest that spiritual transformation —along with physical, emotional, and rational transformations— gave the most critical spark and fuel for the participants’ social engagement.

Social engagement, or integrated global consciousness, in their participants manifests as love, care and intent to make the world a better place through acknowledgement of ancient future. As James O’Dea (2014) states, “as we turn, we return. As we turn towards the root of our own being, we remember the common source of all being” (pp. 71-72).

Our studies contribute to the paradigmatic intersections between spirituality and social engagement where dual and non-dual ways of thought and being meet. We hope that our work builds on and advances the spiritual turn of transformative learning theories. We recognize that this work is not generalizable and is specific to our particular participants and their respective contexts. However, we invite others to join us in vigorously engaging this exciting discovery in transformative learning theory.

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The Role of Reflective Practices in Developing Authenticity in Leadership: Three Year Case Study

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Abstract: Discovering one's leadership values empowers them to better respond to challenging conditions in our society. The purpose of this study was to explore how a leadership development course impacted the participants' authentic leadership development from a transformative learning perspective. Authors will present how participants reflect on their significant life events and experience the discovery of their leadership values as a result of having participated in a leadership development program.

Organizations have lavished time and money on improving the capabilities of managers and on developing new leaders. McKinsey report says that companies spent almost \$14 billion annually on leadership development in the States (Gurdjian, Halbeisen, & Lane, 2014). As organizations face challenges ranging from the next demanding phase of globalization to disruptive technological change and continued macro-economic uncertainty, leadership development is a must to do for organizations to thrive. In these challenging and turbulent times, there is a growing recognition that authentic leadership development becomes more and more relevant and urgently needed for desired outcomes (Avolio & Gardner, 2015). Leaders who follow their own core beliefs and values exhibit authentic behavior. As a result, they can manage unexpected challenging situations and successfully lead their teams and organizations (Klepper & Nakamura, 2012). Successful leaders understand themselves well enough to discover their leadership potential and talents that are aligned with their core values (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007). A significant concern that research can inform is that executives need a better understanding of in what ways authentic leadership is developed.

Research Problem, Purpose, and Research Questions

There are various studies that attempt to identify the traits of authentic leadership and to measure the impacts of having authentic leadership (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). However, there is limited research on the ways in which individuals can develop authenticity in leadership. In order to shed light on this problem, the researchers explored with executives who attended an executive development course that was offered each year from 2013 to 2015 to understand what helps them develop authentic leadership and what impacts they have as a result of developing authentic leadership.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore how a leadership development course impacted their authentic leadership development. More specifically, this study sought to understand how participants reflect on their significant life events and experience the discovery of their leadership values as a result of having participated in a leadership development program. Mezirow's (2000) view of transformative learning is that reflective dialogue may lead to disorienting dilemmas, thereby changing their frames of reference. Reflective practices happen when individuals interact with others and effectively share ideas and opinions

(Nakamura & Yorks, 2011). Transformative learning theory is an essential component that can explain individuals' discovery journey of their leadership values.

Overall, this research addresses the following questions.

1. How, if at all, is an authenticity in leadership developed by attending a leadership development program?
2. What outcomes were resulted by developing authenticity in leadership by attending a leadership development program?
3. How, if at all, did participants experience transformative learning elements in developing authenticity in leadership at a leadership development program?

Authentic Leadership Development and Transformative Learning

The concept of authenticity traces its roots to ancient Greek philosophy of "know thyself" and "to thine own self be true." It is about understanding one's self and acting in a manner consistent with one's true self. (Jensen & Luthans, 2006). In the field of leadership studies, authenticity in the leadership literature arose in the 1960s and has been a growing area of interest for successful leadership (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). Authentic leaders enact their true selves and is manifest in behaviors such as being honest with oneself and being sincere with others (Klepper, 2010; Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, & Sels, 2012).

Authentic leadership can be developed by increasing one's self-awareness and discovery of one's values (Michie & Gooty, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005). Authentic leadership rests heavily on one's meaning making of life experiences through reflective practices and by these meanings being captured in the leader's life story (Mälkki, 2012). It facilitates reflection not only casual introspective thinking about events and experiences but also systematic thinking leading to deep-level analysis (Nesbit, 2012). Even though not all reflection leads to transformation, people may experience disorienting dilemmas as they question what they think they value or believe through engaging reflective practices (Mezirow, 2000). Adult educators can facilitate individuals' critical reflection and dialogue to challenge individuals and organization's existing mindsets on taken-for-granted norms, structures, processes, and practices to build a new culture (Marsick, 2008). The reflective practices allow the optimization of work processes, critical analysis, and the attempt to change organizational values as well (Van Woerkom, 2004). Therefore, developing authenticity in leadership through reflective practice is a key for unlocking greater understanding of one's values and leadership style.

Research Site and Methods

The subjects of the study included 32 executives from different organizations across industries who participated in a leadership development program. Industry representations included finance, healthcare, information technology, media, insurance and education. Majority of participants were from the United States while 14% of the sample came from outside of the United States including United Kingdom, Italy and Romania. At the program, the executives were asked to reflect on their significant life experiences and from those experiences identify their leadership values. In turn, they then linked their values to their organization's mission and values. They formed small learning groups whereby they can collectively reflect, exchanging thoughts about their life experiences and leadership values.

The following questions (Klepper & Nakamura, 2011, p.6) are what they were expected to answer. They were asked to craft their message addressing all of the points below to their identified audience such as their team or clients as the final product of the program.

PART 1: LEADERSHIP LIFELINE

Look back on your life's experiences, either those you were directly involved in or those you observed.

- a. What is the basic sweep of your life's story? How did you get from the person you were as a child to the person you are now?
- b. What values were in play during experiences that have held the most meaning for you?
- c. Have there been lows in your life that have served either to clarify or confuse your values?

PART 2: PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CREDO

Apply what you stand for individually to the collective stand you and the rest of your organizations leadership must take.

- a. What do I stand for as a leader? What are my guiding principles of leadership?
- b. What is our organization's vision and how will we win?
- c. What do we stand for as an organization?

The methods of the study included individual telephone interviews, field observation notes, and archival data. The online journal was another medium for them to log as well their individual reflections. The interviews were conducted soon after the course. The follow up interviews were conducted approximately one year after the course. The interviews were focused on particular episodes and stories surrounding the individuals' authentic leadership development experiences. Each open-ended interview was comprised of a set of questions whereby the participant could tell his or her story. Both probing and follow-up questions were asked of each research subject in order to collect and clarify information anticipated according to the interview protocol.

Preliminary Findings and Discussion

We observed that the leadership development program facilitated the participants engagement in a series of reflective moments. There were three different patterns of reflections that emerged from this study: content, process, and premise (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1981). Based on the findings, the authors developed a process model of authentic leadership development with reflective practices (Figure 1).

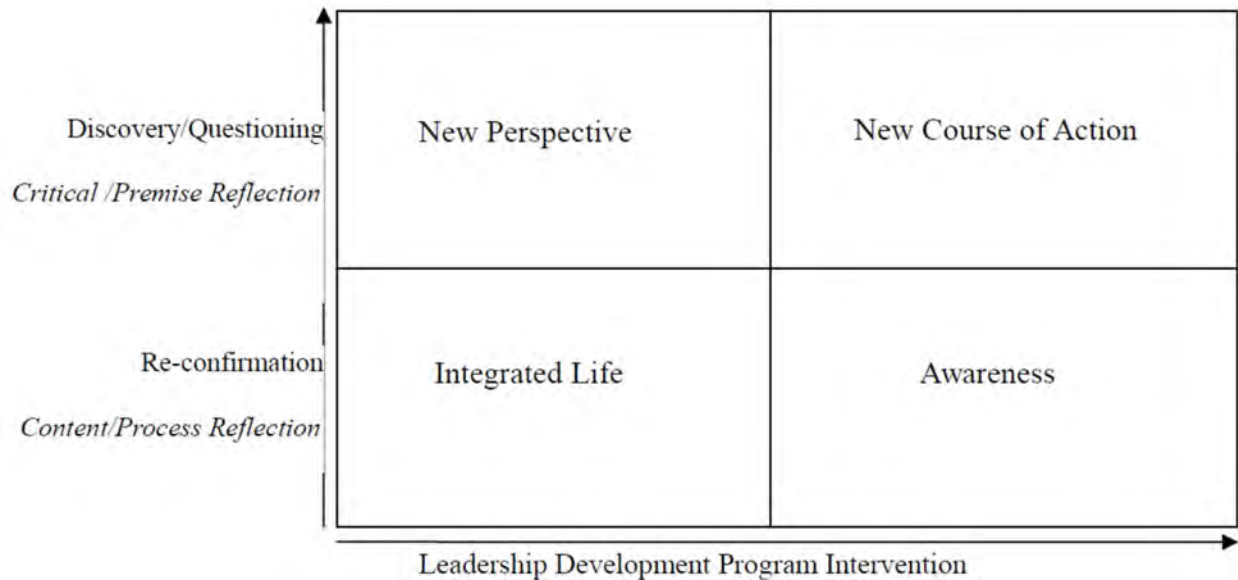


Figure 1. Authentic leadership development process with reflective practices model.

The majority of people were able to reconfirm their values and/or increased awareness of their leadership values. The 80% of people experienced “content reflection” during which they simply questioned what their values were. As a result, they were able to reconfirm their values and/or increased awareness of their values. As the second theme, 53% of people showed “process reflection” on how their values have formed or where the values came from. After the program, for example, an individual mentioned that she is more self-conscious of what she stands for as a leader. After the program ended, she made a conscious efforts of communicating her values with people at work. Another individual reported that she modified her communication style after the program as she became more aware of what she believes. Her organization was going through a lot of changes. It sounds simple, but a fundamental belief she stands for is “honesty.” She started simply being honest with people about what changes are happening and what she knows, and what she did not know, which eventually helped her team build trust.

While majority of people experienced either or both content and process reflections, only 20% of people had premise, the third, or critical reflection. An essential question that they asked themselves was “why are their values important?” They reflected on socially constructed assumptions, beliefs, and values inherent in the experience or challenge (Coryell, 2013; Cranton, 2006). The reflection on premises is what allows the individuals’ belief system to be examined in order to determine whether the previously acquired beliefs are still functional, examining their origins, nature, and consequences. Learning that involves critical reflection on the premises of a problem or on the individual herself or himself may transform meaning perspectives, a learning experience that is more meaningful and less frequent (Mezirow, 1994). One participant explained that he had an opportunity to critically reflect on past crises that helped define his leadership values. He said, “Part of the process of building the credo was easy, but when you get into the personal aspects of why that value, and why that matters, that got a little bit more personal.”

The study results also indicated that a half of people who had premise or critical reflection felt a disorienting dilemma as they did not take an action or change even though they

gained a new perspective on life and work. They saw the gap between their values and their reality. As a result, they ultimately took new action (Stevens, Gerber & Hendra, 2010). For example, a participant who works in a financial service firm said, “my heart tells me I should be working with people who are younger helping them figure out ways that can help people become more financially secure...the way this has impacted me is I have actually questioned what I’m doing.” People were aware of their new frame of reference yet they did not change their course of action at the time of the interviews. However, as outcomes of having individuals develop authenticity in leadership, the follow-up survey 1 year after the program revealed that a half of those who experienced “premise or critical reflection” changed their course of action. The person described above, for example, negotiated his company to transfer him to the newly opened department where he can actually help people who need help to become more financially secure. The individual, in other words, changed his job by transferring to a new section that better suits what his “heart” tells himself. The meaning structures are transformed by reflection, which involves the critique of assumptions in order to determine whether the beliefs previously acquired are still functional, and the examination of their origins, nature, and consequences. The trigger of reflection comes from a confrontation with a disorienting dilemma. The gravity of this dilemma or of a trauma influences the probability of a change; under high pressure of external circumstances (e.g., death of a partner), a change in perspective is more prone to happening. The transformation in perspective can happen through a sudden insight or as a process of successive transitions that allow for the revision of specific assumptions about oneself and others until the structure of assumptions is changed (Mezirow, 1981). Critical reflection of assumptions is then a key concept for the understanding of how adults learn to think for themselves, instead of acting based on concepts, values, and feelings of other people (Mezirow, 1998).

In summation, our study revealed that people can develop authenticity in leadership by increasing their self-awareness and engaging in deep reflections through interactive activities and to communicate their values to one another. Through a leadership development program people were able to re-confirm or increase awareness of their values or discover their values through reflections – content, process or premise, which was a critical part of authentic leadership development.

Limitations

It is important to note that there are some limitations in this research regarding the assessment of executives’ authentic leadership development. First, this research focuses on subjects’ perceptions of their transformative learning experiences on their authentic leadership development processes. There is no other data that objectively verify what they explain, such as interviews with their surrounding colleagues including their peers, direct reports, and bosses. Second, the sample size of this study supported in-depth exploration of the participants’ perspectives but limits the generalizability of the data beyond the sample, especially beyond the program. Third, the research is conducted by voluntary participation, which also limits the variety of data. The positive aspects of the program on authentic leadership development may have been emphasized by those who voluntarily participate in the study. Lastly, given the sample population across organizations, it is important to recognize that the research did not cover how and to what extent each individual’s organization’s culture or norm impact their authentic leadership development. However, the findings bring insights, concepts, and contribute a theoretical view for future populations and researchers to build upon.

Conclusion

Our study revealed that people can develop authenticity in leadership by increasing their self-awareness and engaging in deep reflections by having participated in a leadership development course. Discovering one's leadership values can be a great asset for leaders and managers. It empowers them further to better respond to challenging conditions in our society. We feel that discussions of our research at the conference will be beneficial not only for executives who lead their teams and organizations but also for adult educators and practitioners who are responsible for designing leadership development programs.

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Towards an Integrated Conceptualization of Dialogical Action

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Abstract: Habermas' view regarding dialogical action constitutes a seminal suggestion within the field of Transformative Learning (TL). He introduced the notion of *discourse*, understood as a specific form of reflective dialogue to which we resort when we need to question the validity claims of our speech acts and come to an agreement. Mezirow and other TL scholars contributed to the enrichment of the conceptualization of discourse or suggested alternative views of dialogical action. Nowadays, there is a broad range of perspectives concerning this issue, which move towards various and often opposite directions. Consequently, the challenge to look for congruency emerges, aiming at attempting a more unified approach. This paper aims at contributing to this task. In the first section, Habermas' pivotal view is presented. In the second section, research on Mezirow's approach is discussed, while the third one includes an account of newer theoretical perspectives. Furthermore, there is a discussion of applications of the dialogical action within TL practice. In the last section, I present my reflections aiming at searching for connections among the various views as well as bringing out the need for further research.

Introduction

Habermas (1984) considered discourse as a *sine qua non* process for building relationships and handling tensions. He claimed that discourse might constitute a doorway towards the establishment of democratic processes and cooperative actions. Mezirow shared the idea of the importance of the role of discourse in assessing beliefs and pursuing mutuality. He made clear (Mezirow, 2000, p. xiii) that Habermas' conceptualization has been a major influence and a "building block" of his view regarding TL. Other scholars of TL (e.g. Cranton, 2006; Taylor, 2009) consider discourse as one of the basic components of its framework. However, most of the TL theorists claim – having in mind the emphasis on the rational dimension of discourse that prevails in most of Mezirow's writings – that his view is quite restrictive. Thus they suggest broader or alternative views, that may take further dimensions into consideration, such as the affective, the relational, and the psycho-social. A number of theorists build on Mezirow's view and expand his conception. Some keep their distance and suggest alternative perspectives, while others seek a more holistic approach. In this paper I conduct a literature review of the theoretical views and practices regarding the dialogical action within the TL framework, seeking to capture the whole picture as much as possible. I also make suggestions towards an integrated conceptualization of this issue.

Habermas' view

Habermas (1984) argues that the ultimate aim of communication is to reach an understanding that could lead to consensus and coordination of individually pursued plans of action. However, not all forms of communication may arrive at this end, but only *communicative action*, which contains certain *validity claims* that are endemic to it and might be used as criteria in order to judge whether each utterance pursues shared understanding: The

claim of *truth*: the speaker takes up a clear relation to existing circumstances; the claim of *rightness*: the speaker adduces arguments that are appropriate, justified and morally permitted in respect to the prevailing norms of the discursive community; the claim of *comprehensibility*: the speaker uses linguistic expressions that are understandable by the hearer(s); the claim of *authenticity*: the speaker wants the hearer(s) to give credence to what she says, thereby she discloses, reveals, confesses and the like, manifesting that she means what she says and she intends to pursue the relationship with the hearer(s).

Habermas (1984) considers that discourse is activated when the interlocutors challenge one or more validity claims of each other's speech acts. To enter into discourse reflects a commitment of the participants that they should attempt to make good their validity claims and seek consensus. This pursuit of agreement constitutes, according to Habermas, the core element of discourse and is inextricably linked with the intention to reach understanding itself: "Reaching understanding is considered to be a process of reaching agreement among speaking and acting subjects [...] Processes of reaching understanding aim at an agreement that meets the conditions of rationally motivated assent to the content of an utterance" (Habermas, 1984, pp. 286, 287).

Furthermore, Habermas identified a number of rules of discourse aiming to immunize it against repression and ensure its full realization:

1. Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in the discourse.
2. a) Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatsoever.
b) Everyone is allowed to introduce any question whatsoever into the discourse.
c) Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs.
3. No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in (1) and (2) above. (Habermas, 1990, p. 89)

Finally, Habermas claimed that discourse is completed when the "unforced force" of the best argument wins out.

Mezirow's Contribution

In the early 1980s, Mezirow adopted the Habermasian perspective and transferred it within the field of TL. His train of thought was that we incessantly need to interpret and judge the validity of our own and others' assertions, but, given the actual absence of possibilities for empirical testing, our quest for understanding is predicated on the reflective assessment of assumptions through discourse.

Later on Mezirow (1997) made a shift. He did not mention exclusively the rational dimension of discourse; he expanded it with the idea that empathy lies among the conditions of this specific kind of dialogue: "Effective discourse depends on how well the educator can create a situation in which those participating [...] are empathic and open to other perspectives; are willing to listen and to search for common ground or synthesis of different points of view" (p.10).

Three years later, Mezirow (2000) expanded his prior position. He emphasized the dimension of empathy, arguing that efficient discourse depends widely on moving from self-serving debate to empathic listening and concern about how others think and feel:

There is also a close relationship between the ideal conditions of discourse and what Belenky and her colleagues refer to as "really talking", in which emphasis is placed on active listening, domination is absent, reciprocity and cooperation are

prominent, and judgment is withheld until one empathically understands another's point of view (Mezirow, 2000, p.14)

Moreover, Mezirow clarified that discourse might not be conceived in terms of antagonism between opposing sides. He pointed out that: "Discourse is not based on winning arguments; it centrally involves finding agreement, welcoming difference, 'trying on' other points of view, identifying the common in the contradictory, tolerating the anxiety implicit in paradox, searching for synthesis, and reframing" (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 12-13). Within this framework, the argument the interlocutors will agree upon constitutes the result of a participatory process of collective judgment, Mezirow also stressed that the final judgment is always provisional and tentative, "until new perspectives, evidence, or arguments are encountered and validated through discourse" (p.14) – an idea which confirmed his point of view regarding the non-competitiveness of the discursive process.

Finally, Mezirow, in one of his last papers (2009/2006), repeated the position that the cognitive and the affective – relational dimension of discourse complement one another. In the same paper, he draws attention to the fact that the interlocutors' commitment to seek consensus might be hard or unattainable. However, he thinks that this should not be considered as a reason for adult educators to be discouraged from prompting further discursive processes. He claims that even if no consensus occurs, the values and beliefs of interlocutors might still be mutually understandable, as well as their reasons for disagreement: "Our effort must be directed at seeking a consensus among informed adults communication, when this is possible, but, at least, to clearly understand the context of the assumptions of those disagreeing" (Mezirow, 2009/2006, p. 91). Thus, one of Mezirow's latest arguments is that our involvement in processes that aim at awareness of each other's perspective constitutes a crucial contribution towards the construction of meaningful relationships. Otherwise, he claims that the only alternative is to rely on tradition, an authority or force.

Other perspectives

Building on Mezirow's perspective. Fleming (2014) starts from the acknowledgement of the significance of Honneth's theory of recognition – a notion understood as an interpersonal process of caring and support that builds reciprocal self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence. Fleming argues that there is a close connection between the experience of recognition and the development of one's identity. Drawing on this idea, he identifies the implications that might have the consideration of recognition into the process of discourse. He claims that, without altering the importance of Mezirow's and Habermas' conceptualization, we may reframe it so that it is grounded in the mutual recognition between learners. Doing so, recognition might be seen as a precondition of discourse that may "soften" the emphasis on rationality.

Gunnlaugson (2005) also starts from Mezirow's view; however, he argues that it has to be enriched with a broader canvas of ways of knowing. More specifically, he states that the form of "meta-conversation" – a generative dialogue about "what was just talked about, felt, intuited or sensed" (Gunnlaugson, 2005, p. 190) – may unearth learners' sensorimotor schematas, emotions, desires and thoughts, thereby contributing to the expansion of their territories of awareness.

Alternative views. A number of scholars have expressed alternative ideas, pointing out the catalytic impact of the emotional and relational issues within learners' interaction. For instance, Dirkx and Smith (2005, 2009) emphasize the psycho-social dynamics that are

embedded within individual-group relationship, namely the dependency on authority figures or reactions against it, fear of intimacy, tendencies to imagine and either fight with or run from perceived enemies, scapegoating, issues of belonging, etc. Aiming to address these challenges, the authors use the framework of depth psychology and the theory of group dynamics. Moreover, they suggest a number of pedagogical strategies that may foster deep emotionally laden interactions between group members, such as debriefings of learners' experiences, journalism (where participants explore emotionally powerful ideas or relationships that arise within the course) or reflective writing.

Belenky and Stanton (2000) in turn argue that, if the resulting consensus of discourse is predicated on the coherence of the best argument, as they consider to be the positions of Habermas and Mezirow, a dualistic approach is likely to emerge. Consequently, Belenky and Stanton put forward the idea that the essence of learners' interaction should be the concept of *connected knowing*, within whose framework participants look for strengths – not for weaknesses – in each other's argument, seek to understand each other and engage in collaborative practice.

Holistic views. Other theorists aim to elaborate a more unifying perspective. Cranton (2006), based on Jung's psychological type theory, argues that "different people engage in transformative learning in different ways" (p.43); therefore, regarding learners' attitude towards a kind of discourse that is pervaded by reasoning, those who have a preference for thinking may become familiarized with this process, while others who are strongly introverted may find it hard. Consequently, Cranton suggests that adult educators might maintain an awareness of the different psychological type preferences, and use various learning and dialogical strategies so that each category of learners could be attracted by some of them.

Dix (2016) claims that discourse might be considered as a much broader and more comprehensive process than what Habermas and Mezirow have identified. Dix's suggestion is that emancipatory educators might recognize the significance of the non verbal dimensions that are embedded in dialogue. Consequently, he claims that the conceptualization of discourse should include not only cognitive and linguistic but also nondiscursive and embodied modes of communication, such as pointing, illustrating, and showing.

Finally, Yorks and Kasl (2002) criticize the stance of most adult educators in North America for the reason that they do not pay attention to the importance of the affective dimension as a basic component of the transformational process. They suggest a holistic conceptualization of learning and participants' interaction within which the affective way of knowing constitutes an essential feature, while simultaneously it is balanced with other ways of knowing (imaginal, rational, practical). Moreover, Yorks and Kasl, based on Heron's theoretical framework, suggest a strategy titled *learning-within-relationship*, that may contribute to the development of whole-person learning. This strategy takes two interconnected forms: the creation of empathic field among learners, as well as practices of presentational knowing that aim at "our intuitive grasp of the significance of imaginal patterns as expressed in graphic, plastic, moving, musical, and verbal art forms" (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 182).

Insights from Practice

The literature that regards how discourse or alternative forms of dialogue have been engaged within educational settings is rather limited. However, certain empirical studies have offered important insights. I present some of them as an indication.

Shapiro, Wasserman and Gallegos (2012) studied the behavior of various learning groups in which dialogical action occurs. They concluded that the learning groups could be classified into three types, according to the goal that they share, and that within each type of group a specific sort of dialogical process takes place. The groups aiming at self-awareness and personal growth (Mezirow's model), as well as those aiming at the critical systemic consciousness (Freire's model), usually include the sort of dialogue that has been suggested by Habermas and Mezirow. On the contrary, the kinds of groups that aim at the development of relational empathy across differences (the model of Boyd and Myers) imply a sort of dialogue that favors the sharing of experiences. Furthermore, the authors present data that confirm the argumentation of the theorists who move towards a unified theory of TL: the more the models of group functioning overlap, the more powerful transformative learning can become.

Brookfield and Preskill (1999) implemented a variety of techniques aiming to reinforce students' interaction (e.g. 'critical conversation protocol', 'critical debate', 'critical incident questionnaire', 'circular response', etc). The two authors realized that these techniques had been useful to educators who aim at preserving their commitment to discussion.

On the other hand, a number of authors pinpoint the difficulties that emerge in the frame of dialogical action within learning groups. Dirkx and Smith (2005) drawing from their inquiry regarding students enrolled in graduate-level online courses, conclude that the participants faced considerable difficulties during the individual-group interaction: "There is relatively little evidence that the participants valued being held collectively responsible for the quality of their work together" (pp. 115, 117). The authors attribute these difficulties to the dynamics of power and influence, such as differences in experience, knowledge, and background, as well as lack of clear expectations and role definitions.

Wilhelmson (2008) showed that the difficulty for meaningful dialogue to occur within learning groups is connected to issues of power relations and gender differences. With particular regard to the latter issue, Wilhelmson argues that men's way of speaking is more individualistic and competitive. Conversely, women's conversational style is often more cooperative, while the differences in opinions stay rather vague.

Finally, Yorks and Kasl (2002) realized through their engagement with groups where learners' individual perspectives are divergent, that "the more diverse the learners, the less likely it is that they will be able to create an empathic field that enables them to understand the other's point of view" (p.186).

Reflections

A concluding remark regarding the aforementioned literature review is that the conceptualization of dialogical action within TL has been significantly broadened. Nowadays, this issue may be related to a wide range of aspects, such as the validity claims of truth, rightness, comprehensibility and authenticity, as well as the dimensions of empathy, recognition, meta-conversation, connected knowing, presentational knowing, embodied modes of communication, and consideration of psycho-social dynamics. Hence, we, adult educators, may draw from this nexus and choose the components that suit our learning strategy. Even better, we may bring together the components that are congruent. For example, I argue that Habermas' view on authenticity might be combined with the relevant concerns of the non-rational approaches of knowing, while connected knowing could be related to Mezirow's concern (2000) regarding the readiness to seek mutual understanding. Furthermore, I share Cranton's idea (2006) that the dialogical strategies might be related to learners' preferable ways of knowing.

Nevertheless, there is still a lot to be done towards an integrated approach. One problematic issue is that a number of scholars address the primary theoretical sources only partially. This is the case, for example, of Dix (2016), who does not seem to take into account Mezirow's ultimate conceptualization of discourse. More specifically, he mentions: "Mezirow appears to instrumentalize the nondiscursive and not wholly cognitive as merely facilitative" (p.144). Even though the justification of this critique is connected to Mezirow's primary ideas, it does not correspond to the ideas that he suggested later and that were presented in a previous section of this paper. Thus, I argue that the critiques that are not engaged in integral grounding, as well as the overemphasis on opposite views, do not contribute to avoiding the emergence of dualistic approaches within the TL framework. I posit that there is a need for theoretical approaches that attempt to capture the whole picture and seek convergences between the various perspectives. The dialogue between Mezirow, Dirkx and Cranton (Mezirow, Dirkx & Cranton, 2006) is a creative case in point.

Another crucial issue is the lack of sufficient research regarding how dialogical action is integrated within educational processes, and more specifically how the substantial difficulties that seem to arise within its framework can be dealt with. In addition, researchers could make more use of the theoretical field of group dynamics, which could provide further understanding of the aspects of interaction within groups, such as dealing with complexity and unpredictability, constructively utilizing diversity, motives for participating, psychodynamic mechanisms, emerging roles, stages of group development etc.

Finally, I argue that if we, in our attempt to explore the phenomenon of dialogue and participate in it, get in touch with significant works of art that deal with this issue (indicatively, Aeschylus *Eumenides*, Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, Lumet's *Twelve Angry Men*) we may gain insights that would otherwise be scarcely possible to emerge from the established academic ways of making sense.

Conclusively, through the construction of appropriate bridges between the various perspectives and practices, the rise of new research questions, and the use of aesthetic experience, we might contribute towards a synthetic elaboration of the conceptualization of dialogical action and development of meaningful communicative processes within TL practice.

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Understanding the Role of Vulnerability in “Transformative” Executive Development Programs

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Abstract: This paper seeks to understand how senior level executives experience vulnerability through a “transformative” 16-month executive development program. Specific questions this paper will explore are as follows: How do executives acknowledge whether or not they experience vulnerability? How do executives understand and make sense of the phenomenon of vulnerability? How do these interpretations impact the transformative learning experience of these executives, especially during times of transition?

Introduction

This paper sought to understand how senior level executives experience vulnerability through a “transformative” 16-month executive development program through a pilot research study. This study will help fill a gap in the literature regarding the role vulnerability plays in how individuals experience transformative learning programs; offer insights to practitioners who develop these programs; as well as offer insights to the executives themselves who plan on transitioning to new roles.

Brene Brown’s Ted Talk on the “Power of Vulnerability” which was filmed in June of 2010 has been viewed over 22 million times, indicating an interest in the topic. Scholars, as well as practitioners have observed that learning can cause anxiety and fear (Argyris, 1991; Contu, 2002); however there has not been much done to understand the phenomenon of vulnerability. Kegan and Lahey (2009) indicated that anxiety management creates blind spots, prevents new learnings and constrains action.

Kets de Vries & Korotov (2007) discussed the transformative nature of executive programs and they also indicated that participants in these programs often struggle with personal and organizational issues. Kaiser and Kaplan (2006) indicated that executives in the workplace are sensitive to being hurt by repeat experiences of a painful event from the past, and that this disposition can cause anger, fear and panic. Turner and Mavin (2007) claimed that vulnerability is an under researched aspect of leadership and they indicated that further research is necessary to understand how leaders experience isolation, vulnerability and emotional displays.

Literature Review

The literature provides opposing perspectives on how an individual might acknowledge themes of vulnerability. An individual might not want to acknowledge vulnerability because it may bring about anxiety or fear; yet scholars also indicate that it is this very anxiety that helps an individual learn through these dissonant experiences. This idea is explored in Mezirow’s (1978) transformative learning theory. One component of Mezirow’s (1978) transformative learning theory is the concept of disorienting dilemma. Recognizing the dissonance between what one has believed in the past and changing a worldview based on this dissonance can lead to an individual feeling alone and vulnerable. Mezirow (1978) elaborated that resolving this dissonance through critical reflection leads to successive levels of self-development. The more an individual confronts a disorienting dilemma, potentially exposing vulnerabilities, the more they will

develop; in fact, Mezirow (1978) indicated that the disorienting dilemma usually generates pressure and anxiety to produce a change in perspective. Cranton & Wright (2008) echoed this sentiment and said that transformative learning happens with these events that call into question what we believe. Conversely, Cranton & Wright (2008) also admitted that not all adult learners are ready and willing to experience these dilemmas and that the environments they are returning are hopeful or accepting.

Identity. Various scholars have attempted to understand Mezirow's transformative theory taking into consideration social aspects of learning including emotion, identity, and the micro-processes that occur between learners, mentors and others in the environment. Illeris (2014) explored what form actually transforms during the learning process; his answer is that the individual's identity changes. In their reflections on an online inquiry class, Hanlin-Rowney and her colleagues agreed that "transformation was a change in self-identity for each of us, resulting in new expressions and a new view of the self, overcoming resistance or fear to reach a more full and honest self-expression, fostering deeper self-knowledge" (Hanlin-Rowney, et. al, 2006, p. 327). Dirkx (2006) added that in formal adult learning settings that are interactive and dialogical, the unconscious is often expressed through emotionally laden experiences, images and relationships. As individual's question their identity, they might sometimes feel as if they are in a state of ambivalence where they might feel vulnerable.

Liminality & Threshold Concepts. Malkki & Green (2014) criticized Mezirow for his attention to what happens to an individual once they have gone through the transformative process, yet not focusing on the turmoil that it necessitates. Malkki & Green (2014) focused on the liminal spaces where individuals reside as they are trying to figure out their new identity. Hawkins & Edwards (2005) actually believe that liminal passages provide a way of articulating the experiences of management and business studies undergraduates as they negotiate the links between leadership, learning, identity and transformation. They also discussed the idea of threshold concepts, where students experience doubt and confusion about an aspect of leadership theory and practice, which require them to alter their perspective (Hawkins & Edwards, 2015). Yip & Raelin (2011) indicated that threshold concepts are troublesome because encounters with such concepts are typically accompanied by a period of difficulty, requiring constitutive change in thinking and practice.

These notions of identity, liminality and threshold concepts are important to the questions regarding how senior level executives experience vulnerability as they participate in a "transformative" 16-month executive development program. Two participants who have completed the program were interviewed to capture their reflections on their experiences with vulnerability and transformative learning.

Overview of Methodology

Various scholars have written that a person's worldview frames what is studied and how (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Crotty, 1998; Huff, 2009). Crotty (1998) defined theoretical perspective as "the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria" and epistemology as "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology." (p.3) Crotty (1998) indicated that "interpretivism emerged in contradistinction to positivist attempts to understand and explain human society and that interpretivism is often linked to Max Weber's idea that in human science we are more concerned with understanding" (p. 66-67). Burrell and Morgan (1979) characterized an interpretive worldview as one in which the nature of society is

perceived as integrated, stable and coordinated. Huff (2009) used social constructivist and interpretivism interchangeably and explained how the interpretive worldview influences scholar conversation; she indicated that the focus of scholarly activity with a social constructivist/interpretive worldview is to create knowledge through insights from multiple accounts. Creswell (2013) included various frameworks under the interpretive category including social constructivism.

The study utilized a social constructivist interpretive worldview. This study focused on understanding (Crotty, 1998) the phenomenon of vulnerability as senior level executives participated in the executive development program through multiple realities constructed by the lived experiences and interactions with others (Creswell, 2013). Reality was co-constructed between the researcher and subjects through an inductive method of emergent ideas obtained through interviews and knowledge was created through insights from these various accounts (Creswell, 2013; Huff, 2009). Throughout the interview process individual's values were honored as the researcher acknowledged the subjects lived experiences with vulnerability and negotiated as the researcher challenged the subjects to reflect on these experiences.

Research Procedures. The first step Vagle (2014) recommended in conducting phenomenological research is to identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial and varied contexts, conduct a partial review of the literature, philosophical claim, statement of phenomenon, contexts and participant selection. The phenomenon, as well as a partial review of literature, philosophical claim are stated above.

The setting for this study is a national, non-profit organization whose structure is defined as a distributed social enterprise; leadership of this social enterprise is distributed across more than 150 territories in the United States and Canada. Each of these territories is led by a different CEO, board of directors and staff members. These territories are members of the national umbrella organization that is responsible for providing strategy and leadership for the enterprise. The researcher is familiar with this setting based on 12 years of working for the national umbrella organization in several different capacities.

Creswell (2013) indicated a sample size of three to twenty five is ideal for phenomenological research. Over the past eight years, many senior level executives have participated in a cohort driven executive development program administered by the national umbrella organization. Since this was a pilot study to test the interview protocol that will be used in the researcher's dissertation, the researcher chose to interview only two subjects.

Data Collection. Vagle (2014) recommended that in order to collect data under a phenomenological philosophy the researcher needs to devise a clear and flexible process for gathering data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation and select data sources that are aligned with the research question. This study utilized Seidman's (2013) three-part interview protocol to collect data; Seidman indicated that the 'three-interview series allows both the interviewer and participant to explore the participants experience, place it in context and reflect on its meaning' (p. 20); the first interview is focused on the individual's life history, the second interview is focused on the details of the experience and the third interview is focused on the reflection of the meaning of the experience.

Data Analysis. Van Manen (2014) encouraged researchers to do a wholistic reading, selective reading and a detailed reading of the interview transcripts to identify codes and themes that represent the essence of the phenomenon studied. Vagle (2014) recommended that researchers create a post-reflexion plan that assists the researcher in identifying moments when the interviewees or the researcher connect or disconnect with the researcher's initial assumptions

as well as identifying moments when the researcher or interviewee is shocked. He also suggested that the researcher read and write his or her way through the data in a systematic and responsive manner crafting text that captures tentative manifestations, not essences, of the phenomenon. This study utilized a combination Van Manen's (2014) and Vagle's (2014) methods to analyze the data; utilizing Van Manen's suggestions to conduct a wholistic reading, selective reading and detailed reading of the interview transcriptions while utilizing Vagle's suggestions to capture moments that connected or disconnected with the researcher's assumptions as well as moments that shocked the researcher.

Subjectivity. The researcher of this study chose to utilize Vagle's (2014) method of bridling (a reflexive open stance where the researcher "bridles" his or her understanding so he or she does not understand too quickly or carelessly, or so that the researcher's own agency does not determine the phenomenon) to ensure his agency and subjectivity did not determine the phenomenon, but instead he let the phenomenon emerge. As the data was analyzed, in addition to codes and themes that were reflected in the review of literature, the researcher considered other explanations or lenses of learning through which he might understand the phenomenon, and there were certain codes that emerged that were not necessarily reflected in the conceptual framework.

Validity. Vagle (2009) indicated that validity in phenomenological research should center on the notion of intentionality, which marks the in-between spaces between subjects and the world that link us with the world we experience. Validity is pursued through the intentional relationship with the phenomenon (Vagle, 2009). It is up to the researcher to prove that he or she has consistently questioned the data and his or her own assumptions in order to resist the temptation to settle for superficial or false speculations. Van Manen (2014) indicated that validity of phenomenological research can be pursued through heuristic questioning – or contemplative wonder (similar to Vagle's notion of shock), descriptive richness, interpretive depth – insights that go beyond taken-for-granted understandings of everyday life, distinctive rigor, strong and addressive meaning, experiential awakening, and inceptual epiphany. Vagle (2009) and Van Manen (2014) are not too different in how they each approach validity and the researcher has decided to utilize a mix of their methods to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Regarding reliability, the researcher shared the transcriptions and initial themes with each of the research participants to ensure that he interpreted the data correctly. Although, the data and themes represented a new way for the participants to think about how they experienced vulnerability and learning through the executive development programs and through the interviews, each of the participants concurred with the researcher's interpretation of the data.

Findings

The initial research question was "***How do senior level executives experience vulnerability as they participate in a cohort driven executive development program?***" Both participants frequently acknowledged during the application and interview process for the executive development program they were uncertain about what to expect; risk and emotional exposure was almost always coded alongside uncertainty. They also experienced uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure throughout the program as well. These constructs represent the three parts of Brown's (2012) definition of vulnerability.

Both participants discussed the ideas of belonging, affirmation, acceptance and feeling supported, especially as it related to the peers in the executive development program. It was important that each of the participants demonstrated that they had a right to be in the program and accepted by everyone else, or at least had a contribution to make to the group. These

responses also help answer the question related to social learning and understanding vulnerability in the context of a group. Both participants mentioned mentors and their supervisors. They also mentioned eventually connecting with members of their respective cohorts and how some of these individuals have helped them outside of the cohort experience.

Both participants expressed how transformative the executive development program has been in their own personal development. Even though each participant is at different stages of his or her career, both acknowledged having disorienting dilemmas as they progressed through the executive development program as well as feeling as in a space of liminality; this is related to the third research question regarding how an individual interprets and learns through his or her vulnerability. Below are quotes that represent examples of the transformative nature of their experiences:

Table 1.
The Intersections Between Vulnerability and Transformative Learning as Represented in Jack’s Quotes Regarding His Experience in the Executive Development Program

Jack’s Quotes	Transformative Learning				Vulnerability		
	Disorienting Dilemma	Liminality	Threshold Concepts	Reflection	Risk	Uncertainty	Emotional Exposure
“You don’t know what you’re going to learn. You don’t know what you don’t know. You don’t know who is in there with you. Do you stack up to people in the group?”	X	X			X	X	X
“In EDP, these people have these experiences and this amount of years, and titles – do I really belong. Sometimes, I have doubts about myself.”	X	X	X		X	X	
“When I started EDP, I thought the other participants had more life experiences. Am I ready for this situation right now?”	X	X		X	X	X	X
“I think you need to push yourself as well. You need to challenge yourself. By me putting myself in situations that are uncomfortable, I learn more.”	X	X		X	X	X	X

Table 2.

The Intersections Between Vulnerability and Transformative Learning as Represented in Sarah's Quotes Regarding His Experience in the Executive Development Program

Sarah's Quotes	Transformative Learning				Vulnerability		
	Disorienting Dilemma	Liminality	Threshold Concepts	Reflection	Risk	Uncertainty	Emotional Exposure
"I am like pinching myself, because the moment she asks, I am almost in tears. There is now way I am going to become a CEO."	X	X	X		X	X	X
"My supervisor said this is where she found her group – the people she likes and that are dear friends with her. I remember thinking this is not going to happen for me."	X			X	X	X	X
"We were the only team that said we should race. All the other teams criticized our answer. It turns out this exercise was about the Challenger, and them not listening to the mechanics. We nailed it."	X		X		X	X	
"I could not have done that reflection in the same way without having gone through that development and leadership."			X	X	X	X	X

Discussion

The significance of this study has implications for the individual who is participating in the study, educators and professionals who design learning programs in the workplace, and the scholarly community in three ways. Through telling his or her story, the senior level executive participating in this study did gain more insights into the transformative nature of his or her learning, especially as these insights relate to feeling vulnerable. Both participants felt like these interviews gave them new ways to understand their own vulnerability. This study will help guide

practitioners and educators as they develop programs that facilitate the development of senior level executives. As practitioners and educators design programs that surface vulnerability, they will need to help participants learn through this vulnerability – they cannot simply dismiss it as psycho-therapy.

Finally, the scholarly community benefits from this study by providing a different, deeper and richer understanding of how senior level executives experience the phenomenon of vulnerability, especially as they learn in a cohort-driven program. This study could be replicated with different subjects in the workplace, for example mid-level managers; or it could be conducted in the corporate setting. This pilot study has informed the researcher as he is working on his dissertation, which will explore: “How Senior Level Executives Experience Vulnerability as The Learn to Transition to the Role of Chief Executive Officer,” representing the next stage of development for these senior level executives.

The most recent cohort of this Executive Development Program graduated in June 2016; the participants participated in a reflection lunch at that annual meeting of the organization. Below is a graphic rendering of the Reflection Lunch conversation. Themes of vulnerability (risk, uncertainty, emotional exposure) and transformative learning (disorienting dilemma, liminality, threshold concepts and reflection) are woven throughout.

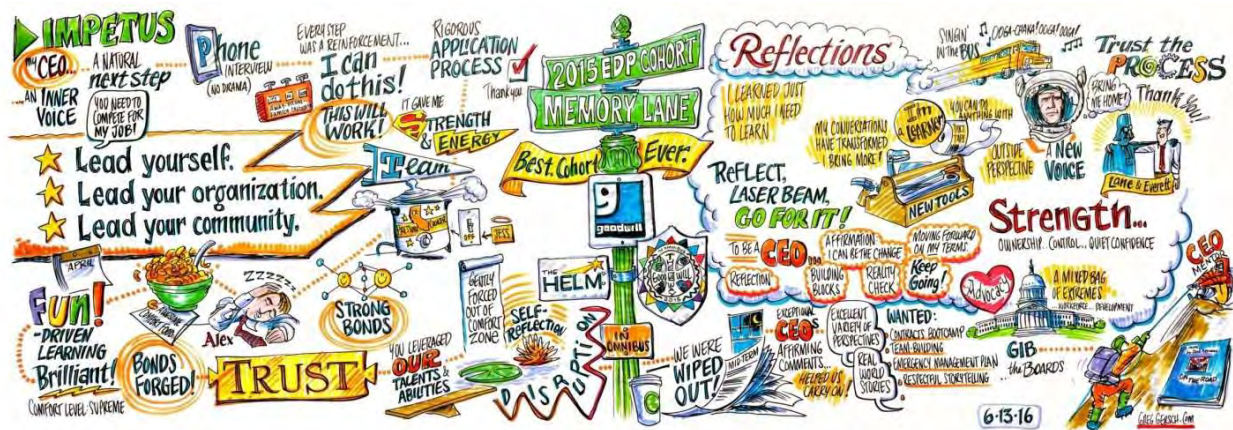


Figure 1. Graphic rendering of 2015 Executive Development Program Reflective lunch held on Monday, June 13, 2016.

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Giving a Hand—Transforming the Lives of First Time Volunteers Participating in a Prosthetic ‘Hand’ Fitting Project with Landmine Victims

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Abstract: To investigate the characteristics of perspective transformation in a non-educational setting, this small-scale, qualitative study focuses on narratives of a small group of Australians who participated as first-time volunteers in a ten day humanitarian project to fit prosthetic ‘hands’ on landmine amputees in Sri Lanka. Narrative inquiry allowed for thematic analysis of the data, affording ‘windows’ into how the group variously engaged at cultural, ethnic and social intersections previously unknown to them. As the group engaged in the project, a discernible shift occurred between a focus on what they assumed would be ‘personal’ challenges, to a focus on empathy and respect for the ‘other’, namely the amputees and their families. It was found that in helping to transform the lives of amputees, the volunteers were presented with opportunities to examine personal perspectives and paradigmatic assumptions, and experience profound, personal transformation as their assumed challenges became overshadowed by ontological and philosophical contemplations. In situating this study beyond more often researched educational contexts, this paper demonstrate that catalysts for perspective transformation do indeed arise when different social and cultural values and experiences intersect.

Rationale for This Study

In his review of empirical research from 1999-2005, Taylor (2007) laments the “dominance of higher education settings for the conduct of research into transformative learning” (p. 175). Much of this literature indeed positions research about transformative learning theory in educational contexts, but the last decade has seen considerable research in other contexts (see Malkki, 2014; Merriam & Ntseane, 2008; Sands & Tennant, 2010; Hoggan, 2014). Additional works include those cited by Taylor (2007) (Baumgartner, 2002; Bennetts 2003; Carter, 2002; Courtenay et al, 2000; Feinstein, 2004, Garvett, 2004; King 2000; Kroth and Boverie, 2000; Lange, 2004; MacLeod et al. 2003; Scott, 2003). This study seeks to further contribute to this growing body of knowledge and relates the story of a small group of Western volunteers (henceforth referred to as participants) who voluntarily participated in an international humanitarian project, namely the Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) registered project (Project 62—2013/14) entitled “Helping Hands”. This occurred in March 2016 and entailed a 10 day visit to Sri Lanka to participate in fitting prosthetic ‘hand(s)’ on landmine amputees. This was a first time experience for all seven participants.

Some Background

A devastating legacy of the 26 year Sri Lankan civil war, ending in 2009, is an indefinite number of unexploded landmines and other explosive remnants of wars. In efforts to address this serious problem, in March 2016, the Sri Lankan government signed the Ottawa Treaty, thereby agreeing that within four years it would “destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines it owns and/or controls under its jurisdiction” (Citizens for Global Solutions (CFGs) (2016, p. 1).

In order to safeguard and transform opportunities for many citizens, it has also committed to continue systematic clearing of these deadly devices. Additional are promises of assistance to thousands of citizens harmed by landmines, many of whom sustained injuries as they went about their lives harvesting, planting, fishing, hunting or engaging in other everyday activities. Such victims not only confront physical limitations but experience attitudinal, economic, social and legal barriers that constrain their full participation in society (CFGS 2014).

Of the numerous humanitarian ventures currently being undertaken in Sri Lanka, in addition to the obvious benefits they provide for local citizens, one small project that fits ‘hands’ to landmine amputees has been found to instigate personal transformative experiences for those who fit the ‘hands’ – namely, the participants in this study. As they became immersed in a socio- cultural world vastly different to their own, the participants were exposed not only to a greater understanding of themselves and ways of being, but to the productive and generative possibilities of themselves and humanitarian ventures. Empirical research informing this paper aims to demonstrate how the participants’ involvement in a non-formal, unknown context posed as a disruptive event that unsettled some of their preconceived assumptions and worldviews, and in turn, led to shifts in notions of themselves and others. In addition to contributing to transformative learning theory, a pragmatic intention is to identify and share findings with organizers of such projects to ensure future first-time volunteers have adequate preparation for some of the personal, socio-cultural and other challenges they may encounter as a result of their participation.

Theoretical Framework

Various interpretations of transformative learning theory have emerged in the almost 40 years since Mezirow’s seminal conceptualisation and it has not been without scrutiny (see for example Newman, 2013, 2014, 2016; Christie, Carey, Robertson & Grainger, 2015) and its organic nature defies a definitive explanation. However, this affords theoretically diverse frameworks. Nested within the broader field of transformative learning theory is perspective transformation which fundamentally holds that when personal assumptions/perspectives become unsettled for any reason, an opportunity for self-reflection arises, activating scrutiny of taken-for-granted perspectives and actions—the ‘default position’ or personal compass that consciously and unconsciously guides us. Long held personal assumptions or perspectives are inevitably shaped by the lenses through which we each view and act upon our world, influenced by upbringing, religion, personality and numerous other socio-cultural-economic factors (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2000). When an assumption/perspective is unsettled, a period of disequilibrium can ensue, during which various emotional expressions can reveal the cognitive and other ‘shifts’ that typically accompany critiqued and revised behavior. After all, personal assumptions are “part of the fabric of who we are” (Cranton, 2006, p. 64) and to question them is to question our “taken- for-granted beliefs about the world and our place in it” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 2). Meaning-making can be facilitated through dialogue with and support from others, or it may be more of a personal, intrinsic contemplation of new knowledge and ways of being and acting. Of course the periods of time during which this occurs and personal awareness of this process are indeterminate and not always perceptible. This mostly complex, non-linear process makes manifest “how people feel when they work outside of the realm of cognitive rationality and find deep, powerful shifts in the way they see themselves and the world” (Cranton, 2006, p. 77). Inevitably, such change is generally pervaded by emotions, “windows that reveal experienced realities” (Dirkx, 2006, p. 17). It is an inclusive conception of

transformative learning theory informed by Cranton (2006) and others (Mezirow, 2000; Dirkx, 2006; 2008) that underpins this paper.

Methodology

Narrative inquiry is an appropriate choice when exploring indications of personal perspective transformations as it allows for use of participants' stories as vehicles for expressions of their thinking about lived and told experiences. Encompassing both rational and extra-rational manifestations and the "messy and complex" (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, p. 6), narratives are perceived by Connelly and Clandinin (2006, p. 375) as providing a "portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful". It is within such spaces that emotions are made manifest, representations of how personal transformation can 'feel'. Narrative inquiry also allows for "particularities and context [to] come to the fore" (Riessman, 2008, p. 13) and "reveal truths about human experience" (Riessman, 2008, p. 11), thus allowing researchers to "understand in more complex and nuanced ways the storied experiences of individuals as they compose stories lived on storied landscapes" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 71).

Clarke and Rossiter (2006, p. 31) note that personal narratives serve not only to link concepts to previous life experiences, "but also to transcend those experiences and see the larger social and cultural structures that shape lives and their meaning-making". Thus narrative inquiry is used in this study as a way to focus attention on experiences articulated by the participants as they prepared for and then travelled to Sri Lanka to engage in the project. Their narratives proved instrumental in constituting descriptions of tensions associated with the cultural and social intersections they navigated (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) and simultaneously provided opportunities for them to fathom those experiences (Riessman, 2008), a significant phase of perspective transformation.

Gathering the Evidence

The data collection phase for research informing this paper entailed two on-line surveys consisting of open-ended questions—a **pre-project** and a **post-project** survey. Although several authors (Burrows, 2015; Flick, 2006; Meho, 2006; Murray & Sixsmith, 1998) allude to associated disadvantages of this method, such as possible poor response rates and time delays, and the absence of nonverbal cues, they also acknowledge many benefits. These include access to participants regardless of geographic location; ability to contact participants who may be reticent to engage with the researcher face to face; elimination of "transcription bias" (Mann & Stewart, 2000, p. 22); financial cost and time savings (Meho, 2006); reduction of power ratios for more authentic responses (Mann & Stewart, 2000, p. 22; Flick, 2006); and the ability to generate "reflectively dense accounts" of their experiences with "honesty and frankness" (Murray, 2004, p. 965).

Of the 11 volunteers participating in the voluntary project, seven (7) consented to engage in my study. They were aged between 22 and 64 years, and the anonymous nature of their participation permitted no further demographic data. Prior to their project visit to Sri Lanka, the survey asked the participants to share some of their reasons for participation and what they anticipated would be rewarding and challenging aspects. Upon their return, the **post-project** survey invited them to share any experienced impacts, challenges and rewards they personally experienced and also asked for their choice of a metaphor to capture the essence of their participation. The intention was disclosure of these cognitive representations might provide

further insight in data analysis. Thematic narrative analysis allowed for the emergence of dominant themes, ‘windows’ into various perspectives held about themselves and others, pre- and post-visit. In order for readers to assess the validity and reliability of my interpretations, emergent themes are supported by participants’ actual discourse, as suggested by Murray (2004), and denoted henceforth by italics.

Some Findings

Such a small piece of equipment was bound to change the lives of those fitted and those who fitted.

(Participant, Sri Lanka Project, March 2016)

The participants’ engagement in the ‘hand’-fitting project can be perceived as a disorienting event, providing an impetus for self-reflection and re-framing of personal perspectives. It became apparent that post-visit, there was a significant shift from pre-visit assumptions and expectations about the ‘personal’, to concern and respect for the ‘other’. Pre-visit personal assumptions related to pragmatic issues of maintaining adequate hygiene, coping with the physical demands of likely excessive heat and humidity, and issues of local foods and tolerance for such. However, post-visit, few participants made mention of these and a significant shift emerged in their narratives as they came to reflect more deeply about the ‘other’, namely the recipients, and the life-changing ramifications for them in having a ‘hand’ fitted. Assumptions raised by some participants about *likely language barriers, lack of technical skills* in fitting ‘hands’ and *invading the recipient’s personal space* while fitting the ‘hand’ were found to be actual realities. However, as opposed to the manner in which these tended to be problematized by some participants pre-visit, they revealed the taking of a more proactive stance post-visit, where issues could be sorted by *simply working out ways to find solutions rather than surrender[ing]*. Whilst it was revealed that language difficulties *sometimes felt like a barrier to really connecting*, most participants soon learnt that this could be overcome by authentic gestures, such as *a smile, or a touch or the Aussie thumb go[ing] a long way to breaking the ice and helping people relax*.

Post-visit data revealed a change in assumptions about levels of civic responsibilities and support. In previously underestimating family and other support structures available for amputees, one participant revealed that self-reflection on this assumption had been in play, writing that they were *moved by witnessing the unconditional care and love from family and friends for those injured* and remembers *wondering if that would be the same in the “western world” we live in*. Others were somewhat *surprised, very impressed* and in turn, *respectful* of the level of governmental care that many ex-military amputees *on both sides of the civil war conflict* receive. Participants wrote of being *humbled* and *inspired* by amputees, and their post-visit depiction of amputees as *courageous, adaptable* and *resilient* revealed a shift from a perception of amputees as piteous, to a more deferential, respectful perception. As one participant shared: *I always knew that fitting someone with a hand would undoubtedly change their lives, so that automatically made me feel good... but that really goes out the window as you see the man for who he is. They all have their own story and we appreciated everything they offered of their story*. Introspectively, one participant spoke of their *increased awareness and empathy for what the Sri Lankans have experienced*, whilst for another, self-reflection on dominant, paradigmatic assumptions had transpired: *I have changed the way I have looked at disability in the western world we live in, where we have always been taught to overlook a person’s disability and not to*

focus on it. Such personal insight signals a recognition, examination and reframing of an ingrained worldview.

While some participants initially assumed their involvement in the project would be an antidote for personal aspirations, in a paradoxical way, they came to relate a more communal feeling. Pre-visit assumptions were about self-gratification: *personally witnessing the joy of the recipients (and their families) when receiving their prosthetic hand(s); fulfilling a lifelong goal to be able to make a difference;* and attainment of inherent, personal benefits such as *life satisfaction and personal fulfillment that kindles happiness* when helping others. Post-visit, a metaphor expressed by one participant revealed a shift from personal antidotes to more collective aspirations, *a cog in a much larger wheel*, allowing them to *achieve more as a team than we could be reasonably expected as individuals*. Another similarly reflected this sentiment, sharing that *when like-minded people band together, we can achieve so much more than we can solo*. Post-visit, a discourse of solidarity and comradeship became apparent, reflected by one participant who spoke of their *great sense of belonging to the group ... experiencing this together*. This bond may have been enhanced by opportunities to debrief each evening to share daily experiences with fellow project volunteers, typical of such projects. As Cranton (2006) notes, discourse and dialogue with others can be integral to perspective transformation and making sense of new meaning.

In reflecting humanistic yet pragmatic assumptions, some participants anticipated civic and moral benefits by giving *their time rather than their money*, and as a strategy to increase volunteer numbers *by highlighting the project to family, friends and others*. Yet for them, self-reflection on actual involvement in the project was expressed quite personally as *exhilarating* or as promoting a sense of empowerment: *I now feel like I want to change the world*. For another, the multi-dimensionality of personal change was reflected in their words, that their participation had *on so many levels ... exceeded [their] expectations*. Others self-reflected more philosophically about their participation in the project and revealed changes in previously taken for granted notions about self and others. One wrote of their *enhanced appreciation for life and what [they] have at home*, while for another, it was as a *wake-up call to put [their] life in perspective*. Another spoke of their increased awareness of *the need to be sympathetic to less fortunate people* and another wrote of the *great boost to general sense of self and overall happiness*. The multidimensionality of perspective transformation was reflected by one participant who found that participation was *rewarding on so many levels*, while another reflected on cognitive, emotional challenges by sharing that it was *hard to find words to explain how rewarding and uplifting the whole experience was*. Such juxtaposition of emotion “conveys a deep and intimate connection with our world” (Dirkx, 2008, p. 15) and is indicative of the complex, ‘messy’ process that perspective transformation can be as old ways of knowing and being intersect with new. As one participant said after fitting a ‘hand’ for the first time, *it was an adrenaline rush and a slap in the face all at the same time*, reflected by another who said the experience was *heartbreaking and uplifting at the same time*.

The participants’ conscious and unconscious mobilization of metaphors and similes provided insight into the role of the affective dimension of learning. Pre-visit, assumptions were about the likelihood of experiencing *strong emotional reactions;* of *being challenged not to cry like a baby* and *anxiety* about their anticipated inability to *deal with the emotion of working with amputees*. As one participant wrote, *it was a very, very emotional time when one man fed himself and wrote his name for the first time in 34 years*. Post-visit, involvement in the project was described by one as *a rollercoaster of emotions*, reflective of the erratic and diverse range

of emotions that can be evoked during disrupting situations. In perceiving positive personal and civic ramifications of their engagement in the project, one participant likened it to a *ripple effect* while another mobilized the quote: *the journey of 1000 mile begins with just one step*.

Conclusion

The results of this small-scale study demonstrate both the unsettling of assumptions/perspectives and the profound emotional upheaval that can be associated with perspective transformation in a context associated not with formal education, but with humanitarian activities. In showing that perspective transformation can occur in unstructured learning settings, this in some small way addresses Ed Taylor's (2007, p. 186) challenge to "explore other settings ... less controlled by the instructor, and more susceptible to external influences". By focusing on pre-visit assumptions of the project participants and contrasting them with experienced realities, 'windows' were provided into how the unsettling and consequent critique and re-framing of certain personal assumptions/perspectives proved to be an emotional yet personally transformative experience. As one participant shared: *You can't help but be changed by an experience such as this*.

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Transformative Learning: The Young Person's Perception of Prisoner Education

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Abstract: This paper reports on a study of young people and their experiences with education while in custody. Data was gathered as part of a qualitative study which included young people engaged in prisoner education programs in the United Kingdom. The goal is to understand if, and to what extent and in what form, transformative learning occurs as a result of participation in educational opportunities during incarceration. The paper also discusses the prisoner learning community and the participants' perceptions of education. The findings of this research speak to the importance of education for young people in prison as a potential deterrent for reoffending, but also suggest that prisoner education can lead to a perspective transformation.

Introduction

We can ask, what benefit is there to providing education to criminals? Prisoners are people who will eventually re-join society. They deserve the opportunity to learn and contribute as citizens. There are mixed views on the purpose and need for prisoner education, but the constant remains, if we do nothing to help rehabilitate people during incarceration, we cannot expect to see a change in behaviour or attitude upon release. Even in the most simplistic way education does offer the ability for people to change, through reflection of self. How we see ourselves and what we know about the world can initiate change. Participating in prisoner education programs can also provide opportunities for individuals to construct a new identity. Offenders can choose to embrace the label of student rather than that of convict or inmate and they are able to define themselves as deliberate learners who choose to spend time and efforts on self-improvement. As these individuals grow and change, the culture of the prison may also change. If the purpose of prison is truly to rehabilitate people, then offering them a restorative pathway could not only result in learning, but also provide hope for the future.

This study seeks to give a voice to the young people engaging in education whilst in custody and increase awareness of the role of education in the transformation process. Engagement in education during incarceration provides the possibility of increasing self-confidence, it aids in development of personal and professional goals, and encourages individuals to become productive members of society. The broader implications of the study are that prisoner education is a fundamental resource for young people. They are able to learn new skills and develop social abilities necessary for a successful liberation, with the central goal of reducing recidivism.

Methodology

This qualitative study consisted of sixteen male volunteers being held in custody at a young offender's facility in the United Kingdom. The young people who participated in the study ranged in age from 18-22 years old. Their sentence lengths varied widely from one year to life in prison. The primary source of data collection was through in person one to one interviews with the young people, educators, and prison staff. The interviews were set up to connect the researcher and participants every two months, resulting in three separate interviews with each

young person in the study. Each interview session consisted of a series of interview questions created to gain insight into the individual's perceptions on education during incarceration, past history with education, and family background. The final interview required the young person to critically reflect on their personal experiences and sought to gain an understanding of their future goals. In addition, observation of educational programming, both traditional and vocational, were useful in understanding the learning community and goals of the educators and prison administration.

Table 1.

Research participant data

Name	Age	Sentence length	Charges	First Sentence
Sean	19	Remand	Remand (waiting for trial, charged with murder)	Yes
Dennis	21	4.3 years	Assault to severe injury, assault to permanent disfigurement and danger of life	Yes
Chris	21	4 years	Misuse of drugs	Yes
Innis	21	11 years	Murder	Yes
Kyle	18	4.8 years	Assault to severe injury, assault to permanent impairment, permanent disfigurement and danger of life, contempt of court	Yes
Chuck	20	4.6 years	Assault to severe injury, assault to permanent disfigurement and danger of life	Yes
Fred	19	4.8 years	Recalled sentence from prior conviction	No
Steve	19	1.9 years	Assault, vandalism, threatening or abusive behaviors, racially motivated crimes	No
Ryan	22	10 years	Attempted murder	Yes
Alex	20	24 years	Murder, invasion of property, abduction, robbery, permanent disfigurement, permanent impairment and murder	No
Kevin	20	8 years	Assault to severe injury x2, assault to permanent impairment, permanent disfigurement and danger of life	No
Gary	22	6.9 years	Assault to severe injury, assault to permanent disfigurement and danger of life, attempted murder	No
Danny	19	1.4 years	Assault to severe injury x2, assault to permanent impairment, permanent disfigurement, assault to injury,	Yes

			threatening or abusive behaviors, assaulting or impeding police	
Scott	21	13 years	Murder	Yes
Gavin	22	3.11 years	Misuse of drugs	Yes
Clyde	19	12 years	Rape	No

Transformative Learning

This study utilizes transformative learning theory as a framework to study young people in custody and their experiences with education as a means of understanding if, and to what extent and in what form, transformative learning occurs as a result of participation in education during incarceration. Transformative learning theory, also known as “perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1990), is a constructivist theory that was actualised by Jack Mezirow. Mezirow (1990) explains that the creation of transformative learning theory grew from the need to further discover, if individuals’ interpretation and explanations of their experiences determine their actions, hopes, contentment, emotional well-being and performance more so than what actually happened or had been experienced by them. Patricia Cranton (2006) has defined transformative learning as “a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better justified” (p. vi). Initially transformative learning theory was a process that involved ten steps leading to a new frame of reference from which to interpret the meaning of one’s experiences. Over the past four decades Mezirow sought to further develop his theory in response to various forms of criticism levelled against his original theory from other scholars. Transformative learning theory, therefore, is considered a theory in progress.

Transformative learning has been described as occurring from a sudden powerful experience or as a gradual process (Clark, 1993). Taylor (2000) expands on this idea and infers that transformative learning may in fact be a more cumulative process, dependent on the individual. In this context, prison is a powerful experience, providing the expanse of a sentence to reflect on actions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Mezirow (as cited in Taylor, 2000) has also implied that transformative learning is perhaps “more individualistic, fluid, and recursive, than originally thought,” with feelings and thoughts playing a more significant role in the transformation process (p. 292). As an example, many of the participants in this study spoke of their disappointment or negative experiences with school prior to their incarceration. These previous experiences have impacted the way they view education, but it is obvious that some form of reflection is occurring as these young people are seeking out learning opportunities.

The educational offerings within the prison are voluntary, therefore an individual must be proactive in pursuing opportunities. The young people in this study have sought out education as a means to improve themselves personally and professionally. The learning process for many of the participants is not just acquiring new knowledge or skills, but more so learning which requires critical discourse and self-reflection. They are learning life skills, problem solving, and for many vocational skills, in addition to traditional courses, such as English and math. The learning environment provides an open learning format, whereby learners are supported on a variety of different educational levels in the same classroom. This learning environment is a perfect example of how the classroom within a prisoner learning community can support transformative learning. In many ways engagement with education has played a pivotal role in rehabilitation. Dirkx (2012) asserts that, “the purpose of education is to bring out that which is within. It refers to the process by which education helps realize, in relation to the outer world, the

inner qualities or make-up of the person” (p. 402). While education alone is not necessarily transformative, it can provide an opportunity for an individual to change their frame of reference, leading to a new or transformed understanding of self, other and context.

In addition to any reflection which may occur within education, Earle (2014) has suggested that reflection of self is common during incarceration as individuals begin to reflect on their life, with questions such as: who am I, where am I going, what’s the point of my existence, what do I need to change? From the lens of transformative learning these questions may lead to profound changes in an individual, changes, we might further say, that come about through a major paradigm shift, the process of perspective transformation. Perspective transformation can in turn lead to a shift in understanding of self, changes in worldview, and possibly changes in behavior. In conversations with the study participants, each was able to demonstrate critical reflection of their personal circumstances and experiences. All of the participants expressed regret for their crimes and showed growth in their thought process concerning previous behaviors and attitudes. Many of the young people felt that they experienced a substantial shift in their worldview and developed a new understanding of ‘*who they are*’. Most also recognize the importance of changing negative behaviors in order to improve their future.

The Learning Community

There is relatively little research concerning transformative learning in prison or as part of prisoner education programs. However, there is an obvious need to better understand the transformative implications of prison and specifically the experiences of young people in custody as students. Research on prisoner education programs shows that there is a positive correlation between learning and recidivism (Wells, 2000; Batchelder & Pippert, 2002; Chapell, 2004). From a personal and social perspective low educational attainment equates to fewer employment opportunities resulting in an increased risk of reoffending and the possibility of additional negative behaviors, such as drug and alcohol abuse and violence towards others (Manger, Eikeland, Asbjornsen, 2013). It is also well documented that young people in custody have lower levels of educational attainment and many also have a documented history of social, emotional, or behavioral challenges, as well as learning disabilities or mental illness (Blyth, Newman, Wright, 2009; Kennedy, 2013).

The prisoner learning community is abundant with opportunities to engage with individuals who are at an “intersection” in life. This intersection contains many opportunities including moving forward or turning a corner. For the young people in this study, most have chosen to pursue education as a route to changing who they are and overcoming personal challenges. The model of a learning community within a correctional environment is a positive way of looking at reform and rehabilitation of people who commit crime. The learning community where this study was carried out is comprised of a variety of learning opportunities, including traditional education, vocational programs, and work schemes. The goals of the establishment are to develop young people and teach them how to persevere in life, how to be successful citizens, and most importantly, acknowledging the barriers that a person with a criminal record may encounter upon release and providing resources and support systems to enable a positive outcome to their release. Engagement with traditional and vocational education while in custody is strongly encouraged, but remains voluntary. The overarching theme of the community is to immerse the young people in an environment where learning is part of any work, experience, or task in their daily routine.

Perceptions of Education

The core of this research is understanding the young person's experience with education while in custody. This research highlighted the complicated and unique socioeconomic circumstances in which young people in prison find themselves. Every individual has had a different path to prison, but there are several common themes which exist amongst the participants. Of the sixteen participants most have:

- A personal and/or family history of addiction (drugs and/or alcohol);
- Previous incarceration of a family member;
- Death of a parent or guardian;
- Most crimes included some form of severe violence;
- Low literacy and previous exclusion from school;
- More than half of participants are a parent;
- A history of angry outbursts or fighting

Many of the young people in the study expressed a common dislike of school, but most enjoy the opportunity to learn. This contradiction is not entirely clear, but all of the participants in the study expressed that they had a history of fighting or angry outbursts in school, which caused them to be excluded or expelled. Another group struggled with low literacy, while others grappled with overcoming learning difficulties or disorders that may have previously gone undetected.

As education in this establishment is voluntary, motivation to learn is crucial. For many young people in custody, education is something that has been done to them, taken away from them, imposed, ordered and required. To think of learning as something more, young people need to see the real life impacts and application of education to their lives. Education or learning is a very emotional experience for many of the young people in the study. They have either had a neutral or negative experience with school prior to prison and this sets the tone for how they respond to a prisoner learning community. The conversations with participants around education before prison were typically lacked depth. Many young people did not receive the support that they needed in order to be successful students. However, after engaging in education in prison, many have a new outlook on what education means to them. Illeris (2014) notes that transformative learning is,

Often initiated when learners come up against their limitation, go beyond the habitual, experience the unaccustomed, meet, split or break down, face dilemmas, feel insecure, or must take incalculable decisions. Many examples indicate that irregular courses with obstacles, breaks, problems and challenges encourage emotional intensity and innovation, and in this way also promote transformative learning (p. 11).

For the young people in this study they are taking courses out of a desire to learn, grow, and increase their chances of becoming more marketable upon release. Many of the participants in the study "found" education as an outlet to pass the time at first, but then realized the opportunities that were possible because of education. There were also individuals in this study who sought education out simply to avoid other more tedious roles within the community, but the vast majority participate in educational activities out of a true desire to improve personally and professionally.

The young people in this study must overcome, not only the oppressive experience of prison, but also the anxieties and stressors of the environment for which they will return to upon release. They must learn to survive in a world, which will automatically judge them based on their biography. Education is a particularly convoluted concept for most young people in prison.

They need to see that they can be successful at something and they begin to gain self-confidence in their abilities. This has far-reaching implications as their growth in confidence leads to further engagement and the ability to mentor and teach others.

Conclusion

This study largely confirmed that transformative learning is possible within a prisoner learning community. However, understanding how and to what extent transformative learning has occurred is more complicated. The environment in itself fosters growth in an individual, thus allowing the young person to reflect on their behaviors. The educational community then adds an opportunity for young people to learn and engage with others on topics that may challenge their personal beliefs or opinions, encouraging perspective transformation. The participants in this study have had to endure and overcome incredible obstacles, incarceration in hindsight, may not be the biggest challenge they have had to face, but it seems that the educational opportunities presented may be increasing their chances of success post-incarceration. This study sought to understand if transformative learning was possible within the confines of a prison and the results would indicate that transformation is certainly possible. However, this may be due to the prisoner experience as a whole, with education playing a vital role in the process.

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Transforming Greek Primary Schools into Learning Organizations

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to identify primary Greek schools that demonstrate characteristics of learning organization and to examine possible relations between leadership style and the above characteristics. A quantitative survey was conducted in Athens, Greece. Findings show that the combination of all transformational leadership dimensions and “contingent reward” transactional dimension, explains a significant proportion of the learning organization’s variance. Therefore, there seems to be an intersection between leadership and organizational learning in schools.

Introduction

In an era, characterized by intense global competition, rapid development in technology and information, and the emergence of a knowledge-based economy (Davis & Daley, 2008), organizations that transcend at global level, are those who manage to make use of people’s commitment and their ability to learn continuously at all organization levels (Yang, Watkins & Marsick, 2004· Hong, Easterby-Smith & Snell, 2006· Dekoulou, 2012).

There seems to be a very close relationship between leadership and organizational learning. Various leadership approaches focus on the effect of leadership in creating conditions for promoting and utilizing organizational learning in order to achieve effectiveness. In a way, organizational learning is now linked to current pressures for change.

However, limited research has focused on schools as learning organizations (Cibulka et.al, 2000· Silins & Mulford, 2008). In Greece relevant research has been carried out in the area of commercial shipping (Georganta, 2009) and banks (Theriou, Theriou & Chatzoglou, 2007).

The main focus of this research paper is the examination of the relationship between leadership style and organizational learning in educational institutions and more specifically in Greek primary schools. This research therefore focuses on the concept of schools as "learning organizations".

Theoretical Background

Organizational Learning through Transformative Learning

According to transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1990, 1991), the way we interpret reality is defined by our perception system. This system derives from the cultural context in which we live and has been unconsciously internalized through socialization. Therefore, it is necessary as adults to harmonize our lives with reality, to develop the ability to critically reconsider our beliefs about ourselves, the roles we undertake and our relationships with others. This is achieved through the process of critical thinking and it can even reach up to critical reflection, which is the holistic revision of the way that we perceive, think, feel and act (Mezirow, 2007).

In the same pattern, critical reflection can potentially transform organizations. Learning takes place when the organization and its members are supported to think critically

about all the interpretations, actions and conclusions that have been drawn. While some theorists of organizational learning put individuals in the foreground and others place the organization first, it seems apparent that these two approaches are not dichotomous. Both individuals and groups cause organizations to act, and the effects of these actions are felt at both levels. Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996, and 2003) argue that a learning organization is an organization which continuously learns and transforms itself by involving employees in a process of jointly conducted and collectively responsible change directed towards shared values.

Schools as Learning Organizations

Literature promoting the (re)conceptualization of schools as learning organizations has significantly increased during the last twenty years (Sillins et.al 1998, 2002· Cibulka et.al, 2000· Sai-Rat et.al, 2015). More often than not there is an attempt to relate school effectiveness with the transformation of schools to learning organizations (Fullan, 1993· Silins, et.al, 2002). There seems to be an agreement therefore that, given the changing social and educational circumstances, schools should be engaged in establishing structures and practices, which encourage facilitate and promote continuous and collective learning of all its members (Fullan, 1993 · Silins, et.al, 2002 · Louis, 2006). Following the arguments above, such development and transfer of organizational knowledge in an educational institution requires personal interaction among teachers, pupils, principals etc. as well as a culture of trust.

In a school engaged in the above process, teachers bring their personal knowledge derived from previous experience, expertise and education/training. At a personal level new knowledge is produced through action research and subsequent critical reflection when contrasts, contradictions, surprises or suggestions act as stimuli calling for a solution or an answer. Teacher chooses a strategy or an action based on his cognitive and emotional understanding of the initial stimulus. In case, this strategy proves to be ineffective then critical reflection's circular learning process is repeated.

Personal knowledge is transformed into organizational knowledge, through working groups' formation, teaching staff's regular meetings and various communication networks' use. Teachers discuss, share and comment on the new ideas. Therefore, every member of the teaching staff can comprehend and use the new knowledge (Louis, 1994).

In addition, organizational knowledge is derived when a school is searching for solutions to identified problems and challenges, incorporating different viewpoints (Louis, 2006). Individuals, groups and organization question values and beliefs that distort the way they understand the world and the events (Mezirow, 1991). They constantly reflect on the effectiveness of their actions and redesign, through continuous repetitive cycles of critical reflection. This process of transformative learning leads what Marsick (1994) refers to as mutual construction of organizational learning.

Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996 and 2003) identify seven distinct but interlinked dimensions of learning organization which constitute practices applied by the organization in four different systemic levels:

At individual level.

1. Create continuous learning opportunities,
2. Promote inquiry and dialogue.

At team/group level.

3. Encourage collaboration and team learning.

At organization's level.

4. Establish systems to capture and share learning (Embedded Systems),
5. Empower people toward a collective vision.

At global level.

6. Connect the organization to its environment,
7. Provide strategic leadership for learning.

Leadership and Learning Organization

It is obvious from above those transforming schools into learning organizations require a change of culture (Cibulka et al, 2000). However, it is well documented (Schein, 1992· Senge, 1990) that culture change starts from leadership. Effective leaders understand the value of knowledge creation and sharing and commit themselves to the promotion of research and exchange patterns among organization members (Fullan, 2001).

According to Bass and Avolio (1993) transformational leadership is the recommended approach as it has the potential to promote organizational learning. According to Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999) transformational leadership comprises four basic dimensions: (a) Idealized Influence or charisma, (b) inspirational Motivation, (c) intellectual Stimulation and (d) individual Consideration.

Research studies, on the correlation between leadership style and learning organization, found that both transformational and transactional leadership styles are associated with the development of learning organization. A transactional leader, avoids risk, pays special attention to the time limitations and efficiency and he is effective in a stable and predictable environment. This type of leadership can take two dimensions (Bass, 1985): (a) Contingent reward and (b) management by exception.

The above theoretical arguments serve as the basis for this research paper. The aim of our research was to identify primary Greek schools that have the characteristics of learning organization and to examine possible relations between leadership style and the above characteristics through teachers' perceptions. More specifically, this research attempted to explore:

1. The extent to which teachers in Greek primary education identify their schools as learning organizations.
2. The ways different types of educational leadership correlate with learning organization's characteristics in Greek primary schools.
3. The extent to which transformational and transactional leadership styles explain learning organization's variance.

Greek Educational System

Numerous scholars and researchers have addressed the issue of *centralization* in Greek education (Andreou & Papakonstantinou, 1994· Kazamias & Kassotakis, eds. 1995· OECD 1995, 2001· Koutouzis et.al, 2008). There is an agreement that Greek educational system is a highly centralized system. Extensive centralization, however, is not the only characteristic of a system also characterized by intense *bureaucratization*, strict hierarchical structures, extensive legislation (polynomy) and "formalism" (Koutouzis et.al, 2008) It could be argued that the "bureaucratic" model of educational management is applied in Greek schools (Bush, 1995). Under these conditions, Greek schools do not have the opportunities to develop an internal educational policy which would allow them to establish among other things mechanisms of professional development and, thus, create conditions of organizational learning.

Currently, however, there are signs that Greek schools are given ground to explore and expand their *relative autonomy*. There are limited but observable signs of decentralization in

Greek education. If that is the case, then schools have the opportunity to create an internal policy which would gradually transform the dominant bureaucratic culture to a culture that among other things and processes promotes organizational learning.

Research Methodology

Two research instruments were used for the purposes of this research:

1. Dimensions of the Learning Organizations Questionnaire (DLOQ), (Marsick & Watkins 1999, 2003· Yang, Watkins & Marsick, 2004) which comprises 21 items (improved version) grouped in seven subscales corresponding to learning organization's dimensions.
2. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X-Short), developed by Bass and Avolio (1988). This scale comprises 45 items which evaluate the frequency of seven different leadership types (dimensions) and outcomes.

The sample of our research consisted of 31 primary schools in Athens, capital city of Greece. Structured questionnaires were distributed in 620 teachers working in these schools, and 255 valid questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 41%. Concerning gender, 23.5% of the respondents are male and 76.5% are female.

Data Analysis & Results

The analysis of the collected data was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.

Table 1.

Chronbach's Alpha for Learning Organization's dimensions and different Leadership Styles.

	Dimensions	Number of Questions	Chronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Learning Organization	Continuous Learning	3	0.742
	Inquiry & Dialogue	3	0.885
	Team Learning	3	0.857
	Embedded Systems	3	0.849
	Empowerment	3	0.902
	System Connection	3	0.885
	Strategic Leadership	3	0.933
Leadership Style	Idealized Influence (Characteristics)	4	0.914
	Idealized Influence (Behavior)	4	0.771
	Inspirational Motivation	4	0.891
	Intellectual Stimulation	4	0.893
	Individual Consideration	4	0.782
	Contingent Reward	4	0.830
	Management by Exception (Active)	4	0.710
	Management by Exception (Passive)	4	0.788
Laissez-Faire Leadership ¹	4	0.884	
Valid questionnaires: 255			

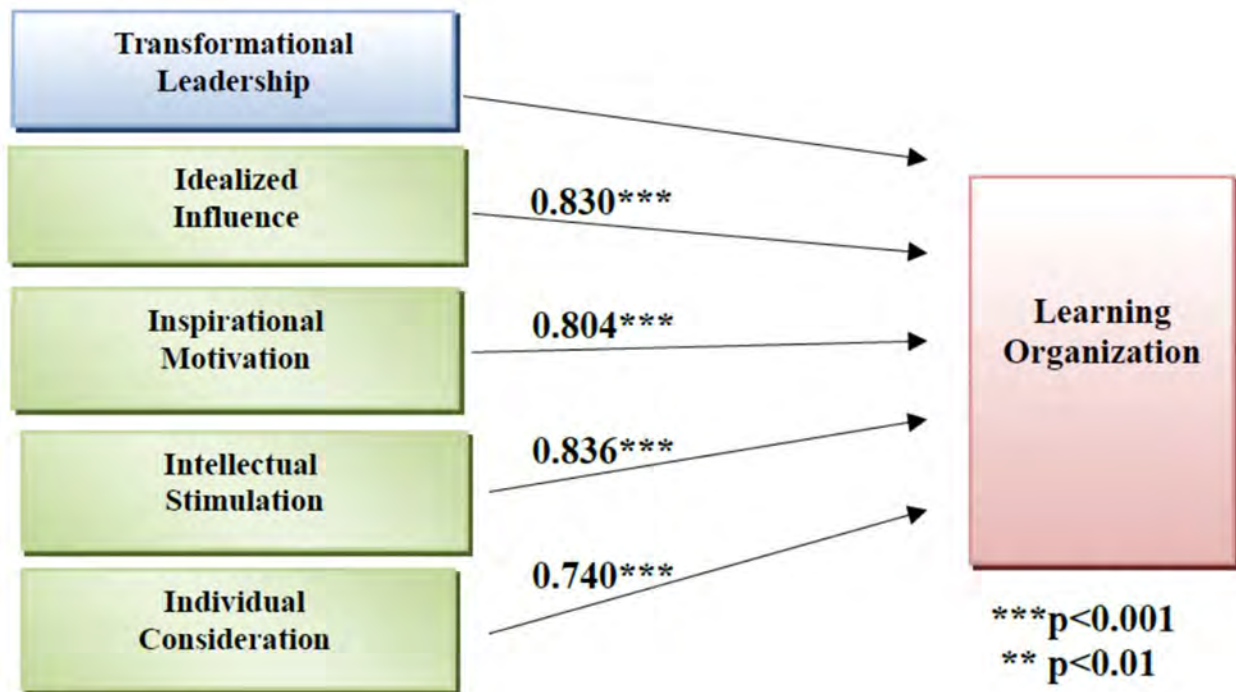
¹ Passive leadership with no interventions

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for the seven dimensions of Learning Organization.

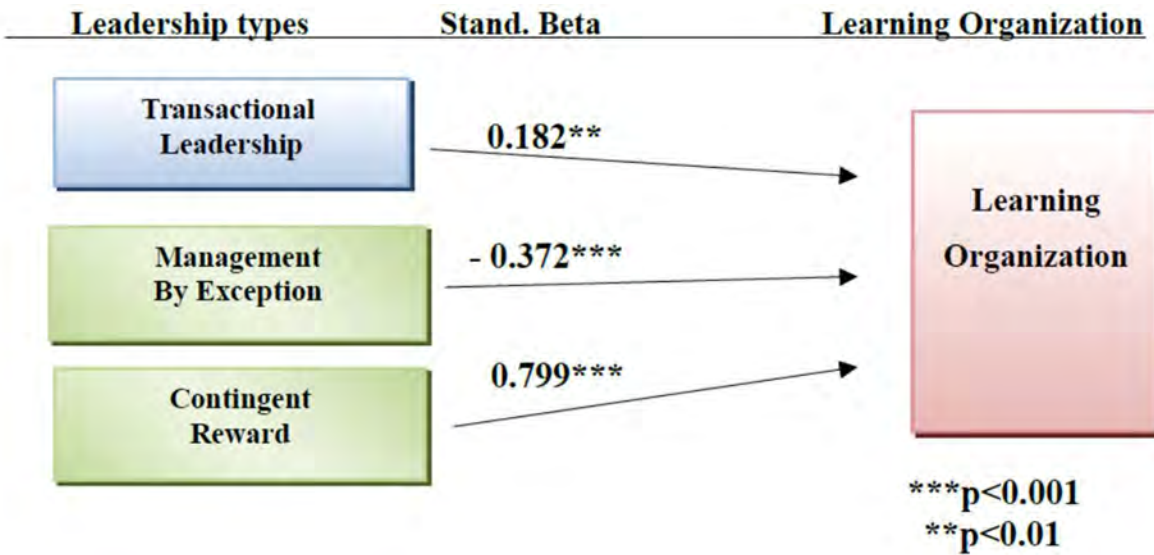
	Dimensions (Scale 1-6)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Learning Organization	Continuous Learning	3.627	0.641
	Inquiry & Dialogue	3.764	0.664
	Team Learning	3.831	0.667
	Embedded Systems	3.525	0.829
	Empowerment	4.059	0.843
	System Connection	4.114	0.794
	Strategic Leadership	4.184	0.872
	LEARNING ORGANIZATION	3.872	0.756

As shown in Table 2, primary schools in Athens seem to have incorporated in their operation the model of *learning organization*. Provision of *continuous learning* opportunities seems to be in a middle level, whereas organizational effort to promote *inquiry and dialogue* appears to be satisfactory. Moreover, teachers speak of a satisfactory cooperation and *team learning*. Presence of *embedded systems* seems to be in a medium level but not very intense, whereas organizational ability to provide *empowerment* to employees and organization's *system connection* appear to be enhanced. School leaders' tendency towards learning and seeking of learning opportunities, through *strategic leadership*, is characterized as remarkably significant.



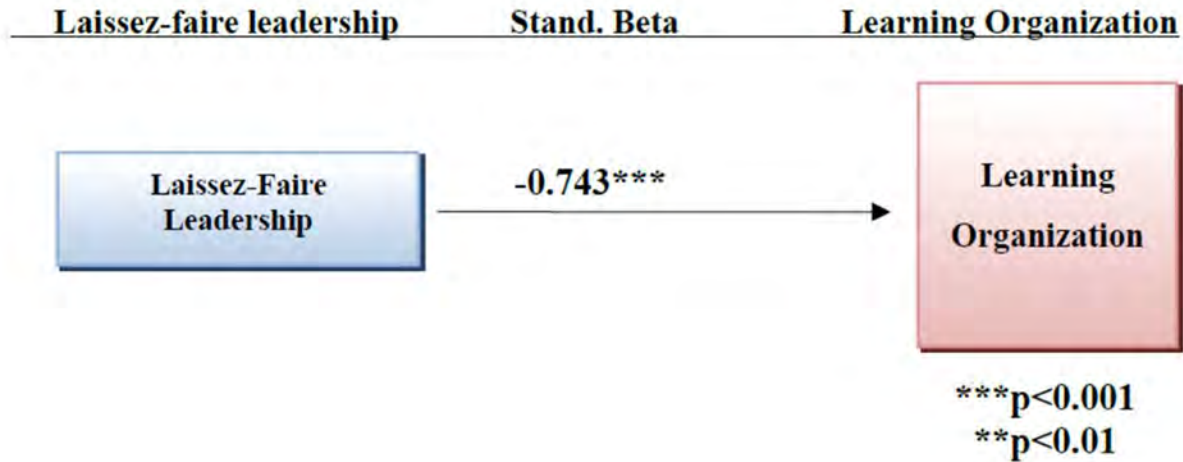
Graph 1. Correlations between Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Learning Organization.

Regression Analysis (Graph 1) shows that **transformational leadership** has a statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) correlation with learning organization (Std. Beta = .873). More specifically, school principal's characteristics and behavior, that cause *idealized influence* on teachers, crucially favor building a learning organization (Std. Beta = .830, $p < 0.001$). Learning organization is significantly ($p < 0.001$) correlated with leader's *inspirational motivation* (Std. Beta = .804). In addition, the more a school principal activates teachers' *intellectual stimulation*, proposing new approaches and seeking different viewpoints to resolve issues, the more he/she facilitates the development learning culture in school (Std. Beta = .836, $p < 0.001$). Finally, educational leaders' *individual consideration* enhances significantly, schools' transformation into learning organizations (Std. Beta = .740, $p < 0.001$).



Graph 2. Correlations between Dimensions of Transactional Leadership and Learning Organization.

As shown in Graph 2, **transactional leadership** correlates positively, with learning organization (Std. Beta = .182, $p < .01$). However, regression analysis reveals the significant negative correlation between management by exception and learning organization (Std. Beta = -.372, $p < 0.001$). *Management by exception*, through correction, negative feedback, reprimand and sanctions weakens the prospects of creating a learning organization. In contrast, providing teachers *contingent reward*, by the school manager, strengthens organization's learning capacity (Std. Beta = .799, $p < 0.001$).



Graph 3 – Correlations between Laissez-Faire Leadership and Learning Organization.

Graph 3, presents the statistically significant negative correlation between *laissez-faire leadership* and learning organization (Std. Beta = -.743, $p<0.001$). Leader’s avoiding taking action and initiatives hampers the construction of a learning culture in schools.

Table 3.

Linear Regression Analysis for the percentage of Learning Organization variance, explained by Transformational Leadership.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R ²	Stand. Beta	Sig.	F
Learning Organization	Transformational Leadership	.761	.873***	.000	807.209

Table 4.

Regression Analysis for the percentage of Learning Organization’s variance, explained by Transactional dimension of “Contingent Reward”.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R ²	Stand. Beta	Sig.	F
Learning Organization	Transactional Leadership Dimension «Contingent Reward»	.639	.799***	.000	447.009

Table 5.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the percentage of Learning Organization's variance, explained by Transformational and Transactional dimension of "Contingent Reward".

Stage s	Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	R ²	DR ²	Stand. Beta	Sig.	F
1 st Stage	Learning Organization	Transactional Leadership «Contingent Reward»	.639		.799***	.000	447.009
2 nd Stage	Learning Organization	Transactional Leadership «Contingent Reward»	.765	.126	.127*	.000	409.984
		& Transformational Leadership			.760***		
***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05							

Transformational leadership explains 12.6% of learning organization's variance (Table 5), beyond the percentage explained by "contingent reward" (DR²=.126). The fact that the combination of transformational leadership and "contingent reward" transactional dimension (2nd stage) explains a higher percentage of learning organization's variance (R²=.765), than each leadership style separately is very interesting! However, it is obvious that transformational leadership displays a positive regression weight (Std. Beta = .760, p<0.001), which is responsible for *an augmenting variation* in dependent variable, compared to the transactional dimension (Std. Beta = .127, p<0.05) (Bass & Avolio, 1988, 1993).

Discussion and Implications

According to teachers' perceptions, Greek schools have incorporated in their operation all dimensions of learning organization to a relatively high extend. This is rather surprising, given the centralized and bureaucratized educational system in Greece. It is also very encouraging, as there seems to be realization of the importance of such process.

Findings of this study agree with Di Schiena et al. (2013), Lang (2013) and Wofford, Ellinger and Watkins (2014) who found that opportunities for informal learning and knowledge transfer are most frequent in non-routine, unstable, uncertain and complex environments.

Regarding transactional leadership dimensions, "management by exception", inhibits the operation of a learning organization. Nevertheless, "contingent reward" significantly promotes the development of a learning culture in school. These confirm the research findings of Georganta (2009) and Di Schiena et al. (2013).

Not surprisingly, transformational leadership dimensions have the central role in transforming a school into learning organization, since they significantly influence the development of an educational learning organization. Therefore, findings of Waldman and Bass (1986), Bass and Avolio (1990), Waldman, Bass and Yammarino (1990) and Georganta (2009), for the "augmenting attribute" of transformational leadership, that enhances transactional leadership to achieve remarkably higher performance levels of employees, teams and organization itself, are confirmed.

However, according to Bass, Avolio and Goodheim (1987), and the findings of the present empirical research, transformational leadership style is based on transactional style, and is likely to be ineffective when the transactional relationship of “contingent reward”, between the school manager and the educators, is completely absent. Therefore, transactional dimension of “contingent reward” constitutes the basis of an organization that “learns”.

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Transformative Learning in the Post Graduate Training of Counsellors

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Abstract: This paper is based on my doctoral research, which looked at the **training of counsellors** through a **transformative learning lens**. The results of my research in training counsellors in a specific counselling model namely, **'Neuroscience and Satir in the Sand Tray,'** which uses a **holistic, experiential** and **nurturing** transformative learning approach showed two findings. First, the participants did experience **deep** and **lasting personal growth**. Second, participants did experience professional growth and it was partly a result of their gains in personal growth

Previous research shows that some counsellor training programs do promote personal growth opportunities for the trainee counsellors, but these opportunities are inconsistent, inconclusive and sporadic. There is great potential for improving counsellor training programs if those programs were to adopt the principles of transformative learning and in so doing have student counsellors, throughout their training, fully experience a range of counselling techniques that provide them with on-going opportunities for personal growth.

A review of the literature on a transformative learning approach within counsellor training programs yielded almost no research. The findings of my research into transformative learning in the post graduate training of counsellors put emphasis on the strong need to open up a discussion around and research into personal growth. The findings showed that personal growth is a necessary and appropriate part of post-graduate counsellor training.

Introduction

For several years now, I have been training counsellors in workshops using a theoretical and practical approach I developed, called the 'Neuroscience and Satir in the Sand Tray' model (De Little, 2015). The workshops have taken me around the world, training counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists. I found that the independently developed methodology used in my workshops echoes closely the most up to date evolution of transformative learning theory. This theory is an approach that involves the mind, body and spirit and is holistic, experiential and nurturing.

The initial goal of these training workshops around the world was simply to teach counsellors the skills of my model. Yet, anecdotal evidence from these international workshops indicated the experience often had an unexpected and profound impact on those participants. After having done one or two hours work in the sand tray they were surprised by profound feelings of personal transformation. Somatic issues were relieved and they were able to make new decisions for themselves for their future.

I learned that the international workshop participants, most of whom were established and practicing professional therapists, had had few and limited transformative personal growth opportunities during their postgraduate training.

There is distressingly little research on the personal growth opportunities available to student counsellors during their graduate training (O'Leary, Crowley, & Keane, 1994). This gap

in research and the lack of personal growth opportunities for student counsellors, combined with the reports of my international workshop students of their unexpected transformational experiences, ultimately led me to my doctoral research.

My Research

I used the principles of holistic experiential and nurturing transformative learning to train seventeen volunteer workshop participants; four were students in a masters counselling program and thirteen were qualified counsellors. My research set out to show that as the participants acquired the professional skills to use the model of 'Neuroscience and Satir in the Sand Tray', they would concomitantly experience deep and lasting personal growth. I investigated the extent and nature of that transformation.

My research shows that both student counsellors and practicing counsellors, when learning the techniques and skills of my model that they can use professionally, do indeed experience personal growth. My research suggests that they are both more congruently present for their clients and better equipped to ask the client to do this work having experienced the power of transformational change for themselves.

The recommendations from this research focus on opening up a discussion around, and research into, the provision of transformative personal growth opportunities throughout postgraduate counselling training. This potentially could apply to the training and practice of many different counselling techniques using the transformative learning model.

Holistic Approach to Transformative Learning

The varying approaches of Mezirow, Dirkx, Daloz, Taylor and other transformative learning theorists remind me of the story of the six blind men describing an elephant. Although the sightless men were learned and intellectually curious, each was able to feel only one part of the elephant. They variously concluded that the elephant was a spear, a snake, a wall, a tree, a fan, and a rope.

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

(The Poems of John Godfrey Saxe, 1873)

More recent transformative learning theorists encourage us not to be blind to the whole picture. Brookfield (2005), for example, suggests that critical thinking being primarily formed from "White Anglo-American" (p.172) male authorities thereby gives little attention to "emotion, to spirituality, to holistic modes of being and knowing and little consideration to how critical reflection can be triggered through aesthetic experiences, meditation and contemplation" (p.173). Other theorists and researchers also argue that for a significant transformation to take place, the whole person - that is all mind, body and spirit - have to be considered (Dencev & Collister, 2010; Lawrence & Cranton, 2009; Lovat, Clement, Dally & Toomey, 2010; Pugh, 2011; Wang & Yorks, 2012). Kramer (2000) argues most emotional existential dilemmas in life do not tend to be resolved through the linear model proposed by Mezirow, suggesting that such existential

questions require "alternative modes of representation, such as art, metaphor and non linear logic" (cited in Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014, p. 77).

Papastamatis and Panitsides, (2014) advocate for an adult learning approach that is a more holistic pedagogy, "in which all developmental measures, intellectual, social, emotional, moral and spiritual, are attended to" (p.78). According to Mezirow (1991) one of the most important learning tasks in adulthood, is making meaning, Papastamatis and Panitsides, don't disagree but they believe that the physical, affective and spiritual domains are also concerned with meaning-making, and should be considered "equally useful in providing a convincing rationale for interpreting adult learning" (p.78).

Research findings have stated holistic approaches in transformative learning can foster meaning making, empowerment, and the emergence of self-managing groups (Nitschke & Malvicini, 2013), helping learners develop a critical engagement with their organizational and social world, increasingly recognizing that the existing state of affairs does not exhaust all possibilities and arriving at alternative courses of action (Yorks, 2000).

The evolution of transformative learning theory has embraced critical thinking, spirituality and depth psychology, embodied knowing, somatic learning, the role of emotions, the role of intuition and expressive art, and the influence of the pedagogical relationship. Today's transformative theorists say that human beings must be understood at the interface of mind, body and spirit (Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014).

My training model has adopted all these aspects of the evolved transformative learning model.

What Research is There on the Use of Transformative Learning and the Training of Counsellors?

Opportunities for transformative personal growth are available to qualified practitioners already working in the field through personal therapy, group therapy, and psychotherapy. This has been widely researched for over a decade (Norcross & Guy, 2005). However there is "a dearth of research, from a phenomenological perspective, that speaks to the lived experience of the transformation that can occur in the training environment, particularly in the context of counsellor training programs" (Thiemann, 2013, p. 24). In 2005, Norcross and Guy recommended, "that clinicians have at least one experience of personal benefit so that they acquire a sense of the potency of psychotherapy that can be communicated to their own patients" (p. 843). Yet today there remains very little research on the role and impact of personal growth during the training of counsellors in graduate programs and even more limited research on how the transformative learning model can be used to provide guiding principles in the training of counsellors.

Three studies, even though the samples are very small and the research limited, showed that some graduate training counsellor curricula, even without an explicit focus on personal growth of the trainees can have a significant impact on these students' self image.

Back in 1980, Manthei and Tuck studied four groups of postgraduate students in New Zealand. Half of the participants were enrolled in school counselling courses, and half in high school teaching. No specific or exceptional training or opportunity for personal growth was given to any of the four groups. However the authors found: "attitudes and values that have been shown to be associated with counselling effectiveness were enhanced by training" (p. 263). O'Leary and Page (1990) conducted a controlled study using a person-centred Gestalt therapy group with 14 postgraduate counselling students. Changes in attitudes were seen in those who

participated in the therapy group. These participants felt more intensely about gestalt therapy but also about love after taking part in a gestalt group in which one of the topics discussed had been their interpersonal relationships with significant others. O'Leary and Page concluded that person-centred gestalt groups offer personal growth to graduate students. In another study, O'Leary, Crowley and Keane (1994) investigated the personal growth outcomes in a group of ten students in a postgraduate counsellor-training program, matched with a control group. It was found that after the training, the students had a "higher sense of self-worth than normal adults" and "evaluated awareness more positively" (pp. 139-140). The researchers concluded that personal growth opportunities during training are beneficial to counsellor trainees, because how they relate to themselves and others is essential to a healthy practice. O'Leary, et al. concluded, "it is therefore an anachronism that so many counsellor training courses largely ignore a personal development requirement" (p. 133).

Although the samples are very small and the research limited, it appears that the graduate training counsellor curriculum, in and of itself, does have a significant impact on these students' perspectives of themselves, and that even better results could occur when specific personal growth experiences are offered within a graduate counsellor-training program.

The Use of the Sand Tray in Therapy

My research involved a technique which I developed combining the sand tray, neuroscience and the work of family therapist Virginia Satir. The Satir model is positively directional and focuses on how we deal with our experiences through the internal world of our feelings perceptions, expectations and yearnings.

The sand tray is used in therapy with children and adults because it affords a deepening of understanding, expression and reflection. Placing small figurines into the sand tray facilitates this process through the creation of symbols and pictures of the unconscious disorganized unarticulated implicit right brain system (De Little, 2015). Using images in the sand tray enables access to the right-brain implicit or unconscious narrative or 'self' (Badenoch, 2008). The sand tray allows the participant to 'see themselves' and all their parts (Badenoch, 2008) in space and time.

The most recent neuroscience adds to the picture of the importance of nurturing through the safe secure attachment of the therapist, which enables new neural pathways to be built within the client. Neuroscience is able to explain the 'ah ha' moment described by Mezirow (1991) in terms of epigenetics. In addition neuroscience explains the importance of such an expressive modality to access implicit right brain/ body experiences.

Research on how the Use of Sand Tray Therapy Is Taught in Counsellor Training

Researchers in the use of sand tray work have been surprised by the incidental but deeper results of using the sand tray. Two pieces of research have advocated for the use of the sand tray in the training of counsellors in order for them to understand their clients. (Markos & Hyatt, 1999; Paone, Malott, Gao & Kinda, 2015). Paone Malott, Gao and Kinda, (2015) discovered a depth of personal and professional reflection facilitated through this use of the sand tray.

There is some research to support the claim made by International Society of Sand Play Therapy (Mitchell and Friedman, 1994) that the most important aspect of sand tray training is to complete one. Researchers. Bainum, Schneider, and Stone (2006) suggest that the sand tray use in training can have the same reflective benefits for counsellors in training as it does for clients in therapy. Stark, Frels, and Garza (2011) state that the "sand tray aids supervisees in shifting to

a place of self-reference, looking inside themselves to discover what they think, feel, and need" (p. 278). This research is also supported by Paone, Malott, Gao, and Kinda, (2015), who found that the sand tray afforded the expression of emotions thoughts and feelings not always consciously recognized.

Counsellor Training in Neuroscience and Satir in the Sand Tray Model

My research is new because I have used a transformative learning approach to the teaching of a transformational therapeutic technique.

Data analysis

The spoken word was transcribed and analyzed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis [IPA] (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), and I used a Multimodal Social Semiotic (Kress, 2011) approach to the use and placing of figurines, body gestures, etc.

The analysis identified six superordinate themes within both spoken and the visual modalities of expression.

1. Theme 1 - Goals for personal growth.
2. Theme 2 - How the research participants experienced themselves before the training.
3. Theme 3 - What had changed for the research participants in terms of their feelings towards themselves, their perceptions of themselves and others, their expectations of themselves, and others and expectations others have of them, yearnings, and a spiritual connection.
4. Theme 4 - What physical changes they experienced.
5. Theme 5 - The importance of a safe caring relationship within the educational setting.
6. Theme 6 - The role of intuition in counselling.

Profound and lasting personal growth for the research participants did occur in a very short space of time. To illustrate this point, sixteen out of seventeen participants used words like: 'Whole', 'Complete', 'Free', 'Delighted', 'Strong', 'Revitalized', 'Happy' and 'Calm' to describe the feeling that the training had on them personally after only *two days* of training. Their perception about themselves and the world also changed. How they thought others perceived them also changed. Furthermore there was some shift in the participant's expectations of themselves and others.

The participants also overwhelmingly stated that, as a result of the training weekend, they gained more professional confidence having a new skill set, and articulated feeling excited to return to their work to start using the model in their practice.

They also referred, without knowing the theory, to all the essential elements of transformative learning theory in their explanations for why this training had promoted their personal and professional growth.

In the interviews, sixteen out of seventeen participants talked about profound personal 'ah ha!' moments (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). They reported feeling different and they made new decisions for themselves. These findings from my research are supported by Bainum, Schneider, and Stone (2006); Stark, Frels, and Garza (2011) and Paone, Malott, Gao, and Kinda, (2015).

There was an overwhelming sense of a numinous experience for the same sixteen research participants. To describe their new sense of being they used the following words and phrases: 'Sacred', 'Magical', 'Treasure', 'Freedom', 'Peace', 'Awe', 'Coming into the light', 'Full of light', 'Spiritual', 'Standing in my own light' and 'Deep'. This quality of personal

growth is described by transformative learning theorists as a deep spiritual connection to a higher power (Tisdell, 2003) and soul work (Dirkx, 2012).

My research showed how the research participants felt more confident in their work and in a number of cases they stated that they would be able to help their clients better. These insights about being more potentially sensitized to the interpersonal reactions and needs of their clients and increased respect and empathy for their struggles is supported by Norcross, Strausser-Kirtland, and Missar, (1988).

Sixteen out of seventeen research participants stated that they felt some version of feeling safe, nurtured, and being playfully and securely attached. This finding is supported by Valliant, (2008) when he says that nurturing, playing, laughing, caring create the same response in the brain as meditation and prayer which is to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which slows the heart rate and lowers blood pressure.

Conclusion

Counselling students trained through a comprehensive holistic, experiential and nurturing transformative learning program will experience the necessary personal and professional transformational change for preparing themselves as fully as possible not just by knowing the theory of particular counselling strategies but also by doing their own personal growth work through practicing those counselling strategies. Qualitative research into the efficacy of this transformative learning-inspired model of counsellor training programs is now, more than ever, needed.

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Developing and Releasing Agents of Change: Teaching Adaptive Leadership and Fostering Transformative Learning

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Abstract: Adaptive leadership entails the exercise of mobilizing people to face and address difficult challenges and thrive. My paper provides an overview of my teaching practice and examines how teaching adaptive leadership might facilitate transformative learning. Through literature review and reflections on my own experiences, I will attempt to build an integrative conceptual framework for understanding the practice of teaching adaptive leadership through the lens of transformative learning and examine how my variation on teaching adaptive leadership with a focus on social change draws from a prior experience of learning social entrepreneurship.

Introduction and Overview of Practice

My teaching and research interests lie in the intersection between the exercise of leadership and systemic change along with the conditions and processes that need to be present not only for change in a system, but also for helping individuals build their capacity to effectively engage with the complexity of change. The primary focus of my teaching thus far has been around adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), while my professional experiences have examined and addressed issues of systemic change, specifically concerning issues of social justice. According to Drago-Severson (2012), a way to help current and future leaders develop their internal capacities to work in increasingly complex environments, is to “create professional learning environments that invite educational leaders of all kinds to experience the conditions and practices that support adult growth and development while simultaneously learning about them” (p. 1). This is something I tried to accomplish with my young adult students at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea and hope to continue.

From March 2013 to June 2014, I taught “Leadership: Becoming an Agent of Change” to a diverse group of international and local undergraduate students at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. The course was offered to two distinct groups of students each semester— Korean diaspora and White and Asian foreign students (including a few Muslim students) enrolled at the university’s international college and native Korean students (mixed with some Korean diaspora and White and Asian foreign exchange students) enrolled at the main college. In addition to local Koreans, I taught students from China, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United States, and Canada. This offered the opportunity to test the pedagogy and curriculum among diverse groups of students and make appropriate adjustments.

The course was designed as a learning laboratory and offered an experiential learning space and curriculum that drew from my professional experiences and studies in adaptive leadership and social entrepreneurship from previous graduate studies. Students presented their cases of leadership failure or challenge on a rotating basis in small groups. Those who were willing to share their cases in front of a larger audience were invited to present their cases to the entire class for analysis and feedback on a larger group level, with my public guidance. In addition to analyzing individual leadership cases, students were also given the space to

collaboratively develop and experiment with their own ideas and actions for change through “team change projects,” while conducting weekly reflection assignments and analyses of group dynamics in their teams and in the classroom. In teams, students designed and implemented projects using the framework of adaptive leadership to guide their diagnosis of systemic challenges and choice of coordinated interventions, which they planned and tried out. Towards the end of the course, teams presented their work to the class in the form of lessons learned for leadership. Accordingly, teams were instructed to assume the roles of teachers or facilitators during their presentations, and other students in the class were invited to provide feedback in addition to asking questions.

Integrating Theory and Practice

Schein (2010) refers to leadership as a central process by which organizational cultures are formed and changed. Extending beyond the organization and into the more general and broader context of communities and societies that encompass organizations, Heifetz (1994) states that those who are exercising leadership must “engage people in facing the challenge, adjusting their values, changing perspectives, and developing new habits of behavior” (p. 276). Nevertheless, the adjustments in values, perspectives, and behavior include the experience of loss as old ways are deconstructed and new habits are learned. Adaptive leadership thereby entails movement and change as well as loss. It is an activity that moves people to confront and address difficult challenges, while accepting losses associated with change at a rate that is tolerable, and eventually thrive (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The analytical framework and practice of teaching adaptive leadership were designed to help people develop their capacities to navigate through these processes and thrive in changing contexts. Introduced over 30 years ago at the Harvard Kennedy School, adaptive leadership has been taught by several faculty members, including Ronald Heifetz who co-founded the framework and method of instruction, and Dean Williams who developed the framework to include cross-cultural and international perspectives and insights on leadership and collaboration across boundaries (Daloz Parks, 2005; Williams, 2015). Students who completed the course at Harvard have frequently reported that it was a transformative experience (Daloz Parks, 2005).

Boyd (1991) examines how a small group, as a social system, affects personal transformation and the ways in which the group may support or hinder personal transformation. Adaptive leadership education has frequently involved a method of “case-in-point” teaching, which is used to help people identify key patterns in social systems. These “include the role and functions of authority and the challenges to authority; factions within the social group; regulating the heat required to do the work; work avoidance activity; loss and grief; and challenges to the self” (Daloz Parks, 2005, p. 61). In the teaching context, the social system is the class, which “serves as a case-in-point of predictable patterns within a social system” (Daloz Parks, 2005, p. 61). Here, people experience the concepts and learn from experience. Case-in-point teaching requires people to be present to their experience in the classroom by actively observing, listening, interpreting, reflecting, and participating in an interactive process of critically examining patterns of behavior and assumptions in their social system and discovering new insights, perspectives, and options for action that could facilitate adaptive work and foster transformation. It also involves experimentation with interventions—acts of exercising leadership—in the social system. It is a method of teaching that “meets people where they are and then builds a bridge across that distance between the assumptions about leadership that most

students hold and a practice of leadership that can more adequately address the adaptive work of complex organizations and societies undergoing dramatic change” (Daloz Parks, 2005, p. 71). As pre-existing assumptions about leadership are challenged and reexamined while new perspectives and options for actions emerge in the social system in which students of adaptive leadership are learning, it may be possible that the students are engaged in transformative learning.

The theory of transformative learning can also be considered a theory of perspective transformation. Transformative learning theory originates with Jack Mezirow who helped establish and advance the field of adult education and learning and was concerned with the question of how to analyze “the dynamics of how adults learn, so that an educator can make an intervention in an appropriate way” (Marsick & Finger, n.d.). According to Mezirow (2012), transformative learning entails the transformation of given and unexamined frames of reference, including mindsets and meaning perspectives, to render them more open, inclusive, discerning, adaptable, and reflective. This involves engagement with constructive discourse in which the experiences of others are used to evaluate the reasons behind these assumptions and “making an action decision based on the resulting insight” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 76). Similarly, Cranton (2016) mentions that transformative learning takes place when “people critically examine their habitual expectations, revise them, and act on the revised point of view” (p. 15). It is “a process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising our perspectives” (Cranton, 2016, p. 18). From this standpoint, teaching as well as exercising adaptive leadership fosters transformative learning as both acts of service move people to critically reflect on their own assumptions, engage in constructive discourse, explore new roles, options, and relationships, and take action based on their transformed perspectives. The projected outcomes of adaptive leadership also seem to mirror the outcomes of transformative learning as increased openness, inclusivity, adaptability, and reflectiveness (Mezirow, 2012) depict growth in one’s adaptive capacity to thrive in a new environment or lead in increasingly complex and interdependent systems (Daloz Parks, 2005; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Cranton (2016) provides an overview of transformative learning theory and its evolution from “a 10-step transition model to a complex and comprehensive theory of adult learning” that other scholars have elaborated upon to include alternative views and processes that deviated from Mezirow’s emphasis on “rational critical self-reflection and discourse” (p. 27). Since its origins and development in the 1970s, transformative learning theory has evolved to consider a variety of perspectives and approaches, which provides for a more holistic and integrative understanding of transformative learning, which is inclusive of arts-based learning, emotions, embodied learning, spirituality, storytelling, and relational learning (Cranton, 2006; Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Dirkx (2006), for example, proposes imaginative approaches or imaginal methods that consider and engage emotion and affect in transformative learning and discusses the ways in which the expression and experience of emotion are an integral part of the transformative learning process and the journey of individuation to develop more authentic relationships with one’s self and with others. Yorks & Kasl (2006) refer to aesthetic approaches as “expressive ways of knowing”. According to the authors, “expressive ways of knowing bring feeling and emotion into consciousness” (p. 53). This seems to illustrate some of the ways in which aesthetic learning fosters transformative learning in deeper ways by allowing people to develop new perspectives as their emotions are engaged and as they find ways to bridge what is taking place in the mind and the heart. The curriculum of adaptive leadership has frequently included the integration of aesthetic activities, such as films, poetry, and music (Daloz Parks, 2005). These

may have helped foster transformative learning, contributing to the connection between affective states and conceptual sense making that Yorks & Kasl (2006) describe and the imaginal methods that Dirkx (2006) examines.

Dirkx (2012) builds on the application of depth psychology to adult learning. In contrast to Mezirow's approach to transformative learning, which involves "central reliance on fostering rational processes of critical reflection in adult learning the theoretical perspective reflected," the depth perspective emerges from "Boyd's long-standing efforts to understand more deeply and fully the unconscious forces that characterize dynamics of small, adult learning groups [as he] argued that Mezirow's theory focuses on the adaptive task of instrumentally responding to reality demands, whereas the depth perspective emphasizes relational, emotional, and largely unconscious issues associated with development of the individual interpersonal interactions, and social development" (p. 116). Relying on several Jungian and post-Jungian scholars, Dirkx (2012) extends Boyd's work to the deeply emotional and image-laden contexts of transformative learning and refers to this approach as nurturing soul or soul work (p. 117). Transformative learning also involves constellation, and "the process of constellating complexes or, more colloquially, having our buttons pushed, suggests that these psychic entities possess their own energy... that sometimes threatens to break through or even overwhelm our ego-consciousness" (Dirkx, 2012, p. 121). According to Dirkx (2012), "The ability to recognize and address these powerful emotional reactions represents a major focus for soul work and transformative learning for the educator" (p. 121). Learning adaptive leadership also involves the examination of "triggers" (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009) as well as "hungers" (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The method of case-in-point teaching coupled with constructive discourse and reflection assignments are intended to help students recognize and manage their intense emotional responses that may impede their ability to lead effectively.

According to Dirkx (2012), "Transformative learning suggests not only change in what we know or are able to do but also a dramatic shift in how we come to know and how we understand ourselves in relation to the broader world" (p. 116). Mezirow considered "perspective transformation as being almost identical to or at least at the core of a theory of adult development" and claimed that "a strong case can be made for calling perspective transformation the central process of adult development" (Marsick & Finger, n.d. p. 9). Adaptive leadership is certainly a practice that aims to foster growth. Daloz Parks (2005) refers to Robert Kegan's work around development in orders of consciousness and explains how the reflective work of adaptive leadership calls for "a major cognitive and affective achievement—the development of a fourth order of consciousness" (p. 52-53), which allows us "to recognize interdependent systems—to connect more of the dots—opening our eyes to the intricate web of connections among seemingly discrete populations, organizations, actions, and events" (p. 52). From an adult development perspective, the practice of teaching adaptive leadership not only involves, but requires the creation of a holding environment for growth to take place (Drago-Severson, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Kegan, 1982). A holding environment, according to Drago-Severson (2009), is "the nurturing context in and out of which a person grows" (p. 57). Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) define holding environments as "the cohesive properties of a relationship or social system that serve to keep people engaged with one another in spite of the divisive forces generated by adaptive work" (p. 305). They "give a group identity and contain the conflict, chaos, and confusion often produced when struggling with complex problematic realities" (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). A holding environment may nurture people's growth, facilitate adaptive work, and create a sense of

cohesion in the midst of challenge. I believe it could also facilitate collaboration and innovation, as it happened for me in the Social Entrepreneurship Collaboratory (SE Lab) several years ago.

Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment for Social Change

Bloom (2006) introduces and describes the Social Entrepreneurship Collaboratory (SE Lab), a model of teaching and transformative learning that was developed and launched at two universities to help students learn how to implement their vision or idea for social change and build social change organizations. I was fortunate to have been given the opportunity to enroll in the SE Lab when it launched at one of the universities. It was indeed a transformative experience that allowed me to translate an idea that I was passionate about into an actual practice and informed the career choices I made thereafter. It continues to shape what I am pursuing now in my studies, research, and teaching. Accordingly, the course I taught at Yonsei University combined aspects of the adaptive leadership course I took and the SE Lab I experienced to generate a learning space that would allow students to learn not only the concepts of adaptive leadership, but also how to collaborate and work together as well as empower each other as fellow agents of social change.

According to Bloom (2006), the teaching environment of the SE Lab is an incubator that merges theory and practice through conceptual frameworks, case studies, and field examples and provides students with an opportunity to design and develop a social entrepreneurship initiative. The fusion of theory and practice was foundational to developing social entrepreneurs. Bloom (2006) states that “while foundational knowledge is important, lectures and readings on theory are not sufficient to prepare students to become social entrepreneurs because much of the skills that are needed to be effective are embedded in applying theoretical frameworks to practical problems” (p. 278). I believe this also holds true for leadership development. Most of the students I taught at Yonsei mentioned that they enrolled in my course to become better leaders—or improve their skills and capacities to lead. As such, I tried to ensure that students were applying and practicing the frameworks they were learning conceptually in very tangible and practical ways.

Bloom (2006) explains how the term “collaboratory” captures the core features of the SE Lab—namely, “its collaborative co-creation between students, faculty, practitioners, and other participants; its experimental, inventive laboratory environment; its aim to translate good theory and good ideas into innovative new social change initiatives and models and to develop the leaders and teams that would power them” (p. 276). Peer coaching and mentorship was also a central feature of the lab as “students also [engaged] each other, advising and helping colleagues to develop as leaders and to build their initiatives” (Bloom, 2006, p. 295). This is the spirit I wanted to infuse into the learning laboratory of adaptive leadership. While the way in which I first learned adaptive leadership allowed me to apply the framework in the here and now of the classroom and small group, I found it difficult to see how it could work in team settings as well as outside of the context in which it was taught. Moreover, majority of the students I taught in Korea were undergraduate students with limited professional experience. To address these challenges, I tried to integrate what learned in the SE Lab and adaptive leadership courses by including team projects and peer coaching along with the myriad ways in which the traditional adaptive leadership course combined reflection and analysis assignments and case-in-point teaching with film, poetry, literature, and music to foster learning that was transformative.

Next Steps for Research

Based on my literature and reflections so far, I would like to start designing a research proposal that would examine the following questions:

- What are the various ways in which adaptive leadership is taught today?
- How does the framework and method of teaching adaptive leadership facilitate transformative learning?
- What are the outcomes of learning adaptive leadership and how do they mirror the outcomes of transformative learning?
- How do these outcomes influence the capacities of individuals to exercise leadership in complex systems?
- What implications does this have for leadership education and social change as well as for the leadership educator?

To examine these questions, I envision conducting and using multiple case studies to explore common themes across cases and general implications for teaching adaptive leadership.

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Developmentally Aware Teaching and Learning: Does Letting Go of Transformation Deepen the Overall Transformative Impact?

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Abstract: Understanding one's own development as an educator, as well as the developmental diversity of students can have a significant impact on transformative learning, including how we cultivate and support spaces of transformation. Constructive development theory helps us recognize the kinds of transformation students are going through, where they might be in the transformative process and the kind of support they might need. This mixed methods research found there was a transformative and developmental impact of learning about adult development on faculty and students in a graduate program in sustainability education. It also found a direct correlation between the students' development and their experience of the program, the teaching and mentorship. Developmental awareness and understanding can inform the creation of transformative spaces and deepen the impact.

Prologue

Six years into teaching for transformative post-secondary programs it was clear that while some students thrived in the curriculum, adopting the ecological and social justice worldviews that the program taught towards, others didn't. I wanted to understand how to be more effective at transforming students and supporting their success in our program. After learning about adult development theory – that there are empirically-based maps of how adults develop cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally, I believed I had found the tool I was looking for to better understand and transform students' worldviews.

After ten years studying adult developmental theory and its' application to teaching and mentoring, my approach to transformative teaching is humbly and paradoxically the opposite. I no longer seek to transform another, but rather to meet a student where he or she is in the process of learning and developmental unfolding, and to support them on their growing edges. In addition, I aim to create curriculum that is responsive to the developmental diversity of a group of students, rather than teaching for the development of a particular worldview. Recognizing the developmental patterns of transformative learning has supported my own development as an educator, helping me to be more self-aware, including avoiding the tendency to project my own developmental edges/ learning needs onto students, which is something I did for years but wasn't aware of.

Introduction

If transformative learning includes developmental shifts, understanding one's own development as an educator, as well as the developmental diversity of students could have a significant impact on the process and the outcomes of transformative learning. This understanding and awareness influences how we cultivate and support spaces of transformation that are reciprocally transformative, in that they support the ongoing development of the educators and the students.

Transformative developmental theory, which has arisen out of 45 years of longitudinal grounded theory and probability research, offers insight into the particular developmental needs of students, how an educators' development influences and interacts with a students' development and how to work with the developmental diversity of a cohort of students to better support transformative learning for all (O'Fallon, 2013).

Developmental patterns include widening frames of identity, care and responsibility (from oneself, to one's family or community, to all of humanity, the planet and the cosmos), and patterns of thinking moving from black and white thinking, to either/or, to both/and, to paradoxical one within another thinking. In addition, there are iterating patterns in the spiral of development including an individual or collective focus, increasing perspective taking capacities (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and beyond) and an iteration of whether one is in a more receptive and active orientation with new ways of being and seeing (O'Fallon, 2013). These patterns have significant implications for transformative learning.

Developmental practitioners refer to developmental maps as a spectrum of compassion (Cook-Greuter, 2013; O'Fallon, 2013), because the maps support increased understanding and valuing of multiple ways of being in the world. Each developmental phase, either active or latent as a capacity within each of us, offers both gifts and blind spots. The maps also offer insight and understanding for the transformative process –that there are times in a persons' life where they are opening to new ways of being and seeing, times where they are stabilizing and integrating new insights and times where they are learning to be active in the world with these new insights.

A developmentally informed educator recognizes the various phases of development or transformation that students are in, and makes adjustments to work with students where they are. The educator is also aware of the developmental diversity of a group of students and doesn't aim for a particular worldview or transformative outcome – but adjusts the outcome, processes and mentoring to meet the students where they are. Without this awareness and knowledge, many transformative programs teach for a particular development, which is an appropriate stretch for some students but not for others.

The purpose of the research was to explore deepening the transformative nature of learning and leadership development in graduate education through the use of a developmental framework and assessment, and to contribute to advancing the application of adult developmental research to adult learning and sustainability education.

Theory

Transformative learning is often considered to be an educational process, when it may be more accurately described as a developmental process. Whether a student is ready to transform, and the particular transformation she or he might be ready for, relates to where the student is in the process of their developmental unfolding. Understanding and responding to this can make a significant difference in students' learning experiences. Ego development researcher Loevinger (1976) illustrated this concept with the following: "Ego development is growth - there is no way to force it. One can only try to open the doors" (p. 426).

Constructive Development Theory

Constructive-developmental theory is based on the assumption that everyone has a lens through which he or she experiences the world, and this lens shapes the reality that each person experiences and the meaning she or he makes of it. Research reveals that these meaning-making systems develop over time and with patterns that are consistent across gender, socio-cultural context and other personality differences (Cook-Greuter, 2013). Constructive-developmental

theory for ego development was created by Jane Loevinger (1976) and expanded upon by Torbert (2004), Cook-Greuter (2013) and O’Fallon (2013). It integrates cognitive (thinking), affective (being or identity), and behavioral (doing) development. Ego development theory and its research has profound implications for the ways in which students respond to and make meaning of their learning experiences and how they approach their subject matter and their research. It also has valuable implications for ways in which educators can design and deliver curriculum and mentor their students in developmentally responsive ways, as well as ways in which to be more aware of their own development and perspective taking. Integrating a developmental perspective into a graduate program in sustainability education -- through developmental assessments, coaching, and teaching about development itself as a tool for personal and professional development (for both students and faculty) – has the potential to be transformative for students and educators alike, and to support increased effectiveness in cultivating sustainability educators and leaders (Cook-Greuter, 1999, 2013; Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan, 1982; Torbert, 2013; O’Fallon, 2013). According to Harvard professor Robert Kegan,

What gradually happens is not just a linear accretion of more and more that one can look at or think about, but a qualitative shift in the very shape of the window or lens through which one looks at the world. (2002, p. 148)

Students’ developmental centers of gravity influence how they make meaning, what they are aware of and therefore able to act upon, how they orient to feedback, their perspective-taking capacities, and their tendencies with regards to thinking patterns – whether they are more black and white, both/and, or paradoxical in their thinking (Cook-Greuter, 2013; O’Fallon, 2013). Individuals’ stages of development also affect the kind of support and challenges that they need as learners. The following describes some of the patterns of the six stages of ego development most commonly found in higher education.

Students at the Expert stage of development tend to be black and white thinkers, take feedback as personal attacks, and may dismiss feedback from anyone not considered to be an expert in their field. They are awash in new ideas of their own, independent from the groups they identify with and have a hard time prioritizing ideas – this is a receptive stage. They have a hard time reflecting on their own thoughts and feelings, and may struggle with self-direction, time management and completing assignments on time. This stage of development often emerges in early college students.

Achiever students are actively goal-oriented, may be overwhelmed with pluralistic or complex system perspectives, tend to think in either/or terms, are more single-system and results-oriented, and are establishing their skills and capacities as self-directed learners. Achiever learners tend to accept feedback if it helps them to achieve a goal and are not as aware of their own subjectivity or that of others.

Individualist (Pluralist) students are likely to be interested in their own authenticity separate from society’s expectations, seek creative and unique approaches to their work, are aware of social contexts (their own and others), want to hear everyone’s voices including faculty’s’, welcome feedback to discover their authentic selves, and may be strident about their pluralism and other socially critical ideologies. These students are both/and thinkers and recognize the subjectivity of objective perspectives.

Strategist students tend to be more complex systemic and paradoxical thinkers, and they are aware of and passionate about their own and others’ transformation and development. They are action-oriented, interested in taking multiple perspectives, may be impatient with excessive

sharing and processing, and may be critical of a mentor or program that is not transformative enough.

Construct Aware and Transpersonal students are aware of the constructed and developmental nature of perspective taking, and they are flexible and adaptive in their communication and actions. Their thinking, which may be perceived as complex, includes both paradoxical and one-within-another ways of thinking. They may source their way of doing and being from a transpersonal experience of encountering a “vibrant and alive” world. These students may not feel seen or understood, and because of the relative rarity of these stages, it is unlikely that there would be other students or faculty with similar developmental capacities (Cook-Greuter, 2013; O’Fallon, 2010, 2013).

This study addressed gaps in the literature of adult and transformative learning, concerning the role that ego development (cognitive, affective and behavioral development) (Cook-Greuter, 2013; Torbert, 2013) and integral adult development (O’Fallon, 2013) play in perspectives and practices around teaching, mentorship, and curriculum design.

Methods

This research examined the personal, professional, and developmental impact of introducing a constructive developmental perspective to faculty and students in a post-secondary program in sustainability education and leadership development. It also examined the relationships between stage development and student’s experience of the curriculum, teaching, and mentoring.

The site of study was Prescott College’s Ph.D. program in Sustainability Education, and the participants included four faculty and seven students (current and recent alumni). The study was a mixed-methods approach that included pre and post semi-structured interviews; a five-month action inquiry process involving reading, reflective writing and group discussion; and a pre and post developmental assessment through the use of the SCTi-MAP.

Findings

The findings demonstrate that learning about adult development is transformative developmentally, personally, and professionally, and indicate that a developmental awareness may deepen the transformative impact of graduate sustainability education and leadership development. Integrating a developmental awareness into post-secondary education is recommended to support transformative learning and growth at all stages of development, support the development of the educators themselves, and support skill development for working well with diverse groups of learners.

Within this sample of students in a Ph.D. program in sustainability education there was a developmental diversity that ranged from Achiever through Transpersonal. The faculty’s development ranged from Achiever through Strategist. Each developmental stage has unique capacities, strengths, challenges, and needs as learners/educators. Additionally, whether an individual is newly emerging into a stage or exiting their present stage of development, also informs the kind of mentoring that is likely to better support them.

Learning About Adult Development

Regarding the developmental impact of the study, six of the eleven participants assessed at a later developmental stage in their second assessment, two participants’ assessments showed more than one full stage of developmental growth, and two participants assessed at half to one stage earlier developmentally. Regarding the personal impacts, all participants described some

positive impact (eight out of the eleven describe significant impact) in their personal lives including greater self-awareness and self-knowledge; increased compassion, understanding, and acceptance of differences with others; communicating in ways that are developmentally responsive and aware; and more careful listening. In their professional lives, all participants described positive impact, and seven out of eleven described significant professional impact. These included that learning about development influenced their research design and analysis, mentorship, communication, teaching, and curriculum design.

Developmental Awareness and Transformative Impact

There were significant developmental differences in how students described their learning and transformation in the program and how faculty talked about their approaches to teaching and mentoring. Applying a developmental perspective to the teaching, mentorship, and curriculum design in a post-secondary program may deepen the transformative impact.

The student participants assessed at Achiever and Individualist described the program as significantly transformative; however, the Achiever participant spoke of her challenges in maintaining some of the learning with increasing distance from the program. Participants assessed at Strategist did not describe as much transformation and were critical of aspects of the program and the mentoring they received. Construct Aware and Transpersonal students spoke of transformation, but only partially as a result of the teaching, mentorship, or program design. In addition, faculties' developmental stages influence how they teach, mentor, orient to sustainability, and design learning experiences. Faculty assessed at Achiever and Individualist are more likely to promote a particular worldview or values development and may be less likely to understand or effectively meet their students' developmental needs. Strategist faculty have greater capacities to understand their students' development and therefore are more likely to mentor in developmentally responsive ways (Lynam, 2014).

Discussion

Developmentally aware and informed teaching and mentorship works in multiple directions at once. Understanding how adults develop supports educators to design curriculum and mentor in ways that meet students where they are developmentally and support their next steps. It illustrates and values the diverse ways in which students make meaning, and their perspectives and practices with regards to sustainability, recognizing the strengths and limitations of the different approaches. It can also inform the self-awareness and development of the educators and leaders themselves, as well as inform ways of working more effectively with the developmental diversity within a learning community (Cook-Greuter, 2013; Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan, 1982; Torbert, 2013; O'Fallon, 2010, 2013).

According to O'Fallon, without a developmental awareness, educators are less likely to recognize the particular developmental needs of students and might be more likely to project and/or promote a particular worldview. They also might over- or under-stretch students, and may not fully recognize the growth and development a student is making, versus the growth and development the educator (or the program) hopes or expects to see, as was seen in the findings of this research. Without an understanding of their own development, educators may be more likely to project their own developmental needs onto students, teach for a particular developmental transformation, which may or may not be appropriate for the student, and may be less likely to engage in their own development, not knowing the range of what might be possible, or not "seeing" themselves in the midst of a developmental journey (O'Fallon, 2010).

This research demonstrated that there are significant developmental dimensions to teaching, mentoring, and learning. Students have different needs developmentally, and understanding this and learning how to meet these needs is likely to be more effective and transformative, and is more likely to support student success. Developmentally aware mentoring can also support the development of faculty themselves, points towards the importance of engaging in developmentally-aware professional development, and encourages listening for and integrating student's interiors in program design, mentoring and curriculum.

Teaching and Mentoring Developmentally

Teaching and mentoring developmentally is paradoxical in a number of ways. It might suggest that by attempting to discern where a student is developmentally, or even using a developmental assessment as a part of a learning process, could limit another's growth by putting that person in a category and judging his or her development relative to other students. Understanding and meeting students where they are, and supporting their next steps developmentally, can paradoxically support their transformation. Teaching developmentally offers a way of attending to the developmental diversity of a learning community, or what Drago-Severson calls "the new pluralism." Exerting a developmental pressure or over- or under-stretching a student can result in the student feeling unsupported, misunderstood, unsuccessful, and can generate resistance. For instance, expecting a student to adopt a particular ecological worldview, or orientation to sustainability that is considered deep vs. shallow, or ecocentric vs. anthropocentric, may be a developmental fit for only some students. It is understandable that a program focusing on sustainability might seek to cultivate a particular approach to the topic. However, if it is not a developmental fit for a student understanding what is a fit and why it might not be a fit may be more effective than trying to promote a particular perspective. As another example, a program might expect a capacity for self-directed learning, openness to collaborative feedback processes, and the capacity to consider multiple and opposing perspectives (a both/and capacity) in their students. However, if a student is not competent in these areas, the program needs to be ready to support that student through more structured mentoring or to be more selective in the application process.

Teaching developmentally recognizes that what is next for a student may not be transformation, but rather stabilization or integration. Developmentally informed teaching directs us to listen for where a student is in their developmental unfolding, meet them where they are and support their next steps. Garvey Berger (2004) recommends "helping students recognize the edge of their meaning-making; being good company at the edge; and helping to build a firm ground in a new place" (p. 346). Paradoxically, letting go of transformation, may actually deepen the overall transformative impact.

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Making Meaning: Exploring the Teaching Portfolio as a Mechanism to Promote Transformative Learning

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Abstract: This qualitative study examines the experiences of faculty members who are required to document their teaching practice in a portfolio, first as a tool for professional development, and two years later as a tool for performance evaluation for the emergence of evidence of transformative learning, which is demonstrated in evidence of teaching practice and documented through the portfolio process. The data collection for the research was completed in various stages. The first stage involved the document review of teaching portfolios prepared for the first time in 2013. Next, the researcher reviewed the portfolios of the same faculty members who were required to submit an updated portfolio in 2015 to be used for performance evaluation. After the two-stage document analysis, 10 faculty members were interviewed to further explore the learning that occurred from the start of the process over the two-year period to confirm and expand on the data from the document reviews, in addition to examining the impact of the interview and feedback stages of the process. The findings reveal that many of the faculty found this process of documenting and reflecting on their teaching a disorienting dilemma. For some this triggered the opportunity for transformative learning as evidenced in the differences between the two portfolios over two years, and as discussed in the interviews. This work aligns with the conference theme in the area of intersections between development and evaluation in an institution that does not have the traditional tenure system in place for faculty.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how the teaching portfolio process can trigger transformative learning for faculty members exposed to the teaching portfolio as a developmental, and then an evaluative tool. Based on the assumption that the portfolio would present a disorienting dilemma for faculty members, the researcher conducted document analysis of the two portfolios, prepared two years apart, for evidence of the different phases of transformative learning. Qualitative interviews with a sample of faculty members whose portfolio writing showed signs of transformative learning expanded on their experiences, with a focus on the experience and the portfolio interviews. This paper presents the preliminary findings and analysis from the study.

Literature Review

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)

Transformative learning is defined as the process by which previously uncritically related assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validate (Cranton, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). The three central themes to transformative learning are personal experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse. TLT

integrates elements from earlier domains in adult learning theory including andragogy, reflective practice, emancipatory learning, and critical theory.

There are four ways that transformative learning can occur (Mezirow, 2000). The first is by elaborating existing frames of reference, the assumptions and expectations we hold that affect our experiences in the world. The second is by learning new frames of references. Transforming points of view or habits of mind are the other two ways transformative learning occurs. Habits of mind, predispositions for how we interpret the meaning of an experience, are expressed as points of view, or what we experience and how we experience it.

Perspective transformation is a structural reorganization of the way a person looks at himself (Mezirow, 1991). Critical reflection and discourse are the two key elements of perspective transformation. Mezirow (1991) describes critical reflection as a rational process of an individual seeing that previously held views no longer fit; these views are too narrowing or limiting. Reflection helps an individual to be more open to making meaning of an experience. When reflection is based on why what happened is important, premise reflection, this often leads to transformed habits of mind because we are questioning the validity of the assumptions underlying how we see the world.

Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) is triggered by a disorienting dilemma, which prompts self-examination. Next, there is a critical assessment of one's assumptions, followed by recognition that one's discontent is shared. There is then an exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions. A course of action must be planned, with acquisition of new knowledge and skills to fulfill this plan. The last phases include trying out new roles, gaining confidence and competence in new roles and relationships, and finally, reintegration into one's life with the new perspective.

Teaching Portfolios in Higher Education

Lea (2015) describes academic practice in three dimensions: teaching and learning, research and publication, and leadership and management. While the research and publication dimension is assessed in terms of tangible outputs, the assessment of the teaching and learning dimension is more open to interpretation across the different elements of teaching, including planning, delivery, and assessment. Teaching portfolios emerged in teacher education programs in the 1980's as a tool for assessment and reflection (Jones, 2010). As the emphasis on teaching excellence increases in significance, this platform enables faculty to present evidence that supports the scope and quality of their teaching performance in the areas of skills, abilities, attitudes, philosophies, and methodologies (Seldin et al., 2010). This scope is not readily obtained through traditional faculty assessment practices, including student evaluations and observations.

The teaching portfolio is designed to allow faculty to select documents and materials that showcase their teaching accomplishments for examination by others (Seldin et al., 2010). The portfolio is not designed to document all aspects of one's work, but rather a selection of work that contributes to meaningful analysis of teaching performance, evidence, and goals. The portfolio consists of material from oneself (statement of teaching responsibilities, philosophy, methodologies, teaching materials, improvement activities, and goals) and material from others (student course evaluations, teaching observations, improvement activities, and honors or other recognition). These examples are not exhaustive and the common thread of presented materials is that they are representative of effective teaching and student learning (Seldin et al., 2010).

In addition to assessment, the portfolio is used as a tool for professional development as mechanism to improve performance. Seldin et al. (2010) describe the portfolio as a valuable tool

for development for the following reasons: (1) high level of personal investment due to the personal preparation of the portfolio and supporting documents, (2) this preparation promotes reflection, and (3) it is grounded in discipline-based pedagogy, acknowledging the context of one’s work. Reflection, defined in the context of the professional portfolio, is a process of “critically examining one’s present and past practices as a means of building one’s knowledge and understanding in order to improve practice” (Davis, 2006). Although there are other factors, the reflection that occurs during the portfolio process could lead to transformative learning.

Methodology

This qualitative research study consisted of a two stages of data collection. In the first stage, the researcher conducted a document analysis of faculty portfolios from 2013, and then again for the same faculty members who completed the portfolio for a second time in 2015. The data was coded using pre-established themes. The second stage consisted of qualitative interviews with eight faculty members, selected after the document analysis due to the presence of transformative learning themes in the second portfolio. The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. These interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis with the preliminary data collected from the document analysis.

Findings

The data collected in this study shows evidence of critical reflection that may lead to transformative learning. The findings are presented in two categories: (a) descriptions of the portfolio and initial submission, and (b) documented differences between the two portfolio submissions.

Portfolio Descriptions and Initial Experiences

At the start of the interviews, each faculty member was asked to define what they think a portfolio is. The way the faculty member articulates what this process means to them, in their own words, supports the themes developed from the document analysis in the areas of reflection and improvement. Some examples of these definitions are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1.
Examples of Faculty Definitions of the Portfolio

Interview Question: In your own words, what do you think a portfolio is?	<i>“...an opportunity to think about what I am doing. To be able to formalize my reflections and justify what I do in order to make improvements.”</i>
	<i>“...analyze what you do every day, an inspection of your job, time to put words on what we do.”</i>
	<i>“A moment to see how I can improve.”</i>
	<i>“Time to reflect on my own work. It is a learning process.”</i>
	<i>“Documentation – a world view of my teaching to shape future direction. A touchpoint for goals and feedback.”</i>

After defining the portfolio, the faculty members were asked to discuss planning for the first portfolio and the components related to the interview – format and discussion, outcomes, feedback. When preparing the first portfolio, the faculty described this planning and preparation as stressful and as a time to follow directions and guidelines provided, even if they were

minimal. While support was provided in faculty development workshops and broad guidelines, the idea of explaining one’s practice as an educator was unfamiliar. This was heightened for new faculty members, with one describing the initial portfolio preparation as follows: “...my first year of teaching, and now I have to think about what I do and explain it to others, which for me is stressful.”

The faculty members described the portfolio interview as a positive experience to engage in discourse over their work, accomplishments to date, and to discuss opportunities to improve practice. Although some faculty expressed uncertainty about the actual interview, there was an overall consensus of it being a collegial discussion and sharing. One faculty described the experience as follows:

I was impressed (that the person had read my work in detail) and intrigued, which gave me a good feeling at the start. This profession can be lonely and this was a nice time to share.

Faculty members were also asked how they would describe the portfolio process to a new colleague. All of them used key words - reflect, improve, revisit, new ideas, and introspective, to describe the work. Each faculty member focused on the independent, reflective nature of the portfolio, as opposed to the discourse that is also part of the process. Some examples of these descriptions are shared in Table 2.

Table 2.
Faculty Explanations of the Portfolio Process

Interview Question: If you had to explain the process to a new colleague, how would you do it?	<i>“A time to stop, be introspective, and reflect in order to be proactive. Revisit what you are doing and strategize for what’s coming.”</i>
	<i>“You won’t enjoy it, but you will love the process because you can focus on yourself and celebrate your teaching potential. You will also be forced to think about new ideas and what more can I do?”</i>
	<i>“...simply reflect on what you do and what you can improve.”</i>
	<i>“A moment to take the time to think about what you do and why.”</i>
	<i>“It is an introspective look at the way we work. We need to really analyze and think about how we work.”</i>

Documented Differences Between Submissions

While the initial findings indicate the portfolio presenting as a disorienting dilemma, the faculty members described the time between the two portfolios as time to refine, reflect, and focus more on the why they do what they do, as opposed to just the what. Faculty members were asked to focus on the second portfolio and describe how the planning, preparation, and interview were different from the first time. Table 3 presents an overview of how some faculty responded to questions focusing on differences between submissions.

While the faculty members respond in different ways, the common themes described include an increase in reflection, responding to feedback and aligning with criteria, and selectivity in what is included.

Table 3.

Examples of Faculty Descriptions of Updating the Portfolio

	What does updating mean to you?	What was different?	How did your portfolio evolve?
Faculty #1	"...I had to focus on relating activities and the things I do to categories."	"Before I wrote everything. Now I had to determine what was valuable."	"It was more about what this means rather than just what I do."
Faculty #2	"The changes made required me to justify my work."	"It was a daunting task to review all of the criteria and my work."	"It is hard to say, but this time it felt more administrative and a requirement than as a reflective exercise."
Faculty #3	"Objective – adding in new information, almost mechanical. Subjective – revising my teaching philosophy and modifying to our context."	"I wanted to be sure to fill any gaps and articulate the things I do. I realized that there was important things I left out the first time."	"I saw myself evolve as now I have been teaching for more than 6 years."
Faculty #4	"Put new things in, discuss changes you have made."	"I had to discuss things in the way of I do this because..."	"I feel proud and able to discuss this work with others. I shared it with my family and friends to continue analyzing after it was done."
Faculty #5	"I already knew the structure and what was expected in terms of content. Now I had to revise and add."	"I was able to discuss more about how I have worked to adapt to different learners and styles."	"I was able to think about more of where I can improve."

Discussion

After thorough analysis of the findings in this study, four themes emerge to support evidence of transformative learning through the portfolio process. These themes include (a) the portfolio process presenting as a disorienting dilemma, (b) a distinct shift in thinking and professional roles, (c) evidence of critical reflection, and (d) a recognition of the significance of discourse and openness to feedback for continuous improvement.

As the first step in TL is the presence of a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000), it is critical to link how the process presents as such. The common element discussed by all faculty is this was the first experience with documenting their practice. The portfolio was introduced as a developmental tool at first, but within two years, its purpose became two-fold: developmental

and evaluative. This transition can also be considered a disorienting dilemma as not only is this a new perspective on the process, but it is also the first formal evaluation system for faculty at the institution.

The second emerging theme is the recognition of a change in one's thinking and professional role, which was recognized at different times, but became concrete during the second portfolio submission. Not only is there a change in role, but a distinct awareness of the process surrounding this shift. One faculty member described the transition from a professional to an educator in the following way:

I needed to clarify my role as an instructor. I have to send out the message as a lecturer, not as a cook. The students here are future managers, not cooks or waiters. This individual was used to working in a structured kitchen environment with other hospitality professionals, but he recognized that his role of a lecturer required him to lead a class with a different perspective.

Another faculty member described a shift in her role as an educator to a role as a leader for colleagues. This required her to revise, modify, and modernize the courses she was responsible for. She described this new role, and how it promotes critical thinking, in the following way:

I don't always remember the logic or reasoning why one task is done before another...in explaining to someone else, I am forced to justify and really understand what the course is about and the coherence of why it is taught in this way.

The next theme is evidence of critical reflection, as evident in the different documents and discussed in the interviews. The statement of teaching philosophy document evolved between the first and second submissions, with a visible move from simply what I do to the why. An increase in theoretical backing and a cohesive alignment of the philosophy with the other sections of the portfolio also demonstrate critical thinking. This is also seen in discussion of personal teacher development, where the faculty members describe what they are doing to understand pedagogy and their practice. In addition to learning new concepts, they are able to reflect on how they put this knowledge and skills into practice in the classroom when discussing the teaching delivery portion of the document. Critical reflection was also demonstrated during the portfolio interviews where the faculty member discussed their work in more detail and received formal feedback.

One faculty member wrote about his ability to balance his personal beliefs about teaching with the abilities and level of the learners he works with. He describes this as follows:

I believe that all teaching endeavors are the building blocks for a student's self-actualization in the long term. However, I also believe that as a teacher I must consciously strive to support both the short and medium term goals of my students. Specifically undergraduate and master's level programs in hospitality administration are aimed at efficient application of academic learning...effective teaching facilitates the application of firm theoretical underpinnings to real world situations.

In our subsequent discussion during the interview stages, this faculty member elaborated on how he was able to shape his way of thinking and articulate this in his teaching philosophy and practice. He discussed how the feedback from his first portfolio, combined with other reflection and discourse, helped him develop this enhanced perspective, which illustrates evidence of perspective transformation.

The last theme is the recognition of the significance of discourse and openness to feedback for continuous improvement. In addition to discourse during the portfolio process, the

faculty members highlighted other times when discourse with colleagues helped them to further reflect and consider new perspectives. This includes dialogue after an observation, following a peer observation process with selective focus on improvement, participating in and leading faculty development workshops, and formative feedback from students.

Limitations

While the purpose of the research project is to explore learning that occurs during a faculty portfolio process, the researcher acknowledges that some limitations exist. The participants in this study were limited to faculty at a university of applied science in Switzerland. A tenure process for faculty does not exist at the institution, so the researcher acknowledges that in traditional universities with a tenure process, the findings would present differently. A second limitation is that three of the faculty members did in fact use their portfolio as evidence during a promotion process. This may have had an impact on the participants experience with the second portfolio, which was also used during the promotion process. The final limitation to consider is related to language as not all of the participants identify English as their native language.

Conclusions

This study aimed to explore how the portfolio process can lead to transformative learning for faculty members. While the portfolio provides a platform that fosters transformative learning through critical reflection on one's practice (Seldin et al., 2010), reflection itself does not definitively lead to perspective transformation. The four themes of analysis provide evidence to support transformative learning and the themes of critical reflection, personal experience, and rational discourse (Mezirow, 2000), but further exploration is needed to probe if the transformative learning is a result of the portfolio process or if it occurs in another context and is realized with the reflection and discourse during the portfolio process.

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EXPERIENTIAL SESSIONS

Creating Virtual Communities of Practice for Sustaining Transformative Learning

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Abstract: This paper explores key concepts, outcomes, and insights from the development of an innovative virtual Community of Practice (vCoP) initiated by a group of learners, alumni and faculty of a graduate leadership program that is grounded in transformative learning theory. We used action research and literature on Communities of Practice to create an engaging online platform for members to support each other's ongoing learning and leadership development. Key processes and outcomes included creating a shared vision; utilizing small, concurrent workgroups in addition to full group actions; sharing responsibility for group facilitation; and creating documents to record and guide our work. We include a discussion of our next steps in ongoing development of our vCoP.

Introduction

In this paper we discuss how an action research (AR) project initiated by a learner in a graduate leadership program that fosters transformative learning led to the creation of a virtual Community of Practice (vCoP) designed to support ongoing learning and leadership development. After graduating from the program with new conceptual frames and an expanded understanding of their lived experience, alumni yearned for supportive structures as they continued developing their practice of leadership. Our vCoP, created through an on-going AR project by learners, alumni, and faculty of a hybrid graduate leadership program, serves this critical need. Because members of our vCoP are from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, reside in multiple states, and are navigating different stages of life, attention has to be paid to creating engagement when people move fluidly between physical and digital spaces.

Developing an innovative online space and replicating the learning spirit and commitment of an academic program has had its challenges. We have found that the outcomes of transformative learning are enhanced within a learning community. We have learned to prioritize leadership development activities over administrative tasks and realized the value of sharing leadership stories that deepen our relationships. We anticipate that the learning experiences emerging from the development of this vCoP are influential for other groups seeking to hold space for continued transformative learning and leadership development. We also expect that our community can be enhanced by the intersecting insights of other online communities.

Orienting Framework

As learners complete our graduate program, conversations about staying connected abound. However, soon after the program ends and the supportive container of the learning

environment is no longer available, ideas about staying connected fade into the background. Graduates often face the challenge of engaging people who do not share their understanding of leadership, which can be both difficult and isolating. Recognizing a need for continued support and learning after the academic program ends, we created a space for alumni to gather virtually to sustain existing relationships and to develop new ones. This space, designed and built as a vCoP, provides opportunities for new and ongoing collaborations, resource sharing, and support with addressing the adaptive challenges we encounter.

Communities of Practice

Communities of practice (CoPs) are groups of people who share a passion or concern about something they do and interact regularly to learn how to do it better (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). They can emerge organically, such as when a group of employees comes together to solve work-related problems without management directive or involvement (Saint-Onge & Wallace, 2003). Or they can be created by intention, as was our vCoP. Found in virtually every industry and sector, CoPs emphasize knowledge creation and sharing, which makes them widely applicable and highly relevant in today's digital age.

Communities of practice consist of three key elements: domain, practice, and community. The *domain* is the topic or area where people share a passion or concern; the *practice* is the activity, knowledge and artifacts that are generated within the domain; and the *community* is the individuals engaged in the practice together (Wenger, et al., 2002). Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) identify seven principles for CoPs that guided the design of our vCoP: design for evolution, open dialogue between inside and outside perspectives, invitation for different levels of participation, development of both public and private community spaces, focus on value, combining familiarity and excitement, and creating a rhythm for the community (p. 51). Virtual CoPs have an additional layer of complexity with technological tools and the challenges of building trust in an online environment (Greer, 2012).

Twenty-First Century Leadership

Learners in our graduate program explore concepts of 21st Century Leadership, which is oriented toward being inclusive, collaborative, and of service to individuals, the social good, and the ecology (Tynan, 2015). Leadership serves as the domain of our vCoP, as well as the means through which our community is created, designed, developed, and managed. For us, practicing 21st Century Leadership is what our community is about. This specific frame for leadership provides a shared language, understanding, competence, and context for graduates and members of the vCoP to focus their continued learning and support of each other's leadership development.

Transformative Learning Theory

Educators Elizabeth Kasl and Lyle Yorks (2012) define transformative learning as “*a holistic and enduring change in how a person affectively experiences and conceptually frames his or her experience of the world in order to apply new action in life contexts that are personally developmental, socially controversial, or require personal or social healing*” (p. 509). Scholar-practitioners understand the concept of transformative learning to encompass three different but related ideas: the transformation of one's *worldview*, the *learning process* of a person involved in a transformative experience, and *practices* that evoke or support transformation (Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock, 2012, p. 184). Our graduate leadership program is grounded in transformative learning theory as learners examine their assumptions and perspectives, transform their worldviews, and engage in practices that support their new

understanding. The vCoP provides a space where collective action becomes the practice that supports ongoing transformative learning.

Taylor and Snyder (2012) make the case that “transformative learning does not happen in a vacuum solely through the free will of an autonomous learner; rather, it is contextually bounded and influenced by relationships with others” (p. 44). Faced with the challenge of sustaining the transformative learning they experienced in the graduate program and integrating new learning into their leadership practice, the vCoP provides graduates a place for ongoing learning where they can share their experiences practicing leadership, collaborate on projects and research, maintain connections with members of their cohort, and continue learning about leadership with graduates from all cohorts and faculty. The structure of our vCoP emerges and adjusts in response to the interests of its members. One of the primary goals of the vCoP is for members to be encouraged and supported as they take actions consistent with their shifted worldviews.

Our Approach

Our vCoP has its genesis in Ty’s insights into the challenges of practicing 21st Century Leadership in bureaucratic environments. Ty recognized a need for a platform for learners to collaborate and share knowledge and experience after their formal education concludes. This became the basis of his leadership AR project in the program (Tynan, 2015). Ty gathered a research team of learners, alumni and faculty of the graduate leadership program to explore the following research question: *How do we develop a sustainable 21st Century Leadership community of practice that will increase the success of the leadership initiatives of the members as they practice leadership in their organizations?*

Action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes and grounded in a participatory worldview (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, p. 1). AR requires a specific and relevant research question, which helped focus our attention. The cycles of action and reflection deepened our understanding of the needs of the human systems touched by the project. And the clearly defined steps and validity procedures employed through each cycle enabled us to measure outcomes at all steps of the project.

As the initiating AR team transitioned into an informal, ongoing inquiry group, we renamed ourselves the “Community Builders” (CBs). We were able to easily and successfully make this transition because of the relationships, behaviors, goals and interests that were cultivated within the academic AR project. We continue to utilize AR and are guided by our original research question as we grow the vCoP.

A key research process and outcome that contributed to the sustainability of our inquiry was the development of a shared vision. As we identified common needs, feelings, thoughts, goals and values, we discovered a shared vision for what our vCoP could become. We were guided in discovering a set of common values through the Hall-Tonna Values system (Hall, 1994). By engaging in presentational knowing (Reason & Heron, 1999), we identified metaphors and symbols that yielded valuable insights and helped us imagine how our community could be designed to realize our vision.

Another practice that helped propel the development of our vCoP is utilizing small, concurrent workgroups in addition to full group actions. For instance, three concurrent workgroups produced our Charter (discussed below), identified potential technology platforms, and developed a plan for member engagement. A further ongoing practice involves rotating the

primary facilitator role every few months to distribute the responsibility for stewarding the larger group. This provides facilitation skill development opportunities for more community members. We continue to meet virtually on a monthly basis as a whole group, providing opportunities for all voices to be heard and for group learning to happen. We also continue to convene small groups of CBs who have the time and energy to contribute to short-term projects when there are matters that need accelerated attention. The interplay between small group work, whole group work, and sharing of the facilitator role has provided for more instances of practical and emergent learning, as well as the creation of new knowledge.

The shared vision provided a strong foundation on which to build our vCoP. An early research cycle led to the creation of the Charter, a foundational document of the vCoP, which includes the vision, mission, and purpose of our vCoP. This was later incorporated into our Guiding Principles and Governing Standards which offers guidance for the development, survival and flourishing of the vCoP. Additional research cycles yielded the documents described in Table 1.

Table 1
Description of Documents Created During the Initial AR Cycles

Document	Description
Guiding Principles and Governing Standards	Details and defines the community’s domain, Charter, membership criteria, outreach process, online groups structure, relationship with institutional groups, community behaviors and guiding values, roles and relationships, communication vehicles, user support and feedback, decision making processes, levels of participation, collaborative process and action learning, privacy policies and terms of use.
Invocation Letter and User Guide	Welcomes new members to the community and provides background on its formation; introduces our mission, vision, and purpose; and helps orient members to the online space.
Administrator Guide	Provides key points and overall direction for CBs administering a tour of the online space for new members. Tours are intended to serve as a personal introduction to the online platform and are guided by new members’ unique interests. The Administrator Guide offers guiding questions and talking points for a conversation with new members to facilitate their active participation in the vCoP.
Virtual Platform Analysis	Used to assess technology platforms and features that can best meet the functional needs of the vCoP. In addition to standard online group and listserv functions, we identified the following needs: data, member and knowledge management tools; chat, polls, and avenues for member feedback; integrated videoconferencing; enhanced communication and notification features; and customizable activity feeds and digests.

This research endeavor relies on and is enhanced by sustained participation. When the proposed goals of this community were presented at a gathering of alumni, there was significant interest and willingness to contribute. This initial intrigue was encouraging and we are still

identifying the most effective ways to maintain engagement among leadership practitioners with multiple competing commitments.

Learning and Plans for Sustaining Participation

Our key learnings at this point in the project revolve around the interplay between the technical issues and design of the virtual space and the importance of fostering relationships among members of the community. We are actively engaged in addressing both of these concerns.

We have engaged external thinking partners to contribute their knowledge, experience and ideas toward further development of our vCoP. Our first thinking partner was renowned author and systems thinker, Peter Senge. Community Builders, members, alumni, faculty and administrators had opportunities to engage in deep dialogue with Senge and participate in working sessions with a focus on strategy and development of the vCoP. The outside perspectives expressed in the working sessions yielded a wave of engagement and learning from within the community. By convening the vCoP in person, we experienced new opportunities to grow our relationships with each other and realized it is essential to have physical as well as virtual mediums in which to interact. We will continue to engage external thinking partners and gather in-person as an ongoing practice.

Recently, we have felt our attention pulled to address and enhance the capabilities of the online space. We believe that having the tools and features that keep members excited to participate is currently our highest priority. In addition to designing and developing a robust online platform, we have invested time building our governance policies, identifying financial supporters, and planning an official incorporation. These steps are foundational to the long-term success of the community; however they are not the activities that keep new members intrigued and engaged. Leadership development is what piques interest and keeps leadership practitioners committed to participating and supporting others in the community.

Technical and administrative needs can often outweigh the shared experience of learning together. This has been a difficult challenge to overcome because the amount of time we can commit to the community is limited due to competing responsibilities. While technical and administrative needs are often part of our agenda, during videoconference meetings we make sure to create time and space for sharing leadership experiences and we pay attention to the leadership elements embedded in our activities. We are no longer surprised that our discourse regularly pivots from administrative tasks, because our relationships and shared inquiry around leadership development is what we were originally seeking from the community.

The trust and honesty that exists among the cohort learning communities within the academic program was essential to the transformative learning process. Because the vCoP brings together graduates from multiple cohorts who are unknown to each other, focused attention to replicating the trust and honesty is essential. This observation has informed our next cycle of action and reflection, where we plan to use digital storytelling as a means to explore members' leadership journeys. Through the process of sharing their personal stories, members will become more known to one another, stimulating cross-cohort engagement within the community and encouraging graduates to explore overlapping interests. A primary goal of the vCoP is to create an environment conducive to creating relationships and continued learning; this learning happens through collaborating on projects and issues that are personally meaningful for members. We continue to explore ways to support cross-cohort connections within the community.

The vCoP has proven to be a generative environment as members share their leadership experiences and coach and support each other. During the academic program, students and faculty learn through sharing and reflecting on their lived experience. Although the vCoP is an informal setting, the conventions are analogous. Our individual biographies, leadership plans, and professional trajectories are constantly evolving. As a result of the transformative learning that happens during the academic program, new meaning perspectives and habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000) are incorporated into our leadership practice. The relationships within the community and members' interactions sustain and expand our worldviews.

We have set a course for members to feel comfortable sharing and contributing their unique gifts. We continue to learn from the interplay of focusing on the ongoing technical and administrative requirements of our vCoP and the ongoing leadership learning that is the fundamental purpose of our community.

Workshop Design

In the workshop, participants learn an orienting framework for building a vCoP; identify opportunities in their own contexts where a vCoP could be valuable; collaboratively experiment with planning action inquiries designed to support development of their vCoPs; and share ideas for sustaining engagement in their vCoPs.

To help frame the exploration, participants first are introduced to the vCoP and the action research method utilized in its creation and ongoing development. Participants then are guided in a journaling process to identify possible purposes for a vCoP. Working in small groups, participants collaboratively refine how a vCoP might facilitate learning in their chosen organizations or communities.

In new groups organized around participants' areas of interest, they then engage in propositional and presentational knowing (Reason & Heron, 1999) to respond to a set of reflective questions to identify activities that could guide development of their vCoP.

After a tour of our vCoP platform, participants reconvene in small groups to identify potential Community Builders and members for their own vCoPs and then engage in a presentational exercise to develop a name, symbol and metaphor for their communities, which they then share with the larger group.

The session concludes with a full group discussion of shared learning around development and sustained engagement of vCoPs in service of preparing and supporting practitioners to take action to realize their goals. Handouts and worksheets for each small group activity are provided for participants to utilize during and after the session.

Conclusion

Communities of Practice are not new phenomena; they have deep roots in indigenous cultures and are found in a variety of settings, organized by common interests that relate to a profession, industry, or practice. Our vCoP focuses on practicing leadership and leadership development, both through participation in the vCoP and the creation of new knowledge. Whether our actions are temporal or grow into long-term research, it is the shared inquiries among faculty and alumni that form our intersecting pathways.

In our program, learning is a product of the key relationships where students and faculty explore the discipline together. Post-graduation learning can be amplified with a sophisticated vCoP. Sharing our progress and engaging others in these collective practices will lead to more

informal groups building thriving virtual spaces that serve as support systems for continued transformative learning outside formal academic programs.

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Exploiting Opportunities for Transformative Learning in Remedial Math Education

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Abstract: Transformative learning hinges on changing a frame of reference, described by Jack Mezirow as the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. Our frames of reference shape our expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings. Many students that enroll in remedial math courses, also called developmental math, have a frame of reference in which they expect to continue doing poorly in math, associate math with feelings of anxiety or shame, and see themselves as not only “bad at math” but also “bad at learning” or intellectually deficient. In other words, their identity as a learner is linked to their interpretation of their experiences with math. For this reason, developmental math courses represent a tremendous opportunity for teachers to facilitate transformative change in students’ self-identity as a learner.

Despite the appearance of math as a “dry” subject, it has the power to elicit powerful emotions in students, both positive and negative. By directing students to look inward to understand their experiences in math class, and by empowering them to trust their problem solving abilities, students can progress through a developmental math class and emerge with both stronger algorithmic skills and self-confidence. Teachers can facilitate this experience through class activities that encourage students to confront their preconceived notions of who they are as learners. In short, rather than being obstacles to success, developmental math classes can become vehicles for transforming students’ identity as learners.

Transformative learning hinges on changing a frame of reference, described by Jack Mezirow (1997) as the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. Our frames of reference shape our expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings. Many students that enroll in remedial math courses, also called developmental math, have a frame of reference in which they expect to continue doing poorly in math, associate math with feelings of anxiety or shame, and see themselves as not only “bad at math” but also “bad at learning” or intellectually deficient. In other words, their identity as a learner is linked to their interpretation of their experiences with math. For this reason, developmental math courses represent a tremendous opportunity for teachers to facilitate transformative change in students’ self-identity as a learner.

We agree with Knud Illeris’ (2014) suggestion that the target area of transformative learning can be defined by the term “identity,” meaning self-perception both internally in relation to the individual and externally in relation to the individual’s interaction with the surrounding world. Accepting that changing one’s frame of reference can change one’s identity, the question remains as to *how* educators might facilitate a change in students’ frames of reference. In this essay we discuss this challenge in the context of remedial math education. We will share some of the practices that have enabled our students to successfully transcend their

limiting personal beliefs to overcome their “I’m not good at math” mindset and replace it with a competent-learner identity and a belief that “I can learn anything.”

We are also in alignment with practitioners advocating fully present, authentic relationships with students. Brent Wilson and Patrick Parrish (2011), for example, suggest that some students are more open to change when they feel a strong connection toward an instructor. Patricia Cranton and Brenda Wright (2008) also focus on teachers’ relationships with their students and refer to teachers who foster transformative learning as learning companions. In their study of how adult literacy educators foster transformative learning, it was found that teachers do so by creating a safe environment, building trust, helping learners overcome their fears, creating possibilities, fostering self-discovery, and working with the whole person (Cranton & Wright, 2008). Adult literacy and remedial math have much in common and are often found housed in the same building or bound by the same department which is the case where we both teach, in a College Skills Department at a California community college. Learning companions do not simply encourage and guide students- they are open to being touched and changed by their interactions with students. As anyone who has experienced it can attest, transformative learning is often a shared experience.

Significance

A wide range of unfortunate events delivers many students into low-level, non-transferable math courses. The courage and vulnerability necessary to learn basic math skills as an adult can be leveraged to develop a growth mindset. This moves remedial math education into the realm of transformative learning. By addressing issues of negative feelings towards mathematics, low self-confidence in learning ability, and limitations in content knowledge, math teachers can transform students’ identity as learners, improving their self-confidence and outlook on all areas of learning. For this reason, remedial math courses are a critical leverage point in improving many students’ rate of success in higher education.

An excellent basic math skills education involves more than clear lessons from a competent teacher, though lack of that basic requirement is one reason students end-up in remedial math courses (Bekdemir, 2010; Guillaume & Kirtman, 2010). Nor do students simply need to be motivated. Every student who registers for a remedial math course was motivated to take the class, but many students lack the perseverance to complete it. Understanding that academic outcomes are largely influenced by student’s perceived control over their own academic behavior enlarges the task of teaching math to include developing students’ self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a generative capability in which cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral skills are coordinated to enable a student to embrace challenges with perseverance (Bandura, 2012; Holmquist, Gable, & Billups, 2013). Furthermore, beliefs of personal efficacy are active contributors to, not merely predictors of, academic outcomes. Changing students’ mindsets about their abilities as learners may involve changing teachers’ minds about their role and responsibilities as teachers.

Transformative Learning in Practice

Many educational reform efforts have focused on academic rigor, but to be successful students must also be taught how to learn, which often involves “unlearning” misconceptions about the process of learning and students’ own role in it. Students who believe that their abilities are fixed can be taught to change this frame of reference to one that is oriented toward growth and resilience (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Learning new frames of reference and

transforming habits of mind are most likely to occur when the teacher intentionally engages in practices designed to challenge and disrupt limiting mindsets. In this section we discuss best practices in transformative learning, particularly in the context of remedial math education.

Trust and Intimacy

It is safer to maintain habits of mind than to change. Before students can be expected to consider risking change, creating openness and developing trust is essential. Teachers can establish trust quickly by sharing their personal experiences first, such as mistakes made and valuable life lessons learned (Castelli 2011). When teachers are authentic - “naked and unprotected”- students find that “such behavior is always seductive in a respectful way because all questions and fears suddenly become legitimate and completely new possibilities of encountering one another emerge” (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004, p. 71).

Another way to create a safe environment and set the tone of the class is by honoring the courage it took to enroll in a remedial math class as an adult. This can be done verbally and also communicated by sharing an appropriate poem such as *The Journey*, by Mary Oliver, or a quote such as this one by James Neil Hollingworth: “Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.”

Sharing poetry is one quick and simple way to infuse a class with intimacy and build suspense, exciting students with worthwhile ideas that are intrinsically inspiring (Chapman, 2013). Countering indifference and stimulating enthusiasm is an oft-mentioned challenge in education, one that can be ameliorated by providing for aesthetic experiences (Greene, 2005; Wong, 2007). From the aesthetic perspective that teaching is an art, the role of the teacher is to design or craft compelling learning experiences, attuned to students’ needs for experiences that are challenging and personally meaningful. This approach is in alignment with the premise that transformational learning means that the “whole student” - cognitive, psychosocial, affective and interpersonal dimensions - has to develop (Barlas, 2001; Bridwell, 2007; Feller, 2007). Additionally, providing opportunities for aesthetic experiences is valuable because “understanding can be further transformed as we come to discover its metaphoric significance in other experiential, theoretical, literary, or aesthetic contexts” (Hersh et al., 2009, p. 18).

Following acknowledgement of vulnerability and a personal revelation demonstrating vulnerability with a group exercise designed to be safe can deepen the sense of classroom safety. An example of such an exercise, based on process rather than outcome, is the “Handshake Problem.” Used as an icebreaker activity the first day of class, and as an example of problem solving versus computational ability, the students work in groups to answer this question: *A group of 10 kids got together at the playground to play basketball. Before the game, every kid shook hands only once with each of the other kids. How many handshakes took place?* (Johnson & Herr, 2001, p. 261)

Problem solving has been defined as “what to do when you don’t know what to do” (Johnson & Herr, 2001, p. 5). Problems like these encourage students to think outside the algorithm and use their own reasoning skills. Since these problems can be solved using many different methods, students see that their thinking, whether the same or different than their groupmates, is valid. That in turn gives students confidence in their problem solving ability. Emphasizing problem solving over algorithms not only validates a student’s ability, but also prepares them for using math beyond the classroom as “a person solving a problem in real life is more likely to have to draw a picture than write an equation” (Johnson & Herr, 2001, p. 386).

Emphasis on problem solving also shifts the tone of the class and brings an unexpected levity. These problem solving activities often invite vigorous debate, creative solutions, and

teamwork. Students see their math class as a new experience and a chance to blaze a new trail in their math education. All of this serves to create an atmosphere of safety where risk-taking is encouraged and creativity is valued.

Additionally, students are more likely to feel the learning environment is safe when they believe their teacher genuinely cares for them, so a teacher's voiced interest in students' personal lives can be an important antecedent to transformative learning. In a case study of twenty adults that identified themselves as significantly transformed by their participation in a doctoral program, an emotionally supportive teacher was identified as a significant factor in their change (Barlas, 2001)

The students felt valued and feeling valued contributed to a sense of self-esteem and empowerment and created a ground from which they were able to take risks and grow. This sense of empowerment supported them in developing their capacities to critically question previously held worldviews and to alter the ways they engaged in their social worlds. (Barlas, 2001, p. 4)

Likewise, when a student feels affinity for their teacher it may improve their affective learning, which is closely associated with cognitive learning because student interest, motivation, and involvement heighten as affective learning increases (Noland & Richards, 2014).

Reflective Learning

Since we cannot change a habit of mind without thinking about it in some way, leading students to uncover and then think about their limiting assumptions or distorted views is fundamental to changing minds. Asking students to write and share their math autobiographies is an effective exercise for uncovering students' beliefs about themselves as math learners and all that this implies to them. A typical math autobiography assignment includes guidelines and questions such as:

To get you thinking about your math autobiography, make a list of twenty mathematical experiences. For example, what can you recall of learning to count? Learning to tell time? Learning what fractions mean? Learning how to use money? Reach as far back into your personal history as possible. Include your earliest memories, as well as memories of how your teachers and your family influenced you in math. Describe how your family members approached math and describe their attitude toward your math ability. What is your most recent math class and how did you experience it? Use your list to describe negative and positive experiences you have had with math. Discuss how these experiences have influenced current *attitudes*, *feelings*, and *intentions* around mathematics and your life goals. (Oesterle, 2012; Urquhart, 2009)

Mezirow (1990, 1997, 2006) argues that transformative change can be elicited by guiding students' critical reflection on the premises upon which their interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based. Recording and sharing one's math autobiography is a first step in a student's critical reflection on their beliefs about math. However, unless the teacher helps students analyze their stories, students' distorted perceptions can become further ingrained rather than challenged.

Instead, when a teacher points out that many of the beliefs expressed were adopted in childhood, by the mind of a child, an opening is created for alternative adult interpretations. Alternative interpretations are then presented, such as the possibility that students had one or more teachers with poor math skills. Students are often surprised to learn that many grade school teachers lack fundamental skills in math and experience math anxiety themselves (Bekdemir,

2010; Guillaume & Kirtman, 2010). The notion that nobody is born with math anxiety - it is taught and learned - can provide students with a new perspective on their math anxiety and their beliefs about learning math. Students are now primed for dialogue designed to uncover premises of their beliefs about learning. For example, by discussing the difference between beliefs in innate or fixed abilities and the belief that intelligence can be developed, perhaps by introducing Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). By reassessing the presuppositions on which their beliefs are based, and with encouragement to act on insights derived from this, students might experience transformative learning (Mezirow, 1998). Providing multiple opportunities for premise reflection, more typically referred to as critical reflection, can help students solidify their new understandings (Mezirow, 1990).

Another example of reflective learning involves metacognition or "thinking about your thinking" to periodically reflect on problem solving. Students engage in several problem solving activities throughout the unit where they may encounter stumbling blocks, "a-ha" moments, or the opportunity to help a classmate. "When students are aware of their thinking patterns as they solve problems and reflect on weaknesses in their approach, they can use this information to grow in their problem-solving ability" (Roberts & Tayeh, 2007). Additionally, when the teacher encourages students to reflect on their thinking and share it with her, it signals to students that their thinking and experiences are valued and part of the learning process. Such essays also serve to deepen the bond of interest and respect between student and teacher.

We cannot teach transformation, but we can engage in practices that may foster it and, as Patricia Cranton (2002) states, "we can teach as though the possibility always exists that a student will have a transformative experience" (p. 6). How might we recognize transformative learning when it occurs? What outcomes can we hope for?

Transformative Learning Outcomes in Remedial Math Education

While remedial math education offers unique opportunities to foster transformative change, transformative learning outcomes are transdisciplinary. Transformative learning is recognized by changed behavior stemming from deeper self-awareness, increased openness to perspectives, and a nontrivial shift in worldview (Stuckey, Taylor, & Cranton, 2013). For learning outcomes to indicate truly transformative learning, students must experience change of significant depth, breadth, and stability or permanence (Hoggan, 2016). This happens when, for example, a remedial math student's changed beliefs about her abilities and responsibilities in her own learning is so profound that it is seen as emancipatory, enabling greater possibilities in her educational pathways and accompanied by such resilience and self-awareness that her academic success is expectable.

The discipline-specific goal in mathematics is to develop students' problem solving abilities. This involves developing students' metacognitive skills, meaning guiding students to regularly monitor their thinking so they can recognize when they need to rethink a problem or switch strategies (Roberts & Tayeh, 2007, p. 233). Teachers in alignment with transformational theory extend such reflective practices to include consideration of assumptions, attitudes and beliefs about learning and change. They also directly address the profoundly emotional aspect of remedial math, helping students develop emotional competence, i.e. the ability to recognize and manage emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, and understand and reason with emotion (Hersh et al., 2009).

Conclusion

Since many students' identity as a learner is linked to their interpretation of their experiences with math, developmental math courses represent an unparalleled opportunity for teachers to facilitate transformative change in students' self-identity as a learner. Despite the appearance of math as a "dry" subject, it has the power to elicit powerful emotions in students, both positive and negative. By directing students to look inward to understand their experiences in math class, and by empowering them to trust their problem solving abilities, students can progress through a developmental math class and emerge with both stronger algorithmic skills and self-confidence.

Teachers can facilitate this experience through class activities that encourage students to confront their preconceived notions of who they are as learners. In short, remedial math students that have transformative learning experiences develop high functional levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. In other words, they can be described as *flourishing*, a term borrowed from Corey Keyes' model of mental health (Hersh et al., 2009; Keyes, 2002). Flourishing students integrate their learning experiences and show openness to new challenges and ideas, with confidence in their ability to cope with stress and emotional disruption. By changing the internal narrative through reflective activities and positive learning experiences, students can be transformed as math students and as learners.

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Stories in the Agora: Transformative Learning through the Medium of Digital Storytelling of Personal Spiritual and Cultural Experiences

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Abstract: This workshop reports the findings of a study examining learners' perceptions of the experiences of transformative learning from a digital storytelling experience and provides workshop participants with an opportunity to experience the transformative learning potential of digital story telling for themselves and/or their students.

In many ways, the learning space can be seen as an *agora*, a market place, into which come people, perhaps strangers, perhaps familiar, all bringing their tales to tell, and in the telling and the hearing of them, learning takes place and lives are potentially transformed. This workshop tells the stories of an experience shared by three groups of graduate students enrolled in a *Spirituality and Culture in the Health and Education Professions* course taught by one of us (Tisdell) in the summers of 2011, 2013, and 2015. Students were required to create a digital story relating an experience of a significant cultural or spiritual event in their own lives, which was to be shared with the entire class on the last day. A digital story (DS) uses technology to combine photos/video, music, and a short text of the story itself used as a voice over (Lambert, 2009; Rossiter & Garcia, 2010). The rationale for the assignment was three-fold. First, words alone are frequently inadequate in conveying the depth of spiritual experience; often symbols, metaphor, art, music, and poetry more closely convey the meaning of an experience perceived as spiritual. Hence, the first purpose of the activity was to encourage students to use multiple forms of expression to capture a spiritual/cultural experience in a digital story. A second purpose, in this age of digital learning, was for students to learn the technology necessary to create the story, and to see how instrumental learning of technology can merge with and be a part of emancipatory and transformative learning. A third purpose was to encourage students to engage in presentational knowing (Kasl & Yorks, 2012) and to share it in the closed "public" space or *agora* of the classroom, because, as discussed elsewhere (Tisdell, 2011) far too often graduate school overemphasizes critique, but doesn't always invite students to engage their creativity.

There is a body of work focused on narrative learning in adult education (Rossiter & Clark, 2007), and the use of stories in enabling transformative learning (Tyler & Swartz, 2012). There has been some discussion of the use of digital stories in the field and in teaching of adult and higher education (Baim, 2015; Cueva et al., 2011; Jamissen & Skou, 2010; Lambert, 2009; Rossiter & Garcia, 2010). With limited exception (Cueva et al., 2011; Prins, 2016), however, there are few research studies in the field of adult education with regard to digital storytelling or how the experience of creating and sharing the narratives of digital stories facilitates transformative learning from the perspective of those who create them. A previous presentation of participants in the 2011 class (Tisdell, Carrow-Boyd, Selveraj & Heiserman, 2012), examined the instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory learning possibilities inherent in the creation of digital stories, following Habermas' (1971) conceptualization of types of knowledge. This workshop builds on this earlier work. More specifically, the purpose of the workshop is two-fold: (1) *to report the findings of a study examining learners' perceptions of the experiences of*

transformative learning from the digital storytelling experience; and (2) to engage workshop participants in the potential role of digital story telling for transformative learning for themselves and/or their students by engaging in some experiential learning opportunities.

Perspective/Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in: (1) the literature on the intersection of spirituality and culture (Tisdell, 2003) and its potential relationship to transformative learning (Charaniya, 2012; Dirkx, 1997; Taylor, 2008), and (2) narrative learning theory (Rossiter & Clark, 2007). Rossiter and Clark suggest a three-part narrative learning model that involves the hearing of stories: their reception and interpretation from outside the learner; the telling of stories: learning through the linking of the learner's experience to a concept; and the recognition of stories: a more objective comparison and critique of narrative patterns. Lambert (2009) outlines the technical skills that need to be mastered in order to create a digital story, but also the narrative roles played in its creation by emotion, by the auditory and visual aspects of the story as well as the structure and the pacing of the story. Narrative theory provides a lens with which to examine the intensely transformative creation process of the changes, erasures and enhancements of word, sound and image needed to create a digital story in computer programs.

The intensity of the learnings in the process, as reported by the participants in their reflective papers, suggested that an interpretation by means of transformative learning (TL) theory would be helpful, though it is beyond the thinking of Mezirow (1991) who initially conceptualized TL as a largely cognitive process. Many, however, have discussed the importance of multiple ways of knowing in the TL process that include the spiritual, the cultural, the embodied and the affective (Cranton, 2016; Dirkx, 1997; Taylor, 2008; Tisdell, 2003). TL and narrative come together to inform this study in the creative process of the 'crafting' of the story by the learners, from the remembered experience to the sharing of the digital work. They have reported the experience to be an extremely significant learning experience. While we have discussed aspects of this study elsewhere (Andersen & Tisdell, 2016), this paper theorizes the data from a TL perspective.

Research Design of the Study

This is a qualitative interpretive study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) that analyses the experiences of students, based on the presentation of the DS on the last day of the course and their written reflection paper about the creation and presentation experience. Participants were told at the beginning of the semester that they were required to create a DS about a spiritual experience that connected to their culture, of no longer than four minutes. They were given examples of digital stories, including one by the instructor that features a spiritual pilgrimage in relationship to the death of her father; they were also shown other digital stories that capture an aspect of the protagonist's personal spirituality, but that were not quite as vulnerable or as "heavy." These were provided to give students options, and to illustrate the range of emotional risk possible in their sharing. This is important, because it is the belief of the instructor (Tisdell) that by modelling deeper levels of risk and vulnerability at the outset, students can feel free to engage in more vulnerable reflection and expression, or not, as they choose.

There were 52 participants in the courses held in the years of 2011, 2013 and 2015. Data collection methods in qualitative research include interviews, observations, and analysis of documents and artifacts related to the context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, the

primary sources of data are the digital stories, online discussion posts about the most important learning in the course, and the reflection papers specifically on the digital story telling process. 19 participants consented to be a part of the study. (All names used are pseudonyms, with the exception of Angelia, who requested that her name be used.) Data were analyzed and gathered into themes by using a constant comparative method of data analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Of all the activities in the class, participants found the digital story an exciting and creative exercise - the most meaningful part of the course. They told deeply personal stories that celebrated powerful spiritual or cultural moments, important events; stories of cultural or spiritual ceremony, of physical and emotional pilgrimage, of death and of loss. All of the stories were ultimately about growth and transformation, often focused on some aspect of their identity. Hence, in this paper we focus our discussion of the findings in two primary areas: (a) the telling of the story in relation to creative expression and culture and identity, and (b) the transformative role of presentational knowing in the community of the classroom.

Telling the Story: Creative Expression and Culture and Spiritual Identity

While a few participants were at first daunted by the instrumental nature of the learning, the transformative nature of the creative process and its spiritually and culturally symbolic meaning-making soon took over.

Power of multiple symbol. Learners found that narrative creation process involving the curation and integration of multiple forms of symbol—image, word, music, and artifact—to tell the story, to be very powerful. Karen found that in revisiting images, or spiraling back to past events was revealing: “It was very profound to me that when I looked at old photographs, I saw new things. The photos have not changed, but I am intrigued about how I may have changed in the interim since I last looked at them, causing my interpretations to be different.” Susan felt that “a simple picture could portray years of heartache and that experiences could be brought to life by voicing a sentence or two”—a sentiment echoed by Janet, who was struck by the many dimensions of meaning available in a digital story “... just speaking the words of the experience will never seem to be enough to try to explain...” She continues, “It is all of the elements put together that make the story more powerful and gives people a closer glimpse into one of the most transformational spiritual experiences of my life.” The digital story, therefore, is a transformative narrative, facilitated and embodied by multiple elements: word, music, and image.

Spirituality and cultural identity. The course provided an opportunity for students in the health and education profession to explore the literature of spirituality and culture, but also by analyzing their own experiences in the light of this thinking. The individual learnings made in this process surfaced clearly in the digital stories and the reflection papers afterwards. Many found that the language and the readings of the course, and especially the process of the digital story creation, gave them a new way to conceptualize and express their sense of personal, spiritual and cultural identity. In reflecting on the memory shared in her digital story, Natalie referred to reclaiming her voice in deciding to leave her husband, as allowing her to make a deeper spiritual connection. She states: “I wore the face my husband expected me to wear and it was only when I challenged this expectation that I began to reclaim myself ...and journey toward becoming whole...It allowed me to develop a connection to the wise mind.”

Another participant to find her voice through this process was Melissa, a respiratory therapist, who found that in telling her story, she was able to transform the pain she felt when

called names like “the Grim Reaper” for the anguishing task of removing patients from ventilation devices. “Allowing myself to feel my spiritual pain, creating my digital story, and reflecting on the experience have helped me to heal -- a type of healing that offers a spirit its wholeness. Creating my digital story was a transformation process for me. It offered healing to my silent spiritual pain through allowing my voice to be heard.”

Angelia reclaimed her name in the making of her digital story. She had been stripped of her unique birth name by a primary school teacher, who had corrected its spelling to ‘Angela’ – and it had remained that way until the course. Her digital story captured a process of reflection and transformation, so that it made a powerful statement celebrating her name, her family history and culture:

I now accept who I am as a Black woman and I love who I am as a Black woman and I embrace who I am as a Black woman. ... Not only is my culture celebrated in my hair but in the way I honor my ancestors and in the way I pass stories down to my children and grandchildren.

She was able to rejoice with her fellow students as they watched her digital story – her individual transformative learning then became that of the group, the students in relationship with one another.

The Power of Presentational Knowing in Community

Kasl and Yorks (2012) argue for the significance of presentational knowing in TL and the positive ways it can affect different forms of community groups. Digital story telling is a form of presentational knowing, and the classroom space is a community of sorts. While early expressions of transformative learning theory tended to favor an individualist, more Westernized conceptualization of learning, there is increasing interest in the enabling role of relationship and community in the transformative learning process (Cranton, 2016; Merriam & Ntseane, 2008; Taylor, 2008). In the context of the course, the digital story was created not only as a presentational narrative, but also as a narrative to be shared in the community of the classroom. One woman reported after the final class that she had “experienced [her] history as both the protagonist and the viewer.” Given that the instructor’s DS was quite vulnerable, students were given a model of risk and self-disclosure, and hence many shared deeply spiritual and vulnerable stories, though it was emphasized that they share only that with which they were comfortable. But in facing that vulnerability lay the opportunity for making meaning – on a personal and on a communal level. On the first day of the course, Susan had been deeply discomfited by the simple question “Who are you?” At the end of the course, she found answers through the digital story:

My digital story began with an uncomfortable, innocent question and ended with a peaceful, self-confident answer. The process of getting from beginning to end was a deeply gratifying learning experience. Without the question having been asked, the much-needed reflection might not have taken place. And without the requirement of creating a digital story, the opportunity to answer the question in such a liberating manner would have been missed. ... Although I was very nervous about whether this “revealing” was right or wrong, watching my classmates’ reactions as the video played reassured me that I had made the right decision.

Her insights speak to the importance of the community in contributing to the creation of further meaning as the stories are shared – as other students examined their own experiences in the light of her digital story. The comments online afterwards continued this shared learning process.

Much of the excitement was about the relational learning that had taken place as students had encountered the stories of the others, and new meaning and new learning was generated. Susan put it best: “Listening to my story in the company of women (and one man) I had grown fond of over the preceding month and speaking with them afterwards was the culmination of a liberating, enlightening experience”. She learned about the commonality of human experience: “Everyone has challenges and feels vulnerable and everyone took the same risk by putting their story together and sharing a piece of themselves with the group.” Others responded to her post: “I felt we were all connected at the core level of being humans” said one; and another, “this connection we lived was palpable. This was only possible because of the profound sense of acceptance and integration of our group.” By opening a communal creative narrative space, using a DS to codify personal experience, presentational knowing facilitates reflection, learning, empathy, understanding and growth; both individually and collectively (Kasl & Yorks, 2012).

Conclusions of the Study

Based on this study, it appears that digital stories, as a form of presentational knowing (Kasl & Yorks, 2012) can be extremely effective in enabling transformative learning – in this case, in a higher education course. In enabling creative expression through the use of pictures, words, and symbols, the digital telling of a story goes beyond cognition and critique to draw on holistic understanding. The deeply personal stories of participants related and celebrated powerful spiritual or cultural moments, events or items of significance; stories of physical and emotional pilgrimage, of cultural or spiritual ceremony, of death and of loss. Ultimately, the stories shared a common narrative of growth and transformation, a transformation that continued as a result of their willingness to share them with others in the classroom community, the *agora* of learning. As Lambert puts it, “when you gather people in a room, and listen, deeply listen, to what they are saying, and also, by example, encourage others to listen, magic happens” (2009, p.86). The presentational knowing articulated through the DS conjures both the possibility of transformative learning and profound human connection. Further, it provides a specific example of presentational knowing and how it can contribute to facilitating TL in classroom communities.

Preparing for Digital Story Telling in the Context of a Workshop

It is not possible to create a digital story in the space of a two hour workshop. However it *is* possible to begin the process by laying the groundwork for participants to create their own digital story. We share the findings of the study, but also show some of the digital stories of study participants, so that workshop participants have a sense of the possibilities and the power of such presentational knowing. Following the showing of these, participants are encouraged in pairs to share a significant cultural or spiritual experience, to get feedback from the partner, and then to re-tell the stories in groups of four. Finally participants consider what symbols, images, music or wording might be used to capture the experience in a digital story that they might create in the future. We conclude with a discussion of the potential role of the digital story in facilitating transformative learning in the *agora* in different contexts—from classrooms to community learning spaces, and emphasize the great potential DS has as a form of presentational knowing for transformative learning.

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The Mandorla: A Symbol for Exploring Intersections in Transformative Learning

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Abstract

Abstract: The mandorla is an ancient archetypal symbol created by drawing two overlapping circles that represent opposite or different perspectives. The intersection of two circles with a resulting elliptical shape forms a mandorla, the Italian word for almond. The center of the mandorla, is more than a blending of two opposites; it represents a highly energized space with creative potential. In this experiential session, we use the mandorla, creative arts, and group process to explore intersectional potential that we create and encounter in transformative learning.

Introduction

“A mandorla is.....the art of healing” Robert Johnson (1991, p. 107).

We use the mandorla as a symbol to explore the intersections we create and encounter in transformative learning. We begin by reviewing literature related to mandorlas, transformative learning, and the creative arts. Next, we describe our process as authors and faculty engaged in a group process of painting mandorlas in relation to the intersections we experience teaching in the Master of Arts in Holistic Health Studies at St. Catherine University. We then describe selected individual and collective experiences of painting mandorlas. Finally, we offer insights for further discussion about using mandorlas to explore intersections.

The mandorla is an ancient archetypal symbol used across time and culture. It was a significant symbol used prior to Christianity and is found in medieval Christian art (Hagstrom, 1998). The essence of the symbol is the representation of two opposing forces and their overlap (Johnson, 1991). The mandorla synthesizes opposites and is useful in working within a dualistic culture where there are challenges to perceive the full spectrum of possibilities. As the overlap or intersection increases within the mandorla, the two original circles, representing opposites, merge and become a single circle, a mandala, a symbol for wholeness (Jung, 1963). “The mandorla begins the healing of the split” (Johnson, 1991, p. 102). “As time passes, the greater the overlap, the greater and more complete is the healing. The mandorla binds together that which was torn apart and made unwhole - unholy” (Johnson, 1991, p.102). Jungian concepts such as archetype, soul, shadow, and individuation have been described by Boyd (1991), Dirks (2012), and Mayes (2005) and offered a place in transformative learning. The intersection found within the mandorla is more than a blending of two opposites. A transformation takes place within the space of the mandorla with the creation of something entirely new. The mandorla is a highly energized space, liminal space, a container for the numinous, and in medieval art, figures within the mandorla are surrounded by a halo or nimbus (Hagstrom, 1998). The mandorla is a feminine archetype, a place of birthing. “...this was a symbol of the gate of life, the birth passage, the entry to another dimension of reality” (Hagstrom, 1998, p. 26). Mandorlas may also be

viewed horizontally where the almond shape takes on the appearance of an eye. This image might be used to represent consciousness, the conscious awareness of self and others required when working at intersections. “Looking into the mandorla is one way of perceiving the wholeness of a journey of the development of embodied witness consciousness” (Adler, 2015, p. 220). Using the mandorla as symbolic space is congruent with transformative learning and the conference theme of being “more intentional and creative in our interactions at these points of connection” (International Transformative Learning Conference, 2016).

As educators and healers in the transdisciplinary field of holistic health, we encounter multiple intersections, for example, alternative medicine/biomedicine, social justice/privilege, feminism/patriarchy, extrarational/rational, flow/structure, personal/political, and teacher/learner “alive with energy, activity, clash and chaos” (International Transformative Learning Conference, 2016). We intend to create learning environments that support multiple points of view so that we as faculty and students might experience shifts and expanded ways of being as we move from either/or to both/and perspectives and consider all elements of our world that impact health and healing (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Mezirow, 2012; Tisdell, 2012). Working at intersections evokes emotions, and transformative learning theories help us make meaning of our experiences with adult learners as we hold the tensions, contradictions, and conflicts that occur (Dirkx, 2006, 2012). Transformative learning theorists have recognized the value of both rational and extrarational ways of knowing; we primarily address the extrarational, intuitive, imaginative components of transformative learning as we use the mandorla (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Tisdell, 2012).

Transformative learning supports engaging in artistic expression (Lawrence, 2012; Mantas & Schwind, 2014; Mendel, 2015). To invite adult learners to use crayons and paint, write a poem, or dance is in and of itself an example of Mezirow’s disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2012). The arts can tap into, make visible, and heal the places of painful intersections. Within the boundaries of an artistic experience, learners and teachers can feel strong emotion and process what may seem like irreconcilable polarities (Dirkx, 2012; McNiff, 2007). Artistic expression leads to the reclamation of a vital aspect of the self and movement towards wholeness (Cameron, 2002). “The arts have the capacity to transform individual worldviews and when experienced collectively can potentially transform communities” (Lawrence, 2012, p. 471).

Process for Painting Mandorlas

Janet M introduced our four-core faculty to the mandorla and served as facilitator. We agreed to paint a series of six mandorlas during spring semester 2016. Janet scheduled painting sessions, gathered art supplies (paint brushes and primary red, blue and yellow tempera paints), drew two circles using a large serving platter as a template for the mandorla on a large piece of sturdy art paper, prepared the room, kept track of time, gave instructions, and provided materials for reflective journaling. We began each painting session by grounding and breathing together and focused on being present in the moment. At each session, a different person decided which pair of polarities to paint (alternative medicine/biomedicine, social justice/privilege, feminism/patriarchy, flow/structure, personal/political, and teacher/learner). Janet gave instructions: *From a grounded and centered space, whoever feels called, put the first stroke on the paper. Do not mix the paints prior to putting them on the page. If they mix on the page that is ok. Then the next person will come up to the painting, pause and look at what is already there and add another stroke.* We maintained a quiet meditative space taking turns in painting strokes. When a natural pause occurred, Janet asked, *Is the painting done? Are we done with the painting? Does anyone else want to add another stroke?* We came to the table looking at the

painting from different perspectives and adding strokes until we determined the painting was complete. We individually reflected on our experiences by writing our answers to two questions: 1) *What did I learn about the intersection of.....*, 2) *What did I learn about myself?* We then shared some of our observations and talked about our experiences.

Reflections on Painting Mandorlas

Janet M's Reflection. I had a sense the mandorla in combination with painting could offer insight about transformative learning at the intersections. I felt excitement that my colleagues were willing to join me in learning through discovery and commit to multiple painting sessions. I noticed I began to think in a deeper way about the intellectual concepts set up as polarities. *Are these pairs really opposites?* Sometimes as we painted I would feel annoyed as certain strokes were painted or when strokes were added when I thought the painting was finished. In spite of the free form guidelines including *no right or wrong way to paint*, I saw that I had a sense of what was right or pleasing. I also heard that some of my paint strokes disturbed others. A positive aspect was that I could notice my emotional responses and not get caught up in them. This felt like an essential learning about collaboration. *I like the support of fellow painters--rich and interesting--trusting more.* I also began to paint mandorlas on my own following my energy and aesthetics. Perhaps the most important shift was becoming more accepting of both sides of the polarities. I felt friendlier and less judgemental about the opposites and saw this change diffusing into other areas of my life. I believe the embodied nature of the painting contributed to this deep learning. I felt it was *a joy to sit in silence together*. I felt good-will for my colleagues. *Spirit emerges in the mandorla.*

Carol's Reflection. I was initially resistant to painting mandorlas partly because it was painting and partly because I recognized the transformative potential of the mandorla and didn't know where it would take us as faculty, but once the process began I find myself completely immersed and engaged. What I noticed about myself is that I was comfortable painting in either circle of the mandorla but the feelings that emerged on each side were different. Through the painting process, I could see where both sides of the mandorla were necessary and informed each and influenced each other; the opposites were not necessarily good/bad, but rather held each other in balance. As I painted, I was aware of my self-talk - my own uncomfortableness with painting and the variety of feelings that arose as part of the group process. At one point, I could see that what we did in the painting was a metaphor for how we interact on a daily basis with one another. At first, I was paralyzed - too afraid to make a move or paint a stroke - and then as I realized we were all participating and co-creating, I felt freer to show up and be me. I think the mandorla paintings have made our underlying group dynamics more evident - in a way that we can more fully honor and make space for our differences.

Laurie's Reflection. The first Thursday of painting, I walk into our meeting room with anticipation. The room had been transformed with art supplies. We talk about the process until we feel that we can trust it. I settle in, welcoming time to be with my colleagues with no expectations of me other than to step into the flow of the process. We start by grounding with a time of silence together. And then as we feel moved we put a stroke of paint on the mandorla. The next person follows and builds on the previous stroke of paint or creates a new separate stroke on the mandorla. I feel myself reacting to the strokes with a variety of emotions and reactions. Some strokes flow through the center of the eye of the mandorla but many do not. As the weeks progress I learn to see each new stroke and accept it as it is and what it offers. Each week, once the process of painting is over I see that the individual brush strokes have created a whole mandorla. After we complete the paintings I begin to have a greater awareness of this

holistic process. The room, I realize, has become for me the center of the mandorla, our intersection as a faculty. During our mandorla painting, stroke after stroke, we offered forward our experiences, our perspectives, our education, our roles, to create a whole, something greater than we could create on our own.

Janet D's Reflection. I immediately went into a panic, resistance, and was catapulted into what Mezirow calls a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2012) when invited to take up paints to participate in a series of collaborative mandorla paintings with three of my Holistic Health Studies graduate faculty. The opportunity to engage in this transformational learning space in connection with my colleagues was the motivation to say yes NOT because I was comfortable or was particularly interested in painting. I am comfortable teaching complexities and intersectional perspectives in the classroom on such topics as holistic health, social justice, feminism, biomedicine, environmental racism, or food justice. Sitting in a circle in front of a blank piece of paper with paints was anything but comfortable despite the welcoming and safe space created by my colleague leading this experience. I felt very vulnerable and anxious as we sat in a circle to begin to let the first mandorla work in all of us. Along with fear, I brought deep curiosity about what I would learn about myself, my colleagues, and possibilities about how this could inform my teaching. Over the course of painting the series of mandorlas I was surprised to watch slowly, my initial fear/anxiety response to painting expand to include a sense of vulnerable confidence. Painting the intersections, we collaboratively identified for the mandorlas, exposed a range of emotions in me not always comfortable. It also opened transformative connections with colleagues and helped me to experience the discomfort students regularly face in the classroom.

Collective Reflections and Discoveries. Painting mandorlas led us to personal and group reflections on polarities and insights into the intersections of our philosophical frameworks. We had a variety of feelings as we began painting mandorlas together. Initially there was tension or anxiety and questions arose: *How will our individual and group experiences be used? Who will have access to our reflections?, Who will write about this?, and Is this research?* We felt more settled after agreeing this was not a research project, we would all have a say about what was included in the paper and presentation, and we established authorship order. As we became familiar with mandorla painting, we showed up, engaged, and became more direct with each other in our reflections after the painting: *When you put that stroke on, I...* We noticed our judgements in that what we considered the “good” side of the polarity consistently appeared on the left of the mandorla. We questioned whether some of the concepts were actual polarities.

We created meditative space, and the mandorla painting became a ritual. We noticed that over time, we appeared more comfortable - the times when no one was painting and we were all silent, when we felt moved to make a mark on the paper, or we were laughing. Doing art together changed our dynamics as a core faculty as we shifted out of task-oriented mode to being present in the moment and living into the unknown. Painting mandorlas encouraged us to look at our own individual processes and how we collectively interact as a core faculty which seemed especially important given challenges and conflicts we were experiencing as faculty. Perhaps the most powerful outcome came at our department retreat in the spring of 2016 when we were discussing our framing for this paper. In the past, we had talked about our various professional backgrounds - physical therapy, nursing, psychology, education, and social work - and how these influence our work. Now, for the first time, we named that we each held a different theoretical/overarching framework that guides our work: transformation, spirituality, social justice, and empowerment. We suddenly had a context for understanding our philosophical intersections and tensions.

Conclusion

Our individual and group experiences are consistent with what transformative learning theory suggests: initial resistance, engagement in the process, reflection, challenging of assumptions, dialog in community, and then a sense of being changed in some way with new roles and deepening relationships for the future. We experienced and honored the emotions and sense of vulnerability present as we became aware of our unacknowledged perspectives at the intersections. “In Boyd's view, powerful feelings, emotions, and affect that arise within our learning experiences draw attention and energies to unconscious issues or concerns seeking to gain voice”(Dirkx, 2000, p. 2).

We sensed the power of an ancient symbol that our ancestors may well have known and recognized the feminine energy contained within the mandorla. “In some traditions, the shape invites an awareness, a memory of the feminine aspect of life as a sacred womb, the concealed, hollow place in which spirit incarnates. Some describe this liminal space as an enclosure that emanates light from within” (Adler, 2015, p. 219).

We recognized the interplay between the creative arts and transformative learning as we created in community (McNiff, 2003) engaging in co-creative art-making and its potential to invite dialog, critical reflection, and relationships (Mantas & Schwind, 2014). Jung (as cited in Mendel, 2015) held that creativity is a primary, instinctive force related to meaning making; we sensed the powerful energetic charge of the mandorla. We experienced our “complex relationship histories with the arts” (Mendel, 2015, p. 20) and the emotions we carried as we painted. “Paint is feeling liquified” (Allen, 1995, p. 28). Painting encouraged letting go and seeing what emerged, an embodied process. “Many learning situations are capable of evoking potentially powerful emotions and images among adults. In a transformative pedagogy informed by the mytho-poetic perspective, these emotions and images are given voice, expression, and elaboration” (Dirkx, 2000, p. 4). We resonated with Mendel’s (2015) Creative Arts Learning Cycle: context setting, freeing up, experience, expression, exploration, reflection, and action (p. 46) and saw similarities in our mandorla painting process. Mendel (2015) describes possibilities in using the creative arts in transformative learning to include the practice of ritual and community expression, linking with the unconscious, distancing and containment of disturbing experience, and embodiment of learning through the senses. Lawrence (2012) writes that “art breaks us out of boundaries that constrain...can be evocative or provocative...both have the potential for facilitating transformative learning” (p. 473).

We see infinite possibilities for the use of mandorla painting when engaging at the intersections. Individuals could use mandorla painting as a form of disciplined self-inquiry, much in the same way one can use daily journaling and painting. We envision using group mandorla paintings in the classroom as one way of having an embodied experience of holding polarities. We see potential for research about both the process and the outcomes of painting mandorlas. Painting mandorlas can be powerful, transformative, and healing.

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Assumption Analysis as a Tool for Understanding White Supremacy

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Abstract: Using the tools of transformative learning, especially those of assumption analysis, participants in this workshop will be guided to consider the assumptions underlying “white supremacist consciousness.” This highly charged phrase is drawn from the discourse of Critical Race Theory (Delgado, 1995) and refers to a meaning perspective that takes for granted the superiority of white norms and the legitimacy of white privilege. The theoretical basis for this workshop draws on Jack Mezirow’s definitions of transformation and Stephen Brookfield’s strategies for assumption analysis. By exploring the myths supporting white supremacy and identifying the cultural narratives that they have observed and/or internalized, participants can come to a better understanding of the ways in which such narratives reinforce problematic paradigmatic assumptions.

Indeed, in America there is a strange and powerful belief that if you stab a black person ten times, the bleeding stops and the healing begins the moment the assailant drops the knife. We believe white dominance to be a fact of the inert past, a delinquent debt that can be made to disappear if only we don't look

— Ta-Nehisi Coates

While it has been over 25 years since Peggy McIntosh (1995) unpacked her invisible knapsack of white privilege, the US continues to be dominated by “white supremacist consciousness.” This highly charged phrase is drawn from the discourse of Critical Race Theory (Delgado, 1995) and refers to a meaning perspective that takes for granted the superiority of white norms and the legitimacy of white privilege. It is heartening to observe that more and more white people are acknowledging their privilege, too often, however, they continue to participate in cultural narratives that presume white superiority. Strategies of shaming and disdaining or attempting to proselytize a counter worldview have typically been unsuccessful in transforming attitudes or in promoting insight in the dominant group (European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness, 2009). I propose a strategy for exploring the assumptions that underlie these beliefs drawn from the discourse of transformative learning.

The workshop, based on the ideas presented in this paper, will focus particularly on white supremacy in relationship to assumptions about those of African descent in the US. I want to acknowledge that this is far from the only context in which white supremacy is central. The legacy of colonialism, the continuing genocide of native peoples, and the relentless xenophobia as manifested in US society’s attitudes towards and policies regarding immigration are the most obvious instances. Given today’s climate, I have chosen this focus because of the urgent need to understand and respond to these particular racial dynamics. I believe that the narratives we will be exploring play crucial roles in those other forms of white supremacy, and indeed have relevance to a variety of oppressive practices (particularly classism) in the US. Assumptions that are implicit in the dominant culture’s values and norms (paradigmatic assumptions) are particularly difficult to identify (Brookfield, 2012, p. 4). Because the dominant culture in the United States perpetuates social myths that appear to justify racial inequality, white

people are often in denial that they hold assumptions about the superiority of white people and white ways of being. Learning how to become aware of and challenge these assumptions can provide new tools for challenging structural oppression as well as affording participants an opportunity to reflect on their current beliefs and behaviors related to race and racism. The workshop is designed to assist participants in uncovering previously unexamined social and personal assumptions that could influence a change in their level of awareness about the ways in which social myths perpetuate white hegemony and offer new strategies for taking action. This paper provides a theoretical base and set of examples that may help to identify the challenges of becoming aware of assumptions about deeply held beliefs and practices.

Jack Mezirow, in articulating his theory on transformative learning, refers to a constellation of assumed attitudes and cultural messages, such as those about white supremacy, as a meaning perspective or habit of mind. He says "transformation refers to a movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives" (2000, p. 19).

Unearthing and engaging such cultural narratives can be done through a process of critical thinking, which, according to Stephen Brookfield (2012), occurs initially "...when we try to discover the assumptions that influence the way we think and act" (pp. 11-12). This first step is followed by checking assumptions (i.e., assessing the accuracy of and evidence for them), exploring alternatives (i.e., considering other points of view), and taking action.

Such a strategy is particularly difficult when trying to uncover and challenge what Brookfield names paradigmatic assumptions, those that "frame the whole way we look at the world" (p. 4) as white supremacy does. Such assumptions are more deeply embedded than causal or descriptive assumptions, which reflect how things work within a worldview. In contrast, paradigmatic assumptions are those that are so central to one's sense of identity and values that one is tempted to reply, as Brookfield puts it, "that's not an assumption, that's reality" (p. 4).

Most of us who have relative status, power or wealth are invested in believing that it is earned and deserved whether consciously or unconsciously. The underlying paradigmatic assumptions are that this society is not as unjust as it may seem, there are just and ethical reasons why some deserve to be rewarded and others punished. I propose a strategy, drawn from the discourse of transformative learning, for exploring assumptions that underlies these beliefs. Few narratives are more dominant or pernicious in the US than the ones that justify presumptions of white superiority. For those of us who are white, it can be comforting to ascribe such attitudes to hate groups, to a particular political party, or simply to those who "don't get it." However, even those white people who are invested in their identity as being anti-racist may focus on personal and interpersonal behavior often avoid considering their own attitudes and assumptions. As Barlas, *et al* conclude:

White people often mask their experience from themselves. When that experience is related to race, racism, privilege or hegemony, the motive to separate themselves from their experience is strong. They may be repressing their prejudiced thoughts, which they are ashamed to discover exist. They may be afraid of making visible their own "unknowing," – either to people of color whom they want genuinely not to offend, or to white friends and colleagues who might judge them as ignorant and insensitive. (Barlas, *et al*, 2000, p. 30)

Indeed, so-called progressive whites are often the most resistant to exploring their own assumptions about race, insulating "themselves via claims that they are beyond the need for

engaging with the content because they ‘already had a class on this’ or ‘already know this.’” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 55)

The workshop will be an interactive process constructed to aid participants in exploring habits of mind that foster presumptions of white superiority. Our goals in this session will be to explore these assumptions, the stories that are taught as givens, as natural, that say that the way things are is just and appropriate, that those who suffer deserve to. I posit that at the heart of white supremacist consciousness are assumptions about who deserves what and that these assumptions are supported by persistent myths about US society that are seldom challenged in the dominant discourse. Factual explanations alone will not change habits of mind, however an exploration of some of these myths can provide an entry point for challenging these assumptions.

Myth 1: The U.S. is the “land of opportunity.”

The first myth is that there is ample and equal opportunity for upward economic and social mobility based on merit and hard work alone are the core of the “American Dream.” Both major political parties use the rhetoric that hard work and big dreams are sufficient for success (Haberma, *et al*, 2016). Many public policies rely on this assumption. Such beliefs are demonstrably untrue. Relative economic mobility is low in the US, for all, though especially for African Americans (Bengali & Daley, 2013).

Myth 2: The U.S. is a “meritocracy.”

The second myth is that the US is a meritocracy. Measures of merit—quantitative measures in particular—are notoriously biased in regards to race, class and gender (Marks, 2013; Sackett, *et al*, 2009) and serve to justify the status quo. Implicit in these false narratives are assumptions about those who do not advance: they are less intelligent, less analytical, less knowledgeable, or are otherwise undeserving. Equally implicit is that those at the top deserve to be there. These myths are justifications for the tolerance of entrenched poverty for those of any race; laws, structural and institutional policies, and social bias have placed specific obstacles to social and economic mobility for African Americans (Coates, 2014; Jargowsky, 2015).

Myth 3: Poverty and blackness are synonymous.

The third myth is that socioeconomic status is tied to race: that is, to be black in the US is to be poor and that to be poor is to be person of color. This leads to false assumptions about both African Americans and poor people—that most black people in the US are poor (when actually only about one in four live at or below the poverty line) and that more people living in poverty are black than white (when there are twice as many white poor people as black poor people) (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014). As Lisa Wade notes, “...a belief that poor people tend to be black and black people tend to be poor is useful for those who want to stifle any redistribution of wealth. The conflation means that opposition to policies designed to alleviate the suffering of poverty can be based in both classism and racism” (Wade, 2009).

Myth 4: The purposes of law enforcement and incarceration are public safety and crime reduction.

This fourth myth is that the justice system is “color blind.” If the presumed face of poverty in the US is black, even more so is the face of crime. As a result, African Americans are prejudicially and inaccurately considered to be more likely to be criminals and more likely to be violent. While this is not true, racial disparities in the criminal justice system distort the picture. African Americans are more likely to be arrested, to be charged with more serious crimes and to receive longer sentences while actual criminal behavior between blacks and whites is relatively similar. This has been widely documented over time. A 1995 Department of Justice report notes that, “...blacks are 40% of drug violation arrests but only 13% of admitted drug users...”

(Langan, 1995, p. 2). Last year, the head of the FBI acknowledged that in the US, the vast majority of law enforcement officers, including those of color, are more likely to believe that a black person is engaging in a criminal activity than a white person (Comey, 2015).

Presumptions of lawlessness and propensity for violence when compounded with presumptions of inferiority serve to reinforce narratives that those who are in poverty and prison deserve to be where they are. This kind of constellation of assumptions is what Mezirow terms a “sociolinguistic premise distortion [which] we take for granted [as] we are unaware of these social norms and cultural codes, which distribute power and privilege” (1991, p. 131).

Such assumptions are particularly difficult to identify and challenge because they are socially sanctioned and because questioning them can challenge an individual’s identity and sense of worth. As Kathleen Taylor and Dean Elias note, “As is evident, the social surround often acts powerfully to manipulate distorted perspectives. When one’s community holds steadfast against challenges to its ideas—not just about faith, but the more pervasive and pernicious distinctions between who ‘we’ are and who ‘they’ are, and what our relationship “should” be—the individual, already burdened by self-questioning, faces the added anxiety of potential loss of the group (family, ‘tribe’) that is a primary source of identity and belonging” (Taylor & Elias, 2012, p. 150).

Evidence alone will not change habits of mind, particularly those that may be central to one’s identity and that are supported by cultural messages. Nor is the process of such critical reflection completed in a 90-minute workshop. To take the final steps in Brookfield’s critical thinking strategy—considering alternative assumptions and “taking informed action” (Brookfield, 2012, p. 12)—requires sustained conscious effort.

By exploring the myths supporting white supremacy and identifying the cultural narratives that they have observed and/or internalized, participants can reconsider their assumptions about who deserves what. My hope is that we can come to a better understanding of the ways in which such narratives reinforce such problematic paradigmatic assumptions.

Workshop Topics and Activities

5 minutes	Facilitator introduction and opening remarks.
15 minutes	Participants reflect in dyads on their feelings about the topic and how they typically engage in such difficult conversations. Some responses to be shared in the full group.
10 minutes	Presentation of four assumptions supporting narratives of white superiority: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The U.S. is the “land of opportunity.”• The U.S. is a “meritocracy.”• Poverty and blackness are synonymous.• The purposes of law enforcement and incarceration are public safety and crime reduction.
15 minutes	Full group discussion of assumption analysis (with handout)
25 minutes	Using worksheets, participants are divided into four small groups, each considering one of the “myths.” They are asked to hunt and challenge assumptions in the myth itself, consider their own worldviews in relation to the assumptions and develop alternatives.
15 minutes	Full group sharing and exploration of Implications for taking action.
5 minutes	Closure: appreciations, regrets, learnings and re-learnings.

Potential Outcomes and Applications

Participant outcomes:

- An understanding of the use of critical thinking to challenge paradigmatic assumptions.
- Greater awareness of individual assumptions about race.
- Tools for deeper analyses of the foundations of structural racism.
- Awareness of possible courses of action for change.

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Regenerative Change: Engaging at the Intersection of Inner and Outer Work through Contemplative Learning

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Abstract: This article explores the intersection of the inner and outer work of regenerative change making through contemplative practices at Portland State University. It describes contemplative strategies employed with graduate students and university faculty including classroom practices and a professional development retreat series for faculty. The authors discuss the importance of inner work in fostering transformative teaching and learning, and explore the connections between inner work, contemplative practices, and transformative learning theory.

Introduction

Over the years, our work has been shaped by urgency to make change in a world in which we see grave social and ecological injustices and imbalances. This desire to effect change led us both into teaching and mentoring work at the university level, and we have put a great deal of energy into teaching and learning for sustainable change. However, over time we have both realized the radical importance of slowing down and the essential nature that inner work plays in any kind of change. Slowing down enough to listen to ourselves, and to be able to engage our authentic selves and true gifts as educators, and to recognize our sense of interconnection with all life has created a shift in both what we do (our outer work) and a clearer vision for why we do it (inner work). Recognizing that colleagues and students all around us are also yearning for time to slow down to connect with each other, with themselves, and with all life, our work has shifted to facilitating more transformative inner work that honors the whole self. In particular, our exploration of contemplative practices in teaching and learning has helped reinforce the importance of slowing down and contemplation in transformative learning. In this article we provide an overview of our work. Next, we discuss the connections between inner work, contemplative teaching and learning, and transformative learning theory. Finally, we offer some examples of contemplative practices and subsequent impacts on participants.

Overview of our Work

Our work at a large urban university centers primarily on transformative learning at the intersections of grave ecological and cultural challenges and immense possibilities for change. Portland State University's motto "Let Knowledge Serve the City" speaks to our university's efforts to partner with the surrounding community to respond to shared challenges. PSU attracts a diverse student body and our courses are populated with students representing a range of ages, and a variety of professional and life experiences. Both of us serve as educators in this university setting, addressing pressing social and environmental issues through our course and program themes. Fitzmaurice serves as a Senior Instructor for service-learning capstone courses in the university's general education program. The capstone is a required, interdisciplinary course for graduating seniors that invites students to apply what they have learned in their majors to

community needs. In addition to teaching, she also serves as a Faculty Support Facilitator for the capstone program, providing training and one-on-one support to faculty members in her program. It is in this role that she facilitates inner work experiences for faculty. Burns is the Director and a teaching faculty member of the Leadership for Sustainability

Education (LSE) program, a master's program situated in the Educational Leadership & Policy department in the Graduate School of Education. The LSE program combines leadership development with educational theory and practice in order to foster personal and professional growth. LSE prepares educators to effect change through careers in a variety of arenas, in garden and farm education programs, in outdoor education programs, in higher education, and in many nonprofit settings. In LSE, sustainability education is viewed as a process of transforming perspectives and opening hearts in order to enact regenerative change and healing in the world.

Inner Work and Contemplative Learning

As we have engaged in our work, we have become increasingly involved in another key intersection; the intersection of “outer” change work and “inner” personal work. Inner work, while commonly disregarded in higher education, is the spiritual work of finding meaning, developing a sense of wholeness and authenticity, and recognizing our interconnectedness (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006). In our work, our sense of purpose is rooted in the need for regenerative change in our world, by which we mean processes that restore, renew, or revitalize cultural and ecological systems, in healthy ways that honor our interconnectedness with all life. We find hope and inspiration in working with many creative and engaged students and faculty who are seeking to foster regenerative change in the world. However, we also often find that the faculty and students we serve are overworked, stressed, and have developed depleting patterns in their lives. As Beer et al. (2015) ask, how can those in higher education “build an atmosphere of transformational learning if they are not themselves engaged in activities which nourish their own growth, creativity and stability?” (p. 162).

Traditional approaches to teaching and learning have focused on outer work, the development of concrete skills and knowledge to prepare students for paid work in the world (Sterling, 2002). A traditional approach to academics has focused narrowly on the mind. In a few disciplines the body also receives some attention (dance, athletics, the arts, etc.) Seldom, if ever, does a focus on the spirit or one's personhood come into play (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). For many, the mention of inner work conjures up images of spiritual gatherings, “fluffy” reflection activities, or even escapism. This work is often viewed as strange, uncomfortable, unpredictable, and irrelevant to the mission of the academy. Additionally, inner work takes time and is a departure from the banking model of education, in which information is deposited from teacher to learner (Freire, 1970). Instead, inner work draws from the wisdom of the participants and calls for a whole person approach to learning. Teaching and learning must shift to an active and engaged model in order to provide opportunities for transformative learning that leads to sustainable change in the world. This approach honors the whole learner, and provides opportunities for reuniting the inner and outer selves (Burns, 2015).

We are engaging, therefore, in the intentional design of transformative teaching and learning and faculty support that integrates contemplative practices to bridge inner and outer work. We seek to engage in transformative teaching and learning that supports living an undivided life in which one's outer work is aligned with one's inner self (Palmer, 1998). Engaging in contemplative learning practices with educators and emerging leaders strongly supports the development of undivided lives.

Foundations in Transformative Learning Theory

Our work at the intersections of inner and outer work using contemplative methods is rooted in transformative learning theory. Our understanding of transformative learning is that it may be relational, affective, extrarational, or experiential (Cranton, 2006), and that transformative learning is best facilitated through engaging multiple dimensions including affective, spiritual, imaginative, somatic, sociocultural, or rational (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006). We also embrace the term “integral transformative learning” which, according to O’Sullivan (2002) is a deep cultural shift that

...involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-location; our relationships with other humans and the natural world; our understanding of the relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of the possibilities for social justice, and peace, and personal joy (p. xvii).

This is a transformative inner shift that alters our outward way of being in the world.

The spiritual work of transformative learning begins with us as educators (Taylor, 2006), and our commitments to personal self-awareness and authenticity. As educators we recognize that we must engage with the great needs of the world holistically and with integrity, employing our gifts as well as our vulnerabilities, while inviting others into this same transformative work. We have been heavily influenced by integrative and holistic educators (Palmer, 1998; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; hooks, 1994; Wheatley & Freize, 2011; Macy & Johnstone, 2012), ecological and whole systems thinking (Capra, 2002; Sterling, 2002; Meadows, 2008; Holmgren, 2004), transformative learning theory (Taylor, 2006; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009; Taylor & Cranton, 2012; O’Sullivan, Morrell & O’Connor, 2002; Cranton, 2006), and the recent emergence of contemplative practices in higher education (Morgan, 2015; Barzebat & Bush, 2014). We have also seen a rise in the connections between spirituality, contemplative practices, and transformative learning, as evidenced in recent issues of the *Journal of Transformative Education* (Ergas, 2013; Burns, 2015; Burrows, 2015; Mamgain, 2010; Morgan, 2015).

Considering the state of our world, these connections must also reflect an ecological identity and sense of interconnectedness—an aspect of transformative learning that is recognized (O’Sullivan, 2002; O’Sullivan, 2012), but not yet well reflected in this field. This ecological awareness is a recognition that we are not separate from the world we inhabit (Devall & Sessions, 2007; Thomashow, 1995). As microcosms of the macrocosm (Kumar, 2002), we are literally made up of air, water, soil, and energy. A recognition of our interconnectedness with the earth reflects a worldview that is holistic and not simply human-centered. As transformative educators, we believe that contemplative spiritual practices can enhance both our personal authenticity, wholeness, and a deep sense of interconnectedness, as well as our abilities to engage in authentic regenerative change making that emerges from this ecological way of being. This is change that is holistic, respectful, compassionate, relational, and non-violent. As Cranton (2006) says, it is about becoming more fully who we are to joyfully and authentically enter into relationship with all of life.

Example from Practice: Opening Circle Classroom Ritual

In the Leadership for Sustainability Education program inner work is an important aspect of everything we do; self-understanding is one of the program’s four key learning goals. A variety of assignments and activities encourage and support personal reflection throughout our courses.

Contemplative practices are also woven throughout our courses and include walking meditation, reflective writing, poetry, reflective expression, art, and storytelling, among others. The opening circle is one central practice that Burns has developed to cultivate regular space for contemplation and connection.

Opening circle is a ritual that Burns employs at the beginning of each class session in all classes. In this circle, class members stand in a circle, engage in 5-10 minute contemplative activity, do some body movement, and engage in a community building activity. Contemplative activities in the opening circle might include a guided meditation on the breath, a guided relaxation focused on the body, a self-compassion exercise, or simply silence followed by intention setting. After quiet contemplation, the opening circle includes time for community building activities. Typically these activities involve sharing a personal highlight, a gratitude, or a life struggle. This ritual of acknowledging the spirit and quieting the self, along with reconnecting with each other in meaningful ways and practicing listening and compassion, signals that inner work is a valued aspect of our learning together. The amount of space, quietness, and openness that this short ritual creates is palpable. This ritual allows for tension release, transition from other activities to class time, and for slowing down enough to really listen to themselves and each other, which promotes deeper relationships. On occasion, students will question the value of spending limited class time on the opening circle, especially the time for sharing and connecting with one another. However, over time the value of this activity usually becomes clearly apparent as students recognize the depth of relationships and learning that occurs. In a recent study, the class ritual of opening circle was noted as a primary way that the class created community and felt connected to one another (Burns, in press).

Example from Practice: Faculty Retreat Series

In the university's general education program, Fitzmaurice, through her role as a faculty support facilitator, introduced inner work to her colleagues in an experimental and incremental manner. Early efforts to integrate and normalize a culture of inner work in her departmental setting included contemplative practices such as opening meetings with introductory questions that highlighted an aspect of self beyond our profession, incorporating quotes into agendas, and encouraging the use of poetry as a teaching and leadership tool. Eventually, the faculty graduated to forming book discussion groups around texts that encouraged the use of inner work techniques or deep reflection such as *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer, 1998) and *Teaching with Fire: Poetry that Sustains the Courage to Teach* (Intrator & Scribner, 2003). Eventually, Fitzmaurice organized a multi-day retreat series titled *The Art of Teaching: Working from the Inside Out* for a cohort of 15 faculty participants. The series is now approaching its 4th year and attracts faculty from a variety of academic ranks and disciplines.

The retreat series is rooted in the *Circle of Trust* © retreat approach developed by Parker Palmer and others affiliated with the Center for Courage and Renewal. Currently, the Center oversees the training and preparation of a growing network of global facilitators who facilitate *Circle of Trust* retreats for diverse participants. Several of the trained facilitators have developed programming for a higher education audience. Fitzmaurice, a trained facilitator in this model, designs and co-facilitates each series with another trained facilitator. The retreat series provides a space for faculty to slow down and reflect on their professional roles. The overall focus of the retreat is to help instructors nurture authenticity, integrity, and a sense of vocational vitality. Each retreat session explores a particular theme in depth and includes time for individual reflection and collegial conversations.

The space created in this series is vastly different from other “work spaces” in which faculty interact. First, the retreat series takes place off-campus in a garden setting, a tranquil setting for faculty to engage in inner work. Retreat activities are carefully tailored to help participants access their own wisdom and the support of their fellow retreatants to bring themselves fully to their roles as educators. Facilitators draw on many contemplative practices in the design of each retreat. These include the use of poetry, the garden landscape, photographs, creative activities, walking reflections, collegial conversations, and silence.

The participants are encouraged to embrace a set of Circle of Trust Touchstones, to ensure the co-creation of a safe and generative environment for faculty to engage in inner work. Sample touchstones include: *Trust and learn from silence; attend to your own inner teacher; and know that it is possible to leave the circle with whatever it was you needed when you arrived.* Another touchstone, *commit to no fixing, saving, correcting or advising one another,* instructs participants to slow down and pay close attention to their own inner teacher while resisting the urge to get in the way of another person’s inner wisdom. We’ve found this touchstone to be particularly powerful as participants engage in group work.

At the end of each retreat series, faculty speak to a variety of positive impacts. A common theme is that the series helps participants return to their center and teach from a place of balance. Participants have commented on their deepened sense of collegiality with peers. Finally, many participants speak to the ways that the retreat series has reconnected them with their authentic selves and given them the courage to pursue professional activities that reflect their core values and characteristics.

Conclusion

In our work, we engage in and invite others to explore the transformative intersection of inner and outer work. It is our hope that this will lead students and faculty to engage in change work from a place of balance, authenticity and interconnectedness. Our intention is to nurture seeds of undividedness through contemplative practices. As we engage in transformative teaching and learning with students and colleagues, we continue to grow as professionals and witness the power of contemplative practice to enact change. It is heartening to see the rise in scholarship and practice surrounding the intersection of inner and outer work in the academy and we embrace the increased legitimacy of this transformative approach to teaching and learning. In the words of Tolliver and Tisdell (2006), “we are committed to learning that makes a difference in learners’ lives and increases their sense of knowing...in their heads, their hearts, their souls, and their entire being—that has meaning to them and that makes a difference in the world” (p. 45).

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Inquiring into Dimensions of Difference through Whole Person Dialogue— Experiencing the Dimensions of Difference Empathically

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Abstract: Adult educators often facilitate difficult conversations on topics that carry high levels of emotional valence for participants who hold very different meaning perspectives on the issue. Harvesting the potential for transformative learning from diverse perspectives among the learners requires creating empathic space where participants with very different perspectives can gain felt insight into lived experiences of the other. In this experiential session participants deepen their understanding of creating empathic space.

Rationale for the Session

Transformative learning provides a framework for addressing the intensifying challenges confronting us in the hyper-connected world of the 21st century. Teachers confront diverse classrooms, workers and managers confront globally diverse workplaces and markets, social service workers confront diverse populations, and all contribute to how “the river flows” both ways. Teachers can learn from their students’ life experiences, workplace professionals can learn from their customers and other key stakeholders, and social service workers can learn from members of the communities they serve.

Learning from experiences that are very different from our own is a fundamental necessity for effectively engaging at the intersections of the racial, ethnic, gender, generational, professional, and cultural divides that confront us in our professional, civic, and personal lives. Doing so requires critical awareness of the often subjective, preconscious assumptions rooted in our frames of reference (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). When learners engaged in “difficult conversations” about controversial issues are faced with these social divides, the learning and personal development is potentially transformational. We define transformative learning as a wholistic change in how people both affectively experience and conceptually frame their experience as a result of engaging in meaningful encounters with others whose experiences and perspectives differ significantly from their own.

Ironically, while the intersections of encounters with diversity provide rich opportunities for transformational learning—translating into changed meaning perspectives, future behaviors and actions—these encounters with diversity often lead instead to denial and defensive routines. This is especially true when the content of encounters involves experiences and/or topics that have high emotional valence. This is the paradox of diversity:

Diversity can catalyze learning through encounter with other perspectives, but can also generate obstacles that thwart this potential. When life experiences are so different that people seem to inhabit different worlds, they cannot understand how the other person’s perspective might be credible. (Kasl & Yorks, 2016a, p. 4)

The dynamics of this paradox will confront adult educators increasingly as they seek to facilitate learning across personal and socio/cultural/economic divides that are becoming more intensely interconnected. An obvious contemporary example is the Black Lives Matter – Police divide.

We have argued elsewhere that navigating the paradox of diversity requires the intentional development of empathic connections through expressive ways of knowing (Kasl & Yorks, 2012, 2016a; Yorks & Kasl, 2006). Various methods for doing so—such as story telling, drawing, poetry, and skits—have been proposed. However, using these methods effectively to create empathic space carries its own challenges. Expressive ways of knowing can leave participants feeling exposed or trigger defensive routines within the group. We have developed a model that can guide educators in assessing and mediating conditions that might inhibit the creation of empathic space (Kasl & Yorks, 2016a, 2016b). The elements of the model are *dialogue, dimensions of difference, emotional valence, and empathic space*.

In facilitating dialogue, which is an interchange among two or more people engaging in inquiry rather than advocacy for a personal point of view, educators need to consider both content and context. The content of dialogue can vary along a continuum of wholeness ranging from *whole-person dialogue* to *partial-person dialogue*. *Whole-person dialogue* uses expressive ways of knowing to integrate emotions and feeling, concepts and ideas, and action. *Partial-person dialogue* emphasizes rational discourse and critical analysis. The context of a dialogue is created by the level of human system targeted for learning and change—individuals participating in the dialogue, the dialogue group as a unit, or larger social entities such as organizations, institutions, or towns.

Dimensions of difference, which constitute the second element of the model, include *relational power* and *hegemonic awareness*. *Relational power* is the distribution of power among the participants in a dialogue, ranging from hierarchical to peer relationships. Hierarchy can be formal, with participants having roles with responsibilities that differentiate them from others in the dialogue, such as managers or supervisors with work group members or teachers and students. Hierarchy can also be informal, based on expertise or identities privileged by the social/cultural context. *Hegemonic awareness* is the extent to which participants are consciously aware of their relationship to the values and practices of subgroups who have accrued unearned privilege in society. The continuum of *hegemonic awareness* ranges from people who are embedded in hegemony (having uncritically adopted culturally prescribed norms that have entrenched the values of the dominant privileged subgroups) to those on the hegemonic periphery (who critically assess how hegemony impacts their lives and the lives of others). Those “embedded in hegemony reject the ‘other’ as deviant; people in the periphery disdain the embedded as willfully unconscious or consciously destructive” (Kasl & Yorks, 2016b).

The third element of the model, emotional valence, refers to the magnitude of intensity of emotion stimulated in the dialogue. High emotional valence is a force for either attraction to or avoidance of new learning. Low valence cultivates indifference.

Empathic space, the fourth element of the model, consists of conditions that foster empathy. “Empathy is the capacity to understand experience from another person’s point of view” (Kasl & Yorks, 2016b). Recent neuroscience research makes a distinction between *cognitive empathy*, having a mental model representing the experience of the other, and *affective empathy*, vicariously experiencing the feelings of others.

In this experiential session, participants will experience and reflect on the elements in the model as well as their own need for being wholistically present.

The 90 Minute Experiential Session

The purpose of this session will be to have participants deepen their understanding of elements in the model and the implications for creating empathic space when facilitating diverse

groups of learners engaged in addressing an emotionally charged topic. After a brief presentation on the model, participants will self-select into groups to discuss an element that most resonates with them with regard to facilitating dialogues on emotionally charged topics in their practice setting.

15 minutes: Setting the Framework for the Session

Welcoming the participants and explaining the plan for the session. A mini-presentation on the relationship between diversity and transformative learning, and the model's definition of its elements. A handout with the model's elements will be provided (See Figure 1).

45 minutes: Experiencing Diverse Meaning Perspectives in Dialogue (3 steps)—

Step 1. Session participants will self-select into small groups, based on these instructions:

“Figure 1 illustrates factors that an educator needs to consider when evaluating the characteristics of a dialogue group for the purpose of making decisions about how to facilitate the dialogue. Think about your own experience with facilitating dialogue about emotionally charged topics. What element that affected the group's members presented a special challenge to you? Choose an element that you are most interested in exploring and join the group.”

If more than six people select one of the elements, we will have them divide into smaller groups.

Step 2. Small groups discuss their experience using guiding questions:

Why did you choose this element of the model?

How does this element present itself as a challenge in your practice? Give example.

As you facilitated the group interaction, what were your intentions regarding whole-person or partial-person dialogue and transformative learning? How well did the outcome match your intentions?

What were you thinking/feeling as challenges unfolded that you didn't say or act on? How might results have been different if you had expressed your thoughts/feelings and acted on them? What do you think others were thinking/feeling that had an impact?

What ideas do you have about how you might address this element in your practice in order to navigate the paradox of diversity more effectively, following the path toward whole-person dialogue and empathic space?

Step 3. Small groups create an expressive presentation of their discussion.

Create an expressive summary of your discussion that shows how the element plays out in facilitating difficult conversations and how it can be utilized. This summary might take the form of visual art such as a poster or mural, dramatic art such as a skit, mime, or dance, or any other expressive communication such as metaphor, poetry, or song.

This presentation can include words representing the unspoken thoughts, or it can be a visual manifestation of feelings experienced during the dialogue, or a combination of both.

30 Minutes: Applying the Model

Each group in turn delivers its representation to the entire session, providing the group's insights regarding the implications of the chosen element. Following the presentations members share any new insights regarding the implications of the model and creating empathic space.

If time permits, each group describes at least one concrete example of how the chosen element can create a dilemma in practice. Examples can be drawn from answers to the question answered during Step 2 above: How does this element present itself as a challenge in your practice? Give example.

Potential Outcomes

Through engaging in this experiential exercise participants can come to a better understanding of the challenges and importance of assessing emotional valence and dimensions of difference, in the context of seeking to situate facilitated dialogue along the continuum of wholeness. They will also be reflecting on how the instructor/educator needs to be wholistically present as she/he facilitates the dialogue to create empathic space. The focus will be on translating the model into practice.

We provide here an example of the kind of situation we expect participants to become more skillful in assessing because of experience during this session. As we write this paper in mid-July, 2016, the people of the United States are absorbed by stark and treacherous differences between two groups—people who are active in, or empathically connected to the Black Lives Matter Movement, and people who are powerfully concerned that police officers are not receiving the support that they have a right to expect from government officials and their communities. These groups' lived experiences are so different from each other that they provide a good example of how one group finds it difficult to believe that the other group's perceptions can be credible. How might an educator who wants to bring these two groups into productive dialogue assess the challenges?

Emotional valence is high. Relational power will be unbalanced and, depending on the setting, hierarchies will be both formal and informal. In structured meetings with police, potentially formal, in more open community settings, informal. Awareness of hegemonic privilege is typically low on the part of white participants with many in denial of their privilege. Reflecting and sharing perspectives on how the conversation has been evolving in communities and the country, along with their own reactions to the dialogue in the session, anchors the model in our current experiences.

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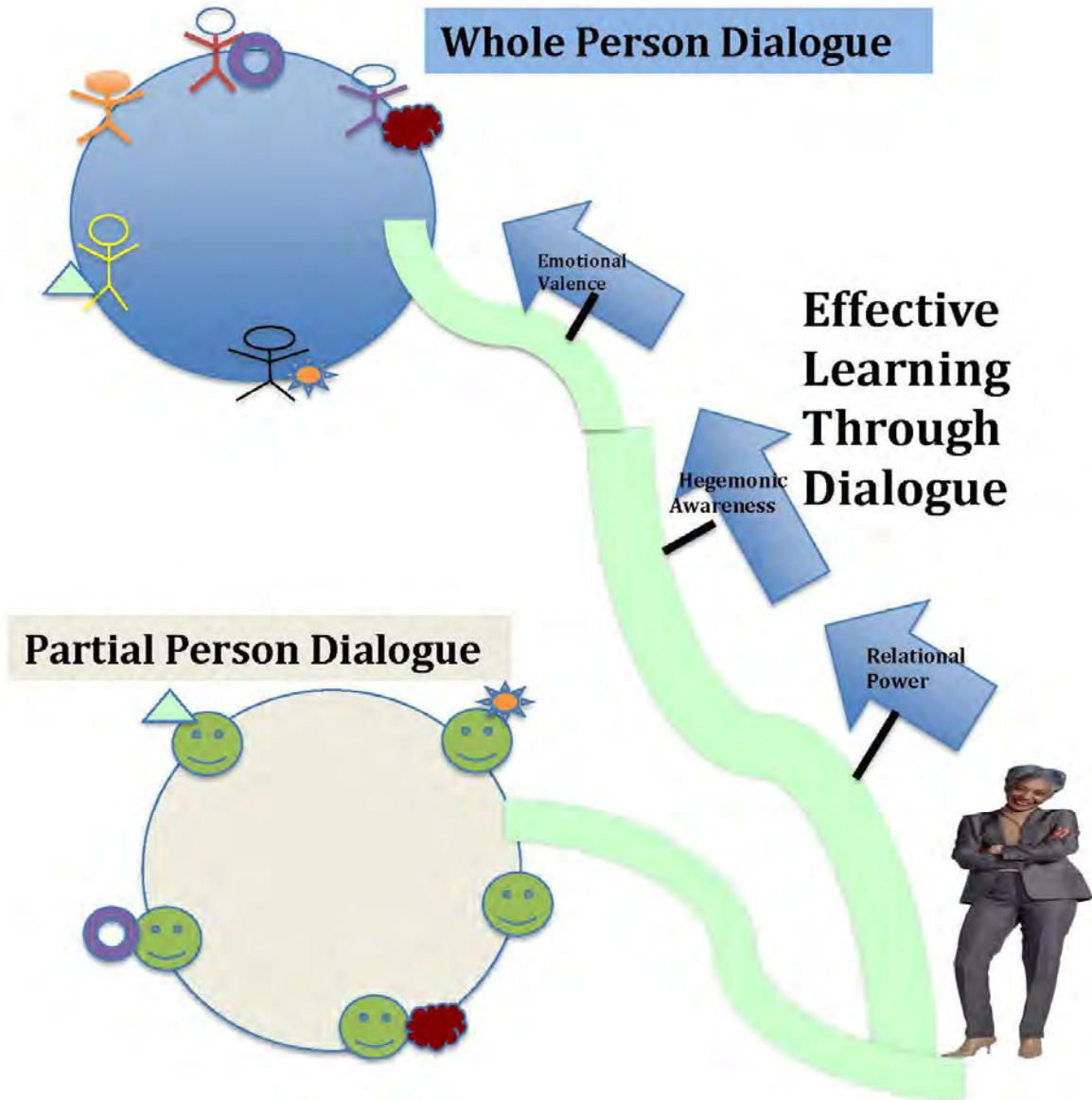


Figure 1: Learning Paths for Effective Dialogue
 Prepared by Elizabeth Kasl and Lyle Yorks for the XII International Transformative Learning Conference, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA, October, 20-23.

Possibilities in Transformative Learning: Facing Radically Passive Teachers Including Artwork, the Breath, and *Shunyata* (Emptiness)

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Abstract: This paper engages Levinas' (1969, 1987) notion of alterity in artwork (Kenaar, 2011), our breath, and the Buddhist concept of *shunyata* or emptiness (Loy, 2008). We may be shocked or called into question by the external alterity of another person or a piece of artwork. Similarly, we may be confronted with internal alterity while becoming aware and engaging with our breath, as well as our inherent emptiness. Adding to Mezirow's (1997) four learning processes, the author suggests two processes as keys to deeper transformative learning: detachment and disengagement with thoughts and establishment of an inner 'zero-point balance' where one is aware and comfortable with inherent emptiness. Cultivating these two internal processes may lead to transformative experiences personally, communicatively, and within educational environments. How does one detach from thoughts and create such a balance and comfort with emptiness? Learning to be in the present moment as well as creating gaps in our thought processes is suggested and explored as access points to *shunyata*. To conclude, this paper discusses possibilities with a turn toward a pedagogy which includes interior learning processes.

Introduction

The teacher's voice comes from another space, another face. Emmanuel Levinas (1969, 1987) requires 'the face' of another in order to learn *from* the Other¹. The face is not physiognomy, character, or psychology, rather the dynamic inbetween-ness, inassimilable and unknowable alterity of the Other (Kenaar, 2013; Todd, 2001). This paper takes departure from Levinas and queries how phenomena can face us. Can voices from abstract and silent shores such as artwork and *shunyata* (emptiness) face us and call us into question as poignantly as other sentient beings can? Here I partially take up Hagi Kenaar's (2011) charge: "What would it mean, for us, to see a face, a facing, in pictures that depict no faces – in an abstract or a landscape, an image of a city, of ruins, a graffiti? How does a face of a still-life look?" (p. 157). This paper discusses intersections between people, artwork as well as the breath, and includes an exploration of a potentially frightening concept in Buddhist thought – *shunyata* or emptiness. Here, I build on Mezirow's (1997) four learning processes of learning, which include:

1. Elaborate an existing point of view;
2. Establish new points of view;
3. Transform our point of view;
4. Become aware and critically reflective.

I introduce and explore two additional processes of learning for transformative education, namely:

5. Detach and disengage with our thoughts;

¹ In keeping with Levinas' writing and honorific usage, I use a capital letter when writing

6. Establish a ‘zero-point balance’ from being aware and comfortable with our inherent emptiness.

How can one disengage and detach from thoughts? To access the two additional processes, one must begin with quieting the mind. Mindful breathing is a way to access the present moment and cultivate gaps in our thinking to experience the (non) space of *shunyata*. These processes lead to a quieting of what Jack Mezirow (1997) refers to as “the constellation of belief, value judgment, attitude, and feeling” (p. 6). When this type of quiet reflection is practiced and sustained overtime, new (non) spaces open up allowing receptivity to new ways of thinking, communicating, and being.

Facing the Absolute Alterity of Exteriority (AAE): The Mona Lisa, Graffiti, and a Jackson Pollock Abstract Painting

Sean Hand, editor of *The Levinas Reader* (2001), writes that Levinas is “filled with infinite anxiety” regarding space that does not include relations with someone (p. 144). For Levinas works of art offer images, frozen in time, without any sense of being useful; art immobilizes being. Levinas (1969) states, “the absolutely foreign alone can instruct us. And it is only man who could be absolutely foreign to me” (p. 73). Every artwork is a statue that presents a stoppage of time likened to a dream or nightmarish shadow (Levinas, 1948). Levinas cannot be swayed, so this is where I make my departure from his approach to what I term the ‘absolute alterity of exteriority’ (AAE). Like human beings, artwork can face or confront us with radical difference. The Mona Lisa by Leonardo DaVinci is timeless, captivating, and mysterious. She is not a real person, yet people are called by her; they visit the museum, and have an internal or conversational reaction or response. The Mona Lisa is nightmarishly frozen in time. Is she smiling, half smiling, or faking a smile for the artist?² Through looking at and considering Mona Lisa’s smile and details, one can make the case for artwork confronting us with alterity or absolute difference.

Hagi Kenaan agrees that artwork can face us in a Levinasian sense in his philosophical writings about graffiti named Klonas in public spaces in Tel-Aviv. The Klonas are (non) human faces that confront viewers as AAE: They “present themselves by making strangeness present” (Kenaan, 2011, p. 147). Kenaan (2011) describes the Klonas’ facing as “a one-directional vector crossing the space between us” (p. 154). The Klonas confront the viewers walking by (see Figure 1)³.



Figure 1. klonas 7

² Video for a closer look at the painting, Mona Lisa: <http://focus.louvre.fr/en/mona-lisa>

³ Image Source: <http://www.maarav.org.il/english/2009/07/facing-klone-the-address-of-a-voice-in-tel-aviv-street-art/>

Kenaar (2011) asserts, as one sees the Klonas, the viewers' consciousness is called into question by a face. Can our consciousness be called into question by a (non) face or abstract piece of artwork? Abstract works of art, such as works by Jackson Pollock are similarly confrontational and mysterious (see Figure 2)⁴:



Figure 2. Number 14, 1951, by Jackson Pollock

The exteriority of the abstract painting is absolute alterity, which confronts me. If I attend to Jackson Pollock's painting, *Number 14, 1951*, it may throw me off balance and call me to react or respond. Like Kenaar's Klonas, it is unclear what the painting wants of me. Therein lies the call of the AAE and one can never know the true intention or meaning of its call. It may be a silent teacher. Levinas (1987) explicates the mystery in the face of the Other: "We recognize the Other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the Other is a relationship with a Mystery" (p. 75). Works of art, such as the Mona Lisa, the Klonas and Pollock's paintings, are examples of absolute alterity of exteriority, but what of interiority?

Facing the Absolute Alterity of Interiority (AAI): *Shunyata* or Emptiness

The absolute alterity of interiority (AAI) and our inherent emptiness may be terrifying. To face emptiness makes us feel vulnerable which may be "a source of wonder, but also a source of pain and torment" (Todd, 2015, p. 250). Prior to any particular expression and beneath all expressions, which cover over and protect with an immediately adopted face or countenance, there is the nakedness and destitution of the expression as such, that is to say extreme exposure, defenselessness, and vulnerability itself (Levinas, 1987). This exposure and vulnerability may be felt or experienced with the experience of *shunyata* or emptiness. It is the (non) space underneath all expressions. Take away words, form, visceral blood and bone, and we are faced with the ultimate, most radical teacher. Before learning from *shunyata*, the awareness of our emptiness may lead to discomfort: "We don't like being nothing. A gaping hole at one's core is quite distressing" (Loy, 2008, p. 18). David Loy (2008) explicates the origin of the word *shunyata*:

The original Buddhist term usually translated as emptiness actually has this double-sided meaning. It derives from the root *shu*, which means "swollen" in both senses: not only the swolleness of a blown-up balloon but also the swolleness of an

⁴ Image Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/jun/29/jackson-pollock-blind-spots-tate-liverpool-review-art-as-nervous-breakdown>

expectant woman, pregnant with possibility. So a more accurate translation of *shunyata* would be: emptiness/fullness. (p. 22)

To relieve the fright of *shunyata*, Guy Newland (2008) utilizes a sky metaphor: “We can think of emptiness as like the clear, blue sky—a transparent space that is wide open. In that way, our empty natures mean that there is no limit to what we can become” (p. 15). In Kundalini yoga, *shuniya* is referred to as becoming zero. I assert finding a personal ‘zero-point balance’ seems like a welcoming place to start for all educators. Tobin Hart (2008) posits we can access *shunyata* by cultivating our interiority, which opens up educational possibilities:

Interiority in education is about developing spaciousness within us in order that we may meet and take in the world that is before us. The greater the information, technology, and demands from the world around us, the more essential the interiority; that is, the inner capacities for discernment, imagination, virtue, reflection, balance, and presence. (p. 235)

The two final capacities that Hart (2008) lists above are currently unexplored or unappreciated in the majority of curricula in education. How does one cultivate balance and presence?

The Present Moment, Creating Gaps, and Silence

Before we allow ourselves to be in the present in any given moment and before we find a way to create gaps between noise, movement, and incessant thought processes, we must cultivate silence. This may be difficult as we live in a world of chronic stimulation and low-grade anxiety, which weighs heavily on our well-being and capacity to learn (Hart, 2008, p. 245). Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman equated postmodern living to a sea of uncertainty where everything shifts and it is difficult to stabilize ourselves (2005, p. 303). At present, the seas are more tumultuous. We have been colonized by our devices and an overload of information at our fingertips, at our every whim. Add to this a never ending stream or raging river of our thoughts and it may be a challenge to access something deeper, something more subtle within: “Incessant mental noise prevents you from finding that realm of inner stillness that is inseparable from Being. It also creates a false mind- made self that casts a shadow of fear and suffering” (Tolle, 1999, p. 15). To shine some light on new learning, first we must learn techniques to quiet the waters, endure, and perhaps come to appreciate silent (non) spaces.

The Precursor to New Learning Processes: The Dreaded Silence

Learning is often perceived as a interactive and communicative process with other people or devices. Levinas (in Gibbs, 2000) asserts that we cannot be our own teacher (p. 31). We must rely on and be attentive “to the mastery of the Other, to receive his commandment, or more exactly, to receive from him the commandment to command” (Levinas in Gibbs, 2000, p. 31). We listen to the Other as a teacher who calls on us. There is a tension between commandment and passivity in Levinas: “Alterity shows itself in a mastery that does not conquer but teaches. Teaching is not a species of a genus call domination” (Levinas in Gibbs, 2000, p. 35). Alterity or difference teaches us if we reach beyond our discomfort with difference. Artwork and silence may be passive, non- dominant teachers if we are mindful enough to hear their counsel: “All the arts, even those based on sound, create silence...[and this silence] may weigh heavy or cause dread” (Levinas, 1949. p. 147). If silence is dreadful or uncomfortable, what does it teach? What can we learn or gain *from* silence? Hart (2008) posits silence may lead to subtle transformations: “Silence can invite the chattering mind to settle down and recede a bit, in turn opening awareness of more subtle currents of consciousness” (p. 242). By embracing silence, we cultivate vigilance to find and experience a new way of learning and being.

The Present Moment and Creation of Gaps as Intersections for Transformation

Explicated by Sharon Todd (2001), learning *from* Others, as opposed to *about* Others, allows engagement across time and space and each encounter holds the potential for us to focus on the “here and now of communication” (p. 73). When we attend to a person talking, a work of art, our own breath, or silence, we attend to the here and now. If we attend to the moment, we are exposed and susceptible to the all otherness or alterity (Todd, 2001). When we are quiet and attend to the breath, we begin to experience our self as separate from the breather. We are being breathed by nature and do not have a choice. We observe the Other as nature within. We attend to the breath and thinking begins to slow down. Overtime we may become more serene with a practice of mindful breathing: “Our emotional and mental turmoil is replaced by a serenity that cannot be grasped but can be lived” (Loy, 2008, p. 47). In Kundalini yoga, the breath is considered a teacher, *pavan guru* (Gurmukhi). It may teach us things about our self and our connection to nature that we may not have experienced before. We might be confronted by the alterity or mystery within us.

Conscious, meditative breathing encourages gaps to happen between thoughts as well as between inhales and exhales. As we breathe, we find new (non) spaces, new intersections. Hart (2004) explicates the connection between gaps in thinking and transformative learning possibilities: “It is the cognitive gaps that allow for the possibility of conceptual flexibility and multiplicity” (p. 34). We cultivate gaps between our thoughts by observing our self: “The beginning of freedom is the realization that you are not the possessing entity—the thinker. Knowing this enables you to observe the entity. The moment you start *watching the thinker*, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated” (Tolle, 1999, p. 17). This ability to ‘watch the thinker’ allows one to embark on a journey to become continually more aware of and detached from thoughts, agitations, and surroundings. Detachment from thoughts is like stepping back from a painting to observe it from afar; space between is created. Detachment may be the gateway to disengaged, nonjudgmental thought processes. After some practice in observing ‘the thinker’, the gaps between thoughts begin to widen. These gaps allow access to *shunyata*. Tolle (1999) refers to as this phenomenon as ‘no mind’:

At first, the gaps will be short, a few seconds perhaps, but gradually they will become longer. When these gaps occur, you feel a certain stillness and peace inside you. This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness with Being, which is usually obscured by the mind. With practice, the sense of stillness and peace will deepen. In fact, there is no end to its depth. (p. 19)

Once gaps in our thinking mind and *shunyata* is cultivated, peace and stillness is realized and felt. The effect in pedagogical spaces may be profound.

Pedagogical Possibilities

Once we find this mysterious teacher of emptiness within, how does our interaction with Others change? As we become aware observers, we communicate differently. We become less reactive and act more empathetically and responsively toward self and Others. Mezirow (1997) posits “transformative learning is rooted in the way human beings communicate and is a common learning experience not exclusively concerned with significant personal transformations” (p. 10); however, if we attend to personal transformation with *shunyata* and find our ‘zero-point balance’ within, our communications may profoundly change. Becoming present here and now has an effect on Others. Hart (2004) asserts: “This opening within us in turn enables a corresponding opening toward the world before us. Through a fresh lens, our worldview, sense of self, and

relationships may be powerfully transformed” (p. 29). With practices of interiority, breathing, and allowing gaps, time slows down and new (non) spaces of possibility are created.

This paper is a call for educators to go beyond exteriority, go within themselves, and to be what Mezirow (1997) calls a “*provocateur*” for themselves (p. 11). In quiet meditative spaces of breathing practice one becomes an inquisitive observer. We are aware of thoughts, feelings and sensations as they go by. This effects how we observe our self and Others in moments of intensity, like in traffic.⁵ Once we have a sustained practice of breathing and being more aware, we might be able to remark, “Ah ha, look at me getting angry at that driver. What is happening now? I feel a burning sensation in my chest. I feel dismissed by the other driver.”⁶ This inquiry within is in lieu of reacting and pointing a finger to blame the Other. The slowing down of our reactive states serves educators well. We begin to tell different stories. Our students hear and sense the differences. Our practice and cultivation of gaps may lead us to feel inspired to introduce a breathing practice to our students. When a practice is cultivated, there is space for transformations to happen: “The teacher-student dynamic is enhanced through this mutual exploration, and ultimately the teacher’s own growth transforms the entire space in which education happens” (Hart, 2004, p. 35).

Concluding and a Beginning

Thirteenth Century Persian poet, Rumi, asserts:

There is a way between voice and presence where information flows.

In disciplined silence it opens.

With wandering talk it closes. (in Banks et al., 1995, p. 109)

As Rumi suggests, we may close possible learning processes by chatting or overthinking. Attentiveness to the present moment opens us to cultivate gaps that may lead us to experience *shunyata*. This (non) space allows new intersections to flow gently, quietly, and intuitively. These processes of detaching from thoughts and establishing our ‘zero- point balance’, along with Mezirow’s (1997) four processes of learning, allow new openness and possibilities. Hart (2004) explicates the subtle shifts overtime allow each educator as a learner and seeker to come to their own understanding of the value of such a mindful practice:

The more subtle benefits rooted in stillness of mind and expanded awareness are real and essential but more difficult to quantify. In the end however, it is these subtle shifts that may have the most potential for transforming the learner and the quality of learning. (p. 34)

What does a pedagogy enhanced by silence, a breathing practice, and emptiness look like? Being open to new quieter waters from unknown shores may be a challenge; however, mindful interior practices gesture to great possibilities. Experiencing *shunyata* confronts us with (non) spaces where we are simultaneously faced with formlessness and form, fullness and emptiness. In this way, we allow deep learning through the conduit of new (non) spaces and intersections and tap into new depths of transformation for education and ourselves.

⁵ See video on mindfulness as a Superpower – example of awareness of present moment and reactions vs responses: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>

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Transform-In-Action: Transforming Stuck Issues and Relationships through Resonance

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Abstract: There is consistent acknowledgement, and empirical evidence showing that Transformative Learning Theory is multidimensional. In previous research I shared an integrative process model of transformative learning that emerged from a narrative inquiry to explore how African war survivors describe their transformational growth and development experiences. The model integrates the cognitive and affective processes of transformative learning. It showed that “Resonance” is the affective complement, which triggers the cognitive transformation process and then is intertwined, coexists, and works in parallel with it during the ensuing process which can also include spiritual/moral development. Resonance refers to moment(s) of awakening, through personal stories, that opens space or creates an opportunity for conscious engagement in transformational learning. It signals the moments in the study when narrators began to integrate their experiences, shifting out of narratives of despair or hopelessness, toward narratives of transformation. This workshop is based on sessions I have done in the past 5 years since completing the original research. The intent of the workshop is to support participants in connecting to their own Resonance stories, in order to unlock transformative learning possibilities in situations where they feel stuck.

Introduction

[Transform-In-Action]

What needs to be Transformed?

What is my Interior state about this situation?

[Enter RESONANCE]

[noun] Resonance - a moment of awakening, through personal stories, that opens space or creates an opportunity for transformational learning.

It signals the moment(s) when people begin to integrate their past experiences, even traumatic ones, and shift out of narratives of despair or hopelessness towards narratives of transformation.

What Action is needed now?

[RESULT = sustained action over time]

I discovered the power of Resonance through a narrative inquiry to explore how African war survivors describe their transformational growth and development experiences (Gilpin-Jackson, 2014). The narrative inquiry was based on 12 interviews of African war survivors in Canada, and six autobiographical accounts of survivors living in Canada, United States and England. The purpose of the study was to understand how the war survivors experience the process of transformation, in spite of the difficult, even traumatic experiences they had had.

I found that Resonance is an emotional experience that triggers the cognitive transformation process. It inspires a concentric ring of impact, like the traditional onion peel or

the ripple effect. It is at the core of transformation and then ripples out to unfold developmental transformations and increased capacity for the following:

1. Realization of purpose,
2. Human connectedness,
3. Spiritual and moral development,
4. Valuing of life,
5. Determination: the will to achieve.

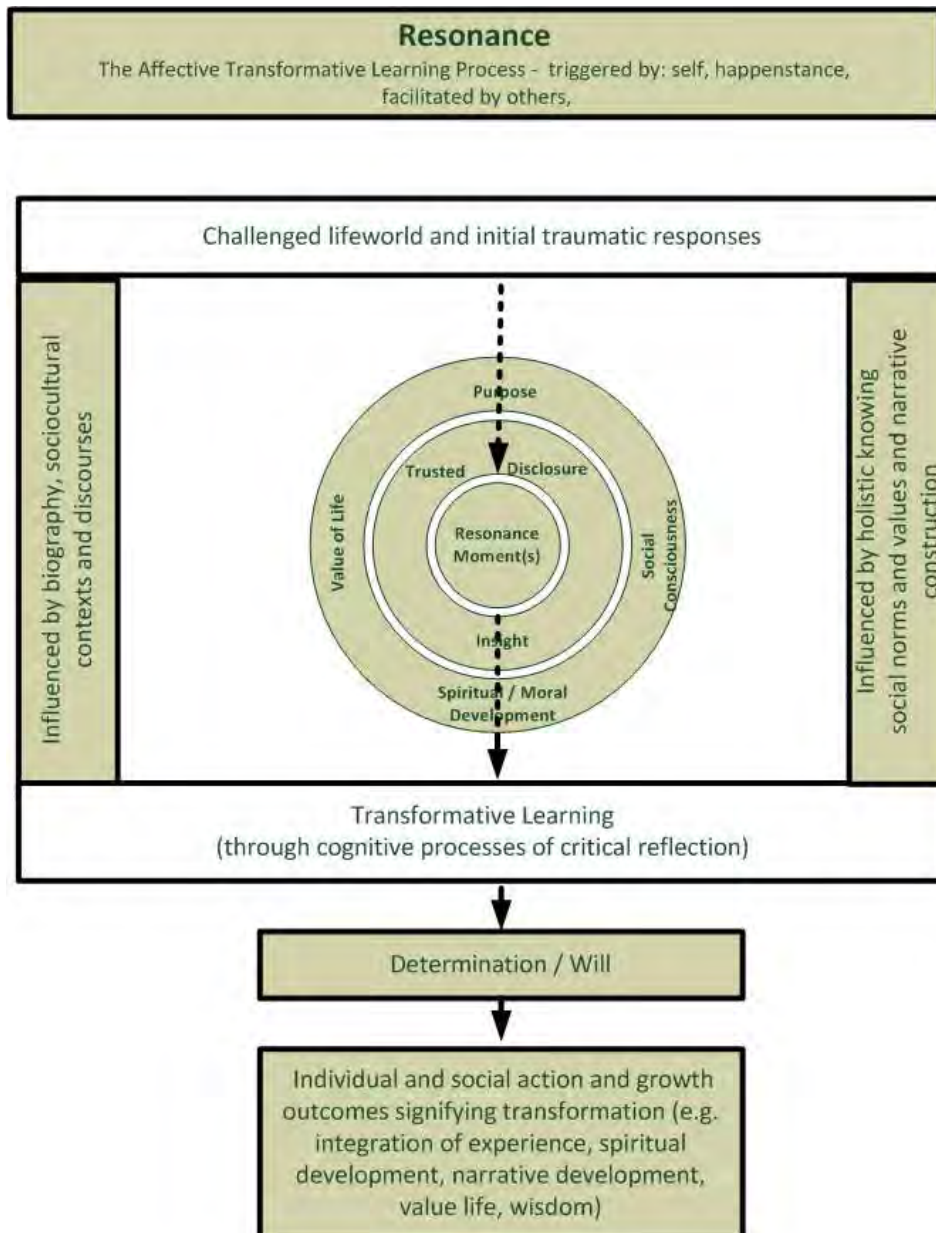


Figure 1. Resonance as Core of Transformation: Affective Process Triggered by Self, Happenstance or Facilitated by Others

In this way, Resonance integrates the affective, cognitive and spiritual aspects of transformative learning. It marks the turning point where people are able to integrate past difficult experiences into present reality and realize a deep desire to move forward.

I have spent the 5 years since completing this research integrating Resonance into workshops and sessions that I have facilitated. To-date, I have now accounted for exposure of hundreds of others beyond the original research to the concept and practice of Resonance. I am finding that it seems to work the same way across individuals, teams and organizations that find themselves in difficult, highly complex and chaotic circumstances. This practice is crucial for our times when so many situations are complex and adverse world events such as global terrorism, unstable financial markets and leadership challenges are continuing to impact individuals, organizations and society in traumatic ways. This is because Resonance creates access to transformation, especially in post-trauma contexts. And it is transformation that sustains.

Resonance gives us access to our deep soul connections to the *why* behind what matters to us. I have found that the choice to move forward is marked by sustained action when it is anchored in Resonance. Otherwise, in my 15 years of experience in the field, planned actions developed through a myriad of action-planning models and frameworks that do not evoke transformative learning continue to fall flat.

This paper outlines one of the facilitation frameworks I have developed to unlock Resonance and transformative learning with workshop participants: Transform-in-Action.

Theoretical & Research Grounds

Resonance emerged at the intersection of Transformative Learning Theory, Posttraumatic Growth and Narrative Methodologies

Transformative Learning

The specific definition of transformative learning used in the study and to inform the subsequent transform-in-action process lies within its multidimensional and holistic frame. As empirical evidence has shown, Transformative Learning Theory is multidimensional. It can now be conclusively described as a holistic learning process that is both precipitated by and impacts the cognitive, affective and spiritual realms of our human development. Therefore, I utilized the definitions of transformative learning that acknowledge the holistic nature of the process, especially its affective and emotional aspects (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006; Kokkos et al., 2015; Malkki & Green, 2014; Mezirow, 2000; Yorks & Kasl, 2006). Mezirow's classic 10-step cognitive process of transformative learning was informative, especially the first three steps: (1) a disorientating dilemma, (2) self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame, and (3) a critical assessment of assumptions (Taylor, 2009). However, insights from the intersection of traumatic learning theory and neurobiology contributed to understanding of how transformation occurs in post-traumatic contexts. As neurobiology research from Janik (2005) has shown, structural changes occur in the brain that support learning in post-trauma contexts, proposing among other things that: "transformative learning ... is strengthened by emotive, sensory, and kinesthetic experiences..." (Janik, 2005; Taylor, 2008, p. 8).

Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)

In addition, a significant body of work that contributed to knowledge of growth and transformation in post-trauma situations was the literature on PTG. PTG refers to the experiences (inclusive of the process and the outcome) of individuals who attain greater growth and develop

more humane social behaviors following a trauma of seismic proportions (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998, 2006a, 2006b; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995, 2004; Tedeschi, Park, & Calhoun, 1998). A trauma of seismic proportions means a trauma that deeply challenges existing cognitive schemas, such that cognitive structures holding fundamental assumptions about the world must be replaced.

PTG is defined in three growth outcomes identified by Tedeschi and Calhoun through qualitative research as perceived changes in self, interpersonal relationships, and philosophy of life or worldview. A biopsychosocial perspective also shows that in post-trauma situations, transformative learning is possible because the metaschema which includes concepts of self, society and nature are shattered and require reconstitution such that metalearning and posttraumatic growth can be expected outcomes (Christopher, 2004). Most relevant for this work was a PTG study that generally corroborated Mezirow's process, but also highlights emotional engagement as the heart of the transformative learning process (Sands & Tennant, 2010).

The Intersection: Narratives & Meaning-making

The particular intersection between these literatures where Resonance emerges is meaning-making. Meaning-making therefore made narrative inquiry and methodologies critical to both the research and the transform-in-action process that followed.

In the research study, narrative inquiry was chosen because it lent itself to the research question, the context of the participants' ways of knowing and their basis for critical reflection and expression (Gilpin-Jackson, 2014). In addition, the meaning-making requirement of transformative learning following traumatic circumstances made a narrative approach a good choice given that participants were asked to make meaning of past experiences. The research protocol and analysis from which Resonance emerged was thus developed from the narrative construction approach to PTG. This approach signified patterns of thinking and narratives that specifically lead towards growth and positive construction of narratives from trauma such as:

1. seeking, finding, reminding, and constructing benefits for oneself and others.
2. establishing and maintaining a future orientation with altered priorities.
3. constructing meaning, a coherent narrative, and engaging in special activities or "missions" that transform loss into something good that will come out of it.

(Meichenbaum, 2006, p. 363)

In developing the transform-in-action process, I turned to narrative methodologies including narrative re-authoring practices, reflection and music (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; Swart, 2013; Taylor, 2009). Narrative re-authoring outlines processes and practices for shifting dominant narratives that are not serving a person, team or system. These processes and practices were also consistent with perspectives on ideology critique of dominant narratives for transformative learning in social context (Brookfield, 2000; Freire, 1970). This is important because the majority of the work I have done with Resonance has been relative to group/organizational and/or social trauma contexts.

Resonance Stories

I have a picture downstairs in the basement...It's on the wall like that. When I look at it all the time, I can see that child is just looking at my eyes ...he's so poor... Sometimes I don't understand why we still have people who are suffering. There are so many kids like that boy. He's maybe like 3 or 4 and he's sitting with ragged clothing and a cup. He looks like he's saying, "Can you give me a drink? I'm thirsty" or something like that. It's just a picture. It's a painting actually, but it's real. When I look at that, sometimes I just – sometimes I cry actually and that's why as I said, seeing the kids

suffering is one of the things that pushed me to say, “Do what you can” ...As a mother, I’ve seen so many kids being killed during the genocide. I’ve seen that. When I see the eyes of the kids – [that’s] actually what’s pushing me.

Research Participant, Elizabeth, 2011

My research showed that the key to unlocking Resonance was personal stories, related to what the participant wants to be different. This is because Resonance unfolds through storytelling and narrative telling or narrative construction.

The above was Elizabeth’s Resonance story. The story that propels her forward and onward. In the eyes of the beggar child in her Resonance photo, Elizabeth saw the children of Rwanda living in the aftermaths of genocide. She also saw the possibility of a generation that will lead the healing and transformation of the nation she calls home. Her passion for seeing the transformation of her country has resulted in her co-founding a Canadian-based NGO to achieve these goals through educational advancements. Her organization has established bilateral school partnerships, built schools and libraries and she speaks in Canada to influence bi-lateral and international development policy.

Why would a simple story or memory have this kind of impact? What makes a Resonance story so different and so powerful? A colleague of mine asked me these questions. In response I said these two things:

1. You know you’ve hit a Resonance story when you feel it, usually in a deep affective or emotional way first. Resonance has a deep soul connection for you and is deeply meaningful. As described above also, this can be followed by full-body somatic as well as spiritual experiences.
2. When you connect to resonance, it pivots your life, as long as you choose to engage with the possibility of change that it offers. If a story moves you and connects you to inner purpose that you cannot shake unless and until you do something about it, you, have made a Resonance connection.

Characteristics of Resonance Stories

Resonance stories hold the following characteristics:

1. It is memory-based, a remembrance from childhood, past or recent past, to a person, or a trigger anchored in a thing, an image or event that leads to a Resonance moment.
2. It deeply connects you to and signifies your organizational and life purpose.
3. It is experienced as a trigger with the quality of nostalgia.
4. It is a deeply emotional, and often a full-body, soul and spirit experience.
5. It emerges from events with positive/happy &/or negative/sad associations.
6. It provokes insight or precedes deliberate cognitive processing toward meaning-making and transformation.
7. You can have different Resonance stories relative to the different areas of your core life identities and transformational trajectory over time.

The Barbara Streisand song *Memory* from the musical *Cats* provides a vivid depiction, in lyrics, and musically, of the journey to Resonance through memory.

Workshop Process

The Transform-in-Action workshop is interactive, requiring that participants do deep reflective and development work individually and in small triad groups throughout the session. There are three basic cycles of narrative dialogues, with reflection in between during the process:

1. Understanding Trauma Narratives.
2. Transition: Connecting to Resonance.
3. Uncovering Possibilities & Igniting Transformation Narratives.

Participants will use a simple cognitive framework (Transform-in-Action) to practice how to examine and gain access to their stuck habitual patterns and their resonance moments in order to access transformation in difficult relational or other situations.



Figure 2. *Transform-in-Action Cycle Framework*

The workshop provides space for participants to do the following individually and in dialogue with a partner or triad. This process also works well with individuals who may want to journal through the process alone or a leader/individual with a coach.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncover a current narrative in which you are stuck and unpack your deeply held beliefs and narratives underlying the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What needs to be transformed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the situation? ▪ What is my current narrative of the situation? ▪ What narrative do I want? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine your interior states relative to the situation including your intuitive, affective and cognitive responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is my interior state about this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do I feel about it? ▪ What interior experience do I want? ▪ What do I think about the situation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use narrative methodologies to uncover resonance stories: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20mins

In one session, I asked participants:

What stood out for you in the experience of sharing your Resonance stories?

- *The level of connection.*
- *The mystery of being alive. The magic, mystery and care.*
- *Love and kindness, we are humans doing life together.*
- *Sacred space and stories -At the end of the day, no matter what, it is all about relationships.*
- *Connected to core purpose.*
- *Connection to my core, my body.*
- *Moved me from outside, in. Re-humanizing, Re-remembering, Re-connecting.*
- *It reconnected me with my purpose and intention - my focus to support - my core values.*
- *It makes me happy.*
- *Amazing privilege to be part of the human experience - a privilege which I am revisiting in my role as a leader.*
- *Privilege to be alongside people at one of their most important events in their life.*
- *How do I work with people in a way that enables people who touch other people to do that?*
- *I have enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on my resonance experience; I found it particularly empowering.*
- *The power of resonance (Mezirow) embodiment.*
- *Feeling restored.*
- *Powerful-I cried- I know that I have a choice.*

Conclusion

*I remember the time I knew what happiness was
Let the memory live again
Every street lamp seems to beat
A fatalistic warning
Someone mutters and the street lamp gutters
And soon it will be morning
Daylight
I must wait for the sunrise
I must think of a new life
And I mustn't give in
When the dawn comes
Tonight will be a memory too
And a new day will begin*

Stanza of lyrics from Barbara Streisand song, Memory

This workshop demonstrates what is possible at the intersection of integrating 2 or more modes of access to transformative learning, and when we engage cognitively, affectively and holistically through the process.

I wonder:

What Resonance moments and stories has this evoked for you?

What has touched, moved or inspired you?

What has the experience of reading this been like for you?

What have you learned?

What applications for Resonance work have you imagined as you perused the requirements, practices and processes I have outlined?

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Exploring the Intersectionality of Learning and Our Senses: A Dialogue between Transformative Learning Theory and Yoga

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Abstract: We often talk about transformative learning interns of personal mindset shifts; a fundamental change in how a learner experiences and interacts with the world. But what's the source data that sparks change? What role do our physical bodies play in gathering information and acting as a critical tool in the learning process? This workshop explores the intersectionality of learning and our physical senses, and in the paper below, facilitators Alicia Pace and Christie Rall discuss the two traditions that drive this conversation- yoga and transformative learning theory- and the connections between them.

Introduction

In his book “Learning as Transformation: Learning to Think like an Adult” Jack Mezirow (2000) describes transformative learning as the process of becoming critically aware of both one’s own and others tacit assumptions and expectations. He writes: “transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mindsets), to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective” (p.8). This definition, as Michael Neumann (2000) identifies, is highly personal; transformation requires a shift in the way an individual both understands and experiences the world (p. 37). Moreover, Neumann notes that Transformative Learning research relies primarily on qualitative data- on getting learners to share their transformative learning experiences. In essence, it relies on storytelling (p 39). And stories, as Newman calls out, are unreliable. Their language and construction might offer a window into transformative insight, but stories “contain invention as well as record” (p. 40). While stories may identify a conscious shift in mental frames of reference, or habits of thinking, they offer little data about transformative action. What constitutes, or perhaps more aptly, does not constitute experience? Is the learner’s experience based on cognitive, rational encounters with the world, or one’s affective response to a situation? What role does one's imaginal, subconscious life play in our understanding of our physical world? And more importantly, how should a learner be encouraged to engage with these powerful, emotive and physical experiences?

Our workshop explores the intersection between our interior space, and the role of the physical senses in creating and understanding individual realities. From a yogic perspective, one’s interior life is fuelled by sense perceptions and arbitrated by the mind. Sense data is filtered through levels of consciousness and through physical movement and reflection, the mind can help reinforce or examine this data, helping a learner to become aware of their interior complexity and the impact of one’s mind on their outer expression in the world. In doing so, the workshop itself “engages at the intersections”— of experience and emotion, of our senses and our minds, of practice and theory, and the forms in which these seemingly polar constructs play in learning and individual transformation.

To set the stage for the workshop, these concepts, and their inter-connections are explored in a dialogue between the workshop leaders Alicia Pace and Christie Rall, two adult learning practitioners exploring the intersectionality between their two practices.

The Dialogue

Christie: As we prepare for this workshop, I've been thinking about what transformative learning really means for me: a sense of being in the world differently that comes from deeply reflecting on how I make sense of, and judge the world around me. Key here, is becoming aware of the lenses in which I experience and act in the world, and then using that awareness to engage differently in my environments. For me, that learning is emotive, and often cognitive. But, there's also a key theme of engaging with my environments that is directly related to physical space- in fact it's often a physical sense of tension or discomfort I have when I know an opportunity for deep learning is present. What role do you think our bodily senses play in this understanding of learning

Alicia: The senses play a pivotal role in understanding learning, both from a physical and metaphysical perspective. Your statement: "becoming aware of the lenses in which I experience and act in the world..." is a great starting point. I need to step back for a moment and place the senses within the framework of the Kundalini System.

From a yogic perspective, each sense is linked with a level of consciousness within us. Each level of consciousness, referenced as chakras (wheels), comprise what is called the Kundalini system, a dynamic set of 7 chakras or levels of consciousness that are interrelated and act as a theoretical framework for the power/energy that fuels our creative potential as humans (Radha, 1979, p. 21). With each sense linked to a field of consciousness, the implication is that our senses are portals to more than tools for physical survival but a sphere of learning that can help us evolve. Each sense is "controlled" by the chakra/level of consciousness.

Let's take an example. On a literal level, smell means we can tell if food is rotten or if a fire is burning. In the yogic system, smell is related to the first chakra which also relates to an element (earth), and attributes such as: life force, creativity, sex, birth, death, love, survival, security, memory to name a few. Therefore, each sense is connected with an energetic field of consciousness as a dynamic experience. It is very difficult to smell something in isolation from these factors. In smelling a particular perfume, the mind searches to connect it with past experiences and is affected by the drivers present in that level of consciousness.

Taking this example further, if I relate a certain smell to a negative experience, I will lay that experience on top of an unrelated experience of smell sense data. Therefore my present experience is tainted by the connections I am unconsciously making. On top of that, the first chakra is concerned with survival, maybe my negative association to the perfume smell activates a need to avoid this person. This is a long way of saying, that sense data is complex and dynamic, the mind interprets through layers of experience and the attributes of the associated chakra. So, to begin answering your question, a yogi attempts to cultivate awareness of these lenses of information. And rather than acting out of instinct, one can deconstruct and control the action/desire provoked by the sense data. The challenge of the yogi is well stated in the ancient text The Bhagavad Gita, verse 67, "For, the mind which follows in the wake of the wandering senses, carries away his discrimination as the wind (carries away) a boat on the waters."

Once I become aware of how certain sense data may be directing my thoughts and actions, I have the ability to determine if I take that data to be "true". I engage in what you stated

as “becoming aware of the lenses in which I experience and act in the world, and then using that awareness to engage differently in my environments”.

Christie: I think the entry point of the senses, and specifically each sense as a connection to a unique emotive or internal response is an interesting path for exploring learning and transformative learning in particular. In my fast-paced world I rarely stop to explore the physical data that defines how I make sense of my environment- that initial entry point of information. Instead, I think of more intangible information- most of it related to sight and how I “see” the world, and then how I process and/or quickly make judgements based on that visual data. Similarly, researchers such as Michael Carroll (2010) have delved into the role of sight in Transformative learning, discussing the process of personal reflection and dialogue as one that creates a profound sense of self-awareness, or what he describes as a “Super-Vision” (2010, p. 29). But the world is not one-dimensional and neither is how we as individuals navigate it- as you highlight, our four other senses are also a constant, if under recognized- interplay with our emotions and memories. So it makes sense that each of our sensory experiences, combined or isolated, play a fundamental role in how we engage and are biased by the world around us.

Expanding this seemingly singular focus on sight as a key sense for learning with a broader emphasis on touch, smell, and taste as opportunities for self-reflection is very interesting. As adult education practitioners, we talk often of the life experience and “baggage” our learners bring to a learning environment. Yet, I rarely examine what that means- the triggers and reactions to simple words, sounds, images and textures that are connected to our stories. I often forget that our stories don’t just exist in the mind- they are intricately entwined (and even begin with) our physical experiences, and create a complex web of personally and emotionally biased data we have to unpack and unravel. So, if the senses are key to deciphering one’s emotions and mental schemas what does the yogic perspective have to say on how a learner uses those, say, under acknowledge senses to identifies and then clarifies their taken-for-granted frames of reference?

Alicia: Again it feels like an easy and complex question at once. Going back to the Bhagavad Gita, the role of a yogi is to control the mind and renunciate the “objects of the senses” as they pull our divine nature away from what is “real”, the “atman” the true self. Our mind and senses are endowed with two natural currents – Attraction and Repulsion (Woodruff, 1995, p. 64). “But the self-controlled man, moving amongst the sense objects with the senses under restraint, and free from attraction and repulsion, attains to peace” (Woodruff, 1995, p. 76). The natural currents of attraction and repulsion ignite our desires, our reactions, our emotions, our imagination and feed our frames of reference.

For example, I may see a beautiful dress in a window display; this sparks my desire to own it, my imagination about where I will wear it, about how I will be perceived in it, etc. I am no longer in the present but in a mix of desire and need, both present and future, perhaps even justifying my desire for the dress as necessary to my self worth! You can see how messy this all gets pretty quickly. So according to this line of thinking, I first need to notice what is happening with my senses, what my mind is doing with that information and then applying some self-discipline in deciding what I do with that information. Do I really need that dress? Will it deliver all that I now need it to deliver?

It all comes down to awareness. In everyday life, reflecting on my actions, reviewing how I reacted to events/inputs within my day may help me slow down and help me transform into who

I want to be and how I want to be bit by bit. Although I suppose a big insight could be garnered in the same fashion and propel me into a whole new frame of reference.

In the greater scheme of things, the yogi is trying to move through the world without the being distracted. By “withdrawing” the senses, not in an effort to eschew humanity but in an effort to be acting from a place of peace, so that one can release oneself from the tug a war of attraction and repulsion, desire and emotion, and hopefully touch into and act from a deeper, more truthful place.

I guess to answer your question more succinctly, reflection is key to learning. From a modern yogic perspective that can happen by any means: art, journaling, and practices that move us beyond our known intellect; mantra, breath, hatha/ body practices. Yet becoming aware of how information moves through us, specifically through the senses elucidates the pathways to transformation.

Christie: I find the yogic definition of reflection, as one of “withdrawing to become aware” a wonderful phrase. Similar to the Yoga tradition, reflection is elevated in transformative learning theory as a key component of learning; the bridge between information and understanding and the our very human way of making sense” (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009, Carroll, 2010). I think critical to both of these traditions is the definition of reflection as a “slowing down”- whether it be after the event, or during it, to dig into our how we were, or are, navigating a situation (Schon, 1990). What strikes me about your discussion of the yogi, is the micro-level on which this reflection takes place; not momentous actions or situations, but a diving into the the small moments of each day, and those sensory interactions that form the basis of all our movements, and through reflection the un-momentous, often passed over ones, and then proactively engaging with the layers of emotional interpretations we pile on top of those thousands of small interactions; it’s learning at it’s very fundamental level. The ask feels simple, yet overwhelming: the amount of sensory data we as individuals are being asked to reflect on is extraordinary. Where does one start?

Alicia: Exactly! If I frame that sense of ongoing, micro-learning in with the “intersectionality” theme of the conference, the metaphor of the town square really spoke to me. Here we are, each human, trying to navigate the endless intersections of race, culture, economics, institutions, belief systems, etc and the pain and triumph of navigating these points of connection/repulsion as a means of deep learning. It can be overwhelming. Then, turning inward, exploring the town square of the senses, how each of us is taking in information and acting/reacting to that data which then influences how I manage in the world town square feels both intimidating and exhilarating. But rather than deflate under the magnitude of what needs to be studied and explored in order to move closer to the atman, or true self, on a good day it moves me towards a greater sense of compassion and humility. In the current context of Black Lives Matter, Occupy, Trump (!), it helps me to know how much each of us is navigating just to move through the day. I embrace the yogic tradition as a means to help evolve my consciousness. I need practices that will shed light on who am I, who I want to be, and how to keep opening in the wake of the intersectionality of life. And it starts with a very simple question: Where am I? And then using each of our senses to answer that question, and explore what the answers mean for how I am acting and reacting.

Christie: I love that statement, “opening in the wake of the intersections of life,” especially twinned with the metaphor of a town square. I am writing this from a family reunion of sorts in Ireland, where my “town square” feels chaotic and crowded. Every action and interaction taking place is overflowing with sentiment, frustration and clouded with judgement/reactions. Here, everything is new and old. I meet new family and see new places, yet each interaction is still filled with old emotional stories. In a way, this trip has been transformative. This experience of my family history and relationships upended what I thought I knew and what I thought my stories were. I’ve seen my behaviors (good and bad) reflected back at me in the responses of others, illuminating old habits, and creating great opportunities for new action. And yet, reading your words, I think of how much more I could have learned, and how proactive that learning could have been if I could identify and reflect on key sensory experiences before they triggered reactions from me, rather than respond emotionally and reflect on the outcome of that response. From this perspective, yogic practices enable learning on a micro level; a subtle, ongoing fine-tuning of behaviors with large, long term impact. The more in tune we are with our senses,- our personal source data for learning- the faster and easier we are able to change our habits, and the ways we interpret the world, and our actions. For me, it is especially helpful in deconstructing our chaotic “town squares” where everyone is bumping into each other, triggering reactions, building on interactions and carrying their own histories and baggage. Is that how you see it?

Alicia: Yes- it takes a lot of commitment to drill into the level we are talking about! I think most people are just trying to do a good job at work, raising their families, navigating their relationships and then the yogic texts say, hey in order to feel a sense of peace, inner calm or equanimity in this crazy life, we have to get to the source. From a yogic perspective we have to uncover the “Self” by all means possible, therefore one has to examine how we move through the world (sensory input) and what our mind is doing with it if you want to be “free”. Not an easy task, yet a rewarding one from my experience.

Christie: So that is where we pick up in October- asking that key question: Where am I? And exploring the role each of our senses play in answering that question. In the meantime, I’m going to take your words and put them into action on the last few days of this trip- I’ll let you know how it goes and what changes! And then, of course we meet again in October in Tacoma, putting these two approaches into action in one room, our own Yoga and Transformative Learning town square, where each of us as learners can bring theory to action, explore our sense perceptions, the memories they are attached to, the thought trajectories that they spark, the very personal roles they play in our own learning and teaching processes. I can’t wait to see what and how this conversation blooms in action- until then!

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Down the Rabbit Hole: Using Theatre-Based Methods to Generate Space for Transformation

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Abstract: In this paper and experiential session, we will advance the notion that Transformative Learning is an on-going mythic journey of the soul and that arts-based methods can support us on this individual and collective journey. Grounded in theory and practice, we will draw upon embodied methods and theatrical conventions to invite participants as learners to join us *down the rabbit hole* and step into an adventure of thinking, feeling, and doing. Disrupting habitual ways of working and tapping into creative potential, we will encourage learners to follow their own stories to identify the intersections in their own life, that is, the place where there is potential for the old story to give way to the new, and how these new stories also contribute to our collective narrative of transformation. Prepare to awaken the senses and engage with us and one another as supportive co-learners on this arts-based journey.

Creativity is increasingly touted as “one of the most important business skills for the next century, and the ‘ultimate resource’ in a technology-and-information-based culture” (Clerkin, 2015, p. 178). Given that the complex challenges of today’s world require our collective creative capacity to address, educators in various sectors understand that we need to disrupt our habitual, linear-rational ways of working in order to tap into our creative potential. Since arts-based methods are tried and tested ways of promoting embodied, sensory experiences, engaging multiple audiences, and opening new ways of seeing, being, doing, and knowing, it is not surprising that scholars and practitioners of transformative learning draw from the arts (Lawrence, 2012; Lawrence & Cranton, 2015). Moreover, Dirx (1998) suggested that in adult education “we need to re-vision how ‘text’ – the skills, content, or subject matter in adult learning – obtains personal or collective meaning and significance” (para. 2). He proposed that we do so *not* from a rational cognitive view, but from a mytho-poetic one. In other words, he suggested that it is possible to use intuition, feelings, personal images, metaphors, and myths to explore the connections between what is happening inside ourselves in relation to our outer experiences. Transformative Learning can therefore be “an on-going, mythic journey of the soul” (para. 2) and arts-based methods can support us on this journey.

This paper and the corresponding workshop aim to promote transformative learning through theatre-based practices. Drawing from theories of transformative learning that see transformation as an ongoing, holistic process that engages all of the senses rather than an end state (e.g., Cranton & Kasl, 2012; Lawrence & Cranton, 2015; Hart, 2015), the authors invite participants into an alternative reality *down the rabbit hole*, where they may identify intersections of their own lives where an old narrative may give way to a new. This alternative reality, generated through theatre-based practices, holds the potential to generate space for transformation.

Identifying Self as Hero in Mytho-poetic Engagement through Theatre

In his show, *Totem Figures*, Canadian solo theatre performer Dawe (2009) suggested that we are all the main character in our own life stories, spinning out our own epic adventures and creating our own mythology with everything we do and every choice we make. He proposed that the stories we keep coming back to again and again throughout our lives provide the foundation for our own personal Hero's Journey (Campbell, 1968). If we listen closely to them, these stories invite us on a call to adventure, a road of trials, the mastering of two worlds, and ultimately the freedom to live (Campbell, 1968). Dawe (2009) addressed personal transformative experiences by recognizing patterns within himself and connecting them to the larger social context of popular culture and literary works.

On the other hand, Playback Theatre (Fox 2003, 2009) as a convention for Transformative Learning moves beyond the individual experience directly into the social and relational experience. Playback Theatre co-founder Jo Salas (2010) pointed out that often community stories become the tale of a masculine hero and “this action story, the Hero story, the killer story, has overshadowed the quotidian stories that have all kinds of shapes and are not necessarily about conflict” (p. 4). Salas (2010) contended that “in a Playback show we are less likely to hear a typical hero's story. . . . We are likely to hear a story that contains a constellation of intersecting meanings, which our enactment strives to embody without reducing it to a straight line” (p. 4). As such, through the telling of intersecting individual stories, the community story can also be revealed.

Shekhar Kapur (2010), film director, speaks to looking for the different lines within stories: the plot, the psychological, political, and mythological. By seeking different lines in participants' stories, adult educators can facilitate deeper understanding and shift perspectives across contexts and realities, through the active engagement among participants as co-learners.

As adult educators and co-facilitators, we will explore these ideas through the arts-based method of participatory theatre. We draw upon embodied methods and theatrical conventions derived from Canadian theatre company, Theatre for Living, (Diamond, 2007), as well as from our experience in playback theatre (Fox, 2003). We will use theatre-based methods to invite participants to join us *down the rabbit hole* and step into an adventure of thinking, feeling, and doing. Carroll's (2009, 1890) *Alice in Wonderland*, is a tale in which Alice goes down the rabbit hole and is involved in a fantastical and transformative journey of self in relationship with others. We will encourage learners to take an embodied journey *down the rabbit hole* by tuning into their own personal call for adventure, identifying active stories, and initiating a journey of discovery through the theatre-based activities on offer. We will suggest that learners follow their own stories on the journey and identify the intersections in their own life, that is, the place where there is potential for the old story to give way to the new. Clover (2007) proposed that skilfully facilitated arts-based methods can foster both personal growth and social justice: they can create healthy and empowered individuals while simultaneously addressing the issue of belonging to and participating in the larger social world (p. 11). Just as Dirx (1998) asked us to consider how learning might “be envisioned in a way that we also foster transformation of ourselves and the world in which we live” (para. 2), we will experientially investigate how theatre-based methods can generate a transformation of space—and how that transformed space can open up brave spaces for individual and collective transformation.

Transformative Learning through Theatre

Taylor (2007) identified that “divergent conceptions” of transformative learning theory are utilized across the field of adult education (p. 189). The Transformative Learning Centre in Toronto provided an encompassing definition that captures the potentially revolutionary nature of the insights that such learning can bring about:

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. This shift includes our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations and our relationships with other humans and with the natural world. It also involves our understanding of power relations in interlocking structures of class, race and gender, our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living, and our sense of possibilities for social justice, peace and personal joy. (O’Sullivan & Morrell, 2002, p. 11)

As is clear from this definition, Transformative Learning has three core elements: first, learners experience a “structural shift”, second, an important social component exists in which understanding comes about through “relationships” and third, it opens learners up to new “visions” and “possibilities” (O’Sullivan & Morrell, 2002).

In scholarship related to arts-based inquiry, leadership, and community engagement, transformation is identified as a possible outcome but it is not clearly defined. Some individuals experience transformation as “rediscovering the pleasure to play” (Fremeaux & Ramsden, 2007, p. 35), “a stimulus to moral imagination” (Kinsella, 2007, p. 39), or “for peace, health, sharing, identity, connection, wholeness, spirituality, magic, mystery” (Power, 1997, p. 171). Underlying the concept of transformation is the belief that it is desirable and good. Ideally transformation is a powerful and life-enhancing experience; however, it may also be challenging to individuals. Fremeaux and Ramsden (2007) asserted that through the practice of rebel clowning, participants “feel empowered to struggle against all forms of oppression” (p. 24). Conversely, in their cross-cultural popular theatre project, Keough, Carmona, and Grandinetti (1995) spoke of the transformative process as “a grueling but exhilarating experience filled with mixed emotions” (p. 12). At the end of Keough et al.’s project, some participants felt empowered whereas others were drained. This recognition that transformation is not always easy, nor does it always end well, reinforces the need for skilful facilitation, where transformation is seen as an invitation rather than a requirement.

Yorks and Kasl (2006) defined Transformative Learning as “a wholistic change in how a person both affectively experiences and conceptually frames his or her experience of the world when pursuing learning that is personally developmental, socially controversial, or requires personal or social healing” (pp. 45–46). They presented a taxonomy of expressive ways of knowing in practice which speaks to creating a learning environment conducive to whole-person learning and working with learners within that environment. Ultimately they noted that expressive ways of knowing evoke experience, bring feeling and emotion into consciousness, and codify experience (p. 53).

One aspect of creating a generative space conducive to whole person learning is helping people transition from their everyday reality into a mental and emotional place that allows them to be open to learning (p. 51). Therefore, an invitation to go *down the rabbit hole* offers a metaphorical shift that encourages a journey into an unknown, surprisingly playful, fluid world, which can evoke a potentially transformative experience. As Boal (2006) explained, “we are what we do, and if we make or do only what others have invented, we will

be a copy of others, not ourselves” (p. 39). For adult educators, creating a theatrical space for people to be creative together can enable them to explore the potential for individual and collective transformation.

The Role of the Arts in Fostering Empowerment and Generating a Shared Narrative

Metaphor and fiction offer a way to engage people deeply on many ways of knowing and being. Fictionalizing gives a degree of protection and distance for the participants (Dobson et al., 2000, p. 189). Themes can be raised and discussed with colleagues without creating an environment that was about personal stories. The challenge with staging personal stories is the potential for the “aesthetic of injury” (Salverson, 1999, p. 35) which holds participants stuck in their identity as victims. By way of example, Leffler (2012) discussed a scene in which a woman who was the victim of domestic abuse performed a realistic narrative of her home life. This re-enactment left her feeling distraught and upset post-performance (i.e., she felt re-traumatized night after night). Conversely, in performing an interpretive dance piece about his experience of discrimination, a self-identified gay man became more empowered in his identity (p. 350). Through interpretation or fictionalization of his story, this man’s viewpoint and self-narrative were transformed. Likewise in going *down the rabbit hole*, fiction can be used to transform perspectives by engaging participants in what Thompson (2009) called a ‘theatre of beauty’ where the vision of beauty and possibility reside. Therefore, through devising and performance with metaphor and fiction, adult educators can evoke and provoke dialogue on many different levels and delve deeper to create alternate visions and possibilities.

Yorks and Kasl (2006) noted that “developing empathic connection is especially difficult when the other’s life experience is very different from one’s own” (p. 52). Nevertheless, entering together into an alternate reality *down the rabbit hole* enables a shared experience in which “expressive activities enable learners to share their experiential knowing in a way that provides others with a brief portal of entry into sharing that experience and perhaps relating it to their own experiential knowing” (p. 52) and thus, bringing feeling and emotion into consciousness and through “learning-within-relationship” (p. 53).

Working in theatre is a social way of making meaning and knowing. Norris (2000) cited McLeod’s observation that there are five major ways of making meaning: through number (privileged in science), word (privileged in education), image, gesture and sound (privileged in art) and that drama/theatre integrates all five (p. 40). Going *down the rabbit hole*, we are able to facilitate a shift in self and worldviews through utilizing word, gesture, sound, and image. As noted by Cranton and Kasl (2012), there are “several ways in which people revise their perspectives (cognitive, extrarational, social, relational, artistic, and intuitive). Each path leads to transformative learning in a different way” (p. 397). Though primarily artistic, theatre-based methods can engage all of the above perspectives (cognitive, extrarational, etc.).

Yorks and Kasl identified expressive ways of knowing as a way to codify experience in which complex experience and ideas are encapsulated. They explained that “if a learner creates an expressive representation of a new insight, he or she can later relive the entire learning experience by re-experiencing the expressive representation. For example... to produce a “bodily memory” that can be drawn upon by learners in future challenging situations” (p. 56). Likewise, inviting learners *down the rabbit hole* can enable similar, embodied outcomes. A skillful facilitator can draw out the embodied lessons gained through expressive representation by inviting dialogue and critical discourse through exploratory, debriefing questions and the opportunity to link theory to practice through discussion.

Transformation as an Ongoing Process

Referring to transformation as a process rather than an end state, Hart (2015) asked the question,

Since the nature of self is emergent, can we consider transformation as an ongoing phenomenon as well as a marker of paradigmatic change? If so, the goal and the process are not only about catalyzing those big transformative shifts but also and maybe especially to redefine this (transformation) as a way of being characterized by ongoing flexibility, openness, and dynamicism. (p. 288)

This is congruent with Lawrence and Cranton's (2015) model of transformative learning. Unlike founding father Mezirow (1978; 1991), who identified ten stages to transformative learning, Lawrence and Cranton (2015) conceived of transformation through the metaphor of gardening. In this model, transformative events often begin with a catalyst, which can plant seeds of change or serve to nurture seeds that had already been planted. Inviting people *down the rabbit hole* seeks to provide a potential catalyst or enrich the soil for catalytic seeds already planted. Lawrence and Cranton acknowledged that catalytic events offer the potential to transform, yet it is not a given that people will transform. They identify a variety of factors that can encourage or delay transformative learning. One encourager is an attentive gardener or significant people in their life that support their growth. *Down the rabbit hole* offers us a community of 'attentive gardeners' with whom we can engage, should we choose to do so.

Furthermore, like Cranton and Kasl (2012)'s list above, Lawrence and Cranton recognize that sometimes transformative learning occurs through critical self-reflection and other times through an intuitive process in which people become conscious through dreams, meditation, artwork, or physical activity (p. 83). *Down the rabbit hole* seeks to touch on all aspects of this through exploring how theatre is a creative means of bringing together body, mind, and soul in a way that allows us to move with others in a specific time and space context, questioning how we can be more intentional and creative in our interactions during points of intersection and connection, how relationship-building through introductions of participants and facilitators, followed by framing comments and initial trust-building methods that serve to create a brave space where people can *challenge by choice*, that is, they can feel comfortable participating to the edge of their own personally-defined comfort zones.

York and Kasl's (2006) taxonomy illustrated how expressive ways of knowing create pathways that move between both an intrapersonal (through critical reflection and feeling emotions) dimension and an interpersonal learning (through empathetic connection and critical discourse) within relationship. Going *down the rabbit hole* brings together this theory and practice for creative transformation of both individual and collective, and plants seeds for exciting new ways of considering transformative learning and education.

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Intentional Exploration, A Method to Transform the Group Experience Through Structured Interaction

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Abstract: In today's world, authentic and intimate connection with others is rare. The 'group' represents a valuable intersection between individualism and collectivism. This experiential workshop will introduce a method for group interaction that seeks to transform the space between individuals as well as between members and the group-as-a-whole. Participants will learn and practice some basic protocols and be responsible for jointly co-creating this transformed space for the group.

Introduction

We live in a time of constant change which requires constant adaptation, and this has created a rapidly growing need for transformative learning (TL) (Illeris, 2014). The technology in general and the internet in particular have made us more globally connected than ever yet paradoxically, it feels like the quality of interpersonal interactions are lower than ever. While technology connects us in some ways it seems to distance us in others. This distancing effect places a premium on easy and fast ways to attain intimate interpersonal connection. Small groups offer an opportunity to create these connections and have transformative potential when certain structural and functional conditions are present (Boyd, 1991).

We live our lives at the intersection of individuality and membership; membership of both small groups like families, friends, work teams and large groups like communities, cities, and nations. The purpose of this experiential workshop is to transform the interpersonal space between people and the intra-group space between the group and its members. This will be achieved by introducing a group interaction method that potentiates this intimate connection through dialogue and provides both deeper awareness of group dynamics as well as an opportunity to practice effective group skills.

Transformative Learning: Theory, Research & Practice

This workshop draws on several theoretical foundations including TL theory (Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 1997), the theory of living human systems and the method of functional subgrouping (Agazarian 1997, 2011), group theory (Agazarian & Gantt, 2003; Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Tuckman, 1965), and dialogue theory (Isaacs, 1999; Neville, 2015; Lipari, 2014; Fay, Garrod & Carletta, 2000; Nagda, Gurin, Rodriguez & Maxwell, 2008).

Specifically, the workshop will introduce 'intentional exploration', a group interaction method based on Agazarian's (1997, 2011) method of functional subgrouping which structures the process of group interaction. Functional subgrouping has been found to lead to more learning and less stress in groups (O'Neil, Constantino & Mogle, 2012). Intentional exploration is a variation of functional subgrouping that creates a minimal yet purposeful micro-culture of collaborative dialogue (Isaacs, 1999; Neville, 2015; Lipari, 2014; Fay, Garrod & Carletta, 2000; Nagda, Gurin, Rodriguez & Maxwell, 2008). Slowing down and sequencing the process of group interaction empowers members to co-create a sense of safety to support broad and deep conversation. The topic of conversation is not predetermined and originates from attendees

themselves, though it usually includes both thoughts and feelings which as Baumgartner (2001) confirms are involved in the complex process of TL. The change in structure and therefore micro-culture of the group which is signified by the protocols, initially creates a disorienting dilemma. Participants have reported initial discomfort in shifting to a new way of interacting, but comfort is rarely transformative (Berger, 2004). Fundamental changes in mind-set are deeply intertwined with shifts in inner–outer psychosocial dynamics (West, 2014, p164). The experience is also designed to raise the consciousness of group process. Conscientization as a both a visceral and intellectual process is a collective activity (Newman, 2012).

The protocols change participants' frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997) and involves critical assessment of the assumptions having to do with how we interact with others in a group context. The protocols also offer an opportunity to assume a revised role and new behaviors. The result is an acceleration of the group development process (Agazarian & Gantt, 2003; Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Tuckman, 1965) as the group purposefully builds skills to support its own development and engagement with its self. Past participants of similar workshops have reported feeling more connected with each other and energized by the depth of conversation that was possible despite initially being strangers with substantial differences in experience, vocation, and interests. This transformation of the group experience (i.e., the outcome) and the transformation of how the group engages with itself (i.e., the process) is an emergent phenomenon that results from the relatively simple protocols. However, no single protocol can be named as the cause, but taken together a qualitatively unique micro-culture emerges.

Participant Involvement

Workshop participants will learn and practice these basic group process protocols which are designed to create safety, overcome social defenses, enable dialog, and accelerate group development. The experience is also designed to be extrarational (Papastamatis & Panitsides, 2014; Kucukaydin & Cranton, 2012). Therefore, passive lecturing and cognitive learning will be de-emphasized in favor of experiential, emotional and relational learning. The analogy of learning to dance is useful here. The steps are learned cognitively but one truly begins to dance when the learner stops paying (cognitive) attention.

There are many intersections at play including that of self and group member, individual and group, exploration and explanation, intentionality and unintentionality, and thoughts and feelings to name a few. I expect the group to be relatively homogenous with regard to extent of professional experience, depth of education, degree of privilege, and level of social status, etc. That said, the method of intentional exploration minimizes the unproductive turbulence that occurs at the intersection of differences and maximizes the value of those intersections. As mentioned, the initial protocols represent a destabilizing experience as the dominant norms of group interaction of the ambient culture are replaced. The experiential practice portion represents a chance to experiment with a new role and behaviors, and the closing reflection provides an opportunity to make sense of the experience.

Time Allocation

The 90-minute time allocation is the minimum time need for the emergent culture to materialize. Thus, minimizing lecturing will be a priority. Note that an additional 30 minutes would significantly enhance the likelihood of transformation of experience given there is an initial learning and adjustment period that precedes the harmonizing that enables that transformative experience. Additional time would also significantly reduce the pressure to keep

the introduction (workshop, facilitators, context, etc.) extremely tight and the closing debrief/Q&A short. If additional time is not possible, the aim will be to create more of an introductory experience rather than one with depth with timing as follows.

The 90 minute agenda will be composed of three sections. First, a 10 minute opening will set the context by introducing attendees, workshop timing, and the protocols. Next is a 60 minute experiential portion which includes a brief centering exercise followed by the method of intentional exploration before closing with a reflection exercise. The workshop closes with 10 minutes reserved for debrief and questions. This timing also allows for a 10 minute buffer to accommodate unexpected flex in the agenda.

Regardless of whether additional time can be allotted, being able to somehow share expectations for this session beforehand would significantly influence its success. These expectations are instrumental in creating the micro-culture and include the session being highly experiential, having a limited introduction, starting sharply on time, late arrivals not being admitted, departing early being discouraged, and attendance being limited to 10. Some of these expectations are negotiable based on the conference's constraints.

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Learning Cities and Transformative Learning: A Study of Community Engagement in New York and Philadelphia

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Abstract: In times of increasing change and disruption, the intersections of experiential learning, spirituality, and/or consciousness-raising in local neighborhoods can provide the context for being more intentional in fostering transformative learning “on the ground.” This paper introduces the EcCoWell approach to Learning Cities, integrated with place-based pedagogy and reflective practice, applied with adult learners in an urban ministry certificate course in New York City and a community college leadership development class in Philadelphia.

Themes such as social justice, unity and collaboration, and love (self, other and place), education, growth through shared experience, and spirituality and/or consciousness-raising emerged from our analysis of individuals engaging in deep learning about their neighborhoods - investigating, dialoguing, and reflecting on their own and others’ roles in the process of change and leadership. The implications are that spirituality is inherent in the learning process, whether a learning context is explicitly faith-based or not, and that cities are spaces where connections are made well beyond the physical environment. This adapted EcCoWell approach has the potential for application in multiple contexts.

Introduction

When adult learners engage in deep learning about their community, they have the potential to more fully investigate complex social systems and reflect on human behavior mitigated by the macro environment. This level of understanding is needed in our families, neighborhoods, and cities so that we can address complex problems such as violence and poverty, and foster stronger education and growth. A way to work towards positive change is the Learning City approach, a macro model that focuses on community development “in which local people from every community sector act together to enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions of their community” (Boshier, 2005, p. 377). Promoting social justice, enhancing quality of life, and building cohesive communities are key elements of this framework (Kearns, 2012; Watson & Tiu Wu, 2015).

Pervasive inequality in cities, however, still exists - even after 20 years of progress in the Learning City field. Innovation is necessary to further the mission of inclusion and foster the potential for transformative learning. A local neighborhood focus may be a potentially effective model for this work, and have broader implications for creating a sustainable and healthy society. This paper describes the EcCoWell orientation, a Learning City method, integrated with a transformative learning approach engaging place-based pedagogy and reflective practice in New

York City and Philadelphia, and draws out implications for future application (Edelglass, 2009; Kearns, 2012; Mezirow, 2000).

Related Literature

The EcCoWell Learning City focuses directly on citizenship, families, and neighborhoods. “EcCoWell”, “Ec” indicates ecology and economy, “Co” refers to community and culture, and “Well” addresses well-being and lifelong learning (Kearns, 2012). One of its goals is to “increase self-esteem and feelings of competency” through social relationships (PASCAL, 2016). The roots of the Learning City movement were based in the “learning society” literature. Jarvis (2007) posits that a learning society is “one in which the majority of social institutions make provisions for individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses within a global society” (p. 100).

The EcCoWell orientation can be used to complement an educator’s transformative learning focus – fostering the notion that one’s frame of reference becomes more “inclusive, differentiating, permeable...critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). Taylor (2009) suggests fostering transformative learning in educational settings (formal or informal) may be attained by leveraging and integrating individual experience, critical reflection and dialogue, into holistic learning design.

In a holistic approach, students engage with each other through multiple ways of knowing such as experiential, presentational, propositional and practical (Heron, 1992). Holistic orientations to teaching, cultivating authentic relationships, and awareness of socio-cultural context also support transformative learning (Taylor, 2009). Developing a heightened awareness of socio-cultural context, in the tradition of scholars such as Paulo Freire or Juanita Johnson-Bailey, and the role of spirituality in adult learning (Tisdell, 2008), can lead to new understandings and produce alternative ways of thinking.

Finally, a critical pedagogy of place can complement this EcCoWell orientation and transformative learning approach in order to further sustain change in local and regional contexts (Edelglass, 2009; Gruenewald, 2003).

Methodology

Using the city as our classroom we led two groups of students with similarly diverse demographics through parallel learning experiences in their respective cities over a four-month period. One group was composed of participants in an urban ministry certificate program at a Christian seminary in New York City, while the other group took a Community Leadership class at the Community College in Philadelphia. Each group spent time in city neighborhoods that were familiar and unfamiliar, making observations, collecting data, experiencing the space, and engaging in various levels of interaction with community members.

Using journal entries, online surveys, and reflection papers, we drew out emergent themes regarding transformative learning and the impact of place-based pedagogy. These themes were used to revise the curriculum as well as serve as the basis for expanding use of this approach in other areas. This was an exploratory comparative case study with the research questions:

1. In what ways does the curriculum and pedagogy in both courses support a transformative learning experience?

2. What are the similarities and differences in student learning/growth between the two contexts, and what implications does this have for the Learning City?

The Ministry Fellows Program and the City as Our Classroom

City Seminary of New York is an intercultural Christian theological learning community located in Harlem, New York. Students come from all walks of life; men and women, drawn by the prospect of learning to see and experience the city and ministry together in new ways. As a body, we read Scripture in community, walk in the city with intentionality of sensory engagement, pray in a way that sees Christ in the ordinariness of the city, listen to one another and ourselves, eat together, share our gifts for ministry, cross boundaries in worship, and reflect intentionally on our ministry practice.

The Ministry Fellows Program, a certificate level, cohort-based urban ministry learning community, was initiated in response to a growing need for affordable, accessible and quality training for a changing demographic of urban ministry practitioners, particularly those from immigrant church communities. Since 2009, we have established a learning community of more than 100 Ministry Fellows representing 54 different churches from all over New York City, and in the process equipped and trained 12 faculty team members.

One of the seminary's key practices, which are incorporated into the curriculum of the Ministry Fellows Program, is to go to five to seven neighborhoods in the city each year to pray for and with the local community. This annual series of community prayer events is known as "pray and break bread. NEW YORK CITY," or "PBB." Together we celebrate what God is already doing in each place, and look forward to what He will do to restore and bring peace to the city. Beginning with the macro – learning about a neighborhood (its history, demographics, context, etc.) prior to going, we then focus on the micro – spending time "ground truthing," or calibrating statistics with our actual experience of the concrete reality of being in a physical space, by interacting with whomever and whatever is in a particular place. This may mean walking up the street counting and praying for hair salons, bodegas, schools or hospitals; or offering prayers for and with local residents. Participants have the freedom to pray as one feels comfortable.

After students experience a number of community prayer events led by faculty and staff, their first assignment is to design one of their own - in a neighborhood they care about, live, work or play in - and to "do it" with a fellow classmate. Research, writing, engaging, praying, and reflecting through an oral presentation (in small groups and then to the class culminating in a prayer strip that is placed on the wall with a dot and string connecting it to a city map) and written reflection paper.

Community College of Philadelphia and the Community Leadership Course

The Community Leadership Course runs two times a year. The Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) is an Associate's Degree granting urban institution. The college has a disproportionate amount of minorities (75% of the student body) that come from underrepresented groups. Many of CCP's students live at or below the poverty level and work to manage the many issues surrounding low income communities. There is also a number of immigrant and international students attending the college which adds to the rich diversity found in the classrooms.

The Community Leadership course introduces students to concepts, models, and practices of leadership that are effective in civic, community and political organizations. Using case studies, simulations, and real-life applications, the course aims to help leaders and potential leaders make a difference at the organizational and community levels. With a deep understanding

of where the students come from and using critical pedagogy and experiential learning, the faculty allowed the students to take charge of their own learning and guide them to a better understanding of themselves, their communities, and their hopes for the future. The class completed weekly online discussion boards where students journaled about the readings and videos for the week and responded to fellow student's posts.

Class time was divided between lecture, student discussions, and experiential activities. Examples of activities included a neighborhood mural walk, attending the college's international festival, a workshop on leadership styles, and peer mentoring time. The class included 3 main projects: a community change book report and presentation, a neighborhood project (including describing one's community with pictures, resident voices, and statistics), and a leadership development plan. Weekly topics included Learning Cities, Cosmopolitanism, Critical Pedagogy, Sustainable Development, Adult Development, Motivation and Engagement, and Leadership Theories. The course started with 12 students; 3 dropped for various reasons.

Comparative Case Study

In order to compare, we individually wrote mini-case studies based on our respective curricula, personal reflections, student assignments, and classroom observations. The case studies focused on curriculum/format, pedagogy, learning objectives / outcomes in terms of process and growth, and assessment. We coded for emergent themes, as well as indicators of transformative learning and characteristics of the EcCoWell approach. After reading each other's case studies, analysis was taken to the next level by creating a matrix of overlapping themes and distinctions, while noting instances where circumstances may have resulted in unexpected outcomes. The learning contexts are outlined below, followed by the findings, analysis, and implications for future research.

Table 1.
Overview of Learning Contexts and Deliverables

	Ministry Fellows Program NY	Community College Philadelphia
At-a-Glance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% are "minority" students • From all over NYC and NJ* • Course focus on understanding the city, seeing the church (diversity), urban ministry practices, and spiritual formation for leadership • LO include: reframing vision of the city, leadership development, ministry practices, spiritual formation • 15 students, 11 completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 75% minority students • Many come from "at risk" neighborhoods • Course focuses on leadership for organizational and community change • LO include: leadership development, power dynamics, creating change, building community • 12 Students, 9 completed, and 8 passed
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "pray and break bread. NYC" neighborhood assignment and reflection paper • Church Site Visit and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Essays • Mural Walk • Leadership Book Report and Presentation

	paper • Urban Pilgrimage Philadelphia and reflection paper • Ministry Manifesto • “Living into Community” Practices Group Presentation • Participation in class activities	• Neighborhood Project • Leadership Development Plan • Participation in class activities
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Findings

Emergent Themes

The tables below show the emergent themes for each site. Next, overlapping themes are described.

Table 2.

Emergent Themes Drawn from the Ministry Fellows Program

Ministry Fellows Program	Indicators
Social Justice	Research and Prayer has a Larger Purpose “What will happen to the homeless? The addicts? Only God knows. But we must be here to pray and persist in being present with them, as a sign of hope.” (KB)
Understanding the City Anew	Opportunity to Pay Attention and Ground-Truth “PBB opened my eyes to look at neighborhoods differently, each one has its own story to tell. It’s just a matter of if we want to listen.” (AY)
Love	Love for God, neighbors, and the community “As I seek and pray, I’m starting to believe our role here is to love the people here...a mother with many disabilities, a recovering addict starting again, an old crossing guard overlooked and a tired mother...” (SA)
Praying with Scripture	Becoming in Tune with Spiritual Priorities “Thinking through and selecting a Scripture passage... gave me an opportunity to really pray and ask God to reveal to me...a prayer for my neighborhood.” (ET)
Making Deeper Connections	Breaking bread leads to more than a full stomach “Learning about a new culture is not finished until you try the food...dinner was accompanied by stories and many laughs. Learning about their [his classmates’] family and story was so relatable.” (AY)

Collaboration, Unity and Healing	Need to Make Space to Bring Differences Together “My PBB experience has instilled in me a stronger burden and better understanding of the need to reach communities both embracing and fearing gentrification.” (MP)
Education	Education can bring about change “We prayed for proper education for all in the neighborhood. If children and families are empowered, then change can happen.” (SSF)

Table 3.

Emergent Themes Drawn from the Community College Leadership Class

Community College Philadelphia	Indicators
Social Justice	Response to Oppression and Inequality “Is it possible that our creative, eccentric and amazingly colorful culture will be accepted by those who are part of the dominant and economically powerful culture or will we always have to assimilate to the way in which the privilege deem acceptable?” (AM)
Unity and collaboration	It takes a village to create strong communities “I was born in a collectivistic community [West Africa] where if I didn’t go to school my neighbors would threaten me that they would tell my parents. They would also help your family...everyone cared for one another.” (ML)
Love, self-esteem, and confidence	Loving and believing in oneself creates positive action “Our world is male driven and it gives the young ladies the perception that they are not good enough to do the male things and be great at it.... young minority girls need to learn how to gain courage and strive to their full potential.” (KJ)
Safety, beauty, and peace	Honoring and creating safe spaces and beauty “Strong communities start with adequate housing, healthy food, safety, an aesthetically pleasing environment, jobs, and reliable transportation” (SD)
Education	Education is the key to individual and social change “I dream of change for the better where guns are lessened, kids want to further their knowledge, and going to jail is not cool. Freedom is a privilege...and education is simply

	power.” (DT)
Personal Growth	Change and growth starts with you “I was self-centered, and then started to hang with the wrong friends. I learned that hanging with the wrong crowd wasn’t going to get me anywhere in life. Playing sports has taught me lifelong lessons and skills that the books and classroom haven’t. I learned self-control, self-discipline and became very self-aware.” (ML)
Servant Leadership	Leadership is bigger than yourself “When people know that you care about them, they will trust you because they know you have their best interest at heart, even when dealing with a problem. Let others have [the] spotlight but then support them if they get into trouble.” (JS)

Overlapping Findings

As noted in the tables above, similar themes emerged from the classes. However, the students in each program were looking at impoverished communities in different ways. The students in the Community Leadership course took pictures of their own neighborhoods, interviewed residents, and reflected on their community in relation to more affluent neighborhoods in Philadelphia and the Learning City literature. They gave an insider's perspective to understanding complex community problems. In comparison, the students in the Ministry Fellows program were encountering new or different communities that the students were not necessarily a part of. They had an outsider's view and used spirituality and scripture to help better understand and pray for others. Interestingly, there were a number of overlapping themes that emerged from these related but unique learning experiences. They included:

1. Social justice,
2. Unity, collaboration and healing,
3. Love (self, other, place),
4. Education leading to change,
5. Growth through shared experience, and
6. Significance of spirituality and/or consciousness raising.

In support of the research questions, we were able to find examples, in both contexts, that (1) supported a transformative learning experience, and we also found that (2) the overlapping themes have important implications for Learning City research. Across both sites, most students’ reflections were personal and multifaceted demonstrating critical reflection on assumptions and the ability to share sensitive stories and ideas. Not surprisingly, the Ministry group had more discussion around God and prayer. However, the community college class also discussed many topics found within different spiritual traditions (love, unity, peace, helping, shared humanity...) and the majority of students described a deeper understanding of themselves, their neighborhoods, and the larger society.

Secondly, our overlapping themes explained “how” an EcCoWell model could be implemented. This could help increase equity, transformative learning, and sustainable change in the Learning City field. For example, when considering ecology and wellness, students suggested creating a community garden in a low-income neighborhood to fill an abandoned lot.

Creating this garden in a collaborative way, that is environmentally sound, and teaches people agribusiness models may be an innovative and powerful approach.

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

As educators, we saw the local neighborhood as part of our learning lab, encouraged self-reflection and built community amongst learners, with the common goal for students to engage with the neighborhood and challenge themselves to be part of positive community growth. In this process, we anticipated they would deepen their cross-cultural understanding and consciousness of the work towards justice. Comparing the process and outcome of our learning journeys as educators, and those of our students, we see that change did indeed happen.

We learned that structural and system change as well as human development need to occur to build Learning Cities. Inequality is more deeply understood when directly experienced with all your senses, when personal stories are shared- allowing voices to be heard, and when one has time for reflection and dialogue. Data increases one's understanding of the problem and helps develop goals and actionable strategies. Love and compassion are powerful instruments of change. They build hope, they enable self-esteem, and they create trust, and develop community. Spirituality and/or consciousness raising happen at multiple levels and each person has their unique journey. It is important to meet the student and community where they are at and be of service to them.

Below are some implications to consider:

1. Integrating the EcCoWell Orientation with place-based pedagogy can in fact foster greater potential for transformative learning for both individuals and groups;
2. Local neighborhood learning can be exponential (formal and informal teaching and learning for lifelong impact);
3. More needs to be done to better understand the connections between leadership, spirituality, and community in Learning Cities; and
4. The emergent themes may be used to implement specific practices and research using the EcCoWell Learning City Model.

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Person/Planet, Mind/Heart, Contemplation/Action: Engaging the Intersections in the Anthropocene

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*Stand still. The trees ahead and the bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.*
~from David Waggoner, "Lost"

The Anthropocene, the new geological era in which humanity has become the dominant biophysical force on our home planet, is the problem of all problems for at least three reasons:

- It was a colossal accident, an unintended consequence of everyday life for our collective humanity.
- These choices are shaped by psychological and institutional forces with deep historical roots.
- The actions of a few of us are far greater drivers than most us, but our lower-impact members are quickly adopting the habits of the affluent.

Taken alone, each of these factors presents a conundrum. Taken together, they highlight the need for integrated, adaptive, and transformative approaches to education. How can we empower our students to grapple with potentially overwhelming planetary problems? How can we foster the creativity, agency, and psycho-social resilience that will help our struggling species navigate the uncharted waters of the Anthropocene?

These new approaches to transformative learning will necessarily engage a host of intersections: between global justice and ecological sustainability; between science and ethics; between personal and collective responsibility; between knowing and not knowing; between mind and heart; and, perhaps most importantly, between hope and despair. In other words, the Anthropocene calls us to whole-person transformative teaching and learning. This is echoed by Mezirow's (2000) description of transformative learning:

...the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open emotionally, capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true and justified to guide action. (p. 7-8)

This illustrates the emphasis of transformative learning on cultivating more inclusive and adaptive meaning to guide reflective and critical action in the world. The three common components identified by transformative learning researchers' and theorists' as essential for transformation are reflective discourse (Mezirow, 2000), critical reflection (Brookfield, 2000; Mezirow, 2000), and informed action (Yorks & Marsick, 2000), the desired result of discourse and critical reflection (Daloz, 2000). Contemplative pedagogies can support the development of

all three, which is critical for creatively and adaptively navigating the challenges of the Anthropocene.

Students in most environmental studies courses can recite a litany of crises that together comprise an unfolding planetary mega-crisis: deforestation, collapsing fisheries, freshwater scarcity, the mass extinction of species, climate change, etc. But what deeper messages—the ones they will remember long after the final exam is over—are they internalizing about how to live on a “new Earth?” Given the mounting urgency of the issues, it behooves us to consider what we are actually teaching. Does the knowledge we convey elicit hope and empowerment or fatalism and paralysis?

In our combined 45 years as environmental educators, we have come to the conclusion that a purely cognitive approach tends to engender the latter. While human and environmental issues can be illuminated by empirical and theoretical study, so too can we investigate them through personal and interpersonal introspection, for our complicity in the Anthropocene calls us to inquire into the “anthropic principle.” Rather than teaching issues like climate change, the extinction crisis, and world food challenges as happening only “out there,” we can teach them as also happening “in here” by continually asking ourselves, “Who am I in relation to this?” This holistic approach integrates cognition with affective and somatic experience.

While our session explores contemplative education in the field of environmental studies, practitioners in many fields will find it useful. The presenters will engage participants in two contemplative practices from their courses on global environmental politics and sustainability leadership development. The practices include a small group perspective-taking exercise and a guided inquiry into the question: “Who am I in a changing climate?” We will include discussion around the value of contemplative practice in teaching potentially overwhelming social and environmental issues, ways of integrating these practices into the curriculum, strategies for addressing potential challenges, and ways of bringing the potentially isolating contemplative experience into the intersubjective field as well as into the public sphere beyond the classroom.

This essay begins with a discussion of what contemplative pedagogical practices are and then explores their value—both in general and specifically with regard to potentially overwhelming problems like climate change. We then offer a brief overview of the two exercises that will be offered in our experiential workshop.

Rationale: The What and Why of Contemplative Pedagogies

Reflective and contemplative approaches to teaching are closely aligned but distinct. While both involve the capacity for stepping back, self-observation, and focused attention, reflection (much like an internal mirror) turns cognition upon itself. Reflection entails a pause to explore beliefs, values, and interpretations of reality and operates very often in the service of evaluation and critique. Contemplative practice, on the other hand, is not so much about active thinking, but is rather characterized by a more neutral space of self-awareness. This relaxed yet concentrated presence of mind very often generates spontaneous or intuitive insights that do not arise through discursive thought. While this practice of silent witnessing may enhance cognitive understanding, as it often does, this is not its primary aim. To the extent that it does have an aim, contemplative practice is more interested in integration and creativity than memorization, analysis and critique. Most importantly, contemplation greatly expands the field of inner observation to encompass not only mentation but also emotional and somatic experience, which in turn facilitates a far more holistic learning experience.

As a consequence of this distinction, some might question the value of contemplative practice in the context of higher education—a context which prioritizes conceptual analysis, explanation, argumentation and critique. In the university’s secular environment, this wariness is easily compounded by the contemplative tradition’s historically religious roots. While contemplation was integral to education in western medieval universities, by the Renaissance these practices were large confined to monastic education (Killen, 2016). Recent developments in neuroscience, however, have generated substantial interest in contemplative practices from secular quarters (Wallace and Hodel, 2007) and offered empirical support for the crucial role of emotional and somatic awareness in human development (Damasio, 1994 and 2010).

These scientific developments dovetail with the work on “multiple intelligences” emerging from the fields of education and psychology (Gardiner, 2011). Contemplative pedagogical approaches have the potential to tap into the full range of intelligences: visual, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, verbal, musical, aesthetic and, of course, ecological (Goleman et al., 2012)—and can be intentionally designed to do so. They also offer an inner pause that enables student to integrate insights from multiple ways of learning. Contemplative practices can facilitate an integrative learning experience in which cognition is interwoven with multiple modalities of knowing, thereby fostering the qualities of subjective and intersubjective awareness, discernment, care, and moral and political imagination so desperately needed in today’s world.

When faced with a problem, the strong propensity of the human mind is to generate solutions—all the more so under great urgency. Yet acting upon the “fix-it” impulse to “wicked problems” like climate change is that inadequate solutions follow inexorably when we fail to truly understand the deeper nature of a problem and/or the unintended consequences of our actions. Indeed, the rush to “solve” a problem may well be a defense against the discomfort of “not-knowing” inherent in taking the time to see deeply its genesis and character. Problem-solving generally begins with a period of open-ended receptivity in which one simply takes stock of the problem. Seen from this light, contemplation takes on a more practical hue: the more complex the problem, the greater the need for stepping back and taking stock. As Wayne Muller observes:

[W]ithout the essential nutrients of rest, wisdom, and delight embedded in the problem-solving process itself, the solution we patch together... often contains enough fundamental inaccuracy to guarantee an equally perplexing problem will emerge as soon as it is put into place. In the soil of the quick fix is the seed of a new problem, because our quiet wisdom is unavailable. (Muller 2000, 4).

Compounding the dilemma, most of us in a fast-paced, technology-saturated culture do not have easy access to this quiet wisdom (Jackson, 2008; Levy, 2007). The contemplative pause cannot guarantee this access but it can certainly open the door to it. Contemplative inquiry opens up the space for envisioning new possibilities—not by rushing to fix the problem or projecting one’s conditioned thinking into the future, but rather by being fully present to the fecundity of not knowing and thereby open oneself to fresh insights and therefore genuinely creative responses. Likewise, contemplative practice can foster the qualities of inner resilience that engender a sense of agency and prevent burn-out (Macy 1998; O’Reilly 1998).

No doubt, we as environmental and global educators have a responsibility to teach the relevant facts, concepts and theories, but in our capacity as mentors we are also called upon to attend to their larger experience at the threshold of adulthood. In the arena of

contemplative inquiry, the point is not so much to have the right answers but to have the courage to *not know*, the skillfulness to help guide our students into the depths of their own experience, and the compassion to abide with them there as their native wisdom unfolds. As Aldo Leopold says, “We cannot bring back what has been lost, but we can bring our whole selves to what it here.” This is the task before us as educators at the dawn of the Anthropocene: to bring our whole selves to what is here and to enhance our students’ capacity to do the same.

**Contemplative Practice:
Grappling With the Overwhelming Through Guided Self-Inquiry**

Who Am I In A Changing Climate?

Karen Litfin

*Vocation is the place where our deep gladness
meets the world's deep hunger.*

~ Frederick Buechner

One of the ways that I create a sense of intimacy in my large-lecture courses is by incorporating contemplative exercises. This exercise reflects my general approach to international relations, an approach I call "person/planet politics." The central question entailed with respect to any subject—loss of biodiversity, fast food, the Arab Spring, etc.—is, "Who am I in relation to this?" My intention is to overcome the sense of abstractness that can accompany the study of large- scale, far-flung issues. In my experience, having a greater sense of connection to any "object" of study elicits a greater sense of inner connection and personal agency.

This particular exercise is aimed towards developing students' capacities for self-inquiry, self- awareness and integrative experience. It is an especially valuable practice for college students, for whom the developmental task is to discover who they are in a world where the prevailing institutions, practices and values are altering the basic life-support systems of our home planet. I have intentionally designed this exercise to be fairly open-ended, without narrowly circumscribed learning objectives. Each time I take students through this practice, I am surprised by the kinds of insights that it catalyzes for the students. In this guided exercise, we will:

- Enter into a state of relaxed yet alert awareness, attending to whatever thoughts, emotions and sensations that might arise as we...
- review central themes from a two-week section on climate change from a global environmental politics course,
- asking ourselves who we are in relation to all of this.
- Gather the harvest from our experience through reflective writing.
- Share whatever we might wish to share with the full group.

Contemplative Practice: Playing with Perspectives

Abigail Lynam

*One hand on the beauty of the world, one hand on the suffering of all beings
and two feet firmly grounded in the task of the present moment.*
-from the Cathedral of Autun, France

In the following contemplative exercise we will explore the psychological, emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning about climate change. We will experiment with taking three different perspectives to understand the gifts and challenges of each, how each informs or inspires action and inquire into what it is like to hold all three simultaneously.

Things are getting worse, better and are simply what they are—these are different perspectives on the state of the world. You might hold one more than the other, or hold all three simultaneously. Others are likely to experience them differently and inquiring into these differences can deepen our understanding and empathy. Additionally, we might consider these as three different aspects of our experience and engage them as a form of inquiry and contemplation.

In this guided exercise, we will:

- ‘play’ with three perspectives on climate change: the polarity that things are getting worse and that things are getting better, and then a third possibility that things are simply what they are;
- dive into each of these perspectives and notice what they bring forth;
- inquire into preferences for specific perspectives and what those preferences might imply;
- share our experiences in small groups;
- engage in reflective writing;
- bring our reflections to the full group.

I’ve spent many years learning how to fix life, only to discover at the end of the day that life is not broken. There is a hidden seed of greater wholeness in everyone and everything. We serve life best when we water it and befriend it. When we listen before we act. In befriending life, we do not make things happen according to our own design. We uncover something that is already happening in us and around us and create conditions that enable it. Everything is moving towards its place of wholeness always struggling against the odds. Everything has a deep dream of itself and its fulfillment.

~ Rachel Naomi Remen

Can we surrender to all the destruction and beauty arising throughout the Earth and vow to be in nonattached service to all organisms and ecological processes as well as humanity and civilization?

~ Hargens, *Integral Ecology*

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Self Transformation Through Values-Based Test Feedback: A Work Example

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Abstract: This session demonstrates how transformative learning may be fostered through a work-related, values-based learning experience. The session utilizes value-based assessments, which participants are expected to complete prior to the session. Based on the assessment process, we provide collaborative feedback and facilitate discussion focusing on participants' values and beliefs and explores their change processes, including the potential for transformative changes in self-awareness and frames of reference for working and their careers.

In today's increasingly complex world, people often find themselves disconnected from what they value and their behavior (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). In the workplace, this disconnect manifests itself among employees in many ways, including a lack of meaning at work, lower job satisfaction (Edwards & Cable, 2009), and increased burnout (Leiter, 2008), thus leading to a lower quality of work life. Individuals may experience these disconnects as disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 2000) and may search for something that is missing in their lives. Although this informal process may lead to greater self-awareness, it may also simply reinforce existing frames of reference, which is defined as "the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). Thus, the question remains: How might workplace educators foster this learning process in a more purposeful and intentional manner – a manner that increases self-awareness and improve one's work life?

Individuals can increase self-awareness of their work values and improve their work life through a systematic work-related, values-based learning experience (Nakamura & Klepper, 2012). By engaging in this process, individuals may experience transformative change, including changes in self-awareness and frames of reference regarding their work and careers. Such change processes have two dimensions. The first dimension focuses on the "process" frame - to better understand what intrapersonal and or interpersonal processes are stimulated by reflecting on one's own values and actions (Wright, 2011). The second dimension focuses on the "outcome" frame. This dimension highlights the perspective shift people may experience. An appropriate intervention, such as the one demonstrated in this experiential session, may foster awareness of disconnections between participants' actions and what they value; that is, between their outer and inner worlds (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006). This process may foster deep learning that shifts their assumptions, notions, and work life values or meanings. Through exposure and test feedback on

individuals' values and experiences, we explore how participants' assumptions, notions, and meanings of what they value towards work life are affected.

Theoretical Framework

Our approach to fostering transformative learning around one's work life is multidisciplinary in nature. For this reason, a number of overlapping theoretical approaches frame our project, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes, Pistorello, & Levin, 2012) and Transformative Learning Theory (Cranton, 2016; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Although these perspectives vary, each converges on the issue of value-behavior congruence.

From a psychological perspective, a number of theories discuss the importance of values-based behavior. The most relevant of these is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, Pistorello, & Levin, 2012), which posits that behavior is the consequence of the interaction between cognitive processes and one's context. Relational Frame Theory (RFT; Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2001) serves as the theoretical foundation of ACT. RFT purports that individuals' language and cognitions are influenced by their context which shape individuals' behavior. From this assumption, ACT asserts that individuals' may experience psychological difficulties due to experiential avoidance, entanglement with thoughts, psychological inflexibility, or continued engagement in behavior that is inconsistent with one's values (Hayes, Louma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006). Given this, ACT interventions include mindfulness and acceptance techniques to examine the relationship with one's thoughts and distance oneself from unhelpful thoughts, with the goal of increasing psychological flexibility and behaviors consistent with one's values. Interventions also include discovery of one's values and evaluating current behaviors as being consistent or inconsistent with one's values.

More relevant to the current context, ACT has been applied in the workplace (Hayes, Bond, Barnes-Holmes, & Austin, 2007), as well as suggested for use in career counseling (Hoare, McIlveen, & Hamilton, 2012). Individuals often pursue a specific career path or particular job due to perceived value similarities (Judge & Cable, 1997). Despite this, individuals may find that their job is not congruent with their values; hence, a potentially poor career choice. Thus, ACT interventions that assist in clarifying values and/or recontextualizing values-based actions can be beneficial. For example, research by Hayes et. al (2004) on a sample of substance abuse counselors, found that an ACT intervention produced decreased feelings of burnout initially and at a three-month follow-up. Of importance, this intervention included exercises on explicitly declaring one's values. This suggests that increased awareness of one's values is likely to increase engagement in values-consistent behavior.

This session is also grounded in transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2016; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Identifying or making more explicit one's work-related values may help foster an awareness of possible disconnects between these values and work-related behaviors. This emerging awareness can precipitate a "disorienting dilemma." Mezirow initially used this term to refer to "a narrow meaning focused on the cognitive frameworks through which the learner was reflecting on her situation" (Willis, 2012, p. 212). As Willis (2012) points out, however, disorienting dilemmas can also connote a wider meaning, in which a person's way of being in the world or even their worldview becomes unstable. For example, we may find that what was once perceived as meaningful work has lost for us the deep passion we initially brought to the work, what Palmer (2007) refers to as "loss of heart." In other words, a disconnect occurs within the various ways in which we have come to make sense of some aspect of our being. It is in this sense that we include in our understanding of transformative learning changes in both rational

and nonrational structures – cognitive and emotional dimensions of awareness, meaning, and learning. As Dirkx (2006) suggests, “transformative learning experiences foster radical shifts in one’s consciousness, in one’s ways of being” (p. 32), of who we are and perceive ourselves to be. As individuals increase their self-awareness, they may experience a shift in the perspective or frame of reference they use to perceive, understand, and make sense of their work-related values and their relationship to one’s work-related behaviors. Here, in this session, people may perceive gaps or disconnects between their values and reality. In this work, we conceptualize this experience as a disorienting dilemma. Through appropriate group facilitation and test feedback, participants may experience greater self-awareness, which can then lead to new or different courses of action.

Although there are many positives to the above frameworks, which do help provide macro-level guidance for such work, the type of values-based transformation and alignment we seek to understand requires the capacity for micro-level analyses among specific beliefs, life experiences, and affective / attributional tendencies if we are to understand the mediators and moderators of change and workplace alignment. As such, for both theoretical and assessment reasons, we are using two measures which are the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI) and the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ).

Operationalizing Models and Methods

One of the central challenges in research of this nature is finding models and methods that operationalize theory into ecologically valid form, with the attendant capacity for real world application. Here, our two-fold focus is on 1) why and how people in a work context experience self, others, and the larger world as they do and 2) what the implications are of such interacting affective, attributional, and developmental processes for evaluating and enhancing self / work congruence. Given such complexities, and under the broader paradigm of “transformative learning,” we utilized Collaborative/Therapeutic Assessment (C/TA), along with two complementary methods for operationalizing these belief / values constructs: the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI) and the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ). C/TA is a theoretically and empirically based approach to evaluation and testing – one that emphasizes collaboration, empathy and perspective taking, and cultural sensitivity. Theoretically speaking, it is based on traditional dynamic (e.g., self psychology), humanistic (e.g., person-centered therapy), and social learning theories (e.g., self-efficacy theory). It is notably efficacious, with outcome effects hovering around 0.40 (Cohen’s *d*) and process effects exceeding 1.00 (*d*; Poston & Hanson, 2010). It is hypothesized that by providing collaborative feedback on individuals’ values and beliefs, those behaving inconsistently with their values are more likely to experience disorientation, which may foster new insights and behaviors. For present purposes, it should be noted that CTA has been used with the BEVI in both assessment and therapeutic applications (e.g., Coates, Hanson, Samuel, Webster, & Cozen, 2016). Also of relevance, the BEVI has been used for leadership purposes and organizational assessment and development (e.g., Dyjak-LeBlanc, Brewster, Grande, White, & Shullman, 2016).

In development since the early 1990s, the BEVI is a well validated assessment measure that is used in a wide range of settings and contexts to assess who the person “is” prior to participating in an experience, “how the person changes” as a result of the experience, and how these factors interact to produce a greater or lesser likelihood of learning and growth. Grounded in Equilintegration or EI Theory – which seeks to explain the etiology, maintenance, and transformation of beliefs and values – the BEVI assesses multiple processes and constructs,

including basic openness, receptivity to different cultures, religions, and social practices; the tendency (or not) to stereotype in particular ways; self and emotional awareness; and preferred but implicit strategies for making sense of why ‘other’ people and cultures ‘do what they do’ (Wandschneider et al., 2015). A web-based inventory, the BEVI typically requires between 25 and 30 minutes to complete, and provides a range of outputs, including individual, group, and organizational reports.

As an additional method, the MIQ (Rounds, Henley, Dawis, Lofquist, & Weiss, 1981) is used to facilitate increase awareness of one’s work-related values. The MIQ was developed to operationalize the Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) that posits that individuals seek out and remain in work environments that reinforce their work values, as reinforcement leads to increased job satisfaction. Using a hierarchical structure, the MIQ assesses twenty lower-order work needs that are organized into six overarching values – achievement, altruism, autonomy, comfort, status, and safety (i.e., work relationships) -- based on factor analyses (Lofquist & Dawis, 1978). Leuty and Hansen (2011) provide evidence that the MIQ provides the most comprehensive assessment of the construct of work values compared to other measures.

Summary

This experiential session demonstrates a systematic intervention for assessing work-related values and providing feedback on the alignment of these values with work-related behavior. This process is grounded in explicit theories of transformative change and learning. While the collection of empirical data to support the intended outcomes of our experiential learning activity is ongoing, we believe individuals will likely experience increased self-awareness about their values, beliefs, and actions. As a result, individuals can better respond to challenging work conditions, as well as better recognize what is needed to be satisfied at work. This transformational activity will also benefit senior human resource development professionals and educators who design and develop experiential training programs, particularly those promoting career growth, development, and satisfaction.

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doi:10.1080/1462394042000326815

Teaching Adaptive Leadership: Variations of Practice from the Perspective of Transformative Learning

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Abstract: Adaptive leadership is about helping organizations confront difficult challenges and increasing the likelihood that people learn, participate in solutions, and make the adjustments necessary to achieve progress. Teaching adaptive leadership is a powerful example of fostering transformative learning. An integrative framework of adaptive leadership and transformative learning will be presented, followed by an experiential application exercise that involves the use of video clips, analytical case work, and interactive explorations of interventions.

Theoretical and Contextual Overview

We live in a world that is changing at an unprecedented pace. Organizations addressing society's greatest challenges must be able to adapt to changing circumstances if they want to survive and thrive. Yet, adapting to change can be a huge challenge. It usually involves abandoning ways of working that may have once served an important purpose, but are now a liability. Adaptive leadership entails the exercise of mobilizing people to face and address difficult challenges and thrive (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). This work involves helping organizations confront difficult issues that they have been unable to face and increasing the likelihood that people learn, participate in solutions, and make the adjustments necessary to achieve progress (i.e. adapt). It is also about enhancing our awareness of other perspectives and recognizing that we operate in the context of a larger system of people who each bring a unique viewpoint based on their experiences, values, family, culture, and beliefs (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Williams 2005, 2015). Adaptive leadership offers a set of tools to better understand that system and how we can catalyze change within it, without getting sidelined or burnt out in the process (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Williams, 2015).

The analytical framework and teaching of adaptive leadership originated over 30 years ago at the Harvard Kennedy School and has been taught by several faculty members on a rotating basis, including Dr. Ronald Heifetz who co-founded the framework and method of instruction, and Dr. Dean Williams who developed the framework to include cross-cultural and international perspectives and insights on leadership and collaboration across boundaries (Daloz Parks, 2005; Williams, 2015). Much of the study and application of adaptive leadership has been focused on mobilizing resources within organizational or community systems to help groups face reality and make changes that are necessary to survive and thrive. Williams (2015) expands this perspective by considering the broader context of a globalized world. Leadership cannot stop at the boundary of any one organizational entity to help it adapt to change. Achieving progress in an interdependent world requires working across the boundaries of our own silos or tribes and engaging with diverse stakeholders to solve the global challenges that affect us all (Williams, 2015). As such, the work of leadership involves crossing boundaries, confronting the tribal silos

that prevent us from understanding each other, and joining forces in ways that will be beneficial to us as individuals, organizations, communities and global citizens.

Integrative Insights with Transformative Learning Theory

Students who took an adaptive leadership course at the Harvard Kennedy School have frequently reported that it was a transformative experience (Daloz Parks, 2005). The teaching and exercise of adaptive leadership could be powerful examples of fostering transformative learning. According to Mezirow (2012), transformative learning constitutes a process that involves the transformation of given and unexamined frames of reference, including mindsets and meaning perspectives, to render them more open, inclusive, discerning, adaptable, and reflective. This entails engagement with constructive discourse in which the experiences of others are used to evaluate the reasons behind these assumptions and “making an action decision based on the resulting insight” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 76). Cranton (2016) explains transformative learning to be both a choice and a process:

When something unexpected happens, when a person encounters something that does not fit in with his or her expectations of how things should be, based on past experience, the choices are to reject the unexpected or to question the expectation.

When people critically examine their habitual expectations, revise them, and act on the revised point of view, transformative learning occurs. (p. 19)

Transformative learning theory building began with the women’s rights movement. As women advocated for their rights, learned that others shared their views, and participated in consciousness raising activities, the fruits of their activism in higher education led to the development of reentry programs for women who had never pursued education degrees or dropped out of school to care for their children (Marsick & Finger, n.d.). Mezirow continued developing his theory and came to identify specific steps to perspective transformation, which include processes of self-examination, exploration of new options, and personal development.

Since its development in 1975, transformative learning theory has evolved to take into account a variety of perspectives and approaches, which provides for a more holistic and integrative understanding of transformative learning (Cranton, 2016; Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Dirkx (2006), for example, proposes imaginative approaches or imaginal methods that consider and engage emotion and affect in transformative learning. According to Dirkx (2001), “the imaginal method seeks a deeper understanding of the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions that are often associated with profoundly meaningful experiences in adult learning” (p. 70). In this light, “journal writing, literature, poetry, art, movies, storytelling, dance, and ritual are specific methods that can be used to help foster the life of the image in our relationships with adult learners” (Dirkx, 2001, p.70). Yorks and Kasl (2006) examine how imaginal and intuitive processes such as artistic engagement, which they refer to as “expressive ways of knowing,” could foster transformative learning and how these processes allow feeling and emotion to arise to consciousness.

One way that adaptive leadership education has fostered transformative learning is through the method of case-in-point teaching, which is used to help people identify key patterns in social systems that “include the role and functions of authority and the challenges to authority; factions within the social group; regulating the heat required to do the work; work avoidance activity; loss and grief; and challenges to the self” (Daloz Parks, 2005, p. 61). In this space, people frequently experience transformation as they learn from both their experiences and the experiences of others. Case-in-point teaching requires people to actively observe, listen, reflect,

and participate in an interactive process of critically examining patterns of behavior and assumptions in their social system and discovering new insights, perspectives, and options for action that could generate adaptive work and foster transformation.

Case-in-point teaching is a powerful method, but it is not the only way in which adaptive leadership has been taught. We and other colleagues in the adaptive leadership community have adjusted and developed the curriculum and ways of teaching the framework to different audiences. Our teaching methods have focused on either the more rational approaches of critical reflection and analysis, the more imaginal and intuitive processes, or a combination of both. Nevertheless, regardless of delivery, the framework itself challenges people to consider alternative perspectives and take action accordingly. As pre-existing assumptions about leadership are challenged and reexamined while new perspectives and options for actions emerge in the social system in which students of adaptive leadership are learning, it may be possible that the students are engaged in transformative learning. According to O’Sullivan (2002), “transformative learning processes are counted as the creative function of the cognitive crisis [where] creativity occurs within a cognitive system when old habitual modes of interpretation become dysfunctional, demanding a shifting of ground or viewpoint” (p. 4). This seems to align very well with the purpose and process in which adaptive leadership is frequently learned and experienced in the classroom.

Applications and Reflections

We, as the facilitators of the workshop and authors of this paper, were both exposed to the adaptive leadership framework as students at the Harvard Kennedy School and then served as Teaching Assistants. Inspired by the framework’s potential to bring about transformative learning in academic and social sector contexts, we each tried applying the framework to our professional work and teaching. However, we also recognized the challenges of teaching the framework in new contexts where the authorizing and cultural environment was not the same as what we had experienced during a semester-long course. We also realized that the intensive case-in-point pedagogy of the Harvard Kennedy School courses required modifications for other learning environments.

Upon graduating from the Kennedy School, April worked for a number of years in the fields of human rights and international development where she applied the framework of adaptive leadership to her work with diverse stakeholders around issues of social justice and criminal justice reform. Following her work as a practitioner, she transitioned to a teaching role as an adjunct lecturer in leadership at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. There, she created and taught “Leadership: Becoming an Agent of Change” to undergraduate students. The course was framed and designed as a learning laboratory that offered an experiential learning space and curriculum that integrated the concepts and analytical framework of adaptive leadership with social entrepreneurship and justice. The challenges she encountered included the limited professional experiences that undergraduate students brought to the course and the cultural context and norms that shaped the way in which students were expected and accustomed to learning. To address these challenges, she integrated team project-based learning to help students create their own leadership experiences to reflect on and learn from. She also tried to combine case-in-point teaching with more structured lectures and assignments, along with films and poetry readings. The course involved regular debriefings on both individual and group bases as well as peer coaching and feedback within and across teams.

Marc sought to apply the adaptive framework to the nonprofit and philanthropic sector where he had previously worked for many years. In collaboration with the B. Robert Williamson Jr. Foundation, he co-facilitated a three-year adaptive leadership initiative, which enabled a cohort of foundation grantees to receive training and apply the framework in addressing their key adaptive challenges. Marc was subsequently invited by one of the program participants, Dr. Linda Lausell Bryant, to integrate adaptive leadership into the curriculum at New York University's Silver School of Social Work. During the 2015-16 academic year, Linda and Marc introduced adaptive leadership concepts into two sections of a graduate social work practice course and a post-graduate executive program in nonprofit management. They also established an adaptive leadership fellowship in which 13 pre-selected students learned about the framework more intensively and directly applied what they learned in the context of their fieldwork placement agencies. Marc is also teaching an online adaptive leadership course as adjunct faculty in the Department of Social Work at California State University East Bay.

Case Example of Evaluation: NYU Adaptive Leadership Fellowship Program

The above mentioned efforts represented new ways to integrate adaptive leadership learning into new consulting and academic contexts. In this sense, our challenge was to *adapt the adaptive framework* from the way we had previously experienced it, attempting to reach new learners in new contexts and experimenting with different formats in different authorizing environments. In the case of the NYU fellowship program, students participated in a series of three seminars and one colloquium in addition to their regular course loads. The program incorporated condensed elements of the Kennedy School course experience such as case-in-point teaching and small group work. However, it had the added benefit of providing students with opportunities for real-time application and peer consultation in the context of their social work field placements.

Evaluations were administered to assess how the program impacted the first cohort of 13 fellows and their field placement organizations. The results showed an upward trajectory in understanding adaptive leadership concepts from the time students were initially exposed to the framework through the completion of these experiences. We asked students to rate their understanding of adaptive leadership concepts before they received introductory lectures in graduate social work practice courses, after receiving those lectures, and following completion of the more intensive fellowship. Their understanding steadily increased from being "poor" prior to exposure to adaptive leadership to "excellent" by the time of fellowship completion.

Evaluations also evidenced benefit beyond the absorption of concepts. When NYU fellowship participants were asked whether they felt more confident having the adaptive framework in their professional toolkit for the future, 85% strongly agreed and 15% agreed. Perhaps even more importantly from a Transformative Learning perspective, participants reported the following shifts in organizational practices and culture as a result of their interventions during the process:

- initiated conversations about challenges that had not been sufficiently addressed before in the agency (75%)
- contributed to a better understanding of client needs and enhanced attention to those needs (67%)
- helped professional colleagues move towards better communication so they could focus more on services (58%)
- contributed to a more collegial or engaged organizational environment (42%)

Notwithstanding the above, there were lessons learned from the NYU experience that can help improve the teaching of adaptive leadership in new contexts. For example, a notable contingent of students expressed that some activities had been too compressed and that they would have benefitted from more time in the fellowship. There was a paradoxical tension between the notion of adaptive challenges, which by definition take time to solve, and the restricted timeframes in which students were asked to run experiments. Although it was emphasized that such exercises were designed to help students dip their toes in the water of adaptive work, the results underscore the limitations of more time-restricted learning methods. Furthermore, this evaluative work has thus far concentrated on conceptual understanding as well as student perceptions of future applicability and organizational benefit. Next steps for future evaluations and follow-up studies of the inaugural cohort could more intentionally include outcomes of transformative learning.

Conclusion

Through our respective experiences in undergraduate and graduate teaching contexts, we have experimented with new tools and formats that can bring this transformative learning approach to new places. Drawing from these tools and our experiences of teaching, we will introduce key concepts from the adaptive leadership framework, followed by experiential application exercises and video clips illustrating an adaptive challenge. Participants will be asked to conduct a case analysis to diagnose an adaptive challenge in a system and generate possible actions for intervention and change. Participants will engage in this exercise in both small groups and as a large group, and discuss how insights from their case work could be applied in their own personal or professional contexts. In the large group analysis session, we will weave in “case-in-point” teaching where the principles of adaptive leadership will be used to analyze the dynamics of an immediate group process. The workshop will conclude with time for participant debriefing and feedback.

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Engaging the Living Edges of Community through Creative Movement and Music

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Abstract: As agents in a troubled world, how can we infuse our actions with more vitality and nurture our capacity as co-creative change agents? We invite you to a playful workshop of experiencing the transformative learning community as a vibrant ecosystem rich in “living edges” and to carry that felt sense into the conference. This workshop is based on a creative modality called Biodanza which deepens connection with self, others, community, and the world through movement, music, and connection. It is also utilized in organizational development. Inspired by systems scientist Fritjof Capra and others, Biodanza is grounded in nature's organizing principles. The presenters regularly utilize this practice in community facilitation and as college instructors.

In this workshop, we will first review the organizing principles of nature as useful design criteria for learning. Participants will then be guided through nature-inspired poetry and movement exercises with music. No dance experience needed!

How can we fully experience the dance of life, engaging our bodies, hearts, and minds? And how can tapping into “living systems awareness” help us feel better prepared as change agents in an increasingly unpredictable world?

Living systems awareness here refers to a deep recognition of being fully alive in this world as a co-creative agent, perceiving the interconnectedness with self, others, community, and all of life. This involves developing capacities of engaging the “living edges” of this world: the multiple boundaries of outer and inner landscapes that mutually influence each other like the living edges between forest and meadow or river and riverbank.

The conference workshop *Engaging the Living Edges of Community through Creative Movement and Music* is based on an experiential approach called Biodanza (International Biocentric Foundation, 2016). Biodanza, which means Dance of Life, integrates music, movement, and authentic interactions to evoke a felt sense of being fully alive in the here-and-now. This modality originated over 40 years ago in Chile and Brazil under the wings of psychologist and anthropologist Rolando Toro and has spread since then to five continents.

Biodanza is an intricate system of movement with music in community that engages the intersections with self, other, and the world by stimulating a heightened sense of direct experience of the here-and-now. There are many components to the Biodanza theoretical model that are aligned with transformative learning theory. Here I touch on two aspects particularly relevant to the conference theme: patterning life's principles, and the concept of direct felt experience or “vivencia.”

Patterning Life's Principles

The Biodanza system is grounded in living systems theory and was particularly inspired by system scholars Maturana, Varela (Maturana and Varela, 1991), and Capra (1996). Through movement in dynamic constellations with self, partners, small groups, the large group, and

exercises that foster a connection with all of life, Biodanza stimulates an awareness of life's pattern language.

Every ecological and social system is based on common organizing patterns, such as networks, cycles, feedback loops, and the capacity to self-organize into something new. These "living systems principles" provide a language of relationships in natural, as well as social systems, and, as such, offer a pattern language for learning, as well. (Capra & Luisi, 2014; O'Sullivan, E. V., & Taylor, M., 2004). According to Volk & Bloom (2007), "metapatterns can serve in the process of learning as templates for understanding systems on a number of different scales, and thus for making connections between these scales (p. 37)." Nature's pattern language can help learners appreciate life's areas of intersections as living edges rich in opportunity for social change.

Table 1 lists the principles of living systems as defined by systems scientist Fritjof Capra. Each of these principles describes an ecological function. At the same time, each of these principles also holds great pattern wisdom when exploring our inner emotional landscapes.

Table 1
Living Systems Principles and Corresponding Felt Sensations







<i>Systems Principles</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Felt sensation and state of awareness</i>
Nested Systems 	Nature is made up of systems that are nested within systems. Each individual system is an integrated whole and—at the same time—part of larger systems. Changes within a system can affect the sustainability of the systems that are nested within it as well as the larger systems in which it exists.	Belonging; feeling part of a larger whole; feeling co-responsible for that which is smaller and larger than us.
Network 	All living things in an ecosystem are interconnected through networks of relationship. They depend on this web of life to survive.	Connecting across difference; learning through diversity; feeling part of the web of life.
Dynamic Balance 	Ecological communities act as feedback loops, so that the community maintains a relatively steady state that also has continual fluctuations. This dynamic balance provides resiliency in the face of ecosystem change.	Feeling seen & heard; compassion; empathy; honesty; transparency.
Cycles 	Members of an ecological community depend on the exchange of resources in continual cycles. Cycles within an ecosystem intersect with larger regional and global cycles.	Feeling attuned to the cycles and seasons of life: active (expressing – creating), resting (reflecting – integrating).

Table 1 (continued)

<i>Systems Principles</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Felt sensation and state of awareness</i>
<p>Flows</p> 	<p>Each organism needs a continual flow of energy to stay alive. The constant flow of energy from the sun to Earth sustains life and drives most ecological cycles.</p>	<p>Feeling open to change and being changed, open to new influences and ideas, and to letting go what is no longer needed.</p>
<p>Development</p> 	<p>All life — from individual organisms to species to ecosystems — changes over time. Individuals develop and learn, species adapt and evolve, and organisms in ecosystems coevolve.</p>	<p>Feeling open to new developments unfolding; appreciating that which was not there before: awe; curiosity, wonder.</p>

Note: From Center for Ecoliteracy. 2011. “Ecological Principles” was originally published by the Center for Ecoliteracy. © Copyright 2004-2011 Center for Ecoliteracy. Images and text in column 2 two reprinted with permission. All rights reserved. For more information visit www.ecoliteracy.org. (Text in column two is from <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/nature-our-teacher/ecological-principles>.)

During a Biodanza session, participants mimic these living systems patterns through a variety of dynamic exercises that are carefully prepared in accordance with life’s flows and rhythms.

Stimulating Direct Felt Experience

There is an energetic quality to any living system that gives it a palpable sensation of aliveness and vibrancy. The quality of direct experience has been called many names in wisdom traditions: innerness (Macy & Brown, 1998), awakened awareness (Ingram, 2008), presence (Senge et al., 2008; Tolle, 2004), and direct experience (Toro, 2002). It has been addressed by ancient wisdom traditions, contemporary spiritual teachers, systems scholars, and scholars of organizational learning and collective consciousness.

In transformative learning theory, the concept of direct felt experience is beginning to receive attention. Yorks and Kasl (2006) developed a conceptual framework on whole-person learning based on a phenomenological understanding of experience. According to a phenomenological perspective (Heron, 1992), experience is the state of being in felt encounter; it is a verb. The experiential way of knowing as defined by Heron underlies all other ways of knowing (the presentational-expressive, propositional-analytical, and practical-skill-based). Yorks and Kasl highlighted the significance of expressive ways of knowing in building a bridge between the experiential and the propositional-analytical ways of knowing.

Our Bodies as Gateways to Living Systems Awareness: A primary vehicle for being in present moment awareness is our body. It is in our bodies that we directly experience life via felt sensations and emotions. It is therefore useful to explore the notion of somatic, or embodied, knowing and learning in the context of accessing direct experience.

The somatic or embodied dimension of knowing and relating in education is only beginning to receive attention in the scholarly literature (Bresler, 2004; Hocking, Haskell, & Linds, 2001; Nagata, 2009; Van Emmel, 2009). Nagata (2009) uses the practice of *body mindfulness* for teaching intercultural communication, fostering awareness of our bodily experiences through both attention and intention.

However, the mind-matter and mind-body split is still deeply engrained in modernity, including education, where the mind has long been privileged and body intelligence long been ignored or suppressed. Yet the concept of cognition has been defined as a process much broader than thinking (Capra, 1996, Maturana and Varela 1991). It involves perception, emotion, and action—the entire process of life. Cognition is rooted in and informed by direct lived experience. The embodied mind *experiences* (as a verb). Attention to somatic experiencing, therefore, needs to be an integral part of any education that seeks to foster the direct experience of living systems awareness.

From a living systems awareness perspective, life is a vibrantly felt experience. Our bodies are our primary access to the felt, visceral experience of life. They are an inner landscape of living systems that entails all meta-patterns of nature. They can be our teachers about the nature of our own experience, and the experience of the group. We experience vitality when there is a bodily felt sensation of aliveness: a tingling in our feet, heart palpating in excitement, a warm feeling of energy permeating through the body, our own bodies as well as the energetic body of the group.

Direct Experience in Biodanza: Direct experience is key in Biodanza (Toro, 2002). At the heart of this movement modality lies the *vivencia*, a Spanish word that has no literal translation in English but describes a quality of intensely lived and felt direct experience. Toro described the nature and effects of *vivencias* as follows.

Like water from a spring, *vivencias* surge spontaneously and freshly; they possess an original, primal quality and have the strength of the ‘real’ that comprises the whole body. *Vivencias* are not controlled by conscious awareness; they can be evoked but not directed by will. (Toro, 2002, p. 4)

Biodanza distinguishes five categories or lines of *vivencia*: vitality, creativity, affectivity, sensuality, and transcendence. It seeks to strengthen and integrate these five lines through carefully designed, progressively paced sequences of guided, creative, relational, nonverbal exercises done with specifically selected pieces of music, in an environment of trust and tenderness. Biodanza sessions (also called *vivencias*) are carefully designed in an organic energy curve of physical activation, rest/regression, and reactivation, which allows for a gradual opening to intense sensations of aliveness.

Applications in Transformative Learning

An organizational development approach Biocentric Systems in Organizations (2016), based on the Biodanza system, is being utilized in Europe, Latin America, and Australia to help organizations become more fully aligned with their inherent potential as living-learning systems and vibrant communities of practice. In addition, Biodanza has influenced education in many countries, most notably Italy, where “biocentric education” (Biocentric Education, 2016) is practiced in several K-12 schools.

As a college instructor, I regularly use components of this practice in my systems thinking course in the Masters of Leadership program at St. Mary’s college. I have also

facilitated several workshops through the International Society for the Systems Sciences using this approach. I noticed how the felt experience of the workshops permeated the whole conference and how they seemed to grant participants permission to be more playful and engage multiple ways of knowing in ways that the conference had not had a history to stimulate. I look forward to exploring new edges and intersections where this modality could enrich different transformative learning contexts.

For me personally, Biodanza has been a transformative journey in many ways and has had a deep impact on my daily life in my fifteen years of practicing this modality. As a result of immersing myself in nature's pattern language in this highly experiential way, I have become a bit more graceful in how I dance with life, particularly with unexpected turns of events and situations or people that are edges for me. I have learned to flow through life with more ease, to welcome change as an opportunity, and to more easily let go of patterns that no longer serve me. I have also come to appreciate and taste the simple joys of life more intensely.

An Invitation to Experience Biodanza at the Conference

At this conference, this workshop is an invitation to participate in a playful hour of experiencing the transformative learning community as an adaptive and vibrant ecosystem rich in intersections of living edges.

We will first review the main organizing principles of nature by which this movement modality was influenced. Participants will then be guided through a sequence of movement exercises with music that are directly inspired by nature's rich intersections, with the intention to nurture deeper awareness of self, each other, community, and the world as a direct felt experience in the present moment. No dance or prior movement experience is necessary. No special clothing or shoes. This is an opportunity to playfully experience the transformative learning community as a vibrant, highly interconnected ecosystem and carry that felt sense to the conference as a whole.

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Learning at the Intersections of Identity, Courage and Power: The Promise of Intersectionality as Transformative

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Abstract: This article, *Learning at the intersections of identity, courage and power: The promise of intersectionality as transformative*, explores multiple intersections examined in two same-sex leadership development programs. These programs led by Fielding Graduate University PhD students, Jo Ann Morris and Pete Saunders, began as an exploration and attempt to transform relationships with “the other”. The authors witnessed evidence of the promise of intersectionality as transformative from their respective programs, Women of Different Tribes and Braveheart Men’s Retreat, respectively. This paper and its resultant workshop session is their attempt to further explore this promise. The benefits of Morris and Saunders’ experience of each other at the intersection of race, class, gender, profession, and age instigated the development of the workshop developed for the XII International Transformative Learning Conference (ITLC), the ideas contained in this article and potential future research.

What if engaging each other at the most important intersections of our identities held the promise of transformative learning? This would suggest that intersectionality is about more than social identities and marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989). And what if transformative learning and interrelatedness are the gateways to developing a different framework of interacting with otherness? We demonstrate this promise by working at the intersectionalities of adult learners’ perceptions of their relationship with the “other” at the intersections born of their work, their identity, and their expressions of power and courage. Critics of intersectionality argue that identity politics encourages separation and victimhood (Collins & Bilge, 2016). We assert that the promise of intersectionality is interrelatedness as an outcome of the courage to identify, examine, and acknowledge one’s multiple identities.

Traditionally, social identities and their associated politics are marginalized in various social contexts (Adams et al, 2013). This makes marginalization a problem to be solved because of the negative impacts of racism, classism, sexism, religious intolerance and homophobia, as observed in Women of Different Tribes and Braveheart Men’s Retreat. An attempt to solve this problem gave birth to intersectionality as a framework (Crenshaw, 1991). We suggest that intersectionality is a catalyst for transformative learning experiences.

Intersectionality and transformative learning

Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw first coined the term intersectionality theory in 1989 (Crenshaw, 1989). Before Crenshaw articulated this theory, people were living its reality in the 1960s and 70s (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Social activism during that period fertilized the development of intersectional analysis by African American women (Collins & Bilge, 2016).

These women expressed their analysis through essays, poetry, art, and other creative works. Crenshaw argued that being a black woman cannot be understood fully in terms of being black and of being a woman, but must include the intersections, which frequently reinforce each other (Crenshaw, 1991). According to Crenshaw an individual's social identities overlap and intersect on multiple levels simultaneously.

When a person understands and embraces their own multiple identities it changes how they relate to others. Ferdman (2014) posits interrelatedness is heightened when we are "able to connect to and integrate the various components of our identities" (p. 96). As a result, we experience ourselves more fully and help others do the same. We concur with Ferdman's observation. Our practitioner experience designing programs that invite participants to examine interrelatedness, and to transfigure their own assumptions and beliefs about themselves and others potentially create disorienting dilemmas.

Transformative learning and disorienting dilemmas

The Transformative Learning Centre defines transformative learning as "a deep, structural shift of basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions" (as cited in Kitchenham, 2008). Mezirow and Associates (2000) define transformative learning as "the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind and mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (p. 8). This paper focuses on disorienting dilemmas as stimulus for creating and deepening participants' awareness of intersectionality.

A disorienting dilemma, as explained by Mezirow (2000), is an incident or experience outside a person's control that triggers transformation. Disorienting dilemmas create an experience of disequilibrium of one's assumptions and beliefs. Roberts (2012) asserts that disorienting dilemmas surface a full range of emotions and trigger critical reflection that can result in sadness about what they believed about themselves and others, even as they gain new perspectives. We observe from our work that change in perspective and active engagement with our own and others' intersectionality supports interrelatedness and deeper understanding. One prominent question is whether or not interrelatedness can be sustained to produce transformation. One of the ways we have engaged this question is through our respective work with Women of Different Tribes (WODT) and the Braveheart Men's Retreat (BMR). In the following section we describe a shared learning experience derived from the intersections of identity, power and courage as transformative. Next, we summarize our practitioner work with BMR and WODT.

Intersectionality lived as student-scholars

We started our studies in Human and Organizational Development at Fielding Graduate University in Fall 2014. Fielding emphasizes learning in community and individualized learning. We engage in small group learning that exposes us to the intersectionality of social identities. It is not uncommon to be in a group with colleagues of a different race, class, country of origin, sexual orientation, and age. This level of exposure and interaction are not uncommon in today's learning environments. However, Fielding invites us to critically reflect on these social identity differences. Critical reflection and engaging each other at the intersectionality of our identities, sometimes produce disorientation and conflict (Brookfield, 2005; Crenshaw, 1991). The transformative learning properties of Fielding's program impact us as learners and in our work.

Our interest in collaborating on this TL conference paper and workshop stems from how our different social identities have served our learning and its application; the promise we experience from intersectionality. We choose to make our identities visible to help you see the promise of intersectionality as transformative.

Jo Ann is a mixed race Black feminist heterosexual woman and parent who is a practicing Buddhist from the U.S. She was raised upper middle-class. Jo Ann's corporate business leader career spans technology and organization development for 40+ years. Jo Ann co-founded and sold her partnership in a small niche consulting business, White Men as Full Diversity Partners. Executive coaching and organization development consulting make up her current practice. Pete is a Black heterosexual Christian man and parent from Jamaica. He was raised lower class. He is pro-feminist small business owner and a coach for 5+ years. Our identities play out over multiple contexts: students, parents, spiritual practitioners, business owners, and consultants. Our examination of our extreme differences operates within values that highlight and transcend those differences simultaneously. These values include courageous honesty, vulnerability, the power of personal autonomy, and respect for our differing ontological and epistemological perspectives. We draw on an experience from our time together as students that illuminates a moment where the intersection of power and courage was sparked from a learning interaction.

During a small group student dialogue, I felt that there was tension between Jo Ann and another student. I signaled the professor for a break to prevent what I thought would be an escalation of the situation and tension between Jo Ann and the other student. During the break, Jo Ann discovered my decision to end her conversation. She confronted me regarding my decision made for her without her concurrence. Jo Ann was direct with me. She expressed irritation over my use of power to serve what she saw as my discomfort with tension.

We manifest power relations in our interactions and across the contexts within which we interact. There is a level of compassion that comes from knowing each other at our intersections that has resulted in making us more trustworthy as scholar-practitioners and as human beings; the promise of intersectionality.

Power is a much talked about concept in social, and particularly gender, relations (McDowell, 2004). For example, many scholars agree that there is a difference in how men and women relate to power (Anderson, 2009; Johnson, 2006; Gilligan, 1993). Power is inherent in every interaction. Foucault reminds us "...[that] power relations are manifested in all adult educational interactions" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 129). There is power at the intersection of our identities. And we find that courage is necessary to reap its potential benefits. In Jo Ann's experience I overrode her ability to make her own decision about whether or not to continue a tension-filled interaction. Each of us, at our own intersection of power and courage described a very different experience of the same situation.

My exchange with Jo Ann made me aware of my frame of reference that tension potentially leads to something dangerous. Becoming aware of how I framed tension was transformative and as Illeris (2014) contends, all transformative learning is about identity development. BMR and WODT participant stories also illustrate our discoveries about the importance of the use of courage at the intersections of identity and power. It is the combination of our identities and where they intersect that allows us to see the promise of

intersectionality as transformative. We continue to question the impact of the interplay of identity, courage and power to support transformation through intersectionality.

Our studies at Fielding introduced us to TL theory and methodologies and in the process discovered our use of TL before coming to Fielding. Melissa Peet's 2014 keynote at the X Transformative Learning Conference (Transformative Learning, n.d.) suggests that students and faculty harbor embodied and implicit knowledge of which they are unaware. When we assess our work with adult learners it is clear that implicit knowledge guided our early application of TL theory and methodologies before we knew TL as a field of explicit knowledge.

One methodological assumption we make is dialogue can help learners find in each other the means to liberate themselves from structures that limit their power and connection (Freire, 2000). Mezirow (2000) suggests adult educators must invent protected and socially democratic learning environments unhindered by traditional power relationships between educators and students. Creating such an environment sets the stage for transformative learning in Mezirow's viewpoint. WODT and BMR are two such environments.

Women of Different Tribes: What Unites Us and What Divides Us

WODT is a 3 ½ day / 3 night leadership development program offered by Integral Coaching LLC. The WODT approach rests on a belief in women's ability to identify and explore the effects of privilege and power on each other at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender-identity, class, sexual orientation and hierarchal position within organizations. Three assumptions operate in the background of WODT curriculum and methodology that serve to develop more socially conscious leaders. They are: (a) Non- white women most often locate their experiences of inequity and oppression at the intersection of race, class and gender, (b) White women most often locate their experiences of inequity in gender oppression and are unaware that they lead racialized lives, and (c) trusted alliances between women of color and white women are possible, take work, patience, courageous honesty, love and compassion.

Feminist standpoint theory and transformative learning are program cornerstones. WODT facilitators recognize that their standpoints as well as those of participants are limited. Collins (1997) defines standpoint theory "...as an interpretive framework dedicated to explicating how knowledge remains central to maintaining and changing unjust systems of power." Experiential learning (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007) is employed to prompt critical reflection on women's attitudes and behaviors toward women at work and the short and long term effects of their behavior toward one another. Curriculum activities engage participants in reflection on each other's different life experiences at work often resulting in unexpected disorienting dilemmas. The systemic devaluing of women through the continuing effects of patriarchy within business environments is assessed along with varying forms of women's strategies to mitigate these effects.

Women interrupt devaluing interactions between them during the program and report a new or renewed sense of power to influence substantive change in their organizations upon their return. A WODT alum says of her experience, "This program took us past a societal myth of women as a monolith of sameness and delved deeply into the core of female leadership. It was a joy to recognize and acknowledge our differences, to remove the stereotypical and get down to honest and real dialogue. Women from across the organizational spectrum and a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds were compelled to deal with some hard realities. The multiple modalities used so skillfully guided me to places I didn't expect. I accessed feeling and memories

I had hidden, not acknowledged, set aside and/or conveniently forgotten. I was afforded the opportunity - no really compelled - to discard old paradigms that have served to stifle and inhibit real partnership and to interrupt the accompanying behaviors. It was work and it was well worth it." This participant's experience illustrates Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality and Mezirow's (2000) description of shifts in frames of reference.

The Braveheart Men's Retreat

The Braveheart Men's Retreat is a 3 day / 3 night program offered by the Center on Inclusion and Masculinities. The Center on Inclusion and Masculinities was established to provide inclusive leadership development for men. A primary objective is to deconstruct masculinity and promote the practice of inclusion by men. One of the underlying assumptions at BMR is that focusing solely on what distinguishes us from the other blinds us from our connectedness, resulting in exclusionary and oppressive practices. At BMR, we expose men to multiple masculinities and invite them to express their authentic masculine. This approach also supports men with becoming inclusive leaders at home, work, and in their communities.

The men develop competency in inclusive leadership from their engagement with the "other". For some men, the "other" is Black, White, gay, straight, transgender, Christian, Muslim, wealthy, and materially disadvantaged. Some of our gay participants report that the retreat experience was the first time they felt included, loved, and respected by straight men. Similarly, straight participants admit to never imagining that being with gay men could be as comfortable, intimate, and fun an experience. This experience facilitates a shift to inclusive masculinity, which is one of the theories that undergirds BMR.

Anderson (2009), an American sociologist and Professor of Masculinities, Sexualities and Sport at the University of Winchester in England, first proposed the inclusive masculinity theory. Anderson defined "inclusive masculinity" as one in which heterosexual men demonstrate emotional and physical homosocial proximity (Anderson, 2009). He claimed that his theory explains the gradually diminishing "homophobia," or a culture of homophobia, femphobia, and compulsory heterosexuality (Anderson, 2009).

Inclusive masculinity is both a theory and a practice. As a practice, it requires a shift in our attitudes and behaviors towards the other, as well as our assumptions and beliefs. The men who attend BMR discover through critical and healthy engagement with each other that they are also "the other". I describe this process as transformative because it results in new frames of reference and ways of being and acting that were previously unavailable (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). Frames of reference are networks of unexamined ideas, beliefs, biases, prejudices, and social and cultural embeddedness (Adams, Blumenfeld, Castaneda, Hackman, Peters, & Zuniga, 2013; Mezirow & Associates, 2000). The practice of inclusive masculinities highlights engaging at the intersections of our social identities. Braveheart, in its process, engages men as they grapple with deconstructing their learned masculinity and assumptions and beliefs about "otherness". This process creates a shift in how the men relate to themselves and others.

Conclusion

We invite readers to consider that there is power in "otherness". We suggest that active engagement with otherness and intersectionality cultivates use of personal power and courage. Both are needed to examine otherness from a framework of hopefulness rather than marginalization. Our two programs, Women of Different Tribes and Braveheart Men's Retreat

offer disorienting dilemmas that invite participants to reframe their assumptions and beliefs about "otherness." In lieu of research, it is our opinion that use of intersectionality in varying contexts produces many disorienting dilemmas. Our scholar-practitioner experience prompts us to question how Mezirow's concept of disorienting dilemma can be expanded to initiate transformative learning through intersectionality.

The ITLC workshop is a step in the direction of formulating future questions and research on the promise of intersectionality. Anecdotal evidence from our respective programs point to a symbiosis between transformative learning and intersectionality. We suggest the promise of intersectionality as transformative lies beyond marginalization. The outcome of both BMR and WODT are ripe for research about the promise of intersectionality as transformative. Participants' active engagement in the ITLC workshop can assist their learning after the conference. With your help we hope to fulfill the promise of intersectionality as transformative through learning together.

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Transcending and Transforming University and Community Boundaries: Using Collage to Explore the Edges and Beyond

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Abstract: Collage is a creative process that can lead to transformation as the process involves bringing together disparate parts to make a more integrated whole. We seek to examine the hegemonic assumptions and the relationship between community and academic institutions in the creation of knowledge through the metaphor and creation of collage. Participants will engage in storytelling and collage making as we explore this phenomenon.

It is this active boundary [the edge], where previously disassociated material is amalgamated, that gives collage its frisson, its efficacy as a technique. Any artist using collage, be it found film footage or magazine clippings for example, is confronted with the discreet point at which two or more previously distinct bodies collide, and here a decision is made and difference is expressed. Thus, what unifies all of these practices is not just the literal and metaphorical gluing together of things; it is the functions, the transformations performed at the edge that gain significance.

Ian Monroe “Where does one thing end and the next begin?”

Introduction

The purpose of this experiential workshop is to explore the transformative potential of collage as both a metaphor and practice that can bring divergent perspectives together. As the quote above attests, collage is a creative process that can lead to transformation by bringing together disparate parts to create new meaning, and a more integrated whole, which, as Mezirow (2009) has argued, leads to more inclusive frames of reference. The term collage (derived from the French verb ‘coller’ meaning to glue) while practiced for thousands of years, is usually associated with modern approaches to visual art, such as the work of Picasso, where different forms are assembled together creating a new whole.

As university professors in Canada and the U.S. we have been experimenting with a wide variety of arts-based participatory activities in our teaching and research and have noted their potential to create spaces where new understandings, including transformative learning, can take place (Butterwick & Roy, 2016; Lawrence, 2014). One area of practice that has engaged our recent energies is community-university engagement (CUE), particularly how knowledge is constructed and recognized as a result of these relationships. When searching for a way to address the conference theme of engaging at the intersections, the idea of creating collages as a visual and tactile metaphor for examining the boundaries of knowledge construction between the university and the community emerged. Ledwith and Springett (2010) strongly advocate the role of the arts in promoting community engagement and participatory practice due to the embodied nature of most art forms. “We can know something intellectually, but need to feel it and believe it in order to live it.” p.81 We are using collage as a way to help participants explore the possibilities of engagement and boundary spanning in embodied ways.

We are curious as to how the art and practice of making collage-- bringing together the edges of two distinct bodies or artefacts--can shed light on how to approach CUE such that boundaries are crossed and knowledge is co-constructed. Can collage as practice and metaphor interrupt notions of knowledge creation that are hierarchized, positioning academic institutions in more valued positions than the communities they serve? We seek to explore this question.

We begin with an exploration of CUE before turning to a brief discussion of transformative learning and the value of artistic and aesthetic practices including collage. The remainder of the paper is organized as a dialogue.

Community University Engagement

CUE has been the focus of much discussion within higher education institutions in the US and in Canada. Central to this discourse are questions about the role and responsibility of higher education institutions in addressing wider social problems that exists within the communities they serve. For Boyer (1996), a key instigator of these conversations, CUE is about “connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers and to our cities...” (p. 32) which requires the development of a new climate of higher education “in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other, helping to enlarge what anthropologist Clifford Geertz describes as the universe of human discourse and enriching the quality of life for all of us”. (p. 33)

Under the broader category of CUE, there are numerous activities that involve partnerships and relationships between higher education and community, including community service learning (CSL) community-based experiential learning (CBEL), and community-based participatory research (CBPR). Unfortunately, many of these partnerships assume a charity-based approach, where the university is positioned in a helping role, which maintains relationships of inequality informed by a deficit orientation to community. Many scholars have argued for an alternative orientation, one focused on social justice (e.g. Verjee, 2010). As Ledwith and Springett (2010 p. 15) note, “if participatory approaches to practice are to justify a position on social justice, environmental sustainability and collective well-being, then participation has to be understood as a transformative not ameliorative concept.”

CUE and CSL, or CBEL are gaining popularity in many colleges and universities. While these programs are purported to be mutually beneficial to both the students doing the “service” and the communities they serve, in much of the literature, the question of whose interests and voice are being represented remains a key concern. (McCrickard, 2011). By shifting the language from service to engagement informed by notions of mutuality and shared decisions making, we can begin to blur the boundaries and dispel the myth that knowledge resides exclusively in the hallowed halls of academia.

Within dominant discourses of CUE and CBPR, universities are positioned as the legitimate site of knowledge production and communities are seen as the recipients of such knowledge. Challenging this hierarchized approach to knowledge creation and to CUE, Weerts and Sandmann (2008, p. 74) call for an alternative and more reciprocal model of engagement. “The new philosophy emphasizes a shift away from an expert model of delivering university knowledge to the public and toward a more collaborative model in which community partners play a significant role in creating and sharing knowledge to the mutual benefit of institutions and society.” The power of creative processes, such as collage, to enable new perspectives to emerge

offers an opportunity to explore an alternative approach, one that has potential for transformative learning to take place.

Transformative Learning Through Collage and Arts-based Activities

Mezirow (2009) described transformative learning as a process of deconstructing assumptions and distorted belief systems and replacing them with more inclusive perspectives. Arts-based approaches to transformative learning can wake us up out of complacency and provide entry points into difficult conversations (Lawrence, 2012; Butterwick & Lawrence, 2009). Collage as a particular artistic practice, appears to have transformational potential. Vaughn (2005) described collage as a research method where displaced objects placed in new locations offered opportunities for more divergent thinking. Larson (2010) used collage as a way to construct knowledge by moving pieces around and making new connections. Simpson (2009) used collage with people who experienced transformation through artistic expression after experiencing a traumatic event. Collage helped people to tap into their unconscious through symbol and metaphor (Dirkx, 2012).

In what follows, we engage in a dialogue about these ideas.

Dialogue: Transforming Boundaries

Disrupting the Hegemony of Knowledge Creation

Randee: Shauna, I understand that your university has been involved with a number of initiatives in relation to CUE and CBEL, right?

Shauna: That's true. UBC now has the Centre for Community-Engaged Experiential Learning (CBEL), which is a more recent initiative (see <http://students.ubc.ca/about/centre-community-engaged-learning>), but CUE began in 1999 with the opening of the Learning Exchange (<http://learningexchange.ubc.ca/>) which is located in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver. The DTES has a long and complex history; it is often associated with poverty and "inner city" problems. The LE assists UBC students, faculty and others who want to connect with the DTES residents using an asset-based approach that recognizes the community's assets and its various forms of capital, a counter-hegemonic approach that challenges the deficit view many outsiders have about this part of the city. Many new and wonderful projects have arisen as a result; the community is in many instances the teacher and knowledge holder. One example is the Binner's Project which involves residents who make their living collecting recyclable containers from refuse receptacles or bins. Through support from the LE, they have become a collective group and have undertaken a study grounded in their everyday lives including a review of relevant municipal policy and recommendations for change. The Binner's project, in my view, exemplifies an alternative to the one-way, charity and deficit approaches CUE.

In your work across various universities what has been your experience with these kinds of two-way engagements?

Randee: When I was with Northern Illinois University I worked with the Bottom Up Project under the direction of Phyllis Cunningham. The goal of the project was to create leadership development in the poorest communities of south Chicago. The particular project I was involved in was at Lowden Homes, a low-income housing

development. As we sat with the Lowden residents, we listened to their concerns. The main concerns were about safety. The doors to their apartments were flimsy and easy to break into. Additionally, the units were infested with roaches and rodents and they were worried for the safety of their children. It was important to find ways to minimize the hierarchy. I was a white woman. Most of the residents were African American. I was university educated and of a higher economic class. Using my first name was important. I was Randee, not Dr. Lawrence. I shared that I was also a parent and let them get to know me. We decided that installing safety doors with strong locks on the apartments would be a good first step. While the university people acted as guides and consultants, it was the residents that took the lead in researching the different options for doors and coming up ways to get the community to fund them. The goal was to empower the residents to solve their own problems rather than create dependency on the university.

As we discussed above, it is important to create egalitarian partnerships in these initiatives. How would you describe the partnership in the Learning Exchange? How are the interests of the community being addressed?

Shauna: The partnerships developed at the LE have grown quite organically. I think it was central that the LE, which is located in the DTES neighborhood, and has an open door policy in which residents can come in and just have a coffee or use the computers that are there for as long as they like. Some have eventually become more regular attendees and staff have developed relationships that have grown into partnerships, moving in a very gentle way, all the while cognizant of how the residents of the DTES have been inundated with academics wanting to do research ‘on’ them, not ‘with’ them, so there is understandably a lot of mistrust of university intentions.

Randee: Building trust is so important. Many communities have been approached in the past from the charity-based methods we have discussed. Getting to know each other in our shared humanity seems to be the key.

Artistic Expression and Transformative Learning

Randee: We’ve both written about the transformative potential of the arts in learning. For example, I have discussed how both creating art and witnessing art created by others can be transformative because it gets us “out of our heads” and into our affective and embodied selves (Lawrence, 2012) which disrupts traditional assumptions of how knowledge is constructed. I tend to agree with Dirkx (2012) and others who challenge Mezirow’s overly rational views of transformative learning. The arts have the power to evoke emotion and imagination and provoke us out of complacency to consider alternative realities. The arts can awaken passion and when practiced in community settings can lead to social justice.

Can you talk about some of your favorite examples of transformation through the arts from your recent book, *Working the margins of community-based adult learning* (Butterwick and Roy, 2016)?

Shauna: I’ve found much inspiration from each chapter (even writing my own was helpful as I gained some new perspective). For example one of the stories is about the creation of a puppet show in a prison. The Gordon Head Prison near Victoria on Vancouver Island has for 20 years, been running a theatre company called WHoS (William Head on Stage: <http://whonstage.weebly.com/>). Despite the constrained

context within which outside artists had to work, a space was created and in that space, inmates came forward (very cautiously at first) and became engaged with creating and using the puppets which became animated and real and vehicles for the inmates' voices. The stories and scenes they created humanized the prisoners and showed both the inmates and the audience (outsiders as well as prison inmates and staff), that they were much more than men in prison with criminal records. Through the puppets, stories were told of their childhoods and of their hopes and dreams. The puppets broke down the barriers between the performers and the audience. The risks these inmates took were significant, but somehow, through puppets and the creative process, they took the leap, as did the audience.

Randee: This is powerful. Puppets provided a creative outlet to tell their stories but it was also less threatening than telling the stories outright. They could let the puppets talk for them. In doing so they were able to share much more than they might have if they had just been sitting around talking.

What does Collage have to do with it?

Shauna: A few years ago, I took a mixed media collage course at college night school program; I had never taken an art class before and the instructor was welcoming and supportive. She began by telling us we all had two key skills required --we knew how to glue and we had our imaginations. I jumped into the process creating my first collage, which I did not like one bit. My wonderful teacher taught me to look at what I'd created differently; she turned my picture on its side, then upside down and then used a small frame that she laid down on different parts of my creation. Suddenly things looked very different and I started to see things that drew me in, that I had missed before.

Randee: I've had similar experiences with experiential painting (Lawrence, 2005). We paint spontaneously with no preplanned agenda, defocusing on outcomes. It is all about the process and surfacing unconscious ideas and emotions. We share our work in a group and others often notice things I didn't see at first. We turn our paintings upside down or sideways and new stories begin to take shape.

While painting can be a powerful tool it is often intimidating to adults who have had negative childhood experiences with art or feel making art is only for a chosen few who identify as artists. I prefer to use collage with adult students because it is much less threatening. Anyone can do it. Have you used collage with students? What has your experience been like?

Shauna: I also find collage to be a much less threatening creative process and when I use collage in my classes, there is generally much enthusiasm. The students find that tearing; cutting and gluing are things they can do. There is often a lovely energy as they find images from old magazines and glue them together to create something meaningful to them; often they talk to each other in the process so there is a kind of creative collaboration. I always join my students in these activities and also create something. I think collage is powerful because it's less risky and it's fun. There is a kind of democracy in collage as participants choose the images or items they want and place them where they want. There are no rules and our non-rational mind is engaged. Aspects of ourselves, ideas, stories and memories, often not visible to others and even to us, begin to emerge. I have witnessed a kind of radical-co-presence through these arts-based activities. Collage often facilitates heartfelt and meaningful conversations.

We live in a consumer-oriented world and through art-making, everyone is a creator, a producer and art can be a space for us to become active agents for change.

Randee: I agree. That's why I resonate so much with our opening quote. Collage is a great way to experiment with boundary crossing. When we take seemingly unrelated objects or ideas and juxtapose them alongside each other we can literally see new relationships appear before our eyes. What you said about our non-rational selves being engaged is important as most academic work is dominated by the rational. We hold fast to our ideas and perspectives and are often reluctant to hear divergent views. Collage puts these ideas right out there in front of us. We can't ignore them.

Mutuality and Convergence

Randee: Shauna, what do you think might happen when we use collage to explore university/community boundaries?

Shauna: I think through collage we can engage with visuals and textures of different kinds and bring them together, turn the picture on its side, zero in on a specific part, and so on to take a different view. I'm excited to see what happens in this workshop when participants select images associated with university and those with community, juxtapose them and create a new image, noticing their feelings and thoughts as they do that.

Randee: Collage is an embodied, affective and creative way to tap into our unconscious knowledge. We can start with a dialogue of university/community boundaries and how knowledge is constructed and shared however I sense that conversation may be limited to what we know in our rational mind. Collage offers a way to literally see new possibilities as they form, leading to a deeper dialogue and greater understanding.

Conclusion

While writing this paper and engaging in dialogue to further explore the potential of collage as an embodied art form to transcend and transform university and community boundaries, new ideas emerged. The very process of listening to one another's ideas triggered new thoughts and helped us to make new connections. Creating collage as an individual can generate new insights, as images appear that were outside of one's conscious awareness. Creating and sharing collages in a group can expand the synergistic and transformative potential. That is our hope.

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The Experience of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry: Intersections Between Transformation and Reflection

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Abstract: We would like to propose an experiential workshop modeled on Matthew Lipman's (2003) community of philosophical inquiry (COPI), where participants will have a reflective experience of an encounter with the "other", engaging with differences within a dialogic space constructed according to a specific pedagogical matrix.

The workshop will be facilitated by an experienced Teacher Educator, certified by the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.

The Community of Philosophical Inquiry

Philosophical inquiry, according to the model defined by Lipman (1988, 2003) and implemented in the long established and widespread experience of Philosophy for Children [P4C], is a kind of inquiry which is focused on the exploration of both the *sense* and the *meaning* of human experiences, and is triggered by problems regarding the aims, the origins, the relations, the value of things in human life. For these reasons its nature and purpose is not explicatory (like in scientific inquiry) but critical, inquisitive and deliberative.

Its goal is not to explain and order the phenomena constituting human experience, but to relate them within a structure of shared meanings; to explore them in depth, taking into account their complexity and variability; to connect them to human agency and conduct. For these reasons, it requires a particular epistemic position (critical, problematic, reflective) starting from *the inside* of human experience, in order to broaden its range and make it more and more meaningful, significant and powerful both for individuals and communities.

Philosophical inquiry, indeed, is constructed and developed within a community of individuals, which grows up as an individual itself, and passes through different growing phases, becoming more and more autonomous, self-correcting, self-effacing through a continuous reflective process. From our point of view, the community of philosophical inquiry (COPI) - which is an educational space in presence characterized by a specific aim and structure which differentiate it from the community of practice theorized by Wenger (1999) and from the virtual community of inquiry theorized by Aykol and Garrison (2013) - is a multidisciplinary intersection that can activate critical thinking processes in all participants (interpreted by combining Lipman's and Mezirow's views). This possibility of critical reflection is boosted through education for critical thinking in Lipman's sense. According to Lipman (1988), critical thinking is a "skillful responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment," understanding judgment as "a determination of thinking, of speech, of action or of creation." Critical thinking "relies on criteria, is selfcorrecting and is sensitive to context" which means that it refers to assumptions, conventions, goals, norms, laws, procedures, principles, requirements, rules, specifications and standards in order to orient and assess our thinking, but it is always open to selfcorrection, taking into account the different contexts of reference.

In this sense, Lipman's critical thinking can be considered as the basis of what Mezirow (1990) indicates as "critical reflection," understood as the process which occurs when we analyze and challenge the validity of our presuppositions and assess the appropriateness of our knowledge, understanding, and beliefs in given contexts.

Critical reflection determines a "perspective transformation" which is "the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting on these new understandings" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14). The "community of inquiry" conceptual frame emphasizes the importance of genuine and open dialogue that fosters innate curiosity and the ability for individuals to question and think for themselves (Lipman, 1991).

The CoPI Workshop

Our point is that the participation into a "community of philosophical inquiry" is a meaning making experience grounded on a reflective use of critical thinking and this makes it a powerful device to activate transformative learning processes. It can, indeed, open up a shared space within which individuals have the opportunity to reflect critically on their own assumptions and beliefs and, through a process of awareness, construct, validate and reformulate the meanings of their own experiences.

Within a process of philosophical inquiry the participants are challenged to justify their own ideas and positions and to give reasons for them. This leads them to explore the implicit grounds of their worldview and therefore to develop a new understanding based on the possibility of reconstructing the meanings used as a frame of reference for their own actions and thinking, according to a philosophical framework.

The process of inquiry is modeled on Dewey's theory of inquiry (1938), which always starts with a doubt or a perplexity (assimilated to a "disorienting dilemma") that challenges individuals to try to find a possible answer through a process of problematization, investigation, reconstruction, and validation of their own hypotheses and premises (Kennedy, 2012) through the use of philosophical tools and methods (such as questioning, argumentation, judgment construction and challenge, hermeneutical circle...).

Indeed, the CoPI is a space of experience and reflective practice in which the development of new meanings happens through philosophical dialogue and the negotiation of meanings within a group of individuals starting from an "undetermined" stimulus (a narrative text) which triggers a process of philosophical inquiry.

At an early stage the process is facilitated by an experienced "facilitator" who supports the unfolding of the inquiry process with open questions, activities and interventions aimed at clarifying and deepening the understanding of the community in search for new meanings through the co-construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, of ideas, knowledge and world views, which necessarily passes through the revision of one's own meaning schemes and perspectives.

At a mature stage the CoPI internalizes and acts the facilitator's role.

The narrative texts used to trigger the inquiry will be extracted from a curriculum composed of novels and handbooks developed within an European funded project, Philosophical Enquiry Advancing Cosmopolitan Engagement (Striano, Camhy, Garcia Moriyon, Glaser,

Oliverio, 2013) aimed at building up of a new grammar of thought based on a socio-scientific “rationality” which helps us in the “acknowledgment of the otherness“ of “those who are culturally different“, “the future“, “nature“, “the object“ and “other rationalities”(Beck, 2006).

The development of a cosmopolitan frame of mind, where cosmopolitanism works both as a method (Delanty,2006) as well as an attitude (Hansen, 2013) can help us in moving towards a matching of our meaning perspectives with the coordinates of our experiential spaces, through a transformation of our meaning perspectives. This creates a place for transformative learning, suitable for developing that cosmopolitan perspective which is necessary to engage with contemporary experiential spaces.

This goal is consistent with Mezirow’s (2000) idea of an adult education that must “help adults realize their potential to become more liberated, socially responsible, and autonomous learners” (p. 30), who can think critically and dialogically about their participation in their social context, despite the fact that we are all captives of inescapable and invisible “meaning perspectives” or “frames of reference” that shape our unquestioned assumptions about ourselves and the world (p. 16).

Exploring the Transformative Impact of the CoPI Workshop

In a certain vein, transformative learning can be considered epistemologically an Adult Education philosophy for its interconnection with philosophical thinking (Mezirow 1991, p. 198-201; 2000), emphasizing the role of Adult Education in the cultivation of critical reflection through dialogue and self-reflective learning (Mezirow, 1990; 1991; 2000). Transformative Learning (TL) encompasses the liberation of adults from forms of thinking that trap them in dysfunctional stereotypes and entrenched habits of expectation. Our hypothesis is that the process of helping learners becomes more critically reflective on their assumptions and those of others, more fully and freely engaged in discourse, and more effective in their reflective judgments (which is part of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry by Lipman) is crucial also for transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 30-31).

The exchange and the encounter with the “other” involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to find reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 7-8). Discourse, in the context of Transformation Theory, is that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and “assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief. This involves assessing reasons advanced by weighing the supporting evidence and arguments and by examining alternative perspectives” (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 10-11).

The reflective dialogue through critical assessment aims at mutual comprehension and consent in conditions of freedom and equality (Mezirow, 2000; 2009). Under this perspective, facilitators of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry are cultural activists, committed to broadening practices and systems that enhance free and active participation of adult learners in dialogue and in transformative learning (Mezirow (2000, p. 30). They try to engage students in a dialogue and to ask questions that provoke the most possible thoughtful conversation. “In communicative learning, we determine the justification of a problematic belief or understanding through rational discourse (Habermas, 1979) to arrive at a tentative best judgement” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 10).

Habermas’ critical theory (1979) sustains that the proposition that for humans to be rational, or reasonable, means to act according to our knowledge of the so-called objective world

that we approach as outside observers, the moral order that we constitute intersubjectively, and the internal subjective state that we access as personal experience. Habermas calls the types of knowledge associated with rationality in those arenas of life, respectively, moral practical and aesthetic practical knowledge. In Habermas' communicative learning rationality is judged by our success in coming to an understanding concerning the issues at hand: here, rationality refers to assessing reasons supporting one's options as objectively as possible and choosing the most effective means available to achieve one's objectives. In Habermas' instrumental learning, rationality is judged by whether we are able to achieve technical success in meeting our objectives. In coping with the external world, communicative competence refers to the "ability of the learner to negotiate his or her own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than to simply act on those of the others. We test our interpretations and beliefs instrumentally by hypothesis testing and empirical measurement when we can justify them communicatively through reflective discourse what we cannot" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 10). Finally, Habermas' theory suggests another domain, emancipatory knowledge. It draws out from the need of understanding the empirical-analytic sciences and their taken for granted assumptions, demanding in a certain way the "existence of an open, self-critical community of inquirers" (Bernstein, 1976, p. 198).

Habermas argues that the pragmatic function of speech is to bring interlocutors to a shared understanding and to establish intersubjective consensus, and that this function enjoys priority over its function of denoting the way the world is.

By fostering transformative adult learning, adult educators do not indoctrinate, but instead create opportunities and foster norms supporting fuller participation in discourse and in democratic social and political life. 'Learning as transformation', 'reflective discourse', and 'critical reflection' bind Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1990; 2000) to reflective dialogue, which is traditionally regarded as the basis of critical thinking and learning. The dialogic learning promoted in Community of Inquiry reflects social-constructivistic theories of learning, viewing students and participants as active meaning makers, who can progress to higher levels of cognitive and reflective skills through their interaction: participants collectively formulate, defend and analyze each other's viewpoints, negotiating and constructing new meaning. The pedagogical goal is to focus on the processes of thinking and to challenge people in forming new habits of mind, which, in turn, help to create open perspectives and pattern of actions (Reznitskaya, 2012).

At this regard, Walton (1998) identifies six types of dialectic discourse adopted for facilitating meaningful classroom dialogue, each with a distinct purpose and structure: information-seeking aims to distribute knowledge; persuasion aims to resolve conflicts of belief; negotiation aims to resolve conflicts of interest; inquiry aims to establish the truth or most reasonable position about an issue; deliberation aims to determine how to achieve a shared goal; and eristic dialogue aims to air grievances. Walton (1998) describes his taxonomy as pragmatic because each dialogue type is distinguished by a unique goal, and he describes each type as normative because it obliges participants to follow a distinct set of procedures conducive to reaching that goal. For the dialogic structure and process of the Community of Inquiry seems to fit particularly the types of the negotiation, persuasion and inquiry (Gregory, 2014). Another taxonomy (Reznitskaya, 2012, pp. 447-448) proposes six indicators that characterize dialogic conversation:

1. Sharing of the authority over the content and form of discourse among group members. People take on key responsibilities for the flow of the discussion. In the

- CoPI, they participate in managing turns, asking questions, judging each other's answers, introducing new topics, and suggesting procedural changes.
2. Fundamentally open or divergent questions in "terms of allowing a broader degree of uncertainty in what would constitute an adequate answer" (Burbules, 1993, p. 97). These questions serve to inspire a meaningful inquiry toward new understandings.
 3. Meaningful and specific feedback, asking for justification, challenging, or prompting for evidence.
 4. Engagement in meta-level reflection. Participants of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry scrutinize both the products and the processes of the discussion, thus creating opportunities for the group to self-correct (Burbules, 1993; Splitter & Sharp, 1996), seeking clarification, connecting ideas across contexts and reflecting on levels of understanding.
 5. Explanations of their ways of thinking. Members of the CoPI take public positions on complex issues and support them with reasons, examples, and other evidence. They continually address the questions of "Why?" and "How?"
 6. Collaborative coconstruction of knowledge. Participants listen to and react to each other's positions and justifications and "take up" the preceding contribution to further develop the group's reasoning.

Indeed, the questions that members of CoPI pose are not susceptible of definite answers. The questions remain open: at this regard, Lipman (1991) began the conversation with the "Community of Inquiry" (CoI) conceptual frame emphasizing the importance of genuine and open dialogue that fosters innate curiosity and the ability for learners to question and think for themselves.

Participants may develop capacity to integrate different views and their willingness to see how incompatible notions emerging from different theoretical assumptions and practices can fit together: members of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry are also lead to perform the practice of "suspension of preconcepts" developing a meta-awareness of their experiences and theoretical assumptions and creating a welcoming space (a transitional group third space) for emerging new knowledge.

On the basis of the above, it is interesting to explore the impact of reflective dialogue and of learning as transformation of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry in relation to its convergence to- or its divergence- from Transformative Learning: at the end of the workshop, the participants will be involved in a reflective process of evaluation of the session analyzing the links between TL and philosophical inquiry and focusing of the meaning perspectives challenged within the experience. Moreover, it will be administered an open-ended questionnaire in order to understand participants' perception of the transformative potential and impact of Community of Philosophical Inquiry according to Mezirow's theory: this process permits expanding the reasoning of theoretical and practical aspects of CoPI thanks to the collaboration of scientific community of experts involved in.

The triangulation between the evaluation of the session that participants will make at the end of the workshop and the responses to the questionnaire will create the possibility to overcome any possible tendency to interpret evidence in terms that tends to confirm the initial expectations and speculations of the researchers who are directly involved in the experience.

The interest is for tracing new roots for implementing Community of Philosophical Inquiry as space and methodology for questioning stereotypes, prejudices and prior assumptions, and experimenting new roles and new attitude for being in the world and for an active citizenry.

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Intergenerational and Cross-Cultural Communication: Influence Transformative Learning

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Abstract: From three different cultural settings, the researchers examine dynamic relationships between intergenerational activities to understand processes of transformative learning. Studies include: a discourse analysis of the Canadian documentary, “Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations” (Rusnak, 2014) which followed teens instructing elders to use electronic communication devices; an in-person program of teens in Hong Kong replicating the Canadian initiative; and a business setting in Vietnam with a cross-generational staff. Each site demonstrates practical insights into the influence of reciprocal dialogue through disorienting dilemmas and shifting meaning perspectives. Ultimately, each intergenerational research site illustrates opportunities for transformative learning.

The Information Age has generated a major shift in social dynamics and communication (Castells, 2011). Most critically, the digital divide is widening the generation gap (Gardner, & Davis, 2013). For example, Millennials choose to communicate primarily through electronics in present time, while Baby Boomers are less likely to value immediacy in social media and texting (Bennett, Pitt, & Price, 2012). There appears to be disorienting dilemmas generated as these cultures collide.

In order to further examine the intersection between interpersonal communication and transformative learning, this research is focused on how intergenerational and cross-cultural communication may influence meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 2000). Specifically, this research is in response to Taylor and Snyder’s (2012) call for a greater understanding of how various ages and cultures engage with transformative learning.

Research Questions

This research investigates human intergenerational learning and cross-cultural interactions. The populations comprise exchanges between varying generations. Research questions: How can reciprocal dialogue reveal meaning perspectives, question interpersonal communication, and evaluate transformative learning? Furthermore, how might intergenerational and multi-cultural engagement from face to face, social media, and a workplace environment influence transformative learning?

Literature Review

There is research demonstrating the impact of intercultural communication and intercultural competency influencing transformative learning (Taylor, 1994). However, there is little research on the idea of reciprocal dialogue between generations outside of classroom

environments (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). Interestingly, the Scandinavian Research Council for Criminology is advocating for youth and mature adults to develop a reciprocal dialogue to understand community violence as a means to increase understanding of each other's perspectives (Honkatukia, 2011).

An overarching assumption of the modern age is that youth are more tech savvy than their elders. Due to this flipped dynamic, youth are teaching elders with a void in reciprocal or shared knowledge between the generations. However, as one study showed, after participating in a short-term structured activity between youth and elders, the youth's perceptions altered away from general ageist attitudes (Thompson & Weaver, 2015).

Inspired by the Canadian documentary, "Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations" (Rusnak, 2014), teens in Hong Kong have recognized the city as an ideal setting to arrange a similar initiative. For example, while Hong Kong citizens have on average over two smartphones, elder use is significantly lower (Chen & Chan, 2011). Elders who do use smartphones report that they rarely use email and social media applications to communicate with others (Ziefle & Bay, 2005). Their grandchildren, however have embraced technology and often spend more time digitally "speaking" with their peers than communicating face-to-face.

Cecilia Bjursell (2015) advances the scholarly discussion of intergenerational learning by clarifying terminology and a learning process. One aspect of the framing that is missing is encouraging acknowledgement of participants' grounded assumptions prior to embarking on the knowledge sharing (Mezirow, 2000). This research aims to develop rich texture to the dialogue and build on past assertions with new points of intersection.

Methodology

The methodology has a three-pronged approach, gathering numerous forms of qualitative data from various forms of reciprocal dialogue. While each setting examined intergenerational learning, each represent unique environments that illicit culture-specific data. Based on the researchers' viewing of Brenda Rusnak's (2014) "Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations", prompted two additional research setting opportunities. Discourse analysis was completed on the documentary separately from the research on-site in Hong Kong and Vietnam. The on-site research conducted in Hong Kong and Ho Chi Minh City had a similar methodology process of employing pre-post survey data with an intervention. The qualitative content analysis and observations offered insights into communication cues towards grounded assumptions and self-reporting transformative learning. Further methodology descriptions for each site follow.

Canadian Setting

The "Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations" documentary depicts Canadian elders learning about the internet and social media from high school student volunteers. Some initial assumptions from the researcher's perspective were that the elders wanted to learn about this technology. Moreover, the youth may have tacit knowledge related to technology, which could inhibit the explanation of the processes being instructed. Another possible barrier to learning could be related to the elders and youth having conscious and unconscious perceptions about the other generation. One stereotype being that youth do things quickly and take risks, while elders will be slower and stay within their comfort zone. Additionally, the researcher supposed that various communication cues could be discovered by critically observing and interpreting the media. Employing J.P. Gee's (2014) discourse analysis method, the 75 minute documentary was cut into four – five minute segments focusing on explicit points of reciprocal dialogue illustrating

awareness of meaning perspectives through both verbal and non-verbal cues. The researcher transcribed the segments acutely identifying verbal and nonverbal cues to document words, facial expressions, along with vocal pitch changes to describe possible meaning perspectives between the youth and elders. The focus is mainly on four high school aged youth and five elders between 75 and 95 years old. Attempts were made by the researcher to maintain cultural relativism being aware of possible unconscious assumptions while recording interpretations across more than a dozen viewings of the segments. By focusing on specific points of instruction, misunderstandings, collaboration, and praise, the researcher was able to evaluate disorienting dilemmas through the change in speech and behavior between the youth and elder. Fascinating themes emerged suggesting specific opportunities for perspective transformations as a result of this intergenerational and cross-cultural communication.

Hong Kong Setting

Inspired by the intergenerational documentary, a similar initiative was created with an international school and an English-speaking elder home in Hong Kong. The program, the Elder-Tech Task Force, consisted of four-sessions with high school students instructing elders on how to use popular technology to better communicate with their loved ones. Five youth between 15-16 years old volunteered to participate in the Elder-Tech Task Force. Many of the students explained that their grandparents (and some of their parents) were not using these forms of technology, and as a result felt disconnected from their family members.

Students completed a pre-session questionnaire to draw out meaning perspectives on elderly people and technology. The students planned to initially focus on conversations with the elders during the first session in order to gain a more personable relationship and to determine their preferences for technological devices and tools. In follow-up sessions, students designed lessons for specific devices and programs such as Skype, email, and Facebook. Additionally, students ran a fundraiser at their school to purchase four tablet devices to donate to the elders, in order for them to learn on the same devices.

Six elders, ages ranging from 65-95 years old, volunteered to participate in the Elder-Tech Task Force. Elders completed a pre-session questionnaire that captured their meaning perspectives on teenagers and technology. Special attention was paid to communication styles of both the students and elders throughout the study. Students met with elders monthly for a total of four, 1.5 hour sessions. While each session had all five Elder-Tech Task Force students, due to family visitations and other obligations, the elders' attendance was less predictable; the first session had three elders, the second had six, the third had three, while the fourth had only one elder.

A reflection questionnaire was gathered from the students midway and a post-program questionnaire. An exit interview was conducted with the elder available on the last session. Additional anecdotal feedback was given from the general manager/activities director at the completion of the pilot study.

Vietnamese Setting

Based on multi-generational work setting in Ho Chi Minh City, the researcher observed a staff meeting with eight members between the ages 20-30, four between 31-40, and the leader, who was over 60. The staff meeting lasted three hours in length with little resolution to issues raised. The researcher's assumptions were that staff were not communicating effectively to resolve problems. The leader's assumptions were that the staff were so busy that they did not have time to prepare for the meetings, hence the leader was moving from weekly to monthly

meetings. This entire staff agreed to participate in a pre-survey and intervention as part of this study. The researcher's bias related to the group interaction was that it was not a time issue. The intervention was a team based activity with attempts to mix generations. Following the activity, a debrief was conducted by the researcher, observation of another staff meeting, and focus group discussion.

Discussion

Within this a three-pronged research approach, there were unique findings and broad themes to emerge related to inter-generational communication. Based on each setting, researchers recognized disorienting dilemmas from established assumptions and re-evaluation of meaning perspectives. The various reciprocal dialogues during the interventions ultimately supported some impact to interpersonal communication and transformative learning opportunities. Moreover, it appeared transformative learning could be inferred and observed from the communication cues described in the face to face intergenerational and multi-cultural engagement in the various settings.

Canadian Setting

The discourse analysis methodology enabled the researcher to focus on specific vignettes between a youth and elder pairing within the many intergenerational interactions in the "Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations" documentary. The youth voiced their assumptions that the elders would be interested in learning. Moreover, the youth described the elders as "cute" and "funny" in the beginning of their connections. However, elders voiced their uncertainty in how to communicate with technology or learn something new. Additionally, several elders sought to share their professional experiences or opinions with the youth. For example, Ellard (90 years old) had direct connection to technology through mechanics and the functioning of the system. One elder voiced concerns with the openness in Facebook based on negative stories she had heard. The youth listened to her judgment and shared, "this is why my grandmother isn't my Facebook friend." After this seemingly disagreement, they continued to move forward signing into Facebook and finding the elder's family members. Meaning perspectives were visible as the elders found a level of comfort when reflecting and connecting the new information to known cognitive scripts. Moreover, the youth developed a greater understanding of the elders' cognitive ability and personality with ongoing exchanges.

There was a distinctive disorienting dilemma visible from communication cues that appeared to support a transformative learning process for both the elder and youth. One particular pair was Shura (88 years old), and a high school student, Max. Shura initially states she doesn't believe she can learn something new at her age. During the reciprocal dialogue, Max demonstrated patience and offered incremental steps to decrease Shura's fear. As Shura displayed wonderment in this new world and excitement in the opportunities of possibilities, she asked more questions. The communication evolved between Shura and Max from instructor-student to collaborators in developing a YouTube videos. In a closing celebration, Max defends Shura's ability, not as a cute elder playing with technology, but validating her contribution. This team ultimately won the YouTube video competition and illustrates a shift from initial meaning perspectives.

Some reflections from the youth were that elders look at technology as a big monster, which can impede learning. When the youth and elders found mechanisms for technology to be helpful, the communication cues between the youth and elder grew more meaningful. For

example, the youth working with Ellard found that online banking could be beneficial to him based on physical needs and timing. Ellard was able to accept this new process of banking and learn the system. This highlighted a shift in meaning perspectives verbalized by the youth that some elders were able to advance in a short period of time no matter their age (as Ellard was 90), while others could not move forward and quit.

Hong Kong Setting

Capturing both student and elder meaning perspectives prior to the first session established to what degree habits of mind were affected by the intergenerational communication. This data reported that the students had a higher preference for using technology-assisted communication, while elders preferred mostly face-to-face. On average, students identified six to eight hours of daily technology use, while elders had less than two hours a day. Students described that the majority of their technology communication were for communicating and sharing with others, indicating that this generation prefers social cohesiveness, even if it is through electronic means.

Anticipated challenges the students brought up were the fear of long, awkward silences, language barriers, and a lack of topics to talk about because of the age-gap. One student explained that elders “come from a different generation... I believe that these visits can help me turn into a person with a lot more patience.” A different student explained, “I would like to learn how to live a slow, healthy life from the elders,” while still another hoped to learn how to “spend less time using technology.” Paradoxically, the very thing the students were teaching the elders to embrace was also what they were trying to decrease. The elders’ concerns were focused on fears as every single elder made a comment (some in jest and some seriously) that they might “breaks the device,” or “cannot remember how to open the programs”, or “gets too confused to continue.”

One group consisted of two teenage boys and one elder woman and the other group had three teenage girls and two elder women. The all-female group was quite amicable while the mixed-gender group was more awkward. This researcher noticed that the elders’ preexisting meaning perspectives likely played a significant role in how they approached the students.

For example, the elder woman in the mixed-gender group (who we will call Jane, a pseudonym) used to be a teacher, so she immediately began treating the boys like her former students and made comments like, "You are not speaking slowly or loudly enough" and "You will not get a job with that kind of mumbling." Jane was present for all four sessions with the boys over the time there was a noticeable and dramatic shift in the reciprocal dialogue among the group. By the second session, Jane had come prepared to the session with a list of questions for the students. By the third and fourth sessions, her lecturing had significantly diminished and her engagement with the students became filled with humor, personal questions, and gratitude. Her demeanor softened and she was more open to the boys’ lessons. In fact, Jane was the one most concerned with when the students would be returning to continue the lessons. On the other hand, the elder women in the all-female group carried on an open reciprocal dialogue from the start.

In reflections the students recognized the need to change their assumptions. One student summarized, “What surprised me the most was how much more difficult it really is to teach something as using a tablet. Prior to these sessions, I imagined in my head that it would be easy. I was dead wrong. It takes so much more effort than I thought to think about what I am going to say so the elders will understand.” The students’ communication and meaning perspectives with the elders changed. Students consciously adapted their language to be simpler, have less jargon.

They offered more guiding questions as, “do you remember where that button is,” rather than directing elders. Another student mentioned that the experience “made me try to see things differently...like that some people learn at a much slower pace, especially elders”. Other interesting comments from the post-session questionnaire included a student describing that “despite the huge age gap, I learned that there are a lot of things that we can have in common with elders.” Another student commented that working with elders had given her more confidence to approach anyone older than her, where as previously she was afraid to do so.

Vietnamese Setting

The business setting of this research site offers an interesting comparison to the other two settings. Based on the opening survey, there was some consensus related to the staff preference for face-to-face communication, reporting they want to solve the problems quickly. However, the various generation groupings of 20-30, 31-40, 60+ were ethnocentric in their generational communication styles (there were no staff between 41-59). The younger generation group identified themselves as strong communicators and willingness to learn, whereas communication with the older generation was challenging because of their stubbornness and inability to understand others. Interestingly, the leader shared that the greatest challenge with younger generations is getting them to share and agree on different viewpoints. On the positive side, the younger group recognized that older staff are experienced. Similarly, the older group were willing to learn from the young. The leader felt that he has the ability to “break the age barrier.” Overall, the staff had a universal agreement that communicating to get a problem solved is better than hiding or procrastinating.

The researcher noted during the first observed staff meeting, lasting three hours, that the younger staff were preoccupied with electronic devices and the leader did a majority of the talking. Prior to the next staff meeting, a teambuilding intervention activity was proposed. Two teams were formed with diverse generation groups standing on either side of a meter stick. Each person was to place two fingers from each hand under the stick. Then, the team was to lower the stick to the ground. Although a seemingly easy task, the team with the greatest generation gaps had unproductive communication and took the longest time to accomplish this task. During the debriefing from the activity, there was open reciprocal dialogue reflecting on the challenges of communicating and need for cooperation. This was interpreted as a shift in meaning perspectives by the generational groups.

In the following staff meeting, the researcher observed a surprising change in the communication cues. All staff were engaged and sought to understand the issues. There was a level of synergy in problem solving. The meeting was completed within an hour. Based on the initial meaning perspectives, the disorienting dilemma, and changed behavior, the researcher suggested this process produced a transformative learning opportunity.

Major Themes from the Data

Across all three research settings, the findings suggest that generation gaps posed initial communication challenges. First, data suggests that adjustments to reciprocal dialogue enhanced the generational communication differences to become more aligned. They exhibited characteristics of a perspective transformation, complete with disorienting dilemmas, critical self-reflection and change in behavior. Second, participants with a planned course of action, reflected and changed their approach. Additionally, those who doubted their ability and recognized value in the activity, changed their self-evaluation and behavior. Overall, it could be recommended that a combination of reciprocal dialogue and self-awareness shifted

intergenerational meaning perspectives about communication and influenced one's ability to learn.

Implications for Research

The implications of this research are multi-fold. First, these findings express an intersection of intergenerational communication and multi-cultural interactions. Second, the exploration demonstrated how generations and cultures may engage in transformative learning from both a personal and shared perspective (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). Moreover, the field is still exploring the role that transformative learning plays in adolescence. These findings suggest adolescents are capable of experiencing disorienting dilemmas, critical self-reflection, and meaning perspectives as young as 15 years old.

There is a need for further research. Additional studies may explore how youth and elders learning a new task together. Compare how intergenerational cooperation may be different than peer-to-peer cooperation. As the field of gerontology is exponential growing, research the connection between the elders' meaning perspectives and the effects of aging, specifically memory loss and motivation.

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Collaborative Inquiry into the Research Designs and Methods of Transformative Learning

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Abstract: The purpose of this experiential session is to collectively engage the research designs and methods of transformative learning. This session is framed as a collective inquiry into potential methodologies by which to study transformative learning.

The purpose of this experiential session is to convene those interested in the research and practice of transformative learning (students, faculty, and practitioners) to collectively engage the research designs and methods of transformative learning (TL). This session is framed as a collaborative action inquiry where together we explore and prototype methodologies by which to study transformative learning. Some guiding questions are: What research paradigms help us to describe, understand, and measure the phenomenon of transformative learning? What methods of inquiry are suitable to understand the impact of transformative learning at the individual level and for groups or teams, organizations, and communities? What emerges from novel research that contributes to theorizing transformative learning and extending its epistemological and ontological roots for sustainable and beneficial impact?

Foucault (1988) wrote,

Critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, [on] what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept rest. (p. 154)

As we think about critique anew, it is important to highlight that Foucault included in his description of critique both the epistemological (modes of thought) and the ontological (practices enabled by modes of thought). He went on to explain that after identifying and questioning assumptions of the taken-for-granted, “one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, [and] transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible” (p. 155).

Historically, transformative learning research has been dominated by the production of knowledge about what is known about processes that lead to it in an individual’s experience. Almost exclusively, qualitative methods dominate the research landscape. Interviews and instructor/researcher observations are very common, but over the past several years there has been increasing variety in the qualitative methods employed. Taylor and Snyder (2012) document the growing use of action/teacher research, narrative inquiry, autoethnography, and case study, as well as data collection methods that extend beyond interviews, such as participant journals, student writing, photography, portfolios, and videos. While these methods are valuable and justifiable, we fear that the same overall approach to research inevitably results in a lacunae and will limit the range of new understandings that can emanate from the body of research.

In his review of the empirical TL literature from 1999 to 2005, Taylor (2007) noted some exceptions to trend of relying exclusively on qualitative methodology. The few studies that differ employed longitudinal designs, mixed methodology, action research, scales, surveys, content analysis, and simulated recall via video and phone-elicitation interviews. We applaud these efforts, and yet we wonder what else might be possible.

In looking to expand the research horizons of this topic of study, Taylor and Snyder call for several possible areas of exploration. First, presuming the central role of critical reflection in transformative learning, they call for research into the factors that contribute to the development of reflective capacities. We would add that likely other factors can promote transformation, and inquiry into the development of those factors would also be beneficial for our overall understanding of transformative learning. Taylor and Snyder also call for longitudinal research to better understand how critical reflective capacity—and we would add: other capacities—evolve over time.

Much of the research on transformative learning has used formal educational settings as the context for the learning. Indeed, this learning context was what Mezirow used in his grounded theory study that led to the conceptualization of transformative learning theory. Despite the prevalence of this research context, Taylor and Snyder offer some aspects of learning that have yet to be explored. What is the student's role when fostering TL in the classroom? What are some of the peripheral consequences and additional learner outcomes when TL is fostered in the classroom? What is the nature of transformative relationships? And, what is the relationship between intimacy, trust, and empathy and TL? How can educators more effectively acknowledge, support, and engage with emotions in their practice? Taylor and Snyder also cite the need for exploration into transformation that happens in settings less controlled by an instructor.

In exploring future possibilities for TL research, Merriam and Kim (2012) point to beginning steps that some researchers have taken. For instance, they note how several scales (Frommelt Attitude Toward Care of the Dying, the Learning Activities Survey, and the Cultural and Educational Issues Survey) have been created or adapted for use in quantitative approach to studying whether or not TL had occurred for research participants. Also of note is Stuckey, Taylor, and Cranton's (2014) Survey of Transformative Learning Outcomes and Processes Based on Theoretical Principles. Merriam and Kim's exploration of research methods, despite its elaboration on how one's underlying philosophy determines the methods used, nevertheless demonstrates a heavy reliance on traditional interviews as the data-gathering method of choice. They advocate for narrative analysis and arts-based methods as additional approaches for researchers.

What fresh methods of inquiry might open us up to new possibilities for researching and understanding transformative learning? What would it be to experiment with what is yet to come? If this were possible, what else might there be, what more, what excess, what supplement, might be set loose? (St. Pierre, 2014). Our challenge is to make many little experiments together to call forward new epistemologies and ontologies that may also generate a thickening of Transformative Learning theory and impact.

The *map* below (see figure 1) is based on the integration of Wilber's (2007) notion of methodological pluralism, Torbert's Theory of Action Inquiry (1991, 2004), and is influenced by developmental theories (Neo-Piagetian (Kegan, 1982, 1994, 2009) and Complexity Thinking (Cilliers, 1998; Stacey & Griffin, 2005)). Together they form a map to help guide new

experiments that break through habits of conventional qualitative humanistic approaches that have saturated the study of transformative learning. The map makes explicit that reality includes at least eight perspectives that we have the capacity to encounter as we become more critically aware of our ways of knowing, being, and doing. The map captures eight perspectives, which suggest that any occasion possesses an inside and an outside, as well as an individual and collective dimension. Together these perspectives give us the inside and the outside of the individual and collective. The map is not exhaustive and also implies that we can transcend these perspectives to allow for even greater possibilities. The map drawn as a flat two dimensional depiction of a more complex and multifaceted reality that is both deep and broad, represents a more whole reality that is possible to both know and act upon. The map positions the historically prominent mode of research on transformative learning as being focused on the individual's felt experience and proposes additional foci that are possible. Holding this part/whole in mind, what multiple experiments could be develop to inquire from within transformation?

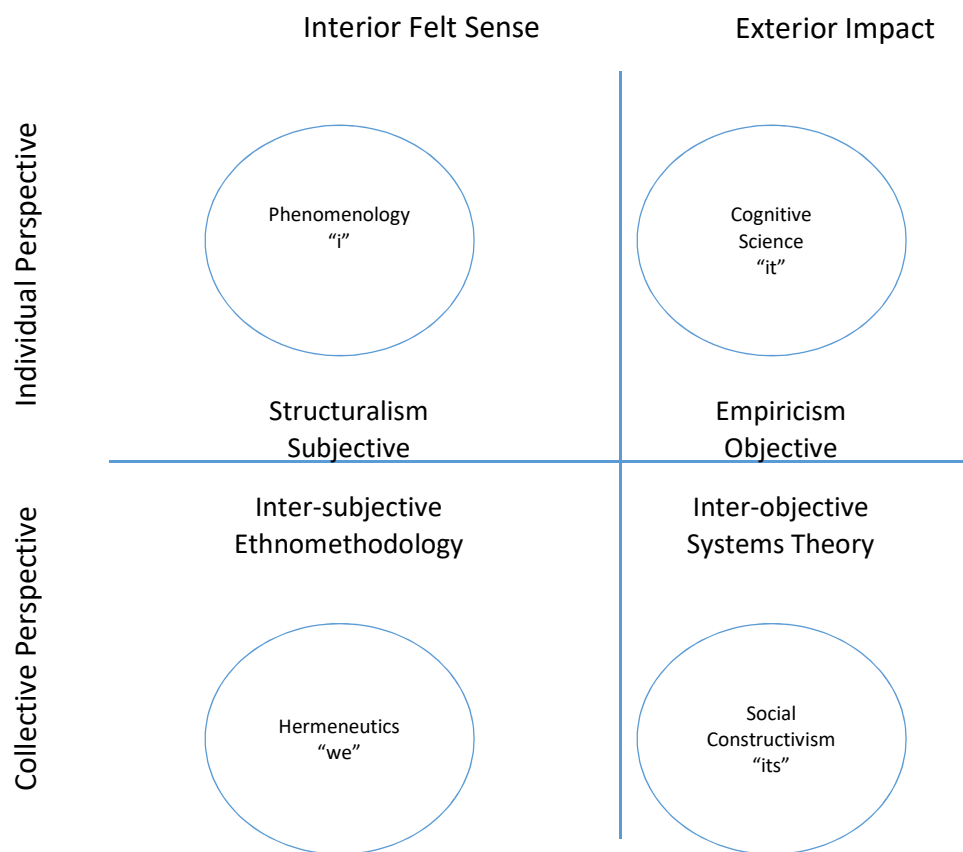


Figure 1. Map of Eight Perspectives

Dirkx notes, "The research and theory in transformative learning clearly illuminates the rich, multi-focal, multi-layered nature of adult learning" (1998, p.9), but how might we create a context to engage this theory meaningfully in our research? We are motivated to move toward

creating that space such that we, as practitioners and researchers, have the space to surface and challenge our assumptions about the ways in which we research this phenomenon.

This collaborative action inquiry begins with pre-conference session, allowing the inquirers the space of the conference to engage their questions, and it culminates with a session during the conference, which creates an opportunity for the inquirers to share their interim outcomes and ongoing plans with the larger community in order to invite additional perspectives and co-inquiry.

In the pre-conference session, the group will generate prototypes of research designs and methods that can be used to explore transformative learning. Drawing on the experiences of the participants, we plan to allow time and space to explore the possibilities and challenges of various methods, as well as to work in groups to explore innovative research designs. To engage this inquiry we will borrow the process of design thinking, a structured approach to generating and evolving ideas that is human-centered, collaborative, optimistic, and experimental (Brown, 2008).

Design thinking can be particularly useful under conditions of complexity and ambiguity and as applied to challenges that have multiple possible solutions and transformative change is sought. As imagined by the design firm, IDEO, the process involves five iterative phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. This process is rooted in developing empathy about the people who are impacted by the challenge. First, we will guide participants through an empathy developing exercise. Second, we will work to define the challenge, allowing the group to collectively determine how to frame the problem, balancing the needs of individuals with those of the community. Third, we will brainstorm possible ways to address the challenge. Fourth, we will choose some of these examples to build well enough to receive feedback from the conference community. Finally, we will test these solutions with our community, using the feedback to reenter the design cycle to refine our solutions.

By the end of the pre-conference, we aim to have prototypes of innovative research designs that participants can reflect upon while attending the remainder of the conference. Then, on the final day of the conference, we will conduct a follow-up experiential session where participants can reconvene (and new participants can join) to continue to engage with the designs, methods, possibilities, and challenges. By the end, we hope to have the beginning of a guide for innovative TL research that can later be published as a resource for scholars of TL.

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Pariahs, Poets, and Violinists at the Intersection: The Arts and the Path to Transformation

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Abstract: One area of higher education where Transformative Learning Theory proves to be more alive than ever is with a population of adult learners who have enrolled in community colleges to earn their high school equivalency and associate's degree simultaneously. This experiential session will explore the power of film and dramatic writing to engage such adult learners at the intersection of their past experiences, their "disorienting dilemmas," and possibilities for perspective transformation.

Background

According to World Education, Inc. (2016), "In the U.S., over 30 million adults do not have a high school diploma." Doll, Eslami, and Walters (2013) presented a comprehensive study of the various reasons why students dropped out between 1955 and 2006. They found that dropouts typically dropped out due to "push," "pull," and "falling out" factors. According to their study, a "push factor" involves "adverse situations within the school environment ... These include tests, attendance, and discipline policies, and even consequences of poor behavior." (p. 2).

The same authors (2013) examined the "pull" factor. According to their study, "Students can be pulled out when factors inside the student divert them from completing school. These occur when factors, such as financial worries, out-of-school employment, family needs, or even family changes, such as marriage or childbirth, pull students away from school" (p. 2). Quite often, it sadly becomes a matter of a student not having enough support from either their home or their school.

Lastly, these authors discussed the "falling out" factor. It is described as "a process in school dropout whereby the student gradually increases in behaviors or desires of academic disengagement, yet without being forced out by the school (by push factors) or lured out by things they need or want (by pull factors). As a result, these students eventually disappear or *fall out* from the system" (p. 2).

Regardless of whether students are pushed out, pulled out, or have fallen out, many find themselves facing an endless array of obstacles, from financial and employment obstacles to shattered self-confidence and self-esteem. Thankfully, there are some wonderful resources like GED programs that can help them re-enter the world of education when they are ready to take the leap.

Today, many community colleges are taking these opportunities to another level. In New York, for example, several colleges have implemented programs that help students earn not only their GED but also their associate's degree. This is a new trend in higher education; there is not even an official network to show how many of these programs exist across the country. However, it is catching on, for a student's potential to find employment can only be enhanced if they have an associate's degree along with their high school equivalency. The Associate's can

then become a pathway to a Bachelor's degree, and so on. These programs open up great possibilities for these students.

In these programs in the state of New York, students earn their high school equivalency by taking 24 credits of college courses. As outlined by College GED Programs (2014), the credits are broken down as follows: 6 credits in English/Writing; 3 credits in Math; 3 credits in Natural Science; 3 credits in Social Science; 3 credits in Humanities; and 6 credits in their respective degree programs.

Theoretical Links

There are two critical moments in the journey of the adult learner who enrolls in college for their high school equivalency and associate's degree. The first is that moment when they were pulled or pushed out of high school, or when they fell out. Then, there is the first day when they returned to college to start this dual program. Between those two moments could be a few months, several years, or even a decade or longer. I teach in such a program at Plaza College in Forest Hills, NY, and I have had students who range in age from 18 to 70.

What I believe is most profound about these two moments are the events that take place between the two moments, one of which, according to my own experience with adult learners, is often, as Mezirow (1991) described as a "disorienting dilemma," or an event that sets transformative learning into motion (Chapter 6). Many of these learners leave high school and then, at some point in time, come to a point where their current frames of reference simply will not work anymore. This is certainly not prescriptive, but many of them seem to show evidence of experiencing some version of Mezirow's "phases of transformation." When I meet these students, some of them seem to have experienced a "disorienting dilemma" and suggest phase five, where they are, as Mezirow (1991) described, engaged in an "exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions." (Chapter 6). Whether or not they have engaged in phases two, three, and four is relative; some appear to have, while for others, if transformative learning is what is happening, their experience does not appear to be linear.

At this point, one might understandably ask, "So, is this transformative learning?" "Is it being assumed that any student in this situation is automatically in the process of transformative learning?" The answer is a resounding "No – but the possibility is there." It is this possibility for transformative learning that we adult educators must embrace and nurture as meaningfully as possible.

These adult learners often come to grappling with such paralyzing assumptions. These assumptions include, but are not limited to, "School is not a place for me;" "I do not have what it takes to succeed in education;" "My own needs must never come before those of my spouse and my family;" "I do not need to get an education; my significant other will always take care of me;" "I am a terrible writer, and this will never change;" "School represents pain, disappointment, and failure;" and, quite often, the most devastating, "Dropping out of high school was the most foolish thing I ever could have done, and I will suffer the consequences for the rest of my life."

The temptation, as practitioners and proponents of transformative learning, would be to want to jump right in and do everything within our power to make transformation a reality. However, Mezirow (1991) warned educators of behavior such as "intentionally precipitating transformative learning without making sure that the learner fully understands that such transformation may result" and "deciding which among a learner's beliefs should become

questioned or problematized” (Chapter 7). Instead, Mezirow (1991) advised, both simply and profoundly,

The educator’s objective should be only that the learner learn freely and decide, on the basis of the best information available, whether or not to act and, if so, how and when... The essence of adult education is to help learners construe experience in a way that allows them to understand more clearly the reasons for their problems and the action options open to them so that they can improve the quality of their decision making (Chapter 7).

Will transformative learning always happen with these learners? No. However, with this population, there is tremendous potential, so it then becomes important to examine how we inspire students who suggest having the potential for transformative learning to moving to “edge” of transformation, as Taylor and Cranton (2013) discussed. Furthermore, they wrote, “Considerable research has examined the process of engaging transformative learning, but little is known about what brings learners to the ‘edge’ of the learning, or if they need to be already at the edge before learning will occur.” It must be stressed, as Mezirow’s work suggests, this “edge” cannot be a destination that we impose on our students, but it is a place ideally they will come to discover for themselves according to what they need.

As educators, we must realize the electrifying potential that a classroom full of such learners possesses. Time and time again, I have found a classroom of these students an awe-inspiring place to be. However, with the possibility of transformative learning in the air, educators must make wiser, more inclusive decisions when it comes to curriculum. Students in these dual programs are required to take courses in writing and humanities, so my proposal has two critical parts.

First, we should expose these learners to examples of transformative learning in film, theater, art, and literature, which may help inspire their own transformative learning and propel to the edge of where they respectively need to go. After all, Wilbur (as cited in Lipson Lawrence, 2012) believed that a powerful work of art “grabs you, against your will, and then suspends your will. You are ushered into a quiet clearing, free of desire, free of grasping, free of ego, free of self-contradiction. And through that opening or clearing in your own awareness may come flashes of higher truths, subtler revelations, profound connections” (p. 474). The subjects of these works of art can range from real-life teachers to sports teams, to high school students in New York coming to terms with sexual identity, to older adults taking poetry writing classes, to the artist Frida Kahlo, to many, many more. The beauty of this is the myriad of possibilities that exist and those that are created year after year. What unites all examples of transformative film and fiction is the changes they can bring about. Jarvis (2012) described these changes as “making us stand back, stimulating awareness not only of the constructed nature of fiction itself, but also of the way we construct our daily lives and experiences” (p. 498). Most importantly, Jarvis (2012) also asserted, “Researchers have demonstrated that fiction enables us to engage with lives that are radically different from ours and with people who may be on the margins of our social world, or even seen as threats and enemies. This not only creates understanding and empathy with those who are different from us but also allows us to imagine alternatives to the way we live now” (p. 490). It is then within those alternatives where students might be inspired to continue on their paths to transformation.

In addition to exposing these students to works of art, we should also give them opportunities to tell and write their stories. My recommendation is to have students write original

monologues and then create an event where students can have their works performed for an audience if they so choose. While this event should not be mandatory for a student, such an opportunity can be transformative, even emancipatory for a student. Even those students who do not consider themselves creative have the potential to write a monologue; that has certainly been my experience, for a monologue is a story that has a beginning, middle, end, and then in some cases, a surprise twist at the end. Educators can give students a range of prompts to engage them wherever they are most ready. Bolder prompts can include: “Tell about your most disappointing day in high school – and connect your story to where you are today;” “Tell about the person who inspired you to be where you are today;” “Describe how not finishing high school could possibly turn out to be one of the best things that ever happened to you;” and “Describe the day you decided to apply to college.” The monologue format and the platform of a performance could provide the student with an opportunity to turn their experiences into works of art, to inspire others with their stories, and to be inspired by others’ stories. As Daloz (1986) emphasized, “In those moments when the world falls apart, when we lose a sense of meaning, stories can reconnect things for us, place our fears in contexts help us to see new forms of meaning. They do so by offering a way out, not simply in the characters or the setting but in the very syntax of the tale itself, a syntax that seems almost universal” (p. 24).

The Session

This session will be divided into three segments. In the first segment, participants will discuss their experiences with adult learners and high school dropouts and brainstorm factors that can lead someone to drop out of high school. The conversation will also focus on how these factors have evolved over time. It will also be an open forum to tell stories about former students, family members, friends, or acquaintances who struggled in high school. Then, participants will brainstorm possible “disorienting dilemmas” that could possibly lead a high school dropout to consider returning to school as they “explore new roles.” This will also prompt a discussion about the role of “empathy” in connecting with these students; empathy must be a force behind all the choices we make in our experiences with adult learners. Taylor and Cranston (2013) pointed out, “Research is needed to better understand how empathy fosters transformative learning, such as by teachers who engage in the practice of transformative learning in their classroom. It means asking: Are empathetic teachers more effective at fostering transformative learning and if so how?” (p. 37).

In the second segment of the session, participants will examine clips from four films and one theatrical work with characters who experience transformative learning. The works include the following: *The Color Purple* (film clip, clip from musical, and examination of its anthem “I’m Here.”); *Music of the Heart* (film clips); *Poetry* (film clips); *Pariah* (film clips); and *Frida* (film clips). In each of the films, the protagonists transformed and found ways to turn, specifically, their disorienting dilemmas into vibrant art that touched people. In *The Color Purple*, Celie’s dilemma became beautiful pants. In *Music of the Heart*, Roberta’s dilemma inspired her to create the East Harlem Violin Program. In *Poetry*, Mija’s dilemma inspired her to write a poem before she died. In *Pariah*, Alike’s dilemma inspired her to embrace her sexual identity, write poetry, and pursue her dreams. Lastly, in *Frida*, from Frida Kahlo’s bus accident emerged her body of paintings that inspire millions around the world every day. After examining the clips, participants will discuss the different ways in which adult learners might be able to

connect to such an array of characters and suggest ways these films may inspire adult learners to engage further in transformative learning.

Finally, participants in the session will write a short monologue. The prompts will be similar to the aforementioned ones. Then, participants will have the experience of having their works performed for those in the session. A discussion of how such an experience could foster transformative learning will follow.

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ROUNDTABLES

Storying, Inhabiting and Performing Transformation: An Aesthetic Exploration of Ontologies and Epistemologies

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Introduction

This journal will be my fourth. Many times it is very hard to keep doing it - sort of like a habit. Go through streaks of writing of thoughts and feelings and only facts at other times. Some day they will be fun to read. And just think, many times I have thought of writing a book and after this year is over, I will have.

Bob's Journal, January 1, 1976

As I look back in this journal, I am struck by the adaptations, learning and creativity that my 35 students and I are experiencing. I am transforming faster than I can think as I, and my family - the only 4 pale-faces as they laughingly call us- adapt to this extremely remote, northern Canadian, Babine Indigenous village. The students, ages 5 to 15, and I, aged 31, nest into this one-room schoolhouse to learn and see what happens...In this world IQ means how good are you in the bush. My IQ is extremely low, so far. But the merry souls of this classroom and village are my deeply appreciated teachers.

Mary Ann's Journal, December 30, 1973

How can we be more intentional and creative in our interactions for the purpose of transformative learning? This major question of this conference is taken up in this paper, and the subsequent roundtable, through a discussion about the use of the arts to story, inhabit and perform our lives. In particular we focus on journaling, diaries kept by Bob and Mary Ann Fenimore for over 30 years of their lives and on *métissage*, a practice that literally means story weaving. Our roundtable is a conversation between four friends, on the meaning and practice of transformative learning. Two of us, Darlene and Budd are academics whose careers have been linked to transformative learning. Two of us, Mary Ann and Bob are a former teacher and veterinarian who have had a transformative learning practice, the daily writing of personal journals at the centre of their lives for more than 30 years. The four of us share a commitment to social justice, to the importance of relationships, and an aspiration of leaving our families, communities and our world better than we found them.

The World in Which We Live

If a conversation on the importance and potential of transformative learning is to be worth the time it takes to share words and ideas, we have to acknowledge and name some of the

contexts, challenges and concerns that surround or inundate the world that we share. The four of us begin by acknowledging that we live on the traditional and unceded territory of the WSANEC and Lekungwen First Nations. We further acknowledge that as Settler peoples we have benefited from the historic genocide perpetrated on First Nations peoples of Canada. We also acknowledge on-going patriarchal practices in our lives and communities, the continuing violence against women – including the 100s of murdered and missing Indigenous women in Canada. On a global scale we are concerned with the proliferation of nuclear weapons, growing gap between the rich and the poor, the ecological threats to our planet and to the plight of more than 60 million displaced and refugee children, women and men in the world. We feel a link between our lives, however small and insignificant, and the aspirations everywhere for a better, more loving and healthy world. Reflecting, acting, studying, engaging others on these issues that we face is what the practice of transformative learning means to us. Budd and Darlene have found their practice in work in the classroom, research in communities, writing and interacting in an academic discourse. Mary Ann and Bob have found their actions over the years through their own work, relationships deepened by their unique dedication to putting words down systematically day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year for over 30 years.

Ontology and Epistemology

Art gallery adult educator Illeris (In Press) argues that ontology, a philosophical term concerned with determining what it means to be in the world and how we explore this existence, and epistemology, how we construct knowledge, provide important lenses for explorations and discussions of the arts and transformative learning. In this context, epistemology is fundamental to understanding how transformation happens within a system of knowledge and through arts-based practice, whilst ontologies of transformation ask what transformation is according to foundational assumptions about being and experience.

Our current research explores these epistemological and ontological positionings through what Illeris (In Press) calls the person-bound and the practice-based. For adult educator Buch (2002) a person-bound ontology acknowledges human beings as separate individuals with capacities that allow them to create representations of an independent reality. What can be transformed are the representations and understandings within the subject, who (in a critical/progressive understanding) also holds the power with others to transform the world. In other words, following a person-bound ontology of making sense of existence and one's own experiences is bound to the existence of others, to moments in time, to experiences of the external world but processed individually through means such as journaling, poetry, performance and visual arts. This learning is understood as an awakening of consciousness (e.g. Cranton, 2013).

A practice-based ontology situates the individual human being not as solely independent, but as a social, relational being constantly in inter-action with others (Illeris, 2015). As Rogoff (2013) argues, a practice-bound ontology leads to a pedagogy in which the central point for transformation is to perform new, embodied, and collaborative ways of inhabiting the world; ways that uncover collectively and dialogically, issues and injustices in our world, critiquing them by experimenting together, through any variety of educative processes. Rogoff (2013) describes this as a 'mode of criticality', as an ability to 'inhabit' complexity without having to articulate it discursively or spelling it out in a didactic manner.

Transformative learning is a process by which individuals or social groups undergo a deep shift in perspective and understanding (Cranton, 2013). This can include critical social reflection, critical self-reflection, and/or the imagination (Dirkx, 2012). For Greene (1995, p. 21) the most powerful tools of transformation, which allow us to ‘inhabit’ complexity, and “give credence to alternate realities...[and] break through the inertia of habit”, are art and the imagination.

Transformative Learning, Art and Imagination

There is a prevalence of artistic expression within discourse of adult education and transformative learning today from Indigenous artworks in galleries that render visible the complexities of colonialism and modern indigeneity (Clover, 2015), to poetry that aims to express wholeness in lives and communities that draws attention to imbalances and from visual imagery or puppetry that make the world three-dimensional, to storying our own lives in ways that make meaning, resolve tensions, or simply tell us who we are and how we fit.

The role of the imagination – whether through poetry, exhibitions, images and our own stories - is “not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve [but rather] to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard and unexpected” (p. 89). Wyman (2012) argues that key catalysts of the imagination are the arts. Questions of ‘being’ are fundamental to the arts, and questions of knowledge creation and process to arts-based transformative learning (Burnham & Kai Kee, 2011; Clover & Stalker, 2007; Greene, 1995). Art provides us with means to take a reflective grasp of our life stories, and to re-imagine and re-position these in more transformative ways. Our research has found that because the arts are comfortable with chaos, ambiguity and complexity, they can simultaneously be person-bound and practice-based. That is, they can allow us to explore ‘being’ and experiences, as they challenge us to look outward to the social and ecological challenges and injustices of today. They are at once individual, and at once collective.

In this roundtable, we will look specifically at two art forms. The first is poetry and the second, journaling.

The Gift of Poetry

Poets provide a number of interesting ways in which we can think about the contexts, uses and definitions of poetry. Victor Hugo in the Preface to *Les Misérables* (1862) noted that,

So long as there shall exist, by virtue of law and custom, decrees of damnation pronounced by society, artificially creating hells amid the civilization of earth...so long as social asphyxia is possible in any part of the world; -- in other words, and with a still wider significance, so long as ignorance and poverty exist on earth, [poetry] of this nature cannot fail to be of use.

Chilean poet Pablo Neruda tells us, “Poetry is an act of peace. Peace goes into the making of a poet as flour goes into the making of bread” (cited in Loyola, 2000, p. 7). Marge Piercy, a social movement poet, in her book *The Low Road* (2012, p. 10) explains that, “In poetry, the exchange is one of energy. Human energy is transferred, and from the poem it reaches the reader. Human energy, which is consciousness, is the capacity to produce change in existing conditions”. Here, we see the very essence of transformative learning: to change not only ourselves, but also, the social conditions around us (e.g. O’Sullivan, Morrell & O’Connor, 2002). Muriel Rukeyser (1974) takes us further with her belief that poetry is in fact something that lives in the very heart of democracy. She says that, “The sources of poetry are in the spirit seeking completeness” (p.

23). Jack Kerouac, the iconic poet of the Beat generation, speaking not of poetry but of poets said,

The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars....(1955, p. 57)

But we would argue that perhaps the fullest explanation of how and why poetry works and why it is such a natural companion to transformative learning, comes from Adrienne Rich a feminist activist poet. In *The giving and taking of a poem* (1993, p. 31) she writes a poem is,

then, a triadic relation. It can never be reduced to a pair; we are always confronted by the poet, the poem and the audience. The reading of a poem, a poetry reading, is not a spectacle, nor can it be passively received. It's an exchange of electrical currents through language...that daily, mundane, abused and ill-prized medium, that instrument of deception and revelation, that material thing, that knife, rag, boat, spoon

reed become pipe

tree trunk become drum mud become clay flute

conch shell become summons to freedom

old trousers and petticoats become iconography in appliqué rubber bands stretched around a box become lyre.

And all this has to travel from the nervous system of the poet, preverbal, to the nervous system of the one who listens, who reads, the active participant without whom the poem is never finished.

Storying our Lives: Journaling and Métissage

The second 'imaginative' art or device we will introduce in this roundtable, is journaling. We open a space to speak about the meaning of transformative learning as we share how Mary and Bob have used journaling, the 'storying' of their lives' to deepen their learning experiences over the past 30 years. Their personal reflections through journal writing speak to us broadly about how this particular art form acts as an ontological and epistemological agent of transformative learning – the ability to enable allow Bob and Mary Ann to 'inhabit' the complexity, chaos and ambiguity of their own experiences in and of the world. We will not only speak about the process of journaling, but also 'show' the process of journaling. For this we will use a methodology called métissage, which will create a new story of what has been written in the journals. Etmanski, Wiegler and Wong-Sneddon (2013) describe métissage as the art of weaving together and performing our own stories. In many ways, this co-existence of differing stories and realities, reflects the reality of mutually present interconnectedness and "irreconcilability" within human relationships, communities, movements but also, our hopes for solidarity across difference - a concept borrowed from Tuck and Yang's article on contradictions and parallels in decolonial solidarity, which returns us to our own context on Vancouver Island we noted above (2012, p. 4). We can extend the notion of métissage further yet by thinking of it as what O'Neill and Wilson's (2015) call 'curating research', that is assembling our individual stories, responses and analyses of the art of transformation, and curating these into a relational, collective story. We will in this roundtable engage in the participants in the process of métissage as the person-practice and individual-collective intentions of transformative learning.

Participants will create their own individual stories and then weave them together with the stories of others in a métissage. They will think of a ‘disorientating’ dilemma using the phrase: “I was transformed when...”. Our intention is to draw from many voices, allowing alternate realities to co-exist as a ‘same story’, in order to embrace many ways of understanding and experiencing the transformative potential of journaling/storying/reading our lives.

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**Transforming Conflict at the Intersections:
Making Meaning at Moral, Cultural, Social, Psychological and Spiritual Crossroads**

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Abstract: Conflicts do not happen in isolation, and neither does the work needed to transform them. In this paper, we address the conference theme of “intersections as the place of innovation and transformation” through a description of the reflexively transformative impacts of the 2015 CMM Institute (CMMI) Fellows Program. This was a collaborative effort among three institutions to address the phenomenon of “transforming conflict” which ignited multiple intersections of people and networks of relationships to look at conflict at different levels of consciousness and context through six competitively selected and thematically aligned projects. In addition, the 2015 CMMI Fellows program was extended to a collaboration with other projects following the same thematic guidelines, sponsored by the Advanced Consortium for Cooperation, Conflict and Complexity (AC4) at Columbia University. The discussion of this work will include several different layers of “transformation in relation to others” that occurred during the project: (a) the individual Fellows work to transform a given conflict situation; (b) reflexive transformation of the Fellows by their projects and work with the project team; (c) the support team and sponsoring organizations being transformed in relation to the Fellows and their projects; and (d) the continuing process of transforming-in-relationship that is occurring in peer coaching among the Fellows, and with board members of the CMMI in preparing for this conference and this paper. Our conclusions support the value of explicitly addressing social construction communication dynamics and principles of communicative learning in peer coaching or mentoring collaborations to foster ongoing transformative learning processes.

“In these times of disruption and challenge, we are constantly asked to explore our assumptions and the ways we engage the world”

Engaging the world requires us to notice ourselves, our encounters, and our impact. Transformative learning, is a process, informed by theory, of noticing what and how we are engaging, and through critical self-reflection, understanding ourselves in relationship to each other and our social worlds in a different way. Transformative learning is also about development: development toward more inclusive ways of understanding experience (Mezirow, 1991), higher orders of consciousness (Kegan, 1982), more critical understandings of our sociopolitical realities (Freire, 1970), greater individuation and wholeness (Dirkx, 2000), and increased capacity for empathy across cultures (Landis, Bennett & Bennett, 2003). Other applications of transformative learning theory shift the location of the process from the internal cognitive arena to the relational and dialogic processes (Wasserman, 2004; Schapiro, Wasserman, Gallegos, 2010). These relational and dialogic processes have moral, cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions, and can be examined and understood using interpretive and practical theories of social construction in communication, in particular the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory (Pearce, 2007).

The framing concept of this year's Transformative Learning Conference (TLC) is "intersections as the place of innovation and transformation." In this paper, we describe how the 2015 CMM Institute Fellows Project, a collaborative effort among three institutions, ignited multiple intersections of people and networks of relationships, to look at phenomena related to conflict at different levels of consciousness and context. We also describe the same types of phenomena in the AC4 fellows and how they developed their network and projects together. The discussion will include several different aspects or layers of "transformation in relation to others" that occurred during the project: (1) the individual Fellows work to transform a given conflict situation, (2) reflexive transformation of the Fellows by their projects and work with the project team, and (3) the support team and sponsoring organizations being transformed in relation to the Fellows and their projects, (4) the continuing process of transforming-in-relationship that is occurring in peer coaching among the Fellows, and with board members of the CMMI in preparing for this conference and this paper.

The CMMI and AC4 Fellows

In the call for proposals for the 2015 CMM Institute Fellows program, we asked for projects using the lens of CMM theory and the communication perspective and involved "transforming conflict" around pressing social issues. We were specifically looking for conceptual models to further our understanding of how our communication determines "who we be" in our interpersonal social interactions, and how this may, in turn, change our "hard-wired" (intrapersonal and organizational) responses to open new (emergent) ways of "becoming together." Six proposals out of the 24 submitted were chosen, representing a mix of scholars and practitioners in various fields and levels of experience. The six CMMI Fellows projects were:

- The Application of Digital Storytelling to Facilitate Personal, Professional and Organizational Development among Police Officers and Organizations;

- Literacy in the Art of Living, the Art of Waging Peace, and the Art of Listening;
- The Role of Narratives and Metaphors of identity in Organizational Change;
- Teaching Conflict Resolution in Middle Schools in Kosovo;
- Changing "Unwanted Repetitive Patterns" (URPs) in Communication; and,
- The "Shakespeare's Mirror" Project: Sociodramatic Reflection Among Inmates.

The Advanced Consortium on Cooperation Conflict and Complexity (AC4) at Columbia University, Fellows projects were similar in their focus on transformation of conflict, applying principles of CMM theory. The five AC4 projects were:

- Aesthetic Experience in Leadership Learning;
- Women and Protection in Great-Lakes Region of Africa;
- Quaker Experience of the Divine and Heuristic Methodology;
- Arts-Based Programs in Community Action, and
- Transforming Conflict at End-of-Life: Critical Moments in Narratives for Creating Change.

Each of these projects addresses an aspect of conflict that includes both personal and interpersonal transformation, and at some level engages processes of communication and shared meaning making. Since all Fellows were invited to present their work together at an international conference with a tight agenda, some advance coordination among their diverse projects was necessary to achieve some level of coherence among the Fellows. To support this process, the CMMI helped to structure peer coaching pairs which helped the Fellows learn from each other, prepare, and also give feedback to the Institute. In this sense, the project was intended to be transformative at several levels; personally, interpersonally, organizationally, and socially. Looking at the parallel and recursive processes of transformative conflict and meaning making among those involved, transformative learning can be seen at work as an emergent and ongoing process of noticing new stories of self and other through dialogue and engagement of each other's stories and perspectives. In this respect, "dialogue does not serve as context for the individual construction of meaning, but as a process for the social construction or coordinated management of meaning" (Pearce and Pearce, 2003). This aspect of the interaction among Fellows will be highlighted in our roundtable discussion.

Dialogic processes also foster relational empathy, a reciprocal process framed as mutual empathy as described by Jordan (1991). While some mutual empathy involves an acknowledgement of sameness in the other, the movement towards the other's differentness is central to growth in relationship and also can provide a powerful sense of validation for both people. Growth occurs because "as I stretch to match or understand your experience, something new is acknowledged or grows in me" (p. 197). The relationships provide the container for fostering relational empathy and meaning making. In these projects, engaging in critical self-reflection with a focus on understanding and not understanding different perspectives was a recursive transformative learning process. We sought to create such an environment by setting the context for the Fellows' collaboration as a "nonjudgmental camaraderie of a group of colleagues who are also growing" (Felten, Bauman, Kheriaty & Taylor, p. 31). The Fellows all had parallel

interests, but it was our intention to maintain focus of the interactions on their shared growth and development as a group, not on their individual projects.

Theoretical Framing

In keeping with the conference theme of “innovation and transformation at the intersections,” our project engages the intersections between literatures of transformational learning and communication. The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory is a practical theory of the social construction of reality that privileges communication as a way of seeing what is made in communicative episodes, between “persons-in-conversation” (Pearce, 2007). As a practical theory, CMM is often useful in combination with other theories for framing questions and issues in order to analyze their social dynamics. (Creede, Fisher-Yoshida & Gallegos, 2012). In this case, we apply CMM in conjunction with transformative learning theory to consider dynamics of collaborative learning among the CMMI and AC4 Fellows around their projects in conflict transformation. The literature of CMM is broad, so for our purposes we will focus on several of its conceptual models that help us interpret the transformative learning experience of our Fellows as a process of social dynamics. These are defined briefly as follows:

Logical Forces

There are certain dynamics that happen in relationship and a series of our interactions in relationship create episodes. In the language of CMM, we refer to these dynamics as *logical forces* (Pearce, 2007). They are created and governed by feelings of what we ought to do, which we learn from our environments and cultures: how we ought to act, how we ought to respond and how we should not react. There are four categories of forces that we will explain in the context of the peer coaching amongst this group of Fellows.

Prefigurative force sets up a situation to call forth certain types of behaviors or responses. In the case of the Fellows, by setting up the Fellows’ program and having peer coaching be a part of the process, we are setting the stage for the mindset and behaviors that accompany peer coaching. We created certain steps along the way, by introducing the Fellows to each other and making it financially possible for them to travel to the CMM Learning Exchange to be with one another in person. That is *practical force*, or the actions we take to create prefigurative force. The CMM Learning Exchange is an event that creates the *contextual force* for the types of interactions that take place in that context. Naming it as a learning exchange and not a conference is intentional because it calls forth behaviors that stimulate the exchange of information laterally, rather than a more formal presentation from “experts” as in a conference environment. There are implications of the forces at work and this is *implicative force*. If we want to change the episode within which we are in, we can respond in a different way from what is predicted or expected. In the case of the Fellows, they bonded and decided to continue to work together on their initiatives and peer coaching with one another. Once we are aware of these logical forces we can be in a better position to understand them, manage them and even create them to suit our needs.

Cosmopolitan Communication and Communicative Learning

Within CMM theory, the concept of “cosmopolitan communication” (Pearce, 1989) presents ideas about achieving *coordination* and *coherence* across cultural boundaries that otherwise act as barriers to shared understanding and cooperation. These barriers are often unseen and unquestioned, operating as moral codes within closed social systems to achieve coherence. When opposing moral codes interact without an interpretive schema for coordination, the result can be intractable “moral conflicts” (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). Cosmopolitan communication is proposed as an advanced form of interaction that transcends cultural barriers in a dynamic process of co-creating new shared meanings. In many ways, this conceptual model intersects with Mezirow’s notion of “communicative learning,” which involves “understanding, describing and explaining intentions; values; ideals; moral issues; social, political, psychological, or educational concepts; feelings and reasons” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 75).

The process of achieving cosmopolitan communication (or enacting communicative learning) requires awareness and competence in interpersonal communication that engages all dimensions of human experience, not relying on culture, social structures, or cognition alone to construe and interpret meaning. The interplay at the intersection of these domains is illustrated in figure (1), which overlays the cosmopolitan communication principles of coordination and coherence with the four-quadrant integral model of “mind, brain, system and culture” (Van Middendorp, Matoba & Buechner, 2012).

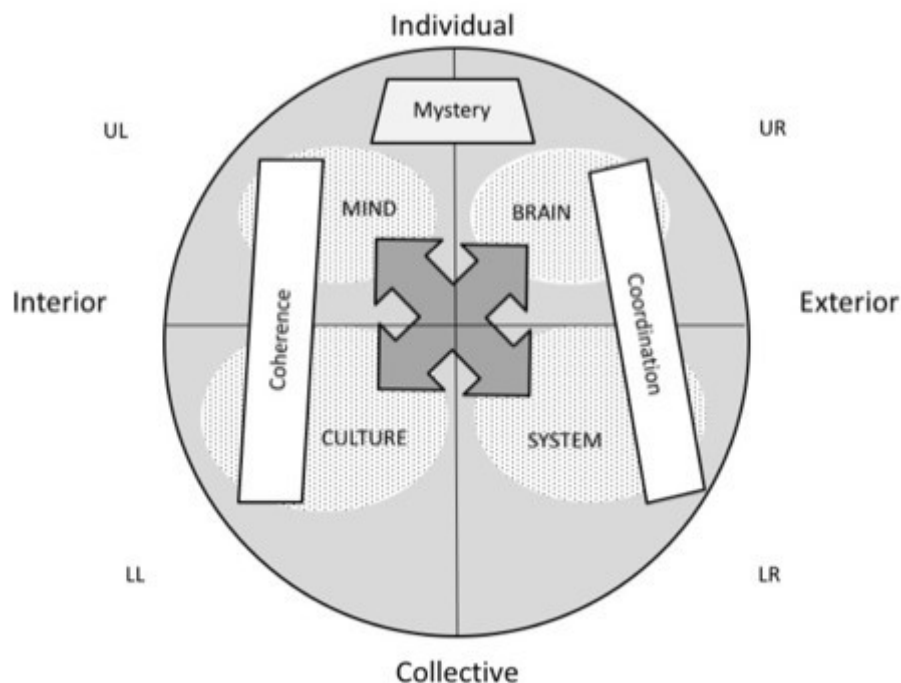


Figure 1. The dynamics of cosmopolitan communication.

Within this model, mind (spirit) and brain are represented as the inner and outer (observable) manifestations of the individual, while culture and system are manifestations of the collective. Meaning (coherence) is made in the interior space, while mechanisms for coordination are visible in the exterior. Between the exterior and interior of the individual level lies the domain of consciousness or “Mystery,” where multiple realities may coexist, and new realities may emerge (Buechner, 2014, pp. 75-78).

In our workshop presentation, we use this model to map out episodes of transformation in the Fellows program that we observed along moral, cultural, social, and spiritual intersections.

Synthesis

For purposes of this discussion, we focus on the transformational aspects of the Fellows’ experience, and the way that carrying out this collaboration caused us all to operate at the intersections. These intersections include the theoretical, interpersonal, and practical interactions between the CMM Institute, the individual Fellows, and the areas of conflict in the social sphere that they sought to transform with their work. The context and naming of the episode “peer coaching” provided for individual and collective reflection. To gain a sense of the collective impact and deepen the reflective process, the authors interviewed each of the Fellows at the end of the Fellowship year exploring the following questions:

- How did your contact with CMM influence how you looked at conflict?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- In what ways did your perspective change or transform: (1) about the conflict; (2) about yourself; and (3) about your work?

The Fellows were able to critically reflect on the beliefs they held and their motivations for doing the work they do and in learning with their peers through engaging in the peer coaching experience (Brookfield, 2011). As the conversations continued and they enriched and modified their perspectives on self and other in the context of their work and being in relationship with their peers, they deeply appreciated each other in their meaning making process (Fisher-Yoshida, 2015). They reported that the layered process of doing, reflecting and sharing was transformational in influencing the ways in which they continued their work. They also talked about how CMM and the communication perspective was, in effect, their internal conversation partner as they were facilitating their work. Shailor talked about how tapping into the untold and untellable stories as he worked a conflict episode with the inmates. Kusari talked about how, reflecting in action, she foregrounded coherence and coordination when working with an emerging conflict with the high school students. Tenzek commented on how through the use of CMM she was able to challenge herself and feel empowered to expand the scope of the community she engaged while having end-of-life conversations. They had a deeper understanding of their role and how they could be more effective in their work as they guided others.

Conclusions

The Fellows worked with different types of populations in facing conflict ranging from end-of- life conversations to dealing with violence and post-war aftermath to managing team

dynamics to incarceration. One thread that connected them is their use of CMM as a practical theory to transform perspectives through a difference in framing of the conflict situation (Fisher-Yoshida, 2014). CMM concepts and models allow for individuals to apply different lenses from what they typically use to familiar situations providing access to new information. This expands their understanding of their role in the conflict dynamics, as well as, a deeper understanding of the role of the other person(s) and the influences of the context. CMM facilitates transformation of perspectives by surfacing taken-for-granted assumptions that were hidden and embedded in previously held points of view (Mezirow, 2000; Pearce, 2004).

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What Role Does Transformative Learning Play in Adolescence?

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Abstract: The purpose of this round-table is to discuss what role transformative learning may play in adolescence. The intersection between the fields of adolescent development and transformative learning offers an opportunity to uncover how an adolescent (under 20 years old) may experience transformative incidents and to what degree these may align with the frameworks of adult transformative learning theory. Discourse from scholars and practitioners can address the gaps in the intersections between these two fields.

Purpose

The purpose of this roundtable is to discuss what role transformative learning may play in adolescence. The intersection between the fields of adolescent development and transformative learning offers an opportunity to uncover how an adolescent (under 20 years old) may experience transformative incidents and to what degree these may align with the frameworks of *adult* transformative learning theory. Currently, the theory is not prominently featuring adolescent experiences in the literature, yet should they be? In response to Taylor and Snyder's (2012), request to better understand how all ages experience perspective transformations, this round table seeks to explore theoretical and practical perspectives on how adolescents may engage with transformative learning.

Despite sentiments to the contrary (Mezirow, 2000), growing research on how young people experience transformations shares some consistencies with the adult literature (Grider, 2011; Kerr, 2014; Walsh, 2010; Whalley, 1995). Additionally, the field of adolescent development has made significant findings in how a young person may experience components of transformative learning from a cognitive, emotional, and physical perspective that are unique to their age group (Blakemore, 2010; Hodgson, 2007). How should the transformative learning field address these perspectives?

Literature Review

Transformative learning theory is firmly established within the adult learning field because it is commonly accepted that only “adults have acquired a coherent body of experience—assumptions, concepts, values, feelings, conditional responses—frames of reference that define their world” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). However Taylor and Snyder (2012) note that little research has actually supported the claim that these meaning structures are only firmly established in adulthood. While Kegan (2000) argued that at least twenty years of life experience are required to be capable of thinking abstractly in any situation, he also encouraged researchers to study how transformative learning occurs across the lifespan.

Nevertheless, the majority of the empirical literature has focused on the process of transformative learning in adults over twenty-five years of age (Taylor, 1997, 2007). However, recently the work of Walsh (2007), Hodgson (2007), Schmidt (2009), Grider (2011), and Kerr (2014) confirm that various aspects of transformative learning are present in the experiences of individuals less than 20 years of age. Furthermore, transformative learning has been identified as

a potential impetus for cognitive and emotional development, facilitating the process of maturity in young adults (Walsh, 2007), which has significant implications for the foundation of the theory (Grider, 2011).

Even with these theoretical and empirical implications, there has been ample research discussing the specific developmental components to transformation that seem to be age-dependent, perhaps excluding young adults from *adult* forms of transformative learning (Brookfield, 2005). These include: cognitive development (Merriam, 1994); the ability to critically self-reflect (Mezirow, 2000); and the amount of life experience from which to draw reflections (Brookfield, 2005). However, standing early in the twenty-first century, we see that millennial adolescents have been the first generation to be given such wide exposure to diverse people, ideas, and ways of being in the world since their conception—something that could be influencing their transformation in ways that are less age dependent than we once thought. Additionally, recent advances in our understanding of the adolescent brain indicate that teenagers may be experiencing transformative learning in a way that is completely unique to their age.

Historically seen as an impediment, an adolescent's brain development precludes them from having adult-like abilities for critical reflection, perspective taking, and rational thinking; yet it also affords them the opportunity to experience transformation from a uniquely pre-adult perspective with much richer, emotion-laden sensations than those only a few years older (Blakemore, 2010). This suggests that adolescents may experience transformative learning from a more extrarational perspective (Cranton, 2006), which means when studying them, we must pay close attention to their non-cognitive ways of knowing, such as imagination, emotion, and interaction with the mythopoetic symbols of their lives (Dirkx, 1997).

An adolescent brain may be more akin to the brain of those who experience the world through a more extrarational lens. It can feel moments in high fidelity, with rich emotions and sensations, meaning that adolescents are more likely have *peak experiences* (Maslow, 1971), or moments that can trigger transformation. These moments seem to be more aligned with Tisdell's (2012) three categories of transformative learning.

Tisdell (2012) described three lenses from which to view transformation. Firstly there are types that can alter our very being, our beliefs, and our core sense of self, which is the key theme by which we live, move, and define our being. A second type moves our hearts and our moods and gives us a glimpse of the Big Questions (Parks, 2011) in life, like what it means to be human, why we're here, what makes the universe go on, and the nature of human consciousness itself (Tisdell, 2012). Often, these Big Questions instill awe and wonder within us, yet they do not necessarily change our core identity or our core theme. Rather, they take our breath away in their profoundness as we move to living more deeply (Schlitz, Vieten, & Amorek, 2008). And a third type of transformative learning experience involves working for social change in a community. People working together to make their communities better as they challenge systems of privilege and oppression (Horton & Freire, 1990) will often transform communities as well as the individuals within (Tisdell, 2012).

An adolescent's brain does not necessarily preclude them from these three lenses of transformation, in fact it may even encourage it. The immature pre-frontal cortex may not be as much of a limitation after all, as the lack of rigidity in beliefs and habits allows adolescents to be more open to new experiences, ideas, and people than they will be at any other time in their life (Blakemore, 2012). The exposure to these new things is vital because a driving force behind the development of the prefrontal cortex is increased social complexity (Dunbar, 2003); thus one

could argue adolescents who are exposed to complex social environments at a young age are more likely to both experience a form of adolescent transformation and develop the traits needed for adult transformative learning.

There is a growing body of research (Kerr, 2014) that suggests adolescents are able to experience something that can alter their very being, beliefs, and core sense of self (Tisdell, 2006) which would cause the field of transformative learning to adapt. Like Walsh (2007) concluded, higher cognition may not be necessary for transformative learning, but instead exposure to social, cultural, and personal complexity may play a greater role.

For example, in their studies Whalley (1995) described the capacity for perspective transformation in cross-cultural settings as high for those under 25, and Hodgson (2007) confirmed this by reporting that participants between the ages of 15-20 were able to experience *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, and *holistic* transformation in a cultural immersion program. Schmidt's (2009) work with adolescents developing a social conscience described that during the process of development, students reported long-term shifts in meaning schemes which matched Mezirowian and Parks' (2011) definitions of transformative learning. This study was complemented by the work of Grider (2011) who studied young adult pool lifeguards who experienced perspective transformations after responding to drowning victims, and Kerr (2014) who researched adolescents changing meaning perspectives on a cultural immersion trip. Both of these studies concluded that transformative learning experiences can be experienced, recognized, and processed by those under 20 years of age.

These studies and the recent understanding of adolescent brain development implores us to better understand just how an adolescent may be experiencing transformative learning from cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual perspectives. Then we can better determine to what degree these experiences may align with adult transformative learning, or are unique in their own right. This author has begun researching this topic for her doctoral dissertation and wishes to determine how the field may respond to these roundtable questions.

Roundtable Questions

1. What role does transformative learning play in adolescence?
2. How may the fields of adolescent development and transformative learning intersect?
3. To what degree are young people's engagements with transformative learning unique to their age group?
4. What are practical ways young people can/have engage/d in holistic experiences with transformation?

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A Mixed-Method Approach to Evaluate Critical Reflection and Transformative Learning for Sustainability Among Graduate Students

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Abstract: Despite the increasing number of teaching-learning experiences of sustainability in business management courses (Annandale & Morrison-Sounders, 2004; Collins & Kearins, 2007; Springett, 2005), and increase in the supply of training programs in sustainability in business schools, we do not know much about the potential of these courses regarding the nature of reflection proposed in these programs and its ability to encourage change in students' mindset toward sustainability. Although the literature indicates some critical reflection (CR) and transformative learning (TL) evaluation tools, we do not have instruments that can capture learning processes, triggering transformative learning in the specific context of sustainability in management courses. This is the aim of this research. By adapting the tools of Kember, Leung, Jones, Loke, Mckay, Sinclair, Tse, Webb, Wong, Wong, & Yeung (2000), Kember, Mckay, Sinclair, & Wong (2008) and King (2009), this research aims to present an instrument to evaluate qualitatively and quantitatively CR and TL within the context of education for the sustainability in management schools.

Introduction

Business organizations and professionals who work therein have been considered to be one of the main reasons for social and environmental problems. Moreover, they are considered to be responsible for solving these problems. Furthermore, international organizations have been significantly focusing on these issues; management schools came to be recognized as one of the key players in the discussion of this management theme. Hence, in the 1990s, the Education for Sustainability (EfS) was incorporated in business schools; since that time, significant focus has been placed on the theme (Starik, Rands, Marcus, & Clark, 2010). Numerous studies have explored this theme and have indicated the challenges for future (Annandale & Morrison-Sounders, 2004; Collins & Kearins, 2007; Springett, 2005; Svoboda, & Whalen, 2004). To include sustainability in these courses means creating a new approach for economic and social development, which integrates both economic issues as well as concerns about environment and social welfare of future generations (Springett, 2005, 2010). However, finding the right balance among the financial, environmental, and social aspects in organization is difficult, especially in the business context, where conflicts, tensions, and paradoxes are considerable. The managers work in an environment of dispute and under a lot of pressure. Simultaneously, they must show financial results and meet the demand of a wide range of stakeholders (Wirtenberg, Lipsky, & Russell, 2008).

From the teaching for sustainability perspective, this complexity becomes even more evident. Teaching managers to act in this new scenario requires a change in the way we usually think the structure of an entire course, which was constructed and marked from a pro-capitalist

vision, seeks profit at any cost, and appreciates the value of the individual interests rather than the collective one (Springett, 2010).

Despite these difficulties, the development of reflective managers on this theme becomes critical to the extent that their critical consciousness and systemic vision motivates them to think about solutions to environmental problems that impact society and threaten the future of humanity (Collins & Kearins, 2007). If we need professionals who review the business plan supported exclusively by the profit maximization ideology (Springett, 2005), it is important to engage them in a kind of reflection that allows them to put in discussion their conceptions, thoughts, behaviors, paradigms, and beliefs about the role of organizations and about their own practices as a manager in this new context.

Seeking to overcome these challenges, researchers have been outlining a conceptual basis to study EfS in higher education, linking it to critical reflection (CR) and transformative learning (TL) (Brunnquell, Brunstein, & Jaime, 2015; Moore, 2005; Moyer, Sinclair, & Diduck, 2014; Springett, 2005; Sterling, 2011). This is because an effective change toward sustainability requires a process of reflection that extends beyond the habitual action and understanding (Kember, Sinclair, & Wong, 2008); however, that involves a deep reflection of the premises, through which the individual re-examines your belief system (perspectives of meaning), as well as becoming aware of why we perceive, think, feel, or act as we do (Mezirow, 1991). From this level of reflection, it is possible to transform the reference patterns of individuals (Mezirow, 2010).

If the intention is to foster a CR that leads to a significant TL toward the social and environmental requirements in business world, it is valuable to understand the learning process of students in sustainability training programs. Solely monitoring experiences of teaching-learning can provide parameters to understand how these students/managers are reflecting and learning about sustainability. The data collection in an MBA course specific to sustainability may raise important questions on every existing criticism related to instrumentality and technicality of traditional courses (Antonacopoulou, 2010), which often adopt a reductionist perspective toward management reality.

However, to do so, we must have tools that help us identify the reflection levels achieved by students and the potential of this reflection to lead to a TL process on these managers. The literature has indicated elements to help researchers to think about mechanisms of evaluation and measurement of this learning process, for instance, the studies by Kember et al. (2000, 2008) and King (2009). Although these authors do not mention sustainability specifically, however, it is possible to adapt their instruments and even expand upon them to evaluate educational experiences for sustainability in the context of business schools.

Based on the proposals of Kember et al. (2000, 2008) and King (2009), this research suggests a mixed-method approach to evaluate CR and TL for sustainability among graduate students.

Literature Review

I discuss two theories in this paper: CR and TL. For CR theory, I discuss the studies by Mezirow (1991), Brookfield (2012), and Kember et al. (2000, 2008). For TL, I discuss briefly the studies by Mezirow (2010) and Cranton e Taylor (2012).

Critical Reflection

The concept that this reflection develops in levels, which might vary from the most superficial to the most profound one, is based on the study by Mezirow (2010). For him, reflection may be a) *on content*, where the individual reflects about the manner in which we perceive, feel, and act in relation to a problem; b) *on process*, where the individual reviews strategies and processes for solving a problem; c) *on premises/assumptions*, where we revisit a previous acquired knowledge—identifying similarities and differences—and such visitation leads to a questioning of the problem in itself: “Why am I thinking about that?” “Is this important?” “Must I worry about that?” This third level of reflection is considered to be the most profound one since it causes a change in the reference schemes.

For Brookfield (2012), the critical thought occurs when we perform four things: (a) we seek to identify the assumptions that influence the manner in which we think and act, (b) we try to evaluate whether our assumptions are valid and reliable as guides for our actions, (c) we see things through different perspectives, and (d) we take informed actions.

However, how to evaluate the reflection ability of these students in a classroom? The study by Kember et. al (2000, 2008) provided a way to deal with this. The authors focus on the identification of reflection processes that can be observed, defining them from four constructs (2000, 2008), established mostly from Mezirow’s theory: habitual action, understanding, reflection and critical reflection.

The *habitual actions* are routine actions, learnt through frequent use and performed automatically, or with little consciousness, for instance, biking or computer typing. *Understanding*, however, is a mind action that uses existing knowledge without evaluating it. The learning is based on pre-existing schemes and perspectives. It is a cognitive process that does not necessarily make students reflect about its meaning in specific and personal situations.

Reflection is an intellectual activity always triggered by the individual’s experience who validates it by causing, creating, or clarifying meanings; it can cause a change in conceptual perspective and even suppositions. The *critical reflection* refers to a high-level reflexive thinking able to transform our significance schemes. Mezirow referred to premise reflection, which involves the consciousness of why we perceive, think, feel, and act. To experience a transformation perspective, it is necessary to recognize that many of our actions are governed by a group of beliefs and values that are almost unconsciously assimilated in a specific environment. Premise reflection requires a critical presumption review. From theoretical elements, Kember et al (2000, 2008) proposed tools to identify quantitatively and qualitatively reflection levels.

In the quantitative proposition, Kember et al. (2000) developed a survey in which the students indicate their agreement level with the proposed statements—five-point Likert scale. In the qualitative proposition, however, Kember et al. (2008) proposed writing texts in which they asked students to write about the learning process in their professional practice. To analyze the texts, the authors developed an analysis log based on the four reflection levels, which can be used as guide to the analysis of the reflection level in written works.

Transformative Learning

TL can be defined as “learning that transforms problematic reference patterns to make them more inclusionary, distinct, reflexive, open, and emotionally able to change” (Mezirow, 2010, p. 22). The author assumed that adults already have reference patterns (suppositions,

values, concepts, and feelings) that are acquired through lifelong experiences. These patterns, however, can be modified through CR of assumptions on which interpretations, beliefs, habits, and perspectives are based, in other words, through what he calls TR. The key idea of this theory is to make the students change the way they see the world, in other words, change their perspective. Therefore, the author proposes 10 phases or 10 steps, which will guide the students in that direction (Mezirow, 2010).

Since Mezirow's first works in the 1970s, many researches have been conducted and their reviewers have brought the theoretical discussion even further, indicating that TL occurs not only at an individual level but also at the group and organization levels. An interest for social context of TL begins to arise, and social change as a target of TL (Cranton & Taylor, 2012) begins to be considered.

After explaining this understanding about TL, how has the literature been presenting tools to evaluate these learning processes? King (2009) developed a tool—*The Learning Activities Survey Questionnaire*—to identify the 10 precursor steps of TL of Mezirow (2010). One of the goals of the questionnaire is to identify if the individual went through some or all of the 10 TL steps, in addition to what was the situation that maximized this transformation and who or what affected the change. This allows to identify the origin of students' change process and to establish relations with CR since it is one of the key steps of TL. This tool was already applied by Brock (2010) in the context of a business management graduation course; however, the focus of his study was not sustainability (case of this research).

From the various ways on how we can benefit from TL in practice, regardless of through individual experience, conversation, consciousness of the context, i.a. (Cranton & Taylor, 2012), we will specifically focus on CR. Therefore, individuals must be exposed to perspectives discrepant from the currently maintained ones, which trigger the disorientating dilemmas. This means to stimulate corporate life dilemmas, using activities and materials that have the potential to lead individuals to observe and criticize their beliefs and assumptions. From the point of view of students' learning process, measuring and analyzing experiences of teaching-learning in courses that propose to do so are important for this context; but, first, we must think of tools that can help to achieve this purpose.

A Proposal to Evaluate CR and TL within the Context of Education for the Sustainability in Management Schools

The proposed tool was adapted for developing future managers for the incorporation of the central idea of sustainability based on the studies by Kember et al (2000, 2008) and King (2009). To observe the reflection levels and understand whether this student thinks reflectively toward the endured teaching-learning experience, the tool was divided into three parts that contains open-ended questions, multiple choices questions and a survey.

The *first part* seeks to identify surveyed individuals' demographic characteristics. The *second part* seeks to understand individuals' learning process. Four open-ended questions are made, asking the student to describe what led him to look for a sustainability management course (question 1), what he thought about sustainability in his professional activity before having started the course (question 2), which knowledge he had before entering the course (question 3), and what new has he learned with the graduating experience (question 4). In question 5, the student answers yes or no, when he is asked if since the beginning of the MBA course, he has had any change in values, beliefs, opinions, or expectations in relation to what he thought about

his role in the company regarding sustainability. The aim is to know if he noticed any transformation since he started the course.

In open questions 6 and 7, the student who asserted that he has experienced a change in the previous question describes how this change was and how he applies this experience in his professional activity practice. These questions were based on King (2009)'s *Learning Activities Survey*, and the aim is to capture the nature of this change.

Questions 8, 9, 10, and 11 aims to determine which experiences may have affected the perspective transformation. The questions seeks to identify whether it was an individual that affected the change and who was it; whether it was an activity promoted in classroom, and what were these activities; whether it was a change outside class that led to that transformation, whether he considers himself someone who thinks that his behavior is sustainable or what he thinks about the importance of sustainability for management practice. In question 11, a series of alternatives is presented; the surveyed individuals were asked to mark the check boxes that pertain to their experience.

Questions 12 and 13 seek to know how active the individual considers himself in relation to sustainability questions inside or outside the organizational context. In question 14, some statements, which represent Mezirow (2010)'s 10 LT steps, are listed. The surveyed individuals were asked to highlight the statements that applied to their situation. This indicated if the surveyed went through a transformation perspective in relation to sustainability.

The *third part* of the questionnaire is an adaptation of the questionnaire developed by Kember et al (2000) to the sustainability context to measure reflection levels. The statement of this quantitative tool was adapted to the sustainability context in business courses.

Since the intention is to accompany the learning process, the tools will be applied in the beginning and in the end of the course, aiming to observe the student development in relation to the reflection levels and TL throughout the course.

As Kember et al. (2008) proposed, the answers to open-ended questions are analyzed on the basis of the protocol of these authors' reflection level identification. See Figure 1.

The present proposition is a multi-method approach because the tool is based on the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.

Table 1.

Protocol guide to analyse levels of reflection

Level of Reflection	What did we seek to evaluate?
Habitual Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer does not show evidence that the student sought to achieve a comprehension of the concept or theory studied in class. • The material was produced without the student putting thought into it or trying to interpret the material or even formed a
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a comprehension about a concept or topic. • The material is limited to theory. • Dependence of textbook or annotations made in class. • Theory is not related to personal experience, neither to real-

Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory is applied to practical situations. • Situations faced in real life will be considered and discussed
Critical Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a change in perspective over a fundamental belief of the understanding of a key concept or phenomenon. • Critical reflection is unlike to happen frequently.

Source: Kember et al. (2008), p. 379

Reflections About the Tool

By presenting a tool proposition adapted from other authors, to accompany the learning process within a sustainability context in business management courses based on CR and TL, some reflections are made necessary. For improving the tool, this study proposes the following: (a) do they fulfil their goal to capture CR and TL? (b) are there other instruments that could be used? (c) could the proposed instrument be improved? (d) as an unique instrument, can it facilitate the comprehension of relation between CR and LT?

All this discussion concerning the instrument and its subsequent application can enable other important contributions: 1) theoretical—to seek to establish relations between CR and TL and how this is reflected in the teaching of sustainability in management courses; 2) methodology—to create a tool to assess and measure CR and TL in graduate courses that can be replicated and adapted by different educational institutions; 3) practice—to describe the implications of this experience in business education that can also serve as an influence for other teachers and other disciplines as well, leading to a reconsideration of the instrumental teaching model that supports most of the courses in graduate management for sustainability.

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Transformative Global Learning through Storytelling

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Abstract: Understanding different perspectives is essential to navigating increasingly complex and interconnected worlds and for embracing cultural differences. In this paper we explore how storytelling can be intentionally used to design transformative global learning experiences. Global learning produces knowledge based on collective, diverse and global processes resulting in different and contextualized knowledge. Developing intercultural competence can be seen as a transformative outcome of the global learning processes. Storytelling supports critical thinking and can facilitate changes in perspectives, identity, and consciousness, and is therefore a powerful tool that can support transformative global learning.

Transformative Global Learning through Storytelling

When a worker is sent to foreign countries to conduct business, organizations often ask if they understand the language and culture of their destination, but seldom inquire whether or not the individual has the capacity to embrace the cultural differences they encounter. Similarly, when a college student embarks on a study abroad trip, they may recognize ways the host culture is different from their own, but may not critically reflect upon the ways their interactions with difference might lead to transformations in their own perspectives, sense of self, and consciousness. As the boundaries between local, global, international, and intercultural become increasingly tenuous in our highly interconnected world, supporting transformative learning to further enhance capacity for empathy amongst adults who live, work, and travel in intercultural environments is becoming increasingly important. We are interested in exploring how storytelling might serve as a means to promote transformative global learning, where perspectives, identity, and consciousness shift toward more interculturally empathetic frames.

In this paper, we use the term global learning as defined by Khan & Agnew (2015), but also draw on the concept of intercultural competence (Taylor, 1994), which we argue can be a part of global learning. We begin by briefly defining what we mean by global learning, storytelling, and transformative learning, and then outline the existing intersections between storytelling, transformative learning, and global learning in the scholarly literature. Building upon this literature, we illustrate how storytelling can be used as a tool for supporting global learning, leading to transformations of perspectives, identity, and consciousness. We demonstrate how global learning can be supported with storytelling techniques and by implementing Taylor's (1994) empirical model of learning to become interculturally competent. Finally, we call for more empirical studies that focus on the intersections between storytelling, transformative learning, and global learning and for more systematic use of storytelling as a means for facilitating transformative global learning.

Defining Global Learning, Storytelling, and Transformative Learning

Kahn & Agnew (2015) define the foundations of global learning as:

1. Emphasizing learning processes.
2. Engaging with complexity.
3. Viewing the world through relational, plural, and contextualized perspectives.
4. Acknowledging the importance of self-reflection and the interconnected nature of human's lives.
5. The ability to navigate micro and macro phenomena.
6. Understanding through collective knowledge production.
7. Acknowledging responsibility and taking action.
8. Recognizing the roles of disorientation and disagreement.

Difference and contextualized knowledge is essential to global learning and requires learners to accept multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives across diverse contexts (Kahn & Agnew, 2015). Taylor's (1994) concept of intercultural competence, which is defined as the capacity to adapt to, integrate with, and effectively accommodate the pressures that come from living in a foreign country, fits within Khan & Agnew's (2015) definition of global learning and could be considered one type of global learning.

Storytelling is often an untapped strategy for facilitating learning (Tyler, 2007) that gives voice to marginalized individuals (Chen, 2012). In this paper we use Czarniawska's (2004) definition of story to distinguish narratives as purely chronological accounts from stories, which are defined as emplotted narratives with at least a beginning, an intervening event, and a conclusion. Video and photographs can also meet the criteria of storytelling and thus stories can be told via text, orally, and digitally. Storytelling is a powerful tool that can be used by facilitators interested in drawing forth the narrative of global experiences, facilitating transformative learning by helping individuals deepen their awareness of the intercultural contexts they have experienced, and surfacing the way in which their view of that context may have transformed how they see themselves in the world.

Mezirow (1991) defined transformative learning as a process of critical self-reflection that changes the meaning perspectives (or the frames by which an individual makes meaning about experience) in order to "...allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience," (p. xvi). While Mezirow's theory describes the process of transformation after it occurred, Tyler (2007) and Taylor (1994) offer a process of initiating learning with the potential to transform. Given the increasing need for individuals to be able to see the world from the vantage point of global citizenship, we assert that strategies and tools are needed to both capture and describe transformative global experiences, but also to initiate transformation of global perspectives.

Intersections in the Literature

Transformative Learning and Global Learning

Intercultural encounters trigger transformative learning experiences. For instance, Kasworm and Bowles (2012) argue that cross cultural and intercultural programs like study abroad create powerful transformative learning environments. In studies of immigration, it has been shown that newcomers go through three stages of adaptation to a new cultural context with only the last stage being understood as a "transformative moment" when newcomers have sufficiently integrated their own learning that they can help others in the integration process

(Lange, 2015). Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014) examined the international experiences of undergraduates and identified four triggers that may change existing frames of reference such as, “immersing with local customs and people, experiencing the novelty of ‘normality’, finding time for self-reflection, and communicating in a new language” (p. 671). Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014) consider these triggers “antecedents of a transformation of frames of reference” (p. 671).

In Taylor's (1994) empirical study on intercultural competency and transformative learning, he found similar patterns of learning to become interculturally competent regardless of the participants' diversity, the host country that the participants lived in, or their previous lived experiences. Taylor's (1994) findings show that learning is recursive, repeats continuously as a participant becomes increasingly interculturally competent, and demonstrates that readiness for change is essential to the process of perspective transformation in intercultural environments. Mezirow's (1991) concept of the disorienting dilemma is similar to the concepts of cultural disequilibrium or culture shock that push participants to change (Taylor, 1994). Taylor notes that Mezirow's (1991) model does not adequately address the role of emotions in disorienting dilemmas because his concept of perspective transformation emphasizes rationality, logic, critical analysis, and planned action. Because storytelling often utilizes and evokes emotions in powerful ways, bringing aspects of storytelling to the existing literature may help bring new insight to the affective components of transformative learning and global learning.

Kahn & Agnew (2015) directly connect global learning and transformative learning noting that global learning requires an individual to step out of their own perspectives and into the perspectives of others, to allow themselves to redefine their identities as complex and relational, and to view themselves through a process of conscientization (Freire, 1984). They argue that global learning requires deliberate design of curriculum so that students can explore their assumptions and biases, and that transformative learning occurs when individuals change their frames of reference after critically reflecting on them. Although Khan & Agnew (2015) do not mention storytelling directly, storytelling could be used as a tool to deliberately engage in transformative learning.

Transformative Learning and Storytelling

According to Tyler (2007), storytelling is a form of self-reflection that can spark critical thinking processes that place emotions at the center. Because storytelling contributes to critical thinking processes, they are connected to the processes of transformative learning outlined by Mezirow (1991). Tisdell (2003) argued that transformative learning is a transformation of narratives that can arise from the act of engaging in personal storytelling, coupled with group inquiry. This perspective on transformative learning theory has been identified as a cultural-spiritual perspective (Taylor, 2008), and is a view that directly ties the act of storytelling to the process of transformative learning and refers to changes in perspectives, identity, and consciousness. As Kegan (2000) argued, transformative learning is a change not only in what we know, but how we know, and storytelling may serve as a powerful tool to support this examination. For example, one of the authors who is a white woman married to a black professor with children of mixed race, heard how her neighbor once alleged that his new neighbors (her family) were a black professor, his children, and a “white babysitter”. We wonder, what led this neighbor to “know” that the author was not the mother of her children, but rather, a “white babysitter?”

Storytelling, Global Perspectives, and Transformative Learning

Andenoro, Popa, Bletscher, and Albert (2012) argue that storytelling and narrative can be used as a way for learners to develop their identity and examine their emotions in micro and macro global environments. By encouraging reflective practice through storytelling, facilitators help learners understand how their experience is a transformative learning experience (Mezirow, 1991). In a review of two prominent educational leadership journals, Blakesly (2010) argued that narrative and biographical storytelling could demonstrate the transformative nature of learning when non-indigenous school principals reflect on their lives in indigenous Yukon contexts. Leading storytelling can encourage openness, self-awareness, empathy, and the development of understanding between diverse populations.

Nguyen (2014) reflected on her experience facilitating and evaluating Middle Eastern adult learner's experiences abroad at the American University in Dubai, and touched upon aspects of storytelling, global perspectives and transformative learning. Nguyen's (2014) female students used stories of their lived experiences to bring consciousness of their world view and experiences as women pursuing higher education, which often challenged the assumptions of the male students in the group. Nguyen (2014) found that perspective taking and story was a powerful tool that helped lead to a thoughtful consciousness about different experiences. Her research supported Brookfield's (1991) assertion that transformations occur as the result of thinking critically about our taken-for-granted assumptions. Her research also concurred with Baumgartner's (2001) claim that sharing experience encourages transformative learning. Although, Nguyen (2014) did not conduct an empirical study, her reflections demonstrate that deliberate empirical studies at the intersections of storytelling, global perspectives, and transformative learning could serve as rich sources for analysis and learning.

A Model for Storytelling as a Support Tool for Developing Global Perspectives

Literature at the intersections of storytelling, global learning, and transformative learning suggest that transformations of perspectives, identity, and consciousness can take place, but few empirical studies consider how a facilitator might use storytelling to support global learning. An example of how storytelling might be used as a support tool can be seen in Taylor's (1994) model of learning to become interculturally competent.

Taylor's (1994) process of learning to be interculturally competent involved five steps:

1. Setting the stage, or the context of learning readiness.
2. Cultural disequilibrium, which is comparable to 'culture shock' and disorienting dilemmas.
3. Cognitive orientations that can be of either a nonreflective or reflective orientation.
4. Behavioral learning strategies as observer, participant, and friend.
5. Evolving intercultural identity leading to changes in values, an increase in self-confidence, and a change in perspective or world-view.

At each stage of this cyclical model, storytelling can be used by facilitators to guide transformative learning around developing global perspectives.

Setting the Stage

Taylor (1994) notes that former critical events, personal goals, and previous intercultural experience training are important features of setting the stage for developing intercultural competence. This is supported by the work of Root and Ngampornchai (2013) that found that immersion in another culture is not necessarily enough to raise intercultural competence but that

“predeparture training, support during the experience, and follow-up is crucial” (p. 529). A facilitator who is engaging with adult learners who are about to travel to a host country might consider having the adult learners tell stories about critical incidents to explore their assumptions (Brookfield, 1991) about a host culture, explore narratives about the personal goals they have for travel in order to unpack assumptions—perhaps utilizing journal writing (Lukinsky, 1991), or telling stories about their previous intercultural experiences in a group setting as a way to learn through reflecting about their life histories in a group setting (Dominice, 1991). These methods of storytelling can help a facilitator prepare adult learners for intercultural interactions by helping bring aspects of the individual's perspectives and identity into consciousness.

Cultural Disequilibrium

Cultural disequilibrium (similar to culture shock and disorienting dilemmas) are periods of dissonance where an individual may be pushed to reevaluate or change their taken-for-granted assumptions about intercultural phenomena (Taylor, 1994; Kahn & Agnew, 2015). Storytelling might assist in both provoking cultural disequilibrium in cases where a group of adults will not be travelling to a host country, or where a facilitator would like to challenge the adult learners to experience cultural disequilibrium before travelling to a host country, and assisting learners to transition through cultural disequilibrium through group sharing of individual reflections. Transformational learning can happen with any encounter with difference, so leaving the classroom or country is not a requirement for transformative learning experiences to take place (Braskamp, 2013; Kahn & Agnew, 2015). Facilitators might consider using story through photos or films to help provoke emotional cultural disequilibrium either before, during, or after travelling to a host country. Sharing stories digitally with individuals currently living in different countries may also support critical reflection and transformation of global perspectives, as digital stories have been found to assist with transformative global citizen education (Truong-White & McLean, 2015). Since previous experiences can also help ease learners’ transitions through cultural disequilibrium, story sharing in a group of adult learners who can speak to their previous experiences with intercultural differences can help foster learning.

Cognitive Orientations

Taylor (1994) distinguishes between nonreflective orientations that include "thoughtful action" and capture the more embodied and extrarational ways of knowing and reflective orientations that involve deep critical thinking and conscious examinations of the self and assumptions in intercultural competence development. Storytelling can connect nonreflective orientation and reflective orientation by bringing thoughtful actions to light, subjecting them to critical thinking and conscious examination at an individual level or in a group setting. Facilitators might encourage adult learners to tell their stories about critical intercultural interactions and invite others to probe them to unpack their assumptions together. Film and photos can also be used to create a nonreflective orientation that can later be brought into reflective orientation when a facilitator or other group members ask critically reflective questions about those stories.

Behavioral Learning Strategies

The observer (listening, watching, reading), participant (talking, socializing, etc.), and friend (committing, risking, sharing) behavioral strategies can be enhanced using storytelling as a support tool (Taylor, 1994). To enhance observer strategies, an adult learner might listen to, watch, or read the stories of individuals from the host culture. To enhance participant strategies, an adult learner might engage in telling their own stories of intercultural experience with other

adult learners, becoming an active storyteller themselves in everyday interactions. Friend strategies can be enhanced, similar to the participant strategies, by using stories as an invitation to engage in dialogue and empathetic listening and telling. By considering these behavioral learning strategies, a facilitator can invite storytelling into various steps of learning intercultural competence.

Evolving Intercultural Identity

Learning to become interculturally competent also involves the development of an evolving intercultural identity that can consist of changes in values, increasing self-confidence, and changes in perspective or world-view (Taylor, 1994). Listening to and telling stories of critical intercultural incidents and engaging in critical reflection about those stories can help support an evolving intercultural identity throughout the process of learning to become interculturally competent.

Conclusion and a Call to Action

Sharing personal experiences can help bring concrete and vivid meaning to abstract concepts and create shared points of reference for participants to explore and test together (Kolb, 1984). Storytelling is one way to accomplish this process of sharing experience through a variety of activities that fall into our conception of storytelling such as, personal journal writing, role playing, personal stories, storytelling, sharing experience with others, visualizations, imaginative activities, and empathy-taking activities (Kohonen, 2007). These experiential learning activities could be deliberately used by facilitators to help adult learners begin critically reflecting upon their own taken for granted assumptions and their identities. We recommend that facilitators utilize storytelling as a deliberate way to encourage transformation through global learning amongst adult learners, whether they are travelling abroad to work, learn, or live. A facilitator may also utilize storytelling to support adult learners engage in global learning without having to leave their local learning environment. We recommend using storytelling as a support for implementing Taylor's (1994) model of developing intercultural competency and we encourage scholars to engage in more empirical research that addresses the connections between storytelling, global perspectives, and transformative learning.

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**International
Transformative Learning
Conference
XII**

**Pacific Lutheran University
Tacoma, WA, USA**

20-23 October 2016



**Theme:
Engaging at the Intersections**

In these times of disruption and challenge, we are constantly asked to explore our assumptions and the ways we engage the world. The theory and practice of transformative learning provides a home in which you can further explore this and contribute to the ongoing evolution of transformative learning.

We invite educators, consultants, facilitators, practitioners, researchers and students from around the world to join in exploring the nature and practice of transformative learning at the intersections.

THE ORIGIN OF THE THEME

This theme is derived from both the significance of the host location, Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, USA, and from the provocative work of the XI conference, "Spaces of Transformation and Transformation of Space" where we asked ourselves how we shape our spaces and how they shape us. In 2016, as a conference community we move from exploring the spaces of transformation to now exploring the intersectional potential of those spaces.

Transformative Learning and the Theme

Fundamentally, an intersection in the context of human activity is where disparate ideas, activities and systems jostle for attention. The robust image of the town square comes to mind as the primary intersection where people come together for commerce, debate, worship, governance, entertainment, socializing, protest and more. Thus the square and its intersecting pathways are alive with energy, activity, clash and chaos.

To take the metaphor further, intersections can also be places of innovation as well as the location of disparity. Intersections are places of contact and connection at many different levels and in many contexts simultaneously: individuals, cultures, races/ethnicities, organizations, institutions, professions, disciplines, nations, and systems. Intersections are full of possibilities for transformation and influence. A primary question of our work is how can we be more intentional and creative in our interactions at these points of connection for the purpose of transformative learning?

<p>Proposal deadline</p> <p>Open 15 October 2015</p> <p>Close 1 February 2016</p> 	<p>To submit the proposal:</p> <p>http://transformativelearning.ning.com/page/theme-2016</p> 	<p>Transformative learning Social community</p> <p> https://www.facebook.com/groups/116studentalliancecommittee/</p> <p> https://twitter.com/transformativelearning</p> 
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As such we will come together in October 2016 to consider and share:

- How can we be more intentional and creative in our interactions at these points of connection for the purpose of transformative learning?
- What aspects of life connect and jostle for attention at the intersections, and how do these connections create potential for transformative learning?
- What intersection do you work in; what are the combinations you seek that hold transformative potential?
- How is our collective work grounded in transformative learning theory? How does our work affirm, challenge, critique and expand the body of theory?



How to submit a proposal

- 1 Write the type of proposal you want to submit
- 2 Submit proposal through All Academic Site
- 3 Follow the prompts on All Academic to submit your proposal

Types of proposals

1

PAPER PROPOSALS & PRESENTATIONS

All papers must deal with transformative learning. Please be clear about how you use this concept. Indicate the focus of your paper. Papers should be based either on:

- Research (quantitative or qualitative, action research, case study, meta-analysis, etc.)
- Theory (conceptual study, model or theory development, etc.)
- Specific practice (formal setting, community-based, online learning, democratic setting, etc.)

Paper presentations will be grouped based on themes. Presentation sessions include opportunities to dialogue with participants.

2

EXPERIENTIAL & WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Experiential sessions demonstrate transformative learning practices through creative, interactive formats. These sessions demonstrate integration of theory and practice, based on your experience with a particular practice format or theoretical frame. We encourage use of video, drama, graphic arts, poetry, and other art forms, recognizing that sometimes the method is the means. The proposal should address the time allocation of the 90 minute session, the elements of transformative learning theory referred to the session, and participant involvement.

3

SYMPOSIA

Proposals for Symposia follow the same guidelines as paper proposals & presentation. They should include a group of at least 3-5 authors discussing contradictory, antagonistic or complementary points of view related to a shared topic. International collaboration is desirable.

4

ROUNDTABLES

Roundtables are opportunities to discuss new research or work in progress in an informal, group context. Presenters should indicate the questions the author/s would like to discuss.

SCHOLAR-TO-SCHOLAR

The scholar-to-scholar session melds the traditional poster session with targeted, intimate conversation. Participants will prepare a poster and are assigned specific scholars with whom to engage during the session. This creates the opportunity to both share your work with the larger community and have one-on-one conversations with scholars who have read your work.

This session will be held in an expansive space that is conducive to quiet conversation.

Note: Due to limited conference space, the conference committee may invite some submissions in the first four categories (Papers, Experiential Workshops, Symposia, Roundtables) to present instead in the scholar-to-scholar format. This will be clearly communicated in response to your proposal.

Timeline

<p>Accepting proposal submissions</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>October 2015</p> <p>15</p> <p>Open</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>February 2016</p> <p>1</p> <p>Close</p> </div> </div>	<p>Accept/Reject Notification</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>April 2016</p> <p>15</p> </div>	<p>Registration Opens</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>April 2016</p> <p>15</p> </div>	<p>Upload Final Paper</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>July 2016</p> <p>15</p> </div>
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The conference design will uphold International Transformative Learning Conference standards of theoretical rigor, high hospitality and communal experience. We invite you to join this community through authentic engagement with other scholars and practitioners who care about the transformative potential of learning. The campus and the larger Tacoma area will also be used to engage the intersections of transformative learning.

[Consult the website for conference and preconference details, registration, hotel, fees, etc.](#)

CONFERENCE DESIGN

Please check our website for updates on pre-conference events, conference design and special events. Registration details will be posted on our website:

<http://transformativelearning.ning.com/page/theme-2016>



STEERING COMMITTEE

- Amanda Feller, Pacific Lutheran University
Steering Committee Chair & Conference Host
- Steve Schapiro, Fielding Graduate University
- Mikhail Burstein, University of Arizona
- Urusa Fahim, Independent Educator, Pakistan
- Placida Gallegos, Fielding Graduate University
- Chad Hoggan, North Carolina State University
- Victoria Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia
- Claudio Melacarne, University of Siena
- Aliki Nicolaides, University of Georgia - Athens
- Stacey Robbins, Texas State University
- Ellen Scully-Russ, George Washington University
- Dave Veazey, Pacific Lutheran University

Sponsors:
Pacific Lutheran University
Fielding Graduate University

APPENDIX II
STATISTICS

ITLC 2016 by the Numbers

	A. Submitted In Category	B. Rejected	C. Accepted Total	D. % of Acceptance	E. Accepted in category submitted	F. % of Acceptance in category submitted	G. Accepted in another category (-)	H. Moved Into this Category (+)	I. Withdrawn by Author(s) Or not submitted (-)	J. Total in Category on Schedule (=)
Experiential	45	13	32	71%	30	67%	2	0	4	24
Individual Papers	106	23	83	78%	72	68%	0	11	5	78
Roundtable	19	3	16	84%	9	47%	7	0	5	4
Symposium	8	1	7	88%	4	50%	3	0	1	4
Pre-Conference	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	1
Overall	Total Submitted = 178	Total Rejected = 40	Total Accepted =138	Average Acceptance Rate = 80%			12	12	15	111
										111 + 15 + 12 = 138 Accepted

- A. "Submitted in Category" = the category type each submitter selected of four proposal categories: (1) Experiential Session, (2) Individual Paper, (3) Roundtable Session, or (4) Symposium. (Pre-Conference and Scholar-to-Scholar are categories that emerged from the scientific review process.)
- B. "Rejected" = the number of proposals rejected. Each was initially read by two reviewers, scoring the proposal on 5-8 criterion using a 1(lowest) to 5 (highest) scale and giving an Accept or Reject recommendation. Each proposal and the reviews were read by two other individuals. Those proposals which received two reject recommendations were rejected. Some proposals that received a split recommendation were accepted or rejected on a variety of factors: reviewer comments, reviewer scoring, second round reviews, space constraints, etc.
- C. "Accepted Total" = the total number of proposals submitted in the category that were accepted, regardless of final type in the scheduling process.
- D. "Percentage of Acceptance" = the % of proposals submitted in a category that were accepted, regardless of final type in the scheduling process.
- E. "Accepted in Category Submitted" = the number of proposals that were accepted and scheduled as the category the authors intended.
- F. "Percentage of Acceptance in the Category" = the % of proposals that were accepted and scheduled as the same category submitted.
- G. "Accepted in Another Category" = the number of proposals accepted but moved to another category.
- H. "Moved into this Category" = the number of proposals that were moved into this category from another.
- I. "Withdrawn by authors or not Submitted" = the number of proposals that were never finalized as papers and withdrawn from scheduling.
- J. "Total in Category on Schedule" = the final count as in the program and on the schedule

International Transformative Learning Conference

Oct. 20-23rd



XII

2016

Tacoma, Washington