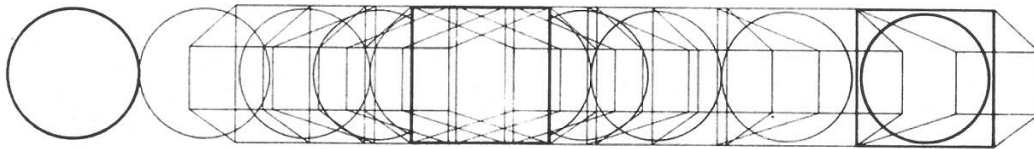


**FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING**

***Transformative Learning in Action:
Building Bridges Across Contexts
and Disciplines***

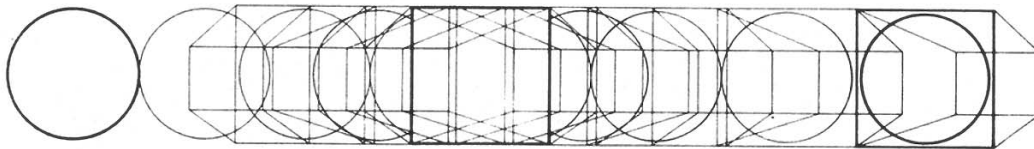


**In cooperation with:
The Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation
Teachers College Columbia University
525 West 120th St.
New York, NY 10027**

**Teachers College, Columbia University
October 23 - 25, 2003**

**PROCEEDINGS OF
THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING**

***Transformative Learning in Action:
Building Bridges Across Contexts
and Disciplines***



Teachers College, Columbia University

October 23 - 25, 2003

**Proceedings Editors:
Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner
Susan R. Meyer
Nancy Lloyd Pfhal
Peter G. Neaman**

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Rachel Ciporen

Dr. Terry Maltbia

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Krystina Pawlak

Dr. Nancy Lloyd Pfahl

Sandra Hayes

Dr. Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner, Conference Coordinator

"Thinking of things as if they could be otherwise," a phrase adopted from Maxine Greene's essay of the same title, captures the spirit and focus of this conference. (Maxine Greene, *Variations on a Blue Guitar*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2001, p. 116). Led by a group of conference presenters and leaders, participants will explore a diversity of perspectives on transformative learning and the various contexts where it can happen. The conference will juxtapose conceptions, practices, ideologies and epistemologies in conversation with each other, exploring differing definitions and visions of transformative learning.

Transformative learning is the process by which we call into question our taken for granted frames of reference (habits of mind or mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. Transformative learning often involves deep, powerful emotions or beliefs and is evidenced in action. "We experience a sense of surprise oftentimes, an acute sense that things may look otherwise, feel otherwise, be otherwise than we have assumed" and suddenly the world seems new, with possibilities still to be explored (Greene, 2001, p. 116).

We invite you to come together in community through authentic engagement with other scholars and practitioners who care about the transformative potential of learning and other related issues. Participants will focus on transformative learning for individuals, groups, organizations, and communities through various conference venues:

Papers, innovative sessions, workshops, and artistic representations of transformative learning will be presented by scholars from around the world.

Dialogue groups, reflective opportunities, will follow the presentations to contextualize and explore, with a group of participants who share a practice area or interest, what the speakers presented.

Personal reflection on keynote presentations, individual reflection activities, will follow each keynote presentation or panel, giving participants time to integrate their own thinking related to the topic.

Learning circles and interest groups will be led by conference leaders, meeting with groups of participants, to explore topics they are planning to research in the future. By exploring common areas, interests, or experiences, participants will have an opportunity to further their own thinking and to provide helpful perspectives on an issue.

A *research agenda* will further the field of transformative learning.

**FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSFORMATIVE
LEARNING TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN ACTION:
BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS CONTEXTS AND DISCIPLINES
Teachers College, Columbia University
October 23 - 25, 2003**

Thursday, October 23

8:00 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Conference Introduction

Victoria J. Marsick
William J. Baldwin
Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner

9:30 a.m. Panel on Different Theoretical Perspectives:

Jack Mezirow, Coordinator
Peter Coleman -- Transformative Conflict Resolution
Patricia Cranton -- A Jungian Perspective on Transformative
Learning
Jack Mezirow -- Epistemology of Adult Knowing
Ed O'Sullivan -- The Ecological Terrain of Transformative
Learning
Carlos Torres -- Critical Pedagogy

10:45 a.m. Dialogue with Panel Presenters

11:30 a.m. Break

11:45 a.m. Paper Presentations

12:45 p.m. Lunch

2:00 p.m. Keynote Presentation

Robert Kegan

3:00 p.m. Reflection in Large Gathering

3:30 p.m. Break

3:45 p.m. Dialogue Groups by Contexts

5:00 p.m. Evening Arts Options (Explored with Transformative Interest)

Friday, October 24

8:00 a.m. Learning Circles in Breakfast Areas

9:00 a.m. Paper Presentations

10:15 a.m. Paper Presentations

11:30 a.m. Concurrent Sessions:

John Broughton – Media in Transformative Learning
Dean Elias and John Dirkx – Jungian Perspectives and Spirituality
Elizabeth Kasl and Lyle Yorks – Mapping the Territory: Finding
Your Way with Presentational Knowing
Sharon Lamm
Vanessa Sheared
Kate Unger, Jennifer Locraft Cuddapah, and Katie Armstrong –
Synergies—Transformative Learning and New Teacher
Support: Connections, Communities, Complexities

12:30 p.m. Lunch

2:00 p.m. Panel on Research

Terry Maltbia, Coordinator
Pierre Dominice -- Transforming Biography through the Process of
Transformative Learning
Juanita Johnson-Bailey -- Enjoining Positionality and Power in
Narrative Research: Balancing Contentious and Modulating
Forces
Terrence E. Maltbia -- Strategic Learning Capabilities for
Leveraging Diversity: A Process of Personal and
Organizational Transformation.
Sharan Merriam -- The Relationship between Cognitive
Development and Transformative Learning: A Research
Agenda
Ed Taylor -- Looking Back Five Years: A Critical Review of
Transformative Learning Theory

3:30 p.m. Dialogue in Main Room

3:45 p.m. Break

- 4:00 p.m. Keynote Presentation
Carlos Alberto Torres
Globalization and Education: Critical Remarks
- 5:00 p.m. Reflection in large gathering
- 5:30 p.m. Dialogue Groups by Interest Areas
- 6:30 p.m. Book Signing and Reception in Macy Gallery

Saturday, October 25

- 8:00 a.m. Learning Circles in Breakfast Areas
- 9:00 a.m. Panel on Practice
Kathy King, Coordinator
Dorothy Ettling -- Development of Women
Kathy King – Facing the Music: What Happens When Theory Comes to the Classroom?
Knud Illeris -- Defense and Resistance towards Transformative Learning
Victoria Marsick -- Opportunities and Limits of Transformation in Organizations
Vanessa Sheared -- Inclusion & Afro-centrist
- 10:00 a.m. Dialogue
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 10:45 a.m. Paper Presentations
- 12:00 p.m. Dialogue Groups by Context areas
- 12:45 p.m. Lunch
Video Screening
"Exclusions & Awakenings: The Life of Maxine Greene"
- 2:15 p.m. Keynote Presentation – Maxine Greene
The Arts Against Apathy: Openings to Transformation
- 3:30 Reflection in Large Group

3:45 p.m. Break

4:00 p.m. Closing Session –

“Hachijo” -- Manhattan Taiko, Japanese Drum Ensemble
A Photo Reflection on the Building Bridges Across Contexts and
Disciplines – Peter Nieman and Terry Maltbia

5:00 p.m. ACE/AEGIS Reception

Optional Sunday Post-Conference on Spirituality

9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

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Rethinking Transformative Learning and the concept of 'Critical Reflection' through the Paradigm of Complexity

Michel Alhadeff, University of Geneva, Switzerland

Abstract: *Taking as a point of departure the diversity of writings developed around the concept of "Critical Reflection", this paper outlines various ways to organize them beyond the traditional epistemological, theoretical and practical compartmentalizations. Through the introduction of seven principles illustrating the Paradigm of Complexity (Edgar Morin), a heuristic approach is proposed to revisit one's own look on such a field.*

Keywords: critical reflection, Paradigm of Complexity, Edgar Morin

Introduction

The project of this paper is born from the double gap, cultural and epistemological, I have experienced during the two last years. The first appeared to me when, at the beginning of my PhD project, I was confronted with the fact that even if the French-speaking field of Adult Education carries implicitly different kinds of *Critically Reflective Practice*, it still appears that *Critical Reflection*, as a concept, does not explicitly exist in French, as it does in English (Bézille & Le Grand, 2002). Frustrated by such an observation, I have been progressively raised to investigate works related to this issue, as developed by British and North-American authors (Alhadeff, 2002). In the framework of this paper, *Critical Reflection* (CR) will be broadly defined as the capacity to challenge the assumptions through which one gives meaning to one's own experience following a purpose of emancipation. For a Swiss French-speaking researcher, the English-speaking literature in education regarding the idea of critique (*Transformative Learning, Critical Thinking, Critical / Radical Pedagogies, Critical Feminist / Multiculturalist Pedagogies, postmodern positions*, etc.) represents a background full of interest because it offers multiple ways to describe and conceptualize it. At the same time, for the careful reader who respects the contribution of each author and who is worried about articulating the different epistemological traditions and fields of practice, such a compartmentalized literature is the ground of numerous questions. As Brookfield (2000) showed, *Critical Reflection* cannot be considered as a univocal concept. The ways researchers and practitioners conceive CR depends on their own epistemological backgrounds (Critical Social Theory, psychoanalytical / psychotherapeutical traditions, logic and analytic philosophy, pragmatist constructivism, postmodernism, feminism, etc.) and their own field of practice (schools, universities, adult education, etc.) It is here, the second gap appeared for me: if, for almost 30 years, an extensive literature considering CR in different specific ways has been developed in the English-speaking field of education, it seems particularly relevant to underline the discrepancy between the richness of these sources and the few attempts of articulation between them (e.g. Burbules & Berk, 1999; Brookfield, 1995, 2000; Garrison, 1991; Gore, 1993; Mezirow, 1998; Usher, Bryant & Johnston, 1997). Indeed, beyond the multiplicity of writings, questions remain: what are their similarities and their differences? How can we think about their articulation? As an external observer in regard to this field, I perceive such issues as a core challenge. From an epistemological and theoretical point of view, it raises the question as to how to define how connecting and take benefit of the diversity of CR? From a practical one, it necessarily brings me, as a practitioner, to wonder what epistemological / theoretical framework I should use in my

specific practice? In other words, the main questions at this time would not be so much to define which theory would be most relevant in a given context, but instead: (1) How to organize their multiplicity and their various dimensions? (2) How to take into consideration specific positions of each researcher/practitioner? And finally, (3) how to think about the relationships between the diversity of this literature and the specificity of one's own position; i.e. one's own identity?

Because each of the existing theories about CR already gives specific perspectives on these issues, my position is not to look for a 'new' theory, but instead to participate in an attempt to organize them in a way which goes beyond the traditional compartmentalizations between modernist and post-modernist positions, emancipatory or instrumental approaches, rational or feeling-focused ones, individualist or collaborative ones, to go beyond the distinctions between theoreticians and practitioners, school teachers and adult trainers, etc. To do it, one needs an epistemological anchorage which allows us to take into consideration the "disorder" inherent in the diversity of approaches and subjects, and in the same time, the "order" inherent to a scientific theory and an organized practice. Following the considerations of Morin (1990) about the potential "blindness" of traditional epistemologies (objectivist-modernist and subjectivist-interpretivist-postmodern, as well), it appeared relevant to me to try to inscribe my reflection on the *Paradigm of Complexity* to go beyond some of their disjunctive and reductive dimensions (argued either in the name of "objectivity" and "universality" or "subjectivity" and "relativism"). In many respects, such an attempt can be seen as directly related to some of the reflections developed by Wilson and Hayes (2000) about practical resistances and theoretical limitations encountered in attempts to implement a *Critically Reflective Practice*.

The Paradigm of Complexity as Developed by Edgar Morin

Initially inspired by the theory of information (Shannon, Hartley, Weaver), cybernetic (Wiener), systemic theory (Von Bertalanffy), and writings about self-organization (Von Neumann, Von Foerster, Atlan, Prigogine), the paradigm of complexity slowly appeared in the work of Morin at the end of the '60s to progressively become in the early '70s the central feature of his research in the field of anthropology of knowledge. Going beyond a narrow understanding of some of these theories (as illustrated by *engineering* or *system analysis*), Morin proposes a work located at the junction between philosophy, physical, natural and human sciences. His reflection appears fundamentally grounded in the writings of philosophers as Pascal, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Adorno, Horkheimer, as well as Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos and Feyerabend. At the heart of his position stands the assumption that the main (dangerous) mistake characterizing and limiting the contemporary scientific field is that it is grounded in a paradigm of simplification (*paradigme de simplification*), locked in principles including disjuncture, reduction and abstraction. In such a perspective, the thought of Morin is grounded in the necessity to become aware of the limits and the dangers of such a mode of organizing knowledge (especially denouncing the separation between physics, biology and human sciences and compartmentalization of the specialized sub-divisions). From this point, one of the purposes of his project is to legitimize (from a philosophical, scientific and epistemological background) the necessity to conceive a way of thinking able to deal with the real complexity of the physical and the biological worlds, as well as the world of knowledge and ideas. From this perspective, the ambition of a *Complex Thought* is grounded, both in the integration of simplifying ways of thinking as they appear in the traditional conception of Science (but refusing to accept their mutilating, reductionist and one-dimensional consequences), and also in the research of articulation between disciplinary fields (but refusing to fall in the trap of an omniscient way of

thinking which would deny the ever-evolving life of knowledge and its permanent uncertainty). According to Morin, a *Complex Thought* develops a multidimensional way of thinking driven by a perpetual strain between aspirations of a non-compartmentalized / non-reductionist knowledge and the recognition of the ever-evolving dimension of knowledge.

Knowing its extent, the work of Morin can be comprehended through various lenses: through its epistemological, theoretical and philosophical backgrounds and the ways they are connected to each other, through developed notions (energy, order / disorder, organization / auto-organization, uncertainty, autonomy / dependence, rationality / rationalization, etc.), through its metaphors and analogies (micro and macro physical, biological, and social, etc.), through its privileged logic (circular instead of linear), or through its methodology (multidimensionality). Because they appear as core concepts, I have chosen to ground my reflection on seven principles defined by Morin (Morin & Le Moigne, 1999) as being at the heart of its paradigm. Through their definition, the reader will be informed about the main characteristics of a *Complex Thought*. In the same time, they should appear as heuristic openings to consider new avenues to tackle the diversity and the complexity of CR without reducing it.

Critical Reflection Revisited Through the Paradigm of Complexity: Seven Principles to Develop a Heuristic about CR Literature

The systemic-organizational principle

It binds knowledge of parts to knowledge of the whole; the organization of a whole produces new properties in comparison with its own parts taken individually: they can be seen as emergences. Illustrations of such a principle can be found in the physical world (a molecule is more than linked atoms, it supposes chemical principles which does not exist at the atomic level); in the biological world (an organism is more than linked cells); in the social world (a society is more than the addition of individualities). Such a principle can bring us to wonder about the specific phenomenon like CR: what are the limits and the core through which one studies it? In the same way, depending on the scale adopted to define it, what are the rules or emergent logics specific to the level of study considered? Such a perspective should bring us to investigate, among others, what are the preferred 'spatial' scales (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, institutional, social, cultural, etc.) and the privileged 'temporal' scales (punctual event, life time, generational, historical period, etc.) that are used to conceive CR. Questioning the limits, cores and scales inherent to any theory on CR should bring us to wonder what are the rules or emergent logics inherent to CR, conceived at a specific level of study, and how are they connected to each other? For instance, if we take the *Transformative Theory* (Mezirow, 1991) as a system, knowing its various compartmentalizations, it appears relevant to investigate the relationships one can establish between them: how could we articulate the instrumental, communicational and emancipatory dimensions of any learning activity? How are *Critical Reflection on Assumptions* and *Critical Self Reflection on Assumptions* articulated to each other? How are they connected to other theories about CR? How can such relationships be conceptualized or concretely highlighted? What specific emerging logics appear when these different components of CR are related to each other?

The Hologrammic Principle

It emphasizes the seeming paradox of complex systems whose parts not only belong to the whole, but whose whole also appears in the part. Usually, the concept of hologram is used to

refer to three dimensional laser-made representations in which each smallest part contains the picture of the entire image. Illustrations of such a principle can also be found in the biological world (living cells are parts of a body, but through the genetic code, the body is part of each cell). Such a principle can bring us to question the way in which an entity (an individual, a behavior, a theory, etc.) contains information related to the whole it belongs to and what can we learn about the whole, only observing any of its parts. Considering the CR literature in such a way should bring us to investigate in which ways specific writings belonging to the field (and its respective practice) contains by itself all of the stakes related to CR. Suggesting a specific kind of relationship between the particular and the whole, the hologrammic principle leads to another question about how to promote an investigation on CR, one is able to deal with a specific Critically Reflective Practice (as it could appear, for instance, in the Informal Logic perspective, or in the feminist one) and at the same time able to recognize multiple dimensions it contains (as they appear transversally through all the writings having CR as subject). It raises, among others, the question to define how to take advantage of the fact that one's own personal way to conceive CR (depending of one's own readings and practices, social and cultural background, as well as one's life history) appears as particular and carries at the same time shared conceptions of CR.

The Retroactive Loop Principle

It allows for an understanding of self-regulating systems. It breaks with the principle of linear causality to put the stress on the fact that cause acts on its effect, as effect acts on its cause. Such a principle allows any system to maintain its autonomy. The most well known illustration appears with the thermostat, but one can also mention homeostasis observed by any living system. Such a principle can bring to question through which process an entity (an individual, a theory, etc.) self-regulates and what are the circular relationships between causes and effects related to it. Considering CR (as practices or as theories) in such a way should bring us to investigate how it self-regulates itself, how does it adapt and evolve, and how to consider its development in a circular way instead of a linear one. Such an approach could probably bring some new insights about processes as radicalization or inhibition of CR in a given context. It could also allow us to go beyond a linear way to conceive the CR development in the life history of the learner (or the institution) to stress the circularity of its developmental process.

The Recursive Loop Principle

It goes beyond the idea of regulation to self-production and self-organization. It refers to a generating loop through which products and effects are themselves producers of what produces them. Such a principle can be observed for instance in social life: society produces who we are at the same time that anyone contributes to what society becomes. Such a principle can bring us to question through which processes an entity (an individual, a theory, etc.) produces by itself something influencing what has initially contributed to shape it. Applying such a principle to CR could bring us to wonder in which ways CR (as practices or as theories) self-produces and self-organizes itself? In the perspective of *Transformative Theory*, for instance, CR appears as reaction to an initial dilemma (Mezirow, 1991), but at the same time it produces new dilemmas. How can such a recursive dynamic be understood and managed? If we consider the theoretical field of CR, with all its various epistemological backgrounds, through which processes do these writings contribute to new frameworks going beyond their initial epistemological roots?

The autonomy-dependence principle (or self-eco-organization)

It focuses on the property characterized by the fact that what makes a system self-sufficient is also what makes it be dependent. In the biological world, any living being constantly self-produces itself; to save its autonomy, it needs to draw from its environmental resources (energy or information). At the same time, the resources allow it to evolve, they make it be dependent of its own environment. Such a principle can bring at least two kinds of question: on one hand, what are the specific resources allowing an entity (an individual, a theory, etc.) to be autonomous and on the other hand, how does what allows an entity to be autonomous also make it dependent. Applying such a principle to CR should bring us to investigate what are the resources privileged by each specific conception of CR and how do they contribute to a specific form of autonomy / emancipation / empowerment. At the same time, it should bring us to wonder in which ways are these theories limiting and how can these limits be managed?

The Dialogical Principle

It brings together two notions, concepts, options or assumptions which are supposed to exclude each other, but which appear as an integral part of the same reality. Such a principle allows us to assume in a rational way the association of contradictory views which would help us understand the same complex phenomenon. Such a principle supposes to focus first on the paradoxical or contradictory dimensions of a phenomenon (behavior, theory, practice, etc.) Then it should bring us to question the way to deal with them, and more specifically to articulate them. Considering the CR literature following the dialogical principle (which often appears as a fundamental ground of CR) should bring us to investigate the paradoxes and the contradictions inherent in various forms of CR and what could be learned from them about CR. For instance, at an epistemological level, a fundamental paradox — most of the time reduced to a logical contradiction or a lack of coherence — appears with “postmodern” writings: at the same time they favor particularism and relativism, they prove by their own existence the meaning to share considerations which could appear as having a general scope. What is there to learn from such a contradiction, such an ambivalence? Other significant examples appear in theory each time a conception of CR is denounced as potentially oppressive (such as with *Transformative Theory* or some *Critical Pedagogy* writings, sometimes perceived as too abstract, rational, masculine or culturally oriented). How can we deal with and what is there to learn from the ‘alienating’ side of any CR? At a more practical level, how can we deal with the fundamental double-bind inherent to any critical project: “I will help you to empower yourself”? Finally, what is there to learn about CR, knowing that trying to implement it often implies a kind of instrumentalisation which appears as fundamentally opposite to any emancipatory project (Hayes & Wilson, 2000)?

The Principle of Reintroduction of the Knower in Any Knowledge

It brings us to underline the necessary implication of the subject in any knowledge he/she is producing, from perception to scientific theory. It supposes particularly to focus on the specificity of the knower, the characteristics of his/her brain/mind, his/her position in a specific social context, a culture and a given time. Such a principle brings to question how the characteristics of the knower do influence the knowledge produced and how it can be taken in consideration to better understand the knowledge production process. Following this last principle, one can wonder in which way the implication of the researcher – respectively the trainer or the learner — (life history, age, gender, generation, social and cultural status, position in the field of science/work, etc.) does influence his/her privileged way to conceive CR? It

appears as particularly relevant to consider that understanding the choice made by an author to favor a specific conception of CR should help us to understand why some other researchers or learners have affinities or not with such specific ways to conceive CR.

Conclusion

The Paradigm of Complexity, as developed by Morin, has no monopoly on the way to conceive and theorize the complexity inherent to any human phenomenon. In many respects, any theory on CR already includes ways to deal with complexity. Nevertheless, Morin's paradigm offers a rich, informed, explicit, coherent and attractive way to define and tackle complexity. If the seven principles introduced above should not make us forget that complexity cannot be reduced to them, they appear in the same time as relevant to deal with the diversity and the paradoxes inherent in CR. In such a way, some of the considerations developed above could constitute an invitation to revisit theories on CR in order to make explicit: (1) the relationships between the various scales through which CR has been theoretically and practically considered; (2) the hologrammic dimension of any specific CRP and the way it allows us to connect the particular to the whole; (3) the circular processes which contributes to reinforcing and inhibiting the various forms of CR; (4) the circular processes through which CR self-produces itself; (5) the resources needed by any kind of CR and the way they can represent support and limitations; (6) the contradictions and paradoxes that are part of any CRP and the processes they implies to be tackled without being denied; and finally (7) how the positionality or the implication of the researcher/trainer/learner does influence his/her own affinities with a specific kind of CR and how it can be considered to implement specific kind of CRP. Following the initial wish to find a coherent and explicit way to organize the multiplicity and the specificity of the various theories available on CR, the perspective proposed in this paper will offer, I hope, resources that will allow us to think about Critical Reflection from a more explicit complex perspective.

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Creating Space for Somatic Learning within Transformative Learning Theory

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Abstract: *Transformative learning theory has been criticized for not only its rationality, but also for failing to include other ways of knowing. This proposal suggests that somatic learning has significant implications for transformative learning and can contribute to the expansion and understanding of the theory.*

Key Words: Somatic Learning, the Body, Whole-Person Learning

Problem Statement

The literature surrounding transformative learning alludes to the possibility that “other” ways of knowing, such as affective, spiritual, and somatic learning, may be just as significant in fostering transformation among adult students. In his most recent work, Mezirow (2000) does acknowledge the existence of other modes of making meaning including the impact of emotions and the importance of connecting the inner self with the outer world. While researchers have begun to define and explain what affective learning (Chapman, 1998; Taylor, 1996; Yorks & Kasl, 2002) and spiritual learning (Tisdell, 2002; Wuthnow, 2001) can look like in practice, it is the broadly defined domain of somatic learning that I seek to explain in this work. The purpose of this paper is to explore the existing interpretations of somatic learning, create a framework for understanding bodily learning, and examine how the body contributes to the meaning making process. Specifically, the following questions will be examined: What kinds of learning does somatic knowing encompass? What is its relationship to transformative learning theory?

Transformative Learning Theory and Other Ways of Knowing

Mezirow (2000) advocates a transformational focus for adult education that is created as a result of critical reflection and rational discourse. Given these two functions, much of what Mezirow proposes as critical to transformation is a result of cognitive functions. The processes of critical reflection and rational discourse have both been criticized as being too rationally driven and void of the subjectivity of personal experiences. It is a typically Western view to separate rationality from experience and mind from body, but while rationality is generally accepted as integral to transformative learning, research in the areas of emotions, senses, movement, and spirituality have also yielded significant contributions to the process of transformation (Bach, Kennedy, and Michelson, 1999; Barlas, 2001; Brooks & Clark; 2001; Taylor, 1996; Tisdell, 2003). However, the primary way society instructs us to know or accepts our knowing rests in the cognitive domain, and as a result, little information exists regarding learning from our somatic knowledge (Beaudoin, 1999; Clark, 2001). Information gained through emotion or movement capitulates to information that results from our intellect or ability to reason. In essence, modern society requires “the knower and the known be separate and distinct” (Clark, 2001, p. 3). Given that current thinking on the mind/body debate generally agrees that Descartes did indeed make a grave error so many years ago, the time has come to explore how the body, through its movements, senses, emotions, and spirit, contributes to transformative learning (Damasio, 1994).

Defining Somatic Learning

The existing literature regarding somatic learning at first glance appears minimal, but a deeper investigation reveals that bodily learning takes on many forms in various disciplines. Matthews (1998) defines somatic knowing as “an experiential knowing that involves sense, precept, and mind/body action and reaction—a knowing, feeling, and acting that includes more of the broad range of human experience” (p. 4). At its core, he describes somatic knowing as an “embodied experience of being and doing” (p. 4). Somatic learning often occurs in experiential learning, where the learner becomes an active participant in the knowledge acquisition process through activities like role plays and discussion. Clark (2001) generalized somatic learning even more, describing it as “how we learn from our bodily experience” (p. 3). She gives the example of how often stress manifests itself in our body before our mind recognizes the situation as an example to how we discount the body’s message until our minds can define it. While these two definitions sound similar, it is necessary to explain what somatic learning looks like in action. Clark (2001) provides examples of somatic learning ranging from the artistic to the emotional to the physical. Others have included the body in the learning process using movement and art (Crawford, 1998) tacit learning (Durrance, 1998) and dance (Fortin, 1998). Crowdes (2000) also used experiential techniques with somatic and emotional learning with sociology students studying power relations. She explains somatic learning in terms of a “conscious embodiment” that goes beyond simply connecting the affective and cognitive domains in experiential learning. Further, “it implies an integrity of mind, body, and action accompanied by some awareness in the broader social context” (p. 27). Conscious embodiment includes but is not limited to body posture, style, emotions, and simple body actions (Crowdes, 2000).

Each definition positions somatic learning *within* or *through* the body rather than knowledge about or without the body (Brockman, 2001; Chapman, 1998; Clark, 2001; Matthews, 1998; and Sellers-Young, 1998). Brockman (2001), Chapman (1998), and Crowdes (2000) all recognize the body’s inclusion in the learning environment as having implications for how we make sense of social and cultural norms and issues such as power and gender. Crowdes (2000), Matthews (1998), Michelson (1998), and Sellers-Young (1998) each recognize somatic learning as experiential and involving the body’s action and reaction. Each uses similar terminology to define experiential learning such as knowledge that is gained through the senses or perception and the reactive knowing, feeling, or acting that results from tacit involvement.

A limitation of the existing definitions offered in the literature suggest that the term “somatic” is being used indiscriminately whether the author means to explain, for example, affective or kinesthetic learning. The definitions offered in the literature for somatic ways of understanding often admit they overlap other ways of learning, such as spiritual learning, but explaining this overlap in cognitive terms is difficult. Somatic learning is *felt* by the body, and defining such knowing in rationale terms has limited not only the understanding of somatic education but also its development. While the range of learning that is classified within somatic learning is broad and interpreted differently, it is the body itself that continuously emerges as a multi-faceted force for making meaning of our experience. In response to this ambiguity, a framework developed that encompasses four domains, with each being somatic in nature. The framework resulted from a review of the literature that revealed “somatic” learning or knowing was often represented under other terminology. Since somatic simply means relating to or affecting the body, somatic learning, as illustrated in the literature reviewed, can be categorized into four main areas: kinesthetic, sensory, affective, and spiritual.

Kinesthetic Learning

Learning that occurs as a result of the concerted movements of muscles, tendons, and joints is labeled kinesthetic. Drawing on his experience as a high school cross-country and track runner, Matthews describes his involvement in athletics as an embodied experience that allowed him to endure the disembodied high school curriculum (1998). Matthews (1998) references Csikzentmihalyi's (1990) concept of "flow," the occurrence of being so actively involved in something that we are oblivious to distraction, time becomes irrelevant, and the mind and body work as one. Advocating that all fields and levels of education can benefit from an embodied approach to education, Matthews (1998) warns that continuing to follow a bodily detached attitude toward learning will reinforce obsession with grades and paper and pencil learning and alienate scores of students who learn in other ways.

Beaudoin (1999) conducted a study of six adults who integrated somatic education into their everyday lives using body-centered approaches. She describes somatic education as approaches that aid individuals in developing increased awareness of their bodies in movement. Beaudoin's research examined the areas of daily life that somatic education participants applied their learning to improve their efficiency and quality of life and the level of integration they achieved. Participants had an average of six years of experience using body-centered approaches such as the Eutonia method, Alexander and Feldenkrais techniques, yoga, and Somarythm. Data collection occurred through interviews asking participants to describe the life circumstance where they used somatic learning with particular attention paid to the transference of this learning to daily living. Beaudoin found that participants chose to use somatic techniques mainly when they were suffering emotional discomfort such as fear, anger, or distress. These somatic education techniques tie movement to body awareness creating a kinesthetic version of somatic learning. The body produces movement and action that often yields lessons about discipline, diligence, dealing with stress, or solving problems. Kinesthetic learners need to be actively engaged in their learning with hands-on manipulation, physical involvement, and role plays.

Sensory Learning

Utilizing the five senses to construct knowledge or make meaning of our learning is considered sensory learning. Our senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling each require a distinct function of our bodies, and as information is accumulated through each sense, we relate that information to our experience and extrapolate meanings significant to our lives. Bach, Kennedy, and Michelson (1999) explore sensory knowing through autobiographical narratives of sensory perception as a way of relating the senses of hearing, visual awareness, speech/verbal expression and the sense of smell to pedagogy. Each author shares personal stories from a historical context and relates learning experiences to each of our senses. As an example, one of the authors relates a story about how her family's mealtimes during childhood were spent in silence as dictated by her father. She learned that expression of any sort at the dinner table equated into punishment; even laughter was not tolerated. She came to feel that being silent was necessary for survival and that her "body was devalued, and became a repository for all that was deemed undesirable" (p. 12). Bach, Kennedy, and Michelson (1999) conclude that "It is through stories of understanding our bodies and our senses, through all their migrations and peregrinations, their processes and their connections, that we wish to make meaning in our lives" (p. 46). They advocate opening curriculum to incorporate sentience, a consciousness of perception and thought that occurs through our senses. Because our eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and ability to touch are all part of our bodies, sensory learning is inherently somatic.

Affective Learning

The acquisition of knowledge as a result of paying attention to and honoring our feelings and emotions is called affective learning. Many times in life we find ourselves at a decision point and although our head examines the rational choices we can make, our gut or an internal feeling instructs us otherwise. For example, an upset stomach may be a signal of stress that our minds have not yet acknowledged. Yorks & Kasl (2002) wholeheartedly advocate a push toward a more holistic view of learning but acknowledge that many educators are unsure of how to handle emotions and feelings in the context of the classroom. They caution that the pragmatist view of experiences “casts affective knowing as an object for reflection, [and] so permeates adult education discourse that it has narrowed our theoretical vision and truncated our practice” (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 25). Yorks & Kasl (2002) therefore recommend a theoretical roadmap to guide educators and specifically the use of four interconnected ways of knowing—experiential, presentational, prepositional, and practical to more fully embrace the learner as a whole person.

Taylor (1996) examined the role of emotions within transformative learning theory from a neurobiological perspective and found that while feelings are recognized as part of transformative learning, the interactive relationship between emotion and rationality is still unacknowledged. Using affective learning or fostering emotional intelligence requires some of the same interactive, experiential techniques as are found in kinesthetic and sensory learning. Collaborative learning that involves discussion and role play can be valuable for understanding differing perspectives, resolving conflict, and improving communication. Emotional Intelligence has also emerged in mainstream literature as a way of measuring an individual’s control over emotional responses. Goleman’s (1995) work in particular has made an impact on the management field as business programs realize the importance of the emotions in the workplace. Emotional intelligence is about self-awareness. Being aware of our emotions and identifying them, gives us an opportunity to reflect on the impulses certain emotions cause. We then make choices about how to react—we can choose our first impulse, or we can decide on a mutually beneficial response for all parties involved. Recognizing the impact of emotions on our personal and professional lives has further legitimized the affective realm as a domain of learning.

Spiritual Learning

Including spiritual learning within this model of somatic learning makes sense because spirituality is basically about making meaning of our lives. One of Tisdell’s (2003) definitions states that spirituality is how people construct knowledge, and this process is often carried out in symbolic and unconscious ways such as creating art through music, art, imagery, symbols, and rituals. Symbols then can be a concept, a person, a physical object that has a particular meaning, or a movement or gesture (Tisdell, 2003). Much of the spirituality literature makes direct links between our spiritual learning and learning through our feelings, senses, and movements.

Wuthnow (2001) explores the role of the artist and spirituality citing many stories of how artists interpret and define their own spiritual journeys and discoveries. A painter, Nancy Chinn described a particular spiritual experience as, “the phrase ‘God is a Spirit’ flowed into me and I understood in a kinesthetic way what that meant” (p. 23). She believes spirituality should be sensual; “relating to God should be so emotionally fulfilling that it generates *bodily* movement” (p. 24, emphasis mine). Wuthnow also interview a dancer, Ann Biddle who similarly found chanting as “kinesthetic, physiological” (p. 109). She “could *feel* something happening” (p. 109, emphasis mine). For Biddle, “the kinesthetic effect of chanting is especially meaningful because it resembles the bodily transformation that occurs from dancing” (p. 110). At their core, these

two women found their spiritual experiences to be intertwined and dependent on a simultaneous bodily experience. Other examples of the somatic and spiritual domains overlapping occur in Tisdell's (2003) work. A Chinese American woman named Janine commented on her experience giving birth as a somatic experience. "The most cosmic spiritual transformative events of my life are strongly related to the body. One was giving birth to my daughter" (p. 76). These are only a few of the many stories that combine spiritual learning and experience with other domains of somatic learning. The intent is to demonstrate that by combining cognitive learning with the many forms of somatic learning, "learning itself becomes more holistic, thereby increasing the chance for learning to be transformative" (Tisdell, 2003, p. 42).

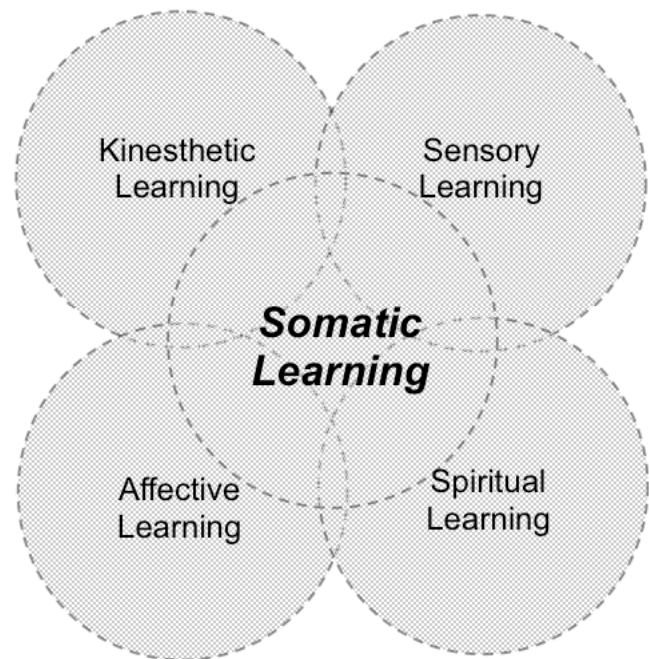
Developing a Somatic Learning Model

The rationale for this model builds upon each of the four categories above and posits that meaning making is created by the body through movement, each of the five senses, emotions, and/or our spirituality. The model offers a visual explanation of how somatic learning often acts as an umbrella for many types of bodily learning and that each of the four domains also often intersect with one another.

Implications of Somatic Learning for Transformative Learning: Integrating the Domains

After reviewing the somatic learning literature, the question remains of exactly how somatic ways of knowing impact transformative learning. According to Matthews (1998), "A somatically involved education will more likely lead to student transformation, which should be the goal of all education" (p. 5). The learner, who is viewed as possessing both a mind and a body and given permission to use the two in tandem, will more likely find the educational experience to be transformational. Brooks and Clark (2001) utilize narratives to encompass the cognitive, affective, spiritual, and somatic dimensions. They make the case that in order for a story to be accepted by our society, it must somehow make a cognitive link by having a "point" to the story. Stories that are particularly compelling often appeal to affect in that they can possibly cause people to feel differently or experience a change in opinion or a call to action. The narratives embrace spiritual and somatic learning when the story touches us on a visceral level where we are left touched or moved in some way from the information we have read. Narratives serve as a way to understand and theorize transformative learning because it "a) moves from past to future, (b) spans the psychological, social, cultural, and historical dimensions in content and form, and (c) includes cognitive, affective, spiritual, and somatic dimensions" (Brooks & Clark, 2001, p. 3).

The integration of multiple learning dimensions is often labeled "whole-person learning." Whole-person learning values the cognitive, affective, somatic, and spiritual realms of the



individual. In a qualitative study of 20 adults participating in a cohort-based transformative learning and change doctoral program, Barlas (2001) discovered implications for whole-person learning and transformative learning. First, the valuing of emotions by the instructor and the cohort can be critical for reflective learning and for creating transformative learning and action. Secondly, by creating a space for learning “into which the diversity of the whole self was invited provided the learners with the experience of inclusivity” (Barlas, 2001, p. 18). The students were better able to actively listen and view different perspectives in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance that were fostered by the instructor. Barlas (2001) therefore establishes an important link between whole-person learning and fostering transformative learning.

Conclusions and Recommendations

By incorporating learning experiences that engage the whole person and offer several modes of learning, a more complete, sometimes transformational, learning experience can occur. Kinesthetic learning offers the opportunity for students to move by engaging in role plays or dramatizations of situations or cases. Sensory learning can be incorporated using storytelling, music or artwork that is interpreted visually and aurally in relation to the subject matter being taught. We can bring emotions and feelings to the forefront of our classrooms by illustrating the power and significance of emotional awareness. From a spiritual perspective, we can give students opportunities for expression through movement, art, music, or symbol to construct meaning, connectedness, and awareness. Each of these options centralizes the body so that it is integral to the learning experience. Combined with opportunities for reflection, somatic learning contributes a new perspective to the scope of transformative learning.

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Using Transformative Learning to Teach for Wisdom: Starting the Conversation

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Abstract: *What does wisdom mean for us in our busy lives today? How do we access it or grow into it? What can transformative learning teach us about becoming wiser? Because wisdom is not a single construct, it requires a multifaceted approach to understand it. A model of wisdom is presented here, based on grounded theory research, that makes wisdom tangible and accessible so that it can be comprehended more easily. The major components include discernment, a cognitive function; empathy, an affective function; engagement, an active function; and identity, a reflective function. Further, techniques and practices of transformative learning that can lead us toward wisdom are discussed, including some that stretch the non-cognitive aspects of mind.*

Keywords: wisdom, ego maturity, non-cognitive transformative learning practices

Introduction

Merriam and Caffarella have called wisdom the “pinnacle or hallmark of adult thinking” (1999, p. 161). Yet adult educators rarely discuss wisdom, much less try to teach for it. Is it not worthwhile to strive to guide ourselves and our students not just to be more inclusive and discriminating, but also to work towards greater personal integrity, moral courage, acute insight into and good judgment on complex issues, and actions based on generosity of spirit for the common good? But try to seize wisdom to examine it and it slips through your fingers like water. Your hands are still wet (because wisdom is something that does exist), but grasping it proves elusive.

Problem Statement

Wisdom is often conceived of as lasting truths or good values and nowadays is frequently associated with spirituality (or even thought of synonymously with it). This static descriptive perception of it as a fixed external phenomenon is contrasted to a more dynamic one, where wisdom is seen as a habit of mind, that is, a way of thinking and understanding. Wisdom in this context represents the application of complex intelligence to the human condition. This intelligence includes seeing things as they really are, not as we would like them to be; understanding that everything is connected to everything else; acting with largeness of spirit; and seeking the common good. Thus, the wisdom discussed here is not concerned with right answers or single truths. Instead, it is about an approach—a reflective and considered response that encompasses the big issues facing our world today and that goes right down to our work in the classroom and in our daily lives.

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks are represented in this study. Because it is a complex and multi-faceted construct and because it is a concept that is found in our daily life, it is necessary to examine wisdom from an interdisciplinary perspective. For the purposes of this paper, the theoretical framework is limited to cognitive, moral, and ego development. The work of Sternberg (2001) on wisdom, particularly learning for wisdom, Kegan (1994) on orders of consciousness, and Cook-Greuter (2000) on mature ego development contribute to the cognitive

and ego development aspects of the study. Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks (1996), Daloz (2000), Kohlberg (1981), and philosopher Wieman (1958) add a moral dimension to help define the common good. With wisdom, everything is connected to everything else, making it difficult to discuss.

Research Questions

1. What does wisdom mean to us today? What does it look like?
2. How can transformative learning help us in learning/teaching for wisdom?

The first question requires a working definition of wisdom or at least a way of talking about it in an understandable and consistent way. The model that has been developed through an interview study using grounded theory research provides a framework to begin this part of the discussion. This model makes wisdom tangible and accessible so that it can be comprehended more easily and so that the potential contributions of transformative learning to the process of becoming wise(r) become more evident.

Methodology

For the first research question, a grounded theory study was conducted. For the second and ongoing one on how transformative learning can help us learn to be wise(r), some thoughts are provided. The conversation is only beginning on this topic.

For the grounded theory study, 25 thoughtful insightful leaders were interviewed using a modified snowball method. Questions were asked on such topics as the characteristics of a wise person they know, their thoughts on how people become wise, and how our society can encourage wisdom. The sample included university presidents and professors, clergy, legislators, businesspeople, public servants such as a state supreme court justice, and writers and other artists, mostly in the Twin Cities area but also including people from other areas of the country. Most were White; two Black women and one Native American woman were included in the sample. The use of the constant-comparative method and reductive analytical techniques (axial and selective coding) resulted in a model or proposed working “theory” of wisdom. A major finding is that wisdom is not one single construct; rather, it is the dynamic interplay of four major elements, all necessary to some degree or another, none alone sufficient.

Results and Findings

Wisdom can be understood as the dynamic interaction of four basic elements and their application through the use of complex intelligence for the betterment of the human condition. According to all interviewees, there is always a quality of beneficence associated with wisdom—it is never for one’s personal gain.

The major elements are:

- Discernment, a cognitive aspect
- Empathy, an affective aspect
- Engagement, an active aspect
- Identity, a reflective aspect

It is important to note that none of these elements alone characterizes wisdom. A person can discern ultimate truth, but if they do not care about the people or the world around them that this insight will affect, then it is not wisdom. So say virtually all study participants; so say both Buddhism and Christianity. A business man described the Discernment aspect of wisdom:

“Wisdom is looking at the underlying forces and not being distracted by surface symptoms.” But wisdom is not simply a matter of understanding what is really going on (Discernment). “If you don’t care, it isn’t wisdom,” stated a state supreme court justice. This is the Empathy sector.

Yet, discernment and empathy do not suffice either. “Wisdom is about not always pursuing your own interests (a necessary but not sufficient quality). It also is about being committed to the common good. Wisdom is about action, not just being,” said a college professor. According to these people, feeling compassion for others is not enough—a person has to do something, even if that something is writing a letter to the editor or (even) teaching a class. We all do not have to demonstrate and be put in jail, as one political activist interviewee was.

Finally, wisdom has to do with getting outside of ourselves and our own self-interest to see the larger picture and to determine the larger good. The ability to de-center the ego is found in the Identity sector; its fruits, which come from stepping outside our own interests, lead right back to Discernment, as detachment deepens and is strengthened the more we can de-center the ego, see clearly what is really going on, compassionately get on the other person’s terms, and engage in action that contributes to a fairer and more just world.

Table 1, presented at the end of this discussion, shows the major elements of wisdom and other attributes of the model.

New Knowledge in Transformative Learning

The second research question asks how transformative learning can help us in learning/teaching for wisdom. If the model presented here gives a reasonable representation of what wisdom looks like, then we wonder if people can strive intentionally to become wise(r). In other words, can wisdom be learned? If it can be learned, which aspects of transformative learning theory and practice can contribute?

The model gives some examples of learning prompts or queries that can be used at all times, almost like a mantra, to develop our wisdom thinking. For example, for the Discernment dimension, questions such as, “What’s really going on here, not what I want, but what’s real and true? What is important?” can help us explore to deeper levels the causes and consequences of events. One study participant was very unhappy with the Republican hegemony resulting from the elections of fall 2000 and subsequent ones and strove to understand why this was happening. His first impulse was to rail against the American electorate and its immaturity, short attention span, and need for immediate and selfish gratification. As he thought more about it, he now understands that demographics play a part in the situation (more suburban voters) and he realizes (or re-realizes) that politics are cyclical, swinging from more conservative to more liberal. Little comfort for him in these days, he recognizes, but a truer understanding than simply blaming the stupidity of the voters.

The learning prompts provide questions to help us uncover and examine our assumptions and to build new and larger more inclusive frameworks that explain and interpret the world in more complete ways. Asking himself how he can relate to Republicans in a more satisfactory way, the above-mentioned study participant has used the query about trying to understand their reality from their own point of view. Doing so has allowed him to understand them with a bit more magnanimity. These queries prod us toward transformation.

Because wisdom is a habit of mind that requires an expansion of consciousness, transformations of awareness are necessary, for which transformative learning provides sound guidelines. Cranton puts it this way: “transformative learning, then, is a process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising...perceptions” (Cranton, 1994, p. 26). Further, Boyd notes

that personal transformation expands consciousness resulting in “greater personality integration” (Boyd, 1989, p. 459). Because wisdom is also about development and the expansion of spheres of consideration, the book by Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000) provides many examples of how transformative learning can contribute to this kind of development. More theoretically, Kegan (1994) frames the transformation as one of a shift from one order of consciousness to another or as a subject/object shift—what was ground becomes figure, what was whole becomes part. I would argue that those we consider wise reside at least in the 4th order, moving towards, if not in, the 5th (or beyond).

Besides the more usual and effective processes of transformative learning, especially the cognitively-oriented ones such as critical reflection, discourse and reasoning, and use of disorienting dilemmas, for example, other techniques can be used as well. They include listening to inner “voices” (that is, different aspects of the self), accessing (as well as assessing) intuition, and working with metaphor, image, and narrative, as Dirkx (2001) suggests, for the imagination must be nurtured with its own kind of nourishment. Both discursive and imaginal approaches can help us learn better how to apply complex intelligence to the human condition and nudge us along in the life-long process of becoming wiser.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A model of wisdom has been presented emanating from a grounded theory study that outlines the major components of wisdom and how they are related. Unfortunately, it does not show the dynamic qualities of wisdom development, which would be represented as a spiral (a work in progress). Nevertheless, the table shows the chief characteristics of wisdom, the related proficiencies, how they manifest, and finally learning prompts or queries that can lead to transformation. The arrows indicate the interactions of all of the elements of the table. Typical cognitive transformative learning techniques can play a role in teaching for wisdom, as can ones that allow for the growth and maturation of the non-cognitive aspects of mind and spirit, such as aesthetics, intuition, and the imagination.

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Table 1
Dynamic Process Model of Wisdom Development

WISDOM												
Dimension	Discernment (Cognitive)			Empathy (Affective)			Engagement (Active)			Identity (Reflective)		
Chief Characteristic	Detachment			Openness			Involvement			Integrity		
Proficiency	Insight	Holistic seeing	Balanced interests	Multiple perspectives-taking	Compassion & caring	Generosity of spirit	Sound judgment & adept decision-making	Actions based on determinations of fairness & justice	Moral courage	Self-knowledge	Self-acceptance	Self-transcendence
Manifestation	Deep understanding of causes, consequences, and relationships			Expanded sphere of consideration			Committed action for the common good			Expansion of consciousness		
Learning Prompt/Query	What's really going on? What's true? What's important? What's right?			Whose point of view am I taking? How do others understand reality? How can I relate to them with magnanimity?			What guides my actions? To what ends are my actions directed? What means do I use?			What are my values? Do I live them? Who or what is the "I" that I think I am?		
Direction of Growth												

Dancing on the Threshold of Meaning: Recognizing and Understanding the Growing Edge

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on naming and understanding the threshold of transformation, the growing edge of peoples' thinking and sense-making. The author reanalyzed a set of interview data from several studies, paying attention to those places when participants reached the edges of their meaning making. She offers three examples of those places as well as an analysis of the different ways participants experienced their growing edge. Ultimately, she suggests that the work of a transformative teacher is first to help students find the edge of their understanding, and secondly to be company at that edge, helping them find the courage they need to transform.*

Understanding the transformational realm

As a teacher interested in transformative learning, I strive to develop curricula that push my students to the edges of their understanding. In my teaching at the Initiatives in Educational Transformation (IET) masters program at George Mason University, transformation is actually in the title of the program. Instead of having a curriculum that helps teachers become reading specialists or certified teachers, at IET transformation is the curriculum. But what is it that IET is really asking of our teacher-students? These K-12 teachers come to us from their classrooms each month to become better at the art and craft of teaching; they say, on the first day (and on many days thereafter), that they want to be “transformed” as teachers. When we say that the experience of IET will be “transformational,” do any of us—the professors or our teacher students—really understand what that means? This paper seeks to deepen that understanding.

My theoretical frame comes from the work of adult developmentalists who seek to explore and chart the way adults change and grow over time. In this adult developmental world, transformation has a specific clinical definition; it comes about when the *form* of a person's meaning-making system changes. Kegan (1994) says transformative learning happens when someone changes, “not just the way he behaves, not just the way he feels, but the way he knows—not just what he knows but the *way* he knows” (p. 17). Adult developmentalists believe that to begin a transformative journey is to give up an old perspective, to actually lose a sense of the former world before the new world is fully articulated (Basseches, 1986; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Kegan, 1982; 1994; Perry, 1968). This journey takes place in many settings—in classrooms and workplaces, in conversations at coffeeshops—and in many different phases of adult life—as young adults who look to others for authorities eventually grow to become those who find the authority inside themselves. For the 70 or so teachers who join us for the two-year masters program, transformation happens in the university classroom, in on-line virtual classrooms, in school-based seminars, and in their own thinking, and writing, and talking. But what might this journey feel like? Perry (1968), who wrote about the transformation of college students, describes this transformative journey:

At every step, the movement [toward development] required the students to “face up” to limits, uncertainties, and the dissolution of established beliefs, while simultaneously it

demanded new decisions and the undertaking of new forms of responsibility. This constellation of countervailing forces appeared to consist of such tendencies as the wish to retain earlier satisfactions or securities, the wish to maintain community in family or hometown values and ways of thinking, the reluctance to admit one has been in error, the doubt of one's competence to take on new uncertainties and responsibilities, and, more importantly, the wish to maintain a self one has felt oneself to be.... Pervading all such motives of conservation lay the apprehension that one change might lead to another in a rapidity which might result in a catastrophic disorganization. (p. 52)

Perry's articulation of that transformative edge as a place where students fear a "catastrophic disorganization," is a compelling—and frightening—image. Is that what we are asking of our adult students? If we were to call our program, "Initiatives in Catastrophic Disorganization," we might have a hard time recruiting students! I needed more information about the transformational journey of adults in order to fully understand the challenges I was offering my students. What does that "catastrophic disorganization" look like and is it always experienced as an uncomfortable and unpleasant place? Once the edge of understanding is reached, what happens then? What does the edge of understanding look like, and, perhaps more importantly, what does it *feel* like to those who stand there?

Methods

With these questions in mind, I reviewed nearly twenty interviews from several qualitative studies that I had conducted with a wide variety of participants. My initial purpose for doing these interviews was to understand (and measure) each participant's meaning-making system as defined by Robert Kegan's (1984, 1992) constructive-developmental theory of adult development using the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988). These participants range in age from 25 to 69 and come from a variety of different professions—teachers (the largest group), clergy, business executives, and independent consultants. They are men and women, White, African American, Asian American, and Latino. All of the participants come from a background of educational privilege (and often they have many other kinds of privilege, too); they all have at least a Masters degree, many from highly competitive universities.

To do this analysis, I reread each of the SOIs, noting particularly where participants seemed to be at the edge of their knowing. Because the Subject-Object Interview is specifically designed to help measure the edges of people's meaning-making systems (and thus their order of mind in Kegan's developmental theory), there were many incidences of these places. Then, I looked across those edges to find clear examples and patterns within the differences.

The limits of this study come from my use of data that was gathered for previous research projects. While a reanalysis of data with new questions is often a fruitful task, it means that I have not been able to select these participants with an eye to gathering these data. In another study I might have asked the participants, themselves, about what it felt like to be standing at the edge of their meaning; here I can only infer their perspective by their words and tone as they look out over the edge of their meaning.

A glimpse at the edge

In the course of three different interviews, three very different people find themselves at a similar space—at the edge of their meaning, the edge of their knowing, the edge of their words. During the interview, the participants have given voice to many things they know and understand, and now they are attempting a more difficult task—giving voice to those things they do *not* know and do *not* understand.¹

Kathleen is an articulate executive, who, in her mid-fifties, is at the height of her career in the government. Then, Kathleen finds that, with the change of administration, she is unexpectedly asked to step down from influential position she has had for many years. Suddenly unemployed, she is groping for some idea about what lies ahead for her. Facing the future from this place of uncertainty, she finds herself on the edge of her knowing. When I ask whether she wishes she were in a different place in her life, she answers:

No, I think this *is* the journey. I think this is the journey. And I could stay in this [uncertain space], I think, forever. You know, I could never hold another job again, I could, you know, start volunteering for the Washington Home and you know, do Hospice work, I could, you know, spend time with my husband, I could. . . . I don't know. You know, or I could. . . . I could, you know, decide I really want to do coaching and get into a, you know, get into an accredited program and do that. I just. . . . or you know, do more speaking and teaching or. . . . I don't know what to say. It just feels like it will emerge. But no, where I am right now feels very much like. . . . it doesn't feel like a hiatus. It feels like it is the journey and that work will emerge from this place. That's what I think. I think work will emerge from this experience.

In this excerpt, it is clear that Kathleen is on the edge of her knowing. She stumbles, stammers, circles back. It is only after she says, “I don't know what to say,” that the tone of her voice changes. After admitting that she doesn't know, Kathleen seems more comfortable with it and sounds more and more certain. Perhaps, even, she becomes certain of and in her uncertainty. Kathleen is excited, not demoralized, and the not-knowing about her future leaves her filled with possibility and hope.

Melody is a classroom teacher in her early thirties who is dealing with a profoundly difficult school culture. Like Kathleen, Melody has been very successful, and has been given a significant number of awards and accolades for someone so young. Lately, though, she has found herself caught up in the negativity of the school, and speaks of needing those accolades to keep her spirits high. When I ask her what would happen if all the outside praise dried up, she pushes right up against the edges of her understanding. She pauses and then says:

I would be scared. I would be scared that um, I would just muddle . . . like, I have been muddling through since um, September. I'd be yelling at my students more. Um, and this comes from a woman who is determined to say, “Hello,” and “Good-bye,” and not call her students stupid because I know they hear that at home all the time, and I want them to at least know that there's someone in their life, who says something positive. To . . .

¹ To leave in the sense of wandering and uncertainty here, the ellipses are where the speaker pauses or trails off, and are *not* where text is deleted.

going . . . to calling my students stupid. Or screaming at them. Um, . . . [Interviewer: That must be so hard for you?] It is. And like I said when you asked me how I . . . I don't even know how to. . . I know I'm getting rid of a cold, but I don't even know how to address how I am right now because it's like outside of work, I am fine. But when I go . . . when I go through that door, it's almost like a gloom that comes over me. And it bothers me because I've let a lot of the evil people at school win. And for a long time, I mean, I was like that beacon of light in all this.

The response Melody has to the question about what would happen if she stopped getting outside accolades—"I would be scared"—is unexpected. And it is clear that Melody is frightened of who *she herself* could become—that she would start “screaming” at her students, calling them “stupid” and in other ways losing the sense of herself as “that beacon of light in all this.” Melody—for whom words rarely fail—tells me “I don't even know how to . . .” For Melody, this place at the edge of her meaning is frightening as she describes becoming a person she doesn't like.

The struggle for Walter, a mid-twenties classroom teacher on the edge has similar characteristics but yet another emotional style. Like Melody, Walter finds himself teaching in a difficult urban school. Unlike her, however, he does not have even a glimmer of what it would take to help him feel successful there—or anywhere else. For Walter, defining success is at his growing edge. I ask him how he'll know whether he is a good teacher. He says:

It's draining to put so much energy into something but to not reap what you sow. You know, I mean, I feel like I'm sowing so much in this job and to see like, things come up out of . . . You know, it's just that I want to like, really like, see some huge . . . [Interviewer asks: “And so describe to me what that would look like.”] I guess . . . and you know, I . . . and this is where I guess I shouldn't have any. . . I can't have any control over it, but when like, a student . . . you know, like responses to the things that I did, you know, just sort of. . . and not so much, “Hey, that was good.” But just to see them enjoy what's going on. Mostly that.

Walter, too, is at the edge of his knowing. In some ways, it's quite a similar place to those of Kathleen and Melody in its content. All of them are facing major choices about their futures in their careers, and all are trying to figure out what they want from their careers and how to get it. None can guess what the next chapter might hold. But Walter is deeply unhappy as he stands at the edge of his knowing. He cannot say what he wants from his current job, and he cannot say what he wants from the next job. Censoring every thought, Walter gropes for certainty and does not find it anywhere. Profoundly different from Kathleen's perspective that “this is the journey and that work will emerge from this place,” Walter feels out of control. And while Melody is “scared,” Walter's focus is about how “draining” this time is. All on their growing edge, these different people make sense of the edge of their knowing in very different ways.

Patterns at the edge

Looking across interviews, I found that the edges of understanding—the most fertile (and perhaps most frightening) ground of transformation—have common characteristics and also interesting differences.

These edges of understanding are characterized by the participants' sense of bewilderment and sudden inability to answer questions. An articulate participant will stumble and stammer, beginning sentences that trail off or loop back to the beginning, and participants who more often struggle with words seem to lose them completely when they reach the edges of their understanding. These edges are often (but not always) recognizable to the participants themselves. They can be surprised that they *haven't* thought about a particular perspective, or admiring of the question ("Hmm, that really makes me think"), or self-conscious and apologetic about their inability to answer the question. Particularly thoughtful and articulate interviewees may even note the edge of their understanding. When he got to this place, one participant told me, "This is where language fails."

The affective tone of conversations at the edge varies widely. For some people the edges of meaning seem to be frightening and unpleasant (as it was for Melody and Walter), and for others (like Kathleen), the growing edges feel exciting and energizing. Some participants appreciate the opportunity to dance on the edge of their knowing; others seem reluctantly dragged there and scramble to get back to familiar ground. Some people push themselves to this edge with little help from the interviewer; others avoid the experience altogether.

Implications for transformational practice

I must admit that my expectation from this reanalysis was that I would find what Perry found—that being on the edges of their understanding was painful for the adults with whom I worked. I was surprised to find that that was not clearly the case at all. In fact, one finding that emerged from my review of these interviews is that being on the edge is a unique and individual experience. There is a complex continuum that ranges from those who seek out and enjoy transformation to those who are in anguish while at the edges of their understanding. As a professor who strives to bring my students to the edges of their understanding—and to support them to stretch those edges time and time again—it is important for me to be mindful about how painful that can be for some students. At the same time, it is also vital for me to be aware that, unlike Perry's students, it doesn't seem to be necessarily true that this transformative realm is painful for *all* of my students. Rather, the level of patience for and excitement about transformation becomes yet another of the long list of individual differences my teaching must strive to support and include.

It makes sense to me, both theoretically and also from my experience, that many elements shape a person's reaction to being at the edge of their experience. For some, it is likely that issues of adult development are at play (certainly, at Kegan's highest level of development, the "self-transformational" or 5th order, pushing against the edges of your own meaning making is a definitional component of the order). But anyone who has watched a child (or teenager, or adult) push again and again against the edges of their understanding knows that the affinity for pushing oneself doesn't only happen to those in mid-life or beyond. Other factors—personality type, community of support, socio-economic status—are likely to play a major role, as is the place we are in the particular transformation (it is likely more frightening to be at that point when the past seems untenable and the future unidentifiable). If the continuum exists as I've described it—for whatever reason—it seems critically important that those of us who teach with an eye towards

transformation become aware of the continuum—and both our own orientation towards transformation and also the diversity of orientations of our students.

One of the defining pieces of this edge of our knowing is that those at the edge usually can not name their specific problem because they are enmeshed in the problem and cannot gain a vantage point from which to name it. Teachers—even those whose curriculum attempts to be transformative—are likely to want to *teach* at this point, to name and even solve the problem with which the students struggle.

For example, seeing Walter in pain and trapped at the edge of his knowing, a teacher might be tempted to offer Walter some way to solve his problem and judge whether he is a successful teacher. Handing him the answers he seeks instead of supporting him to create his own answers might make Walter feel better because it would allow him to step away from his growing edge, get back onto firm ground, and feel certain again. Certainty, however, is not transformative. Similarly, a teacher educator might work to “solve” Melody’s fear, either pointing her in the direction of places she can go to continue to get outside accolades or else give her techniques for using the ones she already has to sustain her. This might take care of the particular issue that has brought Melody to the edge—her need for ongoing external praise—and helps her solve the problem of not having enough external praise. Solving this problem as it presents itself wouldn’t push against the edges of Melody’s understanding and allow her to face up to questions about why such external praise is important, and about how to create her own sense of internal security.

My reanalysis of these interviews shows me 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. While finding the edge sometimes requires a guide, and staying there requires support, ultimately, the way through the confusion is to grow, and only the person at the edge can do that growing. Helping our students reach the edges of their meaning-making—in classroom discussions, in journal entries, in the discussion of a particularly puzzling issue or conflicting data—is in itself a developmental activity. Once they come to the edge, they need help to sustain the courage to stand at the edge and work to grow, to transform. Sometimes that courage comes simply from an acknowledgement of the difficulty of this place; at other times, a teacher might have to point out a pattern showing that a student continues to shy away from the edge. A transformative teacher can then push gently to help students begin to puzzle through the place of confusion, working to keep the pattern clear for them so that they can understand it and eventually come to act upon it. In this way, a transformative teacher helps students reach the edge of their understanding and then stays for the difficult work of expanding that edge, transforming the shape of their world.

In the busy world of teaching, there is rarely time to listen deeply to the sense students are making—and to the ways they are not making sense, even to themselves. Looking for such moments and recognizing them for what they are—the edge of a person’s understanding—might help transformative teachers recognize and support the work about which we care the most.

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Self-Directed Learning: An Opportunity for Transformation

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Abstract: *Thirty years of research about self-directed learning has focused primarily on the impact of this approach on individuals and societies. Using self-directed learning in graduate school classrooms presents different challenges as well as holds the potential for exponential benefits. The learning transformation affects students and faculty alike as the classroom evolves into a learning community where power and responsibility are shared. It is through anticipating the barriers and acknowledging the benefits of self-directed learning that more faculty may incorporate this methodology to prepare adult students for a lifetime of learning. Modeling self-directed learning in the classroom becomes an effective tool for transformation as students and faculty negotiate, interact, and thrive in a democratic learning community.*

Keywords: Self-directed learning, Adult learning, Democratic classroom, Learning community

Introduction

Bernadette's Story

I write, grateful for the time to ponder and plan as the snow continues to fall in Virginia during the storm of 2003. I am stuck without a way to get from here to anywhere. This is both good and bad news as I am happy to be free to engage in my projects but am frustrated with my lack of mobility. As I consider my situation during this storm, I am reminded of what prompted me to integrate self-directed learning into my graduate classes. As a learner and an instructor, I have experienced the profound effects of utilizing self-directed learning in the classroom with both the joy of being set free and the constraints of not being able to get from here to there.

I started my uphill road with self-directed learning two years ago in a class that I cofacilitated at the FBI Academy in Quantico Virginia. UVA's School of Continuing and Professional Studies provides a master's degree program in adult education to selected FBI/DEA faculty who teach new and seasoned agents at their Academy. The cohort of twenty-three provided the perfect venue to experiment with this type of instructional delivery. Students who are steeped in adult learning theory will be more than up to the task of applying it. Or will they?

Cheryl's story

I too have journeyed down the self-directed learning path in my UVA graduate courses. As an assistant professor and coordinator of the Educational Leadership program area, I have a unique opportunity to honor my masters and doctoral students as adult learners. Educators and education leaders themselves, I believe that this methodology offers them a model necessary for their future work with teachers and other adult educational stakeholders.

What I thought would be a welcome change from the typical "one size fits all, top-down" delivery model of instruction turned out to be something very different. I have met resistance from my students, and I struggle to let go of the predictability and comfort that traditional methodologies afford. Fortunately, my writing buddy and colleague has blessed me with her experiences and her reflective wisdom. Although I have hit many bumps along the way, I enthusiastically continue the journey, benefiting from her support and shared materials. Getting

from there to where I am now, and where I want to be in the future, has been enriched by our relationship. I use that collegial relationship with Bernadette as a context and model for my relationship with my students. I have found that as I attempt to nurture their learning independence and honor their ideas and experiences, our roles as teachers and learners are reciprocal and interchangeable. Will they share this observation?

Our Common Story

Merriam writes in *The New Update on Adult Learning* (2001) that although the body of research on self-directed learning spans thirty years, areas for further investigation abound. The research on practice is ever in need of expansion as it contributes to the body of adult literature and informs adult education practice. It is critical for teaching faculty to share their wealth of experience about how self-directed learning plays out in the classroom because clearly it is at this juncture that hope in this methodology is lost. Reading Weimer's *Learner Centered Teaching* was an exhilarating experience for us but the cost of incorporating the self-directed philosophy was costly in terms of time and energy, not unlike incorporating technology into the design of a course. Self-directed learning changes not one thing, but **everything**, because it means designing a course from the inside out. It forces an examination of traditional classroom assumptions where the instructor maintains control and students are passive learners.

In our quest to transform our students as learners, and ourselves as instructors, we have learned many lessons. Primary, at least in our minds, is that the entire process is not about information, but about formation. We believe we are better teachers, advisors, collaborators, and friends for our attempts. It is our goal to share these lessons learned with other colleagues.

Our desire to share our experiences is grounded in our contention that much is written about the theory of self-directed learning, but little is written about the application and potential outcomes of the methodology. This presentation/paper will focus on our stories as we seek to transform our classroom into adult communities of learners. Specifically, we share our opinion about why there is not more written about the classroom realities of using self-directed learning. Additionally, we proffer two barriers to implementing self-directed learning. Acknowledging the drawbacks is important because self-directed learning requires “unlearning”—re-orientation, re-strategizing, and re-direction of many notions about teaching and learning. Finally, we share the challenges and benefits of using this approach, and discuss the potential that the methodology of self-directed learning holds for student and instructor transformations.

Paucity of Literature Guiding Classroom Implementation of Self-directed Learning

Even the most cursory review of the literature informing current methodology in college classrooms suggests that the traditional and preferred instructional strategy is the lecture (Saroyan, 2000; McKeachie, 1999; O'Donnell & Dansereau, 1994; Gibbs, et al, 1987). In fact, professors seeking advice on improving teaching can find countless sources for improving their lectures as a means of facilitating student learning. In one recent work, Martin (2000) postulates that each teacher's philosophy of education dictates the teaching method. Specifically, Martin places college teachers into two camps according to style (teacher-focused or student-focused) and describes the relationship between the two styles and the teacher's presentation. The goals of presentation in the former style include covering and presenting material as well as clarifying material. The goals of presentation in the latter style include engaging and practicing in discipline knowledge, and challenging discipline understanding and professional practice. Although the goals suggest different presentation methodologies, both utilize lecture.

Similarly in a recent study by Kember and Kwan (2000), interviews with seventeen lecturers at a university resulted in two categories of teaching conception. The lecturers could be described as either transmissive (transmitting knowledge) or facilitative (facilitating student learning). The study reports a high correlation between transmissive-oriented lecturers and content-centered teaching, and between facilitative-oriented lecturers and learning centered teaching. Again, the readers infer that lecture is the primary instructional strategy, although guided by different orientations.

After spending significant time researching current instructional practices in higher education, one of our own graduate students concluded that much is written about how to present a “good and engaging” lecture and very little on how to implement other methodologies. The conclusion is that college classrooms continue to be didactic rather than democratic and negotiated.

It is our opinion, therefore, that little is written about the implementation of self-directed learning because relatively little takes place in the classroom with groups of students. Although few would argue that the college and post-graduate experience is about potential scholars seeking deep personal understanding as inspired by, rather than dictated by their professors, there is little evidence to suggest that this is happening through self-directed learning. Perhaps the many-to-one lecture mode better lends itself to mass education and is less labor-intensive than its counterpart—“beyond the content,” one-to-one, self-directed learning. We delve further into this notion in the discussion of challenges we have faced in implementing self-directed learning.

Potential Barriers

Two barriers to self-directed learning include the socialization of students and the expectations and traditions within higher education. These barriers are embedded in and obstruct the classroom implementation process.

Students are socialized within our educational system to *need* and to *demand* the syllabus to plan the semester’s learning activities. They require, assume, and expect the course syllabus to plot out the course content, course requirements and set the assessment parameters, all of which place them on the continuum toward dependent rather than independent learning. Faculty have a responsibility not just to educate adult learners about their content but also to demonstrate alternative methodologies that provides a road map for a self-directed learning journey. Then students learn that they can and will get from here to there on their own.

What if the syllabus offers adult students opportunity to craft, mold, and shape their own learning curriculum according to their interests and needs beyond minimal content mastery? Suppose adult students have opportunities to choose seminal topics, choose how they would like to participate, choose a variety of delivery styles, choose most beneficial sequencing, and even choose grades? These decisions usually fall into instructors’ domain. However, the value of discussing and deciding in, instead of outside, the classroom serves as a model of democratic principles. Power is distributed among and between rather than hoarded. At least at onset, self-directed learning approaches are often met with resistance, reservation, and unpredictability. These responses denote the primary challenge we faced—risks inherent in the implementation of self-directed learning methodology, all of which are discussed later in the paper.

The second obstacle to the implementation of self-directed learning entails the traditions inherent in higher education, itself. Douglas Stalker charges, in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article (2002), that professors are duping students by, “avoiding, evading, eluding, abstaining, dodging, and good old ducking” their responsibilities to *teach* their classes. He accuses

professors of shirking the hard work of teaching. The eight alternative approaches he humorously bashes are peer editing, problem-based/ group learning, computer-based learning, experiential learning, class discussions, class presentations, class circle configuration, and the use of video. While he refrains from offering what he thinks is the *true* teaching method, he implies that the traditional lecture is what separates a real professor from one who dupes students.

The lesson is clear. If you deviate from the tried and true pedagogical methods in higher education, accusations of slacking are just around the corner. Those who hold dear their right to teach from the lectern are eager to impose their style on every other professor. The entrenchment of one-way learning within higher education has a century of legitimacy in the United States. However, the influx of savvy, richly experienced adult students into higher education is forcing adult educators to rethink delivery, purpose, and style of instruction.

Personal Challenges and Benefits

Our teaching experience using self-directed learning has provided us with many challenges and corresponding benefits. In focusing on two under each category, we hope to allay some of the preliminary fears and pitfalls that may thwart the implementation of self-directed learning in the classroom. The challenges are ambiguity and dissonance, and the benefits are responsibility and the exponential effect of sharing meaningful methodologies.

Ambiguity is inherent in the self-directed learning process because of the necessary reliance on individual needs. The reality is that closure is rare. This is both good news and bad news as self-directed learning in the classroom looks and feels risky to both students and faculty. That “out on a limb” feeling creates internal and external tensions. These tensions either energize or demoralize a group of students and can have a unsettling effect on an instructor. We have experienced both. Ambiguity is reality as class colleagues link old knowledge to new learning. The spider-web effect prompts the realization that pat answers are no substitute for deep understanding. In the classroom we value and invoke humility in not knowing answers as we listen and learn. It is in the uncovering of answers, the questioning, and the formulating solutions together that the trust of a learning community is forged.

Current work by the Commission on Behavioral and Educational Practice, National Research Council (2000), suggests that this is the appropriate orientation for learners of all ages. In the expanded edition of *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*, the contributors suggest that contemporary research provides the following implications for teachers:

Regardless of the age of the student, all teachers must

1. draw out and work with preexisting understandings that their students bring with them;
2. teach some subject matter in depth, providing many examples in which the same concept is at work and provide a firm foundation of factual knowledge; and
3. teach and integrate metacognitive skills into the content/curricula.

These implications challenge the appropriateness of passive instructional models where students are considered empty vessels and teachers are considered the dispensers of knowledge. It is interesting to note that in a masters level course entitled, *Models of Instruction*, the students personally responded to these active learning precepts in their own learning and pledged to honor them in their own k-12, nursing, and adult learning classrooms. Teacher education programs need to encourage similar pledges from pre-service teachers.

Dissonance is also a by-product of self-directed learning and becomes the norm in the classroom. Anticipating the dissonance can diminish its effect. Deborah Meier (1995) calls the democratic classroom “messy” as students and teacher play out the ideals for our forefathers in their interactions with one another. It is our responsibility to offer students the opportunity to break the cycle of dependent learning as they peel the layers of their own resistance and discomfort. Since self-directed learning is a developmental journey, many students do not get from here to there until the course is over. Faculty plant the seeds and provide the impetus for self-directed learning and then launch students as they come to understand and appreciate the joys of their own adult learning journeys. The classroom culture evolves from information to formation.

Ambiguity and dissonance are challenges that present valuable learning opportunities for both students and faculty. Graduate school curriculum lends itself to differentiation and who better to differentiate than the students themselves. Faculty can provide the roadmap but the students decide their own destination and possibly the proper vehicle for their own learning styles. The buzz created within the classroom is part of the learning process and manifests itself as ambiguity and dissonance. The critical outcomes of self-directed learning mean that instructors need to not only weather the storms of ambiguity and dissonance but to derive maximum benefit from the challenge. Sharing classroom responsibility and power encourages adults to engage in research and produce products that are meaningful. Self-directed learning sets a nontraditional course by changing the dynamics between the students and the instructor and among the students. Traditional roles of student and teacher are transformed into that of co-learners and facilitators.

As faculty, it is important to think of the potential exponential effect of self-directed learning. Our students will choose to replicate this methodology in their classrooms and with their students. Teaching teachers and school administrators has its advantages in the rippling effect that cycles through other soon-to-be adult learners. In an *Educational Leadership* article, Brown (2002) describes the power of self-directed learning in a middle school classroom. Differentiated instruction, authentic assessment, and an integrated curriculum propelled young students to ask serious questions as they constructed their own learning in a program called “Soundings.” While standardized test scores were similar for eighth grade students in and out of the program, it was the parents of the Soundings students who witnessed a marked difference in their children’s positive attitude to learning. More longitudinal research is needed on the effects of self-directed learning. Following the learning growth of these students as they enter high school and college would add to the body of knowledge and, hopefully, discover the power of their eighth grade self-directed learning experiences.

As we reflect on the challenges and benefits of changing our own classrooms as a result of our new approach to teaching and learning, we question whether we would embark on this journey had we to do it again. The answer comes without hesitation or regret—we would! In fact, we wonder at the lack of research and academic discussion surrounding a methodology that has been respected by theorists for over thirty years. As our impatience with the slow pace of methodological development grows, so does our hope. We are dedicated to the task of sharing our journey toward self-directed learning. We seek opportunities to actively engage in the discussion of issues surrounding teaching and learning—questioning our own and traditional assumptions guiding instruction. In an era of heightened accountability and scrutiny, we believe the time is ripe for encouraging others to begin a difficult journey that may provide dynamic mechanisms for the advancement of teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Our experience with self-directed learning has brought us to the following recommendations:

1. Higher education faculty need to learn more about the effectiveness of self-directed learning and the impact on adult students in the classroom.
2. Higher education faculty need to know about various implementation strategies or models for self-directed learning to maximize student learning and expand student responsibilities for learning.
3. Student evaluation systems, which are based on traditional educational practices, may not serve as the most effective instruments to measure self-directed student learning. The evaluation of self-directed learning and the accountability for self-directed learning appears to require a more appropriate, open-ended measure.
4. Self-directed classroom learning needs to be studied and assessed with different types of students enrolled in various types of programs.
5. Self-directed learning in the classroom may not be appropriate or preferred in all learning situations. Research on the optimum educational level, time, content, and context for implementation is both necessary and desirable.

We believe that the need for self-directed learning in the higher education classroom has never been greater. Adult theorists, notably Knowles, Brookfield, Weimer, have been exhorting the benefits of self-directed learning for over thirty years, but the practice does not appear to be widespread or well accepted within higher education. How could this methodology evolve into wider usage for the strengthening of programs, improved instructional practice, and most importantly, enhanced, independent student learning? We strongly advocate moving self-directed learning from a marginal classroom practice to a customary, instructional methodology of choice for learners to help us all to get from here to where we need to be. It is our belief that communities of self-directed learners become transformed communities of practice.

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Transforming the Workplace: Feminist Educators Challenge Sexism in Elementary and Secondary Schools

Lynn Villyard Brannon

Abstract: *Feminist educators seeking to transform the gendered relations of power in schools used defensive, offensive and pro-active strategies in engagement. The study concluded that for transformative efforts to succeed educators must depart from a liberal feminist agenda and focus on pro-active strategies driven by a vision of social justice.*

Keywords: Emancipatory practice, Anti-sexist education, Workplace learning

Background and Research Design

My work as a school psychologist takes me into elementary and secondary schools every day where I see the many ways gendered power relations are played out and how gender influences, and in some cases determines, the outcome of many interactions. Having reviewed much of the literature about gender bias and schooling, I was initially optimistic that significant changes in the social life of schools would be forthcoming. Much to my disappointment, however, this has not proven true and one nagging question remains: Why is it that, despite volumes of research flooding both professional and popular audiences, years of discourse, and implementation of numerous feminist initiatives, gendered power relations have remained largely unchanged? This apparently irreconcilable situation stared me in the face as if to say, “this is just the way it is.” Unwilling to accept this premise and driven by a passionate belief that things do not have to remain “just the way they are,” I set about to discover what feminist educators actually are doing to transform the social life of schools. I reasoned that discovering what was working, what was not working and perhaps most importantly, why, that a clearer understanding of the disparity between effort and desired outcome would emerge.

This research draws on the various traditions of transformative education that inform the field as outlined in *The Journal of Transformative Education* (McWhinney & Markos, 2003). This study is located in the “emancipatory” strand of the literature which has “goals of social transformation” rather than transformation of individuals. Specifically, participants in this study acted to transform systems of gender oppression that privilege the lives of boys and men while reducing the life chances of girls and women. The purpose of this study was to discover how women educators negotiated feminist interests to transform the elementary and secondary workplace. Three questions guided the study: 1) What issues are raised by feminist educators, 2) What factors constrain or enable action, and 3) What strategies do women educators use to transform their workplaces? This study adopted a power relations perspective (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) as its theoretical framework and was situated in the socio/political context of schools.

Ten women educators ranging in age from 33 to 61 years and occupying the roles of teacher, school counselor, principal and superintendent, were interviewed about one or more critical incidents (Ellinger & Watkins, 1998) in which they acted to transform conditions of the workplace. The constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam,

1998) was used to analyze fifteen incidents discussed, with categories created based on commonalities found.

Results

My aim in conducting this study (Brannon, 2002) was to understand what women educators are doing to transform the sexist status quo of the workplace. To more fully understand what they did and why, however, I also needed to know the kinds of problems they faced in their day-to-day practice and what conditions and forces in the workplace affected what they did or did not do. To get at this information I asked three questions. The first focused on identification of sexist attitudes, beliefs and/or behaviors encountered. Participants discussed fifteen incidents of sexism to which they were party, either as a target themselves or acting on behalf of one or more female student(s) who were targets. In six of the incidents the participant was targeted, and in nine, female students were targeted. The critical incidents were categorized as Sexual Harassment, Battery (sexual and physical), and Sexual Discrimination. Of the total number of incidents, three were student-to-student offenses, six were faculty-to-faculty offenses and six were faculty-to-student offenses. One striking revelation was that the experiences of women and girls in schools were parallel, both in type of offense and in the physical, emotional and psychological aftermath of dealing with the offense. In other words, whether the female is 40 or 14 years old, one is just as likely as the other to be the target of sexism.

The second question focused on identification of things that influenced the women in their decision to act or not to act, their decisions about what to do along the way and the outcome of the situation. In other words, what things functioned to constrain or enable them in their challenge to the sexist status quo in schools? Two primary constraints stemming from the socio/political context of the workplace were found to be overwhelming in their influence on what the women did and did not do, as well as the degree of success they achieved. The first and most formidable constraint was Patriarchal ideology itself—stereotypical beliefs and attitudes about gender and gender roles that permeated the work environment, creating conditions hostile to the interests of women and girls. The conditions in which the women worked directly influenced the degree to which they acted, and in some instances, determined whether or not they acted at all (Brody, Fuller, Gosetti, Moscato, Nagle, Pace, & Schmuck, 2000; Stein, 2000).

Second, the politics of Patriarchy—strategies and tactics to protect and maintain the sexist status quo—used by those in positions of power also constrained action through such practices as withholding information, denying open discussion and deliberation, prescribing or otherwise limiting options, and abandoning established policy and/or procedure altogether. Simply put, schools are patriarchal institutions within which females occupy a subordinate status to that of males. As such, women acting on behalf of themselves or other women and girls are doubly handicapped—first by being female themselves and second, by raising issues pertaining to the interests of females to a power structure that assigns little or no value to either.

To counter, the single-most powerful enabler was the moral imperative to act. Every woman spoke in some fashion about being driven to act by a belief that they had to act regardless of risk or cost—they simply could not let the situation go and do nothing. They spoke in terms of “having a mission,” of having people to protect and being

determined “to do it one way or another,” and of the willingness to “do what I have to do.” This moral imperative compelled the women to continue in their efforts despite personal and professional risks, as well as mental and emotional stress.

A secondary enabler was that of personal credibility, but surprisingly, being well respected, even well liked professionally and personally, was of little consequence in the struggle for change. In actuality, personal credibility served only to get their foot in the door, so to speak, but did not further their argument or agenda. Lastly, the level of political awareness and astuteness figured prominently in the success or failure of the women’s efforts. The few politically astute women were far more successful than the majority who failed to account for political realities of the workplace. As such, they either went away defeated and demoralized or, for those who persisted, found themselves in the midst of the fray trying to sort things out as they went along, as their concerns were trivialized, dismissed or ignored altogether.

Faced with such a formidable opponent and with more working against them than for them, these ten women had what Horton (1998) calls tough problems—those that take time and that you have to struggle with. It is from within the struggle that answers to my third question emerged. I asked the women to describe, in as much detail as possible, the specific strategies used to transform their workplaces by challenging sexism. It was my hope that through this process not only what worked and what did not work would come to light, but also the elusive “why;” bringing insight into how the disparity between feminist efforts and desired outcome in schools might be bridged.

Having come to a clearer understanding of what the women were up against, as well as the corollary risks and costs incurred by challenging the status-quo, the image of their predicament as a bout—as in a fight—or perhaps best put, as a “struggle for power”(Inglis,1997) came readily to mind. Fittingly then, the strategies were categorized as Offensive, Defensive and Pro-Active, differentiated by function and visibility. The strategies identified are both specific actions engaged by participants and specific actions they did not engage, but in retrospect see would have been effective. Strategies were engaged sometimes singly, sometimes in rapid succession, but most typically in concert.

The Defensive strategies were largely preparatory in nature and typically not publicly visible. Preparing well prior to engagement—as in doing your homework—was the most frequently discussed defensive strategy, either from the perspective of having done so or from having realized the folly in failing to prepare well. Foremost, preparing well involved identification of the players or stakeholders (Cervero & Wilson, 1994), what role they play, and what interests they have at stake; anticipating a range of possible reactions once engagement begins along with concrete plans for dealing effectively with them; analysis of failed attempts or of less-than-desirable outcomes so the same mistakes are not repeated; taking into consideration the larger political climate of the community in deciding courses of action; and last, developing a consciousness of yourself as more than as “school employee”—you are also a citizen of a community, a state, a country, with civil rights that enable action despite constraints imposed in the workplace. In other words, it is sometimes necessary and appropriate to act independently when the school fails in its responsibility to act in the best interest of employees and students.

Two other defensive strategies engaged were retreating for self-protection and/or protection of your interests—‘distancing’ as several participants put it—and attending to your mental and emotional well-being. Distancing was engaged by women who were

targets of sexual harassment and physical battery perpetrated by a male colleague by avoiding situations in which they would both be present and, when this was not possible, by putting as much literal space as possible between themselves and the perpetrator. For one participant, however, distancing for self-protection meant changing jobs. Distancing for purposes of protecting interests involved readying yourself for the next advance by retreating, giving yourself space to engage in activities such as data gathering, consultation with others about the matter, and making pertinent contacts with key players.

Integral to the effectiveness of all efforts to challenge sexism in the workplace was finding ways to keep your wits about you and your emotions under control—maintaining mental and emotional balance. Key to this balance was being very clear and resolute about what was negotiable and what was not—knowing your bottom line (Newman, 1994). Participants found that keeping this focus helped them resist personalizing and lashing out at people, and allowed them to let superfluous issues and distractions fall by the wayside. Psychological and emotional well-being was seen as an important corollary to maintaining mental balance and focus. Every woman interviewed mentioned experiencing significant psychological and emotional stress following their taking a stand to challenge sexism in the workplace. One spoke about the stress of being the “lone voice,” ...you just don’t know how much longer you can go to work feeling no one supports you.” And, she added, instead of going to bed at night knowing she had done a good thing—the right thing—by helping a student, she went to sleep wondering if she would have a job the next day. Another spoke of the uncertainty of support from colleagues and supervisors, saying she could never be absolutely sure anyone would back her up—“you never know who’s jerking their chain...you never know where they are with their own agenda.” To help them cope with the mental, emotional and psychological stress, all of the women relied on at least one close confidant and family for support, and some sought out a mentor as well. Most also secured support through affiliation with professional organizations.

Offensive strategies were engaged in response to precipitating factors. Because of their responsive nature, they were also visible, although the scope of visibility may vary. Offensive strategies engaged were timing—the calculation of when to act and rate of response—following established policy and procedure, and raising the issue to the individual or entity in the highest position of power. Understanding when and how quickly to act figured prominently in the degree of success achieved by participants, allowing them to preserve positional advantage and favorable conditions, neither of which could have been regained had timing been miscalculated.

Following established school policy and procedure—using the tools you already have—was engaged by every participant. Serving as an initial blueprint, this strategy had less to do with having blind faith in the system than with following the rules so that failure to do so could not be used against them and undermine their efforts. As one participant said, “you can’t leave room for anyone to say ‘this is the proper procedure...did you do this before you did that? If not, you need to go back and do it.’” While following policy and procedure did not necessarily advance their agenda, neither were their efforts compromised due to failure to follow them.

A third offensive strategy was that of raising the issue of concern to the person(s) or entity in the highest position of power, either within the school system itself or outside the system as appropriate, such as law enforcement, community agencies and parents. For

example, in response to incidents of sexual assault of sixth grade girls, a middle-school principal immediately notified local law enforcement realizing the offense was a violation of law and, as such, superceded school rule or policy. In another situation, a teacher contacted the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFACS) in her attempt to help a seventh grade girl impregnated by her father, when the principal dismissed her concerns.

The last category of strategies engaged were those initiated by the individual for the explicit purpose of attracting attention to the problem of sexism in schools—to make sexism an issue. The Pro-active strategies identified were the voicing of one's anti-sexist stance and the education of faculty, students, and parents about sexism in schools. As one participant said so well, "we teach kids all the time that what I pay attention to is important, and what I don't pay attention to is not important...talking about gender gives enormous credence to it." On the surface, voicing an anti-sexist stance and educational intervention seem obvious, even simple—the least we could do. Obvious, maybe. Simple? No. It must be remembered that feminist educators work in conditions hostile to their interests and the moment they act to challenge sexism, a myriad of subtle and overt practices are engaged to suppress or ultimately halt their efforts. Labeled "trouble-makers," all quickly became the recipients of harsh looks and rolling eyes, turned-backs and cold shoulders, while others endured aggressive verbal assault, fear of job loss, and for one woman, the certainty of job loss had she not preempted the move by resigning. Engaging pro-active strategies is the equivalent of throwing down the gauntlet—it says "I challenge you." No simple matter and, perhaps not surprisingly, the reason pro-active strategies were engaged the least.

In summary, this study indicates that women and girls in schools encounter sexual harassment, sexual and physical battery, and sexual discrimination. More incidents of categorical discrimination occurred than incidents directed at an individual target. In their efforts to transform their workplaces by challenging sexism, feminist educators met with stubborn opposition against which most were ill-equipped. Multiple forces were found to operate simultaneously to constrain and/or enable action. The single most powerful constraining force was the ideology of Patriarchy itself, ably fulfilling its role as the defender of the sexist status-quo through the politics engaged by individuals and entities in positions of power. The most powerful enabler found was the moral imperative to act—the certainty that to try to make a difference was the right thing to do. Secondly, personal characteristics enabled efforts, but were limited in effectiveness. Lastly, the few participants whose success distinguished them from the majority who failed in their efforts also possessed a high level of political awareness. Feminist educators engaged and/or identified three categories of strategies in their efforts to transform the sexist status-quo of their workplaces. Each category made its own distinct contribution and all three were found necessary for successful negotiation of feminist interests.

Discussion

Patriarchy marks the social life of schools, communicating fundamental assumptions about what is valued and what is not valued (Brody, et.al., 2000) as sexism has become normalized and its public expression tolerated (Stein, 2000). Through denial, rejection and blame the system divests itself of responsibility for dealing with gender issues, thereby protecting its own interests and preserving the sexist status quo.

Perhaps the most illuminating discovery made relative to the disparity between effort exerted and lack of desired outcome is that most of the feminist educators interviewed attempted to transform the social reality of schools by working with/within the existing system—a system hostile to their interests. This approach, stemming from a liberal feminist perspective, fails to acknowledge and account for the forms of power and privilege that work together to create the very social realities they were attempting to transform (Brody, et.al., 2000; Stromquist, 1995; Weiler, 1988). Seven of the ten educators interviewed were unsuspecting of, and consequently unprepared for, the often fierce opposition they encountered. Consequently, their efforts were easily foiled and they were left feeling as one participant said, “like a ‘semi’ just came along and flattened you.” Only in retrospect, when it was much too late to salvage the situation, did these women realize their errors and subsequently identify what went wrong and why. On the other hand, the few, more politically astute educators interviewed anticipated conflict and successfully negotiated their way through many potential pitfalls, faring much better in the end. To say that politics matter, then, is a bit of an understatement, but nonetheless necessary. I have heard it said that “if you don’t turn on to politics, politics will turn on you”—a lesson hard-learned by most participants in this study. As they found, understanding relationships of power, accounting for structured interests and motives, and anticipating conflict are indeed central to successful challenge of the sexist status-quo (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Forester, 1989).

For transformative efforts to succeed, feminist educators must depart from a liberal feminist perspective and its social vision of equity and empowerment strategies. Rather, transformative efforts of feminist educators must be guided by a critical perspective and a vision of social justice, supplying the “what for” (Cervero & Wilson, 2001) of practice that will sustain us in the face of opposition. Transformative efforts are then enacted through engagement of strategies for emancipation. Clearly, pro-active/provocative strategies hold the most promise for social transformation because, being born of critical analysis, they are engaged with the intent to disrupt and subvert existing structures of power—in this scenario, the underlying Patriarchal framework of schools. (Brannon, 2002; Brody, et. al., 2001; Cunningham, 2000; Weiler, 1988).

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Cornel West as a Transformative Intellectual

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Abstract: *As an emerging discourse, transformative learning and education is in need of models of transformative intellectual work. This article proposes Cornel West, the prominent African American philosopher, cultural critic and preacher, as one such model. In his creative drawing on two traditions central to transformative education – critical theory and pragmatism – West proposes a model of critical intellectual engagement which he lives out in his own political commitments. West believes the process of education should be inherently transformative and is particularly concerned with the creation of an anti-racist, truly democratic society. He reinterprets critical theory in the interests of African Americans and infuses his analysis with elements of classic pragmatism to produce a politics of prophetic pragmatism. To West education is transformative only if it moves society in a certain political direction.*

Keywords: Transformative Practice, Cornel West, Racializing

Introduction

The perspective informing this paper's analysis of transformative learning, and its selection of Cornel West as an emblematic transformative intellectual, is critical theory. Critical theory is usually associated with the work of a group of theorists collectively known as the Frankfurt School, who authored a series of social and political critiques of Western capitalism and the rise of Fascism. Representative figures in this tradition are Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm and, more recently, Habermas. These thinkers were attempting to reinterpret Marx's work in a world where capitalism seemed to be loved, rather than reviled, by the European working class, and in a world where citizens seemed to welcome, rather than resist, fascist movements and the dumbing down of culture into mass commercialization. Central to the critical theory perspective that evolved out of this work is the belief that personal transformation must always be either the handmaiden or consequence of social and political change. Moreover, such change must by definition be in a leftist direction involving the abolition of the exchange economy of capitalism. In this sense, transformative education has of necessity a political dimension, and transformative intellectuals live out their praxis in contemporary social and political movements. Transformative education would be education that in its process or outcome involved a fundamental challenge to, and reordering of, political economy. Transformative intellectuals would be theorists of, and activists within, such re-orderings. Although every social movement has such individuals whose contributions are known to its own activists, public transformative intellectuals are rare.

In Cornel West, however, the United States has an example of a public transformative intellectual. West, who recently joined the faculty of Princeton University, is one of the most dynamic African American intellectuals alive. However, West does not propose a distinctive Afrocentric epistemology, looking instead to the transformative emphasis in critical theory as one guide to the creation of a non-racist democracy. He also draws on Gramsci's idea of the organic intellectual to theorize transformative change within society, and to live out his own praxis of such change in political, theological and even musical spheres. Learning to understand and dismantle racist power structures as part of a broader movement of social transformation is West's project, and he draws on Marx, Foucault and Gramsci (all major figures in the critical

theory tradition) for their contributions to keeping the hope of a revolutionary future alive in the African American community. This paper explores his use of critical theory as the intellectual tradition that informs transformative education, and his elaboration of prophetic pragmatism as a form of educational engagement.

West's Transformative Educational Project

Contribution of Marx

West has clearly committed himself to what he conceives as a transformative educational project. This project is one of helping activists in disconnected fields (anti-racist literature, labor unions, ecological activism, Gay and Lesbian rights, etc.) realize their common cause in fighting multinational capitalism and learn from the successful activist practices of each of these. In thinking through what such a project would look like West uses iconic critical theorists to craft his designation of the transformative intellectual. From Marx West takes the idea that transformation is an inherently political struggle that must entail the abolition of the exchange economy of capitalism. From Foucault he cites the importance of studying how as social actors we are implicated in power relations as we exercise power, and in particular how we live out the practice of racism in the minutiae of our lives. And from Gramsci he builds on the idea of the educator as an organic intellectual with one foot holding open the door of theoretical analysis and one foot anchored firmly in the particularities of social movements. If we follow West's line of analysis, then, to work transformatively is, by definition, to play some kind of activist role in oppositional social movements. Transformative education as a field of practice would therefore require a high degree of political engagement.

The importance of considering seriously but critically the ideas of Karl Marx is a theme that threads throughout West's attempt to understand the barriers to social and political transformation. For West, Marx's ideas are "indispensable – although ultimately inadequate – in grasping distinctive features of African-American oppression" (West, 1993b, p. 259). In his view, however, the "richness of the Marxist methodological orientation and analytical perspective in relation to race remains untapped" (ibid. p. 261). This is partly because Marx, himself, did not conduct an analysis of race as a separate dimension of oppression, nor did he anticipate how "a common denominator of white supremacist abuse cuts across class, gender, sexual orientation" (West, 1993a, p. 131). In the words of the title of West's best seller Marx failed to anticipate that *Race Matters* (1993c). There are other silences and blind spots in Marx: "a relative inability to understand the complexity of culture - issues of identity and so forth" (1993a, p. 139) and a lack of understanding of how power is "tied to the microphysics of a society" (ibid.). Furthermore, Marxism is irrevocably linked in the American imagination to totalitarianism and Stalinist oppression, which ensures its continuing exclusion from consideration as a means of understanding American life.

Yet, time and time again, West urges the importance of engaging with Marx as "an inescapable part of the intellectual weaponry for present-day freedom fighters" (1991, p. xiv). While he acknowledges that contemporary matrices of oppression – nationalism, racism, homophobia, patriarchy, ecological abuse – are not accounted for by Marx, he remains convinced that "these complex phenomena cannot be grasped, or changed, without the insights of Marxist theory" (ibid.). Why should this be so? For West it is the rise of global capitalism and the ever-increasing power of multi-nationals that make knowledge of Marx indispensable. 3 In an interview with George Yancy, West states his case as follows; "I don't see how, in fact, we can

understand the market forces around the world and the fundamental role of transnational corporations, the subordination of working people, the tremendous class conflicts going on around the world at the market place between management and labor without understanding some of the insights of the Marxist tradition” (West, 1998, p. 41). In West’s world understanding transformative education is not just a matter of understanding the educational dynamics of major personal change. It is also about learning how capitalist dynamics frame opportunities for personal change, including the conduct of personal relationships themselves.

In *Prophesy Deliverance* (1982) West proposes a blending of Marxism with Black theology, to him the single most important source of philosophical energy for African American transformative activism. Black theology and Marxism both employ a methodology of unmasking falsehood, but in his opinion “Black theologians barely mention the wealth, power and influence of multinational corporations” (West, 1982, p. 113). Neither do they make the link between “the way in which the racist interpretations of the gospel they reject encourage and support the capitalist system of production, its grossly unequal distribution of wealth, and its closely connected political arrangements” (ibid.). Inserting a Marxist element into Black theology would ensure that Black oppression in capitalist America was understood as linked to Black and Brown oppression in the Third World. As a way of illuminating the interconnected nature of racial and class oppression West also calls for a “Marxist influenced genealogical materialist analysis of racism” (1993b, p. 268) that would probe the logic of white supremacy through a “micro-institutional (or localized) analysis of the mechanisms that promote and contest these logics in the everyday lives of people” (ibid.). Such an analysis would explore “the ways in which self-images and self-identities are shaped, and the impact of alien, degrading cultural styles, aesthetic ideals, psychosexual sensibilities and linguistic gestures upon peoples of color” (ibid.). Concurrent with this micro-institutional analysis would go a macro-structural exploration of “class exploitation, state repression and bureaucratic domination, including resistance against these modes, in the lives of people of color” (ibid.). Transformative education in this analysis is education that must entail a strong element of anti-racist practice and analysis.

Contribution of Foucault

This emphasis on a genealogical analysis of racist practices in everyday life demonstrates West’s acknowledgment of another major figure in the critical tradition, the late French cultural critic and historian Michel Foucault. West declares that “Foucault’s perspective can be valuable for Afro-American philosophers whose allegiance is to a revolutionary future” (West, 1983, p. 58) because it helps illuminate how the power of racist ideology is made manifest in daily conversations, gestures, rituals and interactions. By fusing Foucault’s ideas with a neo-Marxist analysis “Foucault’s viewpoint can be creatively transformed and rendered fruitful for a genealogy of modern racism, in both its ideational and material forms” (ibid.). This genealogy of racism would not just analyze the way dominant discourse inaugurated the category of race and excluded positive notions of Black beauty, culture and character from its discursive field. It would also “put forward an Afro-American counter discourse, in all its complexity and diversity, to the modern European racist discourse” (ibid.). Such a discourse would “exercise and evaluate how the Afro-American response promotes or precludes a revolutionary future” (ibid.). In *The American Evasion of Philosophy* (1989) West criticizes Foucault for his ascription of agency to discourses, disciplines and techniques (1989, p. 225) but acknowledges that the stance of prophetic pragmatism “promotes genealogical materialist modes of analysis similar in many respects to those of Foucault” (ibid. p. 223).

Contribution of Gramsci

Finally, West peppers his works with approving references to the Italian political economist Antonio Gramsci, describing himself as a Gramscian Marxist and calling Gramsci “the most penetrating Marxist theorist of culture in this century” (West, 1982, p. 118). Explaining his affinity to Gramsci he writes “my particular stand within the Marxist tradition is linked primarily to that of Gramsci, which always places stress on historical specificity, on concrete circumstances and situations” (1998, p. 41). Just as he claims Foucault’s work reflects the spirit of prophetic pragmatism, so he believes that “prophetic pragmatism is inspired by the example of Antonio Gramsci (who) exemplifies the critical spirit and oppositional sentiments of prophetic pragmatism” (West, 1989, p. 230). West is drawn to Gramsci’s (and later Raymond Williams) idea that hegemony is always contested and open to being undermined by specific actions taken in specific situations. He is drawn also to Gramsci’s emphasis on cultural products – in contemporary terms, films, books, rap music CD’s - as sites of counter-hegemony. In particular, West refers, repeatedly and explicitly, to Gramsci’s idea of the organic intellectual as serving as a useful descriptor both for his own work and for the work of critical Black intellectuals in general. He believes, as did Gramsci, that “the aim of philosophy is ... to become part of a social movement by nourishing and being nourished by the philosophical views of oppressed people themselves for the aims of social change and personal meaning” (ibid. p. 131). If we think of philosophizing as a form of transformative educational practice, this inquiry ceases to be conducted for its own sake. Instead, it becomes a political practice geared to working with disenfranchised groups.

Implications of This Philosophy for Critical Intellectual Engagement

This situating of philosophy in everyday transformative practices and struggles is a defining feature of the organic intellectual. In *Keeping Faith* (1993b) West reframes the concept slightly as that of the critical organic catalyst, “a person who stays attuned to the best of what the mainstream has to offer – its paradigms, viewpoints and methods – yet maintains a grounding in affirming and enabling sub-cultures of criticism” (p. 27). In his view Black intellectuals should function as organic intellectuals. They should be scholar-activists who are grounded in the experiences and struggles of the African American community while having their transformative efforts informed by the wisdom of allies outside that racial group. This model of intellectual engagement “pushes academic intellectuals beyond contestation within the academy ... and links this contestation with political activity in grass-roots groups, pre-party formations, or progressive associations intent on bringing together potential agents of social change” (ibid. p. 103). Such groups include activists of color, feminists, lesbians and gays, black churches, ecological movements and rank and file labor caucuses, and Black nationalists.

As organic intellectuals, African American philosophers have specific transformative responsibilities in West’s view. These focus particularly on transforming African Americans’ awareness of the distinctive, racially based, elements of their own lifeworld. In a Foucaultian vein, they must “articulate a new ‘regime of truth’ linked to, yet not confined by, indigenous institutional practices permeated by the kinetic orality and emotional physicality, the rhythmic syncopation, the protean improvisation and the religious, rhetorical and antiphonal repetition of African-American life” (ibid. p. 82). They must also conduct “a critical self-inventory” (ibid. p. 85) and work to create and reactivate “institutional networks that promote high-quality critical habits primarily for the purpose of black insurgency” (ibid. p. 83). West is clear on the need for

the critical spirit to be applied to African Americans' philosophizing and organizing and is critical of overly charismatic activists who leave no organizational or community structures in the communities they visit. In approving contrast to this he cites Martin Luther King as "an organic intellectual of the first order – a highly educated and informed thinker with organic links to ordinary folk" (ibid. p. 273). King's roots in the black church "gave him direct access to the lifeworlds of the majority of black southerners" (ibid.), his education provided him with an analysis of anti-colonialism as well as bringing him respect within the Black community, and he "facilitated relations with progressive non black people, thereby insuring openness to potential allies" (ibid.). King's contribution was that he tried to produce transformative structures and processes that would outlive his presence. Hence, an important element in the transformative intellectual's work is creating structures that will galvanize the activism of others after the transformative intellectual has left the scene.

As the foregoing discussion clearly shows, West's work draws strongly on critical theory as one of the central intellectual traditions contributing to his project for African American philosophy. This project is summarized by the titles of his books *Restoring Hope* (1997) and *Keeping Faith* (1993b). To him "the principal task of the Afro-American philosopher is to keep alive the hope of a revolutionary future ... in which the multifaceted oppression of Afro-Americans is, if not eliminated, alleviated" (1983, p. 57). In pursuing this task West believes that African American philosophers must preserve critical theory's notions of negation and transformation and initiate "a serious confrontation with the Marxist tradition and, among others, the recent work of Michel Foucault" (ibid.). But African American philosophy must also be "indigenously grounded in the prophetic religious and progressive secular practices of Afro-Americans" (ibid.) and have as its particular project the generation of guidelines for transformative social action that springs from the true needs of African Americans. He summarizes "the major function of Afro-American critical thought" as being "to reshape the contours of Afro-American history and provide a new self-understanding of the Afro-American experience which suggest guidelines for action in the present" (West, 1982, p. 22).

There are several elements to this project. One is, as we have seen, to conduct a genealogy of racist ideas and practices. Another is "to provide a theoretical reconstruction and evaluation of Afro-American responses to white supremacy" (ibid. p. 23). A third is to explore the cultural roots and sensibilities of African Americans. A fourth is "to present a dialogical encounter between Afro-American critical thought and progressive Marxist social analysis" (West, 1982, p. 23). This encounter is much more than an interesting philosophical confluence for West. Indeed, he sees such an intellectual fusion as crucial to democratic social reconstruction declaring confidently that "in an alliance between prophetic Christianity and progressive Marxism ... lies the hope of Western civilization" (ibid.). Finally, West sees the task of African American critical thought being to disentangle and interpret the African, European and American elements in black experience. As West writes "the life-worlds of Africans in the United States are conceptually and existentially neither solely African, European, nor American, but more the latter than any of the former" (ibid. p. 24).

West is clear that transformation is not an open-ended process that contains its own justification. Transformation for transformation's sake, irrespective of the political direction of such transformation, is not what he is advocating. A truly transformative education is normatively grounded for him in a commitment to work for a socialist, anti-racist democracy. 6 He eschews the idea that transformation can happen in a purely internal, intra-psychic manner. For him individual and socio-political transformation are intertwined. Transformation is also

inherently directive. Transformative intellectuals work to galvanize grass roots activists to fight global capitalism's manifestations in their own neighborhoods.

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“My Misfortune Is To See The Grid Of Assumptions”

Eva Hoffman, *Lost In Translation*

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Abstract: *Three women’s narratives illuminate the experience of dual culture subjectivity. Their stories raise questions for transformative educators regarding the multiple challenges of living a life in which our own and others’ meaning structures are continually up for question.*

Key Words: transformative learning, bicultural subjectivity, narrative analysis

In the past two decades, global labor and commerce, political and economic persecution and disadvantage, lives disrupted by war, and expanded educational opportunities have meant that increasing numbers of individuals are living or have lived for significant periods of time in cultures and/or nations different from their that of their families or communities of origin. The experience can enable some to grasp and move between multiple frames of reference. Others may develop the same ability through living as a member of a group that is the object of discrimination¹ (Du Bois 1903/1995). It is important to honor the work of Du Bois as it predated by several decades other work on critical consciousness as the outcome of critical reflection, as well as the work of African American, Asian, and Latina feminists for their pioneering work on dual culture and intersecting identities and border identities. I am inspired by these women’s work as well as my own cultural struggles.

Transformative learning (Mezirow 1991) theory highlights the importance of being able to identify the assumptions behind taken-for-granted cultural and personal frames of reference and idealizes this ability as a worthy goal of adult learning. In a postmodern world characterized by mobility, fluidity of national boundaries, and cross-national families, a cognitive ability such as this seems especially valuable. Yet, while its value seems irrefutable, I am increasingly

¹ For many, W.E.B Du Bois’ concept has provided language to understand the experience I call dual culture subjectivity as a strength not held by those, who are monocultural or monolingual. Du Bois defines the concept of “double consciousness” as “...a peculiar sensation...this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,— an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (Bakhtin 1993/1995, xxxiv). His biographer, David Levering Lewis, wrote, “Had Du Bois left double consciousness in this epiphenomenal limbo—as a sort of non-ego or psychic negative pole...--the partial legacy of *Souls* would have been one of perpetual, devastated psychic passivity. But Du Bois intended the divided self to be a phenomenon that was spiritually and socially evolving...The divided self was destined to cohere and to merge...[The] divided self would not remain flawed, compromised, unstable, or tragic. It would become in time and struggle stronger for being doubled, not undermined—the sum of its parts, not the dividend” (Kenan 1995, xxxvi-xxxvii).

troubled by the struggles of those with dual culture subjectivity or the ability to see and challenge the assumptions of two or more frames of reference and our lack of response to them as educators.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical perspective is Jack Mezirow's theory of transformative learning. I focus on his concept of "frames of reference", which he defines as "the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions" (Mezirow 2000, p. 16). He elaborates, "Our frames of reference often represent cultural paradigms (collectively held frames of reference)—learning that is unintentionally assimilated from the culture—or personal perspectives derived from the idiosyncrasies of primary caregivers... One's frame of reference may include... philosophical, economic, sociological and psychological orientations or theories as well... They provide us with a sense of stability, coherence, community, and identity" (p.17-18).

Research Questions

- How do 2 women with dual culture subjectivities, narrate their lives and describe their relationships, emotions, and understanding of cultural frames of reference?
- How does 1 woman with monoculture subjectivity narrate her life and describe her relationships, emotions, and understanding of cultural frames of reference?
- What evidence of transformation of frames of reference exists in each of the 3 women's stories?

Methodology and Limitations

I use narrative theory, in particular, the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. Most narrative theorists (Sarbin 1986, Bruner 1986, Gergen and Gergen 1988, McAdams 1993) focus on the temporal dimension of narrative, however, Bakhtin highlights the dimension of space, as well. Research on transformative learning has mostly examined stories of transformation that occur in a temporal sequence, often (but not always) of before, during, and after. By introducing a spatial dimension, dimensions of subjectivity can be examined that coexist in temporal consciousness, but encompass far-flung places in space. Relevant to this study, we can conceive of one person with two or more cultural subjectivities, each growing out of its own habit of being. For understanding the lives of people, who live among more than one cultural or linguistic meaning structure, this allows exploration of their holistic experiences of ongoing questioning cultural assumptions about relationships, power, emotions, and institutional structures.

The data for this paper are the life histories of Jodi Baxter and Karen Sanchez, both of which I selected from among 23 recorded collaborative and individual interviews collected in the past 8 years and the published autobiography of Eva Hoffman (1991). Each life history includes between 3 and 5 hours of data. I include the 3 women for their variation from each other in terms of social identity and cultural positioning.

Results

Jodi

Jodi calls her childhood family "southern white trash". She tells of an alcoholic father, who hit his wife and failed to provide adequately for his family. She also tells of a father, who sold Christmas trees, his pay being a free one for his family. As she grew older, she learned the

shame of being poor in the U.S. and having a dysfunctional family in a conservative southern Baptist community.

I think I knew we were poor from some of my earliest memories. I certainly knew by the time I was five. I remember my mother's relatives would bring a sack of groceries when they would come to visit [disapproving, but silent and charitable). I remember early on, before I started to school, going to the grocery store with my mother one day, and my brother was with us. I guess we were maybe three and five, four and six, something like that, and she filled up this basket full of groceries, and I'd never seen that in my life. I was, "What are we going to do with all this?" I just didn't understand it. I didn't know people really did that. She pulled it up to the check-out counter, and she looked at the clerk, and she said, "My babies are hungry, and I don't have any money. The manager said I can have credit." At the time that really didn't mean anything to me. I just thought, "Wow, a whole basket full of groceries." But many experiences like that added on to each other really became for me a real powerful message of poverty overlaid with embarrassment, shame of myself and my parents, determination, envy, and then, a real eye opening respect for her.

Jodi narrates her life as the story of working her way out of poverty and separating herself from her mother's life. At first, she seeks to marry someone Baptist and middle class. As she becomes dissatisfied with what becomes an emotionally distant marriage, she seeks divorce, returns to school for a doctorate, buys her own house, and finds a job.

Jodi's life narrative is a classic American "Horatio Alger narrative". She tells of being an "outsider" because of her poverty and her family's dysfunction and her efforts to work her way out. When she earns her first paycheck through a 1960's poverty program, she buys her first new pair of shoes and French fries and ice tea at a real "sit-down" restaurant with "a menu" and "everything".

Her first major transformational moment is when she realizes that her mother has no vision for Jodi other than to live some version of her own life; Jodi leaves home, gets a job, and sends herself to college. This represents a transformative move away from her mother's understanding of her life and shift toward autonomy. Her second moment is when she realizes her husband is sleeping with another woman and neither desires nor respects her; she decides her marriage is not worth keeping and leaves to make it on her own—another shift toward autonomy. This is a classic American narrative of freeing oneself from dependency and moving toward self-determination. She also found her newly developed strong sense of self to be supported by the personal narratives characteristic of the consciousness-raising efforts of second-wave feminism. A stronger and more autonomous self allows her to enter into relationships, gain a new understanding of the culturally embedded power relationships that perpetuate poverty and demean women in marriage, find new and more satisfying emotions in an intimate relationship ("he made my body, speak to my heart"), and disempower the moral judgments of the Southern Baptist Church in her life. All of these accomplishments fit well within an American frame of reference.

However, she never steps outside of this frame of reference. She develops a more autonomous subjectivity within that meaning structure, but her life narrative of "pull yourself up by your own bootstraps" is still quintessentially American, a gendered and poor white southern variation on that narrative, but American, nonetheless.

Karen

Karen describes her life as taking place in two distinct cultures – traditional Mexican and Anglo. She tells of growing up in a large Texan city in a Mexican American community. She says her parents “had this upwardly mobile thing”, so did not allow their children to learn Spanish (even though family and friends spoke it) and also sent their children to a “very very wealthy”, predominantly Anglo Catholic school: “I was probably the only Mexican there, and I knew it as, I was this way, and every body else was another way. So there was always something different about me and different not being good...But I really wanted to fit in, desperately.” Karen sees her brother as having been “the king” in her family. While he had the freedom to do what he wanted, Karen was expected to stay home, serve her brother and father, and help around the house. When she wanted to go to college, her father refused to help, and when she wanted to move out, her mother said it was because she wanted to sleep with men. The paradox for Karen has been that to be successful in the Anglo dominant society (as her parents wanted), she has to behave like an Anglo women, but to earn her parents’ approval, she needs to behave like a well-bred Mexican girl. Now Karen is partnered with a Mexican woman instead of, as her parents wanted, a man, and instead of staying home with their two children (another of her parents’ cultural expectations), her partner stays home and Karen goes out and earns a living. With cruel irony, many with whom she interviewed while job hunting, were interested in her because they expected her to speak Spanish.

Karen’s life narrative remains conflicted and unresolved, following no particular narrative form. In terms of content, her stories tell of wanting to fit in and being consistently misunderstood in the process. The lives of most of the people she tells of in her story each live within either a traditionally Mexican or Anglo frame of reference and respond to Karen as though she, too, was predictable in terms of their own frame. Her “otherness” sets her up for abuse from both cultures: (a) Brother James, and Anglo and her school music teacher, sexually abuses her and dresses her in revealing ethnic costumes in the basement of her Catholic School and (b) her mother accuses her of promiscuity and of lying about Brother James (she remains subject to his abuse for four years).

Karen has no archetypal narrative form with which to make sense of her life. Her relationships are frequently inappropriate as viewed by members of one culture or the other; as a member of historically dominated ethnic, gender, and sexual groups, she is triply subjugated; she experiences strong emotions of anger, fear, isolation, and identity confusion, as well as humor and determination; and while she understands both sets of multifaceted, overlapping, and very complex frames of reference, she still cannot find a “place” to make a cultural and psychological home.

Eva Hoffman

Eva Hoffman writes of being born a Polish Jew and moving to Canada in the late 1950’s at thirteen. Her family and their friends in Poland and her sense of the person she is becoming are powerful parts of her being. Her adjustment to North America is painful and requires her to “forget” the person she had become while in Poland, in order to be successful in her new home. When Polish immigrants of longer standing in Canada take her aside and shave her armpits, Eva feels it as an intimate assault on her Polish identity, an identity she was not at all sure needed changing.

In her book, Eva Hoffman writes about her efforts to assimilate into North American culture. Comparing her youthful self to her American companions, she writes: “I want to live

within language and to be held within the frame of culture; they want to break out of the constraints of both language and culture...” (p. 194). She also tells of purposely dissociating in order to hang on to her childhood language and culture: “I’m pulled into the common circle... Then, to retain my grounding, I pull away. And then pulling away too far, an astronaut floating in an enormously lonely outer space, I know that I cannot sustain my sense of a separate reality forever, for after all, the only reality is a shared reality, situated within a common ground” (p, 195). Later, she explains,

Much of the time, I am in a rage... It’s directed at the culture-in-my-friends. My misfortune is to see the grid of assumptions drawn all over particular personalities, to notice the subjection to collective ideology where I should only see the free play of subjectivity... Where my friends suppose they’re voicing their deepest beliefs, I whiff the dogma of intellectual fashion... But when the full force of my disapproval is spent, the dialogue with myself takes a U-turn, and I remember that my rage is an immigrant’s rage, my suspiciousness the undignified, blinding suspiciousness of an outsider” (p. 203).

Finally, she writes that the “soul can shrivel from an excess of critical distance” and she doesn’t want to remain “in arid internal exile” for the rest of her life” (p. 209) and asks, “How, with this bifocal vision, does one keep one’s center? And what center should one try to keep” (p. 213)?

Eva’s life as she tells it, like Karen’s, follows no identifiable narrative structure; rather, it is episodic. She cannot help but see the cultural assumptions of those with whom she has relationships; her “outsider” position gives her power of criticality, while simultaneously barring her from the deeply known nuances of emotions and meanings to which “insiders” to both the American and the Polish frames of reference are privy. The passing of time has transformed her into both outsider and insider to each culture.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Jodi, Karen, and Eva encountered challenges to their frames of reference; however, in terms of transformation, their experiences are different. Jodi’s life narrative, classically American, leaves her with little doubt as to who she is and what she critiques. Her relationships, emotions, experiences of power, and understanding of cultural nuance make her stories of transformation fit well with a familiar American narrative. However, neither Karen nor Eva tell their lives in a familiar narrative form. In fact, their ability to concurrently recognize more than one worldview and pick out a particular web of assumptions as it manifests in individual lives, group beliefs, and environmental forms defies the suitability of conforming to any well-known narratives. Reflecting on the 23 life narratives from which the two in this paper were drawn, the tendency to spontaneously identify cultural assumptions exists overwhelmingly among Latino and Black women and women, who have immigrated or lived overseas and intimately interacted in work or family settings. In terms of life content, Karen and Eva’s narratives tell of internal conflict; difficulty expressing thoughts and feelings, which often extend beyond the understanding of the monocultural persons with whom they are trying to form or maintain relationships; identity questioning; and the feeling of being a perpetual outsider.

Given the increasingly global world in which we live, I recommend further research on the phenomenological experiences of people of dual and multiple cultures. I also recommend that adult educators, psychologists, social change activists, and managers recognize the inadequacy of the conventional culture-related terms of adaptation, assimilation, or even

acculturation as “deficit” terminology and learn to recognize, understand, and encourage people with dual or multiple culture subjectivities. Learn from them as harbingers of a world to come.

How This Research Contributes To New Knowledge In Transformative Learning

Transformative learning research has been built on narratives of moving from dependence to autonomy and from a universalizing conception of self and culture to recognizing one’s own embeddedness. As Mezirow has pointed out, transformative learning is a temporal process. However, this research suggests it is also spatial and more complex than we have been theorizing. We may be being blinded by our own assumptions and overlooking people with the very abilities we try to promote: individuals who already recognize the assumptions embedded in multiple frames of reference. I am not sure, but I suspect that as a field we have overlooked these people for the very reason that they are often “outsiders” and so we are blind to them. My hope for those of us working with transformative learning is that we look carefully at the life experience of individuals with dual/multiple cultural subjectivities; these individuals already see grids of cultural assumptions and move back and forth among them on a daily basis. Given that these people will likely become more and more common, what kind of learning comes next and what form might an appropriate education take?

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Travel as Transformation? A Cuban Experience in Education

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Abstract: *Travel is broadening. It can also be transformative. To that end, Lesley University has developed a series of study/travel trips, one of which is to Cuba. The purpose of this presentation is to explore the power of place as text for the participants in the January 2002 trip to Cuba, addressing the issue of transformative learning in a specific context. Representative group members are highlighted as they discuss the nature of their learning from their own perspectives. Video clips from post-trip reflection interviews conducted 11 months after travel are used in a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate their experiences with their learning. The data collected through the interviews as well as reflection papers from the students was examined to see whether and to what extent transformative learning occurred as a result of this travel trip and if so what kinds of transformations were evident. Themes did emerge that provide evidence for change as a result of the trip. The implications for practice regarding the value of non-classroom based teaching through travel, highlighting the power of place as an instructional technique for advancing the understanding of political, social and cultural contexts are examined. In addition, the benefits for professional development of adult educators, the use of multi-media for data collection, analysis and presentation are discussed. Finally, questions raised as a result of the research that are intended to advance understanding of transformative learning theory on individual, group and societal levels are presented.*

Keywords: travel, teaching and learning strategy, transformative learning

Background and Context

Lesley University has developed a series of study/travel trips for students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners. One of the recent and most powerful is "The Cuban Experience in Education and the Arts."

In 2000, the president of Lesley University Margaret McKenna traveled to Cuba with a delegation of college presidents led by Congressman James McGovern of Boston for the purpose of exploring the possibility of engaging North Americans and Cubans in a mutually beneficial educational relationship. A university license that enabled Lesley to travel to Cuba with members of the Lesley community as well as participants from the wider community was obtained in 2000 and the first trip took place in January 2001. Since the 2001 inaugural trip, approximately 150 students, faculty members, administrators and community partners have traveled to Cuba with the university.

According to President McKenna, the value of the trip for Lesley students is to enable them to become more aware of culture and its impact, to become critical thinkers and to value diversity as they move forward as educated, informed citizens of the world. The trips also provided a means of enhancing a feeling of community in a more global sense, providing a cultural mirror through which the US worldview was reflected.

The purpose of this presentation is to explore the power of place as text for the participants in the January 2002 trip, addressing the issue of transformative learning in a specific context. The experience of traveling to a controversial country for the express purpose of learning was captured in the participants' own voices.

Theoretical Frame

The overarching theoretical frame of analysis used is Mezirow's transformative theory of adult learning, which has as its core perspective transformation (1991). The theory “makes sense of how adults learn to change their frames of reference” (Mezirow, 2000, p. xiv) and focuses on how adults learn to negotiate and act on their own. Since the generally accepted definition of learning in adulthood is that adults make meaning of their experiences, then the theory holds that they do this by becoming critically aware of their own tacit beliefs and assumptions and those of others who help them assess the validity of those assumptions. Mezirow defines learning as the “process of using prior interpretation to construe new or revised interpretations of one's experience as a guide for future action” (2000, p. 5). If learning is making meaning of experience and the desired outcomes of transformative learning is “...to make them (learners and teachers) more inclusive, discriminating open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so they may generate beliefs and opinions...that will guide action” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8), then travel is an immediately felt experience that enhances learning on many levels.

That learning can be intentional, incidental or mindlessly assimilative. The role of experiential learning or the express purpose of learning by doing, or by being there in the case of travel, can enhance and accelerate the transformative process.

Transformational learning in adulthood has traditionally focused on the individual and has been criticized as such for failing to acknowledge the role of context, political, social and cultural on individual change and vice versa. Recent iterations of the theory, based in part on the outcomes of previous transformative learning conferences, have prompted Mezirow to address the importance of new understandings promoted by critical reflection on *context* based-assumptions. For the purposes of this presentation, the core elements of the theory used to identify elements of transformative learning and its context-driven process are placed as the “trigger” event, disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, change in perspectives and action that followed that change (Mezirow, 2000).

Given the political and economic issues attendant in the US/Cuban relationship, it is not surprising that all of the participants, while having the common purpose of learning, also came on the trip with their own particular expectations and with their own unique biases that would come to be challenged on the trip. It is also true that each viewed their experiences through different lenses; had different responses to the people, events and places; and had their own stories to tell within the larger story of the Cuban experience.

The Trip

The trip to Cuba took place from January 4 to January 14, 2002. Thirty participants went, including the two faculty leaders. The group was comprised of students, both graduate and undergraduate, alumni, administrators and community partners. Interestingly, five adult children of faculty, including the President's son, went on the trip. The composition of the group was impressive in terms of its diversity along many dimensions, including age, race, ethnicity, gender and profession. The differences among the travelers enhanced the vibrancy and discourse in this very purposeful learning community and, as will be seen later, enhanced the richness of the learning experiences of each individual.

The Study/Travel trip enabled the Lesley students to take the trip for credit; those who did so had to follow the curriculum that included pre-trip reading, a journal that was kept throughout the trip, post-trip reflection papers and a research project of their choice. Of the six

students who attended, five took the trip for credit. The one student who did not take the trip for credit did keep a journal for her own purposes. Students came from several schools within the university including the Adult Baccalaureate College, the School of Education and the School for Interdisciplinary Inquiry. PPD or CEU credits were offered for teachers and two Boston public school employees took advantage of that opportunity. All group members were given background reading material and resources, including websites, prior to the trip. Two orientation sessions were also held before travel, giving participants the opportunity to meet each other as well as ask questions.

The Video

Five participants were used in the PowerPoint presentation that included video clips of post-trip reflection interviews. They were chosen because they represented diversity in terms of age, race, ethnicity and perspectives. Three students were presented as their main purpose for going was to enhance their learning while obtaining credit for the experience. A faculty member on her third trip and a community partner of Cuban descent were also presented because their perspectives added value to our understanding of travel as transformation.

A semi-structured interview guide based on Brookfield's critical classroom incident was used to direct the post-trip reflection interviews. The answers given were evidence of disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, changed perspectives and action taken, the core elements of the theory used as a conceptual frame of analysis. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. A description of the participants presented in the video follow and includes a statement felt to epitomize their most significant learning.

The People

Kris

Kris is an Adult Baccalaureate College (ABC) student majoring in American studies and minoring in elementary education. Her educational goal is to become a middle school social studies teacher. She will graduate from Lesley in 2004. In her self-evaluation/reflection journal Kris wrote: "Some of my most powerful learning came from listening and observing Cuban people... I can only speak for myself, but I never realized that I have such an imperialistic attitude towards life... What did I learn in Cuba? I guess one way to answer this question is that I have a lot to learn about the world and why different societies feel the way they do about us."

Carol and Ted

Carol is also an ABC student and Ted is her partner. He is a software engineer and a part-time blues musician. Carol graduated in May 2003 and will begin teaching in an elementary school in September. They were interviewed together however most of the focus is on Carol and her student experience. "Prior to our trip, I thought Cuba was a dangerous place. Why? Because people I cared about and trusted told me it was... This trip was one of the most powerful and emotional journeys that I have ever been on... I am truly grateful to have been able to expand my knowledge and understanding of such an 'unknown' country and look forward to learning more now that I have a foundation to build on." Ted spoke directly to the political situation that colored his underlying assumptions and expectations about Cubans' reactions to Americans.

Susanna

Susanna is a Latina woman of Chilean descent. She graduated in May 2003 with a Master's Degree in Intercultural Relations. Her reasons for going to Cuba were two-fold: to increase her knowledge of her own Latin roots and to combine this personal quest with her academic pursuits. Since returning from the trip, she realized she hears and sees things pertaining to Cuba differently. She pays attention now to news clippings, TV reports and books with a different view since she has been there and states: "I am now connected to Cuba."

Dolores and Matthew

Dolores is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Lesley College, the traditional college of the university. Matthew is a speech pathologist in the Boston Public schools. This trip was Dolores' third and Matthew's second. Dolores' research area is Afro-Cuban life, especially the Santeria religious practices. Matthew's research is focused on how children with special needs, especially those with speech and hearing problems, are educated in Cuba. Matthew's interest in going to Cuba was purely political as he doubted that the information he was getting from the media about Cuba was accurate. He felt there were stories there to be told about how people were living and surviving in a way that needed to be brought to light. Dolores talked about how she has brought her learning and new perspectives back to her classroom: "I teach cross-cultural psychology and... assign the chapter on Cuba to her students" using her firsthand experiences to guide and inform the discussions.

Marita

Marita is a Boston resident of Cuban descent and a community partner on this trip. She is the Vice President for public radio and the Chair of the Board of the Afro-American Museum in Boston. Marita came to Cuba because of the influence of her father who was born there and her paternal grandmother who visited from Cuba. She was interested in going to see Cuba for herself. She came away with a more textured understanding of Cuba, for example understanding the educational system with more depth as it plays out in day-to-day life. She has gained a "flesh and blood" perspective on life and people in Cuba that is different from the "cardboard picture" obtained from the news and films. She understands now that culture is always with you and that although she had never been there before Cuban culture is a part of her.

Analysis of the data

Travel to Cuba in the post-September 11th era made for many disorienting dilemmas. Thus, the trip itself was the trigger event in the transformative learning process. Habits of mind and points of view changed. Assumptions were examined as critical reflection took place both in and on action. The data collected was examined to see whether and to what extent transformative learning occurred as a result of this travel trip and if so what kinds of transformations were evident.

Several themes became immediately apparent in all of the 11 interviews conducted. Even though, as previously stated, everyone came with their own agendas, expectations and goals, commonalities far outweighed the individual differences. One consistent theme was surprise at the openness and warmth of the Cubans towards Americans, indicating a change in perspective from their unexamined assumptions about how the Cuban people would perceive and react to them. Another common realization was the importance of the Literacy Campaign as a national achievement, changing their perspectives about how governments can impact empowerment and

social reform if there is a collective will to do so. Finally, meeting and talking with Cubans, discourse, was reported by almost everyone as being the best part of their learning. All stated they would take action based on their learning. Types of actions either taken or planned include listening more critically to news reports and other people's opinions about Cuba, sharing information about their trip, learning Spanish, continuing research, using material in their classrooms and going back to Cuba.

Implications for Practice

The value of travel as transformation has implications for the practice of teaching and learning in adult education. For example, one of the hooks or enhancements for the Lesley students was the ability to use the trip as the basis for earning credits while providing them with an opportunity to experience learning in a unique setting. The university's granting of credit validated this type of non-classroom learning. Other pertinent aspects of teaching and learning in higher education in this model of adult education are to use it (1) to build connections and community in its broadest sense and (2) to emphasize the criticality of context and multiple perspectives in this increasingly volatile global village.

An additional aspect of travel as transformation is related to professional development of adult educators, including our own transformation as travelers, the use of multi-media in teaching, and the impact of that learning on educators. The process of videotaping the journey and the post-journey interviews raised questions for us as we examined them through the lens of transformation theory. Coming to the theory from different perspectives, we discussed questions that we now raise together to challenge and expand the theory: If action is not taken or demonstrated immediately, but is only planned, can we say that transformative learning took place as a result of the journey? What exactly is meant by action and how is that action assessed as an indication of transformative learning? Was the trip transformative only individually? Did the group evidence collective transformation impacted by the relationships of the members with each other in this setting? Do the members' new views and perspectives about Cuba have an impact on their families, workplaces and communities such that they trigger transformative learning on a much wider collective and community level?

Given that this group of people who chose to go to Cuba were at least curious and at best already questioning the information received about it, the overarching question is raised: Did travel to Cuba truly result in transformative learning for the participants?

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The Women's Integral Leadership Circle: How the Experience of a Transformative Crucible Helps Women Develop the Capacity for Integral Leadership

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Abstract: *Women leaders are uniquely positioned to be change agents in the chaotic transitional climate of current organizations, yet face developmental challenges in fully bringing forth those needed capacities. Most were conditioned to lead in a Masculine model that is now only partially up to the task, and if unbalanced, erodes their Feminine ground of being. This paper presents research on participants in an intensive six-month women's leadership development program designed from transformative learning theory and practice including rational, psychosocial, and emancipatory perspectives. Integration of Masculine and Feminine capacities is a core element in a learning journey framed with Wilber's four quadrant, all level integral model mapped with archetypal correspondences. Meaning perspective and life changes are described for two Circles of 20 leaders in mostly for-profit firms, with a median age of 45.*

Keywords: Integral Theory, Robert Kegan, Masculine-Feminine Integration

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

What would life and the world be like if we brought all of who we are to what we do? After much hard work and sacrifice many women in organizations are rising to positions of leadership by conforming to a Masculine model. When societally defined 'success' arrives, a disturbing aridity, burnout, and disillusionment are often the bitter reward for the hard climb. In the face of increasingly chronic organizational chaos and dysfunction, some recognize that the ways they have been conditioned to lead are insufficient; they are primed to explore a greater wholeness. This paper will describe the process and preliminary results of implementing, at a private university, a six month women's leadership development certificate program designed explicitly on transformative learning theory and known practices supporting women leaders to bring forth their full range of capacities. This transformative pedagogy balances rational with affective, personal with social, and individual reflection with dialogue within a community of learners to enhance the potential for perspective transformation. Results are from the first two "Circles" of nine and twelve (one participant did both) mostly seasoned women managers and executives, median age 45, employed primarily in for-profit corporations in the Seattle area.

Taylor describes three alternative competing views of transformative learning (pp. 12-16). The rational view of perspective transformation, represented by Mezirow, cites centrality of the learner's experience, critical reflection and rational discourse. Transformation as individuation, represented by Boyd's transformative education model is grounded in depth psychology. "Discernment," central to transformative education, calls upon extra-rational sources such as symbols, images, and archetypes to create meaning (Imel p.1). The emancipatory view represented by Paolo Freire is based in critical theory and more concerned with social transformation. The oppressed learn to recognize the sociopolitical and economic contradictions in their world and take action, transforming their reality through transforming society. We agree with Mezirow that critical reflection is central to perspective transformation, but we found the affective dimension equally important. Feelings were often the trigger for reflection as well as the substance on which to reflect. Intuitive, imaginative, and archetypal ways of knowing were

essential. We also expected and confirmed that being in dialogue with others of an “oppressed” group was catalytic. As Imel notes, learners learn in different and interwoven ways (p.2). The integral design of the program assumed that the rational, psychosocial, and emancipatory views are all aspects of a transformative learning whole.

The primary orienting frame of this work is systems theorist and developmentalist Ken Wilber’s integral theory of the evolution of consciousness. Structures of consciousness are viewed in successively more complex stable patterns that unfold as a transformation is triggered by life conditions. If existence is an interconnected whole, then transformation is best facilitated by working across all domains, or the four quadrants, of human experience (matrix of Interior-Exterior, Individual-Collective), each in a vertical third developmental dimension through all aspects of the self (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual). Thus all four quadrants (the integral self) move through a series of levels, shifting from lower to higher orders of organization and effectiveness. Here we include the work of developmentalists such as Robert Kegan or Clare Graves (in Beck and Cowan), who argue that consciousness evolves through successive structures emerging in response to the demands of increased complexity of the environment. The program is generally aimed to move participants toward a relatively ego-defense free band described by developmentalist Jenny Wade as Authentic Consciousness, correlating to Wilber’s Centaur, Maslow’s Self-Actualization, and Graves’ Second Tier (Wade, pp. 159-173).

A second orienting premise is the development and integration of the Masculine and Feminine structures of consciousness. According to Wade, at the Authentic level the acceptance, expression, and integration of these aspects of the personality frees the individual to act androgynously, choosing from the full complement of behavior modes. (p. 163). Drawing on the work of Jungians Marion Woodman and Maureen Murdock, we define capacities associated with the Feminine as: valuing and pleasure in process over product; a presence in the body – full emotional and sensory awareness and willingness to follow impulses that originate in the body; willingness to receive; ability to contain and hold sacred; honoring of cycles; surrender to flow; openness to connection and communion; diffuse awareness – ability to take in many levels and aspects of the present moment at once; and ability to receive and extend love. For women, the animus represents the Masculine archetype in the unconscious manifesting in aspects such as analytic thinking, independence, goal orientation, boundary setting, and focus. A woman must remain firmly rooted in her Feminine identity to access her Masculine characteristics without them overwhelming her personality. The animus can become a psychological tyrant, demanding constant achievement and perfection that gradually erode the Feminine ground of being. The program’s emancipatory perspective draws from cultural anthropologist and systems theorist Riane Eisler’s interpretation of history conceptualizing Dominator and Partnership societies. We believe that women leaders are at the bleeding edge of a potential historic shift from a Dominator society guided by control, power over and conquest, to a Partnership society characterized by linking, mutual respect, and equality, and are well positioned to influence the outcome.

Program Design

The program is designed to meet conditions summarized by Taylor for fostering transformative learning: promoting a sense of safety and trust; learner centered, promoting autonomy; encouraging exploration of alternative personal perspectives; problem solving and critical reflection; empathetic and caring faculty; emphasis on personal self-disclosure; and working through emotions before critical reflection (pp. 53-54). The program begins and ends with a retreat; the first initiates the community container and grounds core models. Twelve bi-

weekly four-hour sessions follow. The culmination retreat is a meta-reflection of learning designed by participants, who take on progressively more responsibility for the sessions. Each session weaves theory, somatic exercises, reflection, feedback, experiential processes, creative arts, small group work, dialogue, and ritual to forge the collective crucible. Select readings bring alternative perspectives. Between-session fieldwork poses questions to examine and reflect upon in daily life, and interaction with a Learning Partner. Commitment to Integral Transformative practices (mediation, exercise, nutrition, affirmations, journaling) creates the personal container.

Wilber's four quadrant meta-model frames the journey, and Feminine and Masculine capacities are explored in each quadrant. We began in the Individual Interior (I-I) quadrant (Who Am I? – purpose, beliefs, values, intentions) deepening the connection to Essential selves. We then move to I-E (How do I show up? - behaviors, skills, competencies), building congruence between inner and outer experience. Upon entering the C-I quadrant (Who are we? - shared meanings, relationships, values, worldviews), participants are primed to examine the Circle's shared meaning and critique their experience as leaders within the evolution of historical patterns. The final quadrant is the C-E (How do we serve? - institutions, strategies, structures, systems). Participants articulate their leadership vision and consider how to translate their unique contribution into form. A catalytic learning component initiated in the collective quadrants is the community service project (CSP), a crucible for individual and collective leadership development and community building. Angeles Arrien's Four-Fold Way and Moore and Gillette's archetypes are mapped onto Wilber's model (I-I: Magician/Teacher, I-E: Warrior, C-I: Lover/Healer, C-E: Sovereign/Visionary.) These archetypes engage the unconscious and catalyze powerful group ritual work, particularly at session check-in and closing. Participants also have two one-on-one coaching sessions with a Circle guide to deepen the critical reflection.

Methodology

Our research question was "What was the experience of adult women leaders who committed to the intensive WILC program? Specifically, did they experience a perspective transformation and if so, what was the nature of it?" As constructivists we used a basic qualitative approach, gathering data through semi-structured participant interviews (a) prior to program entry and (b) two months following Circle 2 completion. Post-program interviews were transcribed and coded, and themes were developed. We cross referenced participants' initial leadership questions, early assessment of Kegan level, Spiral Dynamics vMeme profiles, and coaching notes. This research is limited to professional women selected from a narrow demographic and developmental band who experienced a program designed to produce specific outcomes. It is not generalizable to transformative learning in women or leaders, though insights can be gained.

Pre-program interviews ascertained developmental maturity and gauged readiness for a transformative process. The post program interviews (11 of the 20 participants) were in-depth individual conversations encouraging the participant to tell her story within the frame of entry, journey, and post-program. To maintain consistency in the data, trigger questions were asked as the conversation unfolded: What encouraged or pressed them to participate? What were some of the deep questions they were living in? What did they specifically want to change? How did they experience the different program elements? How was this transformational? How do they see their world differently than before? What were some of the catalytic conditions/experiences in the transformative process? What can and are they doing differently now?

Each Circle is limited to 12. We screened for participants whose developmental center was solidly level 3 or 4 (Kegan). Most were working the 3-4 (socialized to independent self) transition during the program, with two or three exploring the 4-5 (independent to interdependent self). Using Gravesian Spiral Dynamics (Beck and Cowan), we targeted women working in mid to upper first tier organizations whose personal values were upper first tier (late Achieving to Sociocentric) and moving to second tier Systemic. The Circles are demographically narrow; of 20 women, all but one are white (one Asian), all but one raised in Christian/Catholic families (one Jewish). All have college degrees. Ages mostly span the early forties to early fifties. Over half are mothers, over half married at least once, and three are lesbian. Positions included chief executives of manufacturing firms, law firm partner, business owner, managers and senior managers in multinational corporations, project managers, and manager in a large non-profit.

Results and Findings

Transformations

Among changes in core assumptions, meaning schemes and perspectives, the following were reported by a majority of interviewees. We looked for evidence that meaning perspectives, as Mezirow describes, became more fully developed and functional, more inclusive, differentiating, permeable, critically reflective, and integrative of experience (p. 8).

1. From dualistic thinking and seeing themselves and their outer world as separate, to a broader systems perspective recognizing their part in a larger organic whole. They increased capacity for accepting and recognizing differences and became more able to draw on the creative contributions of diversity. We interpreted this as a move toward Gravesian second tier. Related to this was a shift from valuing the 'Masculine' way of doing things as the 'right way,' to embracing the Feminine capacities and moving toward integration of this polarity.

2. From fusion and merging to differentiation. Participants reported developing the capacity to hold onto the self while simultaneously allowing others to have a counter point of view without having to react, defend, or take on their position. Particularly important was the recognition that they could love and care for someone without getting drawn into their story, maintaining a witness stance. We interpreted this as a move from Kegan level 3 to 4.

3. From a valuing of self based on approval from others, to a strong self concept built on acceptance of themselves just as they are. This aspect substantially increased their capacity to respond creatively and with self-confidence in challenging interpersonal situations, as they were not restricted to making choices that would buy approval. Related to this was a move from being at the mercy of outside forces to the self-authoring of experience. They could own their own experience and remain centered in chaos rather than feeling buffeted by the outer world, with a larger sense of creating and controlling their own reality (also Kegan level 3 to 4).

4. From reaction/action to the capacity to hold ambiguity. With increased grounding in the Feminine they recognized the value of stillness and connection when faced with a difficult problem, managing the anxiety of not leaping into action. By holding ambiguity, ideas and answers of a substantially different quality began to emerge. This was also experienced as a shift from living in the past/future to a center of gravity in the present moment, with increased ability to accept situations as they are and bring a quality of authentic presence into their actions.

5. From a dominant rational/intellectual approach to embracing other (extra-rational) ways of knowing. Most moved from seeing a linear, logical intelligence as the only appropriate way to operate in business, to explicitly exploring other intelligences such as somatic, intuitive and

emotional. For many, the relationship to their bodies shifted dramatically; they embraced it anew as an ally from which they could gather much useful information.

Consistent with Boyd, participants experienced a grieving process as they let go of well-entrenched meaning perspectives. The learning community acted as both a place of safety to explore the emotional dimension of this process as well as a setting for rational discourse. With that exception, no definitive pattern has yet emerged with regard to the primary methodologies that best fostered or catalyzed transformation. Learners could cite specific circumstances and processes, but they were different for each. Nearly all core elements were cited at least once.

Changes Observed in Personal and Professional lives.

Several reported that new opportunities were offered to them at work as a result of their centeredness under pressure and increased deftness with teams. Two were promoted and another started a social enterprise. A successful project manager overcame her fear of the unknown and took a year's sabbatical. A manager at a large technology company improved her team's performance so significantly that she was asked to mentor other managers and assigned more direct reports. A corporate chief executive decided to adopt a child, while a scientist decided at 46 to marry for the first time. An artist turned down an unfulfilling but safe career path in manufacturing. Another ended an unhealthy love relationship in a more differentiated way, breaking a devastating lifelong pattern. Still another was able to make a healthy break with her dysfunctional family of origin and "write her own story" instead of "rewriting theirs." Many found their "voice" in meetings, able to show up more fully with their creative potential. A facilitator found she could now bring in her point of view and "feel worthy to be at the table with powerful people." Some participants found the confidence to risk bringing their "alien" aspects into work. One brought her skill of grief counseling into her manufacturing company during layoffs. Another successfully risked "looking stupid" using improvisational theater at a corporate national conference.

Not all changes were positive. Several women in the Circle re-organized the structures of their primary relationships as they became more differentiated. In some cases this led to an increase in intimacy but in others to separation or divorce. A participant resigned as president of a manufacturing company to take her dream job as an executive director to turn around a nonprofit. Although she was well grounded in integral theory, under the pressure of the new job she returned to a dominantly Masculine approach. In this complex task, her Feminine capacities were vital to building the trust and relationships necessary to accomplish it. She alienated the Board and was fired within a few months, precipitating the transformation in meaning perspective for which the program had readied her.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Taylor notes that empirical investigation into the practice of fostering transformative learning is overshadowed by theory building and critique (p. vii). This research seeks to narrow that gap. A goal of the project was to investigate whether a program designed from a full spectrum of transformative learning theory and ideal conditions would result in significant perspective transformation in a compressed period of time. The preliminary results of this research indicate that this is the case. Selecting participants in a similar state of readiness for transformation, developmentally mature relative to the overall population, and demographically similar were potential contributing factors. According to Mezirow, perspective transformation is often the result of an acute personal or social crisis that threatens the core of one's existence. We

believe that if the participant is experiencing a disorienting dilemma, a transformative crucible can be constructed that serves as the triggering function of the acute crisis.

Our findings thus far lead us to conclude that central to successful meaning perspective transformation is the work done on the integration of the Masculine and Feminine. As women re-established their ground in the Feminine aspects of consciousness and brought those into healthy relationship with the Masculine, they moved more easily between the rational and affective ways of knowing. We propose that this unlocked the accessibility of the four quadrants and expanded the possibility for perspective transformation. We view these findings as the beginning of a rich, long-term study of practices that foster transformative learning for women in leadership. With past and future participants, we will continue to explore (a) disorienting dilemmas pressing women to seek intensive development (inner motivators, outer catalysts), (b) enabling conditions, and (c) resilience of transformed meaning perspectives over time, and their expression in capacities and behaviors. Women leaders are uniquely positioned to act as change agents in this time of accelerating systemic complexity and chaos of multiple, historically critical transitions. As we observe participants stepping into that role, we are continuing this work to understand how to best support the emergence of integral leaders in these challenging times.

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“Dancing in Front of the Blue Screen: Just Where Do You Think You’re Going?”

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Abstract: *Using a multi-modal arts-based approach can be an invaluable tool for capturing and communicating some of the complexities and emotional colors inherent in the transformational learning experience. The author discusses some of the conceptual underpinnings of her work, before describing her hour-long artistic representation: a self-reflective look at the disorienting dilemma that brought about a transformation of perspective (Mezirow, 1991). By employing a combination of narrative accounts, poetry, video, image texts, and live components (including dance), this performance piece explores and illustrates the researcher-artist’s epochal learning and the ensuing journey she undertook to align her mentoring practice more fully with her values. The metaphor of dancing in front of a blue screen is used to explain her knowledge and her newly revised view of teaching and mentoring.*

Keywords: self-reflection, teacher knowledge, artistic representation

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the conceptual underpinnings of an artistic representation: a performance piece designed to explore, analyze, and share the significance of transformative learning brought about by a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991). Based on a critical incident that I experienced as an adult educator/academic mentor, this artistic representation is intended to illustrate certain personal insights into the ways that this learning continues to impact upon my teaching and learning.

Exploring personal experience as a valuable form of knowledge – a knowledge that takes into account real risk-taking and the emotional aspects of learning (Palmer, 1998; Snow, 2001) – can help us as educators and as learners. In this way, private experience can not only inform, but also enrich, public theory (Brooks, 1992; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001).

Transformative learning as a framework and a beginning

Jack Mezirow (1991) conceptualizes adult learning as the confrontation with a disorienting dilemma. The adult learner may recognize a mismatch between knowledge, beliefs and values, and alternative perspectives encountered in a particular culture or environment. The process of learning is understood to involve transformation of perspective, which may be accomplished through reflection, and planning and enacting change, followed by reintegration with a new perspective. Such learning may be incremental – a slow and reasoned process – or epochal – difficult and frightening. In either case, new beliefs, feelings and actions are integrated into previous knowledge and value frameworks.

Mezirow framed this theory a number of years ago. It has been and is being questioned, tested, challenged, revised. It stands as a possible explanation for the learning done by adults in formal and non-formal setting. It provides me with a theoretical framework from within which to understand my own learning and professional development as an adult, and that of my adult students. It is from within this framework that I have begun my work as a teacher-researcher.

Self-reflection and teacher knowledge: personal experience as a valuable resource

The importance of reflection in the transformative learning theory resonates with me and the way that I make sense of my own learning and evolution as a teacher. I believe that reflecting on our individual practices in terms of rethinking, refining, reframing, and developing actions is essential to the personal and professional growth of teachers and the generation of teacher knowledge.

My own work as a teacher researcher has led me to become interested in self-reflection and autobiographical self-study. The dialogue within the Self (intra-talk) and between individuals (inter-talk) responds to the call by educational researchers (Schon, 1995) for a new epistemology of education. It is now felt that understanding about educational practice grows from the actual *practice* of education – the ways in which educators become more aware of their professional stance and improve how they carry out their work (Whitehead, 2000) – rather than as findings from research applied to the practice of education.

Accordingly, teacher knowledge and the ways in which teachers come to “know” has become a subject of great interest in the field of education, especially in the research community (Weber & Mitchell, 1995; Hamilton, 1998; Mitchell & Weber, 1999; Cole & Knowles, 1998; 2000; Whitehead, 2000). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) characterize teachers’ knowledge as “personal practical knowledge” – knowledge built from personal and professional experience – as differentiated from academic knowledge. Likewise, Doyle (1990) asserts that teacher knowledge is “event structured”, claiming that what teachers know is “...tied to specific events they have experienced in classrooms...[Teachers’] knowledge is, in other words, case knowledge” (pp. 355-6). Cortazzi (1993) also speaks about these links between teachers’ personal and professional lives and the ways that teachers understand their past work and their past selves through their experiences. To him, teachers’ self-understanding and knowledge is “...a vehicle for personal emancipation and professional development” (p. 12). He maintains that self-narrative “leads to personal and professional transformation” (ibid.).

We can then conclude that much of the knowledge that teachers have acquired might best be expressed through reconstructions of past situations. This corresponds with John Dewey and many of his thoughts on teaching and reflection. Dewey encouraged teachers to act intentionally by reflecting systematically on their experiences (1938b), and in fact, defined thinking and even logic itself as the ability to reconstruct experience reflectively (1910; 1938a).

However, teacher personal and professional knowledge does not always lend itself well to traditional text-bound forms of representation. To be able to convey this knowledge, teachers need to find vehicles that are flexible and sensitive enough to capture the nuances of their experience without diminishing its vitality and validity. I feel we teachers have an obligation not only to analyze the nature of our personal transformative learning process and the new knowledge it yields, but also to portray it in such a way that it can be shared with others. Other forms of expression are therefore being explored to supplement the written word (Harris, 1981; Greene, 1995; Eisner, 1997).

The arts and artistic inquiry as vehicles for self-reflection and learning

An overview

Certain theoretical stances as well as practical methods derived from cultural studies, visual studies, and the visual arts are particularly important to research involving studying oneself and one’s actions because they not only hold up another mirror to facilitate self-reflection, but also because they encourage critical consideration of the social and cultural

dimensions of personal experience. Over the past twenty years researchers doing qualitative research in the social sciences have begun to pay much more attention to the way images can be used to enhance their understanding of the human condition (Prosser 1998). Collier & Collier (1986), for example, mention certain important traditions of using visual data and methods as part of the research process in the social sciences and humanities. Lister and Wells (2001) stress the importance of working with image texts and visual technologies in today's society and urge researchers to take those images into account when conducting research.

Investigation into the ways in which the visual is used to construct and deconstruct meaning most often draws on the theories of philosophers and scholars like Susanne Langer (1957) and John Berger (1982).

As Eisner (1991), Greene (1995), and Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman-Davis (1997) point out, there is a significant theoretical tradition that signals the use of art as a serious form of scholarly inquiry – one that can provide us with inspiration and methodology. Most especially, there is a rigor and discipline implicit to most art making processes that lends itself well to research. In fact, Eisner (1991) agrees with Arnheim (1985) that most knowledge is visual in nature. The reflexive nature of artistic inquiry that makes it so particularly well suited to self-study also makes these arts-based methods invaluable tools for research within the transformative learning theory.

The work by scholars like Elliot Eisner (1997, 1995, 1993, 1991, 1985, 1978, 1976, 1972), Tom Barone (2001, 2000, 1995, 1992), and Maxine Greene (2001, 1995, 1978) serve as theoretical grounding for much arts-based educational research.

The aesthetic as vehicle for reflection

Eisner (1995) feels that the aesthetic is an essential part of our need to make sense of experience. He maintains that visual forms offer an “all-at-onceness” that discloses what might be hard to grasp through language and numbers alone (p. 1). Arts-based methods of inquiry can help us access those elusive aspects of our practitioner knowledge that are often indescribable or hard to put into words.

Art is a heightened experience. It can simultaneously engage our senses, emotions, and our intellect. It has an ability to make us feel alive, enabling us to see what we had never noticed before, or to discover what we didn't know we really knew. Because the visual and the artistic bring out multi-sensory and emotional reactions in addition to intellectual responses, they can be more memorable than many written texts are. Images or experiences that have emotional overtones usually stay with us: often they can remain hidden in our consciousness for a while – but they usually return at a later date, often with unexpected significances and meanings.

The aim of an artful representation is to facilitate empathy or to enable others to see through the researcher-artist's eyes. Seeing or hearing or feeling the details of a lived experience in all its shapes, colors and textures can do much to make the representation believable and true to life. Additionally, such detailing can help viewers recognize the ways in which the researcher-artist's experience relates to their own or distinguish the ways in which it differs.

According to Eisner (1995), work that is artistically crafted creates a type of paradox: it reveals the universal through a detailed examination of the particular (p. 3). In the realm of research, the greater the amount of detail that can be provided about the context of the researcher's experience and interpretations, the better able the audience will be to determine the ways in which it may or may not apply to their practice or concerns. The viewers can decide or “see” for themselves whether the work is “worthy” or not.

“Judging” an artistic representation: points to consider

Does the work provoke discussion or engage a larger audience in meaningful conversation? Does the audience and/or researcher learn anything that helps them better understand their own learning and teaching experience? Are useful re-framings made possible for other scholars or teachers? Are any new links or connections with people, knowledge, and groups possible? Does anything transformative occur either in the doing or in the viewing that might lead to new ways of being or thinking?

The performance piece: a brief description

After a short contextualizing introduction, I use a projector to show one of my paintings of a moose running through the snow while I read this poem to the audience:

“SUDdeNIY” (by Katharine Childs)

Suddenly, the truth is out – and nothing
is the same. You are
the last surprise, I am
a moose come too far south,
puzzled by speeding cars and villages.
Too late, too late, I try to run
through snowy fields on melting legs.

I then show a video that depicts my critical incident. It was shot in the classroom where the incident took place, using my own students, and begins with my arriving at the school and entering the classroom. The critical incident takes place. The video ends with a freeze frame of me. I re-enter the conference room wearing the same clothes and carrying the same briefcase that the audience sees in the video. As I hang up my coat and deposit my briefcase on the table, I address the “me” on the screen and the audience as well, confronting my behavior in this disorienting behavior and beginning the process of examining my assumptions (Mezirow, 1991). I then present an example – a case study – where I acknowledge the disequilibrium I have been feeling in my practice and then begin planning the steps I would need to take in order to change (ibid.).

Next, using another video I briefly explain a filmmaking process known as blue screen compositing, a technique used for special visual effects. I show how this works by inserting myself into already existing movie scenes (for example, I run with Cary Grant in “North By Northwest”, I flee from a rampaging dinosaur in “Jurassic Park”, etc.). I use this as a metaphor to physically demonstrate to the audience the means that I have found to reach the next phase of learning: enacting change (ibid.). I now realize that if I am true to my values in my practice that I can face any problems that might appear on the “Blue Screen”.

I celebrate this adjustment to a new perspective (ibid.) and the new knowledge that I have acquired, by dancing. In front of a (portable) blue screen, I perform five short choreographed dances to selected musical interludes – each one illustrating a new lesson I’ve learned.

A conclusion

As a teacher-researcher, I have worked hard at exploring how I can best articulate the intuitive connections and the subtleties that I have discovered in my own learning and in the way that I am developing professionally; therefore, I use film, drama, movement, poetry and visual image texts in combination with narrative vignettes to more fully represent and theorize my

experience. Combining various genres is an excellent way to authentically preserve, portray and honor my own voice – as artist, story teller, mentor, and person – while underlining and sharing the emotional color, intensity, and significance of my personal and professional learning experiences. This combination gives me a rich interpretive framework to examine and reflect upon the professional Self, and has expanded my realm of possibilities for expression, allowing me to break down and break through linguistic boundaries. I believe that using a range of genres to represent my learning gives me a viable and pleasant means to convey the intensity and shades that are part of my personal experiences and emotions. This technique can help others understand and connect to my experiences on several different levels, thereby opening up various avenues and opportunities for communication and meaningful dialogue.

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The Voices of Three Ethno-Sisters: Transforming the Ethno-Autobiographical Voice Through Cooperative Inquiry

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Abstract: *Interweaving experiences of ethno-autobiography within a cooperative inquiry format, three women from diverse backgrounds spent a year exploring their lives leading to transformative discoveries. As we worked together, we traced our emergence from the old, culturally-bound selves, to our found and chosen selves. In the process, I became more acutely aware of the influences of my family, religious, geographic cultures and was also able to identify and affirm the adopted culture(s) that influence(s) my choices today. As we worked together, I became increasingly curious about the transitions and transformations that seemed to be emerging spontaneously out of the work. My curiosity led me to an exploration of the cultural roots of those changes. The Voices of Three Ethno-Sisters, an innovative session, will use creative means to interweave aspects of our three stories, interspersed with participant reflection to explicate the transformational outcomes of our cooperative inquiry into our ethno-autobiographical stories. We worked intensely and deeply and will display a portion of the poetry, movement, and stories that emerged from our process.*

Keywords: transpersonal learning, ethno-autobiography, cooperative inquiry

Introduction

Building Bridges across Contexts and Disciplines, the theme of the Fifth International Transformative Learning Conference, is an apt description of the process described by this presentation. A literary form, ethno-autobiography, and a research methodology, cooperative inquiry, enabled three Euro-American academic women (one living in Israel, one on the east coast, and one in the Midwest; spanning three decades; and representing three religious upbringings) to explore our identities using the contexts of our (her)story, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, ecology, and indigenous roots. The cross-context and cross-discipline bridges we built in the process of our cooperative inquiry into ethno-autobiography enabled us to span the distances not only among the three of us, but also within each of us, between the identities framed by the stories of our past and the transformed identities of who we are becoming as a result of this disciplined inquiry and amazing adventure.

This combined innovative presentation will employ creative, interactive formats as we tell our stories of transformation and will invite participant reflection on the ways in which the various portions of the presentation touch aspects of their lives. Focusing on the process of adult learning theory, this session will highlight the critical aspects of the cycles of reflection and action and the development and transformation of our frames of reference, worldviews, and mindsets within our individual ethnic/cultural perspectives. The session will employ music; a montage of the similarities and differences of our lives; poetry; creative movement; dramatization in a readers' theatre setting; artistic mandalas and other visuals; and individual, dyadic, and total group participant involvement.

Ethno-Autobiography

Ethno-autobiography is a form of critical inquiry that invites individuals to search their personal (her)stories for the ethnic and cultural messages forged as a result of the on-going socialization process. Ethno-autobiography is defined by Kremer (2001a) as “a creative writing process that inquires about self-construction in the contexts of culture, history, ecology, gender, ethnicity, and indigenous roots” (p.1).

As a tool for increasing awareness of cultural assumptions and for bringing them to explicit consciousness, ethno-autobiography enabled the three of us to deconstruct and reconstruct our identities as we explored our lives through the lenses mentioned by Kremer (2001a). Once we became aware, choices were available to continue the portions of the internalized identity or to transform our attitudes and actions to be more inclusive, discriminating, open, and reflective. At times, the transformation seemed to have a life of its own, washing in waves over us while we tried to catch our individual and collective breath and to gain our equilibrium, adjusting to the new awarenesses and the attending transformations.

Ethno-autobiography “loosen[s] the seams of [our] identity” (Vizenor, in Kremer, 2001a), enabling us to transgress the borderlands of our habitual categorical ways of seeing ourselves and to transform both internally and in our ways of seeing and interacting with the world and people around us, as well as to “bring out the richness of who we are” (Kremer, 2001b).

Cooperative Inquiry

The writing of memoirs and autobiography is often assumed to be a solitary experience, one embarked upon by an individual alone with computer or pen and paper, seeking as little interruption as possible. Our ethno-autobiography writing, by contrast, was undertaken within a methodology of cooperative inquiry which included the reflective process necessary for transformative learning. Reason (1999) defines cooperative inquiry as “a systematic approach to working with others to develop an understanding and action around issues focused on social, cultural, and ecological subjects through rigorous engagement in cycles made up of four phases of action and reflection” (p. 4). The four phases include: agreement as a group about the direction of the initial cycle, individual action in keeping with the chosen direction, reflection on the actions taken, and a new group decision about the direction of the ensuing cycle.

The choice to work within a cooperative inquiry framework altered the writing experience from one of isolation to one of deep community and relationship, indeed sisterhood. Using the term ethno-sisters at first in an off-handed, humorous way, we soon realized that we had become chosen family to each other, birthing each other’s identities, being playful and at times competitive siblings (family life is not all roses!), and tenderly holding the visions for each other of what we could see emerging in the process of our work together.

Our writing process, modeled after Heron’s (1996) and Reason’s (1999) cooperative inquiry methodology, included an on-line procedure of several cycles of the following elements: developing plans (phase one), writing and posting (her)stories (phase two), reading and reflecting on each other’s stories, and responding to the reflections on our stories that we each received (phase three). We concluded each cycle by noting our learnings during the process, leading us full circle back to the planning phase of the next cycle (phase four, which then became phase one of the new cycle).

As each of us explored, discovered, and claimed our transforming individuality, our other two ethno-sisters attended us with their presence, witnessing and mid-wifing our emerging identity. This threesome created and held the sacred space within which each of us could grow

and change into our authenticity, transforming from our outworn views and assumptions of ourselves, molded by cultural, engendered, and ethnic borderlands, into our genuine selves, stretching beyond the constrictions of our habitual images of our identities.

Transformative Learning

Elias (1997) states that “the key to changing our mind may be found in an understanding of the process of learning, especially learning that changes the nature of consciousness, that is, transformative learning” (p. 2). Both Mezirow’s (as cited in Elias, 1997) and Elias’s (1997) descriptions of transformative learning describe the outcomes of our process:

“...transformation of meaning schemes (specific beliefs about self or world) and meaning perspectives (comprehensive worldviews) through reflection on underlying premises, leading to meaning perspectives that are more inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated” (Mezirow, as cited in Elias, 1997, p. 3).

“Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic worldview and specific capacities of the self; transformative learning is facilitated through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analyzing underlying premises” (Elias, 1997, p. 3).

The ethno-autobiography writing, within a methodology of cooperative inquiry, included an intentional reflective process, as noted above. Mezirow notes the crucial mediating function that reflection plays in the course of transformative learning, highlighted in his description of transformative learning above. Our cooperative cycles of writing the stories of our lives from a cultural, ethnic, engendered perspective and reflecting upon our own and each others’ stories allowed each of us to learn, transform, and heal. We each had unique blendings of physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual awareness; and we each expressed those awarenesses in unique ways.

Contexting the definitions of Elias and Mezirow, Jungian theorists Boyd and Myers note that transformative learning “moves the person to psychic integration and active realization of their true being. In such transformations the individual reveals critical insights, develops fundamental understandings and acts with integrity” (Boyd and Myers 1988, 262 as cited in Elias 1997, 3). We clearly felt that our ethno-autobiographic cooperative inquiry process had moved us into a more integrated and authentic sense of ourselves. In this sense of self we gained awareness, and we gained our individual and collective voices.

By creating a safe, contained, and nurturing environment, our process facilitated transformative learning, slowly changing the ways in which we each experienced our identities. The environment provided avenues to deepened awareness of our thoughts, feelings, and actions in a spiraling feedback loop that grew through each of our cycles. As our voices emerged internally, we became more confident in using them with each other and in the outside world.

The cooperative process of writing and responding to each others’ ethno-autobiographic writing was a life-transforming and emancipating learning experience. Through the interweaving of our stories, we were enabled to imagine ourselves in a new way of being with the complex world. We experienced not only the healing of internalized oppression, but also the empowering of external social action as we discovered new ways of moving our voices into our work and into

the world. Healing our own internalized oppression freed us to be sensitive to the oppression of others and to be present with them as they seek to move into their own awareness and action. Our process also allowed us to creatively access and make use of our inner knowing as we emerged and connected with others and awakened in us a passion to transform critical issues both within and outside ourselves.

Presentation Style and Format

This presentation is designed to be combined and interwoven with the presentations of the two other ethno-sisters in a single innovative session. Together, the presentations will make a seamless whole.

We will set the stage for our presentation with an opening montage which includes a mandala drawing to graphically represent a model of our transformative learning process. After we introduce the topic through poems and creative movement, I will recount my experience of hearing the challenge to become intimately familiar with my ethnicity. Interweaving my exploration of whiteness and a story of an experience of discrimination against, and oppression and dismissal of African Americans, I will show my early encounter with voicelessness in the midst of cultural cruelty. The format of this section will be a readers' theatre setting.

To illustrate the deepening phases of the cyclic process of cooperative inquiry, I will invite and respond to my ethno-sisters' reflections, learning more about myself in the reflection process. The question will emerge: "What makes this experience transformative?" My sisters will lead me through iterations of clarity as I discover the depth of the change that has transpired. I will learn more about myself and become acquainted with my transformation through their eyes. This reflection and response aspect of the presentation will extend the readers' theatre setting into a dramatic presentation.

In the final cycle of our process, we developed increasing clarity about who we are becoming in statements of our identity. By referring to a portion of the identity cycle, I will demonstrate the impact of transformative learning on my understanding of my identity.

Inviting the participants to reflect at each juncture of our presentation, to share the reflections in dyads, and to bring questions and responses to the total group, we will explore potential applications of both ethno-autobiography and cooperative inquiry for individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

Stories

In telling our stories and reflecting on them in community, we transformed and healed. Silko (1986/1977), whose amazing novel *Ceremony* accompanied us on our journey, captures and speaks for our experience:

“I will tell you something about stories
[he said].
They aren't just entertainment.
Don't be fooled.
They are all we have, you see,
all we have to fight off
illness and death.
You don't have anything
if you don't have stories.”

(Silko, 1986/1977, p. 2)

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Surprised by the Joy of Wholeness! Transformative Learning and the Art of Academic Writing

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Abstract: *In the following narrative I describe a critical experience in graduate school, which, in retrospect, I am thankful for. The encounter while acquainting me with the eldership of silence and surprising me by the joy of wholeness moves me from an abstract notion of myself into a new and clearer identity that is unified and whole—an identity that is grounded and centered in myself and the Source of my creativity.*

Keywords: Imagination silence, Wholeness, Academic writing

The white, almost icy, spray of breakers crashing rhythmically against jetties along the coast of Lake Ontario stands in stark contrast to the slate gray sky of late autumn. Seeds lying dormant in mother earth await their early winter call to life anew. And trees, now unrobed of vibrantly colored fall leaves, stand solidly and silently displaying their graceful structures along the walkways of Lakeshore Boulevard as I drive past on my way to York Street where I turn northward toward the university.

The class tonight is on the history of the university. And I am the second presenter. My topic is on the medieval university. I have fallen passionately in love with this era, this moment in history, and eagerly look forward to sharing my discoveries about it with my colleagues.

As I travel, I think of the hours spent putting the presentation together in attempt to capture and convey the transformation of European culture occurring as the university is established during the twelfth-century renaissance, and of the special attention I pay to the astonishing changes transpiring in conceptions of the self, ways of thinking and learning at that time, and my comparison and contrast of them with equally astonishing changes transpiring today. I reflect on the shift in attention of the medieval university masters, builders, and musicians from “solving individual issues to constructing whole systems of solutions to intellectual and aesthetic problems” (Radding & Clark, 1992, p. 57), all of which I mirror through photography, art, and music for the consideration of the class. I look forward to the questions and discussion this topic will stimulate.

Settling into the classroom, feeling well prepared for my presentation, I comfortably turn my full attention to the first presenter of the evening. The hour flies by and I find myself at the centre of my presentation. The professor insisted that the presentation last for forty minutes and that it be followed by ten minutes of questioning and discussion, the first of which would be his initial comments and questions. Although we all longed for less time in presentation and greater time for discussion, we did not challenge the professor. I proceed as planned.

All goes well, the audiovisual equipment works smoothly. At the end of my presentation I sit attentively awaiting questions and discussion. The professor, after a long delay, opens with, “What can I say? This is excellent.” Long silence and then the curt remark, “You do not belong at the university, you belong at TVO.” (TVO is a television program in Ontario that specializes, in part, in educational programming and documentaries.) Wherewith he stands, clicks his heels together in customary fashion, and

leaves the classroom. No further comment, no questions, no discussion. My colleagues and I sit in abject silence and finally decide to leave. As people prepare to leave, I'm told how much they enjoyed the presentation, and we discuss some aspects of it. In a state of dismay, I gather my belongings, try to gather my thoughts, and my composure, and I, too, leave.

On the way home, I see only streams of automobile lights running along side me down Lakeshore Boulevard, along the Gardiner Expressway, and curving toward me down the highway home. The beauty of the night sky evades me. I do not feel the cool refreshing air I usually enjoy. Darkness eclipses the entire event and wraps it's heavy cloak around me.

Arriving home, I do not speak of the class. I find it impossible to speak. I, rather, retire. Next morning, in the half awake, half asleep state of first morning stirrings, it seems for a moment.. I am lying exhausted in a heap at the bottom of a well and before me is an entrance to a labyrinth, a labyrinth much like the one I discovered during my medieval studies in the nave of Chartres Cathedral. Over me preside a kindly old king and queen seemingly happy at my arrival and happy to let me rest. I eventually awaken widely with a strange sense of ease and of peace. And then, then, I abruptly remember the jarring, deeply unsettling experience of the evening before—and the words, “you do not belong at the university.”

The world of study was my oyster. I was never happier. Master's and doctoral studies in transformative dimensions of adult education were slowly awakening me to assumptions in the Western world that were binding and oppressing (Bernstein, 1992; Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1991a, 1991b; Tarnas, 1993). An exploration through the arts, natural and social sciences, and women's studies, in search of understanding the Western experience, led me to understand the meaning of the triumph of the secular over the sacred, masculine ways of being over feminine ways of being, and science over art at the height of modernity (Clark, 1994). Clearly, I realized how I was held in the grip of scientific positivism and in the grip of patriarchy and how this negatively influenced my experiences in school, university, and nursing practice.

So, I wondered, if I have such a clear understanding of Western assumptions, why did the experience of the evening before throw me? Why did I not simply recognize the professor, about to retire, as a man of his time? Why did we, all mature students, not discuss with our professor our preference for discussion over presentation? Why was I not going to talk with the professor about this experience? Was I not versed in the problems of the patriarchy? And if I understood, why did I feel frozen, paralyzed in time this morning? The momentum and enthusiasm gained through my studies and the meaningfulness of naming and understanding assumptions seemed to evaporate before me began to question as the poet, Rilke (1996) does in the last stanza of his poem, “I circle around God, around the primordial tower, I've been circling for thousands of years and still I don't know: am I a falcon, a storm, or a great song?”

The freezing, paralyzing effect of the experience did not disappear and began, first, to play out in writer's block. Although I finished my doctoral courses, wrote the necessary papers, in the final comprehensive examination of six hours, I had lost the spontaneity and joy of writing. Writing had become a matter of “publish or perish”; so publish, I did, and so did I perish. This writing was done under great duress.

I experienced occasional reprieve from writer's block when I reflected upon and wrote about my dialogue with authors who seemed to me to write from the center of their

being—for example: Martin Buber (1958) in his work, *I-Thou*, writing on creativity by Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1992); Maxine Greene (1978, 1988, 1995) and her philosophical and oft-time practical discourse on imagination and freedom; Carl Jung’s writing on myth and archetype; *The Text as Thou* by Steven Kepnes (1992); the philosophical discourse on narrative and imagination by Paul Ricoeur (1975, 1983-1985, 1992) and Richard Kearney (1994 & 1998); and Virginia Woolf’s novels. The strength and power of their writing and their ideas grounded me and permitted me to write (Clark, 1997, 2000). Yet I largely remained silent.

This silence is at once the same, and yet different from, the silence described in *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). It is what I have come to think of as the “Eldership” of silence, a very meaningful description given by the poet, David Whyte (1998), in discussion of his personal experience of silence in his taped series *Footsteps: a writing life*.

Silence, in the first instance, is an “anchoring point for the epistemological scheme, representing an extreme denial of the self and dependence on external authority for direction” (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 24). As I considered these words over the next months and even years, they, in part, rang true for me. Parts of my self and my experience were, indeed, denied me. Certainly, my colleagues and I were dependent upon the professor by default—we did not deal with the issues we found frustrating and unacceptable. I felt I mirrored these women on the first rung of the ladder of women’s ways of knowing, even though I did not fully mirror them. They did not “explore the power that words have for either expressing or developing thought” (p. 25); I did.

The silence I experience and choose to experience is exploratory and interconnected. It is a silence I, now, regularly blend into my life. At times, I sit beside the well with the writings and tapes of Marion Woodman (1985, 1992, 1993, 1998; Woodman & Dickson, 1997; Woodman & Dickson, 1998; Bly & Woodman, 1998), and Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1992, 1995), both Jungian Analysts. Here, stories, poems, and archetypal images nurture my body and soul, and bring forth the beauty of the feminine and the strength of the masculine principles so necessary to re-establish myself and act in the world. The monsters of perfectionism, internal and external critics, along with the ‘negative father’ message of the patriarchy that ‘our work is not good enough’—are vanquished. And although the monsters love to rear their heads, now and then, I know now how to tackle them. For the Woodman and Estés stories contain these monsters for me and give them boundaries so they no longer run loose in my psyche. I can beckon them back into the stories and call on the strength of my soul and spirit to heal their damage.

Finding words to express the experience *does* matter. Journal writing became an indispensable part of the adventure of silence. Through writing I record the thoughts and insights gathered in silence and even make further sense of them. Exploring literature became another facet of the experience. I record insights of philosophers, writers, poets, and educators in mimetic ways—as the scribes of medieval times painstakingly scribed the work of others to preserve it for their own understanding and that of posterity. And I write creatively, interpreting writings in ways that increase my understanding of them.

Working the experience out through dance and painting with watercolor grounds the experience in my body, as does the meditation of walking a labyrinth laid out in a park near our home. The labyrinth replicates the labyrinth at Chartres and in my

unconscious mind. “In this crucible, where masculine and feminine are held in balance and where love moves, transformation and healing can take place” (Sands, 2001, p. 38). And it does take place in a physical, psychological, and spiritual way.

At other times the myths, stories, poems, and archetypal images give me the courage to dive straight down to the bottom of the well. There I sit zazen in the rooms of my unconscious mind gathering my stories of old for consideration—stories for which the kindly and wise old king and queen offer solace and healing or in which they share my joy. Here I re-call myself, remember myself, and find identity anew. In Jungian terms, I experience individuation as my shadow side, archetypes, and consciousness connect and reconnect in new and creative ways. In Blakian terms, I experience the marriage of the masculine and the feminine aspects of my being. In spiritual terms, I encounter my soul and spirit, and the Divine Spirit, the Source of life itself and the Source of my every creative endeavor. Born of the creative imagination, these endeavors, as Kathleen O’Gorman suggests (1998), “seem to spring from the soul, from the realm of the spirit.” And as O’Gorman further notes (p. 236), for Maxine Greene, “creativity and imagination are the quintessential human capacities and contributions to the world. They are the means and consequences of inspiration, emancipation, and transformation.”

Whyte (1998) suggests, in the “spaciousness” of this kind of silence, this eldership of silence, we begin to place our experiences in the greater context of our whole life and make sense of them. As I do this, pretension falls away. I stand naked, if you will, before myself—experiencing only the unity of myself, the strength of my Source, and the passion to create.

During such an experience, recently, I was surprised by the joy of wholeness! The “cotton wool” of academic life momentarily lifted as I glimpsed the meaning of wholeness within the context of imagination and everyday experience (Woolf, 1989, p. 81). Then . . . *then*, I understood that our imaginative lives and our real lives are inextricably intertwined, totally interconnected, totally interdependent. I saw that the normally severed/independent philosophical discourses of good, beauty, knowledge, and being, danced creatively together—each a facet in a beautifully cut diamond, each contributing to the sparkling whole, each equally necessary. The entire diamond pivoted on the primacy of the good and depended upon creative impulse.

At the Transformative Learning Conference in the year 2000, in a paper on imagination, I postulated that imagination was at the heart of human experience. I suggested, concurring with Greene’s conception of imagination, that through our imaginations, personal, social, and cultural transformation occur. Imagination is, at once, the chrysalis nurturing transformation and the purveyor of the generative spark bringing transformation into being. Further, concurring with Kearney (1994, 1998), I postulated that, through our narratives, a new interpretation is born—an interpretation that conjoins the good (ethics) and the creative impulse (poetics).

Kearney (1994, p. 362), in a moving passage in *The Wake of Imagination*, describes the “primacy of ethics,” the good, in response to powerlessness. “When a naked face cries ‘where are you?’ we do not ask for identity papers. We reply, first and foremost, ‘here am I’” (p. 362). The unpretentious, nonjudgmental attitude of “being with” in the sense of the I-Thou relationship articulated by Martin Buber (1985), mirrored in the primacy of ethics, “here am I” undergirds my silent moments, my relationship with my self, the other, and my art. I hold this attitude, this primacy sacred.

Now my identity is grounded in the centre of my being, unified and strengthened by the Source of life. It is not dependent upon others or drawn from the external world as it was, in part, at the time of my graduate-student experience. The creative force that was encapsulated and squelched by the experience is being called forth anew. The darkness associated with the event is gone, as is writer's block. In retrospect, I realize I knew my self and theoretical ideas only abstractly, cognitively. Now that they are, grounded in my body, soul, and spirit, they can influence my everyday experience and my art. I know my self and ideas in a clearer and concrete way. In retrospect, I realize I need to *thank* the old professor for leaving me cold and dropping me down a long well. I remain eternally thankful for the capacity of my imagination to “think of things as they could be otherwise”—in this case whole, interconnected, and interdependent (Greene, 2001, p. 116).

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Hatha-Yoga and Transformative Learning— The Possibility of Union?

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Abstract: *The mind/body connection developed by Hatha-Yoga is applied to adult learning. Using her own yoga practice as a basis, Cohen explores the ways in which Hatha-Yoga dovetails with Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory. She reviews literature on yoga in educational settings. Drawing on embodied knowing, reflective teaching practices and mind-body studies, she suggests a theoretical basis for bringing yoga into academic adult learning environments, and offers some practical suggestions.*

Keywords: Yoga, mind-body, reflective practices

Problem Statement

As liberatory adult educators, we pay close attention to changes in our students' thinking. We're aware of individual differences in their cultural assumptions, frames of reference and interpretive schemas. We work hard to fashion curricula rich in dialogue and student driven assignments. The students sit in circles and we rarely lecture, yet our teaching relies almost entirely on intellectual exchanges and cognitive processes. In our classrooms and our technologically mediated teaching, we behave as if we're all talking heads. I often meet with students during intensive weekends or week long sessions. With so much to accomplish, we tend to ignore and exhaust our bodies. At the end of a recent eight hour class, I noticed half of them sprawled on the floor in various postures, their bodies demanding movement, even if it wasn't on the syllabus. For the past two years I have been taking Hatha-Yoga classes twice weekly, occasionally attending longer workshops. Despite my discomfort with Cartesian dualism and western, rationalist pedagogy, my own teaching has disregarded my students' corporeal selves. Yet, when I consider Mezirow's Transformation Theory in light of Hatha-Yoga practice, I see many parallels (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Both offer paths toward human liberation; one largely dependent on reason and one largely dependent on the body.

Compare scholar George Feuerstein's description of yoga as "a gradual process of replacing our conscious patterns of thought and behavior with new, more benign patterns that are expressive of the higher powers and virtues of self-realization," (Feuerstein, 1999a, p. 3) to Mezirow's description of transformation as the reformulation of reified structures of meaning through incremental shifts which lead to more flexible habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000). Building upon Dewey, who refused to divorce education from direct experience, Mezirow's work emphasizes the experiential and experimental dimensions of human transformation. In its non-theistic forms, yoga envisions liberation taking place in ordinary life, with no ascetic behavior required (Feuerstein, 1999a). Both approaches seek major life changes and both stress a continuum of theory and practice. This paper explores how insights from yoga can enhance education by making the body a laboratory for cultivating personal transformation. I suggest a theoretical basis for bringing yoga to transformative adult learning, some relevant research and speculate about practical applications.

Research Review

Hatha-Yoga, one of yoga's seven forms, aims at liberation through physical transformation (Feuerstein, 1999a, p.1). We're asked to picture the serpent goddess Shakti awakening at the base of our spinal column, urged upward by our breath to the crown of our heads. From there she leaves the body to unite with her divine spouse Shiva. This image captures the way breath, or prana, connects our physical bodies to our minds and links us to invisible forms of energy (Feuerstein, 1999b). The Sanskrit word for yoga, "to yoke" has come to represent both the disciplined practice, and the idea of union or wholeness (Feuerstein, 1999, Yoga, p. 2) With 2000 year old roots in India, yoga's complex, diversified traditions can be found in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism (Feuerstein, 1999b, p. 2). Given its current popularity and the marketing of vigorous workouts like power yoga, it may appear that we've strayed very far from the original practice, yet yoga seems to be amazingly adaptable. Essentially, it seeks to free us from our limited self- conceptions. Like Buddhism, yoga teaches that overly identifying with our bodies, our material possessions, or our relationships causes suffering, for we cannot control these aspects of our lives. Through a combination of breath work, physical postures and meditation, the practice of Hatha-Yoga brings one greater physical strength and flexibility. Gradually, these qualities become embodied as ways of being and knowing. Strength acquired through repeating poses or asanas, brings a sense of decreased vulnerability, and a greater ability to focus and concentrate. Joint flexibility becomes more than a physical attribute; it gives us a metaphor for accepting change, and tolerating ambiguity.

Many educational settings are including yoga in the curriculum. Schools in California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan New York, New Jersey Oregon and Washington state are offering some form of yoga in their public systems. More references to yoga in educational settings can be found in Canada, France, India, Australia, England, Ireland, South Africa and Slovakia (YREC, 2001). Yoga advocates claim that practicing students' show improvement in concentration, hyperactivity, asthmatic conditions and test performance but these accounts are largely anecdotal. Though controlled, empirical studies seem inadequate for examining a holistic process, a number of medically based research studies exist, many originating in India. These include measuring yoga training's effects on muscle, power dexterity and visual perception in young girls (Raghuraj and Telles, 1997), psychophysiological changes in medical students at examination time before and after yoga practice (Malathi, et al , 1998), and the planning and execution time spent on a problem solving puzzle by girls who've studied yoga (Manjunath et al., 2001).

When it comes to including students' bodies in teaching and learning, elementary educators are clearly leading the way. Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory with its identification of a kinesthetic intelligence (Gardner, 1983), and Egan's (1997) emphasis on somatic understanding, have had a considerable impact on curriculum planners. However, at the university level, the body belongs to physical education or health studies departments. With the exception of specific programs aimed at movement education, performing arts or therapy, higher education doesn't appear to consider the body as a site of learning. Graduate students in our Lesley University Interdisciplinary Studies program can combine disciplines like creative arts and management, or technology and history to fashion their own unique degree focus, yet their bodies move only if they study dance, drama or art, while their mouths do the moving everywhere else.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical support for integrating Hatha-Yoga principles into graduate and adult education can be found in a number of discourses. The concept of embodied knowing derived from feminist theory has been explored for adult learning (M. Carolyn Clark,

2001, V.L. Chapman, 1998 and L. Schlattner, 1994). A recent report summarizes studies concerning Somatic/ Embodied Learning and Adult Education (Kerka, 2002). The collective message of these body/ mind theorists, feminists, post-modernists and professional educators is that attending to students as whole, sentient, embodied creatures allows them to recognize their bodies as a source of knowledge. According to these writers, our bodies are more than inconvenient subsidiaries to be attended at bathroom breaks, or mentioned in gender studies courses, but a route to knowledge construction (Gustafson, 1999 as cited by Kerka). Such a process can be observed in yoga practice. Since most yoga postures (or asanas) are repeated on the left and right to maintain balance, one comes to notice differences between one's left and right sides. Observations of subtle distinctions emerging from sensory data in our own self-contained laboratories, can be extended to the observable world. Becoming a researcher of one's own sensations can establish a basis for questioning other knowledge claims (Gustafson, 1999 as cited by Kerka). If my body tells me that my left side responds differently than my right side, what are the implications for medical research, or generalizations about human behavior? Gathering evidence from one's body thus cultivates the habit of collecting data and questioning dominant knowledge sources (Kerka, 2002). Furthermore, comparing bodily responses to the same stimuli in a non-competitive environment highlights individual differences, and can demonstrate human diversity in ways not ordinarily brought into a classroom (Barlas, 2000, Gustafson, 1999, Todd, 2001 as cited by Kerka).

Donald Schon's work on reflective practice and reflection-in-action gives us a model for merging theory with practice that knocks theory off its pedestal(Schon, 1983). Building upon Schon's work, Robert Tremmel cautions that genuine reflection must be cultivated, and educators can learn much from eastern teachings like Zen Buddhism (Tremmel, 1993). Finally, the brain-mind studies of researchers like Herbert Benson (Benson et al, 2000) on the relaxation response and John Kabat-Zinn on Mindfulness Meditation (Kabat-Zinn, 1996) stress the connections between mind and body. Though new scholarship coming from post-modernist theories of gender, race, and disability may have moved the body closer to the academy, the ideas rarely come off the page or the screen. Some critics find it ironic that information technology and on line delivery systems seem oblivious to students' bodies (Beckett, 1998). Australian sociologist David Beckett is particularly concerned about 'asynchronous' on-line learning where students have no access to visual cues, body language and social interaction. He argues for maintaining "the eros of learning;" that unique pleasure that comes from the humor and spontaneity at human gatherings. "You have to be there!" Beckett insists (p.4). This caution raises questions about the relationship of practices like yoga, meditation or other sensory experiences to learning on line. Perhaps these body oriented practices could complement computer assisted instruction, bringing the body on-line. A useful area of investigation would be to compare the virtual presence in technologically mediated learning with actual bodily presence.

Yoga and Transformative Learning

Mezirow's theory, like other well-researched educational theories, rests on the rationalist's faith that critical reflection is the mechanism underlying transformative learning. Students are thought to revise their ways of making meaning by critiquing their own frames of

reference (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). In yoga we learn a similar form of self-observation through a gentle method in which we are cautioned to “observe without judgement.” Yoga understands that entrenched patterns or habits of mind are extremely resistant to change, so the body is engaged to activate the more resistant mind. In his discussion of reflective practices in teacher education, Robert Tremmel suggests that reflection may fall outside the conceptual frameworks and structures found in traditional academic discourse (Tremmel, 1993, p. 442). He finds the concept of “mindfulness” in Zen Buddhism, which asks us to bring our attention back to the here and now, very helpful. For Tremmel, the metaphor of return illuminates the kind of “paying attention” that Donald Schon’s “reflection-in- action” intended (Tremmel,1993, p. 449). That nonrational elements such as affective learning, nonconscious learning, and personal relationships can affect perspective transformation in adults was noted by Edward Taylor in his critique of Transformative Learning Theory (1997, 52). Perhaps we need to expand our understanding of reflection to include more than cognitive activity. If we reject the mind/body dichotomy, we must search for different language to describe the way they work together. Recall that image of the breath snaking up the spine to reach the head and the world beyond. Could breathing be a form of thinking? This notion of breath infusing our beings, connecting body and mind might help bridge the dualistic divide.

Practical Applications: Conclusions and Recommendations

I often work with students’ personal narratives, and have written about the transformative process of “rewriting” one’s story in an educational setting (Cohen, 1996). When students examine their narratives, they become aware of frames of reference and meaning schemes that fall outside their consciousness (Mezirow, 2000). I’ve seen women students who considered themselves to be stupid, reclaim their intelligence, and men whose identity was based on silence and toughness become less rigid in their thinking (Cohen, 1996, Cohen and Piper, 2000). This complex process of using one’s life as text promotes critical inquiry, and ideally leads to a constructivist stance in relation to all knowledge, but words can be insufficient for capturing the bodily elements of one’s narrative. The practice of Hatha-Yoga has enabled me to re-envision my own story through my body, rather than my familiar medium of language. We’re all familiar with the many ways in which our culture marginalizes female bodies. I was one of those fifties girls who felt like a “klutz” in gym class. Because of the changes I’ve experienced through yoga, I no longer see myself as the kid with the lowest fitness scores, ready to duck if a ball came her way. At the age of sixty, in a strange reversal of time, I regard myself as physically stronger and more flexible than I was in my youth. This bodily experience prompts me to reject years of false beliefs. Education of the whole person should mean attending to all factors that affect learning. So many of my students carry histories of physical and emotional abuse, and addictions, that I often wonder if eating disorders, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and severe depression afflict the majority of women in our culture. Since 9/11 many with no trauma histories have acquired disabling symptoms. If Hatha-Yoga and other allied body practices can give us tools for transforming stress before it produces cellular and brain changes, shouldn’t the educational enterprise adopt these methods? These strategies could be incorporated into subject matter teaching, rather than relegated to athletics, therapy or extra curricular work.

Though my intention is to provoke thought rather than offer a lesson plan, I will share a few exercises I have used:

1. Remind yourself and students to observe without judgement before leaping into a defensive position or a rushed response--silence can be welcome.

2. When using free writing, add some breathing to this request. If you stop and pay attention to your breath before you write or speak, it brings your mind back to the present moment.
3. When shifting from one activity to the next, engage students in a simple stretching and breathing exercise as a transition. Ask them to notice how their bodies are feeling and give them time to make themselves more comfortable. Invite a student who may be a movement or yoga practitioner to lead the class in an exercise.
4. In a course called: Ways of Knowing: How We Make Meaning, I ask students to identify their strongest “intelligences” using an inventory based upon Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory. Their first assignment is to engage in an activity in their weakest domain, record their observations, and then share their discoveries with the class. Many choose to engage in dance, movement or meditation. This personal experiment becomes part of their research for this course.

In my own yoga practice, I invoke the Buddhist image of the mind as a naughty, distractable monkey. While doing the many movements required in a sun salutation or balancing on one leg, I must focus my breath to avoid toppling over, thus taming that wild mind. In our high tech culture, with attention diffused amongst a million competing stimuli, yoga allows the body to lead us to knowing and using our own energy better. Asking students to become aware of their breath, to squat after sitting, or balance on one leg, brings their wandering minds back to the moment, and helps them to observe with curiosity, but no judgement. Even the simplest movements done sitting in a chair, can allow the breath to enliven the body. Perhaps it’s too early to imagine an ecstatic union between yoga and academic inquiry, like Shakti’s with Shiva, but maybe a courtship is possible.

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An Outsider's Reflections on the Relationship between Transformative Learning and Conflict

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Abstract: *“Social conflict is a phenomenon of human creation, lodged naturally in relationships. It is a phenomenon that transforms events, the relationships in which conflict occurs, and indeed its very creators. It is a necessary element in transformative human construction and reconstruction of social organization and realities.”* (Lederach, 1995, p. 16).

Keywords: Conflict, Intractable conflict, Transformative learning, Change

I consider myself an outsider to the field of Adult Learning and to the study of transformative learning. I am a social-organizational psychologist by training, and study conflict and justice, with a particular interest in seemingly unsolvable, protracted conflicts. However, I agreed to participate in this meeting for two reasons. First, as an outsider I felt that I would be particularly welcomed to a meeting of people who value (to quote Maxine Greene) “Thinking of things as if they could be otherwise.” Or, as my colleague Kenneth Sole puts it, “Seeing old things in new ways.” Second, after some reflection, I came to realize that, much to my surprise, I have been studying transformative learning all along; that there is a high degree of overlap, both conceptually and practically, between transformative learning and conflict. In this paper, I outline my understanding of the nature of this relationship (organized around six postulates), and allude to some its implications.

1. Conflict is essential to the phenomenon of transformative learning.

The clashing of what we quietly assume to be so (our metaphors, frames, beliefs, and values) with what might otherwise be, is in essence a mighty form of intrapsychic conflict. This mixing together of old and new ways of knowing and being, be they complementary, slightly opposing, or radically irreconcilable, demands change, requires effort, and more often than not, generates dissonance, anxiety, and confusion in the experience of the individual. Such a state can, under certain conditions, fuel change, or a re-orientation of what we assume, feel, or believe to be so. And such changes, when sustained, can affect our sense of ourselves, our relationships, our world, as well as our insight into new possibilities and actions. Whatever the consequences though, it behooves us to see that these processes of transformation are, at their core, sparked by conflict.

I define conflict as *the experience of incompatible activities* (goals, claims, beliefs, values, wishes, actions, feelings, etc.). An incompatible activity “prevents, obstructs, interferes, injures” or in some way makes less likely or less effective another activity (Deutsch, 1973, p. 10). These experiences can occur within and between people and groups of people, may be expressed or left unexpressed, and can be experienced by the parties to the conflict or by observers external to the conflict (Boardman & Horowitz, 1994; Deutsch, 1973). These experiences can also differ by level of importance (from superficial to existential concerns), centrality (to one’s identity, esteem, and sense of reality), pervasiveness (number of interconnections with other conflicts and experiences), and duration.

Conflicts between old and new ways of knowing and being are typically no small matter. They occur within a context of two basic and opposing human needs for stability (integrity) and change (adaptation). People, groups, and societies everywhere struggle to hold onto the stability and sense of continuity provided by their views of history and the status quo (a sense of self, tradition, ancestry, worldview, etc.) while continually attempting to adapt to a changing economic, political, technological, and social environment (see Schwartz, 1992). When substantial, the need to adapt to change triggers anxieties in people, which result in the need for increased stability and resistance to change, and the faster the rate of change the more resistance is mobilized (Schein, 1993). Any internal juxtaposition of old and new perspectives and processes of meaning-making must be understood in the context of this basic human dilemma.

Given the fundamental link between conflict and transformative learning, an important social-psychological question we must consider is when—under what conditions—do these states of intrapsychic conflict, anxiety, and unknowing lead to constructive forms of transformation (such as an increase in inclusiveness, openness and complexity of thought, and reflectiveness) versus their opposite (retreating to an oversimplified, exclusive, unreflective, or closed state of experience). For example as Rokeach (1960) has pointed out, conditions of threat and excessive tension lead to the closed rather than open mind. Threat induces defensiveness and reduces both the tolerance of ambiguity and the openness to the new and unfamiliar; excessive tension leads to a primitization and a stereotyping of thought processes. Similarly, much research (see, for example, Carnevale and Probat, 1998; Johnson, Johnson, & Tjosvold, 2000) has demonstrated that a competitive as compared to a cooperative framing of conflict leads to more restricted judgment, reduced complexity, an inability to consider alternative perspectives, and less creative problem solving. Space will not allow me to elaborate on all that we have learned about these conditions from the study of conflict (see Deutsch, 1973; Deutsch & Coleman, 2000; Marsick & Sauquet, 2000; and Coleman & Deutsch, 2000). However, it seems evident that acceptance of the value or necessity of a change in perspective or ways of knowing, rather than a rigid, defensive adherence to previously existing points-of-view, is most likely when the circumstances arousing new motivations suggest courses of action that contain minimal threat to the social or self-esteem of those who must change.

2. Social conflict presents a unique human opportunity for transformation

In 1994, the field of conflict studies was rocked by the publication of the book, *The Promise of Mediation* (Bush & Folger, 1994). In it, the authors argued that traditional forms of conflict mediation (third party conflict resolution) which emphasized resolving conflicts, satisfying needs, and reaching agreements between disputants was not only misguided but a waste of important opportunities. Conflictual encounters, relationships, and environments, they argued, offered the unique potential for moral and social transformation to occur. They saw conflict mediation as an ideal mechanism for harnessing the “human crucible of conflict” by fostering *empowerment* (a greater sense of self-respect, self-reliance, and self-confidence), and *recognition* (strengthening the individual’s inherent capacity for relating with concern to the problems of others, and the acknowledgment of them as fellow human beings). These experiences, Bush and Folger suggested, could transform individuals from fearful, defensive, and self-centered beings into confident, empathetic, and considerate beings, and consequently go a long way towards transforming society from a shaky truce between enemies into a strong network of allies. In other words, they saw social conflict as providing an external stimulus that

could trigger a process of transformative learning; altering our sense of ourselves, our relations with others, and ultimately our world.

Other scholars, before and since, have emphasized the transformative potential inherent in social conflict (see Deutsch, 1973; Kriesberg, 1989; Kegan, 1994; Fisher, 1994; Lederach, 1995, 1997; Coleman, 2003). Typically, social conflict moves people into a closed experiential mode and produces rigid thinking with restricted judgment, reduced complexity, and a narrower range of attention. Exactly why this occurs is unclear, but scholars have speculated that it may be due to factors such as the conflict triggering a negative affect such as anxiety; a competitive orientation overloading cognitive functioning leading to a preoccupation with formulating strategies and tactics to prevail in the conflict; or simply providing too much cognitive stimulation. When this occurs, conflict facilitators must find the means to re-orient disputants, at least temporarily, into an open mode.

Bush & Folger (1994) recommend a radical re-structuring of the mediation process: shifting it away from problem-solving and contracting, and re-orienting it to focus on generating opportunities for empowerment, recognition, and ultimately moral growth. Others have developed different methods of conflict engagement (such as dialogue, public engagement, and participatory action research) specifically oriented to fostering individual and societal transformation through learning and action (see Coleman, in press). When a psychological state of openness is facilitated, social conflict can provide a uniquely human opportunity to learn about ourselves and others, to motivate necessary changes in the status quo, to challenge obsolete ways of thinking, and to innovate new ways of relating and working. However, such transformations can only be realized and maintained under conditions of prolonged and institutionalized support for the change.

3. Optimal tension drives constructive transformation.

Tension is a critical link between conflict and transformation. Conflict signals dissatisfaction with something or someone, such as with the validity or usefulness of our previously (and dearly) held assumptions. This dissatisfaction brings tension into the system. If the standard approaches to reducing the tension are ineffective, the tension increases. This increase in tension can eventually motivate people to seek new means of reducing the tension, which can lead to adaptation or innovation and an eventual reduction in tension. However, too much tension in a system can impair people's capacity to assimilate information or to think creatively in order to envision a new perspective or approach. *Optimal tension*, therefore, is a state where there isn't too little tension originating from the conflict (where people are insufficiently motivated to take on the issues and the conflict remains unattended to or goes temporarily underground to fester), or too much tension (which can lead either to conflict avoidance because it is so threatening or to conflict escalation as the tension limits one to an oversimplified black-white perception of the problem). Thus, it is critical for teachers, leaders, and conflict facilitators to develop the skills necessary to assess the level of tension in a conflict or learning system, to diagnose what level is "optimal" for a given system, and to discover levers for increasing tension (such as through the use of open confrontation or through empowering members of low power groups) or decreasing tension (such as through the use of humor or by temporarily disengaging with the conflict).

4. Transformative learning is essential to sustained forms of constructive conflict engagement.

It is always problematic to generalize about conflict because it takes so many different forms and the theoretical relations between constructs do not always transfer across different types, levels, and settings of conflict. However with that in mind, it is fairly safe to say that most forms of *constructive* conflict engagement require some degree of learning by the individuals involved. This can range from more minor, incremental forms to more deep-seated transformative forms of learning. For instance, at a minimum, constructive conflict processes require some accommodation of the perspectives and needs of the other into the individual's sense of the problem. This is essential if the disputants are to discover common ground between them where none could previously be identified, and is the first step toward generating integrative (win-win) solutions.

Training in conflict resolution typically targets a more basic form of transformative learning, where participants are encouraged to recognize their chronic competitive framing of conflict, and to begin to see the value of re-framing some conflicts as mutual problems that people can work together on to resolve. This is the primary emphasis of most mainstream negotiation and mediation trainings. Although reframing makes a conflict more amenable to a solution, the ability to reformulate the reframed mutual problem so that, in turn, one can find a solution to it is dependent upon the availability of cognitive resources. Ideas are important to the creative resolution of conflict, and any factors that broaden the range of ideas and alternatives available to the participants in a conflict will be useful. Intelligence, the exposure to diverse experiences, an interest in ideas, a preference for the novel and complex, receptivity to metaphors and analogies, the capacity to make remote associations, an independence of judgment, and the ability to play with ideas are some of the personal factors that characterize creative problem solvers. The availability of ideas is also dependent upon such social conditions as the opportunity to communicate with and be exposed to other people who may have relevant and unfamiliar ideas (such as experts, impartial outsiders, people facing similar or analogous situations), a social atmosphere that values innovation and originality and encourages the exchange of ideas, and a social tradition that fosters the optimistic view that, with effort and time, constructive solutions can be discovered or invented to problems that initially seem intractable.

However when the root causes of conflicts are embedded in deeper soil, such as in the identities of people and groups, or in the institutions and ideologies that constitute communities, a different level of learning is required in order to foster constructive engagement. This type of learning may involve a serious consideration of one's own responsibilities in instigating and escalating the conflict; reflection on the impact of one's relative power and privileges in contributing to their neglect, misreading, and perpetuation of conflict; an exploration of one's own identification with and investment in the continuation of the conflict; or an increased awareness of the overwhelming complexity of the situation, and of one's pressing need to oversimplify the situation and essentialize the other in an attempt to cope. Thoughts and reflections of this manner are demanding and disorienting under the best of circumstances, and present substantial challenges to learners when housed in the context of intense, polarized social conflict. Typically, individual-level transformations of this nature are fragile and cannot be sustained unless supported by (at least pockets of) structural and ideological changes in the broader community, which are consistent with more reflective, responsible, and complex ways of knowing and relating.

5. There is much to learn about transformative learning through the investigation of states of no-learning

Lewin (1947) wrote, "The study of the conditions for change begins appropriately with an analysis of the conditions for 'no change', that is, for the state of equilibrium" (p.208). Lewin indicated that a state of "no social change" refers to a state of "quasi-stationary social-equilibrium", that is, a relatively constant state. My students and I have spent the last few years exploring the phenomenon of protracted, intractable conflicts, which are conflicts that cycle in levels of intensity but remain essentially the same in terms of their malignant and destructive character. There are a few general insights from this work that may have heuristic and empirical value for the study of transformative learning (see Coleman, 2003, in press; Coleman, Johnson, & Lowe, 2002; Coleman, Hacking, Stover, & Fisher-Yoshida, 2003).

First on a meta-level, we have found it useful to envision the intransigent and self-sustaining core of intractable conflicts as emerging out of an extremely complex series of interactions between a multitude of variables which constitute a complex, non-linear adaptive system. Thus, conflict intractability can be understood as an emergent and equifinal phenomenon, which can result from a variety of different factors, conditions, and interactions. We have recently begun to apply the newly developed methods of the dynamical perspective (see Vallacher, Read, & Nowak, 2002) in order to begin to model, test, and better understand the dynamics of these systems. Perhaps the field of transformative learning could benefit from the application of such models.

With this degree of complexity and dynamism as our backdrop, we have been exploring a few micro-phenomena, or variables that we believe play a central role in these intractable systems. Of particular relevance to transformative learning is our work on *polarized collective identities*. During the progression of protracted conflict escalation, disputants organize against and expend considerable energy in opposition to the "other". Conversely in these situations, disputants develop a significant identification with and commitment to the individuals and groups that are allied with them in the conflict (Mccauley, 2001). New ingroups and outgroups form with membership being delineated along the authentic but arbitrary categories relevant to the conflict (nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, etc.; Kelman, 1999). These group distinctions and the collective identities that ensue serve to meet a variety of symbolic, practical, affective and normative human needs (Druckman, 2001). They may initially serve instrumental functions such as resisting oppressive opportunity structures, staking claims to territory and sovereignty, or buffering each group's social identity and esteem (Fordham and Ogbu, 1984; Kelman, 1999).

In time, however, the collective identities that emerge take on meaning of their own. As the conflict escalates, the opposing groups become increasingly polarized through in-group discourse and outgroup hostilities, resulting in the development of polarized collective identities constructed around a negation and disparagement of the outgroup (Fordham and Ogbu, 1984; Kellman, 1999; Hicks, 1999; Druckman, 2001). This can even occur within groups in an already polarized setting, such as with the current divisions between the Palestinian Authority and both Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two extremist Islamic factions in the Middle East. The collective identities that form can eventually take on a monolithic and exclusive nature, profoundly affecting the disputant's sense of their own ingroup, the issues, outgroups, and the options available to them in the conflict. These identities can serve many positive functions under the adverse conditions associated with ongoing conflict, but can also become a primary obstacle to constructive forms of engagement and sustainable peace (Kelman, 1999, 2001, in press; Hicks, 1999; Toscano, 1998).

Under these conditions, the high degree of threat perceived from the other elicits a basic impulse (self-preserving and other-annihilating) that *freezes learning*—in service of survival—resulting in the development of autistic hostilities and enemy images (Hicks, 1999). Thus, the ongoing processes of learning and adaptation (assimilation and accommodation) associated with normal states of identity development cease to function. Any sense of openness to interactions with the other are experienced as threatening to one’s basic sense of integrity and stability. Thus, rigid beliefs, decreased complexity, decreased uncertainty, and decreased ambivalence follow in an attempt to regain stability. In other words, in an attempt to cope with the destabilizing threat of the other, we deny our adaptive learning mode.

6. Conflict transformation within intractable systems requires a complex, multi-level, developmental orientation.

Our exploratory research on the formation and maintenance of polarized collective identities has identified several key factors associated with their transformation, and therefore with a more open state of adaptation (Coleman, & Lowe, 2003). These include the importance of alternative, somewhat inconsistent identity structures (such as being an Israeli and a human rights lawyer); the existence of a peace climate (however slight or marginalized); opportunities for personal, humanizing, and transformational experiences with the other; and a sense of alienation/discouragement with members of one’s ingroup.

However, Kelman (in press) suggests that identity negotiation is a process that must engage the entire body politic on each side of a conflict—at all levels and through different media. These processes must: remove negation of the other, soften exclusiveness, disaggregate the monolithic nature of PCIs, identify outdated elements, reprioritize elements, and negotiate narratives to accept responsibility and accommodate the other’s view. Kelman (2001) outlined five conditions for identity negotiation: 1) mutual acknowledgement of other’s nationhood and humanity; 2) development of a common moral basis for peace; 3) confrontation with history; 4) acknowledgement of responsibility, and 5) establishment of patterns and institutional mechanisms of cooperation.

Kegan (1994) argues that, ultimately, protracted conflict is an opportunity to transform one’s identification with one’s own side or one’s “intractable integrity”—that this belief is really ideology—partial and unworthy. He writes:

In essence, the postmodern view bids disputants to do several things: (1) consider that your protracted conflict is a signal that you and your opponent have probably become identified with the poles of the conflict; (2) consider that the relationship in which you find yourself is not the inconvenient result of the existence of an opposing view but the expression of your own incompleteness taken as completeness; (3) value the relationship, miserable though it may feel, as an opportunity to live out your own multiplicity; and thus, (4) focus on ways to let the conflictual relationship transform the parties rather than on the parties resolving the conflict. Postmodernism suggests a kind of “conflict resolution” in which the Palestinian discovers her own Israeli-ness, the rich man discovers his poverty, the woman discovers the man inside her (pp. 320-321).

Although intriguing, this level of consciousness can be quite demanding and therefore difficult to facilitate, even under non-threatening conditions (Kegan, 1994).

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Critically Reflective Practice: Weaving Community Action and Social Reflection into Professional Graduate Studies

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Abstract: *This paper reports the transformation of learners' perspectives by integrating seminar reflection with social change projects. Research from the pilot year of a new graduate professional curriculum in creative change shows that concurrent social action and social reflection stimulates perspective transformation among adult learners. It suggests that impacts of experiential and service learning will be strengthened by concurrent reflective seminars.*

Keywords: social action, social reflection, collaborative learning

Introduction

How can a graduate professional studies program prepare leaders of social change? Faced with a world of momentous social, political, economic and ecological crises, professional degree programs like ours must choose between technical and transformative learning. Here we report on the first phase of action research that is part of a curriculum for social action and transformative learning among adult students pursuing graduate degrees.

The Antioch Center for Creative Change furthers the historic commitment of Antioch University to education in the service of social, economic and environmental justice. The new center has evolved from the incorporation of four previously separate professional studies programs into an integrated curriculum. In many respects, the development of this collaborative center has itself modeled the challenge of transformative learning. While the transition from autonomous programs to an integrated curriculum has not been easy, the resulting graduate center explodes the linear model of education, generating instead iterative loops of action, reflection and theory. Underpinning this graduate curriculum is the recent work in transformative adult learning (Mezirow 1991 & 2000, Taylor 1998) constructivist pedagogy (Palincsar 1998, Bruffee 1999, Loughran 2002), and reflective practice (Schön 1987, Lichtenstein 2000). The Center is becoming a crucible for critical reflection in multidisciplinary learning communities of students and faculty engaging in social change in many settings.

A key element of this new curriculum is a nine-month reflective practicum in which second year students undertake a social change project of their own choosing. This project may be in a community or organization and it must involve a substantial effort at systemic change; it is not an internship. Students are supported and mentored in their project by faculty and peers in a practicum seminar that runs concurrently throughout the academic year. In this respect, it is similar to collaborative inquiry (Bray, et al. 2000); however, our students undertake individual, rather than collaborative, projects. The combination of this social action project and reflective seminar offers students a paradigmatic transformative learning experience.

In the first phase of the transition to an integrated curriculum, we offered the reflective practicum in the 2002-03 academic year. Other elements, including a common set of core courses, disciplinary specializations, and a preparatory first year reflective practicum have been added in 2003-04. In this paper we report on some of our findings from research during the pilot year of the reflective practicum.

Theoretical Framework

Our research shows that three theories—transformative learning, collaborative learning, and reflective practice—complement each other in ways that are important for curriculum design.

Transformative Learning

Mezirow's work has introduced the concept of transformative learning to a global audience of adult educators. Over the past two decades, his theory has been subject to widespread application, research, and theoretical development. Transformative learning theory offers a model of how individuals undergo the transformation of cognitive perspectives that give meaning to their experiences (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Elements of this model that we use in the design of the reflective practicum include: (1) Learning is a process of revising the meaning of one's experiences in ways that will guide future actions; (2) Radically different or incongruent experiences challenge these interpretations; (3) Meaning perspectives are transformed through critical reflection that results in a reappraisal of existing presuppositions; and (4) Cognitive transformation is signaled by meaning perspectives that are "more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective" (Mezirow 2000:8).

Taylor (1998) observes that while the theory of transformative adult learning has been the source of numerous theoretical discussions and applications, there is also a shortage of attention to the social context of learning and action. According to Taylor, transformative learning theory fails to adequately address the social dimensions of the way learners critically reflect and construct new perspectives. And in comparing Mezirow with Freire's (1970) theory of transformative learning, Taylor also notes that the role of social action has been slighted. In the past several years, both empirical and theoretical work (Mezirow 2000) has begun to address these issues; as does the research reported here. In developing the Center's reflective practicum, we turned to theories of collaborative learning and reflective practice in addition to transformative learning.

Collaborative Learning

In collaborative learning, students engage in socially mediated conversations about their experiences; conversations in which they construct interpretations that are new to them. In this view, "learning and understanding are regarded as inherently social; and cultural activities and tools (ranging from symbol systems to artifacts to language) are regarded as integral to conceptual development" (Palincsar, 1998:346). As in collaborative inquiry (Bray, et al. 2000), the underlying social constructivist model reminds us that cognition is a collaborative process and that cognitive transformation is internalized social discourse.

The design of a context conducive to socially reconstruct meanings may be one of the chief requirements for the successful transformation of students' perspectives. We included the practicum seminar because, (1) learners' understandings and interpretations are derived from the social groups in which they live and learn (Bruffee 1999) and (2) language and other symbolic systems produced in social groups mediate individuals' interpretations and their reconstruction of meanings. Bruffee (1999) observes that learners form linguistic communities that are semiotically transitional between the perspectives and languages that students bring to a course and the concepts and perspectives to which the course is introducing them.

Learning reflective practice

A context of action for transformative learning is addressed in the experiential learning theory of Donald Schön (1987). Our new curriculum drew from Schön's research into the ways reflective practicums prepare students for the unique and uncertain challenges of professional practice—certainly an apt characterization of creative change. Schön says that the work of the practicum is accomplished through a combination of learning by doing, interaction with faculty and fellow students, and a more diffuse process of “background learning” in which students acquire tacit knowledge that helps them to address new challenges. In reflective practicums, “students learn ... by undertaking projects that simulate and simplify practice, or they take on real-world projects under close supervision.” (1987:37)

The ideas we drew from Schön's research on reflective practicum learning include, (1) the creative elements of change leadership cannot be taught in the classroom but can be learned through a graduated development of skills acquired through reflective practice, and (2) the reflective practicum is a place for bringing challenging experiences into contact with challenging conversations in a way that stimulates students to re-construct their perspectives.

These three models, transformative learning, collaborative learning and reflective practice, guided the design of the reflective practicum as the core element of our interdisciplinary curriculum in creative social change. They also are the basis for our research into the transformative power of concurrent social action and social reflection. In this report we address two questions: (1) what is the role of students' social change projects in (a) precipitating critical reflection and (b) supporting the active testing of new perspectives, and (2) what is the contribution of seminar discussions to the construction of new perspectives on social change?

Research Method

Our approach is qualitative and interpretive. Students wrote bi-weekly project progress reports and distributed these to their seminar colleagues. They also kept reflective journals that were submitted to the faculty electronically. The two faculty members leading the seminar kept notes on seminar meetings as well as conversations with individual students.¹ These three documents supplement our observations as participants in the seminar. This approach, of course, is limited by the nature of interpretive research: we tend to record, recall and draw from documents what we are predisposed to find. This report is, of necessity, too brief to convey a more detailed record that might invite alternative interpretations. Here we present, (1) an overview of the progress of the ten students who began the seminar, (2) vignettes recounting critical turning points in four students' projects, and (3) a comparison of students' perspectives on social change leadership at the beginning and end of the year.

Findings

Ten graduate students began the reflective practicum in the fall of 2002; eight were women. They came from all four of the degree programs in the Center and were representative of the interests and career goals held by students in these programs. Their age varied from late 20s to early 50s. Of these ten, four began with projects planned and located and three found projects during the fall quarter.

¹ Our colleague Kate Davies replaced Kristin Woolever as seminar faculty for the spring quarter. We are greatly indebted to her contributions and insights both in the seminar and for this paper.

Students who had the greatest difficulty were those who came to work on an internship rather than on a change project. Students from two degree programs that historically had an internship requirement were unclear how to fit these into the new reflective practicum. Of the six students who began without projects, three successfully addressed this in the fall quarter while three did not. The latter three failed to complete the reflective practicum: two dropped in the first quarter and the third in the second quarter. Without social action, social reflection was irrelevant.

Student Experiences

Four students' experiences at critical turning points serve to illustrate the impact of their change projects and social reflection in the practicum seminar. Not surprisingly, each of the student's projects precipitated opportunities for reflection. One of the most striking of these was for Janet² who began an internship in a Fortune 500 corporation and then decided that she could not meet the change project requirements of the reflective practicum. She was so distressed by this realization that she angrily dropped the course at the end of the quarter in December. Fortunately, she returned in January and, in extended discussions with her classmates and faculty, reconceived and completed her "internship" as an action research project. At the conclusion, she told us that she probably would not have successfully completed her project without the seminar.

Midway through her project, Carol found that the program she was developing materials for in a small non-profit was no one's responsibility and was being ignored amid the organization's search for a new director. In reflecting with her seminar colleagues, she redesigned her objectives to align with the organization's priorities in a way that raised the profile of the program by documenting what had been accomplished. The new director subsequently made the program a priority and Carol's efforts resulted a national award for the non-profit's achievements in this program.

Nancy spent several months developing a survey instrument for a consulting non-profit to use to test the level of multicultural awareness in their client organizations. As she was completing it, the staff member who supported the project left abruptly and no one else had the time or interest to pre-test or use Nancy's survey. As the seminar members discussed Nancy's crisis, they suggested that she pilot the instrument in the organization where she worked. Her supervisor warmly supported this. Nancy's survey proved a major success in stimulating discussions and was adopted as a part of an organization-wide program on multiculturalism.

Ed came to his practicum with a project already underway. With years of experience in his industry, he was consulting for a firm that was experiencing difficulty that both they and Ed defined as mishandling cultural differences. The company was facing possible legal action and had asked Ed to help them resolve tensions by developing better human resource policies and procedures. Throughout the fall Ed was frustrated at slow progress and inattention to this issue by the firm. As the seminar discussed Ed's frustrations, other members began to question him more closely about the history and culture of this organization. Slowly at first and then quite abruptly, Ed's perspective changed to see this as an issue of cultural learning and change rather than a technical problem to be addressed with new procedures. He continues to work with this firm although, at last word, they were not yet prepared to address their challenge in the way that Ed now perceives it.

² All student names are pseudonyms.

These four vignettes address our questions about the role of action projects and the social context of perspective transformation. It is clear that students' projects presented significant disorienting events and perspective challenges. In consequence, students were forced to reflect personally and then bring to the seminar issues of interpretation and action that arose from their projects, challenged their preconceptions, and threatened the continuation of their efforts.

On the application side of the reflective loop, each of their projects allowed the students to test new perspectives that were emerging from thoughtful reflection in seminar conversations. Without a challenging action agenda, it is doubtful that these students would have either seriously questioned their perspectives or been obliged to construct new ways of understanding and acting. In light of this, it is perhaps not surprising that the three students who failed to begin projects in the fall dropped out of the seminar without demonstrating any significant reflection.

In each case, seminar discussions were instrumental in challenging and revising the students' understandings of events. Peer conversations and faculty mentoring questioned premises and brought new perspectives to the fore. The meaning of project experiences often shifted during and following intense and sometimes emotional seminar dialogues. The fact that this seminar included students from four degree programs meant that several disciplinary perspectives were available in discussions, giving rise to new ways of seeing challenges.

Perspective Transformation

We collected comparative data on the way these students' perspectives on social change were transformed over the nine months of the reflective practicum. At the first meeting of the seminar in October, we asked students to tell us what they thought they needed to learn to be effective social change agents. We list their combined responses in the first column below. In May we asked the same question, putting it in the framework of what they thought others would need to learn to lead social change. Their May responses are listed in the second column.

Table 1. What do social change leaders need to know?

<u>October 2002</u>	<u>May 2003</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonviolent responses to others, less defensiveness • How to get people to be willing to change • Amass momentum in groups • Ask questions to help people move • Respond appropriately in social groups • Learn to let go, get off of my positions • Experiential learning • Excellent listening skills • Learn partnerships and gain allies • Toolkit for change processes • Learn collaboratively, engage, create commitment • Cross cultures and undo racism • Develop skills for evaluation of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with inquiry: ask questions • Establish ground rules • Look for early successes • Celebrate accomplishments • Be flexible and committed • Know your clients and help your clients know you • Find common ground and begin there • Leverage points of felt dissatisfaction • Introduce dissonance: challenge & support • Take an appreciative stance • Make it fun • Create ownership • Practice reflectively: learn with your client • Keep a systems perspective

What is most striking when we compare these lists is the students' shift from naming *individual skills* to identifying *social actions*. At the beginning of their reflective practicum students were focused on individual acts to induce change. Eight months later they were describing actions in terms of their impact on groups and organizations. Even personal skills and

attributes were described by May in terms of relationships and working with others. From these early and late responses, it is clear that these students acquired a social language that reflected their systemic understanding of change. We believe that this is a result of the social construction of their perspectives on change. Left to critically reflect on experiences by themselves, this social perspective would not have developed.

In recounting four students' experiences, we noted how their perspective on each of their projects was transformed during seminar conversations. From the May responses we see that these perspectives shifted from individual action to social relationships. It was the context of social reflection with its comparison of diverse experiences and modeling of reflective dialogue that gave students insight into perspectives that transcend individual change. The consequences included Janet's transformation from research intern to action researcher, Nancy's shift from research intern to shaper of multicultural programs, Carol's recognition of the role her project could play in featuring an ignored program, and Ed's discovery of organizational culture. Each of these represents evidence for the potency of social reflection in perspective transformation.

Conclusions

The experience of this group of students demonstrates the value of blending collaborative learning and reflective practice models with transformative learning theory. Our research demonstrates the usefulness of including simultaneous reflective seminars in service learning and experiential curricula. Our students' experiences show that concurrent social action and social reflection stimulates both critical reflection and the testing of transformed perspectives in action.

Our results inspire us to continue to refine the reflective practicum experience. Realizing group reflection takes more time, we have added a first year reflective practicum that engages students in simulations and case studies, prior to taking on their own change projects. We have also developed an assessment rubric that offers criteria for critical reflection, collaborative learning, and perspective transformation while weaving together social action and reflection.

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A Jungian Perspective on Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *Transformative learning is a process in which we reflect on and question assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives that have been previously uncritically assimilated. It is an intense and in-depth look at who we are, what we believe, and what are doing in our life. Jungian psychology provides a perspective through which we can gain insights into our transformative experiences. In this paper, I discuss nine concepts from Jungian psychology—psychological type, becoming conscious, self-knowledge, individuation, persona, shadow, projection and identification, anima and animus, and dreams—and connect each to transformative learning theory.*

Keywords: authenticity, individuation, personal transformation Jungian perspectives

I was somewhat startled to be asked to represent a Jungian perspective on transformative learning for this panel. I am not a Jungian analyst, nor have I ever formally studied Jungian psychology. Surely, I thought, there are many others who are far better qualified than I am to address this topic. But when I thought about my work over the past decades, I reminded myself how Jungian concepts have been threaded through my practice, my research, and my writing for a very long time. I cannot speak as a Jungian scholar, but I can speak as an adult educator who has long tried to understand what I do by calling on Jung's writing.

In this paper, I take nine interrelated concepts from Jungian psychology and examine transformative learning theory in light of those concepts. I have chosen these particular concepts as they have most influenced my thinking about transformative learning. I have ordered them roughly in the order in which I brought them into my practice.

Psychological Type

Thirty years ago, I conducted my doctoral research on what was then called computer-assisted instruction. I investigated the degree to which a variety of learner characteristics influenced university students' success with and enjoyment of working in that medium. One of those characteristics was personality, as assessed by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. At the time, I had very little understanding of psychological type, but perhaps this was a foreshadow of things to come. I did not think about psychological type again until 1986, when I moved to an adult education position at Brock University in Ontario. To my surprise and amusement, shortly after my arrival one of my new colleagues asked me to complete the MBTI myself so he could see what kind of a person had joined the department. We went on to discuss my results, criticize the MBTI as an inventory, and decide to create an alternative to the MBTI. This took me on a ten-year journey in which I thoroughly explored psychological type theory and worked with my colleague to develop, validate, and standardize the PET Type Check (Cranton & Knoop, 1995).

In the early 1990s, with the publication of Jack Mezirow's *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, I also became completely intrigued with transformative learning theory. Putting these two interests together, I began to think about how individuals with different psychological type interests might engage in transformative learning. It seemed to me that the theory as outlined by Mezirow focused heavily on a cognitive process which would be preferred by those people who had a preference for the thinking function. People who were more inclined to

sensing, intuition, or feeling might have different experiences. I became aware of this in my practice and included my observations in my 1994 book, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*.

I eventually came to the place where I saw psychological type as having two parallel and integrated connections with transformative learning (Cranton, 2000). First, I gave up on the idea that only people with a preference for thinking can critically reflect on their assumptions and perceptions; everyone sees themselves as doing so in one form or another. However, I paid more attention to the idea that psychological type preferences form a psychological meaning perspective, one of the filters through which we see the world and make meaning of our experiences. The natural extension of this is that individuals see their own transformation through the lens of their psychological make-up, and it is different for different people. Second, I thought more about psychological type as a developing characteristic. Although popular psychology portrays type as fairly static, Jung is clear about the development of our preferences into a holistic Self as a lifelong journey. This leads me to describe the development of our temperament as a transformative process. If we develop this facet of our psychological meaning perspectives, one which describes the core of how we function in the world, it is bound to open up alternative ways of being.

Becoming Conscious

Near the end of his life, Jung (1961) wrote, “the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being” (p. 326). Perhaps it is Jung’s most important message that the purpose of human life is to become conscious. Becoming conscious is a continuous and progressive process of the ego assimilating what was previously unknown. Our unconscious includes all those unexamined, instinctual, and repressed aspects of ourselves—a garbage can of fantasies and emotions, a hodgepodge of repressed desires and impulses. It also, according to Jung, includes contents we never knew were there, and at a deeper level, all the experiences of the human race (the collective unconscious).

Becoming conscious has long been central to transformative learning theory. Early on, Hart (1990) and others emphasized the role of consciousness raising in transformative learning, but this is somewhat different from what Jung means by becoming conscious. Consciousness raising is a process by which individuals become aware of oppressive social forces. From a Jungian perspective, becoming conscious involves examining the unexamined, becoming aware of depths of the Self, moving underneath the surface of life. It occurs through introspection, reflection, delving into our emotions and imagination, and as Sharp (1998) says, “asking the right questions, again and again” (p. 136). It is facilitated by having an honest mirror in the form of another person who can help us see our blind spots. Looking at Jung’s conceptualization of consciousness adds another, perhaps deeper, level to transformative learning theory.

Self-Knowledge

If, for instance, I determine the weight of each stone in a pile of pebbles and get an average weight of five ounces, this tells me very little about the real nature of the pebbles. Anyone who thought, on the basis of these findings, that he could pick up a pebble of five ounces at the first try would be in for a serious disappointment. Indeed, it might well happen that however long he searched he would not find a single pebble weighing exactly five ounces (Jung, 1953-1979, cited in Sharp, 2001, p. 89).

Jung's point here is that a general knowledge of humankind tells us nothing about a particular person. Self-knowledge is knowledge of our individual psyche. It goes beyond what the ego knows to include our unconscious side. Ego knowledge is dependent to a large extent on social factors—how we think we should be, based on social norms. When we only have ego knowledge, we act based on uncritically absorbed assumptions, norms, and beliefs. We gain self-knowledge through transformative learning as we critically question ego knowledge, and, at the same time, transformative learning depends on increasing self-knowledge.

Individuation

Individuation is the journey in which we become conscious and develop self-knowledge. It is becoming conscious of what is truly unique about our Self through differentiating ourselves from family, community, and the collective of humanity. Jung (1961) describes this process in dramatic terms:

It is really the individual's task to differentiate himself from all others and stand on his own feet. All collective identities, such as membership in organizations, support of 'isms,' and so on, interfere with the fulfillment of this task. Such collective identities are crutches for the lame, shields for the timid, beds for the lazy, nurseries for the irresponsible (p. 342).

However, individuation does not isolate us from others. It is not the same as *individualism*, where we put our self and our own needs and wants ahead of others' and society's needs. Individuation is a lifelong process of differentiation and integration. By knowing how we are distinct from others, we also know how and where we fit in with others. We do not, as Jung says, shut out the world, but rather we learn to gather the world to us. Dirkx (2000) suggests that transformation is the stuff of ordinary, everyday occurrences much more than it is a "burning bush" phenomenon in which we use reason to "wrest knowledge from the throes of ignorance" (p. 247). Individuation, Dirkx suggests, is an ongoing psychic process that occurs in everyone whether we are conscious of it or not. When we participate in it consciously and imaginatively, we develop a deepened sense of self, an expansion of consciousness, and an engendering of soul. Transformation is the emergence of the Self.

Persona

I became interested in persona when I began studying authenticity, and over time I began to see persona as closely linked to transformation. In Greek, persona referred to the mask actors wore to indicate which role they were playing. Persona is a facet of the collective psyche—social identities and ideal images such as teacher, mother, or priest. A persona has attributes and behaviors which we are expected to live up to and which we use to identify ourselves. When we first meet someone and ask what they "do," we are asking for the persona. We want to know how to place the individual socially. When we describe ourselves by naming the role we play, we are giving the other person a collective of characteristics by which they can locate us. The world rewards our persona through money, respect, and power, and invites us to identify ourselves in this way. Our persona is always a compromise between what we know of our Self and what is expected of us.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to live without persona. If I decide not to behave as a professor behaves, then I acquire the persona of an eccentric professor; if I quit being a professor, as I did for four years in order to better know myself, I acquire yet another persona. In order to make meaning, people group and label things, events, and other people.

However, the persona can become a trap, a constraint, an escape from seeking consciousness and self-knowledge, and a badge of inauthenticity. We think and feel and do what our persona should think and do and feel. Critical questioning of our psychological habits of mind helps to maintain an awareness of our persona, when we are hiding behind it, and who we are apart from it. This experience is transformative.

Shadow

The persona is the ideal according to social expectations; the shadow is the dark and unconscious side of our Self. It is everything we strive to keep hidden from others and from ourselves—*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. We can probably all recall (with embarrassment and shame) some occasion upon which we acted quite unlike ourselves, did something we would normally never do. That is the shadow. Most of us have experienced an inexplicable, intense, and inappropriate dislike or even hatred for another person. This occurs when we see our shadow projected onto another. Our persona prevents us from seeing our shadow side (“What professor would think *that*?”).

In order to individuate, to fully identify who we are, we need to work to realize our shadow. This journey depends on separating our Self from who we should be and coming to see who we are, including those repressed desires, uncivilized impulses, and childish fantasies that we would rather not acknowledge. Transformative learning depends, I would argue, on recognizing our shadow. Transforming a persona does not get at uncritically absorbed assumptions and beliefs, it only substitutes one set for another.

Projection and Identification

Jung tells us that we project those things in our unconscious into our environment. We see unacknowledged aspects of ourselves in others and often create relationships with others based on those projections. Projection can be automatic and unintentional, or it can be intentional and active as when we empathize with a student or client.

Identification goes one step further. We see no difference between ourselves and the other person. What is good for me must be good for him; what makes him happy makes me happy. Our emotional well-being is dependent on the emotional well-being of the other person. The other person becomes responsible for how we feel, and the connection becomes like that of parent and young child. Projection, within limits, can be helpful and healthy and lead us to learn about ourselves. Identification creates a merging of Self with Other, a process contrary to individuation and transformation.

Anima and Animus

Jung sees a man’s anima, his feminine side, as functioning as his soul, while a woman’s animus, her masculine self, resides in her unconscious. A man who is unconscious of his anima will see that aspect of himself in an actual woman, through projection. In a man’s development, according to Jung, he first sees anima as mother, the provider of nourishment and security. In a second stage, the anima is a collective sexual image, and in the third stage, a man develops a capacity for genuine friendship with women as he differentiates between the object of desire and his inner image of woman. Finally, a man’s anima can function as a guide to inner life.

A man’s work is to assimilate his anima, but a woman’s work is to question her animus. In her first stage of development, the animus represents power. In the second stage, the animus creates independence and planned action though she relates to men on a collective level, and in

the third stage, the animus is personified as a figure of learning and the woman relates to a man on an individual level but remains uncertain of her own identity. In the fourth stage, the animus acquires spiritual meaning and mediates between the woman's conscious and unconscious.

For both men and women, an understanding of the anima or animus is a process of individuation, of learning how to see the Self as both separate from and the same as the Other. Deliberate efforts to work with our feminine or masculine facets of ourselves creates consciousness and is transformative.

Dreams

Dreams are, according to Jung, a manifestation of the unconscious, symbolic statements about what is going on in the psyche. Each part of a dream is about the dreamer; people in our dreams represent aspects of our Self, and it is really only the dreamer or someone who knows him or her very well who can interpret the meaning of dreams. If I dream about a police officer, I am not dreaming about a police officer, but about some aspect of myself, which is authoritarian and representative of social controls over my life. If I dream of sick and dying kittens for whom I am responsible, I am not dreaming about sick and dying kittens in the world, but rather about a part of myself that I need to nourish and care for. Dreams are entirely subjective. Different people may interpret the same dream in different ways, and the dreamer may interpret the same dream differently on different occasions.

What is important about dreams are the insights they give us into our Self. If we pay attention to how various aspects of our Self are personified, we can ferret out those unconscious habits of mind in need of critical examination.

Summary

I am often struck by how things I am interested in turn out to be related to each other. When I first studied psychological type, I had not heard of transformative learning theory. When I became intrigued with transformative learning theory, I saw psychological type only as a kind of learning style that explained how people might engage in transformative learning in different ways. But psychological type develops as people differentiate their preferences. This led me to individuation, which, it turns out, is a transformative experience. Becoming conscious and developing self-knowledge are a part of individuation and of transformative learning.

When I became interested in authenticity, I was thinking about how teachers who have different psychological type preferences should be encouraged to bring their preferences into their teaching style rather than follow the collective notion of "good teacher." This led me to the concept of persona—the social expectations and ideal images of Teacher. And then opposite the persona, I found the shadow, which is unconscious and links back to becoming conscious, a transformative process. Interested in the unconscious shadow, I explored projection and identification, mechanisms by which we bring the shadow out into the world, and then anima and animus, aspects of our unconscious that we integrate into our Self as we develop. All of which, it seems, is transformative learning. And finally, I found a home for my long-term interest in dreams; they provide a window, albeit a foggy one, into our unconscious.

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Transformation, Power, and the Shadow

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Abstract: *It is a commonly held belief in adult education that teachers must “give up” their power or at least distribute it equally amongst learners. Foucault presents compelling arguments for the notion that power exists in all ordinary interactions and is exercised by people at all levels. Adult educators, we suggest, repress their power in the face of a community of practice that sanctions it. Knowledge of our power becomes a part of the shadow side of our psyche, existing among all of the other things we hide from others and ourselves. The Good Teacher does not exercise power says our persona. It is a process of individuation and transformation to come to see ourselves as separate from the collective psychology of our profession and learn how to exercise our own power and help our learners see themselves as agents of power.*

Keywords: classroom practice, Jungian perspective, power as shadow

There’s a saying in China that goes something like this: “In order to give a student one cup of water, a teacher must have a bucket of water.” The assumption underlying this is that the teacher should be much more knowledgeable than the student. The teacher must be able to see the field in a way that the student will not be able to see for many years.

Brookfield (2001) calls on adult educators to accept that all of us are implicated in the exercising of power. We are fated to exercise power. What we need to focus on is how learners can also come to recognize they are agents of power and have the capacity to subvert dominant power relations.

It is our intent in this paper to explore how educators and learners exercise power, how our understanding of our power is a part of our discovery of the shadow side and how through a transformative individuation journey, we can come to accept and work with power in a constructive way rather than deny its existence.

Exercising Power

Each of us collaborating on this paper brings a different perspective on power. One of us is an adult educator with nearly 30 years of experience. Another is a doctoral student at a Canadian university. And our third collaborator is a doctoral student at Teachers College. Each of us has both positive and negative experiences with the exercising of power, and each of us knows many stories of others’ experiences.

The bucket of water in the Chinese saying represents power. The Chinese would say that “the bucket of water” represents knowledge – the knowledge to be fed into students’ cups, and then minds. According to Foucault, “it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge; it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (Foucault, 1980, p. 52).

Foucault sees power as residing in all everyday, ordinary interactions among people and exercised by all individuals at all levels. This is quite different from the common perception of

¹ Between the time when this paper was proposed and its writing, Merv Roy passed away. We have strived to remain true to Merv’s ideas in our completion of the paper.

power as something that is “used” by people in positions that give them control over others, positions such as that of teacher. Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power originates in his work in prisons where power is constantly exercised by means of surveillance and is based on knowing the insides of people’s minds. Brookfield (2001) points out that the mechanisms of disciplinary power are at work in schools, social service agencies, and adult education.

In institutions other than prisons, self-surveillance becomes the most insidious manifestation of disciplinary power. We discipline ourselves. We know what a good teacher is supposed to say and do; our students know what a good student is supposed to say and do. In Jungian terms, we have a persona of Teacher or Student, a socially constructed ideal image that we use as a standard for our own behavior and characteristics. We watch ourselves carefully to make sure we function as closely as possible to that standard. Foucault (1980) sees this as an “inspecting gaze,” a gaze that we internalize so as to become our own overseer.

Power in the Shadow

It is interesting that water, in Jungian psychology, represents the unconscious where our shadow side resides. According to Brookfield (2001), adult educators often maintain they have no power over others or that they can choose when and when not to exercise it. This arises from our self-surveillance as we strive to be the Good Teacher. We know from the literature, from common understandings of practice in adult education, and from other avenues of our social context that facilitators are not supposed to impose things on learners. We are supposed to empower. In exercising this disciplinary power—monitoring our own practice in light of the expectations about the role of educator—we must deny and repress our power.

This is exactly how we also try to manage our shadow side, our dark side—the aspects of our Self we do not recognize or do not want others to know. Sharp (1998) says that in civilized societies aggression is a prominent aspect of the shadow simply because it is not socially acceptable. Its expression is met with heavy sanctions. In the community of adult educators, the exercise of power is similarly not socially acceptable. We push power into our unconscious. Now and then it breaks out, just as our dark side does. But mostly, we pretend we don’t have a bucket at all, just a cup as the students do.

The persona is the ideal according to social expectations and the shadow lies behind the persona—our dark and unconscious side. Our persona prevents us from seeing our shadow side (“What professor would think *that*?”). The persona aims at perfection, and for an educator, perfection includes never wielding power over learners.

In order to individuate, to fully identify who we are, we need to work to realize our shadow. This journey depends on separating our Self from who we should be and coming to see who we are, including those repressed desires, uncivilized impulses, and childish fantasies that we would rather not acknowledge. Transformative learning depends, we would argue, on recognizing our shadow. Transforming a persona does not get at uncritically absorbed assumptions and beliefs, it only substitutes one set for another.

Learners see the educator as exercising power, no matter how much the educator protests otherwise. Learners often feel powerless and helpless. They may spend their days trying to figure out what the teacher really wants. Lin tells a powerful story of the professor and the stones. The professor wants to empower students and encourage them to discover knowledge on their own. He sends them out to find a stone. When the student comes back with a stone, the professor examines it carefully and says, “no that’s not the right stone, keep looking.” The student searches and searches for another stone, trying to find the one the professor might want.

When she brings another stone to the professor, he says, "I don't think that's what you want." Some students seem to be finding the right stones. Others cannot.

A Transformative Individuation Journey

Individuation is a transformative process (Cranton and Roy, 2003). Jung ([1921] 1971, p. 448) defines individuation as “the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology.” The journey is a complex one—we bring the unconscious into consciousness and develop a dialogue with that aspect of our Self, come to better understand our shadow, become aware of our animus or anima (masculine or feminine soul), realize the influence of archetypes, and start to see how we engage in projection. Since the shadow side of our self is deeply distasteful, painful, and completely unlike whom we want to be, to learn from our shadow side is difficult indeed.

Sharp (2001) sees individuation as a circular odyssey or spiral, a journey where the aim is to get back to where you started, but knowing where you have been. We essentially remain who we are. There is no quick-fix transformation to make us into who we (or others) think we should be. But through the journey of individuation, we come to know who that Self is.

Our frames of reference often represent collectively held frames of reference. We unconsciously and unintentionally assimilate views from our culture, community, and family. We become a part of a collective. Individuation and transformation takes place as we break away from that collective by critically questioning the habits of mind of which we have been unaware.

To bring power out of the shadow, we need to question our habits of mind about power. We need to break from the collective of adult educators who see power as an evil thing to be avoided and out of the collective of adult learners who see power as residing only with the teacher. We need to understand the good powers that adult educators exercise—the "altruistic power," the power to do good, the power to bring about changes, the power to make a difference in the world or in the learners' lives, and the power to pull the helpless learners into new possibilities and potential. According to Maxine Greene, freedom and authority are connected, because in proper authority positive freedom is achieved (Greene, 1988). Greene quotes Arendt (1972, p. 142) as saying, "power corresponds to the human ability... to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together." Power may be thought of, then, as "empowerment," a condition of possibility for human and political life, and for education (Greene, 1988). Coming to this understanding is a transformative journey for both educator and learners.

Working with Power

Jung writes:

If any considerable group of persons are united and identified with one another by a particular frame of mind, the resultant transformation experience bears only a very remote resemblance to the experience of individual transformation. A group experience takes place on a lower level of consciousness than the experience of an individual. This is due to the fact that, when many people gather together to share one common emotion, the total psyche emerging from the group is below the level of the individual psyche. If it

is a very large group, the collective psyche will be more like the psyche of an animal, which is the reason why the ethical attitude of large organizations is always doubtful... In the crowd one feels no responsibility, but also no fear (cited in Sharp, 1998, p. 146).

This goes quite contrary to what we espouse in adult education, including the practice of fostering transformative learning. We advocate sharing experiences with groups and using groups to support and activate transformation. However, if we follow the notion that transformation is individuation, then differentiation from the group or the possible "collective shadow," is necessary for transformation. One inner voice disappears in the face of convention, and personal vocation is lost in the collective. Group experiences have a good place in adult education practice, but it is not individuation. A temporarily heightened awareness is not the same as rebirth.

We tend to identify with our profession or title as though *we* are the complex of social factors that characterize our work. In order to work constructively with power, we need to separate our Self from the collective of adult educators and carefully consider how we, as individuals, can inform our practice through the exercising of power. Some examples follow.

- We need to encourage expert knowledge, skills and practice to erase student self-doubt.
- In discussions, one of the most common strategies in adult education, we need to intervene, not sit back, to ensure that equity of participation is possible. Brookfield and Preskill (1999) suggest a variety of techniques for encouraging democratic discussion.
- We need to acknowledge our position of power and critically question it with students.
- We can help students learn to exercise their power by developing ground rules for discussion based on their own prior experiences with good and bad discussions.
- Students' participation in self-evaluation helps students to see themselves as agents of power. Students may need to learn the skills required for self-evaluation.
- We should encourage learner commentary on how a course or session is going from their perspective through anonymous written feedback, group discussions, or student-led feedback committees.
- Commonly used strategies such as learning journals, autobiographies, and monitoring participation in discussion circles can be a manifestation of surveillance power, Brookfield (2001) suggests, as they are ways of "knowing the insides of people's minds." A choice of activities and freedom to be silent in discussions allows learners to reveal as much or as little of themselves as they wish.

Although some of these examples do not sound much different from what we ordinarily read in the adult education literature, if we are consciously considering how we are exercising power and how we are encouraging our students to exercise power rather than blindly following the collective tenets of our community of practice, we are indeed working toward personal and professional individuation and transformation. Through further discussions and dialogue on these issues, we will move empowering possibilities from the shadow to the conscious.

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Pedagogy for the Economically Privileged: “Tuning In” to the Privileged Learner

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Abstract: *Today’s activists are challenged by the sheer scope of losses by social movements. We have lost most significant battles and have moved into a defensive position struggling to retain earlier gains in social policy. The gap between rich and poor continues to widen, and it is clear that we need new allies in the struggles for justice. The middle class has been eyed as potential allies, with the hope that in bringing their resources, information, and power to bear, progressive social change will result. This paper draws from dissertation research on a pedagogy for the privileged: research that involves transformative educators with more than five years of experience. It documents one educational strategy to assist in this transformation, that of “tuning in” to the privileged learner. Popular education has provided the framework for emancipatory and transformative education for the last three decades. Its emphasis on reaching marginalized learners has created challenges for adult educators as it does not speak to the experience of educating privileged learners. Hence the search for such a context-specific pedagogy has pragmatic potential for the field of transformative pedagogy.*

Keywords: pedagogy, privilege, transformative education

Introduction

Inequality presents itself as a moral and ethical issue as well as a political, social and economic one. In order to bridge this divide, we must better understand what is required of the economically privileged to become “conscientized” about class and to become committed to change. Inherently the process is difficult – pedagogy for privilege is an emotional minefield as it “excavates the ground [learners] stand on” (Bell and Griffin 1997, p. 50). While different forms of transformative education (namely anti-racism, feminism, labour and social justice education) have addressed this issue with varying degrees of success, we know most clearly that the area of class continues to be taboo, even in coalitions and among many transformative educators:

Many citizens of this nation, myself included, have been and are afraid to think about class... As a nation, we are afraid to have a dialogue about class even though the ever-widening gap between rich and poor has already set the stage for ongoing and sustained class warfare... It is in our interests to face the issue of class, to become more conscious, to know better so that we can know how best to struggle for economic justice... I have [often] chosen gender or race as a starting point. I choose class now because I believe class warfare will be our nation’s fate if we do not collectively challenge classism, if we do not attend to the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots. (bell hooks, 2000, p. vii)

In Canada and elsewhere, economic inequality is rising – a result of market dynamics that increasingly provide surging incomes for the top 10-20% and a diminishing share of the pie as one slips down the income ladder (Curry-Stevens, 2001). Increases in corporate executive salaries outpace those of their workers, drawing fire from all concerned with broader societal issues. Profound life-altering changes are resulting as our social ills become “the toxic fruit of a poisoned tree” (Abdullah, 1999, p.38). The ongoing practices of exclusion and exploitation fuel the

flames of oppression, especially when “I dissociate my progress from your pain” (Abdullah, p.38).

Class privilege is both an absolute and a relative concept – when one compares oneself to the population as a whole, one’s economic location holds certain power and access to resources. From a Marxist perspective, one’s relationship to the owners of production is the key fixed attribute of class identity. From a more nuanced understanding of class, there are considerable ways in which the non-elite are privileged. Those in the middle class can be seen as privileged due to their comparative advantage with the poor and the working poor. They are also agents of the status quo, both in their demand for consumer goods and in their cultural collusion with the dominant hegemony. It is within this framework that the middle class is targeted as potential privileged allies for economic justice.

Theory and Research Design

The theory base for this research is imbedded within the existing pedagogical literature that specifically addresses privilege, namely anti-racism, feminism, labour and social justice education. The field of anti-racism practice is most developed in this area, since authors over the last 15 years have been addressing how whites can and should become involved in anti-racist practice as well as how white racial identity has been formed. Recognizing that the problem of racism rests legitimately with the agents of oppression, the privileged whites, their role in its dismantling is taken seriously. This perspective is beginning to be felt in other fields. To date, no educational research has focused on building class consciousness with privileged adult learners.

Mezirow’s theory of transformation provides some helpful insights into a pedagogy for the privileged, but several steps are required to re-orient this work. First, it needs to be contextualized for pedagogy (focusing on the educator instead of the learner), and it needs to be assessed for its pragmatic application to working with privileged learners. It also needs to be politicized, that is, placed in a social justice and social action context that acknowledges that the educator has goals about how graduates make use of their increased awareness. Fortunately, the insights of Schugurensky (2002) and Parks Daloz (2000) assist in this contextualization and re-orientation. Further steps are still required, especially in developing concerted focus on educating the privileged.

I will replicate the conclusions uncovered in the literature review so as to provide a synthesis of what is known about the transformation process from a social justice pedagogical perspective. Please remember that some of these items are less certainly known than others. While these items may look simplistic and rather obvious, know that they are each supported by a range of researchers investigating the practice of a pedagogy for the privileged:

- Learners need to be motivated to go through this process, either through pre-existing motivation or induced through the education process. This motivation takes four forms: empathy, ethical beliefs, spiritual values and self-interest.
- The process is historically imbedded in popular education (Freire, 1967) and includes the “conscientization” whereby the learner becomes aware of the systemic issues related to both oppression and dominance.
- The task for privileged learners to becoming aware of privilege is more difficult and volatile than that of oppressed learners becoming aware of their oppression.
- Cognitive restructuring is required to reinterpret the learner’s experience from one of merit and deservedness to one of luck and happenstance. Each element of inaccurate beliefs about one’s own identity and the role of one’s group needs to be redefined.

- The emotional demands are significant and require considerable attention in the transformation process. Punctuated have been the following: guilt, shame, fear, anger, despair, loss and grief.
- Resistance must be recognized as a natural part of the process and treated carefully.
- The transformation process never really ends; we are at best “in recovery” from dominance.
- The process, when applied, needs to consider supplemental theories about the nature of change: the intellectual development process (Perry, 1967) and group development processes (Peck, 1987).

My perspective of this literature is that it is insightful in certain components of the educational process (such as a rough understanding of the transitions for learners, the motivation for change, the emotional process for learners, and the cognitive processes for learners) but relatively shortsighted in others (such as the interplay between educator and learner processes, the overlay of group dynamics and cognitive development, the role of resistance, the competing needs of privileged and oppressed as they exist in mixed groups, the tensions between individual and group needs, the combining of insights into a learner-centered model and measurement and evaluation of individual learning). The literature also fails to navigate the waters of attracting privileged learners to such learning environments, and the companion requirement to overcome their fear and/or complacency.

This research study marks the first published findings from my dissertation research. It draws from qualitative interviews with 3 transformative educators situated in community settings, all of whom practice in educational environments that combine learners with diverse identities. This paper speaks specifically to the experience of assisting the middle class become aware of their economic privilege, in relationship to both consumers of services in their workplaces and with others in their communities, such as janitors and food servers. It also draws from two workshops held on this topic with approximately 40 community and academic educators.

Research participants have consistently raised issues that need to be reflected upon during their preparation as educators. These concerns are theoretical, pragmatic and emancipatory, stemming from how they understand their own agency and that of their learners. It is this body of findings, contextualized in the context of education with the economically privileged, that form the basis of this paper.

Research Findings

The most immediate finding of this research is the pressing need for educators to prepare adequately for the task. The concept of “tuning in” (Shulman, 1992) is the process by which educators anticipate the needs of privileged learners, attending to both cognitive and emotional needs as they enter an educational setting. The linked task is to attend to the needs of the educator and prepare oneself for the intellectual, emotional and spiritual elements of practice.

Drawing both from the research and from documented practice in the field, there is an emerging imperative for educators to be better prepared for educating privileged learners and for reflecting on their own issues related to this pedagogy. Without such “tuning in,” transformative educators are inclined to underestimate the difficulty of this work, to overlook its significance and be more vulnerable to reacting to the emotions of privileged learners with irritation and anger, and more inclined to enter win-lose interactions with them. Without “tuning in” to the self, the educator will be inadequately prepared to respond with integrity and sensitivity.

As Shulman advises, “tuning in” is required to help the practitioner build empathy for their learners. It is both an intuitive and a methodical process of anticipating the range of possible reactions of the learner, and expanding our understanding of the likely reactions that a learner will face in entering an educational environment. How will privileged learners feel joining this program? What concerns might they have in walking into the room? What will it be like to be a privileged learner in this group? Will they be reviled or supported by the educator?

We then need to remember the nature of the transformative task that is before these learners. The nature of the transformative task is significantly different for privileged and non-privileged group members as privileged learners need to “excavate the ground they stand on” (Bell and Griffin, 1997, p. 50) as they unearth the false foundations for their understanding of both the world and their position within it. Issues such as their own achievements and the degree of responsibility their identity holds for such achievements (their own and that of their group), how they interpret the failure of others to achieve, and the role that they and their group have played in upholding the privilege/oppression dynamic. This material is primarily cognitive, yet there are significant emotional responses to the shift in awareness and perceptions.

The significance of this transformative transition can be life-shattering for the privileged learner who needs to re-evaluate and re-configure their cognitive appreciation for her/his life. For the economically privileged, the transition needs often to recognize the exploitation that led to their family’s accumulation of wealth, often on the backs of people of colour. It will necessitate an awareness of colonization, theft of aboriginal lands, slavery, land grants, euro-centrism, voting rights, racist and classist institutions, wage exploitation, occupational segregation, tax expenditures, tax cuts, social program cuts and even macro-economic policy that has favored investors over wage earners. Collectively, initiatives such as these formalize and entrench the privileged, typically at the expense of the marginalized.

It is thus immensely compelling to recognize resistance (including minimization, deflecting and even outright denial) within privileged learners as natural, preservation-oriented and appropriate given the transformation that we ask of them. If they embrace the alternative paradigm that we propose, they will likely become less comfortable in their own skin as well as in the relationships around them, including their work and familial roles. Even though we rarely anticipate these outcomes, the privileged learner who becomes an ally in the struggle for social justice may encounter extreme dissonance if they stay in their present relationships. It is almost as though they can intuit such requirements before they enter the process. Through this lens, resistance is quite a glorious and formidable tool for self-preservation.

Transformative educators need to be prepared for the intellectual, emotional and spiritual demands of the work. The intellectual task requires an identification of the cognitive changes required. While most social justice education has focused on the devastating impacts of oppression, in this work we need to turn our attention to the impacts of privilege. Specifically, the educator must anticipate evidence of privilege bestowed on the learner with middle class and elite incomes. What are the specific ways in which they are likely to have benefited from their identity? The list will approximate that generated a few paragraphs earlier, listing the affirmative bestowal of benefits on the kin of economically privileged learners. This is a time for collecting evidence, for being able to prove the existence of unfair practices of privilege.

The specifics of how to emotionally support privileged learners is still in development. For now, it is important to recognize the complexity of these emotions and that the learner may experience grief in the process of growth: “Yesterday one thought in simpler ways, and hope and aspiration were imbedded in those ways” (Perry, 1968, p. 157). Educators need to prepare them-

selves emotionally for this work, both to provide concrete support as well as providing effective role modeling. Committing to a process of deep reflexivity can assist such practice.

Educators have always served as role models for their learners. The pedagogy for the privileged is no exception, especially since the research has asserted that the transformation process is life-long in nature, and, at best, we are “in recovery” from classism (Bishop, 1994, p. 97). The educator provides living proof of the concept of privileged awareness and its pervasive nature. Being able to articulate this process and share the details of our own recovery, including the elements against which we still struggle, is critical modeling for the learner.

A related task is being able to articulate one’s own complicity with the status quo, and how the educator is currently attempting to resist such conformity. Educators revealed deep and profound struggles in what they feel called to “give up.” Bluntness punctuated such discussions with educators: “Do you need to give up your salary? Are we retaining our privilege if we don’t give up our salary?” From others, I heard the lines drawn more clearly: “I don’t want to be poor.”

Please note that this was articulated as a dynamic unique to class privilege. When considering other forms of privilege, it was clear that there was no possibility of giving up whiteness or maleness, although certainly there were perplexing issues when considering how to live differently in the world.

Turning to the learners, the issue was similarly complex, as questions are posed by learners about the nature of the changes being sought. The essence of the query is: “How far do you want me to go?” While it appears that both educators and learners are looking for answers outside of themselves, they can quite easily be re-directed to look inwards for the answers to these questions. Appropriately reframing the issue requires the questions to become, “What do you have to give up to live as congruently as possible with your values?”

Finally, the educator must educate from a position of hopefulness, having access to a source of inspiration that might be able to encourage learners through their places of despair. The educator must believe that the work of the privileged learner will be liberating and emancipatory, that there will come benefits from her/his involvement in the process. Goodman (2001) has documented the costs of oppression to privileged people including psychological, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual, and material and physical costs. There are correlated benefits that come from dismantling systems of privilege, at both a societal and individual level.

Drawing from the educator’s own spiritual practice will supplement her/his own educational practice. A pedagogy of the privileged needs to recognize our innate humanness, even within those who have distanced themselves from those who are oppressed. Also, the educator needs to be able to identify forms of social change that are inspirational and hopeful. Whether the process of transformation itself is sufficient for creating such hope since it leads to social responsibility (as profiled by Mezirow, 2000) or whether there are forms of social action that evoke hope (such as specific social movement achievements), the educator needs to believe that change is possible and that there are encouraging signs in evidence around the world. There may be times that the educator needs to publicly articulate these beliefs.

And yet, the educator needs to be bluntly honest with themselves about the changes they are seeking with their learners. Is there a hidden agenda? Perhaps hopefulness that learners will join particular social movements or become organizational allies? Will it be possible to accept the learner who decides to not make any changes to their lifestyle, or who might decide to give more to charity? Within each of us are beliefs about the nature of change. Imbedded in these beliefs are perspectives about desirable forms of “giving up.” As one educator put it,

If giving up is not part of some concerted, orchestrated, systematic process, it is just a drop in the ocean... I don't want to discredit how every little bit is meaningful but the societal impact that we would like this giving up to achieve is not likely to occur... Restructuring and reorganizing people's privilege would be a better aim than simply giving it away.

With adequate preparation, rigorous self-reflection and authentic disclosure, transformative educators can "tune in" to the needs of privileged learners and better assist in their transformation into allies. Educators must be patient people, with the fortitude to believe they are making a difference even if its impact might not be visible for years to come.

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Dialogue of the Soul: Transformative Dimensions of the Experience of Spirit

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Abstract: *Human experiences of spirit have long been recognized as transformative. The purpose of this paper is to identify the transformative aspects of the spiritual experiences of twelve adults recorded over a twelve month period. Findings identified spiritual growth as a deep, soulful experience, attributed to spirit, resulting from a form of communication that was dialogical. These experiences led to profound life changes that were transformational, and affected perspective, attitude, identity and behavior in profound ways. Transformative encounters with spirit are distinct from other forms of transformative learning in that the conversation with the unseen, or a dialogue with the soul, involves a deep encounter with spirit where the content of the experience is never fully known, results are often unclear, and all assumptions are open to radical critique and modification.*

Keywords: Spirituality, Dialogue, Soul

Spirit is capturing the interest of adult educators (Tisdell, 2003; Dirx, 1997; Spencer, 1992). Spirit has long been identified in human experience as a powerful, deeply felt, ineffable force of energy. Spiritual growth occurs when a person becomes conscious of, reflects on, remembers and acts upon those “private experiences that contain, in some form, a contact with a realm that is greater than the self” (Spencer, 1992, p. 4). Spiritual growth is often associated with significant experiences of transformation, termed variously as conversion experiences, enlightenment, peak experiences, transformations of consciousness, or transcendent experiences. The study of spiritual dimensions of transformative learning is an emerging area that expands the concept in new directions (Tisdell, 2003). Of the 44 empirical studies based on Mezirow’s work cited in Taylor’s (1998) review, five address spiritual issues. Relatively little is known about the nature and meaning of the spiritual experience of transformative learning. The purpose of this study was to explore the human experience of spirit and its relationship to the transformative learning process. In this paper transformative learning is defined as “a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions... a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world” (Morrell & O’Connor, 2002, p. xvii).

Qualitative research methods were used because they were consistent with the conceptual model of this study, as well as the topic. Twelve adult volunteers, eight women and four men, ranging in age from 25-65 years of age, participated by documenting their experiences of spiritual growth over a year through journal writing, reflection, and individual and group interviews. All data were transcribed and analyzed. Member checking was also used to help clarify the findings and ensure that the written interpretation corresponded to the participants’ experiences.

Three key themes emerged from the data that describe participant experiences of the phenomenon of spiritual transformation: depth in the encounter with spirit, soul as the locus of spiritual growth, and dialogue as the language of spiritual communication. For participants the combination of these factors was often described as transformative.

Depth in the encounter with spirit

The phenomenon of spirit has been described variously in the literature. Some authors view spiritual growth as transpersonal; that is, including but extending beyond the person and normal consciousness, focusing on “those deeper or higher aspects of human experience that transcend the ordinary and the average” (Scotton, 1996, p. xviii). Participants used the metaphor “deep” to describe their experiences of spiritual growth. As a metaphor, deep was not intended to imply a specific location, but rather as a way to map the complex reality of the spiritual encounter and tease out dimensions of meaning that may not be readily apparent (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Reported experiences of spirit were associated with the process of “going deeper”: a deeper experience of reflection, of asking “deep questions” or “thinking deeply” about something, becoming aware of “a deep mystery,” or encountering “deep feelings and emotions.” Sometimes participants spoke of a depth of meaning. Several spoke of the experience as one of “baring your soul,” noting that “the process of going deeper is itself spiritual.” Educators who write of spiritual dimensions of the learning experience also refer to depth as a part of the process. Depth is viewed as an intra-psychic phenomenon. Dirkx (1997), for example, speaks of “nurturing soul in adult learning” through a process of “looking deeper into one’s life experience” (p 81).

For participants in this study, a part of going deeper was to engage in reflection, to pause, and to be open to discovery. As one participant said, “Most of my spiritual growth comes when I pause to think. I don’t realize I’m growing or recognize that I’m growing because my life is so busy. So, spiritual growth for me occurs when I’m quiet.” In spiritual growth as reported by participants in this study, participants clearly attributed their experience to spirit, even when they found it almost impossible to describe the experience, echoing James (1920) description of the encounter with spirit as “a conversation with the unseen” (p. 420). Participants identified two dimensions to depth that are useful in describing the human encounter with spirit: the soul as the locus of spiritual growth and conversation or dialogue as the language of spiritual growth.

Soul as the locus of spiritual growth

Participants connected the metaphor of depth to the word soul. For example, one participant described her soul as “the deepest part of me that I have to be true to.” For others spiritual growth involves a process of “opening up your heart and your soul.” Prayer was described by one as adding “rhythm to my soul,” and “the place I feel closest to God.” For participants, soul was important in describing that part of the human being most closely associated with the spirit. The word soul was used metaphorically to describe the locus or place of spiritual growth for participants. Educators refer to soul as part of the learning process. As Scott (1997) says, “Engagement with the depth is at the soul level. It is when one dwells in the interior with the soul and goes down into the body (heart) that fundamental transformation occurs” (p. 49). Dirkx (1997) writes of “learning through soul” (p. 80). Classically the term soul has been used to describe spiritual growth in both Western and Eastern traditions (Miller, 2000). Many authors speak of the difficulty in defining soul (Cousineau, 1994). In this study soul refers to the deeper aspects of human life. One participant, herself a musician, likened spiritual growth to the experience of playing music, saying, “If you keep at it long enough, the music comes again. You begin to hear it in your soul, and then you can play it and live it.” Soul describes the core unity of the personal and spiritual dimensions of the person, which in Western religious terms is rooted in a relationship with the divine. Today one might say the soul is where the spirit is reflected in a person’s life and is seen in a person’s emotions, senses, gestures, instincts and

activities, as well as ideas, thoughts and ideals. As Lauzon (1998) says, “The soul embodies all that makes us human” (p. 322). The soul is the spiritual self, the subjective essence of the individual, or “the most enduring and intimate part of the self” (James, 1950/1890, p. 296).

Dialogue as the language of spiritual growth

If soul represents the locus of spiritual growth, conversation or dialogue is the process that best describes the language of the encounter between one’s soul and the spirit. Although study participants rarely used the word dialogue, the type of conversation they described was very similar to descriptions of dialogue in the literature. Spiritual forms of dialogue had both an interpersonal and intrapersonal dimension.

Dialogue as interpersonal communication was often associated with the experience of spirit by participants. Spiritual growth is fundamentally concerned with communication. One participant said, “Communication is the key to spiritual growth... God touches me through other people.” “Spiritual growth is like a conversation,” another said, a “deep spirit-filled conversation.” As Jackson (1998) said, “Soul reveals itself not in the deep recesses of the psyche, nor in the extra-personal world of history and culture, but in forms of encounter, interaction, exchange and dialogue in everyday life” (p. 207). In the literature, dialogue is often viewed as a way to build interpersonal understanding. This study extends the meaning of dialogue to include spirit and suggests that the spiritual encounter has important dialogical elements that can be transformative in a person’s life. Dialogue is an activity “directed toward discovery and new understanding, which stands to improve the knowledge, insight or sensitivity of its participants” (Burbules, 1993, p. xii). Sidorkin (1999) characterizes the dialogical experience as one involving “mutuality, directness, presentness, intensity and ineffability” (p. 19). *Mutuality* was also an important part of participant descriptions of spiritual growth. As one participant said, “The more intimate my relationship with God is, the deeper my spiritual growth.” *Directness* or honesty was also noted as important. For participants spiritual growth is associated with “telling it like it is,” and being authentic: “You have to be honest.” *Presentness* or focus was identified by study participants as important. As one participant said, “I’ve got to pay attention, wake up and notice what God is trying to tell me.” Participants described spiritual growth as occurring when a person slows down and listens, as one said, “when I turn my thoughts off and become more aware of God.” Encounters with spirit were often described as *intense and emotional*. As one participant reported, “I was overwhelmed by the experience. When it happened I just broke down and cried.” An experience of *ineffability* was common as participants struggled to describe the unknown dimensions of the encounter with spirit as “a mystery” that is “beyond words.”

In this study dialogue is more than a communication tool, and involved more than human interaction. Participants also reported intrapersonal conversation with spirit that was suggestive of a deeper understanding of the dialogical process, times “when the Lord is interacting with me,” as one participant said. These experiences involved deep sharing and inquiry. One participant said: “To go deeper spiritually you have to bare your soul.” Another described her conversation with God as a time when she “just shared what was on my heart honestly and openly and then just listened. Sometimes it was deep.” Participants also suggested that dialogue could involve a communion with nature, inanimate objects, and spiritual realities in ways similar to Bohm (1996). Although the importance of language was widely noted by participants in this study, they underscored that the language of soul includes more than words. “Speech, music, art, all gestures, singing, dancing, laughing, crying, painting and sculpture are considered language” (Clark, 1997, p. 17). Images such as a cross or sunset, or purely physical activity were the

context for an encounter with spirit that communicated in ways that were difficult to describe. Dialogue, like spiritual growth as described by participants, can occur between people and also in silence within a single mind, “between perspectives and modalities within a single awareness” (Grudin, 1996, p. ix). Participants spoke paradoxically of spiritual growth as being intensely individual yet highly relational, an experience of profound insight, yet “beyond words.” Spiritual encounters often point toward an “unseen aspect of human life” that “does not have a material location.” In a sense this spiritual dialogue is neither “within nor without an individual,” rather it is “between” self and other (Sidorkin, 1999, p. 16).

Dialogue is not simply an exchange of information, but rather an engagement leading to meaning that has an effect on those participating. Buber (1987/1958) asserts that when a person, an “I,” meets another with authenticity and compassion, they encounter a “Thou” and “every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou” (p. 6). Participants reported that at times when they encountered another person, issue, place or thing with respect and understanding, they also encountered spirit, and it was the encounter with spirit that was fundamental to their transformative experiences. This spiritual dimension is known by various names. Participants in this study commonly used terms God, Jesus or spirit. Whatever form this unseen spiritual reality took for study participants, it represented the ground of their being, or as one participant said, “the center of my life.” Such an encounter also led to a profound experience of change.

Transformative aspects of spiritual growth

Participant experiences of spirit resulted in the transformation of perspective, lifestyle, belief, assumption and attitude in both sudden and cumulative ways. Findings echo similarities to other descriptions of transformative learning including the importance of discernment, non-verbal and non-rational expression, contextual learning, and reflection (Cranton & Roy, 2003). Participants found themselves affected by the experience. In a dialogical encounter with spirit, participants reported an ontological shift where traditional subject/object boundaries were transcended and the encounter led to a different consciousness or sense of self. The story of one participant is illustrative:

I was living in Pensacola in 1985. I was probably in my 20s. I’m 42 now, and it was specific. It happened in church. I was singing a hymn. Suddenly I was overwhelmed by feelings of sadness. Perhaps I felt that way because I was overwhelmed by my responsibilities as a mom and a wife in a brand new town away from old friends and family. As I was singing the words, the words just seemed to jump off the page and into my heart. They were addressing the innermost thoughts and feelings. Speaking directly to me as if a person was talking to me. It’s kind of hard to explain, but I believe that God spoke those words of compassion and love and understanding to me in that place. His presence was so strong that I sat down and didn’t hear another word. I went home, and I told my husband that I was going to join the church. Since then I have been a different person.

This story reports a type of dialogical spiritual encounter that was transformative. The encounter involved communication at a level other than rational that changed the person’s attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, and behavior suddenly. The dialogic relationship with spirit can change human be-ing, the fundamental identity of the person, and is thus ontological in nature (Vella, 2000). In this sense encounter with spirit is often the catalyst for human be-ing. As

Bakhtin (1981) said, “In dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time what he is (pp. 251-252).

Spiritual growth involves a type of dialogical encounter between the subjective essence of a person, their soul, and spirit. In this sense, spiritual growth might be described as a dialogue of the soul. The dialogical nature of the experience forms and constitutes a relationship that changes the person, sometimes in dramatic ways. As one participant said, “I became a new person when I met Christ.”

Although described as a deep experience, spiritual growth is not continuous. More a “brief relational event” (Sidorkin, 1999, p. 15), spiritual growth was reported as infrequent although powerful and memorable: “It was just a few moments, but I’ve never forgotten.” Spiritual transformation was a deep, soulful experience, associated with spirit, resulting from a form of communication that was dialogical, often leading to profound life changes that were transformational for participants.

Conclusion

The study of transformative spiritual learning represents an emerging frontier for research and practice. Even within the sample represented by this study, limited in number and cultural diversity, a wide variety of spiritual transformative learning experiences were reported that were associated with religion, nature, the psyche, and crisis events, suggesting the richness of the phenomenon. A part of the enduring human experience, spiritual transformation is a never-ending and ever-changing process that continues to open new perspectives and possibilities for life. The depth and dialogical nature of participant experiences of spirit imply that the content of spiritual transformation is never fully known and therefore can always be legitimately described from different perspectives, the results or goals may not be clear and can change, and the process and assumptions are always open to radical critique and modification. What is distinctive in this form of transformative learning is the “conversation with the unseen,” or dialogue with the soul, the encounter with an unseen spiritual reality. In an age of increasing religious violence and contested educational practice, transformative dimensions of the experience of spirit offer opportunity for a new vision for life for individuals, groups, and the world itself.

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Sustained Dialogue: An Integral Part of the Princeton Transformation

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“The significance of Sustained Dialogue is that students are engaged in nothing less than a project of changing student culture at Princeton.” (Dr. Harold Saunders, Former Trustee 1996-2000)

Abstract: *Since 1999, members of the Princeton University community have engaged in a five-stage conflict resolution process called Sustained Dialogue, helping to challenge and develop the Princeton campus around issues of race, gender, class, religion and political and sexual orientation. While the initiative is not without challenges, it is a tool that helps create a climate in which students and administrators can thrive and work towards a common goal of pluralism and community.*

Princeton is the first university to incorporate Sustained Dialogue into a campus initiative. What follows is 1) a brief background on the Princeton context, 2) the Sustained Dialogue format and pedagogy, 3) a summary of Princeton’s implementation, 4) participant voices observing transformation, 5) lessons learned for successful replication, 6) and next steps and future expansion.

Background at Princeton University

This paper is written from the perspectives of two former Sustained Dialogue participants, one an administrator and one an alumna. While both contributors came to Princeton in 1997 for different purposes and from different backgrounds, each had been warned of Princeton’s reputation as not only an institution of academic excellence but also as one with a highly racialized history.¹ Princeton is a campus with many deeply committed faculty and administrators, and a highly variegated student body working diligently to reverse a negative socio-cultural reputation. Upon closer examination Princeton, like other campuses, has been perceived as having an atmosphere of student mistrust, in which any institutional efforts were either not visible to or were not accepted by students.

Unlike some peer institutions, Princeton University acknowledges that it has an enormous amount of work ahead to undo the centuries of exclusionary practice and its administration is responsive. Recent appointments and launched initiatives include: the appointment of Princeton’s first female president; the hiring of the first African American provost in the Ivy League (who subsequently became president of another Ivy League school); the retention of an associate provost of color for close to a decade; the recruitment and hiring of the University’s first female vice-president of color; the creation of a Reading Packet on Diversity and Civic Engagement for all residential advisers; the rededication (at the request of a student governance board) of the more than thirty-year-old Third World Center as the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding²; and the launch of the “Sustained Dialogue” initiative.

¹ Prof. George Fredrickson of Stanford University uses the term “racialized” to indicate social contexts (institutions, towns, organizations etc.) that have a history of systematic discrimination.

² Named for the nation’s first African American administrator at a predominantly white university. Carl A. Fields joined the Princeton University administration in 1964.

This last initiative represents a model for campus engagement in diversity in higher education that has the potential to strengthen other university campuses as well. Sustained Dialogue, which is often shortened to “SD,” is, in essence, a methodology for authentic and ongoing conversations, with a core emphasis on building or repairing relationships between individuals of various backgrounds and life experiences.

SD was developed by Dr. Harold Saunders, who under President Jimmy Carter was one of the principal drafters of the 1978 Camp David Accords and the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. As a trustee of Princeton University, 1996-2000, Saunders introduced SD— a process of conflict resolution loosely patterned after productive processes he observed during his career in international peacekeeping.

The Sustained Dialogue Format and Pedagogy

“Sustained Dialogue isn’t just talk, rather it is talk with a purpose.” (Nemeroff, T. & Tukey, D.)³

The term “dialogue” is used here to describe authentic, ongoing, and purposeful conversation and must be distinguished from an informal conversation such as a dorm room rap session. The group must talk rigorously over an extended period of time.

The SD format itself consists of ongoing group conversations facilitated by a moderator. Ideally, each group has between eight and twelve participants. The groups meet regularly (often bi-weekly over a meal) for conversations. It should be noted that although the introduction of this dialogue process was initially focused on race and ethnicity, groups may now be focused on a broad range of topics including politics and faith.

Social mores often dictate a silence or, worse yet, a superficial attention, to real social issues. Public conversations seldom embrace open thought and discussion on topics of race, class, and other diversity issues. Through SD, participants are free to express themselves, ask questions, and make statements that, in another setting, would be deemed too controversial. Contemporary researchers argue that such phenomena are essential to a democracy. David Schoem and Sylvia Hurtado conclude, for example, that “the power of the intergroup dialogue lies in its ability to evoke in the participants the expression of deeply felt but rarely publicly spoken attitudes and viewpoints...”. These authors also find that dialogue permits participants to “...confront long-standing group conflicts, and to move them to address the structural barriers to social inequalities in society” (Schoem & Hurtado, p. 225).

As described in the manual, *Diving In: A Handbook for Improving Race Relations on College Campuses through the Process of Sustained Dialogue* (Nemeroff & Tukey), the groups of SD participants move through a series of five stages together. These stages consist of: (1) “Deciding to Engage”; (2) “Mapping and Naming Problems and Relationships,” which is alluded to as “downloading” because participants relate personal and sometimes painful experiences; (3) “Probing Problems and Relationships to Choose a Direction,” in which participants begin to link individual experience to a web of concepts; (4) “Scenario Building,” in which the group generates possible solutions for identified problems and 5) “Acting Together,” in which the group turns suggestions into action. Groups may move back and forth between stages during the SD process.

³ Teddy Nemeroff and David Tukey were two Princeton students. *Diving In* was published by Dr. Harold Saunders and is available from the Kettering Foundation. [<http://www.kettering.org> or 202-393-4478]

The National Campus Diversity Project (NCDP) based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education has undertaken to study fifty colleges across the U.S. in an effort to determine where model campuses exist. During the course of their work, which included campus visits, the researchers concluded that there are no “model campuses” as regards diversity but, rather, model programs scattered across the country’s campuses.

In the spring of 2001 the NCDP researchers held undergraduate focus groups. They found that, among various factors, Princeton students cited the SD initiative as having the greatest impact on their learning about diversity and intercultural exchanges.⁴ Other models of on-going authentic conversations exist as well. The Study Circles model is a community based process that emerged from the union movement; the Intergroup Dialogue model originated at University of Michigan and is under replication on ten other campuses.

Senior administrators differ in their assessment of the learning in SD. “Princeton has been very strong in its cognitive approach to learning. However the affective side of student learning has been underdeveloped,” argues VP Janet Dickerson. She asks “as educators how do we open student’s eyes to difference?”⁵ She cites Sustained Dialogue as creating a venue where people can talk forthrightly, explore issues, and achieve a level of self-understanding and concern for justice. In contrast Vice-President Janina Montero emphasizes the cognitive factors. She asserts, “In some ways diversity is a very cognitive issue... and SD participants are forced to slow down and pay attention to the facts.”⁶

Summary of Implementation at Princeton University

It took two attempts to get SD off the ground. During the 1997-98 academic year, then-trustee Saunders brought SD to the attention of then-Dean of Student Life, Montero. She hosted a training retreat that spring. At that session, Saunders introduced the methodology and provided a structured first encounter with the SD format of authentic conversation. Student attendees reflected on and discussed their personal experiences with regard to race relations, but didn’t claim the process for themselves. It wasn’t until a second retreat, held in the fall of 1999, that a student leader stepped up. Senior, Teddy Nemeroff set up a meeting with Dean Montero and the student-administration collaboration in support of SD was launched.

In 1999-2000 two SD groups formed and were led by student moderators; those groups met regularly for the duration of the academic year. In year 2000-2001, the students organized their own retreat, and launched four groups. By the fall 2001 retreat, eight groups had formed and participant numbers had grown to nearly 100 students.

The power of this diversity initiative comes from student ownership. Ownership is the most critical factor in the success of a dialogue initiative. A close second in importance is that the groups be diverse—not just racially or ethnically, but with regard to the various viewpoints held by the group members. A valuable third ingredient is that student leaders extend invitations to a wide cross section of the university faculty and staff.⁷ This third factor complements the students’ goals of inclusivity and diversity. While student enthusiasm has been important to SD’s success at Princeton, it is the extreme level of student leadership required—such leadership

⁴ The National Campus Diversity Project preliminary findings were presented at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education on June 1, 2002 in New Orleans, LA.

⁵ Montero, *ibid.*

⁶ Montero, *ibid.*

⁷ At Princeton, staff participation included colleagues ranging from public safety officers and chaplains to academic deans, graduate students, and the university ombuds officer.

arguably being the greatest strength of SD—that poses institutional challenges. Indeed, one of the major questions Princeton student leaders have struggled with during the start up of SD is how and where to imbed and institutionalize the SD initiative without diluting or undermining the student-driven focus.

Despite good intentions, university administrators cannot alter deeply rooted prejudices and beliefs about human beings. While they can impose regulations on what constitutes acceptable *behavior* on campus, universities cannot regulate what is in people’s hearts and minds. Saunders (1999) explains it as follows, “There are some things that only governments (read ‘administrations’) can do, but there are some things that only citizens (read, ‘students’) can do such as transforming human relationships, changing political culture, and modifying human behavior.”

The reflections of past participants conclude that traditional and well-established universities are, by nature, beholden organizations that are responsive to the pressures of their various stakeholders. One of the strengths of traditional institutions is their imperviousness to whims and the pedagogic “flavor of the year.” As such, when innovations and tested methodologies are introduced to a campus community, change permeates the culture of the institutions gradually. Unlike much of the student experience, transformation at the institutional level is imbedded over a period of time.

Transformation: The Voices

*“[That] is what makes SD so powerful. The connections the people can make with one another forms the bond that actually sustains the dialogue.”*⁸ (Sam Todd, Class of 2004)

When asked why they stay in SD, participants cite different reasons. “It is really a reverence for authenticity—that’s the magic of SD. It provides a space where people are free!”⁹ Some students remain engaged because they feel empowered by the process and trust that the peer dialogue will have an impact. One participant noted, “As a black woman in America I confront many barriers.... Sustained Dialogue is my voice. It is an avenue for me to be honest about my experience and share my perspective. By sharing my experience when my contemporaries acquire positions of power they might remember our discussions [which might]...possibly shape the way that they see the world.”¹⁰

Others find SD permeates aspects of daily life. “For me [the dialogue] sustained itself within my daily routine (and heart!) with the incredible level of self-discovery it provided.”¹¹ Regardless of the individual, group or societal level at which student participants make sense of the dialogue process, they regard it as a safe space to learn.

Princeton’s SD initiative has been a catalyst for change. A most illustrative example is the story of Bruce Wright. Mr. Wright is an African American man who was accepted as a student to Princeton University in 1932. However, upon arriving to enroll, it was suggested that he might be happier at a Historically Black College. Mr. Wright left Princeton on that day to pursue his education elsewhere and is now a retired judge.

⁸ Excerpted from a submission by Sam Todd on September 21, 2002.

⁹ Excerpted from interview with Teddy Nemeroff, class of 2001, on September 5, 2002.

¹⁰ Excerpted from a submission by Tshepo Masango, class of 2003, on September 23, 2002.

¹¹ Excerpted from a submission by David Tukey on September 20, 2002

Students involved with SD researched the history of Judge Wright and invited him to become an honorary member of the graduating class of 2001. Students wrote a moving speech about Judge Wright that brought families and faculty to tears and resulted in long minutes of thunderous, standing ovations. Throughout the campus and beyond there was a simultaneous acknowledgment of Princeton's racist past and profound hopefulness and commitment to a more just future. As Vice-President Dickerson puts it "these students are moving us away from silence and denial to openness and reconciliation.... Sustained Dialogue has contributed to a correcting...of Princeton's painful past."¹²

SD is ultimately respectful of all participants. It serves neither as a venue for demonization of the conservatives nor as bastion of homogeneous liberals. "The real potential is to bring into the conversation about difference, those who are not already on that path—SD reaches 'beyond the choir.'"¹³ Students use words like "magic" and "organic" when describing Sustained Dialogue. As Mezirow (2000, p. 118) states, we must provide opportunities for students to "come together to hold the ambiguity, to reflect on the mystery of their lives and commitments."

Lessons: Keys to Successful Replication and Pitfalls to Avoid

*"Start slow and ramp up. There is temptation to fly out of the gates and get the whole school involved, but it takes time to develop leadership and a program."*¹⁴ (Robin Stennet, Class of 2001)

One result of the SD experiment has been the expansion of the project to other schools. Princeton students have conducted training sessions and informational meetings for students and administrators on other campuses, such as University of Virginia and Dickinson College, sharing their "lessons learned." As an example of one such, "The biggest pitfall to avoid is entering a dialogue with expectations for how it will progress and how it will end. Even as a trained moderator, I had to give up thinking I could control [it.]"¹⁵

Several of the challenges that the Princeton community continues to address are: 1) The tendency to intellectualize, often to avoid feelings, when a difficult topic is raised; 2) Avoiding the instinct to focus prematurely on outcomes and actions rather than engaging in the process of group discovery and trusting that outcomes will emerge; and 3) inadequate training and preparation for co-moderators in their vital role.

An important pitfall to avoid is any appearance of exclusivity. By its very nature, dialogue is inclusive and must involve many voices. Furthermore, it is essential for such a program to be integrated into the mission and culture of the school. Other recommendations include having student moderators give "homework" or questions to consider prior to each meeting, and launching SD when students are refreshed in the fall.

¹² Dickerson, *ibid.*

¹³ Montero, *ibid.*

¹⁴ Excerpted from a submission by Robin Stennet, class of 2001, on September 17, 2002.

¹⁵ Nemeroff, *ibid.*

Looking Forward

“Our students engage the world with a strong sense of civic responsibility, and when they graduate they become alumni who do the same. This is as it should be.” (Shirley Tilghman [2001], President of Princeton University)

Student leaders have agreed upon several long-range goals including faculty outreach, written documentation on the conversion of the internationally-used dialogue methodology into a campus-based application, and greater alumni involvement.

At present, Sustained Dialogue is in its fifth year at Princeton. Sustained Dialogue is no panacea for campus race relations challenges or for global instability. However, the generation of strong group loyalty across differences and the high valuation of what one Princeton graduate calls the “reverence for talking,”¹⁶ provide a foundation for transformative relationships.

Universities have an opportunity to impact lives and a responsibility to share practices that represent productive approaches to the tackling of systemic challenges. As indicated in President Tilghman’s quote above, when students graduate and become citizens with a strong sense of civic responsibility, the University has done its job.

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¹⁶ Nemeroff, *ibid*.

Transforming Biography Through the Process of Transformative Learning

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Background: Biographical research as theoretical contribution to the reshaping of adult life

Different sociologists have described the societal changes that are modifying the shaping of adult life. Peter Alheit (Alheit & Dausien, 2000) underlines the fragmentation of adult life. My French colleague, Jean-Pierre Boutinet (1998, 2001), wrote about “the immaturity of adult life.” Different analyses have been presented about the problems faced by adults in the “construction” of their life. In that regard, I think about Robert Kegan, who eloquently describes the burdens in different areas of daily life in today’s society in his book (1994) on “the mental demands of modern life.” In the same context, I would also mention Richard Sennet’s book (1998) on “the personal consequences of work in the new capitalism.” These various contributions, as well as many others I have not mentioned, raise the same questions about the reshaping of adult life in present society.

Sociologists are good at analyzing societal phenomena. They produce interesting pieces of research. But, do they take into account the processes of adult learning? I believe that potentially, a uniquely valuable contribution can be made by the epistemological specificity of the biographical approach that I study and practice in my teaching. Life narratives give access to the underlying structure of fragmented lives in part by drawing upon insights provided by meaningful experiences in adult life. Such narratives can even provide “clues,” or insights to the narrator as to what might constitute an improved course of action. In other words, the biographical approach offers the opportunity for research to “encounter” the actual practice of life.

A biographical approach, therefore, might be a way to gain new knowledge about the dilemmas of today’s adult life and the ways in which the authors of the narratives act, as adults, to explore possibilities and effect a viable construction of their life.

Recent research on the impact of continuing education on the direction of vocational choices

In recent research funded by the National Scientific Research Fund of Switzerland, I was invited to lead a research team examining the contribution of University Continuing Education to the Working Life of Adults. Our specific project was organized around the idea that, in the socio-economic context of today’s world, what adults learn in a continuing education program might result in the reshaping of their lives. Based on our involvement in the management of University Continuing Education, we selected four programs which had already been under way for several years: one on Human Resources Management; one on Human Rights; one on Banking; and one on Social Action for the Elderly. The people participating in these programs were professionals who had held different positions and responsibilities in their fields. They, purposely, had decided to choose a University program of Continuing Education and had no doubt they would meet program requirements.

Our research design had two different parts: 1) a questionnaire filled out by one hundred former participants, and 2) twenty-five interviews with present participants who volunteered. We were asked by the National Fund to use a methodology of “matching” quantitative and qualitative data. For years I had used qualitative biographical narratives as a primary research tool. The idea of such matching thus came as a challenge. In other words, I was being required to tailor the biographical approach I had used previously to encompass a more quantitative research design—one taking into account adults’ socio-demographic characteristics. Our findings were

interesting from different standpoints: “Relation” to University Knowledge for different categories of people was found to be very much influenced by both their level of previous schooling, and the vocational culture which shapes their world of work. Further, generally speaking—though influenced by their age—the way they construct their future is very largely organized around the image of a working life built in a stable society.

Our subjects have been using University Continuing Education to provide support for four different types of mobility: 1) renewal of vocational “itinerary,” 2) access to advancement in hierarchical position, 3) “bifurcation,” or heading off in a new direction in their work life, and 4) enhancing their potential for change. Overall, professionals were found willing to incorporate learning into expansion of their vocational horizons.

New perspectives on biographical research

Modulated by the specifics of an individual’s life history, as well as by his or her personal and cultural resources, the education biographies I have shared and analyzed with students and adult educators—as constructed and presented in adults’ narratives—have explored various areas of work. In the research just described, I was not able to use a life history approach; but my frame of reference was, nonetheless, very much influenced by my former findings. Although the areas of biographical work have changed over the years, there is a consistency to my findings. In research I conducted some years ago with nurses, for example, work done in order to surface and making explicit their tacit knowledge, was also found to be significantly nourished by the culture of nursing and the values of their generation. The quantitative as well as the qualitative aspects of my research indicate, then, that it is necessary to relate biographical work to both generational experiences and gender. Meaning always has its social context! Incorporation of quantitative, socio-demographic data into my research has broadened and enriched my understanding of the life-history approach.

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Contemplative Dimension of Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *Transformative learning theory offers processes that engage the mental, emotional and spiritual capacities of human beings to attend to the fundamental beliefs and assumptions that gird perceptions, attitudes and behavior. The way of contemplation is a tested practice in eastern and western traditions of philosophy and spirituality intended to sharpen one's mind and open one's heart to be attentive and responsive to inner wisdom. The practice of contemplation is the art of being aware of what is taking place in the present moment without the intervention of judgmental processing and rational analysis. This paper dips briefly into the rich wealth of Buddhist teachings on attention and mindfulness for application to transformative learning.*

Keywords: transformative learning, spiritual practice, mindfulness

Introduction

It is no exaggeration to say that the Way of Contemplation has been the royal road to Awakening in the traditions of Eastern philosophy for thousands of years (Nakagawa, 2000). Eons of practice have elicited oral and written teachings that are venerated throughout the world. Today, however, one notes the inclusion of contemplative awareness as a means of self-inquiry and learning in western traditions of education (Glazer, 1999; Heron, 1998; O'Sullivan, 1999). This paper considers the significance of the practice of contemplation, as expressed in the Buddhist tradition, to the theory of transformative learning. The author's intention is to invite the reader to explore with her a path that may continue to bridge Eastern and Western traditions of theoretical conceptualization and spiritual practice.

In the context of adult education theory, transformative learning refers to the process by which one explores and transforms the taken-for-granted frames of reference in one's thinking, often termed meaning perspectives or mindsets. It is these meaning perspectives that guide and influence the way one views experience and takes action in the world. The intention of the transformative learning process is to make these meaning perspectives more open and inclusive, more discriminating, and capable of change. Jack Mezirow (1978) is recognized as a primary initiator of the theory of transformative learning. The objective of transformative learning is to generate beliefs and opinions in the mind that will prove to be more accurate or justified to guide action (Mezirow, 2000). At the heart of Mezirow's work is his theory of critical reflection on experience, a process for examining meaning perspectives in order to uncover the underlying mental assumptions through which we name and interpret experience. These assumptions may be readily conscious; but they are often imbedded below one's consciousness due to long years of non-reflective action.

The theory of transformative learning has developed over the past few decades in the western world in response to the emphasis on adult education and on opportunities for life-long, holistic learning (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Brookfield, 1996; Cranton, 1994; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Cranton & Roy, 2003). Its proponents propose a unique role for educators and the education process in the life of adult learners: to foster a person's ability to reflect upon and critically analyze experience in order to expand one's consciousness and promote an awareness of the underlying premises that form one's thinking.

The way of contemplation, on the other hand, is a tested practice in Eastern and Western traditions of philosophy and spirituality intended to sharpen one's mind and open one's heart to be attentive and responsive to inner wisdom or divine inspiration. The practice of contemplation fosters the art "of being aware" of what is taking place in the present moment without the intervention of rational analysis and judgmental processing.

At first sight, these two means of coming to awareness could appear contradictory. A brief introduction is offered into the deep well of Buddhist teachings on Mindfulness in order to ponder a connection between this practice and the conceptualization of the transformative learning process. This discussion is embarked upon with a trust in the wisdom of learning through interdisciplinary exchange and with a deep appreciation of Mindfulness as a spiritual practice. It seems imperative for us as educators in the 21st century to search for all relevant means of fostering the transformative change so needed in our present world context. Thus, the following question is posed. How could the spiritual practice of mindfulness inform and enhance the meaning of critical reflection on experience, a capacity so central to the exercise of transformative learning?

Practice of Mindfulness

Generally speaking, *mindfulness* is the art of being aware of that which is taking place in the present moment without intervention of the mind. According to Thich Nhat Hanh (1987, p. 11), mindfulness means "keeping one's consciousness alive to the present reality," Chogyam Trungpa (1988, p. 83) calls it a "panoramic awareness." By this he means an all-pervading awareness, knowing the situation at that very moment. It is a question of knowing the situation and opening one's eyes to that very moment of now-ness. According to Trungpa, this is not particularly a mystical experience or anything mysterious at all, but just direct, open and clear perception of what is now.

Nyanaponika Thera (1965, p. 29) in his elaboration on the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, states that Right Mindfulness refers to (1) *Bare Attention*, the attitude and practice of a purely receptive state of mind, and (2) *Clear Comprehension*, active reflective thought on things observed when action is required. *Bare Attention* permits one to temporarily "step aside" to a vantage point of pure observation and *Clear Comprehension* fosters growing inner detachment with regard to any action.

Bare Attention is the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us at the successive moments of perception. Thera (1965, p. 32) explains that, normally, human beings are not concerned with a disinterested knowledge of "things as they truly are," but with "handling" and judging them from a point of self-interest, which may be wide or narrow. A person attaches labels to the perceptions that form the physical and mental universe and it is these labels that greatly determine his or her actions and reactions. *Bare Attention* allows experiences to speak for themselves, without interruption by final verdicts pronounced too hastily. *Bare Attention* permits things to speak fully, by pushing aside the labels, by listening beyond the inner and outer noise of pre-judgments that drowns out more accurate hearing. Because *Bare Attention* sees things without the narrowing or leveling effect of these habitual judgments, it can see them anew as if for the first time. Patient pausing in such an attitude of *Bare Attention* will open wide horizons to one's understanding, inspiration and knowledge. The continued practice of *Bare Attention* can remind one of the constancy of change and of the impermanence of reality.

Bare Attention slows down or even stops, the transition from thought to action. This slowing down, according to Thera (1965, p. 39), is of vital importance to the growth of the receptivity of the mind and of the capacity to live in the present moment without escaping furtively to ruminations on the past or to imaginings on the future. The practice of sharply focusing attention on what arises in thought supplies candid information and reveals to a person the knowledge of both strengths and weaknesses. This is important because deception or ignorance of either strengths or weaknesses is a liability in the spiritual and educational path.

Bare Attention helps us to notice the proclivity of the mind to interfere, to entangle itself in aversion, desire, and other forms of self-reference to all that passes before it. Constantly practiced, it can school one in the art of letting go as it weans one from the busy-ness of this constant mental interference. *Bare Attention* forges the principle tool of liberation of the mind, *Insight*. *Insight* is not a mere intellectual appreciation or conceptual knowledge of truths, but the fruit of unshakable knowledge obtained and matured through repeated confrontation with the facts underlying those truths. It is the intrinsic nature of *Insight* to produce a growing detachment and an increasing freedom from what captivates and enslaves the mind. Although *Bare Attention* forms the foundation for the cultivation of Right Mindfulness and necessarily must consume a greater amount of consideration in one's spiritual practice, it can only be maintained for a limited time in an ordinary life. Most of one's waking life demands some sort of activity and a constant expectation of judgment (Thera, 1965, p. 44).

Clear Comprehension, as explained by Thera (1965, p. 45), as the second aspect of Right Mindfulness, is concerned with the more frequent state of the mind, that of choosing, judging and acting. *Clear Comprehension* is understood to mean the clarity of bare attention that is added to comprehension of purpose: in other words, *Clear Comprehension* is right knowledge or wisdom based on right attentiveness. One of the aims of the practice of Right Mindfulness is that *Clear Comprehension* gradually becomes a regulative force of all of one's activities, making them purposeful and efficient and in accord with one's ideals and the highest levels of understanding.

The Buddhist tradition, according to the Discourse, distinguishes four kinds of *Clear Comprehension*: (1) Clear Comprehension of Purpose, (2) Clear Comprehension of Suitability, (3) Clear Comprehension of the Domain of Meditation, (4) Clear Comprehension of Reality. In this introductory paper, these will be discussed only briefly so as to reflect on their relevance to the practice of transformative learning (Thera, p. 46).

Clear Comprehension of Purpose enjoins that one should always question whether any intended activity is in line with one's purpose, aims or ideals. Through the non-coercive methods of practicing *Bare Attention*, the forces in the mind that obstruct purposive activity can gradually be recognized and eventually channeled into one's aims and ideals. By strengthening the habit of "stopping to think" (to become more aware), more reliable material for discernment is provided, thereby giving *Clear Comprehension of Purpose* an opportunity to decide and act. *Clear Comprehension of Purpose* forms an inner center of character and strengthens the mind's leadership in responding to pressures from within or without (Thera, 1965, p. 48).

Clear Comprehension of Suitability recognizes that it is not always possible to choose the course of action that is the most purposeful or the most desirable, because our choice is restricted by circumstances or the limitations of our own capacities. This second aspect of *Clear Comprehension* teaches one the art of the practical and how to adapt to the conditions of time, place and individual capabilities. It schools one in the skillfulness of choosing the right means to accomplish one aims and ideals (Thera, 1965, p. 49).

The *Clear Comprehension of the Domain of Meditation* reminds the practitioner that the daily practice of meditation must never be abandoned. How far one succeeds in the practice of Right Mindfulness will, in great part, be dependent upon on the habit formation of consistent practice, which then fosters a presence of mind in a specific moment of action. A person who readily questions himself/herself as to the practice of mindfulness in every situation could be said to possess *Clear Comprehension of the Domain of Right Mindfulness* (Thera, 1965, p. 50).

Finally the fourth aspect, *Clear Comprehension of Reality*, is the clarity and presence of the knowledge of the impermanence of all things. It is the confrontation of the deeply rooted, ego-centric thought-habits, egotistic instincts, and the resistance to relinquishing constant self-affirmation. This fourth aspect, obviously, demands a great deal of training and practice (Thera, 1965, p. 52).

Transformative Learning and Change

Transformative learning can be seen as a complex, multi-leveled experience in the human psyche that is difficult to track or capture in systematic steps. It has also been viewed as the result of both personal and collective wisdom, wisdom that emerges from various sources in its own time in the body-mind-spirit field (Ettling & Gozawa, 2000; Kovan & Dirkx, 2003).

Change may be inevitable in life, but transformative change demands the capacity to understand and make choices. Transformative learning theory presupposes that one learns not only from observing and experimenting, but also from the ability to enter into reflection and to engage in dialogue with others. The more one responds to opportunities for reflection and dialogue, the more occasions one has for self-directed change. But courage and discipline are required to enter into this self-reflection.

Mezirow (2000, p. 22) conceptualized critical reflection on experience as addressing the cognitive dissonance that flows from examining deeply held beliefs when encountering what he termed a “disorienting dilemma.” By this he meant directly confronting the internal confusion and disorientation that can exist when one internally experiences a challenge or questioning of a currently held and valued belief. He characterizes this confrontation as breaking the existing frame of reference or as rupturing the established symbolic model that serves as a boundary condition for interpreting the meaning of an experience. His theory posits that engaging the mind in the intellectual conflict that ensues when one faces a predicament or impasse can reveal the inconsistency or rigidity in one’s thinking. In effect, reflecting critically on the assumptions beneath the conflict can open the door to entirely new understandings about a heretofore strongly held assumption. Unlocking the possibility of a fresh interpretation or a “change of mind” can be quite challenging, yet also liberating.

Further elaboration on the theory of transformative learning has focused on ways of knowing beyond cognitive comprehension. Attention is given to ways of accessing knowledge through intuition, bodily sensations, emotional reactions and modes of spiritual awareness. Critical thinking, in this broader sense, is enhanced through the use of art, music, meditation, movement and poetic expression, all of which can provide access to deeper held beliefs and attitudes in one’s psyche. Connecting within oneself on these multi-levels of body-mind-spirit offers a more holistic and integrated potential for learning and for change. By proposing educational processes that encourage whole person participation, there is an attempt to invite inner conflict and paradox to the conscious level as well as a more critical understanding of the influence of dominant cultural patterns. The expected outcome of this new awareness and

consciousness is some form of personal transformative change and subsequently transformative action in the world.

Right Mindfulness and Transformative Learning

How then might the practice of Mindfulness, as presented in the Buddhist teachings, enhance the process of transformative learning? From the previous comments, we see that *Bare Attention* is a kind of temporary stepping aside to a vantage point of observation of one's consciousness at any given time. It heightens the susceptibility and refines the sensitivity of the mind in perceptiveness. It makes for enhancement of intuition. *Clear Comprehension* guides as well as strengthens the creative energies (Thera, 1965, p. 55). The practice of *critical reflection on experience* demands that kind of sensitivity, to the mind, and also to all other avenues of awareness. It requires that one stop and pay close attention to the intricate movements within one's being that reveal deeper held beliefs and judgments. It paves the way for the emergence of creative energy to shape and reshape one's thinking and acting.

Bare Attention heightens the alertness to inspiration and makes for the growth of intuition. *Clear Comprehension* works to make the mind a perfect instrument for the challenge of interior development and liberation (Thera, 1965, p. 56). Critical reflection on experience hones the practice of interior listening, of discovering the myriad ways the human person knows and learns. Its faithful practice paves the way for inner freedom by bringing to light the hidden aspects of what one believes. Interior perception and inner detachment add an important ingredient for the capacity for discernment, which is described as the ability to make judgments with a more reflective and conscious awareness. Interestingly, discernment has also been identified as a critical step in the process of transformative learning (Kasl & Elias, 2000).

Clear Comprehension bestows the keen eye of wisdom and the sure hand of practical skillfulness on the selfless work in service for suffering humanity. *Clear Comprehension* is capable of this training because it provides schooling in purposeful, circumspect selfless action (Thera, 1965, p. 56). An intention of critical reflection on experience, as an educational process, is personal transformation that will bear fruit in the service of the broader social transformation of society.

Have we come to a point of commonality? From this brief introduction, it seems that fostering the practice of Right Mindfulness could be useful to the practice of transformative learning. Right Mindfulness may be described as a "message of self-help". Through it, the little things of everyday life can become the teachers of great wisdom, gradually revealing their dimension of depth. So too, in critical reflection on experience, exploration of the dilemmas of life allows for the revelation of the deeper dimensions of belief and construction of reality.

The process of Right Mindfulness concentrates on awareness and unlearning. The work of transformative learning also focuses on uncovering what one has learned and most often, unconsciously, adopted as fundamental to purpose and action. D.H. Lawrence has remarked, "The supreme lesson of human consciousness is to learn how *not to know*. That is, how to *not to interfere*." May we hope that through continued study and dialogue, we can unlearn what is not working well for humanity and choose the actions that will create a more peaceful and more harmonious world order.

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“Re-weaving the Pattern” Developing a Learning Culture in a Non-Profit Organization

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University of the Incarnate Word

Abstract: *This research consisted of a culminating study with two multiple service agencies providing both resident and non-resident services for women and their children in a southwestern city of the United States. The women and children were domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. The intent of the research was to investigate the process of individual and organizational change that occurred as the agencies participated in an effort to create and sustain an empowering learning organization culture over a three-year period. The research was designed to access the managers' and staff members' perceptions and stories of change. This paper focuses on the findings from the two primary data collection strategies: personal interviews; and a survey instrument completed at one of the agencies; and their implications for theory.*

Keywords: Organizational Learning, Transformative Learning, Non-profit Organizations

Introduction

This longitudinal intervention of consultation and research with a non-profit organization has built on the work of several authors in the field of adult education. Situated within a constructivist paradigm, the framework applies transformative learning principles (Mezirow, 2000; Tennant & Pogson, 1995) to the concept of a learning community in an organizational setting. Fenwick (2000) has stressed the inadequacy of psychological and human resource management frames guiding worker development. Her perspectives on situated learning and development have offered a basis for the organizational change approach used in this study. Marsick and Watkins's (1999) insights and strategies on facilitating learning organizations provided a model for learning through the change process. In addition, the concept of double-loop learning (Argyris, 1999) suggested a way of reflecting on the learning process in which the organization engaged over a three-year period. It is a combination of these theoretical views that constitutes the theoretical scaffolding from which this study is constructed. Adult learning and management literature does provide documentation on the facilitation of learning organizations in the for-profit sector. However, this study focuses on a less addressed arena, that of faith-based, non-profit service agencies.

Research Design

The research was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the organization members' experiences and stories of organizational change?
2. In the process of change, what do organization members see happening that is helpful or not helpful?
3. What will be needed in the future to continue the process of change?

4. What have individual members of the organization learned through the process of organizational change? What do they think the organization has learned?

Research strategies included:

1. Twenty-four individual interviews with executive team members, managers, and staff members;
2. A follow-up survey sent to all organization members to gather data regarding perceptions of the evolution of the agency as a learning organization;
3. Analysis of the interview sessions and survey data by the primary researchers in order to document the stories of personal and organizational change, and to discuss possible meanings and impacts for the organization.

Development of the Competency Inventory

Learning competencies were identified in collaborative consultation with organizational executives and mid-level managers over an initial period of six months. Subsequent consultation with the staff designated learning goals and specific behaviors for each competency. From this input, the research team developed the survey instrument, The Leadership Development and Organizational Competency Inventory (LDOCI). This instrument was then used to address staff perceptions of the development of a learning culture.

Analysis of Findings

Interview participants identified at least eight areas of change and growth for themselves individually, for their teams, or for the organization as a whole (and often the applications were present in more than one of these realms). In three of these same areas, significant learning gaps were also identified.

Signs of Growth Themes

The areas of significant learning or growth were:

Communication: Many participants recognized a greater feeling of being heard and an ability to voice their opinions without fear. “An attempt has been made to create an atmosphere in which people feel comfortable and safe to speak their mind.”

Relationships/Trust: There is a sense of care and compassion throughout the organization. Many participants felt that there had been a significant decrease in the us vs. them attitudes among managers, staff members, and clients. “Before it (the organization) was us and them. Now everybody sees other people’s worth. It was almost like there was a line dividing us before ... I have seen more of that line be erased and people come together.”

Decision Making: Decisions are increasingly being made at lower levels of the organization and problems are being shared among more staff.

Diversity: Appreciating the diversity among staff emerged as a theme in terms of the value of seeking advice and ideas from others. “I think the leaders have placed themselves where they are able to listen and hear everyone else ... and they take their leadership position, but they’re also open to other people, whatever they want to say.”

Lived Values: Living the values of an empowering learning organization culture, not merely talking about them, was an important theme. Continuing to facilitate a culture of learning has become a way of life for some participants. “You can tell us, ‘we want to hear what you

think, we want to make change, we want to grow and be better' ... you can say that, but you have to make the environment that makes that OK... Sometimes they don't just say it ... they really do it."

Knowledge/Skills: There was a desire to transfer the knowledge of building a learning culture to others for use both in the organization and in personal lives. Some felt that transferring knowledge to them had allowed them to find their own voice in the workplace. "When I learn something or something strikes me, then I share it with someone else, then if they are so moved they share that with someone else. As we become empowered ourselves, we offer quality services to our clients, then our clients are passing it on."

Flexibility: Becoming more flexible to deal with frequent change, including constantly changing clients and caseloads, appears to be a key benefit of the organizational change process. "For the rest of us we don't have near the panic that we used to have because we know that it (change) is for a time. Actually all of us can lean into that and help get it back on track."

Learning through Mistakes: Participants related stories of talking through mistakes in their teams so that everyone can learn from them. These stories helped illustrate the depth of the organization's learning culture.

Learning Gaps

Particular areas where greater learning is needed included:

Communication: Learning culture concepts need to be extended to others in all divisions of the organization. Making the learning process less overwhelming, or less of an "enigma," would be helpful in the organization's continued growth and learning. There is also an interest in helping organizational members to see the learning process as relevant to all aspects of the organization, not only problem solving and conflict. "Sometimes not knowing can cause chaos. If you just give people information – even though we may not have control over it – just knowing it can calm you and make you feel better."

Diversity: Learning gaps relate to the need to accept differences and be tolerant of other beliefs in order to extend the concept of openness in the organization.

Decision making: There are more decisions being made at lower levels, but telling others about decisions and the reasons behind them were topics of concern. "Certain people may know what is happening, but as it filters down ... then people don't know... The fact is people have to know something in order to feel comfortable. And if they don't ... they feel insecure."

Survey Findings

The LDOCI consists of 60 affirmative statements in six competency areas related to an organization's learning culture and the leadership competencies of a team. Survey participants were asked to indicate their perceptions of their team or primary working group on each statement using a 4-point scale of 1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3 = sometimes; and 4 = often. Thirty-one (31) managers and staff members completed the survey.

Overall, the perceptions were quite positive with 38 of the 60 statements having a mean score of 3.5 or higher on the 4-point scale. There were 13 statements with a 3.70 or higher mean, while eight statements had mean scores of 3.3 or lower. There were typically one or two very highly rated statements for each competency, although perceptions were particularly positive for statements in Building Woman-Focused Transformation Leadership and Leading in Crisis Oriented Work. Statements on the survey, often in more than one competency, addressed some of

the growth and learning gap areas revealed in the interviews, including facilitating a learning organization, communication processes, and openness to diversity.

Reliability analysis using the Cronbach's Alpha model provided an index of internal consistency for the scale as a whole (.9721), and for each competency based on the inter-item correlations. The scale reliability coefficients were all above .8, indicating high reliability.

Competency	# of Statements	Competency Mean	Reliability Coefficient	No. of Statements ≥ 3.70	No. of Statements ≥ 3.50	No. of Statements ≤ 3.30
Understanding and facilitating learning & change	12	3.56	.8484	2	7	1
Discovering & building on our spiritual values	8	3.53	.8826	1	4	—
Appreciating & embracing diversity	11	3.45	.9254	1	7	3
Leading in crisis-oriented work	9	3.62	.9049	3	7	1
Sharing responsibility	10	3.48	.8835	2	5	2
Building woman-focused transformational leadership	10	3.57	.9124	4	8	1

Facilitating the Learning Organization

Of the 13 highest rated statements on the entire survey, six are particular indicators of the development of a learning organization. Examples are “We challenge others to grow and learn” (3.77) and “We work at understanding the perspectives of others” (3.74). There were very few statements indicative of facilitating development of a learning organization with mean scores of 3.3 or less.

Communication

Communication was not a separate competency, but statements about communication processes were part of most competencies. Several communication statements had means of 3.4-3.6, such as “We understand and share the goals of the agency” and “We are encouraged to share our ideas with others.” The three lowest rated statements on the survey also related to communication, particularly the sharing of information: “We share information without hesitation” (3.13); “We share information across divisions” (3.13); and “We insure that everyone in the organization gets the appropriate information” (3.00).

Appreciating Diversity

One survey statement about appreciating diversity, “We seek advice and help from others when needed,” had a mean rating greater than 3.70. Several other statements had slightly lower mean scores. The two statements reflecting concerns about diversity with mean ratings below a 3.3 were “We look for opportunities to work with persons different from ourselves” (3.27) and “We accept everyone's ideas” (3.16). When diversity openness pertained to listening to others' ideas or advice in discussions, the participants' perceptions were frequently quite positive. Participants' reflections of their working group were less positive when it came to accepting those ideas, being tolerant of others, or seeking out those who are different.

Implications for Theory

Both the interviews and the survey findings showed significant growth as well as learning gaps in the organization's development. The study emphasized the opportunities for expression about the nature and meaning of work experience, revealing the connections between personal and organizational transformation and change. The goal of the research was to understand and be true to the voices of the participants in the work setting, rather than to prove or predict. Simultaneously, the findings reveal insights regarding worker development from several cultural perspectives.

Tara Fenwick (2000) asserts "worker development describes educational efforts undertaken to promote the holistic lifelong learning for workers and managers, including their social and personal development" (p. 294). She contends that meaningful work and learning exist as parallels in spaces where creativity and caring relationships are developed. The participants in this research reported their personal growth as marks of organizational change and continuously connected their personal learning with the capacity of the agency to develop a learning culture more adaptable to change.

Fenwick also addresses learning as situated in the context of both location and system. Her contention is that knowing and learning are "defined as engaging in changing processes of human activity in a particular system" (p. 301). Learning can neither be detached from the community within which it is situated nor from the mixture of expectations and limitations surrounding the context. Appreciation of this perspective prompted the development of the learning tools within the learning situation. This seemed especially important since the setting was a non-profit, faith-based, service agency. In this situation, a prime motivator for promoting quality service is the personal interpretation of the mission of the organization. The mission offers a powerful systemic context underlying policy, procedure and expected behavior. If the organization was to be geared to transformative change, then fueling a verbal and symbolic connection to that mission was essential in the learning process.

The evolving theory of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, Cranton, 1994; Taylor, 1998; O'Sullivan, 1999; Mezirow and Associates, 2000) served as a primary container for the adult education model used in this project. Crucial in this constructivist approach is acceptance that the adult learner finds meaning in a given historical and social context. Application of knowledge, therefore, requires that the learner grasp more than the skill involved in a learning situation. She must understand the meaning of that behavior in the context of her life course and her sense of self. The challenge then, for the educator in the transformative learning paradigm, is to facilitate the creation of a learning container that supports the deeper understanding of meaning in addition to the acquisition of skill. Thus, a distinction is made between acquiring a skill and developing a capacity. Capacity development requires situating the skill in one's personal value system and embracing its practice as a reflection of oneself. The participants in the study connected personal capacity building with fulfilling the mission of the organization. They seemed able to integrate their development as a worker with a much broader perspective and meaning for their lives.

Marsick and Watkins (1999, p. 10) defined the learning organization as "one that is characterized by continuous learning, continuous improvement and the capacity to transform itself." They categorize learning into four areas: individuals, teams, organization, and global. The findings of this study fit naturally into this model. According to Marsick and Watkins, the three components of the model are continuous learning, on-going creation and management of

knowledge, and improved organizational performance. The data, along with observation and informal conversations, demonstrate that the agency has begun to incorporate these aspects into their organizational life.

Marsick and Watkins (1999), along with Argyris (1999) have argued that at least two types of learning are common in organizational settings when a learning mode is in place. The first is that in which people accumulate learning without uncovering underlying assumptions and the second is learning that entails reviewing and challenging the hidden premises underneath one's thinking process. This second learning Marsick and Watkins term the "outer ring of learning" and Argyris characterizes as "double loop learning". It is in this latter mode of learning that the existing organizational culture that supports attitudes and behaviors can be probed. This study confirms their thinking that while the ultimate goal of organizational learning may be collective reflection and re-framing, the process of re-socialization and cultural change at the organizational level must begin with individuals reflecting on their personal actions.

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Awakening to White Consciousness: Transforming Habits of Mind Through Presentational Knowing

European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness¹
A Group of Scholars/Practitioners Without Institutional Affiliation, USA

Abstract: *Six white educators examine their relationship to whiteness and explore their unexamined assumptions by engaging in presentational knowing as a link between intellect and felt experience. The resulting expansion of knowing gives participants an opportunity to reflect on their current behaviors and actions on issues of race and racism within their personal and professional lives.*

Keywords: white consciousness, transformative learning, presentational knowing

One of the marks of a truly dominant intellectual paradigm is the difficulty people have in even imagining an alternative view.

–W.T. Allen (1993)

Purpose

This paper provides a theoretical base and set of examples for how presentational knowing (Heron, 1992) can assist learners in surfacing assumptions about deeply held beliefs and practices. Assumptions that are implicit in the dominant culture's values and norms are particularly difficult to surface. People with white skin in the United States are often unaware of the full extent of the power and privilege conferred by their race. New awareness of these assumptions could give white people an opportunity to reflect on their current beliefs and behaviors related to race and racism within their personal and professional lives. Our workshop design suggests that white people can use presentational knowing as a way to surface unexamined assumptions that could influence a change in their level of awareness about the ways in which white people participate in and perpetuate white hegemony. Presentational knowing is the realm of symbolic, intuitive, imaginal knowing, where art, music, storytelling or movement explore “the underlying pattern of things” (Heron, 1992, p. 170).

Workshop Rationale

Jack Mezirow (2000), in articulating his theory on transformative learning, refers to a constellation of assumed attitudes and cultural messages 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” (p. 19). In her analysis of how race is perceived by dominant White society, Ruth Frankenberg (1993) describes three common meaning perspectives or habits of mind—essentialist racism, power evasiveness and race cognizance. The first, essentialist racism, describes a consciousness where races are perceived as fundamentally different and unequal within systems of white superiority. Second, power evasiveness is described as a “color-blind” point of view, which proclaims all people are essentially the same; the dominant culture takes for granted that its own norms and values are universal. Frankenberg contends that many well-intentioned white people in the United States engage in this discourse of color- or power-evasiveness. The consequence of this perspective can be the exclusion and marginalization of people of color. Finally, a person who has race cognizance as a meaning perspective is one who moves back in the direction of awareness of differences among races, and embraces those different cultural systems as equally valid. In this

view, differences play a significant role in shaping institutions and personal lives. Awareness of this dynamic can influence behavior.

A key aspect of transformative learning is a process of making visible perspectives that have been invisible, engaging people in a process whereby they come to recognize the distortions and limitations in their current habits of mind and are thus able to create and integrate more appropriate ones. Challenging one's deeply held assumptions through critical reflection is a core belief and practice of transformative learning. Awakening to race cognizance is for us a process of becoming aware that maintaining "color-blindness" perpetuates racism and systems of domination by ignoring differences. When challenging a meaning perspective as central to identity as power or color evasiveness, strong denial and emotions are often provoked.

John Heron (1992) has theorized the existence of four forms of knowing—experiential, presentational, propositional and practical. Propositional knowing—typically the form most privileged in academia—represents the sphere of intellect and reason that would be most readily addressed by critical reflection. Mezirow (2000) and others recognize the importance of these additional ways of knowing, but offer little instruction of how to engage and transform them. As educators trained in the USA, we have much less practice and experience in engaging the full array of human ways of knowing. In order to expand one's consciousness, addressing all four forms of knowing in greater balance is most useful, particularly when seeking to transform one's most deeply held beliefs, attitudes and actions.

Based on our premise that strong emotions play an important role in not only what we know, but also how we learn transformatively, we extend transformative learning theory by working with imaginative and intuitive ways of knowing using creative expression. Creative expressions are a way of helping people surface material that has affective meaning (Heron, 1992).

Heron believes that by engaging all four forms of knowing in learning, greater congruence between knowledge and action is achieved. In our work, we have sought to balance our attention to Heron's four ways of knowing. To this end, we focus particular attention in this paper on Heron's concept of presentational knowing because it provides the critical link between experiential knowing and propositional knowing. Heron defines presentational knowing as the place where, "a person creates a pattern of perceptual elements – in movement, sound, colour, shape, line.... Presentational knowledge includes not only music and ... arts, but dance, movement, and mime. It also embraces all forms of myth, fable, allegory, story and drama..." (1992, p. 165-167).

Workshop Topics and Examples

The workshop will be an interactive process constructed to aid participants in exploring habits of mind that foster white hegemony. Additionally, the workshop will give participants the experience of using the imaginal mode of presentational knowing to bridge between affective responses and conceptual understanding.

In this paper, we provide five examples of presentational knowing to communicate a personal experience of surfacing an assumption about white hegemony or racism. Our presentations take the form of stories, two poems and a cartoon. Readers may have affective response to the presentations that could lead to their own identification of assumptions about race and white hegemony. The expressive mode of presentational communication connects with readers at an affective level, in contrast to an explanatory or analytic mode, which is more closely associated with discussion or critical reflection and is also more typical of our "discussion culture."

The presentational examples given in this paper are limited to what can be expressed on a printed page. A wider variety of presentational forms may be expressed in person at the workshop. We also want to state that all of the authors/facilitators are white, and we recognize the limitations that this imposes on the way meaning is made.

Presentational Examples

Andrew



* Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Victoria

Almost a decade ago I had one of those experiences that has stayed with me like an echo that is still reverberating. I had recently moved across the country to teach in a new doctoral program. I was proud that a group of my students had collaborated on a paper that was presented at the African American pre-conference at an annual research conference that I had been attending for many years. With the pre-conference over, I was absorbed in the main conference activities and in making connections with colleagues when I saw Esperanza, one of my students, walking across the grassy campus. As she approached I asked, "So how is it going?" I was shocked when she burst out with anger. She had attended a session that reported on a professional development intervention in a professional development program in a public university. The research was supported by a large foundation grant. She exclaimed, "All that money! And they don't have one person of color on their staff!" An experienced educator who worked with parents in multi-lingual school communities, Esperanza's distress was palpable. "All that money, and they're wasting it!" Mournfully, she added, "They really don't know what they are doing and they have no idea that they don't know." I was caught off guard. Tired at the end of a demanding academic year in which it had seemed as if everything was about race, I spat out, "Oh Esperanza. Give it a rest!" Feeling that surely this too didn't have to be all about race, I

explained to her that the principal investigator was a well-respected member of the professoriate. Then I asked, “Why can't you appreciate what he is accomplishing?” She looked at me with a mixture of hurt and exasperation. “You can ‘give it a rest,’ Victoria. You can ‘rest’ any time you want to. I don't have the privilege of taking ‘time out’ from racism.” The look in her eyes, the fatigue in her voice, and the truth of her statement hit me hard. Here was someone I cared about, and yet I had blurted out with impatience a reaction that showed how little I had actually learned during our year together. I wished I could take it back. That interchange in the bright summer sun has stayed with me; it prods me into action when I think about “resting.”

Rose

A white circle foams
On the blue ocean changing
Shape becomes a heart

Bees gather nectar
Building their hive patiently
The future unknown

An old dead branch cracks
And falls to the earth pointing
Upward to a new twig

The angler's hook waits
The fish contemplates with care
Slowly moves away

Louise

It was early on in the three-year life of my doctoral cohort group when I experienced a disorienting dilemma that helped me to begin to see my own white supremacist unconsciousness and some of the ways I contribute to keeping systems of domination in place. The cohort attended the premier viewing of a racially provocative documentary film that shows a conversation among men of various races about racism in the United States.

There were a few surprises for me as the film began. For instance, I was amazed to hear from an African American man that it was scary for people of color to be driving out of the city and into the rural town where the film took place. As the film proceeded I was reminded of an earlier incident that had taken place in my cohort, when a white woman asked an African-American man a question I could easily have asked him myself, “But isn't that an example of reverse racism?” I witnessed him blow up in anger toward her. I didn't understand his anger at the time, and I was thankful that I wasn't the one who had asked the question. In the film, a white man struggled to understand the conversation between men of color. The white man was making comments and asking questions that seemed perfectly reasonable to me at the time. One man of color in the film exploded in angry reaction to the white man's questions and comments. At film's end, the white man experienced a profound breakthrough. He was sad as he came to understand how the stories from men of color could actually be true.

I sat silently in fear, hoping and seeming to be invisible, as I watched the reactions of both the white folks and the people of color in the room. I was thankful that my arrogance and unconsciousness had not been exposed to receive all the anger and judgment that was directed at the white man in the film. Through witnessing the experience of this white man in the film and myself in reaction to the film, I quietly began the path of learning about my own unconsciousness about racism.

Daniel

today i wonder, was the world ever perfect?

hillary versus rudy / s.u.v. crash deaths / the origin of h.i.v.

suicide in Uganda / the ten commandments / www.homelessness.life

change and transformation

the world is wrong / the world must be made different
collusion with the illusion / of control

i am good, i am bad / i am alone, i am powerful / i am asleep / i am racist / i am right, i am wrong
i am missing the point / that on this particular day / perhaps the world is as perfect / as
i am ...

Robin

It was probably the second month of our doctoral cohort's great experiment in a process called Cultural Synergy. As white students and African-American students we had divided into the White Team and the Black Team, spending hours examining our own assumptions and experiences. We then began a process of presenting our 'self-knowing' to the other team, followed by learning to listen to and accept the other team's experience and perspective.

I was a white member of the elite "Design Team," led by one of our faculty. We met to create the process that our cohort and team members would then follow the next weekend. I very deliberately worked to share power with my African-American colleagues in this process, to participate without trying to take over or run the show.

As the Design Team prepared our plan for the next cohort meeting, when each team would experientially present its self-knowing to the other team, we needed to decide which team would begin. "The Black Team should go first," I asserted confidently, "as a way to counter the power imbalance in society, where Black people are given second class status relative to white people." I was pleased with my clear grasp of systemic power and my clarity about how to address this in our cohort.

But my Black Team colleagues were silent. Finally one of them spoke up. "I hate to use the 'R word' (for racism) – but don't you see what you just did? Even as you were trying to balance things out, you were still keeping control – white folks telling us what to do. Again."

I felt the blood drain from my head. Stunned, embarrassed, busted! The construction of entitlement and white privilege so firmly entrenched, that after all this time, and all this work, it's still alive and well inside my consciousness and my behavior. My African-American Design Teammates shrugged; they cared about me, probably loved me – but my mistake was no great surprise to them. It was what they lived with every day....

Potential Applications and Outcomes

Engaging in presentational knowing as a way to create an environment suitable for whole-person learning and/or as a way to access and make meaning of experiential knowing (Yorks & Kasl, 2003) is helpful for transforming deeply held habits of knowing and being. Using presentational knowing is not a replacement for propositional knowing; it is a complement and enhancement to it. We believe that presentational knowing, and an understanding of how Heron's four ways of knowing interact and work together, is important for creating learning situations that are more congruent and address the whole learner. Application of these concepts can be helpful to virtually any educational experience, especially those that are currently out of balance with a should be an over-emphasis on intellectual and propositional knowing.

This paper is about shifting white consciousness through greater attention to presentational knowing. For many white people in the USA, it is propositional or conceptual knowing that is greatly emphasized over other forms of knowing. There are two opportunities that result from paying greater attention to other forms of knowing. First, in order to transform

consciousness about something as deeply held as one's racial identity, engaging with ways of knowing that can better cope with a large degree of emotional and/or symbolic material is helpful. Secondly, by emphasizing presentational knowing, learners begin to access and validate other learning styles and modes that may be balanced differently in other cultures. By expanding and validating other forms of knowing, white learners can more readily understand themselves as well as others.

Note

1. The European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness fosters research and learning about White Supremacist Consciousness. Collective authorship under one name reflects our understanding of the way knowledge is constructed. Members came together originally through a cultural consciousness project at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco; members are Carole Barlas, Elizabeth Kasl, Alec MacLeod, Doug Paxton, Penny Rosenwasser and Linda Sartor. Inquiries are welcome via email: collaborative@eccw.org

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“I’m Not a Social Activist; I’m Just a Teacher”

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Abstract: *The story of one person's transformation in her frames of reference about race and white hegemony brings to life the process of epochal and incremental transformation.*

Key Words: transformative learning, white hegemony, incremental and epochal transformation

The purpose of this paper is to bring to life a conceptualization from transformation theory — epochal and incremental change. We narrate Victoria's story of transformative learning as she shifted her consciousness from deep embeddedness in white hegemony to growing awareness of race, racism, and what it means to be white in today's U.S. culture.

Our premise is that a change in European American consciousness about the meaning of whiteness is an example of perspective transformation (European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness, 2002); thus, an analysis of this change may contribute to understanding the dynamics of transformative learning. According to founding theorist Jack Mezirow (2000) the process of transformative learning includes coming to recognize the distortions and limitations in one's current worldview and adopting a belief system with changed frames of reference. Transformation may manifest during periods of discomfort or disorientation when an individual becomes aware of dissonance between espoused and practiced values or when familiar coping strategies cease to be effective. As a result of disorienting dilemmas, previously held views are often discarded and new perspectives emerge. Mezirow suggests that “Transformations in habit of mind may be *epochal*, a sudden, dramatic, reorienting insight, or *incremental*, involving a progressive series of transformations in related points of view that culminate in a transformation in habit of mind” (2000, p. 21). In this paper, through examination of one case narrative, we offer insight about the nature of epochal and incremental transformations.

Methodology

We are six European Americans who, as individuals, play a variety of institutional and community roles as adult educators. As a research team, we have spent several years studying the impact of white hegemony on our own and others' lives. Our current study is a heuristic investigation of our personal experiences. We concur with Clark Moustakas (1990) who has observed, “Heuristic inquiry offers possibilities for understanding transitions in the development of identity, personality, character, and selfhood...useful in resolution of dysfunctional behavior and in corrections of distorted perceptions...” (p. 102).

We began this project with an exercise that helped each member reflect upon and visually represent his or her personal journey in understanding what it means to be white. We used the resulting collages as catalysts for extensive interviews, spending several hours with each individual's story and pausing as a group to explore emerging insights about both the individual storyteller and our group's research topic. We coded transcripts independently and then met as a team for several rounds of reflection to verify and refine our thematic inferences.

Victoria's Story

For this paper we chose Victoria's story of changing meaning perspective because it offers a vivid example of epochal transformation, in combination with incremental. Victoria is an adult educator whose frames of reference were limited by what we have described elsewhere as a “system of thought...characterized by...a stubbornly intransigent hegemony” (European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness, 2003a, p. 127). She re-created her life at age 54, moving from New England to California in order to help create a new graduate program for adults. In the collage that Victoria created for our interview process, the focal point is a large volcano in full eruption. We use Victoria's metaphor to organize our narrative.

Before the Eruption

Aside from one boy in kindergarten, Victoria does not remember any people of color in her midwestern hometown. She also tells us that she doesn't remember the civil rights movement. Observing that “during the '60s I was oblivious,” she explains “I was in this really dramatic mess of a marriage...completely absorbed by all the turmoil that was my life.”

Moving forward to the 1980s, Victoria recalls an incident at a northeastern college where she taught. After students wrote first drafts of their term papers, she scheduled individual telephone conferences to discuss potential improvements. Remembering with discomfort her interaction with an African-American man, she tells us, “I remember this poor man trying to engage me and both of us getting increasingly frustrated at the impasse. He tried for about ten minutes, and then he just... acquiesced to whatever I was telling him to do.... I can see *now* that what he was saying was that this [class in learning theory] was *totally* Eurocentric, and I had no consciousness that one can't generalize to all people from white people.... I was just insufferable. I laid out the inadequacies of his paper and told him that he didn't understand. I remember thinking ‘How did he get in this program? He can't understand the simplest thing.’ He must have just given up, and thought, ‘Oh, this is so hopeless, this is not worth my time.’” Victoria pauses, squirming in her chair to illustrate her feelings, “It just makes me squirm to think of what I did.”

Volcanic Change

Pointing to the volcano that punctuates her life's journey toward greater awareness of racism and white hegemony, Victoria shifts her narrative to her move to California and a new job. One of the eruption's early rumbles happened the first week when an African American man expressed strong anger about something that happened in the group of new students. “His burst of anger shocked me. There I was — a good white woman from lower middle class, midwestern roots, 54 years old. And if there's one thing I learned growing up, it's that you don't lose your temper in public. Better you don't lose your temper at all, but certainly not in public!”

She explains that this first group included one African American man, eight white students, and two white teachers. During its initial August residency, the group decided to petition the administration to re-open enrollment so that members could recruit a more diverse student body. By September, the cohort was transformed. In addition to the eight European-American students, there were now nine students of color — six African Americans, a Chinese American, a Latino and Latina. (Multicultural Inquiry eXchange, 1996).

Victoria candidly admits her judgmental reactions during the September weekend. Sighing with embarrassment, “I'm going to tell you something I have *never* said out loud.” She

again squirms to show discomfort, then pauses, “It makes me feel ashamed....” Gulping a deep breath, she plunges on, “I remember being completely bowled over by the way the people of color were sort of taking over and thinking to myself, ‘That’s really nervy of them. Who do they think they are?’” She then asks rhetorically, “Would I have had those thoughts if the newcomers were white?” She pauses, before answering her own question. “Maybe...but I remember that I was very consciously noticing the fact that they were of color.”

Victoria describes another event that contributed to her sense of sitting on a volcano. She remembers an afternoon when the white participants sat silent and bewildered during a group reflection as students of color seemed to erupt — some in anger, others in tears. “I was trying to listen, really pay attention — couldn’t quite follow what everybody was talking about.... And then [an African American] interpreted the last hour to us white people.” Victoria explains that one African-American criticizing another for coming back late from lunch had precipitated the volatility during the reflection session. A veiled conversation ensued, in which the real issue was violating the norm of solidarity among people of color when in the presence of white people. “It was so amazing to me — to learn that there was this whole other reality in the room. I had been sitting through the whole thing, but without understanding any of it. I hadn’t had a clue.”

As the months unfolded, Victoria struggled with ongoing puzzlement, gradually assisted by students of color who she feels adopted her. “Somehow, some of the students of color decided I was educable. They developed a fondness for me; they developed some kind of a trust in me. And coached me.... For me, knowing comes in the context of relationship. As I get closer to people, I am able to get more of an understanding of what it might be like to be them.”

The cohort attended a workshop on race relations. Victoria remembers, “A woman of color talked about how awful it was each day to send her son out because there was nothing she could do to protect him from what he would face. And *that* I could connect to. I got this sudden big *a-ha* about what that would be like because I have children and that’s something I could imagine.... I thought, ‘That is just awful — her son is not safe and there is nothing she can do.’”

In May, Victoria stumbled into another *a-ha*. She impatiently snapped at a Latina student to “give it a rest” because she was weary of the student’s ongoing commentary on racism. Victoria reports that she still feels the impact of the student’s response — that her life as a woman of color didn’t allow the privilege of “giving it a rest.” (See “Victoria’s Story” in this volume, *European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness*, 2003b).

Victoria concludes, “So, there were a lot of things that happened during that year that just kept grabbing at my attention in such dramatic ways.” Referring to the entire year and pointing again to the volcano, Victoria says, “I think once you have that kind of an explosion, you can’t go backwards from it. I don’t see how you can go back and be oblivious. You could harden your heart, but couldn’t go back to the total lack of awareness, like the way I was when I came.”

Surveying the New Landscape: “Everything I Thought I Knew Just Didn’t Apply”

Robin presses Victoria to try to discern why the students of color decided to trust her. “You gave the example of the African American from your earlier teaching experience, who you said tried to talk to you...and gave up. And the people of color in the cohort could have given up. They had a lot of other options.... Yet, they made a decision to trust you.” Victoria nods, “They did, didn’t they? It wouldn’t surprise me to learn that they got together and caucused about it, and decided, ‘This person is worth our effort, we can do something with her, she’s teachable.’”

Victoria joins Robin's question, "Why the trust? Why did I seem so openhearted and teachable, and yet was such an ass a few years earlier?" Speculating about possible answers, Victoria describes the impact of relocating to a new city and new job. "I do have this sense that I was starting a whole new life, entirely unlike what I had ever known. Nothing was the same." She further observes, "It might also have something to do with the conditions. In this other instance [with the African-American man who acquiesced to her demands], we were in a one-on-one conversation, a very traditional sort of academic structure where he writes a paper, I read the paper and tell him how to fix it... So what's going to nudge me out of thinking I know how things are supposed to be?" Comparing that experience to what she faced after relocating, she muses, "The new job was entirely different. I couldn't figure out what was going on. None of the other faculty seemed to understand...I was in this huge place of not knowing... I had no confidence that I knew what I was doing... Everything I thought I knew just didn't apply."

After the Eruption: Moving On, Taking Action

We have explored the epochal learning that occurred for Victoria during her first year in a new job. In the decade that followed, her trajectory of changing consciousness has been more incremental, as she struggles to advocate for making changes in her institution. "I remember going to faculty meetings and feeling so alone, so totally isolated and alone, because there wasn't one other person on the [program] faculty who knew what I was talking about. I kept trying to explain that this thing about race was *really* important! I remember [our director] telling me, 'We just use whatever *ism* is around as a way of examining assumptions. Racism, classism, sexism — they're interchangeable.'" Bemused, Victoria rolls her eyes and nods, "I said, 'I don't think so!'"

"I knew that I had an important message and I guess I felt it was a moral obligation. I have a real streak in me of believing that if you're right and if it's clear that you're right, then the power of being right should simply prevail. One of the hardest things that I've had to learn is that being able to prove logically that something is right doesn't necessarily convince people. Throughout my whole life, if people weren't coming around to my way of thinking, I would just try to explain it again. Because I'd think, 'Surely, the problem is they didn't understand. If I can just find the right words, get the logic right, then of course people will be persuaded.' It's been hard for me to learn that there's an emotional logic that has nothing to do with the kind of logic that I'm good at, and that I have to learn how to speak that logic."

Victoria speaks about her third year of teaching, this time with a different cohort. "I got to do the synergy project, and that was life-changing." In the synergy project, which used an experiential method for working across differences (Barlas, 1997; Tang, 1997), the cohort divided into two teams, one white and one black. Victoria describes a moment at the end of an afternoon when the two race-based groups had been working separately. "I'll never, *ever* forget walking back into that room, and somebody from our [white] team said to the black team, 'We missed you.' And [an African American man] said, 'We didn't miss you!' [laughter]" Victoria grows pensive, "I remember that so vividly, 'We didn't miss you!' In that moment, I understood how much they were getting out of being together. I realized that this was such a vital thing for them, and that there were things that I couldn't be part of [as their white teacher]. One of the most useful things for me to think about doing would be to figure out how to foster making things like that happen that I wouldn't be part of. I guess maybe I started then thinking on a bigger forum about what the issues were — thinking more systemically..."

Acting on her desire to be more “useful,” in the years that followed, Victoria invested time and effort in several diversity initiatives in her school. Nevertheless, when one of the interviewers refers to her as a social activist, she disagrees. Robin counters, “You didn't just sit there with a changed consciousness.... You took it on to become a leader around acting on that consciousness in the institution. Which meant being lonely, taking risks.” “No,” Victoria replies, “I don't perceive myself as an activist, not then and not now.... For me? I keep pursuing the issue because I think that if I can just find the right words, people will understand.... I think of myself as a one-on-one mentor, a one-on-one helper. I feel I make my best contribution helping people one at a time.” Robin presses further, “What about the term ‘social justice practitioner,’ which is a term you were talking about with me?”

“No,” answers Victoria, “it doesn't feel like me. I just think of myself as a teacher.”

Findings

In the heuristic study from which Victoria's case is taken, we identify themes that, although derived from the specific case of transformation related to white hegemony, have general relevance to transformation theory. From the common themes, those most salient in Victoria's story are: 1) being in relationship with people of color, 2) impact of dislocation on openness to new perspectives, 3) challenge in overcoming pervasive silence or denial in response to racial discomfort, and 4) awareness of a system of thought that supports oppressive behavior.

Victoria precipitated epochal learning when she uprooted herself to take on a teaching situation in which she felt lost. “Everything I thought I knew just didn't apply,” she says. Her world lost its foundation, so there was a big opening for new information to catch her attention and for her to think differently. Rooted in her developing relationships with students of color, she increasingly sees the impact of white hegemony through their eyes and thus feels an obligation to advocate for systems changes that will improve their experiences. She finds herself doing things she had not done before — discovering the different realities lived by people of color, speaking out among her peers about race and racism, becoming aware of the importance of “emotional logic.” In an ongoing interplay between new actions and the new insights they generate, Victoria's worldview continues changing incrementally. Although she tenaciously insists she is just a teacher and not a social activist, she is reframing what being a teacher means. Her path has taken her some distance from the person who was so “insufferable” with the African American student whose paper she perceived as evidence that he couldn't “understand the simplest thing.”

Implications for Transformative Learning Theory and Practice

To apply the insights we derive from Victoria's case, we recommend that adult educators strive to create situations that simulate epochal change and that foster the value of *not knowing*.

Creating Situations that Simulate Epochal Change

We recommend that educators construct learning environments for themselves and others that radically depart from current norms. Bring together people from different walks of life whose values and beliefs conflict. Painstakingly attend to each person's unique value in order to create an environment where all concerned can feel safe enough to embrace discomfort and learn from it. Create whole-person learning processes that invite emotions, explore the unconscious, validate intuition, and nurture relationships with empathic connection. These tasks demand new

visions for educating educators, who will not only need to acquire new skills, but also to break free from long-held academic norms about what is “appropriate” in learning environments.

Fostering the Value of Not Knowing

It is perhaps human nature to seek comfort in believing that we understand our lives and environments. To help themselves and others stay in an attitude of ongoing inquiry is a challenge for educators. A strategy that we find helpful is the formation of support groups. In the context of our own group's inquiry, each of us seeks to stay consciously aware that our inquiry supports an ongoing developmental process. As a group, we are vigilant when any of us falls into a frame of reference that presumes the person has *become* transformed, or that it is possible for white people to reach a perspective free from the distortions of hegemony. We nurture a norm of staying in an inquiry mode. We suggest that educators who want to develop practice that departs radically from any normative value form support groups to help themselves dwell in not knowing.

Note

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Quadrinity Online: Toward a Fuller Expression of Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *The overarching principle of this workshop is to provide pedagogy of transformative learning, specifically where on-line learning is concerned. By offering quadrinity learning – a fuller expression of transformative learning – we offer a framework to educators, facilitators, social actors, and others committed to transformation. The intention is to validate, highlight, and name the pattern that is often the undercurrent of various facilitators working within the contexts such as teaching, facilitation, and grassroots activism. In essence, this pattern is one of the whole self. Effective learning and transformative practice, requires sharing one’s whole self and acknowledging the wholeness of others.*

Keywords: Quadrinity Learning, Whole person, Pedagogy of transformative learning

Introduction

The development of online learning communities in an academic setting is a new and exciting possibility for individual and group transformation. This workshop shares the experience of fifteen women – known as Cohort 14 – participating in a learning community which combined on-line learning and week-long, bi-annual, face-to-face intensive meetings over a three year period. Critical reflections on transformative learning are presented by doctoral candidates in and graduates of the Transformative Learning and Change program at the California Institute of Integral Studies. As presenters, we propose that this experience of online learning when engaged and co-created in a specific way can be a powerful, dynamic container for transforming the individual and group. Specifically, we arrived at the conclusion that the essence of transformative practice is to engage learning as a whole person and to engage others in the learning community as a whole person.

This workshop overview outlines (1) how we define key concepts such as transformative learning, cohort experience, and on-line learning community, (2) the grounding framework that emerged from the experience, and (3) means of applying this framework to other contexts.

Quadrinity learning is the name that fits our fuller expression of transformative learning as this on-line community experienced it. When the cohort experience was aligned with transformative learning theory, four quadrants emerged. When seeking to communicate to others the essential conditions for embracing transformative learning, we were drawn to quadrinity. When looking for the pattern that fit our experience, we recognized that where contemporary western culture is drawn to threes (the Holy Trinity; mind, body, and spirit; etc.), we were drawn to fours. The basic design of quadrinity is a circular image with four quadrants representing activities and insights of body, mind, spirit and emotion. The cohort found that base-four, or quadrant designs, had facilitated transformation. As we examined this pattern, we concluded that

quadrinity learning is essential to the transformative practice and relies fundamentally on learning as a whole person.

The foundation for transformation / key concepts

Transformative Learning is defined as “the process by which we call into question our assumed frames of reference (habits of mind or mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (2002 Transformative Learning Conference).

Transformative learning is a practice that moves us toward actualization and in so doing impacts our world – alter one’s way of being and the world changes subtly. “Go far enough on the inner journey, they all tell us – go past ego toward true self – and you end up not lost in narcissism but returning to the world, bearing more gracefully the responsibilities that come with being human” (Palmer 2000, p.73). The members of Cohort 14 that engaged in this practice as a whole person experienced substantial personal shifts.

Cohort experience proved to be fundamental to the transformative learning of Cohort 14. As any Communication 101 text will offer, a team or a small group is typically a group of individuals gathered together to complete a task. A cohort by comparison is a centralizing or grounding force. In the experience of Cohort 14, the term connotes connection, safety, support, and equality. Often the term *cohort* is found in learning contexts when students are enrolled into a program together so as to have a lasting bond throughout the experience. In the case of Cohort 14, members were mixed on how safe, supportive, or inclusive the cohort was; however, over time the experience proved to serve such functions for most. The bi-annual, week long intensives permitted concentrated personal interaction and created a context for personal relationships allowing cohort members to bond and trust each other as recourses for exploring feelings, beliefs and assumptions.

The *on-line learning community* is yet a novelty for traditional higher education. In business and political activism, the World Wide Web has made possible informal and formal learning communities across the globe. For example, grassroots movements addressing social justice issues have gained strength as formerly isolated local groups make contact with one another. The rise of micro lending programs to assist women struggling in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East is just one example (Ishak & Rogers, 2001). Such use of the web, one could argue, is at the very least an outcome of on-line learning communities. Through the internet an individual or local community is able to connect with an individual or local community across the globe. Through this exchange, all involved become related in the cause of social justice, transformative practice, and reach for peaceful prosperity.

For Cohort 14, the concept of an on-line learning community was thoughtfully designed and created through equal stewardship. An electronic classroom can be a learning community, though not necessarily. As members of the cohort we found that a learning community is defined by connection and interaction. Where a more traditional electronic classroom might focus on a specific subject facilitated primarily by an instructor, a learning community transcends. For example, our virtual classroom included journal spaces for personal reflection and this shared equal time with forums for theory discussion. In essence, the personal and the theory became one-in-the-same.

The on-line learning community is a specific container. We found that our community was a virtual space that held a collection of people we needed and valued. For example, our

journal space was uniquely ours to write, reflect, post pictures, share poetry, ramble, cry, scream, or say nothing at all. While we each knew journal entries were public to the community, not every entry was written with that in mind. In other words, having the space to put our whole self into the universe and then acting with the whole self was important. Through this action, we were free to learn through different means and for others in the community to learn through different means.

This merging of personal journeys and theory indicate how these key concepts pull toward one another. For us, the cohort experience and the on-line learning community were essential to the transformative learning experience. However, to prove useful to other contexts, we wanted to deduce the overall framework that had grown which allowed us to embrace transformative learning. We looked to see how the elements of on-line learning, transformation, and community learning fit together. Through careful observation, reflection, discussion, and application of transformative learning theory the framework of quadrinity learning emerged.

Quadrinity Learning

Mind-Body-Spirit-Emotion. For Cohort 14 transformative learning was regarded as a practice of wholeness. “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” (Palmer, 2000, p.16). Parker Palmer’s words are an echo of our cohort’s aim. Transformative practice requires authenticity of self and authenticity depends upon being a whole person. We found that our on-line learning community developed as each woman shared her full being and became open to the wholeness of others.

The cohort was a balance of mind, body, spirit, and emotion. Some members began as strong in one dimension such as spirit or mind and this became transformative learning practice. For example, those strong in spirit brought spiritual practices to the cohort. This aided those less connected to her spirit as discomfort gave way to insight; as spirit became an unwitting teacher to those more oriented to mind or body for example.

Learning as a whole person made possible on-line discussion that generated ways for us to work as a community for the benefit of individual struggle. For example, through discussion we came to explore how hours at the computer writing about transformation was a stress on the body (aching eyes, backs, necks, and heads). The question emerged, was there a way to bring balance? At the same time, various members of the cohort had individual stressors to manage. These two circumstances merged and were assisted by a simple practice for the group. For the period of a month, we agreed to learn through the body – go for a walk, meditate, soak in a bath, or some other body relaxing experience and then share. From this, authenticity could manifest. The lessons of the body became connected to the lessons of the mind, spirit, and emotion.

Learning Modes. As many in the cohort are educators either through formal educational institutions or through professional facilitation/consultation work (or both), embracing varied modes of learning came naturally. Tools such as Kolb’s Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb 1981) and concepts such as John Heron’s Multiple Ways of Knowing (Heron 2000), resonated with approaches used by cohort members in personal and professional life. For example, John Heron’s idea of four learning modes (Propositional, Experiential, Imaginal, Presentational) reflected the varied means naturally used by Cohort 14.

Much like the mind-body-spirit-emotion connections, multiple ways of knowing were folded into our experience. Traditional education depends heavily on propositional knowledge and “the life of the mind”. Well versed in this tradition, we were eager to experience a more

balanced approach. Experimentation with practices unusual, foreign, or out of individual comfort zones became a common experience. Using meditation, daydreams, insight meditation, and other practices of the subconscious became essential to our community. Facilitating a new practice for the community was evidence that the on-line learning was a shared and co-created experience. Artistic expression, trying a new ritual, swapping relaxation techniques, and intellectual discussion were all equally important practices. Similar to Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory, our cohort relied on a range of learning approaches. The LSI charts out quadrants along the axis of active experimentation -- reflective observation and abstract conceptualization -- concrete experience. Kolb suggests that groups move in cyclical fashion through the quadrants depending on circumstances. In assessing our experience, we believe that we did move through the Kolb's quadrants, though not always in unison or in cyclical fashion.

In essence, Kolb and Heron both underscored the point of wholeness. A person is not a single, static learner, where one approach yields the best outcomes. Rather, both authors suggest that learning depends upon a learner being dynamic, expanding his or her abilities. Our experience is in agreement and extends to suggest that transformative learning requires the dynamic, not static, view of self.

The Medicine Wheel. The four directions (West, North, East, South) as defined by the medicine wheel became a literal and physical definition of the cohort experience. In April 2000, the cohort gathered in Arizona to begin the process of formal closure. There the cohort walked a natural medicine wheel. The wheel allowed the cohort to have a shared meaning and simultaneously embrace individual orientation. The Medicine Wheel, like learning modes, requires a learning community to value difference because they are needed. For our cohort, the Wheel was something we could walk together and at the same time honor different points along the way. Some members were "at home" in the west, which is the direction of the season of the autumn, the sunset, endings and death. This is the direction of the bear that hibernates and undergoes transformation during this process. Some members identified with the north as the direction of clarity, truth, wisdom, courage and strengths. Others were aligned with the East (vision) and the South (nurturing).

Quadrinity learning is a folding in and blending of these applications as experienced by the cohort. This is a model that explains how cohort members engaged in transformative learning's customary "habits of mind". The proposition is that quadrinity learning is a means to bring about a "shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world" (O'Sullivan, 1999). Quadrinity represents learning through balance and exploration. When held within the on-line and cohort learning community, quadrinity is an essential practice. We believe that only through quadrinity is transformative practice possible. Only through embracing the whole self can we become authentic.

Applications of Quadrinity Learning

This workshop aims to 1) provide a detailed understanding of the quadrants through sharing samples of Cohort 14's experience; and 2) offer attendees direct experience with quadrinity. The goal of the workshop is to move attendees through practices related to each quadrant and, as a result, illustrate the interrelatedness of the quadrants. Combining Cohort 14's experience with the workshop attendees' experience provides a foundation for further discussion. The workshop facilitators provide samples of mind, body, spirit, and emotion of Cohort 14's experience. Drawing from the cohort's history, workshop attendees are led through similar

practices. The intention is to create an opening for questions, considerations, and sharing of experience.

The overarching principle of the workshop is to provide a pedagogy of transformative learning, specifically where on-line learning is concerned. By offering quadrinity – a fuller expression of transformative learning – we offer a framework to educators, facilitators, social actors, and others committed to transformation. This framework provides a validated approach from the onset of building community. Our combined experience in teaching, facilitation, and grassroots activism suggests that there is a pattern to the seemingly haphazard approach to transformation. Perhaps if we can facilitate quadrinity from the onset, learning groups, whether on-line or face-to-face, then more effectively experience community and transformative practice.

Summation

We, members of Cohort 14, have come to view the transformative process as a continuum with no end point. Though the cohort formally ended April 2000, for some members the experience continues today. Moreover, though the cohort is no longer a formal community, it continues to bring members together in the practice of transformative learning. We retain our sense of community. This community still exists on-line, though now mostly as an email list than a formal virtual classroom. The formal three year's of cohort life was for many, the richest educational experience. Quadrinity made possible this assessment and the continued transformative journeys we each pursue.

Cohort 14's culminating experience was to journey to the Arizona desert to walk an ancient medicine wheel, naturally formed from large boulders. This wheel and its caretakers became an echo of what the cohort explored as the powerful learning experienced in community. Naming this experience quadrinity learning is both appropriate and innovative. Quadrinity is about embracing equally four distinct areas. Understanding quadrinity is to embrace the wholeness of self and thereby the transformative process. Transformation is a process, not a destination. Moreover, through wholeness of self, the larger community is impacted. Even larger still, this places transformative practice as an echo of Fredrick Buechner's sentiment, "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

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Reframing Conflict: Transformation Potential Through Dialogue

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Abstract: *This one-hour experiential workshop focuses on the use of dialogue in transforming disputants' perspectives of themselves, others and the conflict. It is related to the presentation as part of a panel, given by Dr. Peter T. Coleman, Assistant Professor and the Director of the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (ICCCR) at Teachers College.*

Keywords: Conflict resolution, dialogue, conflict transformation

Background

We think of conflict as incompatible activities in that one activity prevents, interferes with or obstructs the second activity, such that the latter is less effective or less likely to occur (Deutsch, 1973). When we are engaged in conflict we may respond in a number of ways that lead to destructive or constructive outcomes. Based on our experience, in most situations we have found that people whom we encounter are often frustrated with the destructive outcomes of their conflicts. This means that on one level they are not having their needs met and on another level they are damaging their relationships with others.

This frustration is often a result of several factors including limited self-awareness, which is often a result of our inability to differentiate between our intent and the impact we have on others. The values and assumptions upon which we base our interpretations and from which we make meaning of the world around us are not explicit to us or to others. At the same time, our views of others can be rigid and narrow in that we don't really understand the other party's worldview or intentions. Thus, this lack of awareness of our own and the other's assumptions may lead us to react to each other in ways that do not foster constructive outcomes to our conflicts.

Our belief is that if we are able to gain a better understanding of ourselves and others with whom we engage, we would be able to lessen the number of conflicts within which we find ourselves. As we deepen our relationships with others, we may no longer react in the same way to issues or behaviors that upset us in the past. This deeper understanding of the other party and ourselves may lead us toward generating and following through on a broader range of constructive options including resolution.

Dialogue is one way of leading us toward this deeper understanding. We can think of dialogue as a way of engaging with others that is mutually respectful (Buber, 1947); built on a foundation of trust and safety, so that disputants will be more inclined to engage (Bohm, 1990); and the use of language as action (Bakhtin, 1981). Dialogic communication, which encompasses the above, could lead toward disputants being able to uncover their own assumptions and those of the other. This process in combination with reflecting on the new learning could lead toward transformations in disputants' perspectives of themselves, others and the conflict. It is this deeper level of understanding that can be transformational (Brookfield, 1987). If enough people engage in addressing conflicts in this manner and are able to shift their perspectives enough to change their orientation toward others and conflicts, there could be change at the societal level, as well (Freire, 1970).

Collectively, we have worked with many individuals and groups using dialogue as a means to develop more effective patterns of communication. As a result, people begin to understand themselves and others differently. This in turn has had positive impact on the assorted relationships in which participants from former workshops now find themselves. It has altered, to different degrees, their ways of seeing the worlds they live in. The differences of before and after manifest themselves in a variety of ways. They may enter into relationships differently from before as their way of engaging the other and the expectations they place on themselves and others change. They may hear things differently as they pay attention to different parts of messages and the meanings they may have. They may also respond differently from the way they have in the past, so that they are giving themselves opportunities to probe further for more information before reacting.

Workshop Overview

This workshop will build on the theoretical presentation Dr. Peter T. Coleman will give earlier in the day. It will be an experiential workshop of one aspect of what he will speak on, dialogue as an approach to conflict transformation. First, we will present an overview on dialogic communication including guidelines for engagement. The expectation is that the participants experience the potential dialogue has in leading toward more respectful communications and interactions, which could result in deeper understandings and possible perspective transformation. Clearly, developing a deeper understanding of another, especially one whom we are in conflict with, is expected to take longer than the time available for this workshop. The ineffective communication patterns and negative emotions we associate with those we are in conflict with can interfere with our being able to listen deeply and empathically to each other. It is also noted that in most people's experiences of perspective transformations they are unplanned and happen for a variety of reasons unexpectedly. We do hope that the participants have enough of an experience to recognize the potential of dialogue to develop deeper understanding and perspective transformation.

The instructors will model the skills, attitudes and behaviors they are presenting to the participants in a number of ways. We will elicit information from the participants about their understanding of conflict and dialogue as a way of gauging how informed they are. Building on that, we will have them participate in the process of creating a shared experience together. These generated ideas will be respectfully commented on and expanded upon as we collaboratively create an environment conducive for dialogue in this limited one-hour experience. Another way the instructors will model the skills and mindset we are presenting will be in the nature of the language we use to help uncover the assumptions by which we and others are operating, so that we can foster a deeper understanding of each other. A third way will be in leading the participants toward action, which does not necessarily mean resolution, but some form of constructive outcome. These three ways of modeling reflect some of the different ideas and definitions about dialogue listed above.

Agenda

- Overview – A brief introduction to the content of the workshop as a foundation to link theory to practice.
- Modeling – The instructors will engage the participants to be active in the co-creation of the dialogic experience and will consciously enact the skills, attitudes and behaviors to set the tone for and demonstrate what dialogic communication is.

- Engaging – The participants will now be given the opportunity to interact with one another following the guidelines about dialogic communication.
- Reflecting – Learning comes in reflecting on experience and here the participants will be given an opportunity to reflect on what they encountered when interacting with another in a dialogic manner.
- Debriefing – Participants and instructors will share some of their reflections and reactions to the dialogic experience and explore some of the successes and challenges it poses.
- Reflecting – Participants will be given another opportunity to reflect on the information they heard in the debriefing as this new information may confirm or alter their reactions from before the debriefing.
- Developing action—Participants will be asked to select two or three applications of dialogic communication they plan on making after leaving the workshop.

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Sharing Women's Experiences of Violence: A Journey

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Abstract: *Our personal beliefs are that transformative learning can consist of a number of experiences each of which jogs one's emotions and beliefs a bit, thus changing the person slightly. We also believe that there is a power within the experience of the visual and the use of imagery that can affect some people more than a verbal form of communication can. Thus this artistic representation seeks to bring together the aesthetic and experiential by offering a silent walk through a roomful of visual portraiture of women's experiences of violence. Since this approach can be a personal and powerful non-verbal experience, at the end of the walk there is an opportunity for personal continuing reflection through options for self-expression of silent drawing or writing, or small group reflection on the experience in a small group. However, we leave the options open to those who make the journey.*

Keywords: visual imagery, women's experiences of violence, artistic representation

Introduction

What is the place of the creative in transformative learning? Clifford Geertz (1973), an anthropologist, saw the creative as "important to bring us in touch with the lives of strangers" (p. 16). Connecting the understanding of lives and the arts Maxine Greene in her early work, *Landscapes of Learning* (1978) developed the entire group of essays around the necessity of the creative through the arts. She wrote, "learning must be a process of discovery and recovery in response to worthwhile questions rising out of conscious life in concrete situations" (p.19). She stressed the use of various literary and aesthetic experiences "to stimulate the kinds of reflectiveness necessary for the pedagogy most of us wish to see" (p 106), a pedagogy where "learning must be in some manner emancipatory" (p.19).

John Dewey, an advocate of experiential education, wrote about the importance of the experiential in learning as "experience in its integrity, ...experience freed from the forces that impede and confuse its development as experience" (p. 17). Part of the experience he advocated for learners focused on aesthetic experience. He proposed that experiential learning through aesthetic experiences provided ways to learn that were different from linear, rational ways of knowing by offering people an imaginative way "to order and reorder meanings, to effect connections, and to achieving continuities" (Greene, p. 171).

Today, within qualitative research there is a method of inquiry called portraiture that, like Dewey, seeks to provide for both the aesthetic and the rational. "Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experiences of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions, their authority, knowledge, and wisdom" (Lightfoot & Davis, p.13). Portraiture attempts to be holistic, synergetic, "provocative, and inviting" (Lightfoot & Davis, p. 11). The means through which portraitists do this vary but there is a strong emphasis on the aesthetic, calling on people to hear, see, experience in a variety of means, people's lives in context. Portraitists seek in their work not only to understand people's lives but also to "link inquiry to public discourse and social transformation" (Lightfoot & Davis, p. 14).

Our Rationale

For our contribution to this conference we propose to bring together the aesthetic and the experiential through visual portraiture in a potentially transformative, creative way.

Our personal beliefs are that transformative learning can consist of a number of experiences each of which jogs one's emotions and beliefs a bit, thus changing the person slightly. Each of these changes is a mini transformation. As these experiences multiply, they may result in what we refer to as transformative learning. We believe that there is a power within the experience of the visual and the use of imagery that can affect some people more than a verbal form of communication can. It is our contention that too much use is made of verbal communication, often from the perspective of talking about an experience rather than experiencing something itself, thus limiting the possibilities of people's learning becoming transformative. You quote Maxine Greene in your call as saying, "transformative learning often involves deep, powerful emotions or beliefs." We believe that actual experience through the use of visual imagery can evoke those deep powerful emotions, providing a powerful potential for mini transformations.

Our Pedagogical Approach and Goals

Therefore, we propose a participatory learning environment designed for active participation in women's lives so people can see and experience women's lives in the context of the violence women experience. The layout is designed to promote active involvement, realism and clarity of experience through moving among colorful and provocative symbols of women's experience with violence, directed at evoking "a surprising jolt of our emotions" (Wlodkowski, 1998). Acknowledging that transformation is not a single process but that it varies from person to person (Cranton, 1994), we conclude the experience with the opportunity for participants to engage in several ways of self-expression, if they wish. Our hope is that participants will develop new insights into domestic violence as part of a learning that can transform.

Proposed Experience

Using the context of violence toward women, we propose to provide within one room a silent visual journey through a) clotheslines of tee shirts decorated by women and girls with experiences of personal violence (The Clothesline Project); b) leading to a walk among symbolic bodies of life-size figures of women who have been killed in domestic violence situations (The Silent Witness Project); and c) continuing reflection by providing options for self-expression, drawing, writing, talking. Each individual experience will be introduced to the participant through an easel that introduces the project. Specifically the invitation to express one's self in one or all of three ways include: putting their feelings in whatever form they choose (imagery or words) on a life size figure of a woman (or for those who are more private, putting their feelings on a small 3x5 card in an envelope provided); leaving their hand print and signature as a commitment to support actions against domestic violence (The PSU-HBG Domestic Violence Awareness Project); and joining a group at the far end of the room to talk quietly about their experiences. Since this can be such a powerful non-verbal experience people may not wish to use words after their experience, so we leave the options open to them.

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Narrative Means to Transformative Ends: Towards a Narrative Language for Transformation

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Abstract: *Narrative therapy has its intellectual roots in and derives its concepts and language from a postmodern concern with experience, narrative and social critique. In this paper the narrative therapy of White and Epston is explored as a body of theoretical and practical knowledge about how to free people from the stories that imprison them in closed and limiting visions of themselves, their relationships and views of the world. Narrative therapy with its focus on changing the frame of intelligibility within which we interpret the world, in how it brings about this change and in how it interprets the social and cultural dimension of one's narrative, is a useful reframing of the language of transformation theory. The paper identifies the implications of this connection for enhancing the social dimension and understanding of transformation and enhancing the ways in which transformation may be facilitated. Finally, attachment stories are proposed as particularly useful narratives for adult educators.*

Keywords: Narrative Therapy, White and Epston, Adult Learning Theory

Introduction

Adult education has been central in reclaiming narrative from the demise predicted for it by Benjamin (1988, p. 87) who announced the end of storytelling. Narrative has become the defining characteristic of the postmodern age. In this paper narrative therapy, as developed by White and Epston (1990) in *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*, is outlined as is the way its insights enhance the understanding of transformative learning theory and practices.

A narrative, in contrast to events described randomly, offers a way of making sense of our experiences by ordering them temporally according to a theme. Many narratives might be constructed from a set of experiences and the account chosen reflects decisions made concerning the significance of events and what theme(s) provide a coherent plot. Narratives are extended metaphors (Ricour, 1984); a fundamental structure of human meaning making (Bruner, 1986; 2002); and “the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 11).

Important contributions have been made to our understanding of how narrative (Wiessner, 2001) and autobiography (Dominicé, 2000) can be instrumental in transformation. The transformative dynamic lies in the recognition that one is not only the main character but also the author of that story and that one can gain a more critical and empowered perspective on one's life through telling and interpreting a life story.

What Is Narrative Therapy?

The theory and practices of narrative therapy are well established by Freedman and Combs (1996), McLeod (1997) and Parker (1999). While many therapies are narrative therapies, White and Epston engage in a more specific exploration of and a more deliberate

stance on narrative and their sustained focus on narrative concepts and processes is the therapy (Payne, 2000, p.4).

Narrative therapy builds on the work of Bateson (1972; 1979) and Foucault (1977). Bateson suggested that the meaning we ascribe to events is constituted and determined by the set of premises and presuppositions, our map of the world. While the map is not the landscape any statement that gives meaning does so within our interpretive frameworks (Goffman, 1974), which determine the questions we ask about events, the realities we construct and the 'real' effects experienced by those parties to the inquiry.

Stories constitute this frame of intelligibility.... it is the story of self-narrative that determines which aspects of our lived experience get expressed, and it is....self-narrative that determines the shape of our lived experience....these stories actually shape our lives, constitute our lives.... (White, 1995, pp. 13-14)

Narratives are akin to Mezirow's frames of reference. White and Epsom (1990, p. 3) resist models of family therapy that see the underlying dysfunction in a family as determining behavior. In therapy the problem has a text and the therapy is a therapy of "literary merit" (p. 4). What is transformed is not only the meaning perspective by also the life narrative. The problems that people present in therapy are a result of the narratives, in which they are storying their experience, and/or in which they are having experience storied by others, not sufficiently representing their lived experience. Others may be participating in stories that are unhelpful, unsatisfying, closed, and loaded with contradictions.

A problem is seen not as a dysfunction in the individual but as a story in need of reauthoring through therapeutic conversations, a 'restorying experience.' One may need to get in touch with other memories and understandings that are usually forgotten in order to be able to tell a different story. We tell stories as versions of ourselves and the way we weave them together in a particular way makes them the dominant plot. If, for example, an adult says they are not good at Mathematics, they will have a network of stories built around this, a dominant plot. What is remembered and what is forgotten, what is excluded and what is included is done both consciously and unconsciously according to the overall version one has of the situation. This dominant plot is not comprehensive. It does not explain or include all experiences.

Borrowing the concept of unique outcomes from Goffman (1961), the untold experiences that are outside the dominant stories are the raw material for narrative therapy and from these unique outcomes alternative stories are generated. The unique outcomes are neglected in the normal meaning making process in favor of dominant stories that are in possession of the individual or group. According to White and Epston (1990, p. 16) these unique outcomes include the range of events, feelings, intentions, thoughts, and actions, etc. that have historical, present or future locations and that cannot be accommodated by the dominant story.

Narrative therapy helps to identify the unique outcomes by a process of externalizing the 'problem-saturated' story of a person's life and relationships. The externalization helps in interrupting the habitual reading and performance of the stories, helps one separate from stories and also achieve agency. Through the use of imagination the unique outcomes are plotted into an alternative story or narrative. Then, by working through the contradictions between the dominant narrative and the new one, there can be a redescription of self, others and one's relationships.

Alternative stories are the acceptable outcome of therapy, stories that enable one to perform new meanings that are experienced as more helpful, satisfying and open-ended, bringing with them desired possibilities. How does one decide if a reauthored story is better than the previous one? Reauthoring is about the reorganization of experience and a better story is more inclusive of experience. People are not only performers of their own stories but also an audience providing reflection and critique. The “consciousness of one’s production of one’s productions, provides for a context of reflexivity” (White and Epston, 1990, p. 18).

Power is frequently overlooked in therapy at both theoretical and practical levels. Narrative therapy encourages people to look at the broader sociocultural context and to look at or include considerations of power, how it operates and the effect it has on people’s lives. Foucault states that we are subject to power through normalizing ‘truths’ that shape our lives and relationships. These ‘truths’ are constructed or produced in the operation of power (Foucault, 1977). He is not subscribing to the idea that there are objective or intrinsic facts about the nature of persons but to the idea that there are constructed ideas that are accorded the status of truth. These truths are normalizing in that they construct norms around which people shape or constitute their lives. These truths specify a person’s life. The effect of power is to specify a form of individuality that is in turn a vehicle of power that subjugates. It constructs people as docile or subjugated bodies.

Relying on Foucault, White and Epston propose therapy as a means of assisting people to counteract the effects of overt or invisible power relations in their lives (Payne, 2000, p. 39). Many of the problems brought to therapy are seen as socially constructed issues arising from the ‘practices of power’ which lead people to define their identities and their lives in circumscribed ways and these political dimensions are directly addressed in narrative work. Social and cultural factors include the taken-for-granted assumptions and values of the group, family, community, society and culture. We incorporate them into perceptual or meaning making lens and are seldom aware of it happening. The range of unexamined and invisible socio-cultural norms takes on ‘truth-status’ for individuals, groups and communities. Language and narrative are products of our culture, embody its assumptions and influence our interpreting by providing ‘ready made thinking’ (Payne, 2000, p. 22). Narrative therapy echoes the language of transformation theory.

Narrative Means: The Methods of Narrative Therapy

The first step in the process of narrative therapy is to tell one’s story. It is usually a problem-saturated description which embodies the dominant story of one’s life. The therapist asks questions about the detail of the story, the way one is experiencing difficulties and the effects on one’s life. The problem is named, even given a name, helping the process of externalization, and implying that the problem is having an effect on rather than existing in the person. This helps the person separate from the problem.

Such problem-saturated stories often leave little room for counter-stories, for contradicting evidence, that may call into question one’s entrapment (White, 1995, p. 25). Some can see little room for alternative versions of reality, e.g. in cases of unemployment, brutality and violence, terminal illness, etc. White sees problems as constructions created through the stories people tell. These stories are shot through with ideas, assumptions and ‘given truths’ of social and cultural origin. Because the stories do not explain everything, they omit experiences and leave room for identifying contradictions (Payne, 2000, p. 68).

By deconstructing the unique outcomes that deny, contradict or modify the dominant problem-saturated story there is a focus on what does not fit the dominant story. This helps the second, until now hidden, description or new story to become a firm account rather than dissolve away. Questions about how other people may have witnessed or perceived these unique outcomes are also asked. “Through deconstruction the person gains a wider perspective on her experience, ‘writes a richer story’” (Payne, 2000, p.14) or thicker story. For example, a person may describe a bleak childhood, but remember an enjoyable birthday party. The clues may highlight hidden experiences, strengths, tenacity, resourcefulness and courage.

The therapy engages in a process of externalizing internalizing discourses through questioning. Discourse does not mean a conversation but is a philosophical term meaning the habitual ways of thinking and assuming, with resultant language habits, that are common currency within particular social groupings, e.g. couples, families, communities, organizations, clubs, professions. It involves the “explicit examination of the ideas which inform beliefs and narratives thus directly bringing issues of ‘politics’ into the therapy room” (Payne, 2000, p.59). It could involve the discovery that habitual, significantly limiting discourses, deriving from one’s history and from ‘assumed truths’ in contemporary society, no longer make sense. This sounds like desocialization.

In therapy written documents may be introduced or readings given to support new stories; outside witnesses may be involved as an ‘audience’ for the telling and retelling of stories. The end of therapy arrives when the narrative is strong enough, rich enough, thick enough to sustain a future.

Questioning is central to narrative therapy. According to White and Epston (Payne, 2000, p. 109) there are different kinds of questioning: according to either a literary or an anthropological metaphor. The literary questioning is about authoring, reauthoring and storying so that the telling and the retelling of the story increasingly incorporate additional sub-plots. The anthropology metaphor is of moving through a ‘rite of passage,’ a ritual of three stages: *separation* from previous dominant perceptions of history, situation and identity; *liminal* or transitional where the confusion brought about by the first stage is replaced by the emergence of new possibilities for change and *reincorporation* where the person’s rediscoveries and new knowledges are authenticated and reinforced by being communicated to significant others and by hearing their response. The questioning is a process of deconstruction, scrutinizing culturally influenced assumed knowledges and ways of thinking in order to see their previously invisible implications and to separate from them, if this is what one wishes to do.

Transformative Ends: The Implications of Narrative Therapy

Firstly, narrative therapy is a transformative process and deepens our understanding of transformation theory. Secondly, it provides a different language, a narrative language, for describing transformation. Thirdly, it provides useful pedagogical tools for facilitating transformative learning.

Narrative therapy alerts us to the way we are inclined to adopt narratives that are carried in and reflective of the ‘truth’ disciplines of our society and culture. Moreover, it alerts us to be careful about locating our practices as educators in the ‘truth’ discourses of our profession. In underlining its social concerns, narrative therapy alerts us to the danger of adult

educators acting as if education has nothing to do with social control. There is always the strong possibility of this and so critique is necessary. We are always engaged in political activity. Narrative therapy and transformative learning can challenge the techniques that subjugate people to dominant ideologies.

Narrative therapy is a process of changing frames of intelligibility (frames of reference) through critical reflection on assumptions (Mezirow, 1998, p. 191), the defining characteristic of transformative learning. It is a process of becoming aware of the “production of one’s productions” which is the White and Epston version of critical reflection on assumptions (1990, p. 18). Narrative therapy and transformation theory see therapy and teaching as a hermeneutic process of textual interpretation. In the emphasis on a critical unearthing of the social and cultural dimensions of assumptions they are also a critical hermeneutic. Though not framed in that language, White and Epston are interested in conceptual, psychic, and theoretical reflectivity. This is a form of critical consciousness and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1981, p. 13).

Secondly, the emphasis on telling one’s story, a description and sharing of understandings with others; the emphasis on the lack of fit in one’s dominant story; the search for alternative outcomes and new meanings; the importance of other people as audience for telling and retelling; the focus on contradictions between dominant story and unique outcomes; the emphasis on the better story being more integrative of experience; deconstruction being a procedure for subverting taken for granted realities and practices; and the emphasis on agency and acting on the basis of new narratives and network of assumptions – all are transformative ideas in narrative guise and a new language for transformation.

Thirdly, narrative therapy alerts us to the possibility that the educational use of narratives can be transformative. The process of transformative learning is clarified by the pedagogy of narrative therapy. Narrative therapy has a methodology of questioning that is Socratic in its critical intent. Deconstruction, sharing stories, retelling, digging out alternative versions, other people as witnesses, taking action on the basis of new stories are all outlined as useful therapeutic process that have implications for pedagogy. How to identify and articulate new stories is developed well in narrative therapy.

The ‘rite of passage’ involving moments of separation, transition and reincorporation are evocative of the stages of transformation as outlined by Mezirow, from disorienting dilemma to reintegration back into society. It is not necessary for the two processes to be identical. It is sufficient that facilitators of transformative learning can look to narrative therapy as a process of some interest and practical import.

Conclusion: A Most Unpostmodern Thought

For good reasons, adult educators have traditionally paid little attention to theories that have a clear biological base. I am suggesting that attachment stories form a set of narratives that are of significance for adult learning and education. Bowlby (1969) implies that the internal working models (secure, avoidant, resistant or disorganized) laid down in infancy as a paradigmatic or epistemic frame of reference influence profoundly the ways one deals with disorienting experiences and other perceived threats to our taken for granted world of meaning making. One’s early attachments are influential in the development of a dominant narrative that influences how we approach development, change, learning and relationships and the many other experiences of adulthood. In its ability to work with narratives, narrative

therapy confronts us with the exciting possibility that adult educators interested in transformative learning might be able to facilitate significant learning in the context of the variety of attachment stories that adult bring to their learning. Like Bruner (1987, p. 12):

I have been looking at another kind of thought, one that is quite different in form from reasoning: the form of thought that goes into constructing not of logical or inductive arguments but of stories.... might we not be well advised to explore in equal detail what we do when we construct ourselves autobiographically.

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How Does One Come to Socially Engaged Spirituality? A Transformative Model Leading to Socially Engaged Spirituality

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Abstract: *Those who practice Socially Engaged Spirituality (SES) often have a turning point in their lives when they experience a transformative process where they must reflect on deep, powerful emotions—when they experience a crisis/dissonance and see that things are “other than they have assumed.” While studying the written accounts of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Mev Puleo, who were spiritually driven and socially engaged in their communities, we identified common components in their SES experiences that led to our development of a process model on how one comes to SES. We hope to inspire dialogue about a model of transformative learning that leads to Socially Engaged Spirituality and its application in different engagements of social change at individual, community, and global levels.*

Keywords: socially engaged spirituality, transformative learning model, social change

Introduction

Yes, the way up the hill to Christ the Redeemer is a bumpy, sometimes dangerous ride. And I have come to believe that we, the privileged, are invited to get off the bus and plant our feet squarely beside the journeying people, walking with the God who is present in those on both sides of the road. We may all start at different places, but as people seeking to follow the way of liberation and justice, we will arrive together as we learn to walk with one another. (Puleo, 1994, p. 7)

This quote from Puleo touches us deeply as we relate to the times we have been invited to “get off the bus” and journey with those walking with Spirit. Sometimes we have walked, and sometimes we have watched from behind the dirty bus windows, seeing but not participating in the journey. When we participated in the journey, we could sense when we were traveling together with Spirit, empowering, liberating, and healing the injustice we noticed in our lives.

But what about those who have dedicated their lives to alleviating the injustices in their worlds without acknowledging a connection to God or Spirit? Is there a difference between a social/political activist not grounded in a spiritual practice and someone who comes to social engagement from a spiritual perspective? And if there is, what is the process that leads someone to Socially Engaged Spirituality (SES)? In answering these questions, we collaboratively engaged in a reflective process, studying the written accounts of the lives of spiritual individuals, such as Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Mev Puleo, who were socially engaged in their communities. We identified common components these individuals expressed in their SES-type experiences and found the same in our own experiences, which led us to develop a graphic model to express our understanding of the process of coming to SES. We found that activism and SES have different patterns of engagement. In our efforts to discuss and clarify the differences between SES and social activism, we present what we see as a dynamic process model of a journey toward SES.

Activism and Socially Engaged Spirituality

We see social activism and Socially Engaged Spirituality as closely related, but with subtle differences difficult to discern at first glance. Activism is a conscious engagement to work toward change in the world. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines activism as “The theory, doctrine, or practice of assertive, often militant action, such as mass demonstrations or strikes, used as a means of opposing or supporting a controversial issue, entity, or person” (1992, p. 18). While this definition primarily relates to the addressing of national social issues such as oppression, we recognize that activism exists on many levels, including those concerning our daily lives and relationships.

We assert that social activism—working to address issues of injustice or liberation—is not necessarily grounded in a spiritual context. We also assume that “spirituality” does not necessarily include social engagement. The main variance between SES and social activism is a *conscious intent* to bring spirituality to one’s social engagement. Thomas Merton alludes to this difference from his personal experience:

I have sought only to speak the truth as I see it, and to bear witness to what I have discovered by living in the world of the twentieth century, both without the light of Christ and with it. There is a difference and I have experienced the difference, and have endeavored to say so (1973, p. 245).

The precise meaning of spirituality, however, is difficult to pin down and may differ across cultures.

The words *spirit* and *spiritual* come from the Latin *spiritus* and are related to the Greek *pneuma*, the Sanskrit *prana*, and the Hebrew *ruach*. All of these words refer to air or breath and denote something vital and dynamic, more subtle than thought, as powerful as wind, as close to living creatures as their breath. The word *spirit* points to the limitless being and unconditioned awareness that transcends all physical and mental structures, yet permeates all. Being and awareness are said in many traditions to be our true, unconditioned nature (Vaughan and Whittine, 1994, p. 42).

In the contemporary Western world, spirituality is often associated with wonderful inner experiences (which may or may not have a mystical aspect) as opposed to “religious” ties—signified by organized forms of doctrines, rituals, myths, experiences, practices, spirituality, ethics, and social structures (as defined by Smart, cited in Rothberg, 2001). Rothberg defines spirituality as that which involves “the lived transformation of self and community toward fuller congruence with or expression of what is understood, within a given cultural context, to be “sacred” (2001, p. 11). The meaning of sacred ranges from “consecrated” to “entitled to reverence or respect” (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1973, p. 1017).

Catalyzing Component for SES

In our initial inquiry, we found that a main catalyst for SES is an “awakening,” which often stems from a crisis or a dissonance with a relationship. The relationship may involve various entities, such as ideas, person(s), systems, or even one’s own environment. The crisis, or dissonance, is one in which inner experience or understanding of what is right and/or just clashes with outer reality. Dorothy Day writes in her autobiography of the inequities she saw and wrestled with during her early adulthood, even before she found her spiritual path.

There was a great question in my mind. Why was so much done in remedying social evils instead of avoiding them in the first place?What of occupational diseases, and the diseases which came from not enough food for the mother and children? What of the disabled workers who received no compensation but only charity for the remainder of their lives? (1952, p. 45)

This “crisis” or dissonance is a catalyst leading to insight regarding that relationship or situation which the person needs to resolve. That is, there is a realization that the person must address the disjunction between inner and outer reality. In our initial model we identified three paths one might take in response to a crisis/dissonance: no action, social activism, and Socially Engaged Spirituality. See Figure 1.

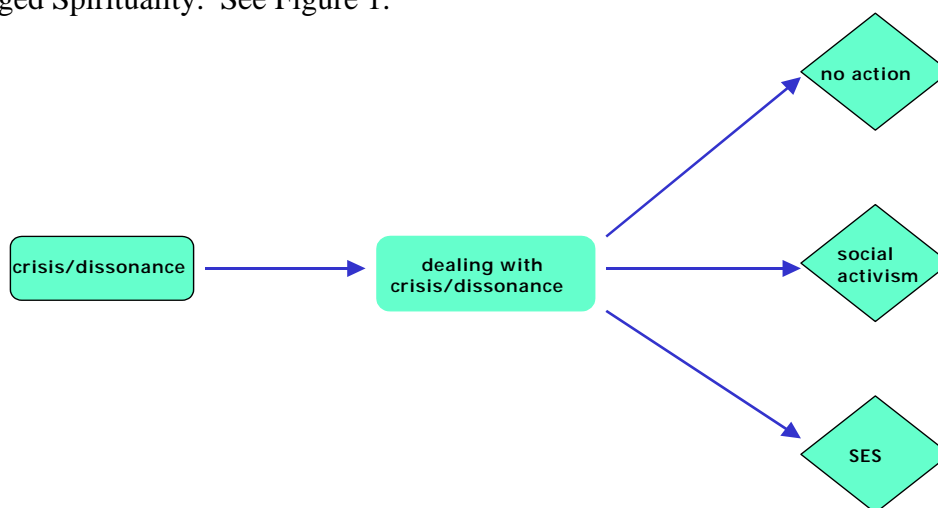


Figure 1. Potential responses to crisis/dissonance

How, and to what level, one reacts to this dissonance is deeply affected by contextual issues. One may react differently depending on one’s place in society, the level of oppression that one experiences, to social, psychological, or physical needs, the depth of spiritual development one has cultivated, or the cultural values at any given time. Hence, one may see, acknowledge, and even participate in issues of dissonance numerous times without transforming one’s actions to resolve the dissonance. For example, both of us have noticed the plight of the homeless for years and reflected upon homelessness, but have not been called to social action on this issue. If one is not greatly affected by the dissonance, one may reflect upon the situation and not set action as a priority.

The question, then, is: At what point is a personal transformation strong enough to lead to a permanent shift to action congruent with Socially Engaged Spirituality? Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton were apparently involved in social activism prior to connecting this work with Spirit. Both individuals returned to social activism after connecting with spiritual aspects of their lives. Why did they resume their social activism with the addition of spirituality? We posit that Socially Engaged Spirituality requires one to *actively* cultivate and nurture one’s spiritual development in order to bring it more consciously into one’s work. This may take many years; Dorothy Day, for example, struggled with accepting her spiritual dimension. Only some years after “doing” personal spiritual work did she connect it to her work. This period of dealing with the crisis/dissonance seems to require a time of contemplation and internal questioning in order

for one to come to a resolution. In fact, we believe that inward reflection is a necessary component of coming to terms with the crisis/dissonance. The quality and level of inner reflection, however, may vary and can lead to different responses, not all of them spiritually based.

A Model of the Process of Coming to SES

Once we identified these three paths, we continued our collaborative inquiry about how one ends up with a path of socially engaged spirituality versus social activism or no action. This resulted in a more intricate model showing the interaction of various components we identified as necessary in the process of coming to socially engaged spirituality (see Figure 2).

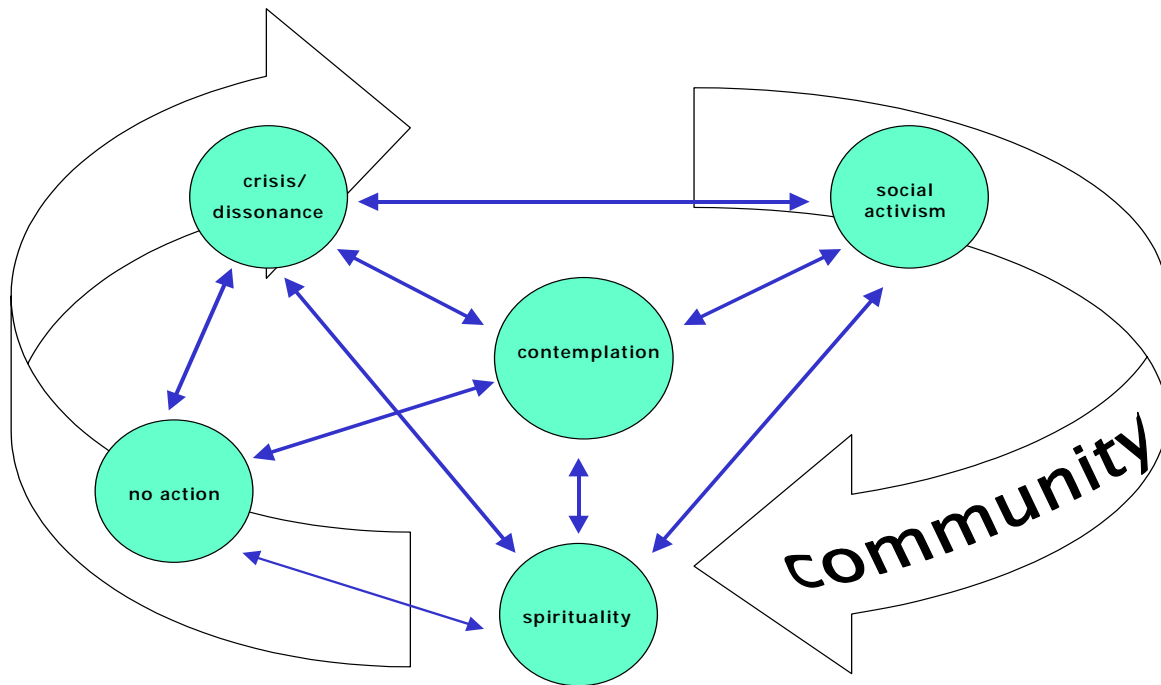


Figure 2. Components of the Socially Engaged Spirituality process

The diagram illustrates the dynamic interaction of components that contribute to the process of coming to Socially Engaged Spirituality. At any given time, some interactions may be stronger than others or even non-existent, but they do inform each other. For instance, activists may have fluid interactions between crisis/dissonance, contemplation, and social activism, but be dissociated from their spirituality even if they have a spiritual practice. One can also be spiritually aware of a crisis but cut off from actively engaging with an intervention to lessen the dissonance.

Socially Engaged Spirituality is predicated on the interaction between *action* and *spirituality*. While we cannot determine the exact point at which social action and spirituality merge to become SES, we can describe what we see as the point of integration. We see this as the point at which a person *consciously* connects spirituality with social engagement. We realize that only the individual can determine when this occurs. Obviously, if one's spiritual development is low, the degree of integration will be small or non-existent. We posit that for some, the shift to SES may never occur. For others, like Day, it may come gradually, while for others it may be more abrupt or distinct.

Critical to the shift is the practice of actively cultivating one's spirituality. The more a person develops a spiritual practice, and cultivates personal knowledge of the Divine, the deeper (and perhaps more conscious) the level that one can bring Spirit into action. We suggest, in fact, that this is where disciplined contemplation can have its most potent effects. Merton puts it this way:

The real point of the contemplative life has always been a deepening of faith and of the personal dimensions of liberty and apprehension to the point where our direct union with God is realized and "experienced." We awaken not only to a realization of the immensity and majesty of God "out there" . . . but also as a more intimate and wonderful perception of Him as directly and personally present in our own being. . . . If we are involved only in our surface existence, in externals, and in the trivial concerns of our ego, we are untrue to Him and to ourselves. To reach a true awareness of Him as well as ourselves, we have to renounce our selfish and limited self and enter into a whole new kind of existence, discovering an inner center of motivation and love which makes us see ourselves and everything else in an entirely new light (1973, p. 175).

Contemplation and action are not mutually exclusive. From our perspective and experiences, they are essential elements in Socially Engaged Spirituality. Contemplation is a way to get in touch with and nurture the Divine, while action is the manifestation of that experience. Without a more profound human understanding derived from exploration of the inner ground of human existence, love will tend to be superficial and deceptive. Traditionally, the ideas of prayer, meditation and contemplation have been associated with this deepening of one's personal life and this expansion of the capacity to understand and serve others (Merton, 1973, p. 172).

As suggested by Merton, the exploration of one's personal life is an important aspect of Socially Engaged Spirituality. The process of getting in touch with our spiritual needs, along with personal desires for liberation and justice, leads to an outward expansion that can encompass and heal others also working toward liberation. This brings us to point out the importance of community in transformation. A community (or communities) can be instrumental in supporting, stifling, or questioning the process of coming to SES. For example, we noticed a deepening of our progress in the model after engaging with communities supportive of spirituality and social activism. (We should note that the communities supporting each component may or may not be the same.)

Transformative Learning in Coming to SES

Through our studies, and our work with SES, we have come to consider transformative learning "as the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of a basic worldview and specific capacities of self through a consciously directed process, while accessing symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analyzing the underlying premises" (Elias, 1992, p. 2). We propose that coming to SES involves a deepening of skills and awareness during contemplation, spirituality, and action until its connecting cycles of association create an atmosphere in which one is empowered to act in accordance with the Divine or with what is considered sacred.

An even deeper question, "At what point is a personal transformation strong enough to make a more permanent shift to action congruent with socially engaged spirituality?", arose during our discussions. While we lack a precise answer to this question, we have attempted to

document the process that one may undergo in becoming more closely aligned with SES. The process incorporates transformative learning on many levels, including: a deepening awareness of one's own spirituality; connection with one's environment; and self-empowerment to enter into action to recreate oneself and one's encompassing world toward a deeper alignment to the sacred. We leave the model open in aspects of where one enters the process and how one travels through it. We hope that readers will reflect on their own journeys and assess the model through their experiences.

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Transformative Learning and More: A Living Learning Group

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Abstract: *This paper adds to transformative learning theory by examining learning in the context of an adult peer-group. It is a brief report of the author's dissertation research on a peer-group; of which she was a member with 2 other graduate students for over 2 years. Various literatures, not previously linked, were brought together that shed light on this particular phenomenon. Themes were derived from qualitative analysis of the peer-group's conversations such as knowledge creation, relationship, and reflection. Contributions to transformative learning theory are the centrality of collaboration and relationship to peer-group learning.*

Keywords: Peer-Group Learning, Collaborative Learning, Learning Within Relationship

Introduction

This paper presents the author's search to make sense of a personal learning experience, one more profound and transformative than any other learning experience she has ever had. The experience occurred while the author was part of an adult peer learning group with two other doctoral students for 2.5 years. She wanted to understand what was so different about this experience so that became the focus of her dissertation study. Her research question was, "What are some of the key aspects of adult peer-group learning?"

Since research and theories specifically on peer-group learning were not readily found, this researcher searched broadly for theories that could help her shed light on the phenomenon. She found various theories, like transformative learning, that addressed certain aspects of the experience but left out other important ones. Thus, the dissertation literature review consisted of an inquiry into, or a kind of back-and-forth dialogue between, various literatures and the author's peer-group learning experience. A collage-like picture was developed that built bridges between knowledge not previously linked.

In addition, a qualitative methodology, informed by hermeneutic, phenomenological, and heuristic perspectives (Moustakas, 1990; Van Manen, 1997), was used for data analysis. Audiotape transcriptions of the group's conference calls were selected as the data for analysis. Conference calls constituted the majority of the group's interaction time since they lived in 3 different states and only had occasional face-to-face retreats. Listening to selected audiotapes that took place over the life of the group allowed her to go back, as close as possible, to the actual lived experience as she wondered "what is going on here?" An inductive coding process was used to discover the essential themes or activities to further add to an understanding of peer-group learning. From this analysis, the researcher found the term *living learning group* best captured the phenomenon. This paper presents, in a condensed form, the author's findings about adult peer-group learning that consisted of transformative learning and much more.

Literature that Fits Researcher's Experience

Various literatures helped explain different aspects of this researcher's experience. Peer-group learning consisted of multiple individuals working together on their own learning and development. In other words they were collaborative learners. *Collaboration* is a complex phenomenon consisting of both process-with and reality-between (Valek & Knott, 1999).

Process-with is how collaborators engage in a process that moves them toward achievement of a goal or task. Reality-between is what exists between the collaborators during the process-with. Collaborative learning groups who adopt an identity of a *learning group*, in contrast to a task-oriented group, go through different phases over time where their learning moves to higher orders of complexity (Kasl, Dechant, & Marsick, 1993). Given the right environment, commitment, and enough time, sometimes a *collaborative self* (Lawrence, 2001; Mealman & Lawrence, 1998) develops. This other entity has its own voice, history, language, and working style. When a collaborative self develops the individual voices are not lost but become stronger like the separate threads in a much stronger rope.

The research on *residential learning* (Fleming, 1998) explained the importance of occasional face-to-face learning through immersion when learners are together for an extended period of time. Residential learning offers a deeper and more intense learning experience because individuals are detached, both physically and psychologically, from the routines of their lives. Residential learning also provides continuity or continuous, uninterrupted learning that occurs in an intimate setting where participants live, eat, and sleep in a space designated for just learning.

Situated learning added that the learners were whole persons acting within a particular social, cultural setting to take on a new identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). *Co-operative inquiry* explained that these individuals used a process of inquiry into their own professional practice through ongoing, emergent cycles of action and reflection into their dynamic and ever-changing needs and concerns (Heron, 1996). *Transformative learning* also showed the value of *reflection* on experience to facilitate individual change and development through examination of underlying assumptions and values (Mezirow, 2000). Others who write about reflection say the intent is the creation of common understanding among learners (Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Palmer, 1993) where both critical and a kind of connected reflection serve this endeavor.

Here learners also engage in *dialogue* where certain conditions are required for its full realization (Mezirow, 2000). Leahy (2001), a participant in this peer-group, found that dialogue is an enigma that is difficult to understand and describe. However, he said that dialogue could be seen as ways of thinking, working, communicating, and being together.

In peer-group learning the knowledge that gets constructed is best understood using an *expanded epistemology* consisting of representational, relational, reflective (Park, 2001; Richards, 1998), and collaborative knowledge (Gilly, 2003). Representational knowledge is concerned with accomplishing tasks, solving problems, being able to describe, explain, or understand something. Relational knowledge includes understanding the meaning of what others say and also goes deeper to what is present between individuals in a relationship. Relational knowledge is not for anything and yet it nourishes learners and bridges the psychological and physical space between them. It also sustains peers through the sometimes difficult process of learning together when differences are encountered. Reflective knowledge is about understanding and acting together on the ethical and moral responsibilities learners share in all aspects of their lives. Collaborative knowledge is knowledge intentionally and jointly constructed. It is different from the collective knowledge of the individuals who constructed it. It is impossible to determine, after the fact, who contributed what (Peters & Armstrong, 1998). No one individual owns that knowledge because it is very much a group creation. Collaborative knowledge is what occurred when this group worked together in ways that produced all three of the other forms of knowledge.

Findings from Qualitative Analysis

The findings of the empirical part of the study, derived from selected conversations between the learners over a 2.5 year time period, provide some of the themes of peer-group learning. *Creating the space, knowledge creation, developing practice, both/and predicaments, relationship, and reflection* were some of the primary activities or themes that this group engaged in.

Because these were peers working together without a teacher or classroom, *creating the space* was an important activity. It involved dealing with the *logistics* of learning and working together, such as scheduling and sharing resources. The group also dealt with the more intangible aspects of creating the space *to work together*, like having a safe and accepting space in which to learn. The term *knowledge creation* was chosen for one of the activities rather than knowledge construction, as is found in much of the collaborative learning literature, because of the exploratory, intuitive, and relational way in which the group worked together to create knowledge. Knowledge creation for this group involved *exploring* or questioning, *pulling things together* (creating group knowledge), and *capturing* that knowledge.

The theme *developing practice* is meant to indicate that this group engaged in dedicated, purposeful learning toward a new state of being that they desired, even though they did not fully understand it in advance. Together these individuals tried to stay open to not knowing, trusting that their direction would be revealed moment by moment through a commitment to try to understand their own experience. Practice here includes developing skill or proficiency in the pursuit of a profession, but is expanded beyond professional practice to include an ontological component of becoming someone or something different. For example, one of the focuses for this group was developing its practice of being a group, which included both a consciousness of *us as group* as well as certain skills and practices.

Through reflection together these individuals realized early on that their experience consisted of many different *predicaments* that they believed were important to embrace and to seek a *both-and* way of being rather than making an either-or choice between options. For example, there were both reasons for as well as barriers to collaboration. These learners found it was important to hold the creative tension of both rather than attempt to choose or focus on one and try to ignore the other.

The participants in this group engaged in acts of *reflection* about almost all of the other aspects of their experience as they tried to understand their experience of learning and working together. *Relationship* served as the foundation for all of their interactions. They did not know this was going to be true in the beginning. Relationship of this depth had never been so important to any of their previous learning experiences.

So *living the learning* brings all of the other activities together. Learning for these individuals was so much more than an intellectual endeavor. It was about making their learning part of their lives. They worked together to understand and to try out the ideas they were studying. It was also about becoming someone different both individually and collectively through this learning that involved their heads, hearts, bodies, souls, and relationships.

Contribution to Transformative Learning Theory

While transformative learning theory offers much to understand this phenomenon, this study adds the centrality of the two intertwined areas of collaboration and relationship to learning in the context of an adult peer-group that was together over an extended period of time. Living the learning together best captures the nature of the experience.

The depth of the relationships between learners that was found in this peer-group learning experience is not addressed in most of the literature on transformative learning, which primarily focuses on classroom experiences or situations where individual beliefs and assumptions are called into question. Other learners are there to instigate and facilitate an individual's critical self-reflection process, thus making it a social process, but not necessarily a relational one. Relationships in a living learning group are more intimate and involved than is described in transformative learning. Having significant relationships for support and ongoing commitment as members go through the sometimes difficult and painful process of having their personal belief systems or social and cultural value systems challenged is critical for these kinds of groups since there is no teacher or leader or institutional sanctions to hold them together.

Transformative learning is also not usually seen as a collaborative process of creating knowledge together since the focus is on the process of individual cognitive change. A living learning group is a relational, collaborative, and egalitarian group. The group is relational because members pay attention to their relationships; they are as important as the group's work together. This includes paying attention to self, each other, as well as the group entity. Learners are joined in a covenant involving a commitment to immerse themselves in a mutually accountable, transformative relationship (Palmer, 1993). Peer-group learners do not have the institutional structures to help sustain their learning efforts. Therefore, the development of their relationships and their commitment to the work of collaborative learning are what keep this kind of group together over time. So there is a need for the participants to pay attention to both their *process-with*, how to act as they move toward their mutual goal, and their *reality-between* or what exists between them. In other words, their collaborative work as well as their relationships.

Equality is an ongoing concern for all involved, in both their collaborative work and their relationships. Members of a peer-group operate from the belief that they create knowledge together using a consensual process through talking together and reaching agreement (Bruffee, 1993). They participate in inquiry into the members' every day concerns through taking action and reflecting on that action. When the group identifies itself as a collaborative learning group they may over time pass through phases from a collection of individuals to a *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998) where processes of transforming experience into knowledge are habituated (Kasl et al., 1993). This process may also result in a collaborative self where the group knowledge surpasses what each individual knows. All of this occurs because the learners intentionally create the space for learning by attending to both tangibles, such as meeting together and having access to resources, as well as intangibles, like developing trust. The group also makes opportunities for immersion in learning through continuity of uninterrupted time spent together that includes detachment from the members' daily lives.

Participants in a living learning group also work on developing various practices to cultivate a consciousness that sustains an ongoing, emergent inquiry into certain domains of being. For example, the group may develop its practice of being a group, being students, or members of a profession. This activity also includes the creation of processes and skills relevant to the group such as active listening and collaborative knowledge creation.

Creating knowledge together is a significant activity for this kind of group. When doing this work creative, connected, rational, and separate ways of knowing and interacting are used (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). What is created is not just *representational knowledge*, accurate representations of ideas or objects in order to predict or control (Park, 2001). The individuals also engage in dialogue about how they understand the world in order to create a common understanding. By understanding how another person acts and sees the world each person comes

to a greater understanding of herself or himself (Richards, 1998). Over time *relational knowledge* is also developed when the members' relationships remained positive, where all are committed to working toward a positive future together (Park, 2001; Richards, 1998). Living learning groups become social action groups too, as Edward Lindeman believed of all successful adult education groups (Elias & Merriam, 1995). Thus, *reflective knowledge* (Park, 2001) is also created through dialogue, reflection, and consciousness-raising into the conditions of the group's world. When the members then take action to make changes they come to understand their world at the visceral and emotional levels, in other words they learn with *mind/heart* (Park, 2001). Representational, relational, and reflective knowledge correspond to the instrumental, communicative, and reflective domains of learning found in transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000) but expands the notion of relationship beyond communicative exchanges and meaning making. Relational knowledge adds what is developed in close, personal, intimate relationships as an important aspect to promote and sustain group learning.

In the context of peer-group learning each person has full responsibility for all facets of the learning and work. This takes collaborative learning found in the classroom to a different level. In this learning environment the whole person is included, all aspects of self and life – a person's ideas, beliefs, values, questions, work, projects, etc. (Leahy, 2001). Here the physical, social, cultural, situational, and relational aspects are all considered important and worth paying attention to. A living learning group also acts as a learning laboratory where ideas and theories are tried out together, taken out into the world, and then reflected upon to discover what was learned. In fact, participants take almost every opportunity to reflect on different aspects of their situation while they are still close to the heat of the experience. To paraphrase the poet Rilke (1984), here individuals are living the questions now so that perhaps someday they will gradually live their way into the answers. The intent here is evolutionary learning, to foster a capacity rather than just taking in and processing information (Montuori, 1993). When individuals live their learning together they see their learning as a process of life itself, not as preparation for an unknown future living (Dewey, 1897; Lindeman, 1989). Thus, this notion of a living learning group adds to transformative learning a fuller understanding of the importance of collaboration and relationship to learning.

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Experiencing Change As Transformational Learning

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Abstract: *This paper describes my doctoral dissertation study on women's perceptions of change. It includes a discussion of its relevance to transformational learning and some of the findings that were indicative of transformational learning. While this research was not a study of transformational learning, the women were transformed by their experiences, and the research offers us a view of change that may be helpful, especially in today's world.*

Keywords: transformational learning, change, women

Introduction: Change and Transformational Learning

"Nothing endures but change." This quote from Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher from 500 B.C., appears in the I Ching, an ancient Chinese book of wisdom. The idea that change is the one constant in life runs throughout history and throughout cultures. It is one of the few things that everyone experiences. But what do we know about change? How do we understand it? There is little research-based information about how people experience change, and few accounts of change exist from the perspective of the person experiencing it within the context of everyday life. There is also little that explains how people can take some change in stride and continue to flow with the rhythm of their lives while other change stops them cold, or how people can face daily challenges and maintain continuity and stability in their lives.

A change event is one of the clearest triggers to learning and development. It does not fit neatly within our prior experience, our assumptions, or our expectations. It is, by definition, different. Because a change is out of the ordinary, it forces us to look at the world differently, to question our beliefs and assumptions. It often forces us to do things differently. When the way that we process change and integrate experience into our lives alters how we see things and who we are, it becomes a transformational learning experience.

In his theory of transformational learning, Jack Mezirow defines it 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; 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)

Transformative learning proposes that a shift in underlying perspectives can occur as a result of a disorienting dilemma (1991, p.4-5). Through transformational learning, we examine and question what our expectations are, how they color what we perceive, and what meaning we give our experience. This leads to a more open, adaptable way of being. In other words, if we experience an event which is out of the ordinary in our lives, and as a result, we examine our expectations built on prior experience in the world, we can alter how we view the world. Change is that event, that disorienting dilemma. It is how we process and respond to change experiences in our lives that leads to learning and development, to transformation.

The Study

This research looked at how women perceive change, how they think and feel about it, what it means, and how it affects them. It looks at the learning process they use to make sense of it, to make meaning of it, and to respond to it. The study presents a clear and dramatic picture of transformational learning. The women were transformed by the change event and its effect on their lives. The women, in varying degrees, all became more conscious of their values and their assumptions. They developed more flexibility and broader outlooks, and they acted in accordance with them. By learning from their experiences and integrating them into their lives, they were changed as people. Change altered their view of themselves, others, and the world, and was therefore transformational.

The study did not set out to look at transformative learning, but the results clearly showed that the women had had transformational experiences. The women reported that their sense of identity changed as a result of their experiences and how they perceived these experiences and responded to them. They also discussed how their beliefs were transformed and how the way they acted or how they were in the world was different as a result. It changed their world views, their priorities, and how they live their lives. The change events led to transformative learning on the part of the women and resulted in the women's thinking and acting differently in the world.

This study was conceived out of a desire to hear other people's stories, particularly women's stories, and to know how they processed change and integrated it into their lives. It was a case study of 17 women who participated in AEGIS, the Adult Education Guided Independent Study program at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. The AEGIS program is designed for experienced, working professionals, leading to a doctoral degree which emphasizes adult learning principles. The program and the study included women with a wide range of professional, socioeconomic, lifestyle, ethnic, and cultural diversity. The women were selected from two class cohorts based upon their willingness to voluntarily participate in the study and their availability. This particular setting and population was chosen because of the diversity of the group, the likelihood that they would be reflective and articulate, and the fact that they would have experienced at least one major change recently in returning to school. The researcher also had access to the population because of her own participation in AEGIS.

The purpose of the study was to better understand women's perceptions of change as they experienced it in their lives. The research focused on providing a description of change in the women's own words, retaining the context of their stories. Its aim was to describe the inner, mostly unseen ways that women process change and respond to it within the context of their lives. The study was conceived in response to the lack of research-based information on the subject of change and the scarcity of women's perspectives in research. The goal was to provide adult educators with the women's perspectives so that they could better assist and support women.

Women and Change

In order to provide a foundation for the study, as well as to establish the context of this research, the study examined literature in the fields of adult development, women's development, adult learning, change, and reflection. There are three core issues which appear throughout the literature on women's development: that women form their identity in connection with others; that women strive to maintain connections and continuity in living their lives; and that women's developmental progress looks different from that of men. These issues differ from men's development in that men strive for separation and autonomy. The importance of these issues is in

recognizing the different approach to life and to experience which results from them.

Women's perspectives have often been missing from studies and descriptions of life experience. Much of what is available in the literature is based on men's experiences and a male model of development which emphasizes separation and individuality. As in the literature on change, development is often described as a simple, linear process. The experience of women is often different.

Historically, women have weathered change experiences while maintaining continuity and connections in their lives. In *Composing a Life* (1990), Mary Catherine Bateson writes about how women live their lives creating patterns within the context of relationships, including integrating diverse experiences into this pattern. It is this experience of change and flexibility along with continuity and connection which may be helpful in learning more about dealing effectively with change. Other leading theorists in women's development, Jean Baker Miller (1986) and Carol Gilligan (1993), also describe how attachment and continuity take on a prominent role. They write about how women's lives are marked by discontinuity, interruptions, and changes and about how women build integrated lives based on a foundation of relationships. These connections create a context for life's experiences.

Women's development looks different from men's development. Women develop and transform while “choosing to stay in their context, maintaining commitments to family and community...” (Parks, 1989, p.298). It might look like staying in place, but they are dealing with change while maintaining connection, continuity, and stability. Women's experience with change would necessarily take place within this framework. By looking at development from this perspective, we see change and growth in a different way. We might learn new ways to approach and deal with change and ways to live our lives in the face of constant change.

Approach

This qualitative case study used critical incidents and interviews to obtain information about the experiences of the participants in the study. Qualitative research methods are suited to gathering information about people's perceptions and feelings and to providing a rich description of the individual's experience. The use of critical incidents and interviews provided depth and detail of the women's perceptions as well as the variations of their experience. The research addressed questions about the women's perceptions of change, including: What is the kind and nature of change? What is significant change? How do they think and feel about change? What meaning do the women ascribe to change? What are the effects of change? What happens internally, such as changing the way they think or feel, or externally, such as doing something differently or taking action?

The study was limited by the unique population that it examined. The women in the AEGIS program were highly educated, successful professionals who chose to return to school, applying to a highly competitive, intense doctoral program. They may have been predisposed to look favorably on change, to take charge of their circumstances, and to reflect on their experiences. While in the program, reflection and critical thinking were emphasized, which may have also contributed to their ability to examine and articulate an internal process.

Because of the relatively small size of the sample and the specific, specialized population from which it was drawn, the findings from this study were not generalizable to the population of women, or even all doctoral students. What the study provided was a description of the perceptions and thought processes of the women involved, contributing to our understanding of some women's experience of change.

Another limitation of this study and of qualitative research in general is the researcher as the primary instrument of the research and the effect of the researcher on the study. One of those effects in this study was the researcher's relationship to many of the study participants. Knowing the participants can lead to researcher bias or to not obtaining the complete information needed for the study. However, it can also work to establish a good rapport with the participants and to ensure their willing participation in the study. By being aware of the potential problems, the researcher made sure not to take information for granted and was careful to maintain the structure of the interview.

Findings

The findings fell under four major categories: the kind and nature of change, the meaning of change, feelings about change, and the effects of change. The women reported that they experienced change as part of an interrelated cluster of change, not a singular event. Meaning was created, and was complex and multilayered. The women's feelings were often mixed, both positive and negative, regardless of the type of change. The most predominant effect of change was the way it altered the women's identities, making them stronger, more confident individuals. The study provides an account of change as a complex, ongoing, nonlinear process, as described by the women experiencing it.

The changes that the women described as significant fell into three categories: life event, professional change, and personal change. The life events were major changes which might be expected to affect most of us: birth, death, marriage, taking a dream trip, and buying a vacation house. The professional changes were being unemployed, starting a business, writing a dissertation, and returning to school. Personal changes included having cancer, experiencing a health crisis, and having a shift in perspective.

The women talked about how their experience affected their lives. They spoke of concrete things that they were doing differently at home, at work, with others, and for themselves. But they also described how they now had a different way of being, in their lives and in the world. This change had to do with a raised awareness, a new consciousness of life and the way they were living their lives. They saw new options, acted on new opportunities, and did not take anything for granted. They almost all spoke of focusing anew on what was truly important, reevaluating their priorities, and of acting on their beliefs and values.

Many also had a broader, expanded outlook. They were able to take in the perspectives of others, to see things from another's point of view. The women had developed a higher tolerance for ambiguity. They no longer looked for the right answer, the truth, the rules by which to live. They acknowledged that there was a lot that they could not control. The world is a messy place. But at the same time each of them recognized what things they could control or influence. And they took strength and comfort in acting on those things that were under their control and letting the rest go.

This was combined with their having developed a new sense of confidence and strength, and a recognition of their abilities. Not only could they see new options but they could act on them because of a change in their perspective. In fact, they could not be the same because of these new perspectives.

What was important to the women was their response to change, not the change itself. They repeatedly emphasized that it is not what happens to us or our experiences which are

important, but how we process them - how we think and feel and respond to them - that matters. And that we need to take the time to reflect, discuss, and process experiences in our lives. The women discussed how they were now consciously living their values, examining their priorities, and focusing on what was important in their lives as a result of the way they processed the change events. The result of this processing was transformative learning in action.

Another important aspect of the study was that the women experienced this transformation while remaining connected to others and within the existing context of their lives. One of the challenges in life is to transform, to grow and develop, and to evolve while maintaining some continuity in our lives and our connections with others. It is a constant struggle to change while continuing to live within a context or to transform that context without entirely losing ourselves and others. I think that the women's experiences can provide a model of how to achieve a balance among change and continuity and connection.

How do we maintain a sense of continuity in our lives? How do we maintain a sense of ourselves? How do we continue to live within the context of our lives? I believe that the experiences that the women in the study shared have relevance to all of us in today's changing world. The way that they perceived their experiences, good and bad, created meaning from them, transformed and learned as a result, all while maintaining and strengthening their connections to others and living their lives with more authenticity, can serve as a hopeful example to us all.

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Transforming Learning as Disorienting Dilemma

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Abstract: *This article offers first an imaginative framing of the deep reasons for learners' resistance to transformative change. Central to this framing is a discussion on the limitations of modern thinking to imagine beyond the individual self. With this discussion in mind, the article goes on to suggest pedagogical practices for transformative learning based on learning communities. The article concludes with a brief consideration as to how it contributes to the "unresolved issues" in transformative learning regarding self and universe and locus of control and regarding perspective change beyond the autonomous self as summarized by Taylor (1998).*

Keywords: transformative learning practices, learning community, beyond autonomous self

Resistance to Transformative Change

Given that transformative learning is mainly a modern Western theory and practice (Mezirow, 2000, Taylor, 1998), an understandable taken-for-granted assumption is that which is fundamentally problematic to learning and centers on *individuals*. In this section I consider whether the exclusive focus on individuals may unwittingly cast learners as objects rather than as *beings* in the flow of a larger narrative. This consideration reflects the ongoing philosophical and psychological discussions on self and personhood and on existence and being (Barrett, 1958; Heidegger, 1949; Heron, 1992; Kegan, 1994; Neumann, 1989)

The Everyday of Being

To many moderns, I would venture that *being* has an esoteric ring more easily associated with Eastern wisdom traditions than with common parlance in the West. Therefore, I take time here to explore what being holds for me, though I confess that I cannot articulate efficiently what I intend. I will circle around in hopes that I can convey something about being without reducing it to an object of analysis.

Oliver Sacks' (1970) book about his patients, who sustained disease to the right hemisphere of their brains, is suggestive. In a case referred to as *the man who mistook his wife for a hat*, the patient Dr. P, a music professor, was able to reason abstractly and to continue to teach music, but could not recognize the faces of even those dear to him.

He [Dr. P] did not relate to them [his loved ones], he did not behold. No face was familiar to him, seen as a 'thou', being just identified as a set of features, an 'it'.

...A face, to us, is a person looking out—we see, as it were, the person through his *persona*, his face. But for Dr. P. there was no *persona* in this sense—no outward *persona*, and no person within. (p. 13)

From the story of Dr. P, I wondered whether a kind of dissociating pathology happens when a different perspective threatens my own. For in that moment I am no longer able to "behold". I lose sight of "the person within". There is something about the ability to behold another that is related in my mind to the feeling of embeddedness in existence. Mutuality is evoked from a sense of being—of being of the same kind, of being subject to the same vulnerabilities, of sharing existence.

The experience of being, however, seems not just lost in moments of conflict. Indeed, the inaccessibility of feelings of being in the everyday has to do with the development of modern thought and objective science in the west. In paraphrasing Martin Heidegger from *Being and Time*, Hunt (1995) writes, “In our objectivity everything that ‘matters,’ including people, becomes some sort of ‘commodity.’” Hunt continues:

Our concept of consciousness as subjective and interior emerges with a social order that values an increasingly autonomous, isolated, and interchangeable individual as its ideal. The problem herein is the simultaneous tendency to see the mind of that individual as similarly autonomous from its social context and to construct a theory of consciousness falsely separated from body, other, and world. ... Whether we like it or not, this is how we, as a people, now think. (p. 23)

The work of Sacks and Hunt moves me to consider whether *being* escapes most moderns and whether the lack of a sense of its mutual ground mimics the pathology of a partial loss of mind. At the same time this musing sensitizes me to what might be missing in transformative learning theory and practice; namely, a sense of self and other as beings who share existence, who are not simply independent and autonomous. Similarly, self and other do not inform each other as two independent objects. They are of a field that casts the form of their relationship. The quality of relationship, it would seem, flows from the essence of the field and whether what is “natural” is to objectify or whether it is to behold.

A Learning Scenario

I offer here a scenario from my teaching to ground readers in my experience and to give us something to hold concretely in mind as I proceed philosophically. I teach a course called *Learning Community*, a major course in a doctoral program in Transformative Learning and Change. In this course, participants engage the paradox of creating a community of diverse learners who do not share common beliefs. The tension between archetypal expectations for community (intimacy, shared beliefs and unconditional and mutual support) and the explicit course objective to engage differences provokes a disorienting dilemma, creating fertile ground for transformative learning. In engaging differences, individual learners are more likely to become aware of their taken-for-granted assumptions and to surface their meaning perspectives.

In one Learning Community session, students were discussing Bynum’s (1999) *African Unconscious*. His work proposes that all of humanity came out of Africa, and therefore, all peoples today share a common consciousness. A first generation African American student said joyously of the work, “This is the truth!” Where upon some students gasped. One white student, with a few nodding in agreement, remarked that she had negative feelings about anyone who insisted that anything was THE truth. Sensing a potential contention along racial lines, other students shifted uneasily. (I will return to this scenario after suggesting an imaginative frame that will help us understand what is at stake that such dynamics feel so charged.)

Cosmic Home and Cosmic Heroes

As I have written elsewhere (Gozawa, 2000; Gozawa, 2001) I suggest that what is at stake metaphorically in transformative learning is one’s *home*—one’s place in the cosmos. In speaking of cosmic home I write:

I do not mean a spatial reality such as the meaning that is construed by the sentence, “the hat is in the box.” This is about a physical entity taking up the interior space of another physical object. Cosmic place is more aligned with the

meaning expressed in the sentence, “she is home.” Here the meaning is about a quality of consciousness. She is of a place and her life dwells in it. To be homeless is more than to not have an enclosure that keeps me protected from the elements. Homelessness also means that I do not have the wherewithal from whence I can meet the world. (2000 p. 2)

Herein I imply that many moderns are not at *home*. Not having a home of being—alone and unprotected—they perpetually are defending their *understanding* of their individual selves, which constitutes an always-tenuous home. Conceivably, such a consciousness is inclined to resist questions that threaten the social construction of a *reasoned* self, a self not secure in the inherent being of *home*. In this context, the “other” with his or her different assumptions is not a mutual being, but rather a detractor to defend against. I imagine a clash of cosmic heroes—armored warriors defending their homes.

At the material-logical level, questioning one’s meaning perspectives may seem only to risk the loss of an unreasonable habit of an objectified self. However, at a visceral level, the ferocity of resistance to change is fueled imaginatively, I suggest, from the clash of *cosmic heroes* fighting for existence, an existence they cannot take for granted. As Hunt (1995, p. 24) notes, “...Descartes—the progenitor of the subject-object dichotomy in its modern form—actually managed to doubt whether he *existed* and had to construct logical proofs in order to convince himself *intellectually* that he did.” In the modern mindset, existence is not inherent—I cannot just be.

Ironically, in this imagining, the capacity of learners to rationally engage their meaning perspectives is minimized in their unbalanced dependence on reason to assure their being. One other complexity: the clash of cosmic heroes, while a metaphor for the insecurity of existential being, is also associated with threats to social legitimacy. A clash of heroes might ensue when one of the combatants, deeply embedded in the modern mindset, is most insecure of cosmic place while the other, bolstered by a traditional heritage and a supportive community is less so. The latter may be more insecure about her social legitimacy and less of her existential being. Nonetheless, the unawareness of being may limit learners’ discernment of social and existential distress. Assumptions emanating from different sources of anxiety have different frames of reference, different triggers, and these differences potentially preclude understanding of self and other.

Revisiting the Learning Community Scenario

In the learning community scenario presented previously, I can now better understand what is profoundly at stake for all the learners. They all share a visceral fear of losing entitlement to be. To the African-American student, what may be at stake is her yearning for a truth that embraces all of humankind equally and that would mediate the judgment and exclusion she feels from the prevailing culture. To those students of Euro-descent who gasped at claims of the truth, perhaps THE truth means the rigid prescription of mainstream religion. This is the very tradition they feel undermines their ability to directly connect with the spiritual. For still others the emerging tension, with its involvement of black and white students, symbolizes the very polarization that they are attempting to transform in their quest to be just. And to be just, perhaps, is unconsciously felt to be the necessary virtue that earns them their place, their right to be.

I suggest that the inability of the diverse learners to connect to a common field of being limits their ability to behold the other and to engage in dialogue that will help them to surface the

assumptions that underlie their meaning. The field of learning needs to transform if learners are to be drawn empathically to each other, for the cosmic heroes are otherwise too wary to allow mutual and critical engagement.

A Transformative Learning Pedagogy

To summarize the previous section and to make explicit its implication to pedagogy: It is likely that amongst Western educators many, given the modern mindset, hold assumptions about learning that conjure an exclusive image of autonomous learner. While they may encourage individual learning in groups, the idea of a field that learns and that learners are of is hard to grasp. However, if cosmic heroes are to relinquish their armor, an effective pedagogy must create conditions for mutuality.

Learning Community, Transforming Context

In the course, *Learning Community*, I provide collaborative processes and reading assignments; however, the primary intention is for a group of diverse learners to transform into a community. This is a community whose members, upon cultivating feelings of shared existence, can thus engage authentically and critically their problematic polarities, opposing points of view, and contending values.

When learners are able to behold each other even as they conflict, then are the learners a community. The community field is one that is attuned to beingness, thus legitimates wholeness in existence, and thereby allows participants authentic engagement with each other. Alternatively, learners could merely remain a pseudo-community of individuals politely learning, but not in a transformative way. Or worse, they could become a conventional group, one where individuals with privilege or personal power arrest community involvement with their individual needs. During engagement and in reflection papers, learners monitor their own feelings of whether the learning environment seems a competitive, compromising, oppressive, or authentically mutual one.

To encourage a theoretical frame, learners also read and discuss texts that critique Western epistemology from various vantage points. Books I use include *Violence Unveiled* (Bailie, 2001), *Yurugu* (Ani, 1994), and *A Buddhist History of the West* (Loy, 2002), reflecting a Christian-mythic, African-centered, and Asian perspective respectively. Learners are asked to discuss these works from three dimensions: 1) stepping into the author's context and conveying faithfully the author's meaning, 2) reflecting what of the work provoked them and what of their assumptions were threatened, and 3) upon completing 1 and 2, what was evoked in them. After sharing these three perspectives with each other, learners are then asked what they are moved to say about the community. Again, while the readings and their discussion are prominent on the syllabus, the transformative learning unfolds in the dynamics of the community trying to come into being despite differences.

Throughout the course, activities like the one just noted are engaged in an environment that evokes awareness of mutuality in existence. In this regard attention to the physical and psychic space, where learning takes place, is critical. Learners are asked to "prepare the space" before engagement. Preparation may include anything from individual student held-traditions of communal altar building, communal singing and movement, sharing life stories, sharing meals, engaging in communal art, and moments of group silence. These engagements, spurred by holistic ways of knowing, create shared states amongst participants. The intention of such preparation is to allow a common field to arise such that all learners are of it. There are perhaps

not words that can fully describe this novel learning experience. I can only comment that appropriately contextualized, a diverse group of learners, invited to bring their practices of whole being, will contribute a plethora of them.

In this section I've talked vaguely about pedagogical practices, as the specifics are dependent on the dynamics that emerge from the group. However, what should be clear is that the general intention is to transform the limitations of the modern way of thinking that treats hats and people the same and to move learners to experiences beyond the individual self.

A final reflection: Objective judgment, the tool of the modern mind, is a powerful way of thinking, but used exclusively, without a common sense of existence, precludes a field of mutuality and hampers an individual's ability to deeply question her or his meaning perspectives. To not throw into question the modern mindset, may limit transformative learning to the taken-for-granted "rightness" of the prevailing order that perpetuates an obsession with self as object, which denies the common ground of existence and thereby keeps cosmic heroes on guard.

"Unresolved Issues" in Transformative Learning

A lack of space precludes a full discussion here, so I will only point to the unresolved issues summarized by Taylor (1998, p. 45) to which this article is relevant. Taylor notes that primary issues are underwritten by "authors' differing view of self and its locus of control in the universe." He also finds that "the definition of a perspective transformation seems to stop short at recognizing a higher level of conscious, the collective unconscious, beyond its autonomous and self-serving outcome." This article contributes to these issues with its discussion on the limitations of modern thinking and its propensity to conjure an autonomous self devoid of context—social and transpersonal. If the learner is embedded in existence rather than standing completely outside of that which is to be known, then rational control at some level is forfeited. However, moved by attunement, that is, the conscious embeddedness in being, the learners' ability to critically approach the meaning schemes of self and other is enhanced.

In seeing self as object so do we see others as objects. Human life is not just transactional in an exchange-of-commodity sense. There is reciprocity of feeling informed by the quality of the gaze of the other. We see ourselves reflected back as precious (as being) or as expendable (as object), and our actions are informed by what we see. This article suggests that whether the gaze of the other objectifies or beholds and whether we know it as such depends on whether the relationship between self and other lives in the mutual field of existence or merely in a competitive field where "home" is always in peril. To be of home allows us the ability to argue with warm hearts for then, psychic existence is not at stake. In such a field learners can proceed with reason.

Beyond the issues, what is important to keep in mind is how their discussion informs transformative learning practices. From an interaction-of-being-and-knowing perspective, a pedagogy for transformative learning might include whole-making practices where individual learners cultivate awareness for a community that learns. Whole-making practices engage learners integrally such that being is experienced; awareness of community and its being moves learners from individual self to self and other and to self and cosmos.

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Types of Transformation in Mathematics Teacher Professional Development

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Abstract: *Professional development that is consistent with constructivist mathematics education reform requires what some call a “transformation” in teachers’ ideas about subject matter, teaching, and learning. Some researchers claim that accomplishing such transformations demand relatively sophisticated developmentally-linked capacities, though most see these transformations more as dramatic changes in the content of teachers’ beliefs than in how those beliefs are held. This paper explores the nature of the transformations of belief that teachers’ experience in mathematics teacher professional development programs, and how those transformations of belief are affected by differences in meaning-making capacity. It explores how teachers’ experiences and processes of change in professional development can best be understood by a combination and interaction of content and structural lenses.*

Problem and theoretical framework

Calls for mathematics education reform (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), 2000) ask teachers to make “very deep changes—even a transformation—in [their] ideas about understandings of subject matter, teaching, and learning” (Thompson & Zeuli, 1999, p. 350). Teachers are asked to develop new conceptions of the nature of mathematics—seeing it no longer just as a set of techniques and formulas to be applied to get correct answers but primarily as a tool for thinking and making sense of the world. They are asked to develop new ideas about how students learn—focusing on how students construct meaning from their experiences rather than through memorization and rote learning. These new ideas, in turn, lead to a variety of other changes—new teaching practices (Schifter, 1996) including the development of communities of inquiry in the classroom (Ball, 1993), and new roles for teachers as generators of new practices that have mathematical integrity and respond to unique contexts (Franke, Carpenter, Fennema, Ansell, & Behrend, 1998; Franke & Kazemi, 2001), among others.

Professional development experiences can support teachers in making these transformations in understanding about mathematics, teaching, and learning. In many programs, these changes occur as teachers experience new ways of engaging in mathematics themselves, explore students’ mathematical thinking, view examples of new forms of classroom practice, and talk together about problems, in and implications for, teaching practice (e.g., Friel & Bright, 1997; Schifter, Bastable, Russell, Lester, Davenport, Cohen et al., 1999). Thompson & Zeuli (1999) claim that such activities will offer a context for transformation when they provide enough cognitive dissonance to create disequilibrium, and then give teachers time and supports to connect new ideas to teachers’ *own* students and contexts so teachers can develop practices consistent with these new ideas (pp. 355-357).

However, what counts as support and challenge may not be the same for all teachers. The same professional development program may be experienced differently by teachers based on many things: their different amounts of mathematical knowledge or kinds of mathematical beliefs, their different philosophies of teaching, their different degrees of teaching experience, and much more. If pedagogical or mathematical ideas espoused by a professional development program are consistent with beliefs a teacher already holds, then the impact of reform-oriented professional development may be more incremental than transformative.

At the same time, constructive-developmental differences—especially in how teachers perceive their roles, where they locate authority, and their capacity for navigating the complexity of multiple perspectives and contexts (Kegan, 1982; 1994)—can have a dramatic impact on teachers’ experiences of professional development. For example, some teachers may see a professional development program as providing clear guidance for expert-tested forms of practice that should be adopted wholesale; others may see it as offering ideas that can be played with and integrated into an internally generated and modifiable framework for effective teaching. For some teachers, the support of administrators and important colleagues back at their schools may be essential ingredients to making change, while others may listen to colleagues’ ideas but will judge them based on their own guiding principles. In both these contrasts, the teacher in the latter example is negotiating internally what the teacher in the former gives over to the responsibility of others, implying that the latter is more developed than the former, according to Kegan’s model. Satisfying both of these groups of teachers in the same program—providing enough authority for those who need it while not sounding too “party line” for those who expect to make up their own minds—can be tricky.

Still, whether or not they intend to, professional development programs often support teachers at several different constructive-developmental levels simultaneously. For example, in providing case studies of reform-oriented practice for discussion, programs may be intending to promote reflection on, and collaborative generation of, new forms of practice and the principles underlying them. Yet these cases may also serve as models for those seeking authoritative direction about reform. Although teachers at a variety of constructive-developmental levels may find support from professional development, throughout much of the mathematics education reform community there is an implicit expectation that real success may only come with more sophisticated meaning-making capacities—primarily the capacity to coordinate a conceptual understanding of important mathematical ideas with students’ ever-changing views in a varied classroom community of inquiry (Fennema et al., 1996; Peterson, Fennema, Carpenter, & Loef, 1989; Schifter, 1995; Wood & Turner-Vorbeck, 2001).

While most demands within the mathematics education community for higher meaning-making capacity have been implicit, a few researchers have made more explicit links. In the 1980s, some researchers (e.g., Copes, 1979; Stonewater & Oprea, 1988) correlated levels in Perry’s (1970) scheme of intellectual development with several increasingly complex perspectives on mathematics and mathematics learning and teaching—ranging from a dualist focus on right and wrong answers, to a more relativist view of math as constructed through inquiry in context. More recently, Goldsmith & Schifter (1997) said, “learning to teach mathematics is ‘developmental’” (p.21), describing qualitative reorganizations of thinking; orderly progression of stages; and transition mechanisms. They also note developmentally-linked “dispositional factors” such as teachers’ “comfort with a greater degree of ambiguity and uncertainty in their teaching lives” (p.47) and the ability to make shifts in classroom authority from teachers to students or to the mathematics itself, rather than “seek[ing] external sources of authority for themselves” (p. 48). Cooney and Shealy (1997) claim that the reform focus on contextual factors, on asking questions, on “consideration of what is not presently the case,” and on “integrating varied voices...requires a relativistic orientation” (p. 104). They state:

Principles of teaching rooted in constructivism rely on an ability to reflect, to analyze, and to question what might be in terms of another’s cognition. Such reflection requires the individual to decenter and see the world through another’s lens.... It seems unlikely

that teachers can adopt much in the way of constructivist principles if their orientation is essentially dualistic. (Cooney & Shealy, 1997, p.100)

In this way, mathematics education reform seems to require capacities that a large minority of teachers may not have without explicit scaffolding (between 1/4 and 1/2 of adults according to Kegan (1994, pp. 188-197)). Yet, teachers of a variety of developmental capacities experience transformations of belief and practice by participating in professional development programs. That is, whether or not teachers have the developmentally-linked capacities that the reforms seem to require, professional development serves to change them. Thus, we are led to ask, What kinds of transformations in beliefs and practices do teachers experience in a mathematics professional development program? How do differences in constructive-developmental level, as well as differences in mathematical and pedagogical knowledge and beliefs, affect teachers' experiences? In this paper we will explore these issues and how using a lens that focuses on the *content* of teachers' beliefs alongside a lens that focuses on *how those beliefs are held* can help us better understand teachers' experiences. This, in turn, will point towards ways that teacher education practice can be shaped to meet the varied needs of teachers.

Method

This paper draws on extensive interview and observation data from four previously developed case studies (Hammerman, 2002) of teachers participating in the Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI) reform-oriented mathematics teacher professional development program during the summer of 2000. Interviewing ten teachers using the Subject-Object Interview (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988) and a baseline interview on beliefs, teaching practices, and professional development experiences, four focal teachers were identified—two teachers each at Third Order/ *Socializing* and Fourth Order/ *Self-Authoring*, using Kegan's constructive-developmental theory (1982; 1994) as a framework. One teacher within each Order of Mind was chosen to have relatively more traditional, "instrumentalist" beliefs about mathematics teaching—primarily seeing it as a set of procedures and techniques to be passed from teacher to student—while another teacher within each Order of Mind was chosen to have more reform-oriented beliefs—seeing math as constructed and made through human activity and interaction (Thompson, 1992). Teachers were observed and interviewed throughout the intensive, two-week, residential professional development program, and once again in their schools in the fall following the Institute. Data were analyzed and "portraits" of teachers' experiences were written (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). This paper re-analyzes those portraits to focus on the different types of transformations that teachers experienced.

Findings

Like many other reform-oriented math professional development programs, DMI asks teachers to do and discuss mathematics themselves in small groups, and in the whole group; to analyze and reflect on examples of students' thinking about mathematics presented through written and video case studies (Schifter, Bastable, Russell, Lester, Davenport, Cohen et al., 1999; Schifter, Bastable, Russell, Lester, Davenport, Yaffee et al., 1999); and to reflect on the nature of mathematics and its "big ideas," their own and students' processes of learning mathematics, and implications for teaching. While some teachers take the examples as models of teaching practice to be implemented back in classrooms, they are intended to serve as a vehicle for exploring mathematical and pedagogical ideas, so that teachers can re-construct their own beliefs and classroom practices. Indeed, some teachers in my study used DMI for exactly this purpose.

Before coming to DMI, Claudia¹ was a relatively reform-oriented teacher at the Fourth Order of Mind according to the SOI, teaching an integrated mix of special education and regular education students in an inner city 4th grade classroom. She believed in an inquiry, “hands on” approach to math, focusing on helping her students “understand the theory behind the rules” and in using a variety of methods and materials chosen to meet the individual needs of students in her class. She preferred classes that are “student-driven” because they both increase student interest in the ideas and empower students to take control of their own learning.

Still, in DMI, she unpacked for herself some important mathematical ideas like “tenness” and “place value” and the meanings of the arithmetic operations and fractions. In doing this, Claudia realized that there was even more she could be doing to help children “make their own meaning” of the mathematics, rather than ultimately grounding her sense of their understanding in whether they could memorize algorithmic steps and procedures. She describes the Institute as pushing her “out of [her] comfort zone...to challenge [her] assumptions and...the conventions of the standard way we teach math.” She appreciates hearing others’ different perspectives on the math because it makes her thinking more flexible, but ultimately, she says, “I still have to do it myself in order to really get it.” Claudia also values delving deeply into how students think about math through the case studies. She “learned to listen more...by watching the facilitators” model very careful listening for meaning. And she transformed her image of learning from a light switch kind of “getting it” to a more fluid process, saying, “There’s waves of—it just flows in and out of understanding” as people encounter ideas in different contexts and settings.

All these changes in thinking move Claudia to imagine transformations in her classroom practice, though she acknowledges some uncertainty about just how things are going to change. “I think that a lot of this stuff is going to come out when I’m actually in the middle of doing it,” she says. Back in her classroom, Claudia struggles to integrate the ideas from the summer into her own practice without any substantive support from colleagues or the school administration. “I guess I haven’t really balanced what I did this summer in my mind yet...It really sort of ruffled a lot of things about how I’ve been teaching [place value]...I have been very confused.” But Claudia doesn’t expect to figure it out all by herself. Instead, she sees her teaching changing in interaction with her students. “I’m hoping that the students will teach me a new way...for me to teach them.” Though she hasn’t yet constructed a new form of practice, she tries to make changes by avoiding doing things in the old, more didactic ways, instead “valuing the discussions a lot more.” Claudia has clearly been shaken up by her summer experiences, but seems to appreciate the chance to reflect on and re-construct her teaching.

“I think that I’m hanging off like...on a flagpole, upside down this year because of the summer...Flagpole hanging is a good thing to do...[though] not because the flagpole is especially attractive. Just because it’s a good thing to be shaken up there for a while.”

Claudia experiences the shifts in her ideas about math and pedagogy as transformative, even though from the outside they seem fairly well aligned with her prior beliefs. Though DMI doesn’t particularly promote constructive-developmental change, Claudia’s self-authoring stance means that she can take the ideas from the Institute and continue to work with them in the context of teaching *her* students, in order to make the ideas her own.

Sheila, another teacher at the Fourth Order whose classroom practice before the Institute is focused on children being engaged and having fun with math, also uses DMI to transform

¹ I use pseudonyms in writing about teachers as per my confidentiality agreement with them.

some of her ideas about math and learning. She develops a deeper understanding of mathematical ideas by exploring a variety of alternative approaches to solving problems and, in the process, reflects on “the value of the confusion [in coming to understand ideas]... That’s a new idea for me.” Sheila also uses her own experiences as a learner, in addition to the classroom images from the cases, to develop the rough outlines of a more learner-centered notion of teaching. Yet, while she cares that reform ideas are being widely embraced and are not just another fad, her ultimate reason for considering them is her own assessment that, “The old traditional way of doing all the algorithms is not working.” Sheila’s changes in belief are at a coarser level than Claudia’s, and are not grounded as well in classroom practices primarily because they’re newer for her. But, like Claudia, Sheila is weighing several perspectives in considering whether and how to use new ideas. Thus, for both Claudia and Sheila, the transformations they experience in DMI are primarily in the *content* of their thinking about math and learning, yet the way they consider these new ideas is shaped by their self-authoring Order of Mind.

The experiences of teachers at the socializing Third Order of Mind are similar in some ways to those at the Fourth Order, but also quite different. Joel, a Third Order sixth grade teacher in an urban-suburban middle school, comes to the Institute with traditional views about mathematics and teaching and a strong desire to “be seen as doing [things] the right way” by colleagues, administrators, parents, and even students. In DMI, he transforms his views about the importance of right answers, saying, “You don’t have to get directly to an answer so quick. You give yourself an opportunity, you give the kids an opportunity to think more about problems.” He also works on being able to ask questions that open discussion and get students to verbalize their own thinking, and changes his view of a teacher’s role from being the source of ideas and techniques to being a facilitator or discovery. In many ways, these transformations seem similar to those experienced by Claudia and Sheila—involving new views of math and teaching. What’s very different is that Joel’s new beliefs seem solely grounded in the authority of the leaders of the DMI Institute—he changes his mind because he thinks that’s what the experts are telling him is appropriate, even if these messages seem implicit. For example, he says, “[The Institute staff] haven’t made it clear that one of their goals is to teach a teacher how to ask questions. But...subconsciously, I am picking up that concept from them.” Although Joel experiences transformations in DMI that he feels are quite deep, when he returns to a school with colleagues who are much more traditional and without much administrative support, the changes virtually disappear without a trace. His Third Order way of making meaning isn’t strong enough to sustain the transformations of belief brought on by DMI without external support.

Lucinda, another Third Order teacher, has very different experiences, but mostly because the reform ideas promoted by DMI match those of her teacher education experiences and the curriculum and philosophy of her school and district. Though Lucinda occasionally espouses more traditional pedagogical ideas, she tends to ignore and dismiss in order to avoid an internal conflict. Though Lucinda learns some new mathematical ideas in DMI, she experiences little transformation, mostly finding *further* support for ideas she already has.

Conclusion

Though constructive-developmental level is not changed through such a short intervention as DMI, a teacher’s Order of Mind has a strong impact on the way transformations in beliefs engendered by the program are experienced, and on whether and how those transformations translate into longer-term changes in practice. Thus, we see that using both a content and a

structural lens together can aid in understanding and in creating more effective change through teacher professional development.

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Boldness Has Genius, Power and Magic: Naming and Framing Influence Transformation

Christine Harris

Abstract: *This paper argues that “framing and naming” the learning arena are critical, previously omitted steps, in the transformative learning process. It suggests that these steps are critical to understanding and researching the process, and that how an individual frames prior experience in a “named” learning area is likely to influence both whether she will experience transformative learning in that area and the breadth and depth of transformation that unfolds (results). It calls for strategies, research and theory that explores what might foster expansive and optimistic framing of transformative possibilities.*

Keywords: Transformative Learning Process, Framing, Imagination

Introduction

As an organizational consultant, coach, friend and global citizen in a world where change is the most reliable constant, I am continually involved in helping adults adapt to accelerating complexity and uncertainty. Whether helping an old style manager change his management style, supporting clients as they adapt to the uncertainties of contract work or cope with unanticipated unemployment, facilitating board members constructive engagement with their personal and organizational racism and sexism, or providing environments that encourage adults to express their life purpose and design more fulfilling lives, my aim is to enhance our abilities to thrive in this fluid world.

Reflecting these concerns, I wanted my dissertation research to contribute to transformative pedagogy and to enhance my ability to support transformation. I sought to address a gap in the literature by exploring students’ experience of the transformative process. I aimed to generate hypotheses about what adults found supported them in their transformations, and how or whether such support could be replicated in other situations. Assuming a growing need for transformative learning, I hypothesized that developmental differences in adults’ meaning systems might influence the depth and extent of the transformations they could effect.

The finding presented in this paper emerged from a study that examined whether adult students experience transformative learning in two courses designed to foster that process. The study also explored whether these adults’ constructive developmental stages influenced what aspects of their understanding of themselves and others or of their behavior they could transform and the support they required when engaged in the transformative process.

While conducting this research, I discovered an important and yet unnamed step in the transformative learning process - the point at which an individual “names and frames” the arena of his learning interest. To provide the context in which this finding emerged, I briefly outline my research questions and methods. I then argue that individuals’ “framing and naming” influences the depth and scope of their learning areas, signals their ability to own and be responsible for their transformations, and influence whether or not transformative learning occurs. I suggest that acknowledging this step allows us to recognize its critical influence on the transformation

process. The paper ends inviting the reader to join in exploring ways to engage people's imaginations in enlarging their framing and therefore the scope of their transformation.

Research questions and methods

My study explored how 19 white, college-educated, male and female, American professionals age 22- 47 described and understood their experience of two MBA courses explicitly designed to stimulate transformative learning. Students' developmental stages were assessed with the Washington Sentence Completion Test (Loevinger, 1976). I interviewed students about their experience of the two courses, observed course activities and reviewed students' written work seeking to identify what students' found most salient and/or valuable, what they thought they learned, and what activities or events they believed supported their learning. I compared students' descriptions of their experience to theoretical descriptions of transformative learning and identified patterns of association between students' descriptions of their experience and their developmental stage. Within the context of this larger study I conducted a thematic analysis of students' descriptions of their transformative experience. The results of these analyses are the focus of this paper.

Theoretical descriptions of the transformative learning process

While they differ in how many phases they include in their process descriptions Mezirow (1975) Brookfield (1987) and Cranton (1994) suggest that the transformative learning process is initiated by a triggering event, and involves self examination, critical reflection and assessment of one's assumptions or behavior. They also suggest that the process includes experimenting with alternative thinking or behaviors and re-integrating into society with one's transformed beliefs, assumptions or behaviors. Cranton (1994) Mezirow and Marsick (1978) and Lamm (2000) also indicate that these phases are neither sequential nor hierarchical. Lamm (2000) explored the features of the cumulative transformation process -- the result of progressive, often less dramatic sequence of changes in points of view (Mezirow, 1997) -- and indicated that 'multiple new awareness in the same learning area, together with verification and practice, seemed gradually and cumulatively to foster a replacement in meaning structure' (2000, p.242).

Findings re: the Incidence of transformative learning and the learning process

Thematic analyses of students' descriptions of sixteen instances of transformative learning identified seven phases that occurred in fifteen or more of the transformations:

- **A triggering event**—a prior situation, course event, concept and/or reflection triggered awareness.
- **Critical reflection** on one's self or others.
- **FRAMING**—using concepts to frame understanding of self, others or events
- **NAMING**—labeling and defining the issue or pattern -- their focus of attention
- **Repetition**—of insight or experience that enlarged awareness in the “named” area
- **Identifying alternatives**—new ways of thinking or behaving

- **Planning** for thinking or behaving differently

Students' reports of their learning experience indicated that the course stimulated and supported cumulative transformations. They also confirmed theorists' (Mezirow and Marsick, 1978; Cranton, 1994; Lamm, 2000) suggestions that while these phases occur in the transformative learning process, they do not seem to follow a prescribed order. With two exceptions -- using the theoretical concepts to frame the focus of attention, and naming the issue or pattern -- these process aspects are reminiscent of those identified by the above theorists.

Using theoretical concepts to frame and name the issue or pattern

As in "traditional" academic courses, students learned and applied course concepts. These courses differed in that students used the course concepts to help them question and enlarging their perceptions of themselves and others and to enlarge their behavioral repertoires. Applied in this manner the course concepts often contributed to or initiated transformations in students' meaning systems.

For example, for some students the concepts helped them "frame and name" an attitude or behavior that had historically been problematic but on which they had never focused their attention. When applied in this manner the concepts helped to trigger student's awareness and fostered their ownership of the transformation process. One student, Susan, described this phenomenon saying: "I'm trying to listen more... I tend to interrupt and turn things in my direction...A lot of the communication stuff really helped me think about how I did that, and I guess in a way I was aware of it (before) because my boss' reaction made me realize that I was interrupting her. But I think reading about some of these things...I was just all of a sudden aware of it." This step of framing and naming the issue, trend, pattern or idea played an important role in all the transformations in my study. Once students had framed and named an issue they were able to retrospectively identify relevant examples, to seek out alternatives, and or plan different behavior -- to engage their imagination in developing new possibilities.

Students' abilities to name their focus seemed to signal their capacity to assume responsibility for their learning, an issue of interest to educators concerned with learner empowerment and self direction (e.g., Brookfield, 1987; Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1997). Learning prior to "naming" may have been occurring but students may have been unaware of it, as Susan's comment above illustrates. When students did not or could not name an issue, the repetitions required to produce a conscious change in their meaning system did not occur.

Why add this step to transformative learning theory?

Many transformative learning theorists' definitions of transformative learning assume that it is a conscious and intentional process of making meaning out of events. For example, Mezirow defines transformative learning as 'intentional participation in critical reflection and rational discourse that leads to distorted, inauthentic, or otherwise unjustified assumptions being replaced by a new or transformed frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience (1995 p.41). Framing and naming facilitate and may be required for intentional action. Further, framing and naming the issue under transformation may be assumed in

Mezirow's notion of a "replacement"-- for to consciously replace an aspect of one's meaning scheme one must identify what needs to be replaced.

I suggest that explicitly including this step in the transformation process is critical to understanding and researching the process for several reasons.

1. The point at which an individual can identify the issue they will focus on, is the point where the possibility of a change or replacement is brought into consciousness.
2. "Naming" seems to initiate, sustain and focus individuals' ongoing reflection, inquiry and practice in the identified arena. Once the learning area is framed and named, it functions as a filter for subsequent experience that brings elements related to the "named" area to the forefront of the individual's attention, and relegates other data to the background. Susan's comment illustrates how framing and naming an issue can lead to scanning for the identified pattern that brings past relevant experience to mind. The ability to identify and name the issue being transformed also enables students to begin to take conscious responsibility for directing their learning process, for planning and for experimentation.

Framing and naming provide a lens that helps an individual interpret experience. For example, one student's attention was captivated by the concepts "theory in use and theory in practice" (Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985) --as a way of conceptualizing instances when one's behavior is inconsistent with one's values and beliefs. Once he had adopted these concepts, whatever the exercise, he focused on identifying instances where his behavior was inconsistent with his espoused beliefs in the interest of bringing his behavior and beliefs into alignment.

3. Finally, it is students' abilities to "name" their transformations that support the researcher in identifying that a replacement has occurred and therefore that transformative learning has taken place.

How prior experience is named and framed determines whether it contributes to transformative learning

If the ability to name one's transformation is a phase inherent in the transformative learning process, then perhaps Lamm's (2000, p. 250) assertion that "prior experience in a learning area reduces the possibility for transformation" is incorrect. Seven students' transformative processes began prior to the course and were cumulative. In these instances, students entered the course with an explicit agenda -- e.g., to improve their ability to communicate, to enhance their self awareness or their capabilities in teamwork. When students' attention was focused on transforming previously named and framed aspects of their meaning systems, they used the course activities to enhance their ongoing transformative processes. Prior experience in the named areas led them to use new concepts or experiences to further their transformation.

On the other hand, some of the students in my study did not experience transformative learning because they incorporated what they learned into their existing way of making meaning using the concepts to confirm their prior knowledge or awareness. One student explained that she

learned little from the course because she already knew about leadership. “I've done a lot of leadership programs. I volunteer in my community. I was in student counsel in high school, college. I mean, I did all this stuff...this is too general for me. It's too, you know, ‘here's a foundation for you to use.’ I've already set my own foundation.”

Framing drives focus, breadth depth and possibility

As the above quote suggests, how a student frames an assumption, issue or himself is likely to influence the breadth, depth and scope of his transformation. The Buddhist master Suzuki expressed this phenomenon saying, “in the beginner’s minds there are many possibilities, but in the expert’s there are few” (1970). Whether an individual uses an experience to contribute to his transformation is influenced by how he frames the experience --whether he “frames” the experience as familiar or as containing new possibilities. It is also influenced by whether he frames himself as being an “expert” in the “named” area, or he filters the offered experience through a beginner’s mind.

What helps enlarge the frame?

Many readers will doubtless recognize the source of my title-- a popular Goethe quote “Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.” I suggest that what a person can imagine likely influences whether her frame evokes brilliant, powerful, and magical transformative possibilities or learning that is more constrained by her history and habitual expectations. I submit that if her presenting issue is difficulty expressing her views in public, it matters whether she frames and names her transformation as “overcoming stage fright” or “learning to enjoy offering her gifts” and that the transformations that issue from these two ways of framing will not offer her the same life possibilities.

If how a person frames her transformation influences the breadth and depth of the transformation she’ll experience, how might we support her in developing a more expansive and creative frame? What kinds of structures or strategies would invite bold, courageous, expansive and magical ways of framing one’s transformation? I invite you to join me in exploring how we might engage people in playing with framing and re-framing their understanding of their transformation. What are possible strategies that could support people in enlarging their frames and what cautions should we consider?

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**The Voices of Three Ethno-Sisters
Empowering the Ethno-Autobiographical Voice –
A Transformative Learning Experience using Cooperative Inquiry**

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Abstract: *The transformative learning experience of the ethno-sisters, three women of European-American descent, based on the empowering revelation of each sister's ethno-autobiographical voice is presented within the realm of the "sacred and spiritual process of human inquiry" comprised by Heron & Reason, now referred to as the art of cooperative inquiry. Touching upon healing attributes of ethno-autobiography the participants are invited to actively join us in a self-exploratory journey in search of life stories, which unfold within the cultural and ethnic messages that make up an integral part of our socialization process. Adhering to Mezirow's principle of "healing internalized oppression" we show how our common theme of "transforming the voices of the ethno-sisters" both in thought and in action emerges as a moving and meaningful transformative learning experience. Through creative expressiveness: storytelling, poetry, prose, expressive movement, and mutual and reciprocal reflection we disclose how this collaborative process of discourse encouraged and invited us as a triad to authentically grow, transform and heal, thus helping us conceive a sense of psychospiritual presence. Through the act of compassionate listening, contemplative insight and personal understanding of the relational wholeness of human nature, we invite the participants to experience a sense of the sacred triologue that emerged through the collaborative learning of the ethno-sisters.*

Keywords: ethno-autobiography, cooperative inquiry, reclaiming voice

Introduction

*The purpose of human inquiry is not so much the search for truth, but to heal –
Reason, 1994, p.10*

The ethno-sisters, three Euro-American academic women, (two living in the U.S. and one in Israel; spanning three decades, and representing three religious upbringings), will present how they conducted individual self-exploratory journeys in search of their ethno-autobiographical identities, within a cooperative inquiry process. While the breadth and depth of the storied journeys extends beyond the scope of this presentation, the common theme that these women share, both in thoughts and in actions, emerged as a captivating topic in transformative learning. The potency and power of our voices, expressed and shared perhaps for the first time in our lives, is what I intend to share with the participants in this innovative session.

My presentation will touch upon the healing attributes of the ethno-autobiographic inquiry process, which can be understood as a self-exploratory writing that grounds itself in the ethnic, cultural, historical, ecological and gender background of its author (Kremer, 2000). It is a form of critical inquiry that searches individuals' life stories and personal his/herstories in relation to the ethnic and cultural messages that have become an integral part of our ongoing socialization process. Part of my work in this triad consisted of creating presence for my self

while living in a land that is saturated with oppression and violence, terror and fear. Living in the Middle East for almost three decades has had a tremendous impact on how I have come to learn to create a presence for myself that is safe and accepting, yet also genuine and real.

My aim is to guide the participants — their creative energies slowly emerging from within — through an evolving process of unraveling life his/her stories, – gendered stories that preserve and assert the narratives that history so often fails to include. The culturally specific context of my journey appears in the form of “soul printing” and healing story-telling, and is based on my Jewish-American heritage and the experience of making Alia (immigrating) to Israel as a teenager.

Rabbi Mordechai Gafni (2001) claims that an individual’s lifestory is an integral part of one’s “soul print.” It is “your dreams and your destiny both lived and unlived, conscious and not yet conscious. It is your fear, fragility and vulnerability, as well as your grandiosity and larger than life yearnings” (p.2). For Gafni, this is the way we give breath and life to our self and thus make our lives more meaningful. I see healing story-telling, as a concept quite similar to the soul-print process, for it uses narrative configuration to help us become consciously aware of our own self-concept and identity. It unfolds and develops into a whole and fulfilling expression of our living existence, providing us with a sense of being deeply acknowledged and understood, and thus more alive and in-sync with life.

My presentation will focus on Mezirow’s principle of ‘healing internalized oppression’ through co-operative inquiry. By releasing the pain and frustration caused by this oppression and transforming it into an emancipatory learning experience, I find myself involved in a synergetic ‘empowering practice of social action’ (Rosenwasser , 2002). The gratifying collaborative learning process that the ethno-sister triad created enabled each of us to authentically grow, transform, and heal through expressions of emotional release (anger, grief, fear, sadness) as it helped us conceive a sense of psychospiritual presence.

The Ethno-autobiographic Cooperative Inquiry Process

Ethno-autobiography Query

The term ethno-autobiography can be understood as a self-exploratory writing (or oral presentation) that grounds itself in the ethnic, cultural, historical, ecological and gender background of its author (Kremer, 2000). Over the years it has evolved into a form of critical inquiry into one’s life stories and personal history in relation to ethnic and cultural messages that have become an integral part of the individual’s ongoing socialization process. It is a tool that has been explicitly designed to help increase awareness about an array of societal assumptions that are unconscious to the inquirer (Kremer, 2001). Saybrook instructor, Jürgen Kremer, guided the three ethno-sisters into the womb of ethno-autobiographic query, inviting us to explore creative writing processes that steered us through an inquiry of self-construction of our identity.

In creating my own ethno-autobiographic sense of writing, I embarked upon a self-exploratory investigation of “hybridity, categorical borderlands and transgressions, and the multiplicity of (hi)stories carried outside and inside the definitions and discourses of the dominant society of a particular place and time” (Kremer, 2000). An integral part of my ethno-autobiographic writing revolved around taking responsibility to becoming a healing storyteller. This is a process of human inquiry that seeks to attain one’s spiritual healing through humankind’s greatest power – the power of words. Words are what makes us distinctly human, for they “describe, they can involve, deny, remember, identify, disidentify” (Kremer, 2001, p. 4).

In the presence of our own words, we are exposed, thus becoming more vulnerable than ever before. We learn to become explicitly present in our sense of being without proclaiming that we have found the essential truth about ourselves.

Cooperative Inquiry

The deconstructing and reconstructing of our identities took place within a self-designed cooperative inquiry format modeled after Heron (1996) and Reason's (1994) co-operative inquiry methodology. We developed an on-line format of inquiry that included several cycles of: developing plans, sharing (her)stories, reading and reflecting on each other's stories, and reflecting on the reflections that each ethno-sister received in regards to her own story. We concluded each cycle by writing about what we learned throughout our joint process.

Using this format we co-created our reality through collaborative participation: through our experience, our imagination and intuition, our thinking and action (Heron, 1996). Initiating interplay between the four fundamental types of knowledge: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical, we became involved in a research process that was as personal and cultural as it was spiritual. Cycling and recycling through the phases of action and reflection we were able to critically see through our own subjectivity (Reason, 1994, p. 333) and see through the distortions that arose through the bias of our own socio-cultural positions. We made meaning from our shared stories as we each experienced what Heron and Reason refer to as 'intrapersonal coherence' within the four ways of knowing by creating congruity between our own sense of experience and presentational construal. Through this inquiry process we discovered coherence among ourselves as co-inquirers involved in mutual and reciprocal dimensions of innovative participative discourse.

We saw this mutual learning experience as a way of "midwiving" each other through a process of what Roberson (2002) refers to as "collaborative labor." In creating a protective triad, which helped make sense of the change and growth that occurred during our exploratory journeys, we essentially heard one another into expressiveness, thus creating, a sacred triologue.

Presentation Format

My Spiritual Soul - Print

This is a process that is intensely personal for me, for it focuses on the strength of internal and subjective experience through an open and direct dialogue with my self. Inclusive of my own spiritual and transpersonal development, its psychosocial nature is both healing and invigorating to my being. In sharing excerpts from (her)stories and poetry that symbolize the reclaiming of my ethno-autobiographic voice and spiritual identity, I voyage deeper into my self-exploratory journey as my ethno-sisters share their reflections to these excerpts. I include a small sample of writings based on meaningful milestones related to my Jewish-American childhood, together with reflections relating to the tormenting process of assimilation and acculturation I experienced as a new immigrant in Israel.

I share my soul-print, as an offering from my heart, for it is my tale. It is the (her)story that I have been sent to tell. As human inquirers we must learn to make our tale sacred, by making the obligation to honor and value the sacredness of the essence of who we are and who we have become. Soul-printing is the tool Gafni (2001) believes must be used to help expand into our "wider-selves" and thus commence upon the emancipatory journey to authentic psycho-spiritual presence. As I transform before the participants, may they be reminded that this is THE

genuineness of the ethno-autobiographic process. It is through their presence that I learn, heal and transform.

Evocative Writing

Richardson (1994) eschews that writing is a way of knowing, a method of discovery and analysis. She considers qualitative writing a method of human inquiry, for “it directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times”, for “it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said to everyone” (Richardson, 1994, p. 518).

Evocative representations refer to one class of experiential writing genres that “deploy literary devices to recreate lived experience and evoke emotional responses (Richardson, 1994, p. 521). Evocative writing touches us from within, for through it we “experience the self-reflexive and transformational processes of self-creation” (Richardson, 1994, p. 521). Through this provoking type of writing we open ourselves up to feelings, ambiguities, and the blurriness of our experiences. In my presentation I incorporate three of the forms of evocative writing comprised by Richardson (1994):

1. Narratives of the self – highly personalized, revealing texts in which I share my herstories of my lived experience as a new immigrant in Israel faced with the challenge of becoming assimilated or integrated into the dominant realm of Israeli society. Using dramatic recall and strong metaphors and images I invite the participants to experience these events of my life.
2. Poetic representation – by setting words together in new and innovative configurations we are able to hear, see, and feel the world in a variety of dimensions. Poetry helps analyze social worlds, for it uses sensuous forms of expression to help us claim ‘presence’ and ‘being’. I utilize poetry’s rhythms, silences, spaces, repetitions and alterations to emphasize my relationship with my indigenous Jewish/Israeli ancestry.
3. Ethnographic drama – I use drama as a way of shaping one of the more meaningful experiences of my childhood without losing its authentic essence. Through the dramatic realization of this memory I am able to reconstruct the “sense” of this event from a multiplicity of perspectives while giving voice to what has been shamefully unspoken and unheard for all these years.

The Transformative Learning Experience

Purpose of the Innovative Session

The innovative aspect of this presentation is based on my interpretation of Boyd’s definition of transformative learning in which he states that the transformative journey is a process of discernment, a holistic orientation leading to contemplative insight, personal understanding of seeing life in a relational wholeness (Boyd and Myers, 1988). Indicative of the following three distinct activities, I shall demonstrate this process with the participants:

- ❖ Receptivity : a state of unconditional listening in which the individual learns to become open to “alternative expressions of meaning” (Boyd and Myers, 1988)
- ❖ Recognition: recognizing the individual’s need to make a choice, and accepting that the choice that one makes is authentic to one’s self.

- ❖ Grieving of a significant loss: realizing that old paradigms are no longer relevant, and that moving on and establishing new ways, while integrating old and new patterns of behavior is needed.

Based on the concept of depth psychology, Boyd's theory of transformative learning adheres to the view that transformation is a "fundamental change in one's personality involving the resolution of personal dilemma and the expansion of consciousness resulting in greater personality integration" (Boyd, 1989, p. 459). The personal dilemma that I have chosen to share with the participants in this session focuses on the evolving of self-processes, which revolve around the marginal and spurious aspects of Israeli discourse.

Applicability of Ethno-Autobiographic Inquiry in Transformative Learning

According to Boyd's view of transformative learning, it is through ongoing dialogue with the unconscious that transformation take place. The purpose of transformative learning therefore is to help people recognize, acknowledge and embrace their spirit from within, thus guiding us to a stage of individuation. Boyd sees this as a self-exploratory process in which individuals come to terms with the hidden aspects of their personality, thus creating transpersonal awareness.

Ethno-autobiographic inquiry invites individuals to transgress the boundaries of human science's writing genres. As a transformative learning tool it calls upon individuals to discard "old patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting, which previously prevented growth" (Boyd and Myers, 1988, p. 279) and to take responsibility to engage in the act of reconstructing one's identity through the self-exploration of consciousness. Its applicability in the realm of transformative learning is endless. The centrality of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse are shared by these approaches. The congruency between them flows naturally, for only after changing one's frames of reference by critically reflecting on assumptions and beliefs that have guided us, and by consciously making and implementing changes that will help bring about new ways of defining our worlds and our selves, will personal transformation occur.

The Advancement of our Understanding of Transformative Learning

Transformative learning, according to Mezirow develops autonomous thinking (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). Through transformative learning individuals come to understand how structures of meaning that they have acquired over the years can be transformed, so that we come to truly understand the meaning of life's experience. Through the acts of receptivity, recognition and grieving, I aim to share alternative expressions of meaning that we found authentic. It is our hope and belief that in experiencing our stories, the participants' understanding of their own stories will change. For in that sacred hour we will be creating a "community of knowers" that are "united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their life experience" (Loughlin, 1993, pp. 320-321).

Both the rational and the affective play a role in transformative learning. Our presentations are aimed to trigger the cognitive and objective, as well as the intuitive, imaginative and subjective aspects of the participants' minds. Although it may appear that these two layers are in conflict, in essence it is their merging together that creates the sacred space needed to bring about a meaningful understanding of human nature at its most vulnerable spot — in open dialogue with one's self, one's being.

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Engaging the Disturbing Images of Evil

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Abstract: *As the post World War II generations perform the task of engaging with the images of Auschwitz, a transformative methodology is required. As Rachel Brenner says, in [Writing as Resistance: Four Women Confronting the Holocaust,] those who research the experience “... must struggle against despair.” This innovative session explores through theater, performative video and audience participation, an artistic engagement with Auschwitz using a transformative learning lens applied to remembering. The author discusses similar “third iteration” Holocaust research that occurs in this liminal site between history and imagination.*

Keywords: transformative methodology, holocaust research, artistic engagement

Purpose

Transformative learning occurs when we experience a change in our meaning schemes. As we confront genocide (and other acts of authority-sanctioned murder), it is difficult to engage these events within our established methods of meaning-making. Lyotard reminds us that Auschwitz marks the confines wherein historical knowledge sees its competence impugned (1984). The session will present an approach that allows the researcher to approach evil events through transformative methodology: the arts. As we move further in time from evil events, we need innovative ways to encounter images of these events. The imagination – for those of us not directly participating in an event - is where our encounters occur. ‘When art remains accessible it provides a counterforce to manufactured and monolithic memory’ (Hartman, 1996, p. 105). The arts provide a way to disturb our received memories and enable us to construct new meaning. In the session, I will perform a live theater piece and show a performative video, demonstrating a transformative methodology. I will invite the participative audience to provide aesthetic response to what they have seen. “An aesthetic response refers to a distinct response, with a bodily origin, to an occurrence in the imagination, to an artistic act, or the perception of an art work’ (Knill et. al., 1995 p. 71).

Discussion of the Topic

As humans explore our consciousness, we work to enter into non-habitual ways of thinking. Bachelard speaks of scientific and poetic creation both deriving “‘from a deeper *poiesis* wherein imagination and reality make and remake each other’” (quoted in Kearney, 1988, p. 97). In the postmodern world, imagination is understood as an *intermediary* state, beyond us, giving access to non-ordering. It is a *liminal* space, a “transmediated realm” (Knill et. al., p. 131). In this definition of imagination, facism is a lack of imagination (Petraha, 1999). Ethical imagination involves compassion: suffering “with the other as other” (Ricoeur quoted in Kearney, p. 231). It is in the liminal state between imagination and history that the participants in the session will encounter a way to make and remake our engagement with the images of evil. Bachelard speaks of a phenomenology of the imagination. Within a phenomenological approach, this transformative methodology considers the co-researchers to be the images of an event and they are “‘allowed to speak for themselves” (McNiff, 1998, p.55). As we move further from the Holocaust, our ways of engaging with this event can be seen through transformative learning

theory. Epistemologies become increasingly complex and inclusive as they grapple with the data and try to create meaning. The first iteration of Holocaust research is that of direct witnesses, who attempted to report. The second iteration enters the reality of *then* through images: to understand, identify or resonate with participants' experience. The emerging third iteration, in which I include myself, research the affect of the images of the event on us and our historical reality *now*. We tend to engage the images through our own artistic practice. The session addresses how we "get more direct reports from the phenomenon we are studying, asking the subject matter itself to comment on or teach us about itself" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p.152) and how we shape our response.

Potential Applicability of the Innovation for use by Other Adult Educators Engaged in Transformative Learning

My work as a psychotherapist has brought me into contact with others' experience of evil. I have often wondered at my clients' resilience in their encounters, as I have concurrently questioned my own lack of buoyancy in recovering from their stories. Engaging the images of Auschwitz has brought me to the worst evil I can imagine, an engagement that makes it hard to return to everyday life. I have found that practicing a transformative methodology has enabled me to make the return as well as to not avoid visiting the encounter. By making and remaking meaning I am involved in a co-creative process with the images. Thus a transformative methodology values both my own life (as a Jew) in a direct response to the Holocaust, "I am still here," as well as a way that I can remember others' experience.

In a study of this methodology (Herman, 1999) adult students reported transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) in engaging with disturbing images not of their own experience. By creating new forms through the arts, the images led them to creating new meaning schemes. Through exposure to this innovative methodology, adult educators may find an additional way to foster an understanding of transformative learning in their students.

How This Innovation and Topic Advance Our Understanding of Transformative Learning

As we continue to encounter events that disrupt our basic concepts of what it means to be "human," we need new ways to transform our meaning constructs to include our very human capacities for evil. In this context, the arts can advance our understanding of transformative learning to include difficult venues of experience. Through practicing a transformative methodology, we can contain the experience of engaging evil and also learn from it: not the unfortunately repetitive lessons of 'never again,' but perhaps, through transformative engagement, new lessons – both personal and political - that have never been thought of before.

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Defence and Resistance Towards Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *This paper deals with non-learning – i.e., all kinds of not learning, insufficient learning, distorted learning, unintended learning and the like – in general and specifically in relation to Transformative Learning. It identifies three main types of non-learning defined as mislearning, learning defence, and learning resistance, relating mainly to the cognitive, the emotional, and the social/societal dimension, respectively. Each of these types of non-learning is considered, and, in particular, two kinds of learning defence, described as ‘everyday consciousness’ and ‘identity defence’ are discussed, as empirical studies have shown that they are prevalent in adult education today. Finally, the terms ‘habits of expectations’ (Mezirow) and ‘sets of assumptions’ (Brookfield) are taken up as the key expressions of non-learning in TL theory, and it is concluded that TL theory could profit from dealing more specifically with the emotional and social dimensions of learning and non-learning.*

Keywords: non-learning, learning defence, learning resistance.

Learning theory is obviously primarily about what happens when somebody learns something. But seen from the point of view of education and teaching this is certainly not always the case, and it should be just as important to deal with what happens when somebody in a learning situation does not learn anything or learns something that is insufficient or quite different from what is intended.

Therefore, in my recent book “The Three Dimensions of Learning” (Illeris 2002) – which is presented in another paper at this conference – I have also taken up the question of what happens “when intended learning does not occur”. And empirically, together with some of my colleagues I have worked intensively with this question in connection with a three-year study of adult education from the perspective of the learners, dealing with various types of education for low-skilled or unemployed adults in Denmark (Illeris 2003).

Lifelong Learning and Ambivalence

The results of this project were in some ways surprising, not to say shocking. They revealed that the great majority of participants had a most ambivalent attitude to the courses they were attending. They definitely wanted to learn something that could improve their chances on the labour market, but at the same time they strongly wished that such learning was not necessary; i.e., that they could manage without.

After the project was completed, I received clear evidence that this is not uniquely the situation in Denmark. In many economically developed countries the adult education situation has changed dramatically during the last few years. On the one hand, participation in adult education has increased rapidly. On the other hand, people are today not participating in greater numbers because they really want to, but because they directly or indirectly are forced to do so to avoid being financially and socially marginalized.

Our study also showed that this ambivalence strongly marked the learning taking place, the learners using a range of more or less unconscious strategies to avoid involving themselves too much and being confronted with the insufficiency of their qualifications and humiliated in other ways.

I shall not here go into details about all of this, but simply use it as a background for discussing different ways of non-learning in relation to the concept of transformative learning – as the learners in our project typically were in such situations where TL could, and for many teachers also should, have been the way out of their profound personal and social problems.

Three Main Types of Learning Obstacles

There may, of course, be an unlimited number of individual and situational reasons for non-learning (which I use as a general and overall term for all kinds of not learning, insufficient learning, distorted learning, unintended learning and the like). In order to establish some kind of structure in the field, I shall take my point of departure in the three learning dimensions that I set up and substantiate in my book: the cognitive, the emotional and the social dimension. However, it must be stressed that this is only a point of departure. It is one of the core understandings in the book that all learning includes each of the three dimensions. When it comes to non-learning, it is not about processes that are fulfilled, but about processes that are blocked or derailed, partially or totally. So, in this case, the dimensions can be used to separate different kinds of non-learning in relation to the types of obstacles and the dimension in which they are mainly rooted. But at the same time it must be acknowledged that they more or less affect all the dimensions of the process, that different kinds of mental obstacles often work together, and that it is only analytically that the main kinds of reasons for non-learning can be kept apart.

In the cognitive dimension obstacles to intended learning will be about what is generally seen as the learning content, which is not acquired, grasped or taken in as intended. In general I use the term *mislearning*, implying that for some reason the content, impulse or message does not come through correctly, resulting in erroneous learning or non-learning. The reasons for this may be, for instance, a lack of involvement or concentration, a lack of necessary prior learning to understand the message, or it may be due to inadequate communication or teaching. Behind such reasons there may again be other and mentally or socially more deeply rooted causes. But when it is a case of more or less pure mislearning, the main consequences are in the cognitive dimension: The learner does not acquire what he or she wants or is supposed to learn.

However, the obstacles to learning may also be rooted mainly in the emotional dimension. If so it will typically be a case of some kind of mental *defence*. Freud has described such defence mechanisms as personal inhibitions, such as for instance repression of impulses that are personally unbearable and therefore must be banished to the unconscious domain from where they can influence the experience and behaviour of the learner in all sorts of uncontrolled ways.

In our late modern society these types of personal defence mechanism have certainly not disappeared; we all have such barriers. But they seem – at least in the educational field – to have been surpassed by two other, more general and societally rooted types.

The one of these we are all subject to, and we must be so to maintain our mental balance. It is a defence against the overwhelming number and complexity of impulses and influences that everybody is exposed to today. Nobody is able to take all this in – to try to do so would lead directly into insanity, and therefore we have all of necessity built up a semi-automatic defence system – described by the German social psychologist Thomas Leithäuser (1976) as our *everyday consciousness* – that either rejects or distorts the majority of impulses, preferably of course those that we dislike or are less interested in, but often also those that we might profit from but do not immediately categorize as worth dealing with.

The other “new” type of defence mechanism, which we have met very often in our empirical studies referred to above, we have called *identity defence*. This is the very strong

mental defence that we are all inclined to mobilize if we get into a situation in which we feel our identity threatened – and this is exactly what today happens to a lot of people who for some reason, in which they may have no part at all, must accept fundamental changes in their lives and change themselves accordingly. For instance, one may have worked fully satisfactorily for twenty years in a bank, but one day the bank is closed and no other job in which one's qualifications are serviceable is available. In adult education today a lot of people who are to be retrained have more trouble with the change of identity required than with the acquisition of the knowledge and skills in question. The situation involves their feeling degraded and humiliated as respectable adults and members of society, which is hard to bear, and this provokes a defence that while certainly inadequate is personally and mentally necessary.

Finally, the non-learning may be rooted in the social and societal dimension. In this case it is typically a matter of mental *resistance*, which may often be combined with and difficult to separate from defence, but in its essence is a very different function. Because whereas defence is something that is there in advance of an event that might result in learning, resistance is active non-acceptance and objection that can be very inappropriate and annoying in an educational setting, but nevertheless constitutes symptoms of strong personal forces and engagement. Therefore resistance has the potential of leading to very important learning processes, albeit often of other kinds than what the message or intention has been. Both for the individual and for our common culture and society the most important steps forward are often released when someone resists accepting the usual way of doing and understanding something.

Learning Problems as Reflected in TL Theory

When working with the perspectives of TL, whether it be in practice or in theory, questions about learning obstacles, inhibitions and blockings will, of course, sooner or later crop up. TL is a very demanding process for the learner, and there must be strong subjective reasons for involving oneself in this type of learning. Correspondingly, it is psychologically natural to find ways to avoid such demanding learning if there is no strong subjective motivation to drive it.

In TL theory as described by Jack Mezirow (1991), the key concept to characterize such obstacles, inhibitions and blockings is “habits of expectations”. Similarly, Stephen Brookfield (1987) employs the concept of “sets of assumptions”. Both of these concepts immediately refer to the cognitive dimension of learning, as they have to do with the learning content. But the term “expectations” in particular simultaneously suggests that there is an emotional aspect involved.

At the same time, both concepts seem to refer to the personal background of the learner and miss the very strong social and societal indications which, as I have come to see it, are at least as important today.

I am not in doubt that the concepts of Mezirow and Brookfield have their background in the kind of learning obstacles that have typically been at stake in the learning settings in which TL has been practised and developed. But today adult education is no more dominated by people who are eager to learn and educate themselves and have voluntarily enrolled in courses to meet their desires, curiosity and interests.

On the contrary, the majority of participants have been pressed into adult education, and they are very ambivalent. If the emancipating and empowering potentials of adult education are to be maintained it is crucial that the “positive” side of their ambivalence is consciously supported by teachers and mentors. To do so, the first step is to realize the situation as these

participants experience it, even though this to some extent changes the role of the adult educator in the direction of that of a social worker.

With respect to the issue of transformative learning, my attempt to relate it to a more general learning theory in the case of non-learning or distorted learning leads me to the conclusion that the mainly cognitive approach of TL should be supplemented by an interest in the emotional and social dimensions in order to fully capture the background, character, functions and results of what is referred to as habits of expectations and sets of assumptions, thereby also establishing a more adequate basis for working with the obstacles, inhibitions and blockings at stake.

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The Organisation of Studies at Roskilde University: the Concept, Practice and Problems of Project Organisation

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Ever since its founding in 1972, it has been a significant part of the image and practice of Roskilde University that studies are primarily carried out by participation in projects; traditional academic activities such as courses, lectures, and seminars are generally regarded only as supplementary.

In the preparation of curricula this fundamental idea has usually been interpreted such that a minimum of 50 percent of the student's time is to be spent on project work. In fact, formally, there is a general rule that project work must occupy at least 40 percent of all study modules (although the educational board can grant exemptions from this rule). If you ask the students themselves they will usually respond that they spend up to 70-to-80 percent of their active study on projects—as a reflection of the fact that they tend to regard project work as more important and profitable than other activities.

Roskilde University and the Danish tradition of project education

In the early 70s, when the university was planned, the concept of project work was a “catchword,” relatively confined to the students' movement and within a minor group of educational theorists. Only a few provisional experiments had been made with that form of educational praxis. However, during the first stormy years of the university's existence, a more coherent design and a set of methodological directions were worked out in both theory and practice.

Today it is possible to distinguish a significant Danish tradition of project work in education which, with Roskilde University serving as a sort of cradle, has spread to nearly all parts of the Danish educational system—from elementary school to university level, and from basic courses for unskilled workers to advanced scientific educational activities. In this context, it is also worth noting that project work is, today, a major and integrated practice throughout all of primary and secondary school in Norway.

There have been many reasons for this development, and many conflicts along the way; but an important factor has, no doubt, been the underlying development in the demand for so-called “soft” competencies, such as flexibility, independence, responsibility, the ability to cooperate and the ability to think analytically. Although it would be difficult to prove, I believe it is now broadly accepted that project work is a good supplement to more traditional educational activities to foster competencies of this kind. And it is by now a well-established fact that, despite complications in our development of project-based education, the graduates of Roskilde University are doing at least as well on the labour market as graduates from other universities.

The concepts of project work and experiential learning

In an international context it is, however, important to emphasize that the Danish concept of project work cannot be identified either as simply an extended kind of group work or as an implementation of the concept of “problem based learning”. Rather, the project-work concept is closely related to a line of educational thinking and philosophy that, in Denmark, is identified as “experiential learning”—this last being similar to, but not identical with, learning by doing, or learning by experience. “Experiential learning” treats learning processes as integrated aspects of the individual's total development, influenced by personal history, life conditions, situation, interests, motivation, etc. A central focus in project work, therefore, is

the student's participation in, and responsibility for, all important decisions in the process, including the choice of the content and problems of the project.

Methodologically project work is based on three fundamental theoretical principles:

Problem orientation mandates that the starting point for the work—in contrast to the traditional subject or discipline orientation—be a problem or a set of problems. The content of the studies will then consist of whatever material, investigation or theory, can contribute to the understanding, illumination or solving of the problem(s). This principle also implies that effective, valid and durable learning is established by dealing with problems. Furthermore, all problems, including those social and personal, are taken seriously.

Participant direction mandates that the studies be directed *jointly* by students, supervisors, and other relevant participants. While all participants have equal standing, each has different functions and responsibilities. This makes the role of the supervisor particularly demanding. He or she has a specific professional responsibility, but must act in agreement with the students, having no means of forcing them to accept his or her suggestions or standpoints.

Exemplarity mandates that the problems and content material chosen should be representative of a larger and essential area of reality. Through deep and serious work on a genuine problem of personal interest, the underlying structures of the problem area are uncovered, enabling students to generalise their insights into new contexts.

The phases of a typical project

The course of a typical project can, conceptually, be broken down into a series of “phases.” It must be understood, however that this construct is reductive—that, in fact, not all phases will occur in all projects, that their sequence may be changed, and that it is possible to be in two or more phases at the same time, or to return to previous phases. With these reservations the following eight phases can be distinguished:

The introduction. This includes introduction to the project method (if necessary), to regulations and practical conditions, an introduction to the subject area in question—which should be appealing and provocative—as well as a social introduction. Sometimes these functions can be united in a pilot project, which is a short, well-guided-and-prepared project that should be able to raise more problems than it resolves. By the end of the introduction phase the frames and conditions of the following project process should be clear to all participants.

The choice of theme or subject of the project. This is, as a rule, also the phase where project groups are formed. The theme should be chosen in accordance with the principle of exemplarity so that the process simultaneously achieves engagement of the students and selection of a relevant content area. Groups are usually formed on the basis of interest in content matter. But, at the same time, and quite justifiably, social preferences and aversions also play an important role.

Problem formulation. In this phase, the specific problems that the project is to deal with should be formulated precisely—a process that will also uncover a lot of bias and differences in the project group, and force the group to make a series of fundamental decisions. Problem formulation is a very significant issue in the project method, and it is important that both the students and the supervisor pay the utmost attention to every detail so that the formulation can function as a common statement of precisely what the group has agreed upon.

Practical planning, which includes time planning, delegation of tasks, internal and external appointments, process evaluation, etc.

The investigation phase, which is the long, central phase in which, in order to probe the problem area selected, an attempt is made to establish an ever-deepening understanding, to relate the problem to relevant theory, etc. In this phase it is especially important to have a high degree of internal coordination, to write down all agreements, decisions, references, abstracts of relevant literature, ideas, drafts, etc. Another important feature is the communication between the project group and the supervisor; the latter must achieve the difficult balance of giving a professional guidance without forcing the group to accept his or her own interests or points of view.

The product phase, in which a report is produced, in writing and any other suitable medium. In this phase, time will usually be short, and the group must find out how to compose, coordinate and produce the report in the most expedient and effective way. This is often a hard, but very useful, learning process.

Product evaluation, which may be an internal evaluation by other students and supervisors, but, in most cases, is an external examination. This examination is quite different from the usual kind of inquiry, because its starting point is the report of the students and not a randomly chosen topic within the curriculum. It usually takes the form of a group examination with individual grading.

Post-evaluation, which is a final internal statement of the benefit and consequences of the project for every single member of the group. Although this phase is optional and comes after the official termination of the project, it can be a valuable contribution to the learning process.

The *crucial* points in the project process are the problem formulation, at the outset, and the making of a manifest product as a conclusion. Between these two requirements, the accomplishment of the central content work is carried out, and has its meaning and motivation. That is why the participation of the students and their commitment to decisions made in these phases are so important.

It is also important to note that the first four phases, which deal with preparing and establishing a basis for the investigation, are equally important and necessary for the process. For beginners, in fact, they may very well take one third or even half of the project time—which is often a problem for an inexperienced and impatient supervisor. But, in project work, a considerable part of the transcendent learning processes, which are so decisive for the development of the “soft” skills, take place in the phases where the group jointly discovers what to investigate together, how to do it, and why.

Projects, problem orientation, and interdisciplinarity

The fundamental principle of problem orientation indicates that projects very often must be interdisciplinary, since the problems of reality do not respect any of the boundaries of disciplines. Therefore, it is quite obvious that Roskilde University also has interdisciplinarity as one of its fundamentals, especially in the two years of Basic studies. This is also the case, but to an even greater extent in studies toward higher degrees and in various research programs. Interdisciplinarity is, like project studies, an integrated part of our image, and a trade mark of our graduates on the labour market.

Although the concepts of problem orientation and interdisciplinarity are closely connected, however, they are not the same. Problem orientation refers to the *process* of studies, interdisciplinarity refers to their *content*. Thus, it is quite possible to conduct problem oriented studies within the boundaries of a discipline, or to accomplish interdisciplinarity without problem orientation.

Historically, scientific knowledge has been organised systematically inside the framework, theories, and methods of established disciplines, and, if students are not very

professional and well guided in their studies, a fully interdisciplinary approach could easily lead to lack of focus. Without a command of essential areas within disciplines, it is difficult to develop a reasonable academic standard.

So, a key issue is not a choice between problem orientation and knowledge of disciplines, but rather how to *combine* the two—such combination, of course, being the logical basis of interdisciplinarity. And this has, without doubt, been the central structural challenge at Roskilde University, ever since the idea of having no disciplines at all was abandoned during the first years of our existence.

As we, for reasons of motivation and adequate qualification, maintain project work and problem orientation as the principal and fundamental elements of curriculum, the ideal solution would be to bring in disciplinary content at the exact point when its contribution is maximally motivated by the work of the projects. However, many years of practice have taught us that this ideal can be realized only in few, very fortunate situations.

The solution, then, is generally a compromise, where discipline-oriented courses are placed in the curriculum where they are expected to be most relevant for the students, and, at the same time, students are encouraged to direct their choice of projects in accordance with the succession of courses. As a supplement, it may be possible to organise ad hoc courses on selected topics, but shortage of resources has considerably reduced this possibility.

On the whole, it must be admitted that it has not been possible, within the existing resource framework, to find satisfactory solutions to the combination of project work and discipline oriented studies—and failure to do so can be regarded as the most pressing structural problem of the Roskilde University curriculum design.

A higher degree of flexibility and familiarity with the students' needs by the teaching staff might be another way to deal with the problem, and some steps have been taken in order to try to effect an improvement in this direction.

However, even with this problem more or less unsolved, it is a fact that our curriculum has proven fully competitive with regard to attracting students to the university, the development of a favourable environment, and the demand for our graduates.

Transformative Learning—From the Perspective of a Comprehensive (Adult) Learning Theory

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Abstract: *This paper outlines a contemporary and comprehensive theory of learning that has been developed to match the modern concept of competence and therefore includes not only cognitive learning but also emotional and social dimensions. In relation to this formulation, different kinds of learning are discussed and a framework is suggested comprising four learning types as characterized in relation to their contribution to the construction of mental schemes or patterns. The fourth, and most complex, of these learning types is Transformative Learning. It is emphasized that, in order to be fully understood, TL must include all three learning dimensions and be regarded as a further development of the other, less complex, types of learning.*

Key words: Learning theory, Learning dimensions, Learning types.

In general Transformative Learning (TL) may be described as an extensive and comprehensive type of learning. As defined by Mezirow (1991), it is also primarily a cognitive process, although it is recognized that important emotional changes are often involved.

This statement indicates, at the same time, that there are other types of learning, and that learning may imply dimensions other than the cognitive. It is therefore obvious to ask about the way in which TL is related to other types and other dimensions of learning—a question of interest not only to learning theory in general but also to the exploration of TL itself.

In my recent book, *The Three Dimensions of Learning* (Illeris 2002), I endeavour to develop the outlines of a comprehensive and contemporary general theory of learning. This work includes quite a few references to the concept of TL. In this paper, my aim will be, against this background, to describe the position and domain of TL in the total landscape of human learning. To do so I shall briefly describe the main features of this landscape and finally focus upon where and how TL fits in.

A theory of learning and competence

Over the latest decades in the world of education there has been a remarkable shift of interest from such key concepts as “education” and “qualification” to potentials characterized by the new buzzwords of *learning* and *competence*. The background for this can be seen in the emergence of a globalised and ever changing late modern market society. Other terms that are used as epithets for our present situation, the Knowledge Society, or the Information Society, point to the importance of knowledge and information, but, at the same time, miss the crucial point that one of the most striking features of the new conditions is that the character of knowledge and information has changed radically—from being something stable that one could acquire once and for all to being something fluid which has to be renewed over and over again.

This is exactly why focus has shifted from the stable and institutionalised area of education to the much more flexible and individual-related area of learning, and from qualifications extracted from the content of specific jobs to competencies defined as human

abilities to cope with and solve current as well as future problems. Actually, the core of the concept of “competence” can be understood as the potential to deal with problems that are unknown and unpredictable at the time when the competence in question is acquired—which is certainly a challenge to any traditional notion of education.

All this creates, among a lot of other issues, an urgent need for a new and comprehensive understanding of learning as not just a cognitive matter, but also as the total personal development of capacities related to all functions and spheres of human life.

This, as I see it now, is the background of my attempt to develop a new and more inclusive theory of learning, which I began to pursue in 1994—not because I was able to formulate my present perspective at the time, but because I was then working on a project for the Danish Labour Market Authority combining practical vocational training of unskilled workers with their personal development of skills remarkably similar to those particularly valued today—flexibility, responsibility, independence and other similar “general qualifications” (as they were then called (Andersen et al 1994, 1996).

Thus, my development of theory has progressed as an interplay between practical and theoretical engagement, ending up in the structuring of my experience and theoretical ideas by examination of a broad range of relevant theories concerning learning, motivation, personal development, late modern society and other proximal topics, picking out contributions and ideas that I found relevant and gradually combining them into an overall construction.

The basic processes involved in learning

The most fundamental assumption of this learning theory is that all learning includes two essentially different types of process: an *external* interaction process between the learner and his or her social, cultural and material environment, and an *internal*, psychological process of elaboration and acquisition in which new impulses are connected with the results of prior learning.

The factors regulating these interaction processes are social and societal in character, i.e., they are determined by time and place. The individual is in interaction with an environment that includes other people, a specific culture, technology, etc., the characteristics of which are informed by their time and social milieu. In the late modern globalised world, all of these interactions are mixed up in a giant and rapidly changing hodgepodge that offers unlimited—and to a great extent also unstructured—possibilities for learning. Hence the often expressed need for “learning to learn,” i.e. creating an intrapersonal structure, or value system, to sort out what is worth learning from what is not.

This entire context is also the background for understandings such as those of the social constructionists that focus on the needs, difficulties and prevalence of this manifold interaction process in late modernity (e.g. Gergen 1994).

But no matter how dominant and imperative the interaction process has become, in learning there is also always a process of individual acquisition in which the impulses from the interaction are incorporated. As discussed by such scholars as Piaget (e.g. 1952) and Ausubel (1968), the core of this process is that new impressions are connected with the results of prior learning in a way that influences both. Thus, the outcome of the individual acquisition process is always dependent on what has already been acquired, and ultimately, the criteria of this process are of a biological nature—determined by the extensive, but not infinite, possibilities of the human brain and central nervous system to cope with, structure, retain and create meaning out of impressions registered by our senses.

The three dimensions of learning

However, learning thinking, remembering, understanding, and similar functions are not just cognitive matters, although they have generally been conceived of as such by traditional learning and cognitive psychology. Whether the frame of reference is common sense, Freudian psychology, modern management or very latest results of brain research, there is lots of compelling evidence that all such functions are also inseparably connected with emotions. The Austrian-American psychologist Hans Furth (1987), by combining the findings and theories of Piaget and Freud, has unravelled how, during the preschool years, cognition and emotions gradually separate as distinctive but never isolated functions; and the Portuguese-American neurologist Antonio Damasio (1994) has explained how this process takes place in our brain and what disastrous consequences occur when the connections between the two are cut by damage to the brain—even though neither of the functions, in itself, has been affected. Thus the acquisition process necessarily always has both a cognitive and an emotional side.

Consequently all learning always includes three dimensions, the:

- cognitive dimension of knowledge and skills, the
- emotional dimension of feelings and motivation, and the
- social dimension of communication and cooperation

—all of which are embedded in a societally situated context. The learning processes and dimensions may be illustrated by the following figure:

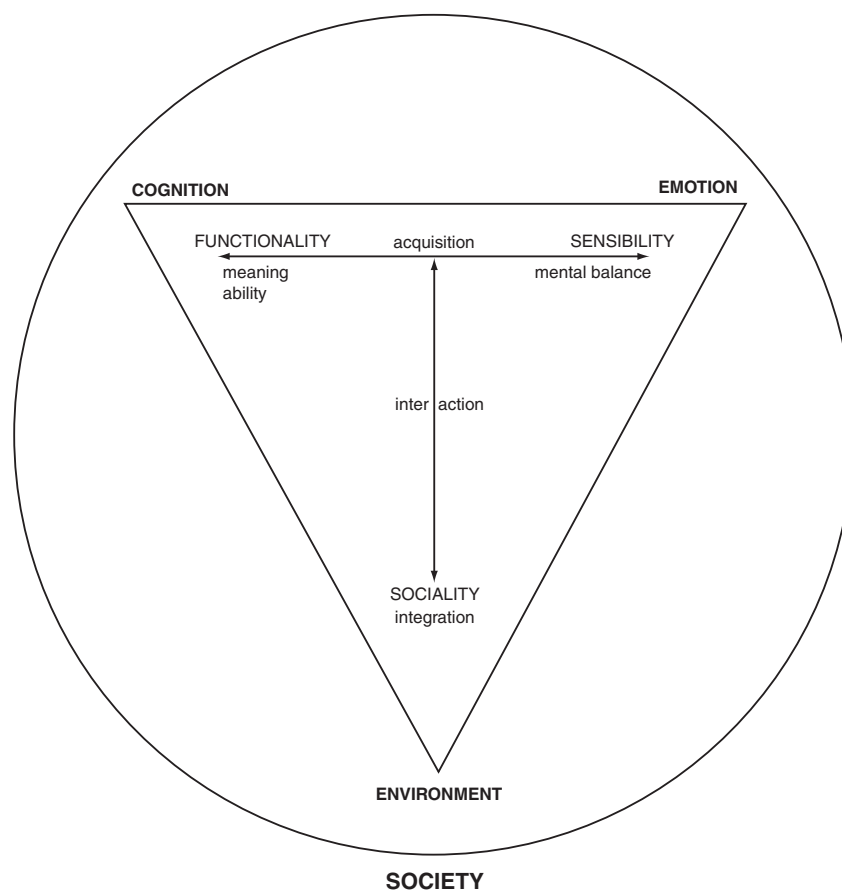


Figure. The Learning Tension Field

The cognitive dimension is the dimension of the learning content, which may be described as knowledge or skills and which builds up the understanding and the proficiencies of the learner. In this realm, the endeavour of the learner is to construct *meaning* and the *ability to deal with the challenges of life* and thereby develop an overall personal *functionality*.

The emotional (or psychodynamic) dimension is the dimension encompassing mental energy, feelings and motivations. Its ultimate function is to secure the *mental balance* of the learner and thereby it simultaneously develops a personal *sensitivity*.

The social dimension is the dimension of external interaction, such as participation, communication and cooperation. It mediates personal *integration* in communities and society and thereby also builds up the *sociality* of the learner. However, this building up necessarily takes place through the two other dimensions.

Thus the triangle depicts what I see as the tension field of learning in general and of any specific learning event or learning process as stretched out between the development of functionality, sensitivity and sociality—which all, together, are precisely the fundamental elements of what we call competence.

Different kinds of learning

Another fundamental aspect of learning theory has to do with the different character and scope of different types of learning processes. There are many different typologies, including for instance, among some of the better known, Robert Gagné's eight kinds of learning, based mainly on American behaviourist learning psychology (Gagné 1970), and Gregory Bateson's system theory based on learning levels 0-IV (Bateson 1972). However, I have chosen to specify four types of learning on the basis of Piaget's conception of mental schemes (Piaget 1952, Flavell 1963), because these learning types can be explained in relation to the character of the acquisition process as outlined above.

As already mentioned, the acquisition process implies a linking between new impulses and the results of prior learning. These results cannot be thought of as merely an unstructured mass of knowledge, emotions and abilities. Actually, one of Piaget's most basic assumptions is that to learn something means to mentally structure something, i.e. to incorporate it in a mental *scheme*. From modern brain research we know that such schemes have the character of dispositions to re-activate and reinforce specific electric circuits between brain cells that represent the knowledge, emotions or abilities in question (Damasio 1994). Piaget used the term schemes in relation to knowledge and understandings. In relation to emotions, social abilities, and other capacities of a less exact nature, I have suggested psychological *patterns* as a more adequate term (Illeris 2002).

When a scheme or pattern is established, according to the Danish psychologist Thomas Nissen (1970), this is a case of the learning type which he called *cumulation*, a kind of mechanical learning establishing an isolated formation characterised by a form of automation that means that it can only be recalled and applied in situations mentally similar to the learning context. This is, for instance, how learning by conditioning functions.

The most common type of learning, however, is *assimilation*, or learning by addition, meaning that the new impulse is linked to a scheme or pattern already established in such a manner that it is relatively easy to recall and apply when one is mentally oriented towards the field in question.

But sometimes situations occur where we receive impulses that are difficult to immediately relate to any existing scheme or pattern. Acquisition can then take place by *accommodation* or transcendent learning, implying that one breaks down (parts of) an existing scheme or pattern and transforms it so that the new situation can be linked in. Thus one both relinquishes and reconstructs something, a process that can be experienced as

demanding and even painful. The result can be recalled and applied in many different, relevant contexts.

Finally, there is also a far-reaching type of learning entailing what could be termed personality change and characterised by simultaneous restructuring in all three dimensions—the cognitive, the emotional and the social. Such learning typically occurs as the result of confronting a crisis-like situation caused by challenges experienced as urgent and unavoidable. Such processes have traditionally not been conceived of as learning, but they are well known in the field of psychotherapy, extending back to the Freudian concept of catharsis (Freud & Breuer 1956/1895). As far as I have been able to determine, it was the well-known psychotherapist, Carl Rogers, who, with his concept of “significant learning,” was the first to connect such processes to learning theory (Rogers 1951). Later, from a quite different perspective, it was also described by Gregory Bateson as his “learning type III” (Bateson 1972) and by Yrjö Engeström as “expansive learning” (Engeström 1987).

I also think that the concept of transformative learning, as developed by Jack Mezirow (1991), can be understood as a description of such learning. However, I see two interrelated uncertainties in relation to this attribution.

First, neither in Mezirow’s own description, nor in the many practical examples that relate to the concept of TL, is it always clear whether what takes place is actually accommodation, as defined above, or what I would call genuine transformation which includes all three dimensions of learning.

Second, part of the reason for this uncertainty is that in his description of TL, Mezirow deals primarily with the cognitive side of the acquisition process—although he in no way excludes the emotional and social dimensions.

To me it is obvious that speaking about TL in these additional dimensions would not only make sense, but would actually be a valuable addition or specification—opening the door to seeing more directly the whole range of conditions involved when learning processes that are not only cognitive significantly change the personal capacities, understandings and orientations of the learner.

Thus, in relation to the approach to learning types that I have set up here, it would be appropriate to use *transformative learning* as the term only for the structurally most comprehensive kind of learning—entailing simultaneous restructuring in all three learning dimensions.

Finally, I would like to stress that when using the framework of four fundamental learning types that I have sketched here—cumulation, assimilation, accommodation, and transformation—it is important to understand that although these learning types are very different in their scope and complexity, none of them can be said to be better or more valuable than the others; it is precisely the capacity to practise all four learning types that makes the learning of our species so supreme, and the more complex types of learning always presuppose that other and more basic learning has provided the preconditions that make them possible.

With respect to transformative learning, I conclude that this concept, on the one hand, provides important contributions to our general understanding of the scope and possibilities of human learning, and on the other hand, that it is important to combine transformative learning with other learning conceptions in order to achieve a complete understanding of what is happening and what is possible.

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Three Meaning Structures For Being Fully Human

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Abstract: *Transformation is a human capacity. Essential to the task of transformative learning and education is the discernment of what it means to be a human being. This paper provides three meaning structures that frame the experience of being fully human, i.e., inwardly free and outwardly loving. These structures integrate the earthly and spiritual aspects of the human being. What parts make up the whole known as the human being? What are the functions of the soul of the human being? How do perceptions of being in a living physical body shape our sense of self? Since the primary goal of transformational learning is to awaken and establish inner emancipation in the adult and to support new, socially responsive behaviors arising out of that emancipation, the focus of these structures is to make apparent the locus of the capacity for freedom and love in the individual. Having first met these structures as the worldview of human development underlying Waldorf education and the little known and sadly neglected work of Rudolf Steiner, the authors share their interpretation based on twenty years of practice in counseling and adult education.*

Keywords: Soul, Individuality, Archetypal Human Being

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), a philosopher and spiritual scientist, whose body of work is called anthroposophy, articulated a worldview based on making conscious the reflection of the world in the individual and the individual in the world. In his lifetime Steiner gave over six thousand lectures that have been published and wrote 50 books grounded on these meaning structures that have inspired new forms of banking, medicine, business development, agriculture, caring for the mentally handicapped and education. Yet, in spite of his tremendous scope of influence, he remains out of public discourse.

Our intention through this paper is share our interpretation and enhancement of three of Steiner's central frameworks: the fourfold human being; the three functions of the human soul; and the four senses of incarnation and how they enhance transformational learning processes. Our interpretations interweave with Steiner's work our reading of contemporary literature on self and organizational development, conversations with colleagues, empirical research in our practice, and intensive critical reflection. In order to present sufficiently all three structures and their links to transformational learning in this brief paper we have not made specific references in the text. We offer instead a reading list for further exploration.

The First Meaning Structure: The Fourfold Human Being

Human beings experience "self" in four ways that can be distinguished as sheaths or "bodies": 1. "Self" experienced as the container of self in space, i.e., the physical body; 2. "Self" experienced in the rhythms and patterns in time, i.e., the life (time) body of biology, biography, and emotion; 3. "Self" experienced in subject-object relationship, i.e., the soul body of

perception, cognition, affection, motivation, volition; and 4. “Self” experienced beyond the conditions of space, time, relativity, i.e., the spirit body. Each of the bodies supports a different learning context and poses different challenges for transformative learning. The path through which the mature human being moves ... from exclusivity rooted in the human experience of the physical body, routine and convention rooted in the life body, and disintegration rooted in the soul body to the inclusivity, differentiation and integration of all content, processes, perspectives, premises, and analyses based on the emancipating and irradiating presence of the spirit body ... is greatly facilitated by knowledge and application of the framework of the fourfold human being.

The Physical Body: Learning as Imitation

The first seven years of life are spent incarnating into our inherited physical bodies in three-dimensional space. During this time our primary learning and socialization process is imitation of family and primary caretakers. Imitation is the least conscious path of knowledge. There is no filtering in imitation because there is no existing historical reference to provide other possibilities for being. Our sense of self is bathed in, and fed by, the forces of blood/genome. “I” is experienced as unity with family beliefs, gestures, and expectations. “I” belong to my family. Any sense of difference is anxiety producing, as we cannot maintain a secure sense of self. Survival is dependent on our family.

Transformative learning is most challenged in confronting the fixed perspectives based on the intermingling of blood and belief. The content, processes, and premises of our sense of self are physicalized: dense, hardened, fixed. The stimulation for transformation requires “dynamite” to threaten all sense of intimate existence.

The Life Body: Learning as Identification

In the second seven years of life as the sense of self incarnates into our life body we move from imitation of family to identification with peers and the larger environment. We struggle with the individuating forces of our own biology (the rhythmical systems of our living organization) and biography (the reoccurring patterns, attitudes, and prejudices revealed in our life’s stories and memories) and the emotional impact of both. We begin to have a life of our own, both biologically and biographically.

Learning occurs through obedience/disobedience to authority and identification with particular peers and their social demands. We learn the importance of the right and acceptable answers, belief, gestures, and expectations based on acquired techniques and stored knowledge. Validation establishes habit, routine and convention.

The life body is a three-part (biological, biographical, and emotional) operating system and a database or storage system. Transformation is seen as necessary when aspects of the databases are lost or parts of the system crash, e.g., chronic or acute disease, divorce, winning the lottery, etc. As both the operating systems and the databases are taken for granted, transformation requires understanding of the old operating system before a new one can be installed or the database rebuilt.

The Soul Body: Learning as Independence and Experimentation

In the third seven-year period of life, the teenage years, the soul body begins its process of discovery as “self” in the dramatic world of relationships experienced through infinite cognitive, affective, and volitional possibilities. We start to think, feel, and will our lives in independent and experimental ways. We begin to develop positions and points of view. The

drive to independence leads us to revolt against old ways and to “try-on” new possibilities but the fit is based on comfort/discomfort judgments or belonging/rebelling notions. We experience a swing between seeking adulthood and returning to childhood. We seek heroes; those who disregard limitations and succeed in new ways. Emulating our heroes in thoughts, desires and actions is awkward and uncertain. Although heroic ideals concerning truth, beauty, and goodness will surface, they remain immature, ineffectual and fleeting.

The soul body is the place of our inner life and it does not mature on its own, let alone transform. It will always be influenced by the life body and instinctual drive to return to the security of habits, routines, and conventions. The soul body receives memories from the life body, and new perceptions from its environments through its connection to the life body. It can form concepts, but any concepts are deeply influenced by viewpoint and ways of being identified by the life body. Transformation occurs when the reasoning of matured thinking, the resonance of matured feeling and the resolve of matured willing are engaged through imagination, inspiration, and intuition. The possibility for this maturity comes with the incarnation of the spirit body.

Adulthood and The Spirit Body: Learning as Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition

Somewhere around twenty-one years of age the spirit body incarnates. There is an awareness of a kernel of “self” that is not informed by space, time or relativity. With this body comes individuality. It appears with the questions “Who am I?” “What do I want?” “What do I provide?” These questions often manifest as the impulse for self-transformation. The spirit body provides the forces of freedom and love that draw thinking, feeling, and willing into new ways of being.

Instead of seven years, the gods were kind, and hopeful, and gave the human being the rest of his/her lifetime to awaken and manifest through the spirit body the fullness of one’s own free and loving humanity. We wake up to the “I am,” sufficient, alive, and creative unto itself. Those practicing transformative adult education have many experiences of “wake-up.” It is that moment when “shift” occurs: the physical presence, the living qualities and the intangible soul qualities you are observing in the learner are irradiated by something that is not quite describable. To use a poetic metaphor, it is as if the sun has suddenly appeared fully radiant from behind a bank of clouds. Something shines through the individual.

The spirit body, or “I am,” does not imitate or identify and therefore does not seek independence. It does not experience belonging, differences, recognition or death. It is free of all context. When it enters the soul, it becomes the source of transformation and emancipation from the meanings of the other three bodies. When transformative learning takes place, it is the spirit body that is engaged and constant, allowing everything else as Goethe once said to “Die and become.”

It is in dying and becoming that the “I am,” totally awake to individual freedom, finds the fully human capacity to love unconditionally and to know and act with unselfish social responsibility. When the human being says “I” he signifies the one meaning that is shared by everyone and no one. The discourse of transformative learning occurs “I” to “I.”

To develop further the significance of the theoretical framework of the four bodies in transformative adult education, it is necessary to explore the functions and dynamics of the soul body, and to understand the ways that the “I” perceives being human through the four senses of incarnation.

The Second Meaning Structure: The Three Functions Of The Soul

The three functions of the soul are thinking, feeling and willing. These functions are the locus of transformative learning. The soul succeeds or fails at transforming out of the relationship of the life body or the spirit body to these three functions. The adult soul experiences many battles in the ongoing war between our instincts for survival and self-interest inherent in the physical and life bodies (manifesting in the soul as fear in thinking, doubt in feeling and hatred and anger in willing) and the spirit body's unselfish strivings for personal expression of the archetypal ideals of Truth in thinking, Beauty in feeling, and Goodness in willing. It is in these battles between instinct and ideals that the adult educator plays a strategic and humbling role.

If you have read this previous sentence you have formed a mental picture of its significance through thinking; you have had a feeling of the mental picture's "rightness" and harmony in relation to your sense of things through feeling; and you willed yourself to read it, form the mental picture, feel your relation to it and move on to another thought and consequent feeling through willing. We can think new skills, but we will not learn them unless our feeling of rightness engages the will to learn. Learning is made evident in the outward activity of the living physical body. The living physical body stores this new form as a rational way of doing things ... and it becomes a learned skill.

For example, we all know the challenge to try a new food: we form an image of it, taste it and decide if we want to swallow it or not, then we digest it and it becomes our body. Entrepreneurs have the idea, get the investors and then build the company. Look at online dating. We get a picture of the person; we see if the description feels like she might be the one, then we make the call. "If you're willing, I am willing."

The soul is informed by the life body which identifies at varying levels of consciousness with certain epistemic, socio-linguistic, economic, neurological, hormonal, metabolic, psychological and behavioral ways of being. As instincts, the soul functions are focused on the survival of self based on historical context: i.e., immature, egocentric, and fixed. New ways of being are learned only with the promise that survival anxiety will be reduced and pleasure and security increased.

Or the soul may be inspired by the freedom and love of spirit body and strive for the ideals of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Transformation must go beyond the capacities to think and speak good thoughts, or to desire a better future; it must engage the will to actualize both through good deeds.

The adult educator must guide the process of transformation with awareness of this constant struggle between instinct and ideal. The ability to recognize and hold the instincts with reverence and compassion greatly reduces their grip on the soul functions. At the same time, the educator must manage his own soul struggles.

The Third Meaning Structure: The Four Senses Of Being Fully Human

The third meaning structure is to look at how the human being inwardly perceives being human. This perception is dependent on four "senses." Many obstacles to successful

transformational learning can often be rooted in the perceptual breakdowns occurring in one or more of these senses.

Touch

The first sense, touch, tells us we are in a physical body. It is the experience of the resistance and containment of our skin. Physically, we are bounded, contained, and limited. Touch teaches us the earthly knowledge that there is self and not self. Physically I stop here and something else begins. Transformative learning is about being “outside the box” and going beyond our limitations, while still keeping a sense of our own boundaries. The analogy holds. The touch sense relates to the physical body and the thinking soul.

Life Sense

The second perception, the life sense, tells us when we require something in order to sustain life. We learn about frequency, duration, and intensity. Through the life sense we perceive hunger, thirst, exhaustion, pain, and other threatening discomforts and alterations in our being. We learn through the life sense our needs, our rhythms, and the meaning of security. With this sense fully conscious we can develop our capacity to endure strangeness and insecurity as we transform our ways of thinking, feeling, and willing. This sense relates to the life body and the feeling soul.

Self-Movement

The third sense is self-movement. We can perceive all our body parts in relation to one another. We can perceive the inner experience of stillness and motion. Coordinated movement is guided by this perception. The experience of stillness is also the experience of potential movement and vice versa. With this sense we can regulate the momentum of change and not trip ourselves up. We can walk ... and chew gum at the same time. We feel stuck or out of control. Transformation unfolds with intention and grace. Self-movement relates to the soul body and the willing soul.

Self-Orientation

The fourth sense is the self-orientation or balance sense. In the first year of life we first balance our two eyes so that we can keep a steady gaze while under all kinds of movement and changing perspective. We then build the capacity to balance our very heavy head atop the atlas vertebrae. Balanced sitting is next as we rest on our sitz bones, freeing our upper limbs to embrace or push away. Finally, we balance on our feet ... upright between heaven and earth. The human being is the only creature that walks upright. We achieve, adjust, and sustain our physical uprightness, managing all kinds of alterations and challenges in the three dimensions of space. It is in this sense that we find the incarnation of the “I” in our earthly humanity. The self, oriented in the experience of the incarnated “I am,” is confident to transform: to die and become.

Closing Thoughts

Freedom is not found in the soul, neither is love. You cannot think, feel or will freedom or love. Freedom and love are in the domain of the spirit body. Meaning schemes, perspectives, premises and prejudices do not dwell in the soul. They dwell in the patterning of the biology,

biography and emotions of the life body. The soul exists in between the life body and the spirit body just as the atmosphere exists between the earth and space. It relates and integrates the two.

Understanding and working with these three meaning structures of being fully human, the adult educator can better design highly effective content and process for the adult learner. It is also possible to locate more effectively the challenges, obstacles and breakdowns in the learner's sense of self. Above all, the adult educator's most valuable source of insight is relentless research into the experience of "I am" within her or his own being.

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Enjoining Positionality and Power in Narrative Work: Balancing Contentious and Modulating Force

Juanita Johnson-Bailey

Over the last decade, the use of narratives in qualitative research has steadily increased. This growth can be primarily attributed to the accessibility of narratives to both researchers and consumers. Since stories are the familiar and are easily understood as the discourse used to frame our everyday lives, the method has universal appeal. Researchers are attracted to the seemingly uncomplicated nature of narrative methodology as a means of collecting data. Readers are drawn to narratives for the unobtrusively intimate format and the ease of understanding. Tappan and Brown (1991) conclude that narratives are the preferred way of communicating when we must tell “the way it really happened” (p. 174). They further posit that disclosures related in narratives are told with moral authority and are representative of the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of the experiences.

Also, we find and construct meaning in our lives by telling our stories. In particular, the narrative as a style of telling and researching has been widely adopted by feminist scholars when working with the words of other women. The format has been relied on heavily by this group of researchers, especially those doing work on women of color, because the implicit, collaborative, and interactive nature of the design is recognized for attending to the power disparities involved in research. In addition, this format gives preeminence to displaying data in its original state, which is acknowledged as a trustworthy way of giving “voice” to the participants. However, such assumptions about the control of the story and cooperative structure are tenuous because the power still remains in the hands of the one who will ultimately leave the field, write the story, and benefit from publication.

This presentation will examine how the narrative format is used to collect and present data. It also explores the broader and more familiar use of the narrative as a means of presenting a story that is embedded in other qualitative products, such as ethnographies, phenomenological studies, or case studies. Furthermore, the discussion explores how narratives are used by feminist researchers as a way of depicting women’s lives and their societal circumstances, and includes an extensive exploration of the “Other” by using a comparative lens to discuss the power dynamics inherent in the outsider and insider positionalities.

No research methodology can provide a perfect balance for telling and representing. Power can affect the relationships, or the historical positions and patterns of relationships, between the researcher and the researched. In a narrative where the storied script reveals in integral and accessible ways while simultaneously functioning as the research structure, the design dilemmas are intense. Therefore, research scholars using narratives must remain vigilantly aware of power issues—the balance of voices, competing political agendas, and the societal hierarchies enveloping the process. Each story, and the accompanying data collection and analytic process, is a balancing act. The forces to be reconciled change as positions shift: a white person studying a person of color, a man researching women and their place in society, a scholar of color doing work within her/his own culture. There is no righteous ground. There are people of color who can accomplish a synchronously sympathetic and critical examination of their kin, and there are those who bring a jaundiced gaze sponsored by internalized oppression to self-group examination. There are Whites who can negotiate the privilege of their whiteness and represent the “Other” in ways that are generally accepted as accurate by the group being examined and there are those White researchers who are trapped and blinded by their privilege.

But then there are those fortuitous instances when all the margins are traversed, the inevitable biases contained, and the fortunate story, told well, reverberates universally.

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People and Place in Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *A variety of theorists have discussed the need for multicultural education (Grant and Sleeter, 1998; Nieto, 1991; and Tatum, 1992). In Education Issues and Perspectives, Grant and Sleeter state: “Education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist extends the multicultural education approach by educating students to become analytical and critical thinkers capable of examining their life circumstances and the social stratification that keeps them and their group from fully enjoying the social and financial rewards of this country. Or, if they are members of dominant groups, it helps them become critical thinkers who are capable of examining why their group exclusively enjoys the social and financial rewards of the nation” (p. 54). Both of these issues speak to transformative learning. This interactive session seeks to demonstrate the importance of including the persona of adult students in multicultural conversations and providing opportunities for experiencing place as a way of confronting discomfort and being involved in experiential learning. The use of person and place is also transformative for it allows each individual to offer a description of self, receive the description of another who may be “different” from oneself, consider the connections between and among identities, and physically place oneself in the experience of an unfamiliar community where once can seek to gain a greater appreciation of difference.*

Keywords: experiential learning, cultural diversity, methodologies for change

People and Place in Transformative Learning

This paper discusses two methodologies that are employed in the course *Cultural Diversity: The African American Experience*, a Lesley University course for teachers, counselors and human services providers. The primary goal of the course is to increase understanding of the socio-historical context of the African American experience by employing a variety of disciplinary lenses: historical, literary, sociological, cinematic and artistic. This paper should be of interest to those who teach African American studies, counsel African American students, as well as academic and administrative personnel who provide services to diverse populations.

Theoretical Grounding

A variety of theorists have discussed the need for this kind of multicultural education (Grant and Sleeter, 1989; Nieto, 1992; Tatum, 1992). In *Multicultural Education Issues and Perspectives* (1989), Grant and Sleeter state:

Education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist extends the multicultural education approach by educating students to become analytical and critical thinkers capable of examining their life circumstances and the social stratification that keeps them and their group from fully enjoying the social and financial rewards of this country. Or, if they are members of dominant groups, it helps them become critical thinkers who are capable of examining why their group exclusively enjoys the social and financial rewards of the nation. Social reconstruction seeks to reform society toward greater equity in race, class, gender and handicap. (p. 54)

Nieto, in *Affirming Diversity* (1992) adds,
 It is easier for some educators to embrace a very inclusive and comprehensive framework of multicultural education because they have a hard time facing racism. Racism is an excruciating, difficult issue for most of us...Nevertheless, I believe it is only through a thorough investigation of discrimination based on race and other differences related to it that we can understand the genesis as well as the rationale for multicultural education. (p. xxvii)

Finally, Tatum (1992), a clinical psychologist, based on years of experience in teaching about racism, feels that

The inclusion of race related content in college courses often generates emotional responses in students that range from guilt and shame to anger and despair. The discomfort associated with these emotions can lead students to resist the learning process. Unfortunately, less attention has been given to the issues of process that inevitably emerge in the classroom when the attention is focused on race, class and/or gender. (p. 137)

Interdisciplinary Nature of African American Experience and Course

The African American Experience is interdisciplinary in scope. As we look at a cultural context, we draw upon a variety of disciplines in our teaching: history, literature, sociology, film, the arts and others. The wider the perspective, the more deeply enriching the multicultural education experience becomes. We seek to unearth the untold stories in the communities where we teach. As students begin to make their own connections among ideas, a powerful transformative experience results. During the course we read one of Zora Neale Hurston's works and then attended a lecture by Alice Walker, who related her efforts that resulted in the rediscovering of Hurston. Student reflections noted the wonder they experienced because of a different way of thinking about persons and their place in U.S. society.

The course emphasizes experiential education. Wherever we teach, we enter into a partnership with members of the local community as they share knowledge and understandings with us. We also visit local institutions such as museums and churches. We encourage students to go beyond library research and interview and observe people involved in the phenomena they wish to understand. We invite a local panel of "experts" to visit our classes. Being welcomed into the African American community while attending an African American church service has been a life altering experience for our students. In their reflective papers, students have referred to the experience as "life changing."

The course is committed to a collaborative pedagogy based on the developmental needs of adult learners. "Adults bring a great variety of life experiences to learning communities, and their cultural backgrounds, interests, and passions generate the questions that help determine the shape and course of their learning" (Baldwin, Cochrane, Counts, Dolamore, McKenna and Vacarr, 1990, p. 7).

Our courses are delivered in a variety of formats on and off campus. Off campus we use a cohort model and encourage the development of learning communities where adults construct and share knowledge. These passionate and purposeful communities become transformative educational experiences for adults. "Our understanding of adult development and our experience in successfully educating adult students have led us to understand our work as a three-step process:

purposeful engagement in the content of the experience; reflection, evaluation, and analysis (as individuals and as a group); and the application of new learning to concrete situations.” (Baldwin, Cochrane, Counts, Dolamore, McKenna and Vacarr, 1990, p.8). Naming the “learning community” by identifying what each member provides both a way of sharing self and receiving the selves of others.

We use the racial identity development models of Cross (1971, 1978, 1991), Helms (1990) and Tatum (1992) to inform pedagogy and classroom practices. According to Cross (1971, 1978), black racial identity develops according to a five stage process, identified as Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion Internalization and Internalization-Commitment. African Americans (as well as other students of color, in all probability) move from a position of belief in the dominant white culture to a desire to immerse oneself in one's own culture, often as a result of a racial incident. The result is a newly defined sense of self, a deepening sense of connection to one's own group leading to personal commitment to social action on behalf of African Americans and others, which is sustained over time.

For white students, on the other hand, Helms (1990) identifies six stages of white racial identity: Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independent, Immersion/Emersion and Autonomy, as students abandon racism and develop a non-racist white identity. The “bliss of ignorance” characteristic of the first stage is replaced by guilt and shame at the recognition of the role whites have played in maintaining a racist system. White students need to move to a committed anti-racist position in which they can forge new alliances with people of color. The mixture of anger, guilt and shame, which occurs in the middle stages of these two developmental models in a racially mixed classroom, can account for the difficult interactions that might arise.

Experiential Nature of the Course

The course seeks to provide contact as a way of exploring issues. It acknowledges the power of person and place, and provides opportunities for experiential interaction. We begin by acknowledging person. Within the classroom, the initial experiences are interactive exercises, which allow students to examine their own cultural identities, and how their assumptions are shaped by socio-political and class constructions. To help our students, who are predominantly white, middle-class women, make a personal connection with African Americans, we ask them to choose one photograph from among a series of photographs. These photographs present the faces of African Americans and at one level this exercise provides an opportunity for students to know these African Americans and make a personal connection with who they are.

Outside the classroom, we provide an opportunity to experience place. In addition to performances, we provide the opportunity to visit and interact with African Americans in their communities. Students are able to reflect on how they felt before and during the experience and consider the “understandings” and impact of the experience on their own knowledge and assumptions. We have observed, among the students, the extraordinary development of new understandings about one another, seen new friendships formed, which at one time would have been impossible and heard stated commitments to create a more socially just society.

Student Reflections

One student, reflecting on the Boston experience said:

I could write a book on my experiences, but I would like to reflect on what I ignored as a high school student. While protesting, I never thought about what the black

students were experiencing. Getting on a bus and going to an all white school, where people disliked you because of the color of your skin, took a large amount of courage. My thoughts were so egotistical that I never considered that the black students were as frightened as I was. There were days when the black students had to be evacuated out of the school because their safety was at risk. That must have been terrible to go through. To hear the white students signing and shouting while being barricaded in classrooms is beyond my comprehension. I often think about that now and feel terrible about my actions. The expression “one learns from one's mistakes” is clearly evident to me, but I would like to erase my actions instead of chalking them up to a learning experience.

Another student noted:

Recently, I was able to use this awareness to help an individual recognize that her thoughts were prejudicial. While at a Color Guard competition, I stated that I liked a guard that was predominately black and believed they should have taken first. A mother stated that they were good, but she did not like their rap music, and if they changed the music they would win. I stated to her that she meant the music was not white enough. She became agitated and protested that was not what she meant. Then I pointed out that the Color Guard program was predominately white and controlled by white judges, she gave her statement more thought. She would not accept my conclusion that her remark was prejudicial but did recognize that whites controlled the program. Before this class, I would not have recognized the underlying thoughts that produced this statement and would have never communicated my thoughts to another.

Summary

The course discussed in this paper has the potential for initiating individual and social transformation. Students rework prior learning, challenge old assumptions and reformulate their identities. The pain of racism is confronted and discussed. Prospective teachers and counselors learn to be educators and activists, to see themselves as change agents who are actively engaged in the struggle for a more socially just society.

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The Voices of the Three Ethno-Sisters: Transforming Voice through Ethno-Autobiography, Cooperative Inquiry, and Creative Imagery.

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Abstract: *This paper presents an example of how combining a literary form, ethno-autobiography, and a research method, cooperative inquiry, created a safe, nurturing, and unique environment that elicited transformative learning. It discusses the author's reaction to the disorienting experience of trying to answer the question "Who am I in an ethno-autobiographical sense?" and tells how she used imagery to explore her identity and integrate the somatic, symbolic, emotional, and rational parts of her being. The process of sharing her creative imagery and learning about its meaning in cycles of action and reflection with two other Euro-American women facilitated her ability to use and think about her voice in a different way. The author learns about empowerment as she discovers how her ancestor's experiences have affected her perceptions of the world and how writing about personal truths and calling forth her authentic voice while someone listens deeply can have incredibly healing and transformative effects. As a result of this organic, interactive process, the author has experienced deep shifts within her consciousness that dramatically altered her way of being in the world such as influencing self understanding; relationships with others; relationship to her voice and her power to use it; somatic, emotional, and symbolic awareness; and self expression. The ramifications of combining ethno-autobiography and cooperative inquiry include the emancipatory transformation of the author's voice and being that has healing implications extending beyond the individual to community and global levels.*

Keywords: ethno-autobiography, cooperative inquiry, transformative learning

Introduction

We have to, at least once in our lives, have the courage to totally imagine ourselves.

Scott Mommoday

I would have never guessed at the outset that writing ethno-autobiographical stories in cooperative inquiry with two other Euro-American women would radically transform my voice. Our dance into voice was one that weaved through and nurtured our muddled souls as we "dialogued" about our life stories. Within our dance we discovered three ethnic backgrounds, ages spanning three decades, and three different religious upbringings. As we mulched the soil with our stories, the seeds of our voices became apparent, first as sprouts, then changing into saplings growing, changing in strength and vitality as we overcame the edges of our boundaries. We grew into "ethno-sisters", a word that grew in meaning with the compassion and sensitivity of our ongoing interactions and that symbolizes the depth of our relationships that formed through sharing the pieces of our lives with each other. While the breadth and depth of our storied journeys extend far beyond this paper, I will reveal one of my critical transformative learning

experiences –continuously emerging clarity of how I access my voice, my stories, and meaning through creative imagery that integrates my experiences through somatic sensations, symbolic associations, emotions, and rational thought.

How My Voice Transformed

Writing Ethno-Autobiographical Stories within Cooperative Inquiry

We [Iaine hazi, Phyllis Clay, and I (Kim Kies)] embarked upon a journey of writing our ethno-autobiographies together for a graduate school course in 2001. Kremer, our instructor, defined ethno-autobiography as a

self exploratory writing (or oral presentation) that grounds itself in the ethnic, cultural, historical, ecological, and gender background of the author. Part of such writing is the investigation of hybridity, categorical borderlands and transgressions, and the multiplicity of (hi)/[her]stories carried outside and inside the definitions and discourses of the dominant society of a particular place and time. Ethno-autobiography explores consciousness as the network of representations held by individuals from a subjective perspective, and relates it to objective factors related to identity construction (2001, p. 1 brackets mine).

We decided to use Heron's (1996) and Reason's (1999) cooperative inquiry methodology to create several predominantly on-line cycles of (her)stories based on the context of our culture, gender, ecological relationships, ethnicities, and indigenous roots. Our "triologue" organically transpired as we included the following elements in each cycle: developing plans, writing and sharing (her)stories, reading and reflecting on each other's stories, and responding to the reflections on our stories that we each received. We individually reflected on each group of cycles by writing about what we learned during the process. The alternating action and reflection cycles of cooperative inquiry helped us spiral deeper into meaning, using each other's experiences to illuminate the multiple truths taking place (Heron, 1996).

Knowing Transforming

Transformative learning occurred through this ethno-autobiographical process on several levels. My first shift in perspectives took place at the onset of writing stories of my life in a cooperative inquiry with my ethno-sisters. I was caught extremely off guard by my inability to write about my identity, partially due to my resistance to using cultural labels normally used to describe one's self in the United States, including nationality, region of birth, ancestry, age, and/or gender. Elias (1997) talks about transformative learning often emerging from the result of a crisis, or unexpected or disorienting experience. The experience of not being able to answer a seemingly simple question, ("Who am I in an ethno-autobiographical sense?"), even though I was an educated, mature woman, was unduly disorienting. Yes, indeed, who was I? The question had never occurred as important before. My response was to search for a way to convey my identity in a more authentic way and I began to work with a creative imagery that helped me see and express myself beyond the labels. The first creative writing imagery called "Contemplation With Strings", explored my resistance to the cultural labels that were binding my thoughts and actions. The imagery allowed me to explain myself through the story of my process; how cultural conditioning affected how I explained myself; how my identity was shaped by my ancestral connections; and how my ancestor's lives and/or oppressions had affected my own life.

Contemplating with Strings

I sat in contemplation as I tore off the pieces of myself and laid them out in front of me examining them like archaeological artifacts: woman; white; 30 something; American; Bohemian, Slavic, and German; educated; middle class; Midwesterner, etc. Consciously (and sometimes not) adhering to the scientific process of “objectively” categorizing the symbols and experiences of my memories, I searched for a way to show others how all the pieces fit together into the essence of “me”. I studied them starting with those I perceived “others” may understand, perhaps by sharing a common experience. The others were conveniently hidden, and yet present for me to create the internal form of myself.

I struggled with the inner and outer components in reflection; I proceeded to define the “inner”, but only in the context of the “outer” could I mold the pieces into anything even closely resembling the morphology of “what is”. Like “God” creating life, did I need to share the process of how I put it together, or just the outer shell of the final product decorated according to the whim of the moment? As I playfully imagined what I might look like after undergoing such a creative feat, the pieces torn off and categorized into neat little piles with labels attached suddenly leaped together into a dancing form of life moving as if experiencing each movement as the first. I was so much more than all the little pieces; I could dance.... and move.... and play.... and create sounds. I felt love and joy, how wonderful!

And then.... this wonderful form, my dancing self, suddenly stops, noticing the strings attached to each of her parts. She realized that she has been silent, void of the carefree ability to dance and create and sing freely with no strings attached. What were these strings for and where do they come from? Some strings tautly moved me as if I were a puppet, pulling me this way and that. Other strings were more generous allowing free movement followed by an abrupt tug to a halting stop at its end. There were yet others that I had tied into knots trying to escape, shortening its length in the process. I experienced a few rope burns from attempting to get free from the whole mess and sat down in pure defeat.

Only in the stillness of defeat, did I experience joy and love again as I realized that I could dance, move, play and even create sounds with the strings attached if orchestrated in the right pattern. And then again, the sadness crept in as I realized that my expressions, although perceived to be free, were simply well refined and trained according to the limitations of the strings. I tugged at the strings fiercely pulling them toward me trying to see, feel, and know the source of my restrictions. I struggled with a Herculean effort, stopping momentarily stopping in dread, as I feared what I was about to discover. My curiosity pummeled the fear allowing me to view each source, however.

This process led to rage, frustration, and disbelief at what was causing me so much restriction and torment. I was attached to all the emotions, actions, and oppressions of my ancestors, neighbors, and their ancestors and neighbors. Then, a lull of peace encompassed the air. I understood my naiveté and accepted the sheer seriousness of the relationship at the same time. For not only was I attached and manipulated by the source at the end of each string, but each source was also attached to other strings. We moved together in a globally orchestrated matrix reaching back into the centuries of the past and casting out the lines toward the future all while being connected and intertwined laterally across each dimension of time and space. I sat again, now in gratitude that I

am not alone in this immense task of explaining myself, and marvel at the complexity of the task as I continue to contemplate. I now move on to choose which string to twang to show the connection of “me” to “others” to....“you.” (Kies, 2001)

“Contemplation with Strings” demonstrates how using imagery helped me connect with my somatic senses, emotions, and rational thoughts while uncovering stories that were symbolic of my struggle with cultural labels, boundaries, and cultural expectations. The imagery process also helped deepen my awareness of how ancestral oppression, if not healed, is both consciously and unconsciously passed down through the generations. This deepening awareness brought forth feelings of dissonance with my desire to think and act beyond my dominant culture’s expectations. I experienced the contextual strings as powerful forces that often silenced my voice from speaking and/or acting in accordance with what I felt was right for me. While just acknowledging the presence of these connections decreased my resistance to their effects, reflecting with my ethno-sisters on the personal stories of struggle due to the connections, slowly allowed my voice to authentically express itself healing my past oppression of silence.

Furthermore, the use of imagery also validated accessing meaning through somatic sensations, imagery, symbolic associations, and emotions. The dominant white culture in which I was raised had taught me to dissociate from these rich sources and ways of knowing in the past. I was taught to value and cultivate rational thought over all else, but some of my personal strengths derived from my kinesthetic and emotional sensitivities and creative imagination. These parts of myself were pushed into the background of my being as I learned how to “succeed” in my cultural environment, however. I often felt as if others failed to listen or acknowledge my voice. It became apparent through writing and sharing my stories that I often failed to listen to myself and acted in accordance with the cultural “shoulds”. As I integrated the somatic, emotional, and rational parts of myself with imagery, I learned how to weave these pieces into my knowing process.

I gradually changed the way I thought about my voice through direct experience in a safe, contained, and nurturing learning environment that sparked a spiraling feedback loop of thoughts and actions that deepened throughout our cycles. The process and content uncovered in the deconstruction and reconstruction of our stories slowly helped me imagine a new way of being, including listening to myself. I literally experienced my ethno-autobiographical voice being mid-wived by my ethno-sisters as I deepened my awareness of my identity. Our triad, started to heal the wounds of internalized oppression as we literally heard each other’s voices into being.

Finally, after sharing the imagery with my ethno-sisters and reflecting deeply on our process and meaning in “triologue”, I realized how sharing my process in the form of imagery with them, was also a story about who I was, showing my need to embody meaning prior to writing about it. Upon deeper reflection I now understand how reconnecting with my own embodied meaning helped me create and become a deeper, more relational and connected person while accepting and nurturing others to create meaning in their own way. Cooperative inquiry helped each of us find a way to be as deeply honest as possible. Each of us had our own way of accessing the authentic voice within ourselves as we listened within. I believe that as we learned to listen deeper within, we were able to better listen deeply without. The deeper I went inward to listen to my truths, the more connected my whole psyche grew outward –connecting and listening through all my relationships. For me, conveniently using conventional cultural labels neither allowed me to express my identity nor allowed me to further explore and deepen my

sense of identity. I was able to find my voice and embrace its transformation as I described my process and myself through metaphors, similes, symbols, and poetry, however.

I see part of the healing process as releasing our attachments to old perceptions that no longer serve us. Perhaps, like Einstein alludes to in his quote, “A problem cannot be solved with the same type of thinking that created it.” (as cited in Elias, 1997, p. 2), we simply need to change the way we think. Our “trialogue” helped me to creatively access and make use of integrating my somatic, symbolic, emotional, and rational knowledge as I interacted with others. It allowed me to heal by thinking and acting in a way different than the culture that created the dissociation from these knowledge sources. By both being allowed to and being able to authentically express my voice through my creative process, I also unearthed a passion to transform critical issues both within and outside myself, ultimately facilitating transformation for others through my work.

Presentation Format

My work with imagery will be highlighted at the 2003 Transformative Learning Conference as part of an innovative presentation with my ethno-sisters. I will present my imagery in a reader’s theater format moving with the imagery and stopping to reflect on its meaning when prompted by my ethno-sister’s comments and questions. Each of us will take turns presenting a deeply meaningful and transformative piece of our writing while the other ethno-sisters listen reflect, comment, and question. In this way, we hope to model our cooperative inquiry process as closely as possible. We will also weave some of our creative writing pieces throughout our presentation to help recreate the atmosphere in which we worked together. We will also allot time for session participants to reflect and engage in dialogue so they can connect with their own stories prior to culminating the session with a group discussion about the process.

The Potential for Integrating Ethno-Autobiography and Cooperative Inquiry to Spark Transformative Learning

Exploring one’s ethno-autobiography within cooperative inquiry can be useful in various settings where there is a desire for transformative learning or to expand one’s consciousness “through the transformation of basic worldview and specific capacities of self through a consciously directed process, while accessing symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analyzing the underlying premises.” (Elias, 1997, p. 3). By reading my ethno-sister’s stories in addition to writing my own, I expanded my worldview about issues concerning religion, ethnicity, nature, and gender. Jungian theorists such as Robert D. Boyd and J. Gordon Myers propose that transformative learning “moves the person to psychic integration and active realization of their true being. In such transformations the individual reveals critical insights, develops fundamental understandings and acts with integrity”(Elias 1997, 3). Transformative learning happens. I experienced a deepening connection within my psyche that broadened my concept of self, extending fuzzy boundaries through nature, my ancestors, and other relations. I experienced transformative learning that *just happened* several times as my new perceptions reconstructed former meaning.

Elias urges us to discover and create the conditions needed to evoke and accelerate the process of transformative learning (Elias, 1997, p. 2). We demonstrated, through writing ethno-autobiographical stories in cooperative inquiry, one way to create conditions that evoked and accelerated our process of transformative learning. Similar processes could be brought to

various educational settings focused on healing or emancipation at the individual, cultural, and global levels to encourage a new way of perceiving ourselves in relation to others and our environment. Likewise, participants can obtain the skills, understanding, and attitudes that will provide the tools to ameliorate the complex individual, community, and global dilemmas our world faces today.

Contributions to Transformative Learning

This paper notes my experience in using imagery as a tool while writing ethno-autobiography and demonstrates how the integration of the many facets of my identity worked in synchronicity with the supportive and nurturing environment created by our process of sharing stories and reflection in cooperative inquiry. This interactive process allowed transformative learning to occur organically, in a way that honored each ethno-sister, allowing her to see, respond, and act, and transform in a manner just right for her. We never knew exactly when a catalyst for a transformation might occur and had to trust the process. Transformations continue to occur when the opportunity presents itself.

The strength of cooperative inquiry is in its flexibility that can be used in diverse transformative learning environments and yet speak to the uniqueness of the participants. I discovered how to express my identity beyond my cultural norms, because the norms within our group process were created by the desires of the individuals in the group. This process can empower individuals and groups that have been oppressed because the integration of using ethno-autobiography with cooperative inquiry taps into the human potential and allows for the recreation of the individuals through their authentic healing process as one learns how to practice a compassionate presence to “what is”. On the surface, we were telling stories, but an intricate, nurturing, emancipatory, relational, and transformative healing process was continuously weaving itself into our lives.

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Facing the Music: What Happens When Theory Comes to the Classroom?

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Abstract: *As we approach the opportunity to discuss transformative learning's expression in and impact on practice, many approaches and lens may be used. This conference panel session brings together experts from different areas of adult education practice, research, and experience to develop a discussion that explores how transformative learning plays out in practice. In effect, how do we reconcile the discussion and critique of cognitive rationality with experience? What do emphases on the affective, spiritual, and unconscious learning and experience provide for such considerations? And what does it mean for us as adult educators as we reflect on teaching and learning within a "transformative learning" framework or understanding?*

Keywords: inner learning, classroom practice, transformative learning theory

Many theorists emphasize transformative learning experiences' process of critically examining beliefs, and developing a frame of reference that is more inclusive of diverse understandings and realities (Mezirow & Associates, 2000; O'Sullivan, 1999). As Mezirow (2003) states,

Transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference – sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets) – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. (p.58)

In theory and research we see that transformative learning unfolds as learners engage in questioning experience and understanding, critically examining assumptions and conventions, discussing changes in perspective, considering new possibilities, and exchanging insights (Cranton, 1994; King, 2002). Transformative learning theory offers an orientation from which to facilitate, support, and study these cognitive changes. Rather than procedural, performance-based outcomes (instrumental learning), more deeply rooted, inner learning, and ways of knowing are at the heart of transformative learning (communicative and emancipatory learning) (Cranton, 1994; Tennant & Pogson, 1995).

Dirkx (1998) succinctly and directly captures this understanding for the practitioner when he states,

Central to our understanding of transformative learning is the emphasis on actualization of the person and society through liberation and freedom... adults are understood to be active, engaged participants in the learning process, co-creating or constructing what it is they are learning as they learn... transformative learning is essentially a way of understanding adult learning as a meaning-making process aimed at fostering a democratic vision of society and self-actualization of individuals. (pp.8-9)

Scholarly inquiry from a variety of perspectives has reached beyond the cognitive focus of transformative learning as many theorists and researchers have introduced other dimensions. For instance Dirkx refers to unconscious aspects of individuation (1998) and the domain of the soul (1997) in transformative learning; while Tolliver and Tisdell (2002) explore its connections among cultural identity and spirituality.

Similarly, adult educators have introduced contexts greater than the individual as they address global dimensions of transformative learning. This discussion includes asking questions about how individuals bear responsibility to personal change to more global concerns (Hinchcliff, 2000; O’Sullivan, 1999). Rather than individual identities, responsibilities, and impact, what do dramatic manifestations of transformative learning mean for communities, cultures, and humankind’s development collectively (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2002)? O’Sullivan (1999) provides a stirring basis for extending this scope further by considering ecological concerns of transformative learning in our understanding of “educational” concerns.

While addressing personal responsibility we have been reminded of social action and transformative learning as well (e.g., Cunningham, 1998; Mayo, 2003; Shor & Freire, 1987; Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000). Such questions as the following repeatedly surface in these discussions to remind us of the possibilities for change and transformation that extend to societal structures and policies: How can transformative learning occur and not impact society? Can transformative learning be experienced without critical examination of society and power issues? And what does this social dimension mean for educators? Indeed Mezirow (2003) recognizes how transformative learning supports the adult educator’s role in cultural activism when he states,

Creating the conditions for and the skills of effective adult reasoning and the disposition for transformation learning -including critical reflection and dialectical discourse- is the essence of adult education and defines the role of the adult educator, both as a facilitator of reasoning in a learning situation and a cultural activist fostering the social, economic, and political conditions for fuller, freer participation in critical reflection and discourse by all adults in a democratic society (pp. 62-63).

Educators face a multitude of profound elements of application and practice within these simple questions about responsibility for social change.

We also need to remember the ethical questions that are inherent to this area (e.g., Baumgartner, 2001; Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000). Recognizing that educators cannot expect transformative learning to always occur (Dirkx, 1998), in what ways can or should educators purpose to have their learners engage in transformative learning? Is it ethical to “lead” learners into experiences that may foster radical change and, temporarily, or even permanently, alter their personal, social, cultural, and or political circumstances? Additionally, what about when learners resist learning or confront obstacles? (Illeris, In press). How are these barriers contemplated, understood, and faced by both teachers and learners alike?

In this light, if there are serious consequences to transformative learning experiences, in what ways could educators be considered accountable or responsible (e.g., Taylor, 1998)?

Conversely, are educators accountable for not raising “difficult” questions and steering clear to only engage in “safe,” uncontroversial areas? When is transformative learning relevant to teaching and learning experiences? In what contexts? And with what, if any, limitations? (Grace, 2002). Questions such as these remind us of the practical dilemmas facing educators as they seek to understand how transformative learning relates to their educational philosophy, learners, and classroom practice.

Additional questions regarding contextualization of the theory and its related questions and issues provide substantial challenges for educators. For instance, how is transformative learning’s emphasis on individual identity and responsibility expressed within other cultures? What forms of transformative learning might we discover in the worldviews and life experiences of people other than those of western traditions? (e.g., Cunningham, 1998; Daloz, 2000; Mayo, 2003; O’Sullivan, 1999). The literature has helped us to begin to explore these questions in theory and research. In the same way how can this understanding intersect with teaching and learning experiences across diverse cultures?

With this brief reminder of some of the questions that arise from our growing understanding and development of transformative learning, we may approach several key foci as we “face the music” of learners’ lives and the “classroom.” As Dirkx has suggested in the past (1998), and within the context of today, what does transformative learning mean for practice?

Perhaps we can engage in learning with one another as we consider questions such as the following:

What is our responsibility as educators when it comes to transformative learning? And does it vary with our context?

How can educators respond to the ethical questions surrounding transformative learning within their educational philosophy and practice?

What does transformative learning and social action mean for our practice of teaching and learning?

How does the educator address, cope, or conceptualize the emotional and social dimensions of perspective transformation among learners?

What obstacles to transformative learning do educators and learners encounter? And what relationships might exist among them?

In what ways might we see transformative learning contextualized across cultures, contexts, and experiences?

If time permits, it would be beneficial also to share our thoughts about how educational research and practice can continue to explore the concerns and issues that are raised. What direction can a vantage point of the field of practice offer to the ever-broadening scope of research about transformative learning? How can we support further development of the field with an ear towards the “music” of practice?

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Best Practices on Fostering Transformative Learning in the Workplace

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Abstract: *In this paper, I look across three workplace programs that seemed to foster transformative learning to see what program conditions may consistently help transformation occur. This is not an in-depth research study rather it comes from a curiosity about how we, as practitioners, can maximize the potential for transformation in our program designs. The purpose is to begin to pool knowledge and experience and engage practitioners and educators in a dialog and exploration on how we can maximize the potential for transformative learning in workplace program designs.*

What do we know about fostering transformative learning in the workplace? I am writing this paper out of curiosity around how we as practitioners can maximize the potential for transformation in workplace program designs. My hope is that practitioners will begin to experiment with combinations of best practices across different contexts and explore whether such combinations help foster transformative learning.

If you are a leader or employee in a company today, chances are you find yourself facing some 21st century challenges such as: mergers, increased global competition, globalization, rapid growth or change, deregulation, restructuring, and technology that can change overnight (Drucker, 1997; O’Toole, 1995; Watkins and Marsick, 1993). Powerful global forces are compelling organizations to continuously learn, innovate, and change to remain competitive. We can no longer continue to do things the way we have in the past. The changing organizational context is requiring a transformation in leaders’ and employees’ mindsets.

Millions, if not billions, of dollars are spent annually by organizations on training and development programs. Organizations have hopes that many of these programs foster transformative learning. I believe return on investment and potential for transformation can be enhanced if practitioners and educators pool our knowledge and experience to uncover themes that help foster transformation in workplace programs.

For the purpose of this paper, I define transformative learning as:

When a distorted, inauthentic, or otherwise unjustified assumption is replaced with a new belief or paradigm resulting in thinking and actions that are more differentiated, inclusive, reflective, complex and empathic, patient, humble and tolerant (Lamm, 2000 p. 5 adapted from Mezirow, 1995).

When I say I adapted Mezirow’s definition, based on my research, I mean that I added the more human qualities—empathy, patience, humility, tolerance—to potential outcomes of transformative learning. See Lamm (2000) for more information about how I assessed whether transformative learning occurred.

In this paper I will: 1) summarize three workplace programs which fostered transformative learning, 2) draw best practice themes from across all three with respect to conditions and contexts that seemed to help foster transformation, and 3) discuss implications for future research and practice.

Three Workplace Programs

I will briefly describe three workplace programs, the Volvo Truck Management Program (VTM), the Berlex (Pharmaceuticals) Corporate Development Program, and the Mobil Oil Corporation Teaming Initiative. All three of these programs had transformative learning as a desired outcome.

The Volvo and Berlex programs were both action learning programs. Action learning programs balance action (through project teamwork on actual strategic business problems) and reflection (separate, specifically designed opportunities to think about what took place) (O’Neil & Marsick, 1994).

The VTM Program

I studied the VTM program as the site for my dissertation research (Lamm, 2000). VTM was facilitated by a collaboration of MiL (Management in Lund) and its sister organization LIM (Leadership in International Management). The impetus for this program was a concern over greater global competition and a realization that Volvo Truck could not continue to do things the way they had in the past and remain competitive. In VTM about 16-20 managers would meet for four five-day off-site meetings spread over six months. The four sessions were split between residential seminars (i.e., Myers Briggs Type Indicator, scenario planning, cultural difference, leader/manager skills, 360-degree feedback, etc.) and project work on actual strategic business problems (i.e., designing an innovative distribution system that surpasses their #1 competitor).

Participants were divided into four project teams of four to six people each. To encourage cross-functional and cross-cultural communication, project teams were mixed to maximize diversity (i.e., greatest possible diversity with job functions, cultures and personality). Cross-cultural communication was also fostered in that each program session took place in a different part of the globe. Also, participants learned as they worked with real strategic business projects that were outside the normal scope of their professional skills.

A MiL or LIM learning coach helped each team to learn from their action, balance action with reflection and reflect on assumptions. Also the learning coach provided just in time training when necessary (i.e., sharing a decision making model when the team had been struggling with making a decision). Each participant had at least one personal learning goal that they focused on throughout the program. Learning coaches helped team members give feedback to one another and also gave individual coaching and feedback to participants

An example of transformative learning in this program is one participant who said: “(Before the program) I didn’t have a great self image...When I got accepted into the program, I thought oh my GOD I can’t run with the big dogs (i.e., his peers in the program), then I found out, hey I can run with the big dogs and some of these dogs are chasing me...I became self confident...I did come back...pushing for a broader role I could play in the organization.

Berlex Corporate Development Program

The Berlex Corporate Development Program is also an action learning program and is facilitated by Partners for the Learning Organization. Judy O’Neil, from Partners, leads this program. As a subcontractor for Partners, I acted as one of the learning coaches for the second Berlex program. Bob Ward, VP of Human Resources, is currently writing his dissertation studying whether transformation is occurring in the program.

This program is also spread over six months but instead of meeting in five or six day increments, program sessions happen in one or two day increments for a total of about 13 program days over the six months. The key differences between the Berlex program and VTM

program are: 1) the program is held in Berlex conference rooms and not in different global locations, 2) there is less cultural diversity in the program but teams are mixed with maximum personality, gender, cultural, and functional role diversity, 3) teams meet more frequently in between the programs because they are all based in the same location, 4) participants are high potentials who have the potential to be future leaders in the company versus the VTM program that targets higher level executives, and 5) there is a unique personal learning goal process that allows each individual to have a focused 60 to 90 minutes of time with their team and learning coach at least four times over the six months. This time is used to further understand, reframe, challenge assumptions and receive feedback.

An example of transformation in this program is one participant who said:

Before the program I did not reflect, I just acted... One of the most important lessons was taking time out to reflect... the reflection process provides me with a process to review how I have handled a situation, how well (or poorly) I did with my learning goals, and what I need to do better next time. My manager has commented that I am functioning much more strategically and in a more team-oriented approach. Another colleague, one that had continually been attacking my position, also commented on the change in my approach and contribution.

Mobil Oil Corporation's Teaming Initiative

The goal of the teaming initiative was to create a fundamental shift in mindset from a group of individuals with separate roles and responsibilities to a team-based organization with broader goals and accountability (Howell, Lamm, Philpot, Quick, 1999). Moore Howell Associates facilitated this program and I acted as a subcontractor and worked on this program for over a year.

This program was not an action learning program. Instead, the customer support organization was re-organized into 13 self-directed work teams. Each team participated in a three and a half day program, including the leadership group. Therefore, this is the only program, out of the three looked at in this paper, where the top leadership team participated in the program. The first day focused on personal awareness and development, the second day transitioned from personal awareness to interpersonal relationships and team development and the remainder of the program provided opportunities to improve the intergroup dynamics between different roles.

Program activities included: 1) Challenging personal assumptions using Kegan's (1996) big assumption exercise, 2) Communication tools, such as Argyris (1990) ladder of inference, 3) One-on-one feedback sessions with each team member, 4) A high ropes course and indoor/outdoor experiential initiatives for team development, 5) Reflection time and journal writing, 6) Myers Briggs Type Indicator, 7) In-the-moment process observations including personality type and gender differences and just-in-time coaching/training, 8) Optional body massage for relaxation and to understand how bodies respond to stress, 9) Creating shared team values, 10) Conflict resolution of actual team and role conflicts, and 10) Facilitators modeling what the teams needed most – to let go of the traditional paradigm that experts have all the answers and to begin to continuously learn and innovate in an ever-changing world. The facilitators also modeled taking personal responsibility and openly shared their own lessons and emotions.

Also important to the design of the program was the setting for the training. The facilitators selected a location that would move the teams out of their comfort zones – the training was held on a rustic farm in rural PA where the teams shared modest accommodations. The location was beautiful yet isolated, with very limited access to phones, computers, TV, and other distractions.

As a follow up to the program, each team had at least one follow up day and the facilitators were available for coaching and just-in-time help for over a year.

Even though the program was not action learning, it had many components of an action learning program including: just in time training, challenging assumptions, feedback, reflection, and one on one coaching. There was also much personality, job function and gender diversity even though these were intact work teams. However, the teams did not work on actual business problems. The focus of the program was personal and team development.

An example of transformative learning from this program is:

(Before the program) I wanted to do everything myself and focused only on my success...and today I am more concerned about the team's success and realize the quickest and most productive way to reach results is to involve others.

Best Practice Themes

As I looked across the three programs for program conditions that helped facilitate transformative learning, eight themes emerged. One of the key findings of my dissertation research (Lamm, 2000) was that individual, program and organizational conditions interacted in complex ways to foster or hinder transformative learning. I did not explore individual or organizational contexts for the Berlex or Mobil programs. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that specific program conditions were taking place within an organizational context as well as one's individual context. Also it is important to note that individual, program and organizational conditions interact in complex ways to facilitate a transformative process (see Lamm, 2000). Nevertheless, the following eight program conditions seemed important in fostering transformative learning across the VTM, Berlex and Mobil programs.

1. Putting participants in unfamiliar and new situations. This was a consistent program condition across all three programs. A key design premise is that the greatest opportunities for learning often occur when people are placed in unfamiliar territory with unfamiliar and complex tasks and relationships (MiL, 1994). At Mobil participants spoke about the importance of sharing rooms in a farmhouse with no phones as well as being re-organized into a self-directed team near the delivery of the program. Even though the program took place at the Berlex facility, participants spoke about the importance of being in new project teams working on subjects where they had no previous experience. VTM participants shared this belief and had the additional benefit of traveling to new cultures for program weeks and many received new jobs around the time of the program.
2. Maximizing the diversity mix of participants. Whether it be cultural, racial, gender, personality and/or job function diversity, participants across all programs spoke about the importance of hearing alternative and diverse perspectives which often provided the stimulus for a new awareness and began a transformative process (see Lamm, 2000).

3. Experiencing the intensity, duration or frequency of the program design. The VTM and Berlex programs were six months in length and while the Mobil program was three and a half days it also included follow up and on-going coaching for six months to one year. Participants spoke about how repetition of certain program conditions, like reflecting on action, helped solidify new behaviors into habits.
4. Creating an open, safe and trusting environment. Mezirow (1995) refers to this as an ideal condition for transformative learning. Participants across all three programs mentioned the importance of the facilitators or learning coaches creating a safe environment. For example, one VTM participant said, “I felt secure in the program...If I felt insecure, I think that would have blocked me from learning experiences.”
5. Giving and receiving honest feedback. Again, participants across all three programs mentioned this as a critical condition. For example, one Berlex participant said, “Hearing others interpretations was invaluable and has made me challenge my thoughts and decisions much more, in a positive way.”
6. Incorporating an intense personal development focus. All three programs incorporated activities that helped participants increase their self understanding. For example, all programs had the MBTI and personal learning goals. One Berlex participant said, “MBTI was a revelation to me...I can now laugh at my disregard for doing things without knowing precisely why...and I am far more tolerant and understanding of those who behave and feel differently than me.” The Berlex program devoted the most time to working on personal learning goals with each participant receiving at least four hours of program time over the six months. An example of how effective this process was is one participants who said,

My personal learning goal was moving past resistance and valuing my own contributions. With the team and our coach challenging my assumptions about resistance and what was good and bad in my handling it, I was able to change how I view it. I now examine far more closely what specific instances of resistance are actually made up of and what they represent to me or how they threaten me...I am able to view them objectively and make better judgments about my behavior
7. Repeated teamwork opportunities balancing action and reflection. It did not seem to matter whether the teamwork opportunities were based on working on actual business projects as with VTM and Berlex or whether they were experiential low or high ropes activities at Mobil. The importance was the repetition of team opportunities for action with reflection.
8. Challenging underlying assumptions through reflection and facilitator/coach questioning. Challenging participant assumptions was a critical program condition across all three programs. Questions to challenge assumptions were asked during reflection breaks and by facilitators/coaches throughout the program. In addition, Argyris’ (1990) ladder of inference was used as a tool in each program to help reflect on and challenge assumptions.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

I am aware that I did not conduct a formal research study to come up with the above themes and that each of the above conditions took place within a complex organizational and individual context. Again, the purpose of this paper was to begin to engage a dialog among practitioners and educators around program designs that may have more potential to foster transformative learning in the workplace.

What is interesting to me is that even with three very different organizational contexts/industries, similar program conditions were mentioned as critical in fostering transformative learning. It is also interesting to bring in the Mobil program as it was not a formal action learning program yet incorporated many of the above conditions.

I think it would be fun to play with the above conditions across different programs designs and contexts, and see whether the context and type of program really matters or whether a certain mixture of these program conditions in and of themselves are magical in the transformative process. I also realize the above list is not all inclusive. There may be additional program conditions that are missing that seem to consistently foster transformative learning.

Another interesting research study could be to compare whether similar conditions are mentioned in educational and social action/community contexts or whether these conditions are unique to the workplace context.

I believe the conditions presented above could increase the capacity to design workplace programs that foster transformative learning and thereby maximize an organization's return on investment. In the conference presentation, let's have fun dialoging about our diverse experiences and exploring whether the above conditions are also true with your experience and what new and additional conditions may exist.

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The Artist's Inquiry: Fostering Transformative Learning Through The Arts

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Abstract: *The practice of acting is fundamentally an inquiry into lived human experience, changing circumstances, interdependent relationships, and action choices. This paper describes an interactive experiential workshop that focuses on the central importance of the body-mind connection as the interface between the inner and outer worlds, and the creative imagination as an activity that restructures experience and generates new meanings. It explores dynamic, relational processes used by actors to make sense of their experiences, including questioning beliefs, feelings, context, character, and intentions; and investigating alternative action choices. It also considers artistic conditions that support creative discovery, and ways in which direct, sensory experiences can foster transformative learning across contexts and disciplines.*

Keywords: Transformative Practice of Acting, Body-Mind Experience, Creative Imagination

Introduction

The Artist's Inquiry is a subjective, descriptive method of investigating human experience that involves exploring alternative perspectives and arriving at informed action choices. "Artist" is to be understood in the broadest sense, and here, the term "participant" refers to people who take action in everyday life—"actors"—who critically reflect upon their action choices. We describe a workshop that demonstrates to educators how this experiential methodology can be used to foster transformative learning across contexts and disciplines. The Artist's Inquiry is grounded in the principles of heuristic research. The etymology of heuristics comes from the Greek word *heuriskein*, which means to discover or to find. According to Clarke Moustakas, heuristics is "a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences. The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one's senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments"(15). We focus in this paper on the centrality of direct experience in the participant's process of self-discovery. David A. Kolb, an influential proponent of adult learning based in adults' experiences, defined experiential learning as

"[T]he process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (38). He was interested in exploring the learner-centered processes associated with making sense of concrete experiences. Drawing from the intellectual origins of experiential learning in the works of John Dewey, Jean Piaget and the action research spiral of Kurt Lewin, he conceptualized the four-step experiential learning cycle: 1-concrete experience, 2-reflective observations, 3-abstract conceptualization, 4-active experimentation. The adult learner's mental construction of experience and inner meaning is a central focus of transformative learning. In this theory, Jack Mezirow highlights the importance of "encouraging and assisting learners to critically assess the validity of norms from alternate perspectives, arrive at best tentative judgments through discourse, and effectively act on them" (31).

The primary purpose of The Artist’s Inquiry is to engage participants in a process of exploring alternative points of view in order to assess and inform future action choices. By engaging the creative imagination, it is possible to restructure prior experiences and generate new meanings. In Edith Cobb’s work on creativity, she conceptualized imagination as the fundamental intelligence of creative thought. So conceived, imagination plays a central role in understanding the meanings of experience. Mezirow acknowledges the importance of the imagination in transformative learning: “Imagination is central to understanding the unknown; it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by “trying on” another’s points 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” (20). In this paper we begin with a description of the workshop for educators that demonstrates The Artist’s Inquiry, a process-oriented method of inquiry for fostering transformative learning. This is followed by an exploration of three key concepts related to this methodology—*body-mind experience*, *creative imagination* and *the power of permission*. In conclusion, we consider potential outcomes of this experiential approach as it is being developed and practiced in our own work related to facilitating transformative learning in a variety of settings.

The Artist’s Inquiry Workshop

Purpose of the Workshop

- To demonstrate how the art and practice of acting fosters transformative learning.
- To engage participants in a sensory-based, reflective experience to explore multiple perspectives.
- To examine how stage actors create new characters, situations and action choices.
- To identify and apply artistic conditions that support the transformative process.
- To encourage an artistic appreciation of multiple perspectives and creative action choices.

Description of the Acting Practice

Originally designed to assist stage actors in preparing for new roles and theatrical realities, The Artist’s Inquiry is a process that has been used over the years in a wide range of contexts and disciplines to investigate lived, felt, human experience. Professional actors/coaches/teachers lead the group through sensory exercises and reflective activities. This interactive experiential workshop first engages participants in a process of recalling sensory details of memories and recreating the experiences in present time. Throughout this process, the facilitators guide participants to question their own beliefs, feelings, and intentions; and to investigate alternate action choices. Following this, an interactive discussion focuses on direct experience; the body-mind and action; and the creative imagination understood as the activity that restructures experience and generates new meanings. In addition, we consider physical and artistic conditions that support creative discovery, and explore ways that acting practices can foster the transformative process across contexts and disciplines. The workshop concludes with a short theatrical presentation to demonstrate the power of sensory language to shift thoughts and

feelings in others, and the reciprocal action that takes place between stage actors and the audience.

Comments

This workshop provides participants with direct experiences that can enlarge their capacities to experience different points of view. The practices of acting can be used to explore situations, feelings, values, roles and relationships, action choices and self-imposed limits that block the creative process. “The joy in theatre comes through discovery and the capacity to discover. What limits the discoveries a person can make is the idea or image he may come to have of himself” (Chaikin 1).

Key Concepts for Understanding The Practice of Acting

Body–Mind Experience

The inseparability of the mind and the body, and the bodily aspects of human understanding are themes that continue to be a source of investigation and interpretation among scholars. Philosophers, biologists, and linguists who emphasize the importance of lived human experience and the embodied mind include Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Humberto Maturana, Francisco Varela, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Performance theorists, such as Phillip Zarrilli and Nathan Stucky, focus on the centrality of epistemology and embodiment from an intercultural viewpoint. The primary interest of acting theorists and practitioners is the integration of the physical, mental and affective realms. Konstantin Stanislavsky, the Russian actor, director, theorist and co-founder of the Moscow Art Theatre (1897), turned the practice of acting into the first acting “System.” To awaken the “creative state of mind” in actors, he developed psychophysical exercises. His student Vsevolod Meyerhold believed that the material of the actor’s art is the human body. Concurring with William James’ theories on the visceral nature of emotion, he developed a movement training method called Biomechanics. The French poet, actor, and director, Antonin Artaud, wrote about the “affective musculature” of actors: “The actor is an athlete of the heart” (133). Jerzy Grotowski, creator of the Theatre Laboratory in Poland, explained his technique to student actors: “When I tell you not to think, I mean with the head. Of course you must think, but with the body, logically, with precision and responsibility. You must think with the whole body, by means of actions” (204).

As coaches and teachers of actors and non-actors, we reflect on the importance of direct lived experience in making meaning. It is not our intention to propose a theory of epistemic cognition. We suggest that the body, the means by which the world is experienced, and the critical functions are inseparable. The term “body-mind,” the unit of the body and the mind, refers here to the interface between the inner world and the outer world. Engaging by means of the body-mind in the continuous reciprocal action between the inner and outer worlds requires the ability to stay open to sensory stimuli. It takes practice to remain in a state of readiness and openness to receive, interpret, and respond to sensory information. One way to do this is through practicing sense memory exercises that heighten the awareness of information received from the outer world through the senses. There is an abundant supply of valuable information stored in the sensory component of memory. The Artist’s Inquiry practice involves remembering visceral sensations of prior experiences and then reexperiencing them in the present. Starting with sensory details and adding language to articulate the experience, reflective activity, and creative imagination, this process can lead participants to new meanings of sensory experience. It is a

practice of acting that encourages transformative learning, as defined by Mezirow: “Learning is understood as the process of using a priori interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action” (5).

Creative Imagination

In the Artist’s Inquiry, the creative imagination is of central importance to the exploration of alternative meanings, perspectives and realities. It is interesting to note that the etymology of the word “reality” comes from the Latin *res* and means “that which we can fathom.” Engaging the creative imagination can extend a limited sense of reality. Michael Chekhov, the nephew of playwright Anton, regarded imagination as the essence of all art. Summarizing his approach to freeing the imagination and gaining trust in the power of the imagination, Chekhov advised stage actors to “catch the first image” and “learn to follow its independent life” (33).

The Power of Permission

Although we have not conducted a systematic study of the principles or conditions that encourage and nurture creativity, we have observed how the creative process occurs when challenges are accepted. This has underscored to us how necessary it is for adults to have opportunities and permission to revitalize through play, and reconnect with their creative spirit in a judgment-free environment where failure is impossible and risk is essential. Central to our approach to working with actors and non-actors across contexts and disciplines is the belief that everyone is creative. This methodology is similar to Michaelangelo’s theory of sculpture that describes a sculptor freeing a work of art from within a block of stone. He believed that the sculpture already exists inside the stone and the job of the artist is to see it and remove the excess material to reveal it. Similarly, we work with individuals to remove the excess to reveal the creative expression from within. The unique contributions and inherent gifts of each individual are appreciated, respected and honored. Our approach to learning is invitational and relational. Invitations are extended and people either accept or decline. This is a respectful way to work with adults. It provides a foundation of trust and acceptance in a way that is free of judgment and honors their choices. Our experience has shown that providing a sense of safety and the permission to take risks is fundamental to fostering transformative learning.

Fostering Transformative Learning Through the Arts

“*Transformation* – that is what the actor’s nature, consciously or sub-consciously, longs for” (Chekhov 77). The art and practice of acting is essentially a study of lived, felt human experiences, interdependent relationships, changing circumstances, and action choices. It is a dynamic process of investigation by doing, acting upon the environment and being acted upon by the environment. In the broadest terms, the practice of acting can be considered direct participation in life research. The Artist’s Inquiry invites participants to reshape experience and reinterpret the meanings of experience. Possibilities open and new options emerge by extending participants beyond their perceived realities. This workshop provides an opportunity for participants to:

- Work with particulars, not generalities or universals.
- Think contextually, rather than dualistically.
- Move into new territory with openness, curiosity and courage.
- Investigate and reflect on personal and professional experiences.

- Engage in open-ended situations that invite actions and responses in the present.
- Step into different circumstances and explore alternative perspectives
- Question, assess, negotiate and restructure meanings.
- Clarify beliefs, assumptions, hopes, fears, desires and judgements.
- Generate insights about current realities.
- Explore personal choices
- Discover multiple realities and new possibilities.
- Break out of private, repetitive patterns and choices.
- Heighten awareness of self and other.
- Take informed, responsible, creative action.

“Not that which *is* inspires the creation, but that which *may* be; not the *actual*, but the *possible*,” wrote Rudolf Steiner (quoted in Chekhov 21). As we continue to learn more about the transformative process and explore ways in which the practice of acting fosters transformative learning, we look to what is possible.

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Using Leadership Forums to Support Individual And Organizational Transformation

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Abstract: *Practitioners in the field of corporate leadership development are increasingly turning to action learning as an approach to foster individual and organizational transformation. This workshop provides participants with exposure to a leadership development intervention, called leadership forums, which provides organizations with an approach to apply action learning principles in small, informal, peer coaching groups.*

Keywords: Supporting Organizational Transformation

Introduction

The current business environment is wrought with complexities far exceeding what leaders faced even just ten years ago (Bennis et al, 2001). Today's leaders are called to perform and inspire others in the midst of rapidly changing technology, increased margin pressures from unstable economic markets, and a highly competitive global market. In the face of these challenges, the performance bar for leaders has been raised whereby "what used to be good enough often is no longer good enough when it comes to organizational performance" (Lawler, in Bennis et al 2001, p.15). Experts on organizational development agree that to remain competitive in this environment organizations must continuously challenge and reinvent their ways of doing business to meet the external needs of this shifting landscape (Quinn, 1996; Bennis et al, 2001).

Increasingly, corporate leadership development practitioners have been applying 'action learning' as an approach to support this need for individual and organizational transformation (Marsick, O'Neil, Yorks, 1999, p. v). Typically, action learning interventions are formalized, large-scale leadership development initiatives (Marsick, O'Neil and Yorks, 1999, pp. 29-34). For organizations holding decentralized senior management structures, and corresponding decision-making on leadership development work, such large scale initiatives present an implementation challenge. For these organizations, alternative approaches must be sought which apply action learning principles; namely, a focus on using managers' 'real work' as a vehicle for fostering personal and organizational transformation, in a more informal way. This workshop will expose participants to one such alternative called 'leadership forums. The following sections of this paper provide an overview of this model including its development and application in a large financial services firm, and a description of the workshop experience and anticipated outcomes.

Overview of Leadership Forums

Like most action learning interventions, leadership forums engage participants in the use of productive inquiry — the questioning of accepted norms, beliefs, values, and practices, and using their findings to correct future actions and replicate successes (Argyris and Schön 1996, Marsick and Watkins, 1999).

Similarly, leadership forums incorporate a foundational premise of action learning which is to use managers' "real work" as a vehicle to uncover and examine the underlying assumptions surrounding leadership, management, and organizational practices. Leadership forums provide organizations with an approach to apply the principles of action learning in small, informal, peer coaching groups.

The Development of Leadership Forums

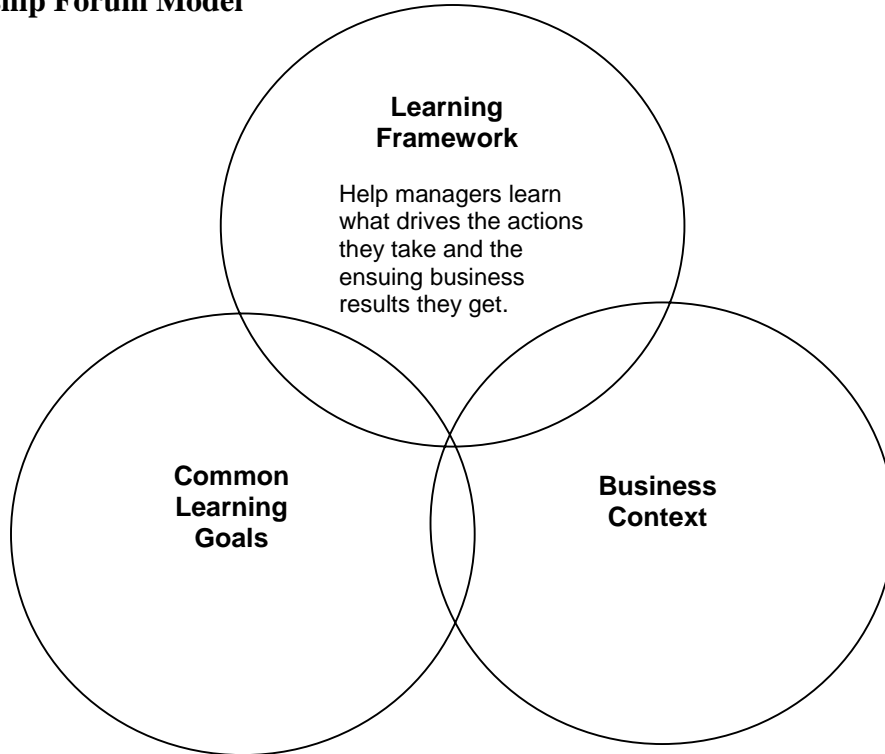
Leadership forums were designed to address a leadership development agenda focused on helping managers to become more innovative, flexible, and adaptive to business conditions and opportunities at a large, international financial services firm, based in the United States.

To support this leadership development agenda, the corporate learning and development group focused on developing products and services which emphasized individual and organizational transformation. The learning framework for each product and service was to engage leaders in the process of critically reflecting (Mezirow 1991) on the underlying assumptions, values, and beliefs of their own and others' leadership and management practices. In other words, this learning framework focuses on helping managers to learn what drives the actions they take and the ensuing business results they get. The assumption being that this critical examination will enable managers to learn why they are successful or not, so they may replicate or correct a situation. Additionally, this process of critical reflection will build managers' capacity to challenge conventional wisdom and "think-outside-the-box."

Leadership forums were designed to apply this learning framework to a small group intervention model for managers, in which managers meet with a small group of their peers, to coach one another in addressing specific business and leadership challenges.

The leadership forum model is designed to be adaptable to meet specific business context, while still holding the integrity of this learning framework. (See model below.) Leadership forum groups are formed surrounding a common learning goal (e.g., leadership roles or development goals), and the content and format for the sessions vary according to the needs of the group. In the next section Table 1.0 provides an overview of how Leadership Forums have been applied and adapted to meet specific business contexts and objectives.

Leadership Forum Model



Coaching techniques applied in the sessions are drawn from action science tools such as inquiry techniques, and left hand/right hand column case studies (Argyris & Schon, 1974), to stimulate critical reflection and critical self-reflection. In their work together, managers focus on problem posing versus problem solving, helping one another uncover assumptions regarding their leadership and management actions.

Facilitators from the learning and development group lead an initial orientation with each leadership forum group. Following this orientation, groups self-facilitate their own sessions, and the learning and development group continues to act as a resource to provide on-going mentoring and “on-demand” support for groups. For example, facilitators may be asked periodically to attend sessions and coach the group on ‘honing’ their application of specific tools and skills.

How Leadership Forums have been Adapted and Applied

Leadership Forums were first piloted in February 2002 to support a classroom learning experience developed for directors and vice-presidents. The objectives of leadership forums, in this case, were to support the transfer of learning from classroom concepts and skills to the managers’ work life, and to enable cross-company relationships to build. The format of each session included having managers use assignments such as left hand/right hand case studies and business challenge presentations as a vehicles for critically reflecting on their leadership and management actions, and developing new strategies and perspectives. Table 1.0 provides an overview of how the leadership forums are currently being applied in the organization.

Table 1.0 Application of Leadership Forums

Learning Group	Common Learning Goal	Business Specific Context
Alumni from a corporate-wide leadership development program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of learning • Build network relationships across boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business climate and organizational strategy call for cross-company collaboration and challenging ‘business as usual’ among leaders.
Mentoring Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide peer coaching support for managers taking on a mentor role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New mentor program for southwest region.
Learning and Development peer group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a forum for directors and managers across the learning and development group to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice what we preach - e.g. leadership learning ○ To candidly share feelings, thoughts and ideas in a safe environment ○ Learn and grow from each other ○ Focus on problem exploration ○ Explore new tools and ideas • Apply inquiry and coaching skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual and national organization increased need for cross-functional collaboration and learning.
New HR consulting group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a forum for consultants to share business and leadership challenges • Focus on being developmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition management to the new HR model • Building and sustaining organizational performance • Strengthening HR consulting capability • Fostering cross-functional collaboration and learning.

Description of the Workshop

Workshop participants will form a Leadership Forum with the common learning goal of coaching individuals on personal leadership challenges, in the context of their roles as adult educators and leaders. Personal leadership challenges include areas that impact one’s personal effectiveness as a leader or in practice as an adult educator. Through the use of productive inquiry, the group will help the individual to explore and examine what might be driving the issue so that they may deal with it more effectively in the future.

Anticipated Outcomes of the Workshop

Participants will learn how to apply productive inquiry as a tool to support critical reflection on important leadership challenges. Participants will also examine their own underlying beliefs and assumptions through this coaching process and experience the support and power of small group coaching. Table 2.0 is an overview of the session agenda.

Table 2.0 Agenda

Topic	Timing
Welcome & context setting	5'
Set-up for Coaching: Use of Inquiry	10'
Small Group Breakout sessions: Coaching on a leadership challenge	30'
Large Group Debrief/Q & A	15'
Total Time	60'

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Level with Me: Creating Space for Adult Learners

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Abstract: *One of the most important challenges an educator of adults faces is fostering a dialogue that encourages the adult student's authentic voice in order to facilitate both informative and transformative learning. The phenomenological study, "Level With Me: Making Space for Adult Learners" responds to Giroux's (1997) border crossing pedagogy by introducing Orientation activities in which new students observe, then enter a role playing activity, then write about their self-assessed experiential learning and goals for continuing education. The study includes an examination of written documents and frequency data, as well as in-depth interviews exploring the students' critical reflections on the history, social values and practices that inform their personal beliefs, values, feelings, and epistemology. The results will be analyzed to identify the emerging themes within the students' accounts, and consider these themes in relation to transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000) and non-traditional higher education.*

Keywords: dialogue, mentoring, border crossing pedagogy

When we first meet them, their faces show the range of apprehension, curiosity, interest and concern that accompanies their first Orientation to degree programs at Empire State College, a recognized leader in non-traditional adult education. Following review and approval of their applications to Empire State College, new students are required to attend a three-hour group orientation in which programs, policies and procedures are presented. After the Orientation, the students meet their individual primary Mentors (faculty advisors) for the first time. In this situation, students are confronted with unfamiliar territory that requires interpretation and decision-making about roles and relationships, including power dynamics. Although our students represent the broadest imaginable cross section of America, many of our students are from a different socio-economic class than the faculty, a situation that may present additional barriers to a productive relationship because of preconceived ideas and attitudes on either side.

Empire State College, of the State University of New York, has been expressly dedicated to high-quality education for working adults since 1971, and was one of the first public, nontraditional institutions to receive accreditation. Since that time, more than 38,000 students have earned degrees through the seven regional centers and thirty-two teaching locations, the Center for Distance Learning, special programs such as International Programs, and corporate sponsored programs such as FORUM Management Education Program. From the earliest days of formation, the teaching practices at Empire State College have been informed by egalitarianism and recognition of the value of experiential learning. The student-Mentor relationship is integral to the Empire State College experience, and it is in this relationship that Mentors are charged with guiding students to articulate who they are and what they already know in a process known as Educational Planning. In this required four-credit study, newly accepted students enter into a relationship with a faculty Mentor that will guide the creation of an individualized degree program, partially including credit for prior experiential learning. Much of this prior learning, or educational history, will be articulated in discussions with the Mentor and through the discourse

of writing. Students engaged in Educational Planning will produce a series of portfolio documents that will be interpreted and assessed by faculty committee.

Thus, three Mentors from the Central New York Center began this study with this question: How do we begin a relationship with students in a way that overcomes the barriers and attitudes that threaten to subvert or derail the planning process before it begins? In this study we examined the student-Mentor relationship by reflecting on our own underlying assumptions about the power relationship inherent in the mentoring relationship. We concurred that we perceive students as “constructive knowers” (Belenky, 2000); students can and do learn from their personal and professional experience. For the students to fully express their experiential knowledge, we needed to make an open, safe place for them to overcome the silence that occurs in traditionally authoritative educational settings where students do not necessarily reflect upon their lived culture.

For example, Brodkey (1996) noted that this relationship (student and educator) is asymmetrical in more than one way (i.e. difference in socio-economic class). Specifically, she conducted research that examined “literacy letters” between Adult Basic Education (ABE) students and English teachers enrolled in her graduate course. These students were skilled English teachers who had not taught basic writing, and were interested in learning more about the concerns of ABE students. In her analysis of the letters, Brodkey noted that the teachers were anxious and wrote awkwardly. She suggested that their anxiety and awkward writing was a consequence of their inability to confront the way that educational discourse confers certain types of power to teachers. In particular, she found that the teachers in this study responded to the students in ways that maintained their authority over the students, and also acted as if there were no differences in social class. Consequently, the students became silenced.

One of the most important challenges an educator of adults faces is fostering a dialogue that encourages the adult student’s authentic voice in order to facilitate both informative and transformative learning. Although Mezirow assumes that the learner has “an equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse” (Mezirow, 2000, p.13) this is often not the case—the relationship, rather, is often one of “power and dependency” (Giroux, 1997, p. 134). Giroux suggests that the border of authority between the learner and the educator must be directly addressed to create a transformative learning experience. He noted that the traditional technique of lecture, for example, established a border of authority between the learner and the teacher that is similar to the border between the United States of America and Mexico. In addition to borders of authority, there may also be cultural, ethnic and economic borders between the learner and the academy. In Giroux’s border-crossing approach, students are given an opportunity to cross cultural borders that are historically constructed and socially organized. To surmount these borders, he designed a number of techniques, including writing as pedagogy and the discourse of lived cultures, both of which are adapted and applied in this study.

The phenomenological study, “Level With Me: Making Space for Adult Learners” responds to Giroux’s (1997) border crossing pedagogy by introducing Orientation activities in which new students observe, then enter a role playing activity (an adaptation of Giroux’s lived cultures) and also write about their self-assessed experiential learning and goals for continuing education (an adaptation of Giroux’s writing as pedagogy). Ultimately, the students produce a document that introduces them to their primary Mentor in their own words. We adapted this technique by demonstrating (via Mentor role-playing) a Mentor and student discussing his/her prior learning history, anxieties, goals. In the role-play, the role-Mentor used Belenky’s notion of connective knowing to explore the role-student’s strengths rather than weaknesses. During the

role playing, the Mentor also used reflective-listening techniques to demonstrate that the Mentor understood what the student was saying about the differences and expectations in their emerging roles, relationships, and the activities that they were about to begin (after Mezirow, 2000). Because the new student thus begins to articulate prior learning in an authentic way through the discourse of writing, the individual student and primary Mentor may then begin their relationship in a way that is more egalitarian, and on a more level playing field. Eventually, these students will create an authentic essay or Rationale in which they describe in detail their educational history and the way in which life experience interfaces with college-level learning.

In our project, Giroux's technique of writing as pedagogy, was first implemented during Orientation when the students were asked to rewrite their own experience and perceptions of prior learning (after Giroux, 1997, p.176) by responding in writing to open-ended questions about their educational history. Specifically, students were asked to critically reflect upon the history, social values, and practices that inform their personal intentions, ideas, beliefs values and feelings (after Giroux, 1983, p 154-55). Following this activity, students met with their primary Mentors and began Educational Planning, a four credit study in which they were asked to critically examine their understanding of where they were, where they are and where they aspire to locate themselves within the context the academy. During Educational Planning, the student and the Mentor were asked, "to understand more critically who they are as part of a wider social formation and how they have been positioned and constituted through the social domain" (Giroux, 1997, p. 141).

Some students also conducted interviews with professionals working in the occupations they aspire to, and in this way gained a better understanding of their locus in relation to their professional goals, lived cultures and the academy. Thus, the way has been paved for the student to enter into border crossing discourses across these boundaries of authority, thereby strengthening the student's authenticity and equalizing her/his position within the student-Mentor relationship. Students in Educational Planning continued to meet regularly with Mentors to discuss their progress and articulate their particular plan through successive drafts of their Rationale essays. Some students also engaged in the process of Credit by Evaluation (CBE) eventually resulting in earned credits for prior "life experience." In the CBE process, students engaged in discussion and wrote essays describing their prior experiential learning in relationship to academic expectations and boundaries. These CBE essays and the learning articulated in them will be evaluated by academically qualified specialists, with the amount of credits assigned accordingly and included in the final Degree Plan. Ultimately, the student and Mentor will prepare a portfolio of documents for review by academic committees who will attest to their validity as well as the quality of college level learning.

This longitudinal (7 months) research project "Level With Me: Making Space for Adult Learners" included three cohort groups of students (n=37) who participated in Orientations and enrolled (n=22, 15 women and 7 men) in Educational Planning in the spring of 2003. Their ages ranged from 23 to 51 with a mean of 37.5. More than half (54.5%) of the students enrolled on a full-time basis. Three of the students identified themselves as an ethnic minority. The study includes the following: an examination of written documents (Orientation document, Rationale and CBE essay); and an analysis drawn from frequency data and in-depth interviews. Using a critical case sampling strategy (Patton, 1990), we selected seven students to engage in in-depth, semi-structured interviews examining the students' critical reflections on the history, social values and practices that inform their personal beliefs, values, feelings, and epistemology. Our projected results will include: (1) frequency data comparing the Educational Planning progress of

the selected twenty-five students to students who participated in Orientation and Educational Planning in spring, 2002; (2) a content analysis of the relevant documents; (3) and a phenomenological analysis of the in-depth interviews with students. We intend to examine all three types of data, identify the emerging themes within the students' accounts, and consider these themes in relation to transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000) and non-traditional higher education. All data will be evaluated over the next three months and the results incorporated into the presentation of the study during the Fifth International Transformative Learning Conference in October.

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Strategic Learning Capabilities to Leverage Diversity for Breakthrough Performance— A Process of Personal and Organizational Transformation

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Abstract: *This paper presents a conceptual model that positions strategic learning and leveraging diversity as enablers to organizational effectiveness. The model represents an early integration of results from a Diversity Practitioner study and concepts drawn from the literature on transformative learning and organizational transformation. It argues that a parallel process consisting of outside-in work (with a focus on organizational transformation) and inside-out work (with a focus on transformative learning in individuals) is needed to achieve the performance gains required of organizations during 21st the century.*

[This paper contains information to support two, separate sessions of the TL Conference.]

Keywords: Strategic learning, Diversity, Transformative learning, Organizational transformation

In the closing decade of the twentieth century many observers proclaimed that the only constant in that highly competitive business environment was continuous and rapid change (Galbraith & Lawler, 1993; Nadler, Gerstein & Shaw, 1992). During that same period, a number of interventions (e.g., Total Quality, Reengineering, Supply Chain Integration, Benchmarking, Enterprise Resource Planning, Customer Relationship Management, The Learning Organization and Change Management) were introduced to help business leaders respond to the competitive landscape of the time while preparing their organizations for success in the dawn of the twenty-first century (Camp, 1989; Ciampa, 1992; Conner, 1993; Hammer & Champy, 1993; and Senge, 1990). Yet early evidence suggests that the successful implementation of these interventions has been elusive for a majority of companies. For example, a survey of Fortune 1000 companies reported that more than 67 percent of reengineering projects did not achieve their stated objectives (Fletcher, 1990). Further, insufficient attention to cultural and other human factors is often cited as the rationale for disappointing results. The model described in this paper represents a powerful integration of concepts and approaches (i.e., transformative learning, transformational change and working productively with diversity) designed to enhance organizational effectiveness during times of discontinuous change.

Problem and Purpose Statements

As demographic, market and economic trends continue to evolve, the complexity of doing business in the emerging global economy has intensified. Companies today are under tremendous pressure to develop the capabilities needed to create adaptive, flexible and responsive organizations to cope with dynamic, often turbulent market conditions. These demands place a premium on designing and successfully implementing organizational interventions that ensure the rate of learning at the individual, group and organizational levels, at least match, if not exceed, the rate of change in the external business environment.

Scholars, consultants and practitioners from the disciplines of organizational development, organizational learning, adult learning and psychological development have devised theories and related practices designed to help organizations make the transformation

needed to prosper, or even survive, in an environment characterized by mergers, acquisitions, global competition, changing workplace and market demographics, and new technological innovations. Further, these theories and practices can be categorized into three groups: transformative learning, organization transformation and working productively with diversity. While much is known about each of these categories, heretofore each has preceded in a rather fragmented manner both in terms of research and practice (Cross & Israelit, 2000; Henderson, 2002; and Miller & Katz, 2002).

This study sought to discover potential interrelationships among three schools of thought related to personal and organizational change (i.e., transformative learning, organizational transformation and working productively with diversity) based on an extensive review of the literature and previous diversity practitioner research (Maltbia, 2001). Specifically, the purpose of this study was to integrate key elements from the three approaches to change into a comprehensive model with a focus on building strategic learning capabilities to leverage diversity for breakthrough performance. To achieve this aim, the study sought to respond to three core research questions:

1. What is meant by strategic learning capabilities? / How can they be deployed to leverage diversity to contribute to organizational effectiveness?
2. What outcomes, if any, are associated with building strategic learning capabilities?
3. Does the focus on learning vary by learning capability? If so, in what way?

Methodology

The preliminary findings discussed in this paper are based on a descriptive and exploratory qualitative case study. The two primary forms of data collection included: semi-structured interviews and post-study literature review. A case study was conducted that included a sample of 20 diversity practitioners located across the United States and selected for their contribution to the emerging theory and practice of diversity initiatives in or for Corporate America. Twelve external practitioners agreed to participate in the study from a potential “expert” sample of 16 individuals who were identified during the literature review on workplace diversity as “thought leaders” from databases (including: A.S.T.D TRAINLIT, ABI and ERIC), resource guides that list diversity consultants and internal practitioners (e.g., The Diversity Directory, Hunt-Scanlon) and conference brochures (e.g., The Society of Human Resource Development’s Annual Diversity Conference, currently the largest in the United States and The Annual Diversity Forum, sponsored by Linkage Inc., a Human Resources consulting firm based in Boston). Further, the sampling approach used to identify the eight internal practitioners emphasized maximum variation to ensure a diverse set of respondent characteristics (Patton, 1990). Criteria for inclusion in the internal sample consisted of: (1) referrals from the expert sample; (2) leading, award-winning diversity initiatives (such as the Opportunity 2000 award winners); (3) practitioners involved in post “class action” lawsuits; and (4) practitioners who have led, or worked on, diversity initiatives in more than one organization. This combination of external and internal practitioners was chosen because they collectively represented a sample of individuals with current, yet diverse perspectives on pioneering work that is shaping the emerging field of workplace diversity. Such knowledge is not currently available in other sources of information.

The data gathered from the 20 face-to-face case interviews were supplemented by additional data sources including: a review of selected literature (workplace diversity, learning

from experience and critical pedagogy), pre-interview data inventories (participant's basic demographic data) and case documents (i.e., written materials including books, articles, diversity strategy, program materials. etc.). All case interviews were audio recorded and supported by extensive researcher notes. The interviews ranged from one and a half to three hours in duration. Data were content analyzed by systematically examining all data sources by eight categories designed to reveal the competency development process for this sample of practitioners (i.e., key experiences, Self-Q-questions the respondents would ask if they were conducting the study and their rationale for each questions, definitions of diversity, role expectations, approaches to diversity practice, and the competencies require of the role including knowledge, skills and attributes). The results from this case study: (1) confirmed a three-phase diversity change process found in the literature, (2) generated a catalog of definitions for the term diversity, (3) clarified the general role requirements of diversity practitioners including objectives and related outcomes, (4) listed the key experiences that reflect the competency development process for the practitioners in this sample and (5) presented a preliminary model that included 19 competencies that reflected the lessons learned from the experience of the study respondent's engaging in this pioneering work (Maltbia, 2001). Importantly, the study revealed important connections between building strategic learning capabilities and leveraging diversity for enhanced organizational performance. This insight has led to this researcher's interest in exploring and integrating key ideas from two bodies of literature that inform strategic learning (i.e., transformative learning theory and organizational transformation) and that were not examined in the first stage of this research agenda. The preliminary results presented in this paper reflect this expanded insight based on conducting a post study literature review.

Definition and Discussion of Key Terms and Concepts

The terms and concepts presented in this section represent an integration of ideas drawn from the literature on transformative learning and organizational transformation. These two areas provide a foundation for framing strategic learning and leveraging diversity as enablers to organizational effectiveness.

What is meant by strategic learning capabilities?

Sanchez and Heene (2000) define learning as a "process which changes the state of knowledge of an individual or organization" (p. 26). Accordingly, changes in the state of knowledge can take various forms ranging from adopting a new belief about a causal relationship, modifying an existing belief or abandoning a previously held belief. In addition, the state of knowledge can be characterized at four levels of "mastery" including *reproduction* (or basic recall), *explanation* (or understanding and meaning), *application* (or ability to act on knowledge appropriately) and *integration* (or a comprehensive understanding that allows the acquirer to selectively choose to apply knowledge in beneficial ways) (Sanchez and Heene, 2000). Further, the process of learning is holistic and made up of *cognitive* (concerned with thinking), *affective* (concerned with feeling and belief structures) and *psychomotor* (concerned with action and doing) *dimensions* (Bond, Cohen & Walker, 1993, p. 12). This holistic nature of learning brings focus to the importance of creating learning interventions that engage the "whole person," that is the head, hand and heart (Hayles & Mendez-Russell, 1997).

Transformative learning theory, with its theoretical roots in adult learning theory, highlights the importance of understanding the context for learning. That is, to be effective, the form of learning should align with the nature of the challenge or situation. Jack Mezirow, the

father of transformative learning theory distinguishes between two forms of learning, *instrumental learning* and *communicative learning*. He focuses on “learning to control and manipulate the environment or other people, as in task-oriented problem solving to improve performance” while the later focuses on “learning what others mean when they communicate... and often involves feelings, intentions, values and/or moral issues” (Mezirow 2000, p. 8).

Combining these two forms of learning with Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky’s (2002) descriptions of technical and adaptive challenges provide a platform for applying appropriate learning strategies to various situations. Instrument learning and related strategies seem to align with what Heifetz and Linsky call “operational challenges,” where people apply their current repertoire of skills, know-how and/or procedures to the problem or opportunity (p. 14). By contrast, adaptive challenges are not “amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedure” and as such require a form of co-creation that can only be facilitated by more communicative forms of learning and interaction (p. 13). Comparatively, communicative forms of learning and interaction require higher levels of involvement with others and active experimentation to foster new discoveries.

The personal and organizational transformation characteristic of adaptive challenges demand that all involve learn new ways of thinking, acting and being. Transformative learning, with its focus on examining, questioning, validating and revising our perceptions of the world (or mental models) is ideally suited to help individuals and collectives adapt to change in fundamental as well as dramatic ways (Cranton, 1994; Senge 1990). A sample agenda for integrating transformative learning principles into a broader strategic learning framework might include (1) using Merizow’s phases of perspective transformation as a foundation for designing learning interventions, (2) applying Merizow’s guidelines for rationale discourse to approaches designed to develop dialogue skills and enhance interpersonal interaction, (3) devising learning strategies to foster critical thinking and critical reflection to bring in the aspect of learning from experience to the process (Brookfield, 1991, Cranton, 1994) and (4) linking the advocacy and inquiry tools from Action Science to the fore mentioned tools (Argryis, 1993).

Having defined learning, the concept of levels of learning mastery, the three dimensions of learning and two situational forms of learning, we are now positioned to frame strategic learning as a particular type of learning and its role in building organizational capability, in short, strategic learning capabilities. Strategic learning is intentional in that it is (1) guided by the strategic objectives of the business and (2) integrated with important business priorities and related initiatives (Cross & Israrlit, 2000). Strategic learning is grounded in the resource-based view of organizations that purports the identification of core competencies and related tacit and explicit knowledge needed to support such competencies is a critical element of strategy formulation and strategic implementation (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). As a result, we are beginning to understand that organizational capability is a fundamental source of sustainable competitive advantage (Nadler, Shaw and Walton, 1995).

From a strategic learning perspective, it is important to understand the relationship between employee capability and organizational capabilities. Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood (1999) define employee capability as the “knowledge, skill, ability and motives of each individual employee and includes the technical know-how and skills needed to get the work done (or operational work) and social know-how to address adaptive challenges with others (pp. 58-59). Organizations can buy, build and rent the employee capabilities needed to execute their business strategy. Organizational capabilities represent the collective skills, abilities and core competencies of the business enterprise as a system and are the result of experience, knowledge

individual capabilities, relationships, structures and importantly shared learning (Nadler, Shaw & Walton, 1995, p. 8). Building on the ideas presented in this section, the meaning of strategic learning capabilities as defined in this paper is presented below:

Intentional and performance driven learning linked to strategy that clearly defines the core competencies necessary for current and future organizational success; identifies critical knowledge and skill areas needed to support these capabilities and establishes planning and accountability systems that ensure that learning is embedded in the actual work and major business processes of the organization.

What is meant by leveraging diversity?

The meaning of “diversity” as a stand-alone concept is simply “difference.” Both theorists and practitioners conceptualize diversity as a *subject* (or the “what”) and/or a *verb* (or the “how”), capturing both its static characteristic as well as its dynamic processes (Burke, 1994; Cox, 1993; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1993; Hayles & Mendez-Russell, 1997; Loden, 1999; and Thomas, 1996). A survey of numerous definitions of diversity in the literature, reveal one of two components (or both) are embedded in the various ways of expressing the meaning of the concept: (1) as a *dimension* (or group of dimensions), and (2) as *action or process* (i.e., acknowledging, understanding, and valuing differences; effectively managing and leveraging differences).

Diversity as dimensions.

The *diversity as dimensions* framework provides a model for examining the unique mixture of similarities and differences that characterize human existence (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1993; Loden, 1996; Loden & Rosner, 1991). The *primary dimensions* of diversity (also known as social category diversity) encompass inborn characteristics generally determined early in the life span (Jehn, 1999). These elements (i.e., race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, age, physical and mental ability, and sexual orientation) form an interdependent core of one’s identity that people often use to determine “in-group” (others like us) and “out-group” (those who are different) status. The theoretical foundations for primary dimensions of diversity include the *self-categorization theory* (e.g., Turner, 1982), the *social identity theory* (e.g., Tajfel, 1978), the *similarity-attraction paradigm* as articulated by Byrne (in Thatcher, 1999), and the *racial identity theory* (Jehn, 1999).

Secondary dimensions of diversity (i.e., experience-based or informational diversity) can be viewed as mutable differences that are acquired, discarded, and/or modified throughout the life-span (Jehn, 1999) and, as a result, are less salient to one’s core (e.g., education, occupation, income, parental status, etc.). *Organizational dimensions* of diversity resulting from one’s work role are influenced by such factors as organizational level, classification (i.e., exempt, hourly, etc.), line of business, work content, location (e.g., corporate vs. field office), seniority, organizational type, mergers/acquisitions and union affiliation. The theoretical basis for secondary and organizational dimensions of diversity is *information processing and decision-making theory* (e.g., Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, & Neale, 1996). *Personal dimensions* of diversity also exist; these include one’s psychological type, thinking and work styles, motivational profile, conflict style, use of power, value orientation, and learning style. The sum total of the four dimensions of diversity shape people’s identities, the frame or lens through which, they view, experience, and act in the world.

Diversity as action or process.

Individuals often ascribe personalized meaning to the concept of diversity. In practice, this is often achieved by placing a word before the term, essentially ascribing meaning to the concept. This inserted word reflects a person's assumptions about diversity (e.g., valuing, managing, cultural) versus the absolute meaning of the concept—thus, the multiple interpretations of what people actually mean when talking about diversity. This is a significant observation because the way one defines diversity has an impact on, and provides insight into how one actually responds to situations involving diversity and ultimately the outcomes associated with such action.

Milton J. Bennett, Co-Director for the Intercultural Communication Institute, provides a developmental interpretation of how people respond to difference ranging from *denial* (or undifferentiated categories for cultural diversity) to *defense* (or polarized us/them distinctions), *minimization* (or subsuming cultural differences into familiar categories), *acceptance* (or acknowledging cultural difference as a reality and interesting), *adaptation* (or cognitive frame-shifting and behavioral shifting based on the cultural context) and *integration* (or encapsulated marginality, the integrating intercultural abilities into one's identity). Collectively, these developmentally sequenced responses to cultural diversity provide a framework for helping individuals and groups (1) understand how they respond to difference, (2) recognize the strengths associated with each response, and (3) identify the development tasks and transition issues related to each stage of Bennett's Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993).

Organizations also address diversity with a variety of approaches each with a different focus and set of action strategies. Since the inception of the diversity movement over thirty years ago, the approaches have become more layered and complex, with this author contenting that leveraging diversity is the most highly developed of these approaches. They include:

1. Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action which places emphasis on acknowledging the diversity mixtures, often motivated by an attempt to “right past inequities,” it is legally driven and representation focused;
2. Understanding Differences places emphasis on creating awareness from multiple cultural perspectives and interpersonal relationships;
3. Managing Diversity places emphasis on assuring the productive utilization of a diverse workforce as an organizational resource, emphasis on behavior and strategically driven;
4. Valuing diversity goes beyond the utility focus and begins to address making personal connections with diversity and the degree to which an diversity constitutes a valuable resource; and
5. Leveraging Diversity contends that the other four approaches must be in place and is the result of the collective impact of capitalizing on the emergent talent of all people (Herbst, 1997; Thomas, 1991).

Again, specific action strategies and organizational practices align with each approach. Affirmative action aligns hiring and mobility practices to ensure representation, or “opening doors.” The movement from understanding differences, both physical and cultural, to valuing diversity results in “opening minds,” examples include diversity focused communication and

awareness training programs. Managing diversity focuses on aligning organizational systems and related behaviors, the artifacts of the culture—unseen but knowable—such as a performance management, compensation and succession planning system, to foster the productive utilization of diverse talent, or “opening systems.”

The challenge associated with conceiving, designing, and implementing effective diversity initiatives in organizations is too complex for one single approach (Winterle, 1992). A review of diversity work in pioneering companies reveals three common phases associated with the journey toward creating an environment that attracts, understands, values, and leverages diversity; these are (1) creating awareness and generating knowledge; (2) building skills and capacity; and (3) applying the learning in real work situations, which may involve the transformation of self, others, organizational systems, and structures (Maltbia, 2001). Collectively, these represent the three focal areas of workplace diversity interventions.

What is meant by breakthrough performance?

Performance is at the very core of organizational effectiveness. Simply put, “performance refers to the way in which something or someone functions...” also performance relates to “accomplishment and fulfillment, rather than potential or capability” (Swanson, 1999, p. 1). In organizations, whether at the individual, unit or system-wide level, performance is about intentionality, that is, the ability to act deliberately to achieve results and desired outcomes. Performance can be assessed using five broad categories of metrics or measures including quantity, quality, time, resources and impact.

At a very basic level performance in organizations is about “increasing” (e.g., sales, profits, market share, customers, etc.) or “decreasing” (e.g., costs, error, customer complaints, etc.) something, in short quantity related metrics. Quality metrics reflect the overall effectiveness of performance (or level of satisfaction) and as such is more qualitative when compared to quantity metrics. Time metrics focus on the duration of performance and are often combined with quantity metrics, such as reducing cycle time or improving customer response time. Resource metrics relate to the required investment needed to generate a given level of performance in terms of people and operating costs. Lastly, impact measures focus on the collective effect of a given set of performance actions such as generating shareholder value or customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In today’s rapidly moving and unforgiving global markets, the incremental gains that result from continuous improvement are necessary but not sufficient to meet the increasing demands of customers and other key organizational stakeholders, nor respond to fierce competitors. Continuous improvement is appropriate for a number of operational challenges leaders face, but adaptive challenges call for a break from the past and the generation of completely new concepts. Gary Hamel (2000) defines the business concept innovation that results in breakthrough performance as the “capability to reconceive existing business models in ways that create new value for customers, rude surprises from competitors, and builds new wealth for investors” (p. 18). Such performance breakthroughs often require, and are the result of, organizational transformation.

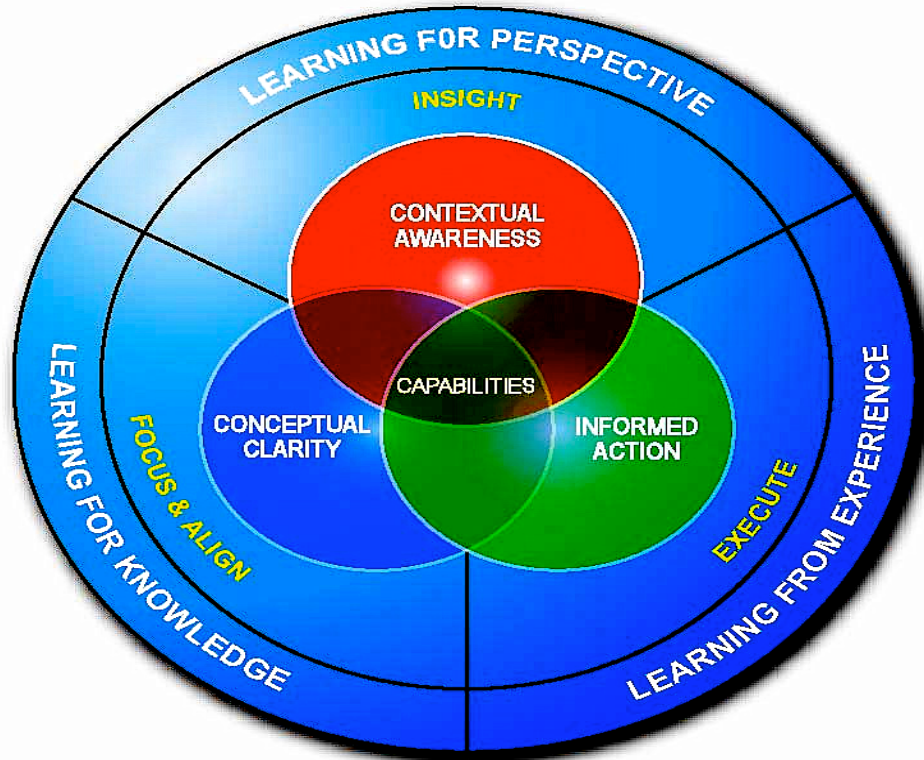
Transformational change in organizations involve discontinuous and radical changes in how members perceive, think and behave at work. Yet the literature on organizational change of this magnitude points to a high rate of failure in large, structured organizations (Henderson, 2002). The model for building strategic learning capabilities to leverage diversity for breakthrough performance outlined in the next section of this paper integrates key concepts

drawn from transformative learning theory, organizational transformation theory and the field of workplace diversity to provide a comprehensive blueprint to help organizational leaders conquer the complexity of today's markets and take advantage of the opportunities associated with using diversity as a source of competitive advantage.

Preliminary Findings

The model for *Building Strategic Learning Capabilities to Leverage Diversity for Breakthrough Performance* (see Figure 1) is based on the assumption that leveraging diversity is a process of strategic learning and change intended to enhance performance and facilitate organizational renewal. Organizational renewal is the ability to continuously adapt to the external environment and respond to problems, challenges and opportunities. While not the only factor, winning companies are beginning to understand that leveraging diversity contributes greatly to creating and sustaining an adaptive enterprise. The model's basic components include (1) three strategic learning capabilities, (2) three related outcomes associated with each learning capability and (3) three different learning foci needed to generate the desired learning outcomes. First, the model positions leveraging diversity as a form of human performance. Drawing on concepts from Jackson (1991) and Sanchez & Heen (2000), the model asserts that understanding this form of human performance is a function of examining the three dimensions of context, content and conduct. Three strategic learning capabilities for leveraging diversity respond to the "where/when/why/," the "what" and the "how" of leveraging diversity. They include: (1) achieving and sustaining *contextual awareness* (know "why" theoretical knowledge); (2) creating *conceptual clarity* (know "what" or strategic knowledge); and (3) Taking *informed action* (know "how" or practical knowledge). Each strategic learning capability responds to important diversity and performance related questions.

Figure 1: Building Learning Capabilities to Leverage Diversity for Breakthrough Performance



Contextual awareness involves scanning the external and internal business environments. This is necessary in order to articulate the basic rationale for leveraging diversity in a given organization, identify the indicators for assessing progress of diversity initiatives and determining the overall success. Conceptual clarity concentrates on the knowledge areas necessary to leverage diversity for enhanced performance and competitive advantage. Conceptual clarity leads to strategic choices. These choices are based on the insights gained through contextual awareness. Taking informed action explores a number of action imperatives and tactics needed to develop a capacity for leveraging diversity for business success.

There are different outcomes associated with each of the three strategic learning capabilities for leveraging diversity and each require a different learning focus (Pietersen, 2002). The learning emphasis of contextual awareness is learning for expanded perspective and results in deep insight. The emphasis of conceptual clarity is learning for knowledge by making strategic choices and identifying the “vital few” critical success factors, that is, “what we must know and what must go well to succeed” and to realize our intentions. The outcomes associated with creating conceptual clarity include focus and alignment. Focus allows for making important decisions related to how to deploy scarce resources while alignment ensures that every element of the organization (i.e., measurement and reward systems, organizational structures and processes, culture and employees skill and motivation) support the strategic priorities. Finally, emphasis of taking informed action is on learning from experience and results in planned experimentation that provides a platform for performance excellence. Taking informed action allow organizations to implement strategic choices and related plans fast, while taking advantage

of the next shift in the external business environment. The reflective potential of learning during and from experience provides a capacity to repeat this cycle of learning for perspective, knowledge and informed action, over and over again, and results in personal and organizational renewal and transformation.

The continuous cycle of learning and change reflected in the model is characterized by a dynamic process of *outside-in* work and *inside-out* work. Outside-in work centers on the achievement of business objectives and is performance focused. Outside-in work addresses both operational and adaptive challenges often triggered by the external environment. The key activities related to outside-in work include (1) environment scanning to identify issues and alternatives; (2) defining strategic choices and devising a shared vision of the future, (3) creating business plans to realize the vision and (4) identifying and closing gaps related to the alignment of organizational systems to ensure effective implementation. Many of the practices related to outside-in work are informed by the organizational transformation literature where the organization is the unit of analysis. While important work, organizational transformation interventions often lack tools for fostering the personal transformation needed to help people adapt to the intensity of change required by the process or demanded to sustain progress over time.

Inside-out work focuses on the individual with an emphasis on the transformation of set limits and assumptions that often serve as barriers to organizational transformation. Inside-out work has to do with generating the self-awareness that one needs to understand one's beliefs, values and worldview and how each influences action. Just as the outside-in work guided by the strategic learning model, provides a process of renewal for companies, the inside-out work guided by these same process steps, provides a vehicle for personal development and growth. The key activities related to inside-out work include:

1. conducting a personal assessment to generate insight about one's capabilities;
2. translating these insights into personal performance and development plans;
3. aligning development and performance objectives with the strategic needs and priorities of the business; and
4. implementing personal performance plans while obtaining feedback from knowledgeable others.

Many of the practices related to inside-out work are informed by transformative learning theory.

Implications for Practice

The goal of combining outside-in work with inside-out work is to align organizational transformation efforts with those of personal development and transformative learning. To become strategic business partners, senior human resources executives, organization development, training and learning and other professionals dedicated to the development of human resources, must be able to demonstrate how various HR systems and practices influence organizational performance. The *Building Strategic Learning Capabilities to Leverage Diversity for Breakthrough Performance* model provides such leaders with a framework for making tight connections between business strategy and human capital interventions. The framework suggests that plans for building each of the three strategic learning capabilities should include interventions that effectively integrate outside-in work and inside-out work.

Developing the three strategic learning capabilities (discussed in this paper) from both an outside-in and inside-out perspective results in improved communication and effectiveness in the cross-cultural situations that characterizes today's global business environment. The expanded description of the model (Maltbia, in press) provides organizational leaders responsible for, or interested in, gaining full access to the talent and potential of their collective human capital with a comprehensive approach for linking strategic learning and diversity with the strategic priorities of the business. Importantly, the approach provides guidance for helping people in organizations construct new, more inclusive responses to the conflict often associated with addressing differences, which is critical to ensure the requisite variety is present to foster the innovation needed to adapt to today business challenges. Lastly, the framework aligns with emotional competence, a factor shown to contribute positively to effective performance (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). The strategic learning capabilities of *contextual awareness* and *conceptual clarity* align with the emotional competencies associated with *self-awareness* (or the inside-out). The strategic learning capability of *taking informed action* aligns with the emotional competencies associated with *self-management* (or inside-out aspect of this capability) and *relationship management* (or the outside-in aspect of this capability).

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Opportunities (and Limits) of Transformative Learning For Individuals in Interplay with Transformative Learning for Organizations: Whither “Bounded Critical Reflection”?

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Abstract: *Lyle Yorks and I offered a view at the First National Conference on Transformative Learning of transformative learning in organizations fostered through action learning programs as “bounded critical reflection.” This article revisits that view in light of selected environmental changes since that time, specifically: globalization, a knowledge economy, and a more diverse workforce. I draw out implications for organizations, and in turn, for transformative learning for individuals and for the organization. I conclude with implications for practice.*

Keywords: action learning, organizations, environmental changes

Action Learning: Its Potential as a Liberating Structure for Transformative Learning

A continuing focus of my research and practice is action learning in organizations. Action learning is “an approach to working with and developing people which uses work on a real project or problem as the way to learn. Participants work in small groups to take action to solve their project or problem, and learn how to learn from that action.” (Yorks, O’Neil, and Marsick, 1999). Lyle Yorks and I have, separately and together, engaged in research on the nature of learning in these programs and on the transfer of learning: to individuals and, when it is desired, the transfer of learning for organizational changes (e.g., in culture, policies, or practices). We both, separately and with others, also design action learning programs and facilitate learning for groups engaged in learning projects.

After the First National Conference on Transformative Learning in 1998, Lyle and I collaborated on a chapter in a book based on presentations from that conference (Yorks and Marsick in Mezirow & Associates, 2000). In that chapter, we contrasted action learning and collaborative inquiry as two related, but different, strategies for learning from experience through cycles of action and reflection. And we showed how both strategies, to different degrees because of their different purposes and designs, can support transformative learning in organizations. These programs both develop needed capacity for stepping outside one’s environment and for using action and reflection to reframe situations and try out new ways of thinking, feeling and acting in the safe environment of a group that also provides frank feedback and critique.

Borrowing from the work of Bill Torbert (Fisher and Torbert, 1995) we described the nature of this space, when it successfully supports transformative learning, as a liberating structure: “We construe spaces that function as liberating structures as parallel structures, that is, alternative structures that coexist alongside those that currently are in place but that need to be reformed or transformed” (Yorks and Marsick, 2000, p. 271). We argued that, under the right conditions, both action learning and collaborative inquiry could be so described.

“Bounded Critical Reflection”

We also addressed the limits of the organization as an influence on the kind of learning that might take place within the liberating structure, and as an influence on the extent to which individuals might transfer their learning outside the program to their work in the organization

when the same conditions do not exist. Kurt Lewin pioneered thinking about the way that the social context acts on the individual who wants to make changes, either as an individual or as an agent of the learning or change of larger social systems. We concluded that transformative learning in individuals is constrained by the organization's context, especially its purposes and needs: "The focus of criticality is on the instrumental task performance issues of the individual, business unit, and organizational level: reframing of roles, rethinking assumptions about the larger business environment, and the like" (Yorks and Marsick, 2000, p. 274).

While individuals may be encouraged to reflect critically on their business performance, be that individually-focused or focused on work units or the larger organization, individuals are also typically constrained in the degree to which they are invited to change the organization's fundamental strategy, vision, or culture. These constraints may or may not interfere with individual transformation, but they do limit the degree to which an organization enables individuals to use their transformed mindsets and skills in the work of organizational change. Lamm's (2000) study of an action learning program in a global organization supports this conclusion. She found that many participants personally benefited from the program but, even though the organization said it wanted to use the program for organizational transformation, barriers to change impeded achievement of this goal.

The degree to which participants of an action learning program can explicitly and purposively transform themselves and the organization is moderated by negotiations with guardians of the organization's strategy, vision, and culture. In other words, while an individual might use critical reflection to raise larger concerns within the safe holding environment of the parallel liberating structure, it is likely that he or she will not be given free reign to act on deeper individual transformations that are not in line with where the organization wishes to go.

This is, of course, no surprise to people who work in and with organizations. All organizations have a fundamental social, work, and psychological contract with employees which may be more or less explicitly stated. Without such contracts, organizations would break apart because of conflicting directions, purposes, and agendas. The same can be said for social groups that are not thought about as organizations but that also ask members to agree to some kind of a social and psychological contract; for example, the family or the community.

Whither "Bounded Critical Reflection"?

I would like to examine selected environmental changes in the past decade in the United States that I think affect the ways in which critical reflection is bounded in today's organizations: globalization, a knowledge economy, and a more diverse workforce. How do these shifts affect the opportunities (and limits) of transformative learning for individuals in interplay with transformative learning for organizations? (See Table 1.)

Globalization

Widespread globalization of the marketplace means that every company competes for customers in countries around the world. Goods and services can often be produced less expensively by a company in a leaner, less-regulated location (though with proportionate impact on employee pay and working conditions). Organizations have to increase productivity, which often means downsizing and doing more with less. Globalization, coupled with other market forces, has catalyzed a change in the employee contract.

Table 1: Selected Shifts in Environment and Implications for Organizations and for Transformative Learning of Individuals and of the Organization

<i>Shift</i>	<i>Implications for Organizations</i>	<i>Implications for Transformative Learning</i>
Globalization	Changing employee contract	Individuals may be more aware of organizational norms, and find it easier to critique them, within a liberating structure. Capacity for using individual transformations to transform the organization depends on local context.
Knowledge economy	Changing nature of work	Work, decoupled from jobs, drives innovation. Innovation invites critical reflection and breakthrough thinking that can be fostered in a liberating structure. It is not easy to make critical reflection a shared practice supporting organizational transformation.
Diverse workforce	Changing mix of meaning schemes / perspectives of people at work	People can avail themselves of many alternative viewpoints that help them question their own meaning schemes. For organizations to benefit, conditions need to be created for dialogue that safely and effectively surfaces deeply-held assumptions (e.g., gender, race, and class).

Changes in the employee contract can be devastating (see for example, Trochiano, 2002; Volpe, 1999). Yet, many employees — who have been able to hold on to jobs in this period of high unemployment — have grown accustomed to the new contract and have found ways to use this contract to their advantage. Even with high rates of unemployment in place, which make it difficult for some employees to find and keep jobs, organizations have also had to put rewards, incentives, and practices in place to retain their most valued employees. The phenomenon of the “free agent employee” is said to grow, if not in practice because of the stumbling economy, then in spirit. The free agent employee no longer expects to work for an organization for his/her lifetime. Free agent employees are said to plan their careers so that they can maximize the benefits they gain over a lifetime as they move from one organization to another. Free agent employees have a career agenda that takes precedence over an employee contract with any particular organization in which they work as they move toward their lifetime career goals.

What are the implications for transformative learning? This period of change creates a climate for “unlearning” of old ways of doing things. On the one hand, individuals might more easily step outside of constraining norms in the organization because, even if they are aware of these norms, their identity in the organization is less intertwined with these norms because they are not lifetime employees. Socialization does inculcate certain expectations and norms, even under the new contract. At the same time, the pay-off for adhering to norms is variable. Employees have observed that good behavior does not guarantee anyone a job if market forces require downsizing or layoffs. Individuals might be more aware of norms that, in former years, operated at a tacit level. People come and go in organizations. With this kind of flux, norms must be made explicit, which makes it possible to take norms as objects of inquiry. This could increase one’s ability to step outside of the system and critique / challenge norms, even though challenges to norms may be high risk / high gain. Depending on one’s level and role in the organization, such challenges can make it easier or harder to hold a job, to improve performance, or to work effectively with others.

Changes in the employee contract change the nature of the playing field for leaders who may have experienced transformation in the liberating structure of a program like action learning when they take on the role of agent for organizational learning or change. Capacity for organizational transformation becomes highly contextual; it depends less on taken-for-granted rules that are universally, though tacitly, applied. Organizations have increasingly decentralized their operations. Work often gets done by drawing on resources of a fluctuating network of people dispersed across the organization, not by working primarily with a clearly defined work group and through established hierarchical channels. Transformed leaders must use personal influence and tap into others' motivation if they are to effectively engage other employees, whom they supervise or with whom they interact as peers, towards a transformed vision or way of working. In this sense, the organization has become postmodern. There may be one overarching vision in the organization, but local visions are covertly or overtly influenced by local personalities and local realities. Local influence has become less constrained in such cases by the counterweight of a rigid formal structure and widely-followed set of ironclad norms.

Knowledge Economy

The shift in the United States, and much of the “developed” world, to a knowledge economy has been widely discussed in the literature and recognized in practice. This shift underlies the changing nature of work. One implication is the uneven distribution of work to the more highly educated and skilled, both within the United States and across nations due to the global economy. Another implication is that work has been decoupled from jobs (Rifkin and Heilbroner, 1996). People seek meaning in their work, not just a job title. Meaningful work involves continuous discovery and improvement. Knowledge workers often go beyond established routines, which can lead to innovation in processes, products, and work procedures.

A challenge in knowledge work grows out of the specialized expertise that people hold which enables them to excel in their projects but can also hold them captive to mental models underlying prior success. Viewpoints can become entrenched, and therefore limiting. Action learning is driven by questioning rather than advice giving. This can help people dig below the surface, uncover framing assumptions, and shift their point of view. Reframing opens up new ways of thinking and acting, which in turn can lead to breakthrough results.

Action learning groups I have observed or worked with initially resist time taken for any kind of reflection, let alone critical reflection. But I have also observed the value gained through structured conversations that help peers raise questions, framed within a shared context, that startle a problem-holder into new ways of seeing their situation. Peer questions surface deeply held points of view that become de-centered when peers push frankly, critically, and respectfully against that viewpoint.

The demands of the knowledge economy, driven by continuous improvement and by breakthrough innovation, help people value insights gained through critical reflection. Some of these new capabilities can be used in the work environment outside of a liberating structure. But it may not be easy to introduce critical reflection to others in one's work group even when new practices can be justified by the need for innovation. One barrier is that critical reflection requires that people acknowledge what they do not know. In many organizational cultures, knowledge workers are expected to have answers but not raise questions. Organizations that wish to take full advantage of the transformative potential of action learning “graduates” need to reconsider what it means to have a culture of expertise. Such reconsideration will not happen

overnight, but can be modeled by leaders who understand the value of asking questions for breakthrough thinking.

Diverse Workforce

Society in the United States has become very diverse. But even though many organizations embrace the ideal of workforce diversity, organizations have uneven records of success in taking advantage of their diverse mix of employees. The challenges to maximizing the benefit of diversity at the workplace (gender, race, class, function, etc.) are great. (See, for example, Maltbia 2001.) Many organizations still struggle with the basics of equal opportunity in employment; few have reached a point where they can effectively draw on the rich pool of backgrounds and experience that is afforded by a diverse workforce.

The potential value of a diverse workforce for transformative learning rests in this changing mix of meaning schemes and perspectives of people at work. Under the right conditions and with the right capabilities, a diverse workforce means that people can avail themselves of many alternative viewpoints that, in turn, could help them question their own meaning schemes. Diversity is a design principle of action learning (as may be so in other initiatives). Yet historically, action learning programs — many of which focus on high potential managers — have been characterized by minimal kinds of diversity in the United States. Women and minorities are typically under-represented. Diversity of function — or in global companies, of nationality — predominates. When diversity is an issue, it is still difficult to surface and address, especially when diverse populations are in a minority. Skills are needed to effectively work through stereotypes and to help people speak their mind and heart in ways that allow people in the “majority” population to address inherited hurt and guilt associated with their privilege without letting this get in the way of productive conversation.

This is a challenge for critical thinking that action learning as a collective practice has not yet faced and addressed in a systematic way. To address this challenge, action learning must borrow from other applied disciplines with a longer history of addressing these concerns such as conflict resolution and some sub-groups in adult education, such as the work of the California Institute for Integral Studies and of Dorothy Etling and her colleagues, also on this panel. Practice has benefited by those who put non-cognitive ways of learning on an equal footing with cognitively focused critical reflection (Kasl and Yorks, 2002).

For organizations to benefit from individual transformation in this area, mechanisms and conditions need to be created for organizational transformation. Some steps have been taken in this area by those who work on dialogue, which can surface deeply-held assumptions (e.g., gender, race, and class). However, dialogue can also avoid addressing assumptions about such deep differences. New skill sets are needed to work in this area, especially when the culture of an organization mitigates against frank and open conversation of issues that are laden with emotions and social identity issues that go beyond the focus of the organization.

Implications for Practice

I conclude that opportunities still exist through action learning (and other strategies) to create liberating structures that provide for individual transformation. The design of such programs, however, has to take into account even more than before the unique characteristics of the local organizational context and the individual’s personal development goals. The action learning coach needs good skills in diagnosing this local reality; sensitivity to the potential influence of organizational dynamics for the consequences of personal transformation; and

flexibility in one's mindset as a learning coach. Skills are also needed in surfacing and addressing deeply held societal assumptions about difference that shape individual and group action. When initiatives are part of a larger effort to transform organizations, steps should be taken to think about what else has to change to provide supports and remove barriers to change.

It seems easier to use action learning to provide liberating structures for bounded critical reflection when the instrumental purpose and value of the outcomes are clearly recognized. Liberating structures could also be used to experiment with strategies and approaches for individual and organizational transformation in areas where the value of outcomes needs to first be clarified, such as maximizing the value of diversity in the workplace.

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Bohmian Dialogue: A Promising Pedagogy for Transformative Learning?

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Abstract: *Between 1997 and 2002, dialogue, a process developed by the late theoretical physicist David Bohm and philosopher Krishnamurti, was adapted and used as the central form of pedagogy within two interdisciplinary courses at Portland State University. The purpose of this workshop is, through an interactive experience, to provide participants with an introductory understanding of Bohmian dialogue and its promise as a pedagogy for transformative teaching and learning in higher education. Throughout the past several years, Bohmian dialogue has developed into a process in which meaning and knowledge are created and shared between and among educators and learners during the learning process. Through this cultivation of shared meaning new understanding emerges and learners identify and are able to gain insight into their assumptions, belief systems, and thought processes. Our explorations of Bohmian dialogue in higher education have led us to conclude that it holds considerable promise as a pedagogy for transformative teaching and learning and for extending our knowledge of how individuals learn together.*

Keywords: dialogue, David Bohm, transformative learning

Conceptual Framework

I do not know if you have ever examined how you listen, whether to a bird, to the wind in the leaves, to the rushing waters, or how you listen in a dialogue with yourself, [or] to your conversation in various relationships with your intimate friends. ... In that state there is no value at all. One listens and therefore learns, only in a state of attention, a state of silence, in which this whole background is in abeyance, is quiet; then, it seems to me, it is possible to communicate. (Krishnamurti, as cited in Dia.logos, Inc. 2001, p. 4)

Bohmian dialogue is a process through which a group of individuals can develop and share meaning together. The late theoretical physicist David Bohm (1996) believed that shared meaning was necessary for society to work; for Bohm shared meaning provided the glue or cement that held a society together. Motivated by concerns over our collective inability to communicate, noting that “People living in different nations, with different economic and political systems, are hardly able to talk to each other without fighting” (p. 1), Bohm spent nearly 20 years trying to understand the various processes that helped and hindered effective communication. Over this time, Bohm, and later his students—including Peter Senge (1990), Danah Zohar (1994), and William Isaacs (1999)—honed their understanding into the process they referred to as dialogue.

According to Bohm (1996), *dialogue* comes from the Greek word *dialogos*: *Logos* meaning “the word” or “meaning of the word,” and *dia* meaning “through,” suggesting a stream of meaning flowing among, through, and between a group of people (p.6). Through sharing meaning in dialogue, new understanding emerges and group members identify and are able to gain insight into their assumptions, belief systems, and thought processes. Dialogue “is a way of taking the energy of our differences and channeling it toward something that has never been created before” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 19). Bohm characterized ordinary thought in society as incoherent and believed that as people sat together in dialogue over time the meaning they

created and shared increased in coherence. Just as light waves build in intensity as they become more and more coherent, so, Bohm believed, would the power of thought increase if people learned to think together in coherent ways.

Purpose of Workshop Related to Transformative Learning

Mezirow has described transformative learning as referring “to 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 ... so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (2000, p. 7). This description fully embraces the aims and processes of Bohmian dialogue, thereby creating the need to explore its usefulness as a pedagogy for transformative learning in various settings, including college and university courses. The purpose of our workshop is to provide participants with an introductory understanding of Bohmian dialogue, to share our experiences using it in different university courses, and to invite consideration of its promise as a pedagogy for transformative learning in college and university environments.

Between 1997 and 2002, we adapted and used Bohmian dialogue as the central form of pedagogy within two interdisciplinary courses at our institution. These courses involved primarily graduate students and faculty within education, community health, and business. Most recently, Bohmian dialogue was integrated into “Leadership Development Through Dialogue,” a course offered during two summer sessions by two of the workshop presenters. The third presenter based her dissertation research on this course, in which she was a participant observer (Voetterl, 2002).

Our experiences have led us to conclude that Bohmian dialogue holds considerable promise as a pedagogy for transformative learning. For example, in response to course evaluation requests for feedback on the role of dialogue in their learning, students have offered observations such as: “Dialogue was where my assumptions, fears, and blind spots became visible, or at least more visible, to me”; “We dove deep in this class, examining not just what we know, but the ways we know it”; “Exploration of beliefs/assumptions is rarely a part of a graduate level curriculum in business; it’s a refreshing and provocative approach to learning”; and “The learning was on many levels: personal insight, shared wisdom, questioning and restructuring of paradigms.” These comments point to the transformative potential that Bohmian dialogue holds.

Discussion of Workshop Topics

This workshop will be organized into three segments. First, we will present a brief overview of Bohmian dialogue; second, we will engage participants in an abbreviated experience of a dialogue circle; and, third, we will conclude with an exploration of the role of Bohmian dialogue in transformative learning—including formal lines of inquiry that could accompany use of this pedagogy. During our initial overview, we will present information on Bohm’s conceptual foundation, including its link to the spiritual philosophy of Krishnamurti, and to the work of Chris Argyris (ladder of inference), Donald Schön (reflection), and Paulo Freire. We will provide an overview of the characteristics of Bohmian dialogue, a description of how we’ve used it in our interdisciplinary courses, and descriptions of specific dialogue practices such as listening, respecting, suspending (one’s opinions, beliefs, assumptions), and voicing (Isaacs, 1999). Participants will receive a handout containing this information as well as a detailed schedule of a typical class session, an example of a course syllabus, and course evaluation feedback. The

handout will also contain enough description and practical guidance on the dialogue process that participants will be able to take part in a dialogue circle.

We will invite participants to take part in an abbreviated dialogue that begins with posing a question to the circle and ends with the opportunity for each participant to comment on the content of the dialogue and/or aspects of the process. Examples of a question that might begin the dialogue are: What connections do you make between Bohmian dialogue and transformative learning? or, What relevance might Bohmian dialogue have to your practice as an adult educator? Following the circle experience, participants will be invited to offer further observations about their experience and about dialogue's promise as a pedagogy for transformative learning. We will also encourage discussion around potential research questions and methods that may be used to further inquiry into the use of Bohmian dialogue to further the goals of transformative learning.

Potential Uses and Outcomes of Bohmian Dialogue to Transformative Learning in Other Contexts

As mentioned previously, Bohm, his students and colleagues, and organizations such as *Dia.logos* and the Society for Organizational Learning, have explored dialogue's usefulness in businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups for over 20 years. Although to our knowledge, we were among the first college and university faculty to initiate investigation into the transformative capacity and the practical aspects of Bohmian dialogue in higher education classrooms, by the time we began our explorations in the mid-1990's, dialogue's merits had already been well explored in other contexts. For three excellent explanations of Bohmian dialogue's potential uses in other contexts, see the work of Dixon (1996), Isaacs (1999), and Senge (1990). Included below are three cases describing experiences we have had facilitating dialogue circles in non-university contexts. These cases differ in group size, background intent, and length of time over which the dialogue circles were held. Together, they provide some sense of dialogue's transformative capacity in other contexts.

In the first case, members of a small bedroom community on the outskirts of the major metropolitan center in their state, held a series of dialogically oriented "community conversations" on the relationship between the local community and the K-12 school. Each participant was personally invited and visited prior to the first dialogue circle not only to ensure their full commitment to the process, but also to explain the practical as well as philosophical tenants of dialogue as a process that would guide their time together. All participants agreed to meet twice per month for the remainder of the school year (March 12 – June 25, 2002) for two-hour sessions. Present at these conversations were representatives from the local school district administrative staff, the school board, building level administration, teachers, parents, coaches, students, and community business and religious leaders. Each was reminded that this was not a meeting, rather it was a time to talk with one another about the things they cared deeply about as they worked together to improve the relationships between school, community, and county school district representatives.

At the conclusion of the first series of conversations, a second series was requested by the participants and completed the following fall with the addition of four members participating in a separate "dialogue facilitators" training. The group is now participating in a third series of conversations to learn how they might better involve teachers in the life of the community and their community in the life of the school. This series is being facilitated by members of the community and the school administrator. The success of these conversations lies not in their

repetition, or duplication, rather it lies in various new relationships that were forged during these meetings and in the empowerment of many otherwise “disengaged” community members who are now willing to contribute more directly in the improvement of their school. In the words of one conversation participant, “I didn’t come here to be involved in yet another project on behalf of my child. I came here to interact with and learn from other adults in our community about how we can work together on behalf of our school.”

In the second case, a dialogue circle was held to conclude a two-day forum on regional food systems and their development. The hope for engaging in dialogue toward the end of the program was to give the approximately 80 participants—who consisted of farmers, restaurateurs, food manufacturers and marketers, food bank and community garden coordinators, and policy makers—the opportunity to think deeply about their experiences at the forum. Because the group was large, the two facilitators suggested that the dialogue take place within two concentric circles. After explaining dialogue’s purpose and the conditions within which shared meaning was most likely to emerge, members of the group spent the next 90 minutes engaged in conversation around their deepest hopes and concerns for the region’s food system. The size of the group called for use of a portable microphone so participants who felt moved to speak had to raise their hands, wait to be noticed, and then wait for the microphone to arrive before they could do so. The facilitators explained the role of silence in dialogue and suggested that participants could benefit from silent pauses by resting their attention on various aspects of the dialogue process during them. Heartfelt concerns were raised, questions were posed, and hopes for regional food systems were shared during the session. As a sense of shared meaning began to emerge from the field, participants gained understanding not only of community food systems issues, but also of the way in which this understanding could be co-created in a participatory, collaborative fashion.

In the third case, dialogue was introduced to a group of professionals in the social work field who were part of a new statewide Child Welfare Partnership. This diverse group of teaching faculty, researchers, and field-based practitioners came together for a one-day retreat to examine what might be facilitating and interfering with their efforts to develop this collaborative. Following a brief introduction to its foundations and practices, about 40 individuals participated in dialogue together for 90 minutes. Reflections on the process of dialogue were very positive, although several members in the group expressed their need for clarifying “next steps.” This group was left wondering, “Where do we go after the dialogue?” a question that often arises when time in dialogue is insufficient for answers to this question to emerge on their own.

Anticipated Outcomes Related to Transformative Learning

As an immediate result of this workshop session, our hope is that participants’ understanding about the connections between the theory and practice of Bohmian dialogue and transformative learning theory will both broaden and deepen. Long-range outcomes we will encourage are: a) identification of participants interested in incorporating dialogue as a form of pedagogy and exploring its transformative learning capacity in classroom and other adult learner settings; and, b) initiation of a process to facilitate the development of a collaborative research and writing agenda focused on Bohmian dialogue and transformative learning.

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Cognitive Development and Transformational Learning: A Research Agenda

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The notion of development as change over time or change with age is fundamental to adult education practice; further, the direction of this change is almost always presented as positive and growth-oriented. Mezirow (1991, p. 155) absolutely sees perspective transformation as developmental:

An essential point made in many studies, including my own (Mezirow, 1978), is that transformation can lead developmentally toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated perspective and that, insofar as it is possible, we all naturally move toward such an orientation. *This is what development means in adulthood....* A strong case can be made for calling perspective transformation the central process of adult development.

Numerous studies (see Taylor, 2000) offer support for the *outcome* of transformational learning being developmental. What has yet to be studied is the question of whether one must already be at a certain level of development—and in particular of cognitive development—to experience transformational learning. My questions center on two notions integral to transformational learning: critical reflection, and rational discourse.

Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is key to transformational learning. Mezirow (1991) differentiates among three types of reflection, only one of which, premise reflection, can lead to transformative learning. Content reflection is thinking about the actual experience itself; process reflection is thinking how to handle the experience; and premise reflection involves examining long-held, socially constructed assumptions, beliefs, and values about the experience or problem. Brookfield (2000) further defines critical reflection as “some sort of power analysis” involving “hegemonic assumptions” (p.126). For Brookfield, “an act of learning can be called transformative only if it involves a fundamental questioning and reordering of how one thinks or acts” (p. 139).

Critical reflection assumes a certain level of cognitive development, most likely a level of post-formal thought. Depending upon which model of cognitive development one finds useful, whether it be Piaget’s, Kitchener and King’s, Perry’s, Belenky et al.’s, or Kegan’s, all assume levels, stages, or positions of cognitive or epistemological development. And being able to critically reflect upon fundamental assumptions requires one to be at the more “developed” stages of cognitive development. Yet studies using these models have found that many adults do not operate at higher levels of cognitive functioning. For example, studies based on Piaget’s model reveal that “perhaps half of adults think at the formal operations level” (Bee, 2000, p. 145). Further, findings using Perry’s schema with adults suggest some connection between higher intellectual development and both level of education (Wilson, 1996) and self-directedness (Kasworm, 1983). In Belenky et al.’s study (1986), half the participants were in the category of “subjective knowledge,” the third perspective out of five.

One can also consider critical reflection in terms of dialectic or postformal models of cognitive development. Postformal thought is a socially constructed concept where realities are co-constructed in and from multiple realities. Dialectic thinking allows for acceptance of inherent contradictions and ambiguities, alternative truths and different worldviews. However,

being able to think at this level is often considered the hallmark of mature thinking (Sinnott, 1998). Kramer's (1989) theory, for example, posits seven levels of development from rudimentary dialectic thinking in childhood to mature dialectical thought which "rarely appears before middle age" (p. 151). Likewise, Kegan's (1994) longitudinal research on levels of consciousness with the fourth and fifth stages being dialectical and trans-systems thinking, found most people not reaching even the fourth level until their forties. Basseches (1984) posits that there are four phases to the development of dialectic thought. Only Riegel (1973) eschews Piaget's developmental levels of thinking suggesting that people can operate simultaneously in a dialectic manner at all levels of Piaget's model.

Both cognitive development and transformational learning are "Western" in their focus on individualism and independence. Mezirow (2000, p. 29) writes that "fostering greater autonomy in thinking is both a goal and a method for adult educators," and "achieving greater autonomy in thinking is a product of transformative learning." He also comments that "even partial autonomy requires communicative competence and transformative learning" (p. 25).

Rational Discourse

Another lynchpin of Mezirow's theory is rational discourse where one's new meanings are discussed and evaluated. In rational discourse we "set aside bias, prejudice, and personal concerns...to arrive at a consensus" (1995, p. 53). There are "ideal conditions" for this rational discourse including having complete information, being free from self-deception, being able to evaluate arguments objectively, having an "equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse," and so on (p. 54).

Again, it would seem that this sophisticated level of discourse mandates a certain level of cognitive development on the part of the learner. As Belenky and Stanton (2000, p. 73) comment, "Most adults simply have not developed their capacities for articulating and criticizing the underlying assumptions of their own thinking, nor do they analyze the thinking of others in these ways. Furthermore, many have never had experience with the kinds of reflective discourse that Mezirow prescribes." And in their study of women's epistemological development, those who are "silenced do not have the tools they need for participating in the kind of discourse community Mezirow describes" (p. 83).

Mezirow (2000) himself comments that not everyone can participate in rational discourse. There are "preconditions" of "maturity, education, safety, health, economic security, and emotional intelligence. Hungry, homeless, desperate, threatened, sick, or frightened are less likely to be able to participate effectively in discourse" (p. 15)

A Research Agenda

So, what are we to assume about the possibility of transformational learning in our and our adult students' lives? How "mature" or "cognitively developed" must one be to have a transformational learning experience? How related is level of education, socio-economic class, gender and so on to transformational learning? Are Western (male?) models of cognitive development with its pinnacle of independent, autonomous, critically reflective thought the only place to situate transformational learning? What about "connected knowing," and "interdependence" being the goal of mature thought?

While cognitive development can be seen as an outcome of transformational learning, I would put forth the idea that cognitive development, as manifested in critical reflection and rational discourse, might also be a *prerequisite* for transformational learning. This question is

difficult to study. Short of using some measure of cognitive development correlated with some assessment of an adult's transformational learning experiences, I'm not sure how to test this hypothesis.

There are however, a few studies of transformational learning in which either or both critical reflection and rational discourse have not been present (see Taylor, 2000). Mezirow (2000), himself, says that “transformations may be focused and mindful, involving critical reflection, . . . or of mindless assimilation—as in moving to a different culture and uncritically assimilating its canon, norms, and ways of thinking” (p. 21). “Mindless assimilation” seems quite a different process from the one most associated with Mezirow. Perhaps an alternative is for research to expand the theory of transformational learning to include more “connected,” and affective dimensions on an equal footing with cognitive and rational components.

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Coaching, Questions and Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *As we look to build bridges across contexts and disciplines, the author looks to the emerging discipline of personal and executive coaching for transformative possibilities. Coaching is generally distinguished from teaching, consulting and therapy by focus and relationship between practitioner and client. The central focus of effective coaching is the nature and role of questioning in the coaching process. The emphasis is on assisting the client in effecting significant change. This paper broadly examines the theoretical underpinnings of coaching questions and explores the link to transformative learning at the personal level.*

Keywords: coaching, questions, theory

Coaching as a Distinct Discipline

Witherspoon (in Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas 2002, p. 167) defines coaching as bringing out the best in people, or conveying “a valued person from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be.” Personal or executive coaching can be an individual or group process, face-to-face, conducted by telephone, by email, and, most recently, in short bursts through instant or text messaging.

There has been a rapid growth in the recognition of coaching as a distinct field and a recent movement to look beyond simply offering training in techniques to exploring the theoretical roots of practice. Coaches come from a variety of fields with an equally varied educational background. Their preparation and experience can range from business and health through education, social work and psychology, thus bringing expertise developed in a wide range of areas to this emerging discipline.

James Milojkovic (2003) of Stanford University recently spoke on the need for codifying the theoretical base of this growing field of practice at a national coaching conference entitled “The Future of Coaching”. He identified theoretical links to adult learning theory, applied sports psychology, leadership theory, organizational development theory and areas of psychology including personality, adult development, moral development and psychosocial theory.

Although coaching, consulting, teaching, and therapy have much in common, and use similar processes and skills, including non-judgmental listening, goal-setting, use of silence and demonstration of empathy, Diane Fontenot (2002) makes some clear distinctions. She stresses coaching’s emphasis on future-orientation and on creating a partnership rather than diagnosing and treating or serving as an expert imparting specific knowledge.

Coaching Conversations

Coaching conversations blend a number of different approaches advocated in the adult learning and organizational development literature. They are designed to get at the heart of the matter under discussion in the same way as Argyris’s (1985) action science techniques do, but

bring in, rather than rule out, the emotional context of conversations and meanings. A good coaching conversation is built on the premise that change is not just possible, but is a given, so the nature of the conversation is transformative – designed to move in that direction. It is presumed that the person coming into a coaching relationship has made a decision to change in some profound way.

A coach sets goals with clients and coaches them through the process of goal achievement. This comprises a series of specific tasks or actions that involve skills – i.e. instrumental learning. This learning is filtered through a series of coaching dialogues. These may range from support and encouragement to exploration of underlying assumptions or constructs that may impede goal achievement. Once a goal is achieved, dialogue also supports the acknowledgement of the achievement, insights gained from the achievement. There is a possibility of lasting change and of change that leads to and supports new behaviors. Good coaching uses the individual's actions as a frame for examining mindsets or habits of mind. It is not sufficient for the individual to be successful or to change; to sustain change, he or she needs to understand the underlying dynamic.

The Importance of Questioning in Coaching

Goldberg (1998) states that, “because questions are intrinsically related to action, they are also at the fulcrum of change.” The power of coaching lies in coaching questions. Unlike therapy, these questions are not focused as much on helping individuals understand themselves as to understand themselves in relationship to their world – to understand their thinking, their framing of situations. The emphasis is not on understanding the past but on understanding interactions and ways of operating in the present as a way to plan how to operate in the future. In fact, coaching is less about what happened in the past as it is about examining what is true in the immediate moment, a concept central to Gestalt therapy, reality therapy, and much of cognitive therapy.

Many coaches see their work as contributing to personal transformation. Coaching questions create dialogue and use instrumental learning tasks as a way to bring about or create an environment to bring about transformative learning. Engaging in dialogue around instrumental learning creates an environment for change. If this change leads to a new mindset evidenced in behavioral changes, it might be seen as transformative. Crane (in Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas 2002, p. 118) states that he sees himself as a transformational coach and outlines a credo that includes elements of reframing and reflection.

The Nature of Coaching Questions

The kinds of questions that are most successful in coaching are clarifying questions – similar to those used in action science – set within a framework of the individual's emotions. They are cast in a positive tone, analyzing but not judging. The underlying purpose is to clear up distorted thinking as a way to remove roadblocks – real or imagined – to success as defined by the client.

Coaching questions are often designed to create a reflective situation and examination of beliefs about an issue or situation. There is a continuous process of framing and reframing, as is found in Schön's (1987) reflective practicum. For example, Hargrove (1999, p.24) uses the following questions to engage clients in dialogue:

- What unintended results are you getting?
- How are you contributing to them?

- Where are you stuck in an old pattern?
- How could you look at the problem or solution in a different way?
- What's missing that could make a difference?

Hargrove (1995) says that he drew heavily on Argyris and Schön in the development of his own coaching perspective. He suggests using these questions as a model for clarifying stories from clients. An emphasis is placed on not accepting the client's interpretation at face value – or as the only interpretation – of the situation. He feels that coaching uses triple loop learning – “transforming who people are by creating a shift in people's context or point of view about themselves.” (Hargrove, 1995, p.27)

Learning from Experience

Cell points out that the individual's success in living depends on the ability to learn (successfully) from experience. Each person interprets the information that they take in differently – in fact, as Cell so wonderfully illustrates through Dorothy Canfield's story of her Aunt Minnie, differently throughout the lifespan – adding new or changed meaning based on both circumstances and new knowledge. Cranton (in Mezirow and Associates, p. 181-2) reminds us, “Our frames of reference are complex webs of assumptions, expectations, values, and beliefs that act as a filter or screen through which we view ourselves and the world.” In a similar vein, Hargrove (1995, p. 62) states: “Transformational coaching involves helping people surface, question and reframe their stories when their current stories are disconfirmed or break down.”

It is easy to see how stories and clarification are central to coaching – stories of the past and stories of the real and imagined future. Stories of the past are examined as sources of strength or as blocks. When they are successes, questions help identify action steps likely to lead to future successes. The client must recognize them before he or she is able to replicate them. If the story is about a block, questions are used to probe for alternate interpretations. This process helps the client move from a passive position and from seeing others as solely good or evil and helps them let go and move on.

Kolb (1984 p. 38) feels that “(l)earning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” This process is not the intensive examination of the client's past that is an integral part of many forms of therapy. It is more analogous to the role of left-hand column work in uncovering assumptions. Good coaching moves the client from single-loop to double-loop learning. Hargrove feels that (1995, p.56) “Committed listening is the foundation. It is better to ask questions and listen.”

Bandura (1986) describes the individual's self system as including the ability to symbolize, engage in alternative strategies and engage in self-reflection. He sees the beliefs that people hold about themselves as key elements in determining how they will act. Pajares (1996) points out that this is consistent with a number of other theorists who describe the influence of beliefs as a filter supporting or constraining behavior, citing theorists as varied as Abelson, 1979; Dewey, 1933; James, 1885/1975; and Mead, 1982 (Pajares 1996). This viewpoint is also consistent with Kelly (1963) and Ellis (Ellis and Harper 1975), both of whom see working with the constructs or beliefs that individuals hold as crucial to effecting change.

Further, Bandura recognizes the reciprocal relationship between individual and environment, with the individual as both producer and product of life events and their own social system. The coach intervenes in this process by asking for stories and suggesting alternate interpretations. This process is analogous to that used in many therapies including Kelly's (1963) construct theory, Glasser's (1965) reality therapy or Ellis' Rational-Emotive therapy. One

difference may be the emphasis on the present and on action rather than on better understanding one's past. A similarity to Ellis includes the emphasis on selecting positive outcomes.

The Role and Importance of Feelings in Coaching

Coaching also relies heavily on feelings and intuition related to actual experience pared down to core truths through focused questioning. While theorists including Argyris and Mezirow rely strongly in critical reflection, separated from emotion, as a basis for reframing, Taylor (2001) critiques what he sees as an over-reliance on rationality. He cites several studies that stress the importance of feelings in transformative learning and notes that his own research revealed that some learners "preferred thoughtful action and an experiential approach to learning." (Taylor, 2001)

The importance of maintaining a positive tone

Part of the coaching relationship is the maintenance of a positive outlook. One role of the coach is to applaud the clients' efforts while spurring them on to even greater heights. Hargrove describes it this way: (Hargrove, 1999 p. 106)

a coaching conversation is one in which we coach people into realizing their possibilities, first by believing in them and second by interacting with them in a way that expands their skills and capabilities.

This kind of support promotes learning at a deeper level. Cranton (1994, p. 7) points out that adult learning is often related to individuals' self-concept:

... low self-concept is seen as inhibiting learning, and increased self-concept is described as a product of learning ... this idea that self-concept influences learning appears throughout the literature (Brundage and Meckeracher, 1980; Merriam and Caffarella, 1991; Wlodkowski, 1990).

Finally, Hargrove feels that (Hargrove 1999, p. 57)

To have an empowered coaching relationship, the coach must recognize that people have the inherent creativity, intelligence and tacit knowledge that they need to succeed but may need help in gaining access to it.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The learning processes in good coaching rely on principles that parallel those identified as the principles of good adult education. The questioning process draws on the work of Argyris and Schön. The conditions of good coaching replicate those of Schön's reflective practicum. Finally, coaching centers around learning from experience.

The processes involved in coaching – listening and questioning – remain under-explored. While much has been written from a skills-based or commercial perspective, the scholarly literature on coaching is all but nonexistent. The few citations to be found in journals focus on executive coaching. Although these roots have yet to be fully explored, it would appear that coaching theory, as it emerges, will draw heavily on adult learning theory and workplace learning theory as well as psychology. There is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that

transformative learning theory will strongly influence the field of coaching, but no solid research to make the connection.

To date, a handful of doctoral students are studying aspects of coaching, creating the hope of exciting contributions in the next few years. The nature of the relationship between coach and client has yet to be fully explored. The extensive use of telephone conversations between two individuals who may never meet face-to-face merits as intensive a research focus as does the use of the internet as a teaching medium. This paper suggests only a few of many possibilities for creating the theoretical underpinnings for the emerging discipline of coaching and serves as a call for scholarship in this area.

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Epistemology of Transformative Learning

Jack Mezirow

Abstract: *This paper briefly examines the metacognitive process of transformative learning by which we critically assess taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations that support our beliefs, feelings and judgments and validate new meaning perspectives.*

Keywords: Transformative learning, Frames of reference, Epistemology, Metacognition, Rationality

“ . . . ‘[R]ational action’ on the common-sense level is always action within an unquestioned and undetermined frame of constructs of courses of action and personalities involved and taken for granted by the fellow-man. From this frame of constructs, forming their undetermined horizon, merely particular sets of elements stand out which are clearly and distinctly determinable. To these elements refers the common-sense concept of “rationality.”

Alfred Schultz (1967, 13-14)

Transformative learning may be understood as the epistemology of how adults learn to think for themselves rather than act upon the assimilated beliefs, values, feelings and judgments of others. An epistemology of evidential rationality involves reasoning—advancing and assessing reasons for making a judgment. Central to this process is critical reflection on assumptions and critical-dialectical discourse. Influences like power and influence, ideology, race, class and gender differences, cosmology and other interests may pertain. However, these influences may be rationally assessed.

Rationality is embodied in evolving traditions that hold that issues are resolved by reference to reasons, the governing principles of which evolve and change. As these traditions evolve, so do principles which define and assess reasons. Principles which define reasons and determine their force may change, but rationality remains the same—judgment and action in accord with reason, (Siegal, 1988, 135)

Our experiences of persons, things and events become realities as we typify them. This process has much to do with how we come to associate our experiences with our personal need for justification, validity and a convincing real sense of self. Expectations may be of events or of beliefs pertaining to one’s own involuntary reactions to events—how one subjectively expects to be able to cope. Our expectations powerfully affect how we construe experience; they tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies. We have a proclivity for categorical judgment.

The process by which we tacitly construe our beliefs may involve taken-for-granted values, stereotyping, highly selective attention, limited comprehension, projection, rationalization, minimizing, or denial. That is why we need to be able to critically assess and validate the assumptions supporting our own beliefs and expectations and those of others.

Learning to decide more insightfully for oneself what is right, good and beautiful is centrally concerned with bringing into awareness and negotiating one’s own purposes, values, beliefs, feelings, dispositions and judgments rather than acting on those of others. If our human sense of freedom is associated with reflection and the self-modifying power of thought, then central is the process by which we assess or reassess the reasons supporting the way we think, feel and act, validate resulting transformations in perspective, and take action to implement them.

This requires that we understand how and why we, and others who communicate with us, have acquired our orienting habits of mind and resulting points of view and the nature of the tacit assumptions that support them.

Transformative Learning—a Summary

Adults:

- A. cannot fully trust what they know or believe because there are no fixed truths and circumstances change. Yet we urgently need to understand the meaning of our experience. To do so, we engage in deliberate learning—using prior interpretations to construe a new or revised experience as a guide to future action. We may also engage in incidental and assimilative learning.
- B. make meaning of their experience by imaginatively projecting value-laden symbolic models - images and conditioned affective responses—to interpret through analogy. This process operates tacitly through our acquired *frames of reference*—mindsets of orienting assumptions and expectations—predispositions with cognitive, affective and conative dimensions. Frames of reference include our values, affective dispositions, moral and aesthetic preferences, paradigms, learning preferences and sense of self. They involve orienting *habits of mind* and resulting *points of view*. They shape, delimit, and often distort the way we make meaning of our experience. Frames of reference are derived from the culture, language, and the idiosyncrasies of principal care givers.
- C. are intrasubjective—accepting others as agents with interpretations of their experiences that may prove true or justified.
- D. search for more dependable beliefs and understandings—those producing interpretations and opinions that are more true or justified—by assessing the intentions, experience and character of others communicating with us, and by becoming critically reflective about the assumptions supporting the beliefs, values, feelings, and judgments of those others, as well as about their own.
- E. validate contested beliefs pertaining to *instrumental learning* by empirically testing to ascertain whether an assertion is as it is purported to be—a truth claim. Instrumental learning involves controlling or managing the environment, improving performance or prediction.
- F. validate contested beliefs pertaining to *communicative learning* through discourse. Communicative learning involves understanding what others mean when they communicate with us. *Discourse* is that type of dialogue in which we participate with others whom we believe to be informed, objective and rational to assess reasons that justify problematic beliefs. Discourse leads to a best tentative judgment that is always subject to new insights, perspectives, evidence or arguments. The quality of this assessment is, itself, enhanced through free, full participation in a continuing discourse involving critical reflection on assumptions with an increasingly broad and more diverse group of informed and open minded participants having the widest range of views possible.

- G. participate more freely and fully in discourse when they:
1. have more accurate and complete information,
 2. are freer from coercion and distorting self deceptions,
 3. are more open to alternative points of view—empathic and caring about how others think and feel,
 4. are better able to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively,
 5. are able to become more aware of the context of ideas and critically reflective of assumptions, including their own,
 6. have more equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse,
 7. are more willing 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, then subsequently validated through discourse as yielding a better judgment.

These ideal conditions of discourse also represent ideal conditions of adult learning and adult education. As such, they constitute an epistemic grounding for a philosophical commitment to social and cultural action by adult educators.

- H. may transform their taken-for-granted frames of reference—when they become problematic—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally able to change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

Within this context, mindful transformative learning about a change of belief involves:

1. recognition that an alternative way of understanding may provide new insight into a problem,
2. context awareness of the sources, nature and consequences of the *old* belief,
3. critical reflection on its supporting assumptions,
4. validating the *new* belief by an empirical test of the truth of its claims, when feasible, or by a continuing discursive assessment of its justification in order to arrive at a tentative best judgment and,
5. taking action on the validated new belief.

The process of change just described enhances one's *disposition* for making meaning through transformative learning. Critical reflection, then, may involve intuition or discernment. Transformative learning may also be mindlessly assimilative.

- I. may have transformations that are *epochal* or *incremental*. And, these transformations may involve *objective* (task oriented) or *subjective* (self-reflective) *reframing*. In objective reframing, points of view are transformed when we become critically reflective on the *content* of a problem, or on the *process* of problem solving. *Habits of*

- mind* are transformed when we become critically reflective on the *premise* of the problem.
- J. when engaged in subjective reframing, often require the support of others, a positive self-concept and freedom from immobilizing anxiety. The transformative process occurs across the following phases in the clarification 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; and
 10. a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.
- K. are expected, as participants in a democracy, to be able to reflectively negotiate our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than to simply act upon those of others. The goal of adult education is to assist learners to more fully realize their capability for autonomous thought while pursuing their own learning objectives. Learner objectives may be personal, occupational, or involve collective social action; they may be to earn a higher education degree, learn a language, gain self-confidence, influence public policy, teach a child to read, keep intellectually active—among many other accomplishments.
- L. as educators concerned with transformative learning, assist learners to understand why they think, feel and believe as they do by:
1. critically assessing the validity of their own assumptions and those of others;
 2. analyzing and assessing the source, nature and consequences of assumptions;
 3. empathizing and providing emotional support for others to engage in transformative learning;
 4. learning to participate more fully and effectively in reflective discourse to assess the reasons for a belief or perspective;
 5. anticipating the consequences of acting upon a transformed perspective and planning effective action; and
 6. developing the disposition to think critically, assess one's own assumptions, and those of others, participate fully and freely in reflective discourse, and engage in cultural or social action to improve the conditions necessary to encourage adult learners to share these insights.

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Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Recognizing and Understanding the Power of Unchecked Biases and Assumptions

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Abstract: *How do we recognize long held assumptions and biases in ourselves? How can we, as educators, help others to question those “taken for granted frames of reference (habits of mind or mindsets)” so vital in the process of transformational learning? This interactive session that will engage participants in teaching activities will address these questions directly. It has been used to facilitate recognition and understanding of biases and assumptions that can lead to a transformation of perspectives. This teaching activity brings many “Ahas!” from every group of learners I have employed it in over the past three years. I feel as though I literally see light bulbs switching on in people’s head through their active participation. The activity is very powerful, yet fun, but even more important it provides a safe environment for people to begin to recognize the deeply imbedded assumptions and biases that we all hold. As Robert Kegan says in his well known story of the mother and son, “It’s so hard to get out of the comfortable bedrooms of our own perspectives!”*

Keywords: biases and assumptions, perspective transformation, teaching strategies

This descriptive paper addresses the conceptual framework and methodologies of the innovative session involving two teaching strategies to facilitate understanding and recognition of assumptions and biases. In the session the author will share suggestions for the adaptation of these ideas for potential teaching applications in a variety of instructional settings (high-school, college, workplace, university) and how this innovation and topic has advanced her own understanding of how educators can trigger the transformative learning process in others.

Introduction: Transformative Learning and Adult Education

Transformative learning is considered to be of a constructivist philosophy, person oriented, and emancipatory (Cranton, 1994). It is constructivist because it builds upon the experiences and contextual factors of the learner. It is person oriented because it takes into account the needs, interests, and experiences of the learner. It is emancipatory because it is consciousness raising and liberating with an objective toward individual and social change. If one of the important goals of education is to provide the means for changing society and individuals (Apps, 1973; Lawson, 1979), then facilitating transformative learning ought to be a critical objective of adult education in general and higher education in particular (Cranton, 1994; Schmuck, 1988).

It is important to recognize that in a session of this nature that not all learning is meant to be transformative and to understand how that in practice, a mixture of these orientations could and often do occur (Cranton, 1994). Categorizing education into various groups or orientations can be helpful in organizing information and piecing together a number of related ideas. However, it can also hinder the tremendous benefits that may result from inter-relating various components of a variety of alternative philosophies of education.

The conceptual framework for this innovative session, therefore, is rooted in the work of Habermas (1971), a communicative theorist, who identified three domains of learning: the

technical (empirical knowledge governed by technical rules), the practical (social norms), and the emancipatory (self-knowledge and self-reflection), (as cited in Cranton, 1994, p. 24). In 1985, Mezirow (1985a) drew further on Habermas' (1971) work and related the process of self-directed learning to perspective transformation, which led to a critical theory of self-directed learning (Mezirow, 1985b). During this period, he defined meaning perspectives, meaning schemes, and psychological assumptions and discussed the different types of distortions that can cloud meaning perspectives.

Mezirow's (1991) meaning schemes are the subunits of meaning perspectives and include "specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgements, and feeling that constitute interpretations of experience" (pp. 5-6). Mezirow and Associates' (1990) meaning perspective involve "a collection of meaning schemes made up of higher-order schemata and evaluations" (p. 2). They comprise the particular frame of reference from which to view both the world and one's self. Meaning perspectives have two dimensions, which according to (Mezirow, 1997) are made up of *habits of mind and point of view*. These two components are the habitual way in which things are done (which are highly influenced by an individual's context) and the way in which the habits of mind are expressed. Mezirow (1991) introduced transformative learning "as an explanation for change in meaning structures that evolves in two domains of learning based on the epistemology of Habermas' communicative theory" (cited in Taylor, 1998, p. 5). The first, instrumental learning is related to Habermas' technical knowledge, which is seen as being based on positivism. The second, communicative learning is related to Habermas' practical knowledge, which is seen as being based on constructivism.

Purpose of the Innovative Session Related to Transformative Learning

The purpose of this innovative session is to engage participants in what Mezirow (1995) describes as three common themes in his theory of transformative learning: (1) the centrality of experience, (2) critical reflection, and (3) rational discourse. These themes are emphasized as being both necessary and central to learning. The learner's experience is the starting point from which critical reflection and rational discourse can occur (Tennant, 1991). Critical reflection occurs as a result of questioning one's assumptions and beliefs. This can involve questions involving instrumental learning through a *critical reflection of assumptions* (such as focusing on critiquing a map or text) but also can involve a deeper subjective reframing of self through a *critical self-reflection of assumptions* (such as focusing on one's cultural limitations) (Mezirow, 1998). Taylor (1998) suggests that transformative learning consists primarily of the process of a critical reflection of assumptions, such as "habits of mind based on logical, ethical, ideological, social, economic, political, ecological, or spiritual aspects of experience" (p. 9).

This session will accomplish three main objectives. First, the main focus will be on the maps of Bangladesh activity itself described in more detail below. Participants will come away from this session with a deeper understanding of their own deeply held assumptions and biases. The purpose of the activity is to awaken this sleeping giant within each of us; by this I mean our assumptions and biases. Second, I will share results of my cumulative work using this activity over the past three years with over 1000 people in transformative learning and critical thinking workshops. Finally, I will both model and explain strategies in which adult educators can use this activity and others like it to trigger or facilitate transformation learning for students. Questioning techniques and guided reflection will play a significant role in this objective. I will provide a summary of transferable "points to ponder" resulting from our learning through the maps of Bangladesh activity.

Methodology

First Activity: BioPoem

Participants will fill out the handout entitled “BioPoem”, a creative writing technique adapted from Gere (1985, as cited in Bean, 1996, p.110). I start out by reading my own biopoem out loud and then asking one or two other volunteers willing to share with the larger group. I believe it is essential that the facilitator/instructor be the first to read their bio-poem. This provides a model of shared risk, so necessary to provide a safe learning environment (Mindorff, 2000). The bio-poem accomplishes a number of other things as well. First, it provides a bridge-in to the topic of understanding biases and assumptions by creating a fun, yet informal way for individuals to reflect on their lives and what they value and believe. It helps instructors to get to know a few things about their audience in a very short period of time and vice versa and also helps students to get to know one another better. I refer back to the bio-poem later in the workshop to talk about the different lenses that people use to look at life. The biopoem is a nice way to help students examine themselves in the “appraisal stage” of critical thinking that Brookfield (1987) discusses and provides a nice platform for engaging in reflective practice (Schon, 1983; Schön, 1987).

Second Activity: Maps of Bangladesh Activity

The main activity of this workshop is what I call the “Maps of Bangladesh” activity. I was first exposed to these maps as part of an Environmental Science course on participatory development illustrating the different ways the same village can be viewed by different individuals. I have developed the maps of Bangladesh into a learner centered activity intended to help students to surface and examine their own assumptions, biases and beliefs. Participants are given three maps of a village in Bangladesh drawn by different inhabitants of the village. The old men of the village drew one of the maps, the young men of the village drew one map, and the women of the village drew one map. The task for the participants is to determine who drew which map and give their reasons why.

Participants must first do this activity on their own and then are put into groups of about five where they write out on overhead transparencies their group results. During the process of recording their individual responses on the transparencies, individuals have an opportunity to really share their various perspectives and provide reasons for their answers. This critical discourse allows students to realize that other people in their group may have the same answer as they do but for completely different reasons. Also, they find that others may have a totally different answer than they do but for the same reasons. What is significant is that everyone starts to consider (sometimes for the first time!) how and why they think the way they do and what influences their particular perspective. Once students have accomplished this group work, an opportunity is given for them to share their results with the larger whole group. (The number of groups who share is sometimes limited due to time constraints of the workshop)

It is vitally important that adult educators model some of the ways to provide a safe critique and probe at unchecked biases and assumptions when each group has finished presenting their findings. It becomes fun when the class is able to pick out other people’s assumptions and biases.

Third Activity: Connecting the group’s work to my larger study and providing points to ponder

I will pull together collective learning through this activity by making connections to my 3 years of cumulative research and experience using the maps of Bangladesh activity with a wide

variety of audiences and providing a list of “points to ponder”. These suggested points can be used as a guide in becoming more skilled as a “critical helper” (Brookfield, 1987, p.4) to awaken the sleeping giant of unchecked biases and assumptions. They can also be adapted to fit other teaching activities or strategies that allow for multiple perspectives to be acknowledged such as those related to the maps of Bangladesh activity.

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The Catholic Church in Crisis: Will transformative learning lead to social change through the uncovering of emotion?

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Abstract: *A considerable number of people world wide, who had the right to expect care within institutions and from religious people within the Catholic Church, have experienced abuse instead. Healing for victims and reconciliation with church organisations have sometimes occurred in personal meetings between victims and leaders representing the perpetrators. In these crucial exchanges, transformative learning that is founded on the participants' naming the emotionality they experience, exchanging it and sustaining it through the meeting is evident. Yet, the place of emotion in adult learning has usually been ignored if not dismissed as having no significance. Recent neurological studies of the processes of knowing have shown that emotion is present in learning. The part that emotion plays as a dimension of transformative learning still needs to be articulated. This study to uncover emotion in learning exchanges provides a context for exploring the ways that emotion affects processes of personal and social transformation.*

Keywords: emotion in transformative learning, child abuse, Catholic church

Introduction

Over the past fifteen years there has been a large increase in the number of complaints received by the Catholic Church, world-wide, that children and young adults were cruelly treated during their time as students or guests of church organizations (McGillion, 2003). In particular, victims of clergy and women religious have made widespread allegations of sexual abuse, torture, physical punishment, emotional and spiritual abuses. This has resulted in priests and religious being jailed. There are a wide variety of perspectives and agendas about this issue. There also appear to be various stages that churches, groups and individuals go through, in dealing with the matter at hand.

What seems to be missing from this discussion is the matter of how the symbolic leaders of churches and religious congregations learn to best face up to, deal with, accept, manage, and enact organizational and social change as an outcome of serious complaints. Little progress seems to have been made overall in how this serious dilemma is viewed, thought about, felt and acted upon. As each wave of new allegations is brought forward, world wide, millions of dollars pass hands in many countries by way of compensation, and more and more church members, as well as the general public, are shocked at the little they are actually told. There appears to be an ongoing power base which has not been attended to. This power base appears invisible and almost non-existent, but it is at the core of this very serious moment in the history of the church.

While there are numerous educational events which purport to “train” people to deal with the complex dilemmas at hand, (seminars, conferences, summer schools and in-house learning from church based “experts”), little application of learning theory seems to have been thought about or applied. In particular, aspects of transformative learning do not appear on the learning agendas of these forums. Yet, change is being demanded from many of stakeholders involved in this crisis: victims and their families, leaders of churches and religious congregations, the media, lawyers, churchgoers, and the general public. While some might argue that the ‘crisis’ will go away, and might pass quickly, there are obvious signs of this not being a reality (Allen, 2003).

Many people in different parts of the Catholic Church remain silent and in a state of denial, refusing to engage with victims or with one another in serious, open discussion. They are unable to construct a language together, a dialogue, as a means to begin to understand what this

time in history means for society in general. The way in which this dilemma might become a learning opportunity for all, leading to social change, is not apparent to them.

Uncovering Emotion in Crucial Learning Exchanges

Propositions

It is my contention in this paper that when emotion is uncovered and properly engaged in during crucial learning exchanges, such as when a victim of child abuse meets with the representative of the perpetrators of their abuse, it is likely that social change begins to take place. Further, the naming, exchanging and sustaining of emotion between individuals, or between groups, during such raw moments of learning, can lead to substantive healing. Critical to the crucial transactions in this learning process are the factors that contribute to, create and sustain emotionality in learning. The nature of emotion and its contribution to learning in these crucial situations is, therefore, of acute importance.

The Role of Emotion in Learning

More and more interest in the role of emotion in education is today taking place. However, it remains largely unexamined and certainly undervalued in adult education literature. It is conceded that emotions can be powerful in encouraging and inhibiting effective learning, but educational research and models of learning have only just begun to shed light on the interrelationships between emotions and learning (Ingleton, 1999). Even theories of emotion have been accorded scant attention until recently (Barbalet, 1998), due in no small part to the legacy of dualism, which has opposed reason to emotion (Damasio, 1994). This neglect of a full appreciation of emotion is also due, in part, to the domination of cognitive psychology within educational research until the past two decades, and the difficulty in capturing the emotional components of learning for research purposes (Damasio, 1995). Recent work on the theory of emotion by sociologist J. M. Barbalet (1998) is useful in foregrounding the emotional context of learning. Significantly, he and others such as Scheff (1997) characterize emotion as comprising both cognitive and dispositional elements. States of emotion include decision-making and a disposition to act, so emotion has elements of reason and action as well as of feeling. Emotion in adult learning can no longer be discounted as a synonym for irrationality.

Emotion, Learning and Neurological Functioning

Since the development of techniques which allow for non-invasive monitoring of brain functioning, it has become possible to construct a much clearer understanding of how the brain functions (Haberlandt, 1998). This research has led to a greater understanding of which areas of the brain are involved in learning, thinking and emotionality. Some of the important and relevant insights from this research include the findings that the whole of the brain, including the 'lower brain', contributes to learning (Lynch, 1999). It can now be understood that emotion, personal interpretation, and varying levels of consciousness, are involved in constructing meaning as well as memory. The fact that there is a neurological explanation, which outlines the involvement of emotion in the learning transaction as being legitimate and valid, adds strength to the proposition in this paper that there is still more to be understood about the role that emotion plays in crucial learning exchanges.

Neurological research findings include the conclusion that any thought process, or learning experience, involves multiple sources of information, including information from different sensory modes (Bergegnheim, et. al., 1996). All of these neurological processes involve different chemical neurotransmitters, each of which carries a unique form of instructions

(Schwartz, 1995). At least some of these neurotransmitters carry messages of emotion, awareness, and/or intention, which become inextricably linked with the information. For eg., incoming stimuli are thought to be subjected to an emotional evaluation, which contributes to, but is separate from, the conscious awareness of emotion (Reiman, Lane, Ahern, Schartz, & Davidson, 1996). Again, emotional arousal is considered critical for enhanced conscious memory (Cahill, 1999). Arousal, intent, and associated with this, a sense of self, are recognised as integral components of learning, memory and thought (Penrose, 1994). Finally, the response(s) to incoming messages depends on the person's interpretations, which are in turn influenced by their understanding of the context, plus their expectations (Kandel & Kupfermann, 1995).

These neurological findings are of critical importance to us as educators. Emotionality is present in learning, whether it is acknowledged or not. Emotion is not the handmaiden of the rational. Emotion is a legitimate phenomenon which exists in different message systems: this does not vary with age, race, or gender (Kandel, 1995). What does vary is the meaning that each individual makes of those neurological signals, especially when there is emotional content.

Emotion, Learning and Memory

There is no such thing as a behaviour or thought, which is not impacted in some way by emotions. There are no neurotransmitters for 'objectivity'; rather even the simplest responses to information signals are linked with possibly several 'emotional' neurotransmitters (Haberlandt, 1998). Because the neurotransmitters, which carry messages of emotion, are integrally linked with the information, during both the initial processing and the linking with information from the different senses, it becomes clear that there is no thought, memory, or knowledge which is 'objective', or 'detached' from the personal experience of knowing.

To challenge traditional, 'scientific' assumptions even more strongly, the evidence that a great deal of this processing occurs at a pre-conscious or sub-conscious level suggests that the learner/knower is unaware of these embedded messages and therefore cannot access them in an explicit way. For example, a person who has had a negative experience in a particular context (school, orphanage, institution) may know that they are reluctant – feel anxiety – to re-enter that context, but not know why. Such a reaction is not logical or rational, therefore, but is an integral part of the meaning of this situation for that person. So, although the significance of emotionality in knowing and learning has for years suffered from being typecast as irrational, and therefore has been dismissed, it now appears, through this recent neuropsychological research, that it is both important and eminently rational. Emotion cannot and should not be dismissed from having an important part in learning exchanges.

Emotion in Crucial Learning Exchanges

Crucial learning exchanges happen frequently. In these contexts, the learning is crucial because a great deal is at stake: personal and organizational integrity, physical survival and even hope. Socially significant and meaningful learning is fundamentally grounded in, and derives from, the adult's emotional connection with the self and the broader social world. The meanings we attribute to emotionality reflect particular socio-cultural and psychic contexts in which they arise. This process of meaning making, however, is essentially extra-rational, rather than merely reflective and rational. Emotionally charged images, story telling, recounts, conversations, processes which are evoked through the contexts of adult learning in everyday life, provide the opportunity for a more profound access to the world by inviting a deeper understanding of ourselves in relationship with it. Through emotionally charged images, individuals and organisations potentially express and connect with this deeper reality. Emotions can be

interpreted as “messengers of the soul” (Dirkx, 1997) seeking to inform us of deeply personal, meaningful connections that are being made within an experience, perhaps out of our awareness. Thus, emotions are integral to the process of meaning making, to the ways we experience and make sense of ourselves (Campbell, 1997) as well as **to** our relationships with others and with the world (Goleman, 1995). Emotions help us connect the inner dynamics of the self with the outer objects of our world and allow room for engagement in a new way of thinking or being.

The “text” in adult learning (broadly understood to include print, speech, visual cues, engaging in conversations, story telling and so on) often evokes emotionally charged images. Images evoked by texts are not merely constructions of our conscious, cognitive egos. **Nor are** emotionally charged images under wilful control of the ego. Rather, they appear spontaneously within the learning process. They arrive as they choose, and one cannot predict them. **Our** active engagement and dialogue with our emotions is transformative, particularly when imagination is called into play (Clark, 1997; Nelson, 1997). Imagination helps us connect **with** and establish a relationship **to** this powerful, non-egoic aspect of our being (Moore, 1992). By becoming aware of our emotions and feelings, we connect with inner forces **that** populate our psyche. Entering into a conscious dialogue with emotions creates opportunity for deeper meaning and potentially more satisfying relationships with our world. **It** opens the possibility for social change.

By approaching potentially emotionally charged experiences transformatively, rather than merely conceptually, learners locate and construct, through enduring themes, images and motifs, deep meaning, value, and quality in relationship between the text and their own life experiences.

Emotion and the Church in Crisis

The Importance of Emotion in Difficult Discussions

When the representatives of perpetrators of child cruelty and abuse engage in personal communication with victims, emotion is rightly a significant aspect of this crucial exchange. Learning can take place inside those exchanges when emotion is named as being present and important to the conversation. This clears the way for dialogue. When emotion is named and then exchanged by both parties, a powerful change in meaning making can begin to take place. When emotionality is viewed as an ally of learning during such crucial exchanges, transformative learning can begin to take shape in a way rarely seen before in these situations. The work of Archbishop Tutu, in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, is one public example of such a crucial exchange, where emotion was indeed welcomed into the learning exchange and witnessed by so many.

Uncovering Emotion through the Pastoral Process

The Pastoral Process engaged in by the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God in Australia and New Zealand since 2001 is another example of this exchange. In this latter example, the leader of this religious congregation has received over one hundred complaints of child cruelty, including shocking recounts by victims of sexual and physical abuse. Many of these complaints come from male victims who are intellectually challenged to a greater or lesser extent. Some cannot speak well and most cannot read or write. The Leader, representing the paedophiles who allegedly attacked these men when they were children, meets with each victim and his or her advocates, at a neutral place. At these crucial meetings, emotion is regularly named by all participants. Having sat through hundreds of such meetings, I have noticed that when very strong emotions are named, exchanged and sustained an engagement takes place in the conversation, during which meaning making can begin to happen in a demonstrably dramatic way.

The integrity of persons from both ‘sides’ naming their very strong emotions of shock, disgust, hatred, feelings of revenge, confusion, trauma and sadness, can lead to a new energy for both. What is sustained is the experience that transpires and transforms, because both parties concur with the emotionality which is present. In many such exchanges, the development of an alternative way of making meaning from what is expressed acts to sustain both parties in a new relationship, in which power can be openly discussed and learned about. The learning for participants from both parties can become transformative.

For the symbolic leader of the religious congregation, the emotions expressed through recounts, silence, and stories of lives broken, bear witness to the horror of child sexual abuse in a clear and non-distorted way. It provides a connection with reality that is not changed by legal language or the text of the media.

The victim, facing the leader of the group to which the paedophile once belonged, or perhaps still does belong, witnesses the disgust of the leader, the voice of outrage, the words congruent with body language which name with integrity the leader’s own emotional response. The response of the leader is often just as strong in its witnessing of what has been heard from the victim. It is a text that holds no fear of reprisal, through which personal power is handed back to the victim, and with it pieces of an often shattered self.

Here, victim and clergyman sit facing one another, facing a powerful memory and experience. The emotionality is sustainable because transformative learning has taken place. The victim now knows, in a different way, that cover-up, protection, secrecy and distortion of the truth is not present here and does not exist between them. The leader knows, and is reminded of it in a very different way, the human tragedy that unfettered power in adults over children can bring. Both break silences equally. Without emotionality, learning and particularly transformative learning, would not take place.

Expressions of Transformative Learning

One text, out of hundreds that I have witnessed, names more simply the reality that emotion in learning is a legitimate and transformative action, without which we are limited in our endeavours as educators, no matter what the educational setting. A transcript of a taped message written by one such victim having taken place in the pastoral process; it speaks for itself:

I never knew that the Brothers knew that what they did to me was not all right. I never knew that they would care. I was sent to that School to learn to read and write. Instead, I learned to peel potatoes and to have sex. I never knew that those Brothers now even thought about me and I never knew that they hurt about it as much as me, until they met me. They never judged me.

For the first time ever I feel believed. Now I want to get my life straightened. I want to get off the streets. I want to stay out of jail. Now I know that they are hurting about this, about what happened to me, even though most of them were not even at the school when I was there, that makes all the difference. They are helping me through a rehab program. They have rented me a house. But the most important thing is that they gave me back something that was taken away from me – my self. I know I can never be the same again, but now I understand that because they had the guts to meet me, to listen to me, and to believe me, I can start to believe in myself once more.

Safe, emotional knowing and processing can take its place alongside many aspects of transformative learning as a partner in the process of social change. Through the process of naming, exchanging and sustaining emotion in crucial learning exchanges, core understandings of the nature of the ‘crisis’ in the Catholic Church can begin to be more fully understood. When individuals and groups can be encouraged to uncover the emotional impact of perspectives and meanings, and to blend this information with other ways of knowing, a more holistic transformative paradigm might be embraced. Such learning is highly transferable into a variety of organisational dilemmas where the very heart of the matter at hand continues to be denied or ignored, and where power consciously or unconsciously is at the centre of the dispute. By bringing to consciousness, the emotions that already exist inside a presenting crisis, particularly through crucial learning exchanges, it is highly likely that people, paradigms and systems can change for the better.

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Innovative Session: Transformative Learning in Action

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Abstract: *In a learning circle similar to that used amongst indigenous peoples, women will talk and share creatively their experiences of what has fostered their own capacities to become more indigenous to their own particular bodies, peoples and places. Some core understandings from a participatory worldview and participatory ways of knowing will be modeled by animators from differing backgrounds. What disrupts and fragments women’s participatory consciousness of themselves as indigenous members of Earth community will also be honoured in the circle though the focus will be on what has been transformative.*

Key Words: Women, Indigenous, Communal Learning

Session Description;

Women from varying indigenous traditions will participate in this learning circle, with the recognition that we are all indigenous members of Earth community. From their different peoples’, places and experiences, the animators will open this process of talking together though the tentative agenda will be developed further together with participants.

One animator is an Northern Irish-born and Celtic identified psychotherapist, community educator and artist. Her doctoral project draws on art as well as transformative learning, feminist, critical and indigenous literatures to propose an understanding of s/Self and of consciousness that is participatory, i.e. co-constituting and deeply ecologically relational, evolving and transforming in multi-local contexts of person, family, communities of identity, peoples and place.

Another animator is a mother, community worker and educator of Anishinaabe, Scottish and English ancestry whose research explores the area of trauma in Indigenous workplaces. She is a member of Manitou Rapids of the Rainy River First Nations in Northwestern Ontario, Canada. In many indigenous traditions, including the Celtic, the circle is a familiar way to talk deeply and equitably about matters important to the community present.

In terms of process, each participant will speak from her own place, peoples and embodied experiences. In the limited time available, we will try to share some sense of what fosters and what disrupts our sense of participatory consciousness, of being indigenous to our bodies as women, as members of our particular peoples and as members of Earth community at this particular time in history. Stories are important here. Most important will be our respectful, authentic and embodied presence with each other. In talking of how we foster participatory consciousness in the circle, we will set guidelines around confidentiality, around honouring what

is said and speaking from our own selves rather than commenting on others experiences. Given the time and space constraints, we will focus on what has supported us in surviving and increasing our capacities in order to be in this place. Because we cannot do so without acknowledging the historical circumstances, events, persons and ways of being that fragment, split or subvert our participatory consciousness such as trauma on personal, cultural and environmental levels, we will suggest a way of honouring this shadow side, the knowledge of what we transform from. Creative means of sharing information will be encouraged. You can draw, dance, sing or story your experiences, for example. There will be time for self-reflection at the end of the session.

As a community of knowledge-makers, we may meet on occasion over the course of the conference. As a community, we may also gather some understandings of the processes and practices moving us towards more participatory consciousness that can be shared with the larger body of the conference at plenary sessions.

Framework of Understanding

The approach and framework of understanding is from a participatory worldview rather than a human learning theory framework. Women and indigenous peoples have been particularly pertinent to the re-emergence of participatory consciousness in our current time.

From very differing perspectives, scholars writing across the philosophies, sciences, and cultural movements within Western history and pre-history, come to three similar core conclusions. Firstly, human physical, spiritual and emotional well-being is in yet another crisis, this time with planetary-wide effects. Secondly, human beings' conscious and unconscious processes, our sciences, values and underlying beliefs for example, are actively participant in both the crisis and in its transformation towards more awareness and more compassionate engagement in the web of life. Thirdly, women's embodied understandings of the transformative cycle of living and their epistemologies, currently marginalized and repressed within mainstream western culture, are central to transforming human consciousness towards more participant living as members of earth community (Goodman 2002; Tarnas 1997; Berry 1988; O'Sullivan 1999).

Women's hold embodied understandings of the participatory in their capacity to bear life, in their connection to lunar cycles and in their assigned responsibilities for nurturance of children, plants, animals and other forms of vulnerable life in patriarchal cultures. Many are also less invested in and attached to dominant knowledge frameworks that marginalize emotional, spiritual, communal and more connected and mutually enlarging forms of knowing. Many women writing in transformative learning see body-mind-spirit knowing, such as that found in art and story, as less colonized by oppressive and hegemonic structures (Ettlting 2001; O'Neill 2003; O'Connor 2002). Coming home to ourselves as participant members of earth community is necessary for planetary, species, peoples, and community healing as well as that at a personal level. I see those of us manifesting self-disruptions and seeking self-transformation as "canaries down the mine". That is, we are evidencing disruptions in the larger ecologies that threaten more than ourselves while offering lifesaving knowledge about what is needed for change. Women's profound embodied knowledge of the fragmentations, traumas and colonisations of human consciousness and their courage in challenging these creatively within systems of domination is a Sacred Fire, holding flames and embers to be shared with others.

To quote John Heron and Peter Reason:

A participatory worldview allows us as human persons to know that we are a part of the whole rather than separated as mind over and against matter, or placed here in the relatively separate creation of a transcendent god.

As such, a participatory worldview:

places us back in relation with a living world—and we note that to be in relation means that we live with the rest of creation as relatives, with all the rights and obligations that implies” (Heron and Reason, 1997, pp. 275, 276).

This sense of mattering in the larger arc of the cosmos, this knowing that we are all participant, active and responsible in shaping the world, is our source of meaning. Despite his exclusionary language, Albert Einstein (1949) captures the problematic and the path towards recovery of this denied deeply relational awareness;

A human being is a part of the whole called by us “the universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affections for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening the circle of understanding and compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. (p.125)

To feel compassion for all that lives and to be reconnected to the whole of the natural world in all its aesthetic and erotic wildness is more than reconnecting with the collective unconscious. Participatory consciousness encompasses our conscious lived awareness of our particular place and moment in the cosmological web of life at multiple levels in continuum with our embodied unconscious. It necessarily moves us towards emancipatory compassion for wholeness in the natural world, in others, and in the s/Self.

All life is interconnected at multiple levels and in ways more relational, less linear and less static than positivistic scientific models. In addition to those knowledges preserved in community praxis amongst indigenous peoples, current theories of complexity, chaos and quantum theory, neurophenomenology for example, all support the shift from dominant scientific models (Capra 2002; Maturana and Varela 1988). We can now recognize that far from the predictability and control touted in modernism and practiced as domination, events are multilocal and so complexly “causal,” that “co-arising” is a more accurate term.

Even at the level of the microcosmos, we now know all life is interconnected equally evolved, that indeed “all life forms are meticulously organized, sophisticated aggregates of evolving microbial life”(Margolis and Sagan, 2001, p. 12). Most significantly, the more powerful changes affecting human and earth life happen through co-operation, not from some competitive form of “survival of the fittest.” “Life forms multiply and complexify by co-opting others, not by killing them” (Margolis and Sagan, 2001, p. 12). In terms of human evolution at personal and social levels of organization, this implies a paradigm shift towards what Catherine Keller (1995) and other feminist philosophers speak of as a “hermeneutics of connection,” i.e., of dialectic spirals of interpretation within the understanding that all things are interconnected. One can also consider this as Earth-honouring, or ecological hermeneutics. Hierarchical and non-ecological assumptions of the world fail to hold this sense of the participatory, leading to disregard and destruction of that which subtends life including the life of the planet itself.

Participatory worldviews are not human-centric. Human beings are as central to earth’s functioning as any other life form, rather than the top of the evolutionary tree. However, we do have extraordinary powers and responsibilities within the web of planetary life, as a community of subjects powerfully participant in its weaving and in its degradation. Currently, human

cultural processes are having devastating effects on earth's biosphere at rates far faster than evolution (Capra 2001). It is our consciousness that shapes our being, our active "participation." Fortunately, we humans are capable of self-reflection and self-transformation, of great creativity as well as great unconsciousness and self destruction.

In this innovative session, animators will model participatory ways of sharing their own experiences of becoming more indigenous in ways that may encourage other participants in this knowledge-making circle to contribute. The learning circle is an experience of creative transformative learning in community that may be inspiring to our work in other adult learning settings.

The tentative agenda to be raised and shaped further by participants is;

- Opening
- Introductions and Guidelines
- Weaving Our Stories
- Creative Explorations of Becoming Indigenous
- Sharing the Shadows
- Final Reflections and Thanksgivings

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Relationships that Grow: Disagreeing as a Site for Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *This study examines ways in which 16 couples in intimate relationships learned from and about themselves and each other when they disagreed. It answered the question: What are the characteristics of the stories couples in long-term, intimate relationships tell that demonstrate learning in or as a result of disagreements. I found five distinct ways in which couples learned. These five ways-- Traditional, Emerging, Developing, Independent and Interdependent-- relate to the levels of consciousness found by Kegan and Torbert to lead to transformative learning.*

Keywords: intimate relationships, disagreeing, transformative learning.

Introduction

Even with a declining national divorce rate, current trends indicate that 40-50% of all marriages will end in divorce (Divorce Reform Page, 2001). One quarter of all American adults who have been married, also have been divorced. Adult children of divorced parents are four times more likely to get divorced themselves than children of couples who have never divorced (Mattox, 1995, p. 2). Given these statistics, and the costs in time, money, and stress of divorce to American families, the ability to resolve disagreements— to learn in and from them— offers a powerful tool for staying married and increasing satisfaction in intimate relationships.

Why do some marriages survive and others do not? Gottman (1994) suggests that couples with successful marriages work hard at resolving conflict. He argues that many of the theories about why some couples divorce— money problems, sexual disagreements, incompatibility, and so on— fail to explain why other equally dissatisfied couples confronting these very same issues do not split up. The real issue, Gottman concludes, is not money or sex or compatibility. The real issue, instead, is whether couples are willing and able to work out their marital differences.

Most or all of the scholarly literature available assumes that disagreements have a negative, or mostly negative, effect on individuals and relationships. Only communications theory, with its dialogic processes and postmodern emphasis on “making” something together in relationships, describes the possibility of treating conflict or disagreements as positive sites for learning. Isaacs (1999), Buber (1958), and Bohm (1996) provide the important caution that this form of talking is about at least the perspective of two people and learning happens in the consideration of both and their relationship. Relationships, Pearce reminds us, are made in conversation (1994, p. 204).

There is little written, however, in any of these literatures about how couples use conflict as a way to learn about themselves and each other, and achieve greater satisfaction in the relationship. Two or more people create disagreements. A shift in either of their perspectives may cause a shift in the meaning they make of their disagreements and their relationship.

Methodology

I gathered and analyzed 16 couples' stories in two-hour interviews. The interview questions examined a) the variance of their experience, beliefs, and values, b) a critical incident representing the theme/story of one significant disagreement, c) their ability to reflect on the disagreement while it is going on, d) the ability to critically self-reflect in the disagreement, and e) the ability to change course in or after the disagreement such that there was a change in self-perception, the relationship, or subsequent disagreements. I chose disagreements as the site for learning due to their upsetting nature. If, as Mezirow states, learning is precipitated by a "disorienting dilemma," disagreements obviously provide that for many people (2000). Using the language of transformative learning in my questions, I could discern whether this kind of learning actually took place in the disagreements of the couples interviewed.

Many experts in conflict management (Fisher & Ury, 1991; Stone, Patton, & Heen, 1999) strive for understanding of the other whether that other is a person, a group, a country, or a philosophical position. But when it comes to resolution of conflict, most accept negotiation toward compromise, accommodation, or at worst the "best alternative to a negotiated agreement" (Fisher & Ury, p. 97). This research looks toward a different paradigm. Difference is not polarized but acknowledged as partial to a more complete understanding of an issue or problem. Perfect understanding is not possible in a world that is changing constantly, so that each person's partial understanding (their story, position or belief) is additive to another, or the other's story, in such a way that together their co-created story approaches completion but never achieves it.

The sixteen couples chose disagreements common to most long-term, intimate relationships: vacation planning, in-laws, pets, household projects, and differing cultures and worldviews. The stories they told about these disagreements showed a wide variation in how they conducted disagreements, such as the conversations they had, the pitch of their voices during the stories of the disagreements, the passionate engagement in some cases and the remoteness or self-editing in others, and the meaning they made of the themes in their stories to me. Bearing in mind the many contexts for these 32 lives prior to our two-hour interview, learning was evident in many of the couples' stories and transformative learning was apparent in several of them. Although I did not expect to find that all of the couples learned from each other during disagreements in a transformative way (Kegan 1982, 1994; Mezirow & Associates, 2000), I expected initially that older couples (nine couples were at or older than age 45) would be more expert at learning, supporting Kegan's findings that transformational learning may be found most often in people older than their mid-40s' (1994).

If a couple could tell their partner's story as additive to their own, and could say how that story had changed the disagreement, them, and their relationship over time, then, according to the definitions for transformative learning, these couples qualified as transformational learners. If they could say what, in the other person's self-narrative, had opened up learning for them, then they were more likely to be open to further learning. There were fewer of these couples than the number of couples who learned in less complex ways from their partners.

Five approaches to learning

A learning continuum, and various approaches to learning along that continuum, emerged from the data. I found that couples I interviewed learned in five ways. I describe these five ways as: Traditional, Emerging, Developing, Independent, and Interdependent (or Transformational).

In the *traditional* learner's worldview there are limited options. In a disagreement, one wins and the other loses. The alternatives, for the Traditional learner, are compromise, where

each gets some of what they want (but not all), or accommodation, where one partner acquiesces to the other for the sake of the relationship.

The *emergent* learner can enter the world of the partner to wrestle with the partner's position. He can put aside his own preferences and worldview long enough to try to understand the preferences and position of his partner. This is a step beyond winning or losing, compromising or accommodating, as the listener has a somewhat broader capability. He wants to know the world of the other, if only to refute it.

The *developing* learner has the ability not only to hear the other's perspective but also to weigh the relative importance of each perspective in a disagreement. The couple may not ultimately agree on the value of a given proposal. One may believe that his solution is a better one, but he is still able to assess the importance of that solution for the well being of the relationship. Resolution may be at the expense of one person's perspective on a one time or occasional basis, or it may be a pervasive way to resolve disagreements.

The *independent* learner not only sees the other's perspective but also can hold both his and his partner's perspective as equally valid, even when they seem to be in opposition. It is at the level of Independent learner that transformation begins to take place.

In several cases the learning described by couples qualified as fully transformational, that is, the learning emancipated one or both in the couple from their former understanding of themselves, the other, the disagreement, and the relationship. These were *interdependent* learners. At least one in the couple told of the ability to reflect on the subject, content or context of the disagreement during the time it occurred, or shortly after it. They also reported thinking about their own speech acts in the disagreement in such a way that they could affect the course of the disagreement. Finally, and most importantly for this research, they could act as observer of their own perspective and their partner's in such a way that their understanding of themselves, their partner and the relationship changed because of this understanding. They described their own perspective as partial, or as one way to see something that had multiple possibilities. They described their partner's perspective with the same respect as their own. Although they said they did not always see their partner's perspective as additive to their own worldview, in the disagreements about which they spoke, they did. They more frequently were aware of the openings to learning in their own and the other's stories and could point to them. They also were more aware of the times when they rejected or ignored the opportunities to learn their partner offered to them.

I found that interdependent/transformational learning was very different from giving in or caving in. It required a strong, healthy self-concept, not a weak one. In order to be able to see the value in another's story one had also to see the value in one's self and one's own story. One had to be able to resist automatic defensiveness, hold one's tongue and give the other time to fully describe her worldview. This required what Buber called "holding the narrow ridge," or listening for possibilities at the same time that one held firm to one's own perspective (1958).

Interdependent/Transformational learners

I found three clear examples of transformational learning in disagreements. The stories of the disagreement of George and Celeste, about their relationship with his mother; of Tom and Betty, about spending time with her family; and of Marvin and Mildred, about each finding personal responsibility for their relationship, all contain at least one experience of seeing the world as their partner and changing as a result.

Marvin and Mildred certainly exemplify Kegan's descriptors of middle-aged, highly conscious interdependent actors in many ways including age. Marvin is 61 and Mildred 56. They have lived rich and complex lives and have, at two points in their relationship, made very intentional choices to be different as individuals for the benefit of the relationship. They have decided who and how they want to be in conversation and are often, as a result of years of practice, game masters in the tension-filled minutes comprising the initiation of a disagreement. When they are not masters, they are often able to retrieve their "personal responsibility" as they describe it, before a disagreement gets out of hand.

Both Betty and Tom were patient and good-humored. They were easily able to balance the interview with their young children's curiosity and needs. They also are making a marriage where their commitment to each other was stated clearly and prominently in their conversations. They were able to listen, to speak for the relationship even when they disagreed strongly. They demonstrated Interdependent learning, Tom by experiencing Betty's loving family from inside her perspective of what family means, and Betty from Tom's calm, disciplined way of conducting himself in their disagreements, helping her to become calm. There was a lot of laughter in the interview. Both Betty and Tom laughed at themselves and at each other with a, "Oh, that's the way we are," kind of lightness.

Celeste and George each have been in therapy at least in part to help understand and navigate the differences in their backgrounds. Celeste understands that her own need for approval gets her into trouble with George's mother. George understands better that his sense of entitlement gets him into trouble in his marriage, and in his own life. They laughed together about these serious things. They were obviously earnest about appreciating the other person's worldview from inside that worldview. When they achieved this ability to see inside the other's perspective, and they both say that isn't all the time, they are Interdependent learners.

While Marvin and Mildred, at 61 and 56, confirm Kegan's assumption about older adults being more capable of complex ways of learning, the two other couples were 33 and 34. They disconfirm Kegan's (1994) assumption. The two 30-something couples clearly demonstrated transformational learning. This finding gives me hope for my own 30-something children and the next generation of leaders of this country. An outcome of this research that is demonstrated by these three couples is that frequent or consistent acceptances of invitations to learning have a positive effect, that they are enabling of growth and greater intimacy. The effect of frequent rejections of those invitations by couples at the Traditional or Emergent level did not have a positive effect.

What separates these three couples from the other 13 is their intention and ability to reflect on the disagreement while it is happening, or shortly thereafter, and their openness to learning from their partners. They reflect on themselves in the disagreement so that they can modify their actions. Finally they put themselves in the place of the other with the purpose of seeing the world through their partner's eyes, so that they see a bigger world than their own experience allows, and that bigger world changes how they see the disagreement. Mildred sees Marvin's world so completely that she can finish his sentences, and make loving fun of his long-windedness. Marvin sees Mildred's desire for intimacy under her bluster. Betty sees Tom's silent, withdrawn father and appreciates his effort to stay present, calm and to reason through their differences. Tom sees Betty's close family world and drinks it in. Celeste knows the "prince" in George's childhood and helps him to be the man he wants to be with her. George sees Celeste's fear of losing him and wants to find a way to simultaneously be a good husband and son.

While many practitioners in marriage and family therapy use postmodern methods of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, Sorenson, Whitney, & Yeager, 2000) and the Coordinated Management of Meaning (Pearce, 2001), scholarship using these perspectives to elucidate marital conflict is much less pervasive than the literature describing what people do that is not effective. The transformational learning literature acknowledges the lack of study of intimate relationships. This study is an alternative way of looking at conflict in intimate relationships, a study that asked, “What are the characteristics of the stories couples in long-term, intimate relationships tell that demonstrate learning in or as a result of disagreements?” and answered that there are five ways described in these stories in which couples learn.

Because of my own personal path, simultaneous with the discovery process with other couples, I suspect that any couple that learns in a transformative way in disagreements has done something to bring their attention to the ways in which they want to be in disagreements: to the words they want to use, to the non-constructive reactions they want to stifle, to the care with which they want to hold the relationship. This ability may have been acquired in many ways, through religious faith, education, direct experience, and intuition. As transformational learning is initially applied, it does not seem to be automatic. What are automatic behaviors are the yelling and the pouting, the defending and the accusations. One applies transformational learning carefully and consciously in disagreements to co-create new and deeper meaning for the self, the other and the relationship.

The theoretical significance of this study is its potential contribution to the extensive literature on conflict management, negotiation, marriage counseling, divorce mediation, psycholinguistics, transformational learning and relationships. This study also enhances the minimal literature about how couples can and do use conflict as a way to learn about themselves and each other. Ultimately, the ways in which couples learned emerged from their own stories much more vividly than from the existing literature.

The practical significance of this study is its potential contribution to knowledge about and skill building in disagreements, with more satisfying outcomes to disagreements for couples and others who disagree. A change in focus in the negotiation/mediation and marriage counseling literatures from models promoting more effective conflict management to models for more effective learning would be a transformation in itself. While the current literatures offer many practical suggestions (Gottman, 1994; Stone, Patton & Heen, 1999) as to how to talk differently in disagreements or conflict, this study offers the potential for how to act differently. Effective talk, then, is an outgrowth of learning.

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The Ecological Terrain of Transformative Learning: A Vision Statment

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Abstract: *This piece defines transformative learning as learning that involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. A shift of consciousness that dramatically alters our way of being in the world, such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body-awarenesses, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. This paper explores some of the parameters of this definition.*

Keywords: survive, critique, create

Introduction

We live in a time of great possibilities and also of grave dangers; both arising from the same capability of our species to pursue effectively, single-mindedly, its goals. Three hundred years of technological advance and extension of our basic physical abilities has resulted in our ability to reach most parts of the globe within twenty-four hours, communicate instantly through cyberspace to go anywhere on the globe, apprehend visually events as they occur around the world within minutes, launch disaster relief in one part of the world from any other part of the world within a day, to walk on the moon and manoeuver in space, provide every child on the earth with vaccines and other medicine that eliminate most life-threatening and debilitating childhood diseases, and produce food on a scale that now can eliminate starvation. And the list of benefits goes on.

At the same time, we are also able to lay waste vast portions of the earth and entire populations with nuclear arms delivered with laser precision from unmanned craft on earth and from space. On a daily basis, manufacturing and refining processes proliferated around the globe also generate toxic wastes that pollute the earth, water and air threatening all species of life on earth including our own. We are creating more garbage than we can dispose of safely. Vast processes of destructive environmental change precipitated by industry and hydrocarbon combustion based transportation are progressing at a rate perceptible to everyone.

Yet our decisions and priorities do not reflect an intention toward life. We are not using our knowledge and technical ability to reverse the dangerous course we seem to be on. The pattern of choices with respect to how we use our technical expertise for what and for who is creating deep resentment and rage that translates into continuous war and terrorism. The capability to produce wealth and material necessities that improve the human condition instead are creating rapidly widening gaps between the rich minority and the poverty-stricken majority. Clearly, traditional science and its applications, the flagship of our modernist civilization, have brought mixed results to the health and well being of the earth (O'Sullivan and Taylor, 2003). As the species at the forefront of the creation of our present perplexities, we are enigma to ourselves and, no doubt if they could speak, all other species. In the midst of our creative capacities, we seem to be griped by powerful forces of ignorance both inside and outside. Alan Clements, in a recent work called the *Instinct for Freedom*, maintains that it is our destiny to master the forces

that move us toward destruction. Noting that our brains are hardwired toward prompt irrationality, rage and violence, he maintains that our destiny is in mastering these primordial forces. We must develop the capability to deprogram the mind of irrationality and volatility reconconfiguring it toward wisdom and goodness. Although these ideals are ancient in origin, the need to cultivate them in our present world is an ambition no longer confined to spiritual or philosophical circles. The profound dangers that accompany the human venture in this moment of history reveal our immense vulnerabilities. As Alan Clements ponders:

The harsh realities of the modern world have shown us how just a few people with hostile fantasies can rain hell down on the multitude. The need to identify the forces giving rise to ethnocentricity, xenophobia, and any other form of human degradation has never been greater. Equally, we must provide concrete and innovative solutions to deal with these denigrating forces, at international, national, and individual levels...The transformation of human consciousness is a political and social imperative. The promotion of global human rights, exploration of the human mind, and the indivisibility of freedom should be standard subjects taught in every school serious about the preservation. (Clements p51-52)

In assessing the cost of the harsh realities that are upon us in this momentous period of history called the 21st Century; we must embrace the task of deep transformative work at all levels. The cost of not doing this work leaves us on a perilous course that spells disaster on the multiple levels involving genocide, bioscide and ecocide.

The New Century as Transformative Historical Moment

The transformative work of the twenty-first century is momentous not because it is a millennium turning point or a movement into some kind of postmodern history, nor because we are moving from an industrial age into a new information age. The period in which we are living is not simply a turning point in human history; it is a turning point in the very history of the earth itself. We are living in a period of the earth's history that is incredibly turbulent and in an epoch in which there are violent processes of change that challenge us at every level imaginable. The pathos of the human being today is that we are totally caught up in this incredible transformation, and we have a significant responsibility for the direction it will take. What is terrifying is that we have it within our power to make life extinct on this planet. Because of the magnitude of this responsibility for the planet, all our educational ventures must finally be judged within this order of magnitude. This historical moment poses significant challenges in areas heretofore unimagined. Education within the context of "transformative vision" keeps concerns for the totality of life's context always at the forefront (O'Sullivan, 1999).

Transformative Learning

Let me stress before presenting my definition of transformative learning that I do not consider transformative learning processes as one of "individualized learning." I consider the framework of transformative learning as a personal process that is carried out in integrally webbed totalities. In my earlier work, I developed, at some depth; the notion of the personal as persons in relation (see Sullivan, 1984, 1990) This larger context of personal learning is illustrated in a famous quote of Einstein's which captures succinctly my meaning of the personal:

A human being is part of a whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. They experience themselves, their thoughts, their feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of their consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task is to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of love and compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

As persons, we seem to have a deep primordial need for reciprocal acknowledgment and in the absence of this aspect of deep sociability there appears to be a breakdown in the development of the person at these early vulnerable stages that can be devastating. It would seem that humans are possessed of a compulsion to share their conscious understanding and emotions as intimately as possible. Intimacy here means a presence to one another at our deepest levels of subjectivity. It is clear that each species carries with it a deep coding of its responsibilities for the enhancement of the life processes of its own. Nevertheless, we are also very clearly aware that there is an inter-species awareness that from our very beginnings is opening us up to a wider world. This wider sense of connection with all of the powers of the world is a primary matrix for all of our subsequent development (O’Sullivan, 1999).

With the expanded context that I have described above, it is appropriate to give a reader a working definition of transformative learning which is set forth in *“Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning”*. The definition is as follows:

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body-awarenesses, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy (O’Sullivan, 2002, p.11).

Let me elaborate in point form:

- ***Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically alters our way of being in the world.*** At our Centre, we are interested in the generation of energy for radical vision, action, and new ways of being. If we are to survive on this planet we need new connections to each other and to the natural world. Changing political and economic relationships is part of the larger project of reconstituting and revitalizing all of our relationships. Thus our purpose in transformative learning is not to delineate abstract principles about how adults learn,; we are not interested in theoretical “generalizability,” at least not in the terms in which this concept is ordinarily used (O’Sullivan, Morrell and O’Connor, 2002)
- ***Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self locations.*** There is a whole range of scholarship that speaks to the fact that there is no abstract unitary selfhood. Several of the contributing authors to *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning* write not only about expanding our definition of knowledge, but also about expanding our very sense of the self (O’Sullivan, Morrell and O’Connor, 2002).

- ***Our relationships with other humans and with the natural world.*** The theoretical shift, and the world view, emerging here is one that moves towards a participatory embodied consciousness and the ways to recover and raise such consciousness. “A participatory world view allows us as human persons to know that we are a part of the whole rather than separated as mind over and against matter, or placed here in the relatively separate creation of a transcendent god”(Heron and Reason, 1997: 275). As such, a participatory world view “places us back in relation with a living world-- and we note that to be in relation means that we live with the rest of creation as relatives, with all the rights and obligations that implies” (p. 276).
- ***Our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body-awarenesses.*** What we should be striving for, at the planetary level of our species involvement, is a community that holds together without collapsing and obliterating human diversity. Thus our planetary community, within a human context, must hold simultaneously, and with creativity, the tensions of difference. When these tensions are collapsed we have a drift toward monoculture and a loss of species creativity. We also have the ugly specter of racism and cultural xenophobia. Under these conditions we are constantly plagued with the evil of genocide. At a less extreme level, we encounter the marginalization of peoples, that has resulted in an increase in human rights violations especially in those areas of the world that are subject to the economic exploitation of the West. For those people who are marginalized and subordinated, almost all basic human needs are lacking. For example, indigenous peoples all over this globe are the victims of human rights violations that leave their needs for subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity and freedom unmet at all of the existential category levels. When we turn to intragroup relations within communities we see that women all over this earth suffer at the hands of men under the dominance and sub-ordination structures of patriarchy. This type of dominance occurs in all cultures and races in the modern world, it is also operating over classes and ages. The structure of patriarchy operates globally. A transformative planetary vision must seek to resist and transform the institutions of patriarchy. Women all over the earth are subject to structures of patriarchal dominance and are the victims of pervasive male violence. At the same time, the structure of male violence operates differently in different cultures and also operate differently within the same societies. What we do know is that gender roles leave women in subordinate positions within the structural conditions of patriarchy and these conditions of oppression operate globally. Patriarchal socialization shapes the consciousness of both men and women, not with uniform results among individuals, to be sure, but with an informing orientation. A pervasive message of subordination goes out to women from a variety of sources giving women the sense that they are not to be taken seriously. This happens in commerce, medicine, and government to name a few institutions. The structures of dominance and subordination that exist under patriarchy, leave men at a level of emotional shallowness and the contribution of women ignored and marginalized. The critical path out of patriarchal dominance toward more equitable relationships between men and women will open up new areas of diversity both for women and men. Having said this it must be understood that the issue of gender must be seen along side other issues of discrimination, based on race, culture, and sexual orientation. If this does not happen, these differences are put in competition with gender and each other. To give attention to gender discrimination without calling attention to racism; we can expect that racism or racist dominance is likely to occur. The same applies to sexual orientation.

- *Our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy.* Chris Carron, an associate of the Transformative Learning Centre, gave us the following mapping of the terrain of ecological vision and it serves as an excellent summary to finish this brief piece.

Ecological Vision

Reflective learning on our locations in relation to the web of oppressions and ‘isms’
Expands consciousness
Community-based social action
Decolonialized thinking
Deconstructs Eurocentrism
Holistic education – engaging the whole person – emotions, body, spirit, and mind – in learning
Learning as an embodied and emotive experience
Bringing the five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch – to learning
Recognizing and protecting the web of life in nature
Nature is our teacher
Interdisciplinary approach to life deconstructs monoculturalism
Thinking outside the box
Using our imaginations and spiritual connections to sustain and heal during difficult times
Sharing
Citizenship does not include consumerism as a lifestyle
Removing psychic blinkers elicits a deeper understanding of one’s internal and external territory
Shifts in collective and individual consciousness
Ethical participation with nature
Dynamic relationship with nature based on participation
On-going and dynamic relationship based on traditions of holistic learning
Active citizenry

Amen

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Transformative Learning Enhanced With Technology

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Abstract: *While transformative learning is a very personal experience and technology can initially appear to be a cold and distant tool, this presentation will examine how the process of transforming can be enhanced using technology. It will also offer two examples: one at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York and the other at Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.*

Keywords: online learning technology, community building, reflection

Introduction

Since this conference provides a forum for participants to “explore a diversity of perspectives on transformative learning and the various contexts where it can happen”, this paper will consider “on line” as a possible “where it can happen”. Considering this transformation taking place within the context of an organization, examples of two environments where transformative learning is taking place will be explored: Teachers College, Columbia University in New York and Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. While these two environments appear different, they are strikingly similar in their missions of social service. Both prepare adults to take leadership roles. Teachers College prepares its students to educate others in business, higher education, K-12, and non-profits. Moravian Seminary prepares its students for ministry to others in religious organizations. The two organizations’ shared values include the importance of reflection on learning and the importance of community building. They share the idealism of “thinking of things as if they could be otherwise”. (Greene, 2001) These students are the dreamers and innovators; those most open to transformation.

Transformative Learning

Mezirow defines transformative learning as a process by which our taken-for-granted frames of references are transformed by making them more “inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective”. (Mezirow, 2000) This paper will examine how in both locations, technology has significantly enhanced the transformative learning that occurred. It will address how integrating technology into courses and offering courses in an online and blended format can facilitate the expansion and transformation of the course and its participants to be more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective.

Brookfield deepens the understanding of “reflective” by offering a connection between transformative learning and critical reflection. He states that “although critical reflection is an ineradicable element of transformative learning, it is not a synonym for it. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition of transformative learning;...transformative learning cannot happen without critical reflection but critical reflection can happen without an accompanying transformation in perspective...” (Brookfield in Mezirow, 2000, p.125) If one accepts the notion that critical thinking is “reflecting on the assumptions underlying our and others’ ideas and actions, and contemplating alternative ways of thinking and living” (Brookfield 1987 p. x), then it becomes obvious that critical reflection is not a process that is accomplished in a few minutes but might take hours or days or weeks. Then the valuable role of technology in facilitating critical reflection will become clear. A classroom discussion relies on students’ instant insights

and reactions. In contrast, an asynchronous discussion online affords students the opportunity to read another student's comment, reflect on it, then return to the discussion at a later time with a thoughtful comment as the result of critical reflection's creating a foundation for transformative learning.

Teachers College

This example utilizes the situation where the same instructor, with the same syllabus, is teaching two courses, Staff Development and Introduction to Adult and Continuing Education, both on campus and on line. Both require the student to apply principles of adult learning and examine the application of that theory in practice. Although the core of the Staff Development course is the development of a staff training module and students arrive with very pragmatic expectations, comments at the end of the course suggest that transformative learning has occurred.

Using technology in an education course offers a unique advantage. In most courses technology is utilized as a course delivery system. In an education course, the course objectives facilitate the inclusion of an analysis of the effectiveness of the use of technology. Students are continually required to reflect on and discuss the learning advantages and disadvantages of technology as they participate in the learning. This paper will demonstrate how course assignments that utilize technology enhance this learning. The qualitative comments from the end of course survey and reflection assignments will be examined with regard to students' reflections on the experience and their learning.

Teachers College uses Blackboard software as a platform for their distance learning classes. Two particular functions of Blackboard, the Discussion Forum and the Virtual Classroom have been most mentioned by students in commenting on elements of transformative learning.

The use of the asynchronous **Discussion Board** where students post their own ideas and comments then reply to other students' ideas was seen to facilitate critical reflection. Following are a few representative student comments:

"The discussion conducted here is very involving; everybody could get a chance to express his own ideas. Moreover, the discussion board online gives us a further opportunity to share ideas with all of the class. It has been developed into a real learning forum. Everybody chose their favorite articles about learning and training in their fields, and then shared their own ideas on the "blackboard", thus evokes a real open discussion. This learning style makes me feel that I can learn anytime anywhere from so many people of diverse fields. By posting, reading, and replying online, our learning location has burst out of the limited classroom and lecture time boundary; thus it has given us an authentic flexibility and motivation to learn."

"It is a medium that does promote student engagement in discourse without the normal bias of face-to-face communication (because our appearance is reduced to letters in a computer screen). And although we have the opportunity to influence and suggest tone, etc. by the use of color, sizes, etc. the initial barriers to traditional communication are somehow diminished. The use of discussion boards allows for a lot of reflection prior to committing to opinions. The student has the time and the resources to build a message that will convey every idea that s/he wants to communicate".

"The process of responding to skilled questions posed by co-group members allowed me to consider and deeply reflect on my actions with respect to learning and how it is applied at workplace."

“The methodology used for this course integrates technology with a pedagogy practice that supports the deeper, more reflective self-directed activity thus, emphasizing on constructivist teaching.”

The **Virtual Classroom** (chat room) was considered to particularly foster the transformative learning characteristics of inclusion and openness in addition to reflection. The class was divided into smaller groups in order to make the discussion logistics manageable. Following are a few representative student comments:

“The conversations were not superficial interactions but purposeful, focused and useful. The instructions preceding the chat in terms of reading position papers, preparing questions followed by chat on each paper allowed all group members an equal opportunity to have their “voices” heard, making the chat more effective. Setting up small groups of 4 students, rather than a whole class, allowed each one the time and opportunity to participate and understand each other’s situations more closely and attentively. The archived feature of the chat that automatically creates transcripts of discussions make it useful for rereading and future reference.”

“I was enamored with the power of this medium. In my opinion, the on-line synchronous communication came closest to simulating a traditional classroom context within the distance-learning framework. It gave me a sense of jointly occupying a temporary space (similar to a class room) and created the illusion of physical proximity and group cohesion through spontaneous conversation and sharing. At the same time it eliminated space restrictions—all four of us gathered from numerous locations, Carol from as far as the UK, to meet and discuss the topic in a real-time environment.”

“A community emerged during the chat session as the group members experienced a sense of personal relatedness.”

“Since my partner is from different culture, industry and gender from mine, I learnt a lot of new perspectives.”

“The chat session personalized e-learning, which can sometimes seem cold and robotic. It provided an interactive, personal channel through which numerous learning and experiences could be shared.”

“The best part lies in my realization toward the end of the chat that a synchronous professional discussion isn't too difficult a thing for me. This is my first time to do a real one with international professionals. As a non-native speaker, I was very self-conscious and afraid I'd lose face before this highly learned group who seem to have a better and deeper understanding of all the theories we're learning. But the 2-hours went by fast, and I felt more and more comfortable, even not nervous when it's my turn.”

Moravian Theological Seminary

Moravian Seminary is unique in its small size and ecumenical nature. A grant from the Lilly Foundation 3 years ago provided the funds for the seminary to build a videoconference classroom at its seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and a similar room on the campus of Salem College in Winston Salem, NC where there is a large Moravian population with an interest in participating in Moravian Seminary courses. The mechanics were being put in place and the faculty mindset was enthusiastic about the grant and the possibilities that it offered. However, the success of the program necessitated transformative learning on the part of both the faculty and students. Their “taken-for-granted frames of references” about space and collocation needed to be transformed into ones that were more “inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally

capable of change, and reflective.” They were apprehensive about their personal role as distance learning faculty members and questioned the influence that technology would have on community building. And building a strong faith community was a significant part of the seminary education. Maxine Greene, in her chapter, “The Passion of Pluralism”, comments about community: “We are in search of what John Dewey called ‘the Great Community’”, but at the same time, we are challenged as never before to confront plurality and multiplicity.” (Greene, 1995, p.155) “To open up our experience to existential possibilities of multiple kinds is to extend and deepen what each of us thinks of when he or she speaks of a community.” (Greene, 1995, p.161)

To help bridge the gap between the two campuses and foster a sense of inclusion, the faculty of the videoconferenced classes traveled to Winston-Salem once a semester and taught the course from that location back to Bethlehem. “Learning to look through multiple perspectives, young people may be helped to build bridges among themselves; attending to a range of human stories, they may be provoked to heal and to transform. Of course there will be difficulties in at once affirming plurality and difference and working to create community.” (Greene, 1995, p. 167) Early class evaluations contained the comments: “It is very new and will take a while to get used to but I will continue to be open-minded to this process and new experience.” In response to the question: What do you like most about this environment, some representative student responses were: “It gives the people in Winston-Salem an opportunity to take these classes and for us to hear some new voices.” “Brings people from different areas together.”

Blackboard software was initially used to support these courses offered at distance. After 3 years, every faculty member had taught at least one course using videoconferencing and Blackboard software is now an integral part of most courses taught on campus. A transformation on the part of both the faculty and students had taken place. Faculty is requesting use of the videoconference room and students are depending on the technology for class presentations and projects for many classes. The technology has become an integral and expected part of the class. One might argue that this is simply adapting not transforming. But a review of the process in the past three years gives evidence of this being a transformative experience. The faculty and staff’s past “taken-for-granted frames of reference” was that students would travel to the seminary for education and community building led by resident faculty who would provide on site face-to-face education. The past 3 years have been filled with critical reflection about the inclusion of this new technology and students in a new venue. An educational technology committee was established to champion the discussions and reflections as the technology was integrated into the curriculum. A program committee of church leaders was established to critically reflect on the role of this technology in the education of their new leaders. This was not using technology for the sake of technology but a critically reflective process by which these bodies lead the transformation in a thoughtful, purposeful way into a new paradigm of seminary education.

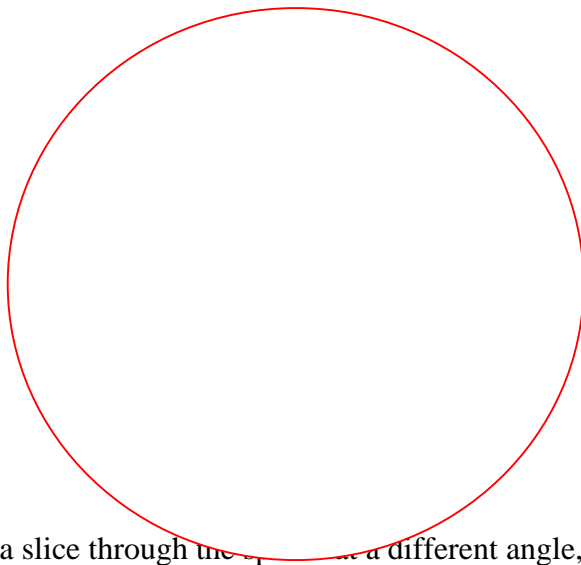
Another transformative experience was led by a paraplegic student who relies on technology for her self-sufficiency. She has become a champion in the use of the Virtual Classroom in Blackboard. She requests a “group” within Blackboard be set up for each of her classes for her study group. Since the computer is her only voice, she brings students to her world by using the Virtual Classroom for her study group sessions. While technology has expanded her world, it has transformed her fellow students’ thinking about communication and forming community and has brought her them to the brink of being “emotionally capable of change” by fostering and facilitating inclusion.

Evidence of this transformation is also apparent in the curriculum revision currently underway. The previous revision was described as “rearranging the deck chairs”. This year’s process began with an open ended discussion of compelling outcomes for each of the seminary degrees and then using a model developed by the Educational Technology committee at the beginning of the year. The committee proposed a model of a sphere. The sphere quickly became a vision of the world (the picture of the earth from space is a good visual). This was the world of opportunities available to education.

Consider the WORLD of Possibilities within that sphere.



Then they imagined slicing through this sphere to generate circles of when, what, and where the learning opportunities could be delivered. The WHEN slice is below:



Taking a slice through the sphere at a different angle, one cuts through the “What” slice which contains the options of Required Courses, Seminars, Electives, Discussions, and Lecture. Taking another slice through the sphere at a yet different angle one cuts through the “Where” slice which

contains the options of Bethlehem, Winston-Salem, Virtual site (on-line), Off-site (Non-Winston-Salem), Blended on/off-site

Each element of each slice was considered with the following questions:

1. Shall we do this?
2. How quickly shall we do this?
3. Is there a market for doing this?
4. What is the role of the adjunct and full time faculty?

Summary

In both of the above examples, many elements of transformative learning and adult learning theory are evident as well as the emergence of a learning organization. “The learning organization is a living, breathing organism that creates the space that enables people and systems to learn, to grow, and to endure.” (Marsick and Watkins, 1999, p. 210) As seen in the above comments, the use of threaded discussions facilitates critical reflection. The asynchronous nature of this Discussion Board offers students the opportunity to take the time necessary for reflection in order to generate more thoughtful responses. Unlike classroom discussions where the discussions focus on thoughts from that moment, the threaded discussions can be well thought out ideas and facilitate continual discussion and continuous learning on the topic. The world view is enhanced during the online format and videoconferenced classes by making it possible for students from another location with differing views to actively participate in the course. Technology enhances many of the elements of transformative learning. But unlike many labels that have attached an “e” to the beginning of a word to indicate the inclusion of technology, technology best enhances learning when it is embedded in the learning process:

LEARNING.

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Presentation Knowing: A Bridge Between Experience and Thinking

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Abstract: *This paper provides a theoretical basis for a workshop that explores presentational knowing as a bridge between experience and thinking. John Heron's extended hierarchy for whole person learning identifies and supports four ways of knowing. We distinguish between and connect Heron's insights with Jack Mezirow's theory of transformative learning.*

Key Words: transformative learning, presentational knowing, extended epistemology

Purpose of Workshop

The complex and global world of today struggles with unprecedented awareness of war, disease, poverty, environmental degradation and intolerance that suggest our human capacity for change cannot keep pace with the challenges confronting society (Kegan, 1994). Awareness of current problems is not sufficient to solve the current crises, and definitive action must be taken. However, the strategy for creating effective action is unclear. To paraphrase Albert Einstein, one cannot solve a problem with the same thinking that created it. Thus, there is a need for creating new systems and approaches to help people learn to change how they know, learn, and think. Adult educator Jack Mezirow describes how transformative learning offers a process for expanding one's "habits of mind" to be more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective" (2000, pp. 5-6). We concur with the direction of Mezirow's work and find that John Heron's conceptualization of an extended epistemology offers a useful expansion. We examine how the terms used by Mezirow and Heron to describe learning appear to be similar, yet have significantly different meanings. These different meanings have important implications for the practice of adult education. Our workshop emphasizes Heron's extended epistemology—and presentational knowing—as a way to help evoke whole-person participation in the educational process.

Theoretical Rationale for the Workshop

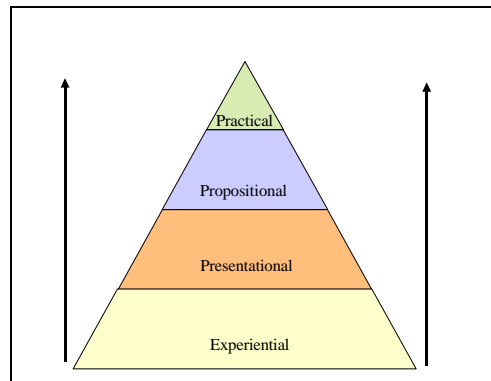
Authors Patricia Cranton (1994) and John Dirkx (1998), among others, document the evolution of transformative learning theory as an important contribution in the field of adult education. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning has been influential over the past twenty-five years in expanding the conversation about how adults learn and develop (2000). We concur with a growing consensus of writers who say that Mezirow's concept of critical reflection is important for shifting one's perspective, but it is incomplete (Taylor, 1998; Sheared & Sissel, 2001; Kasl & Yorks, 2002). Adult educators Elizabeth Kasl and Lyle Yorks (2002) propose that the extended epistemology developed by Heron and his colleague Peter Reason (Heron & Reason, 1997) provides a compelling framework for articulating how four ways of knowing relate to transformative learning. We provide an overview of Heron's epistemological model and then compare Mezirow's conceptualization to Heron's extended epistemology.

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Heron, a major contributor to theory about whole person learning (1992, p.174), describes four interconnected ways of knowing that are pictured through an up-hierarchy (see Figure 1) in which the validity of each way of knowing is dependent on the ways of knowing that ground and precede it. Heron's epistemological model is derived from his model of the human psyche (Heron, 1992, pp. 14-15). He describes the four ways of knowing—experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical—which emerge from the four related modes of the psyche of the whole person, as depicted in Figure 1.

Experiential knowing is evident when we meet and feel the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing. Presentational knowing is ... expressed in graphic, plastic, moving, musical, and verbal art forms. Propositional knowing is expressed in intellectual statements, both verbal and numeric ... in ways that do not infringe the roles of logic and evidence. Practical knowing is evident in knowing how to exercise a skill. (Heron, 1992, pp. 162- 171)

Figure 1. An Extended Epistemology of Four Ways of Knowing (Heron, 1992)



Heron's model of an extended epistemology and four ways of knowing illustrates how propositional knowing, which has held dominant status in Western thinking, is actually just one of four interdependent ways of knowing. He suggests that all four of "these kinds of knowing are a systemic whole, a pyramid of upward support in which experiential knowing at the base upholds presentational knowing, which supports propositional or conceptual knowing, which upholds practical knowing" (Heron, 1996, p. 52). Furthermore, each way of knowing has its own integrity and must be considered on its own terms. Heron describes the simultaneous process of integration and congruence among the four ways of knowing as critical subjectivity, which leads to greater balance of knowledge and action in the world (Heron, 1996).

Similar Terms, Different Meanings

Mezirow and Heron use terms to describe transformation that appear to be similar, but that have significantly different meanings (see Table 1). We review the similarities and differences between these parallel terms.

The first distinction is use of the word "experience." Yorks and Kasl (2002) explain that "learning from experience," among U.S. educators, often refers to "experience that has been conceptualized as a noun, a resource that can be reflected upon" (p. 180). By contrast, Yorks and Kasl point out that Heron uses the term experience more as a verb, to reflect "a process, an

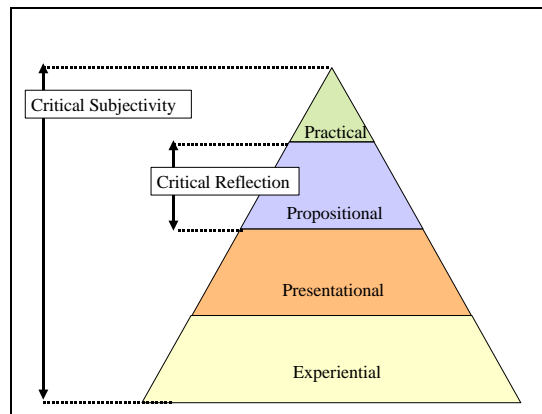
encounter with the world” (p. 182). In whole person learning, this distinction is critical to integration of four ways of knowing. When “experience” becomes a noun, the phenomenon has already been transferred from the realm of experiential knowing to propositional knowing. Recognition of the role of experience “as a verb” is needed when developing a more holistic approach to education that affirms and builds upon other ways of knowing.

Table 1. Mezirow and Heron: Similar Terms, Different Meanings

<u>Mezirow</u>	<u>Heron</u>
Learning from Experience	Experiential knowing
Critical Reflection	Critical Subjectivity
Outcome: Open and Permeable	Outcome: Human Flourishing

Second, Mezirow and Heron both see the need for some form of critical consciousness to expand awareness, but they see the arena for transforming one’s consciousness differently. Mezirow describes critical reflection as the process of rational discourse that learners go through when trying to shift or reframe their current understanding of a situation to a new perspective that is “more inclusive, differentiating, permeable (open to other viewpoints), critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). Mezirow closely aligns his concept of critical reflection within the realm of discourse, reason, and intellect. Critical reflection implicitly assumes that the rational, conceptual mind is the locus of transformative change (see Figure 2), even when engaging in affective or imaginal material that Mezirow readily acknowledges as important (pp. 5-7).

Figure 2. Space for Transformation: Critical Reflection and Critical Subjectivity



Heron’s epistemological extension that includes three additional forms of knowing, constitutes a larger subjective space for transformation. This larger challenge of engaging each of four ways of knowing autonomously and interdependently is called critical subjectivity (see Figure 2). Minimizing distortion of any single form of knowing is accomplished by better balancing autonomy and interdependence between four ways of knowing. Each form of knowing has its own processes of engagement and validity. Critical subjectivity “involves an awareness of the four ways of knowing, of how they are currently interacting, and of ways of changing relations between them so that they articulate a reality that is unclouded by a restrictive and ill-

disciplined subjectivity” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 280). Critical subjectivity engages the whole learner in the process of transformation.

Finally, there is a subtle but important difference in how Mezirow and Heron describe the outcome of the learner’s developmental challenge. Mezirow describes an important and helpful shift of transformation of “taken-for-granted frames of reference . . . to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open . . . so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 7-8). For Heron and Reason, “the primary purpose of human inquiry is practical: our inquiry is our action in the service of human flourishing” (1997, p. 288). Mezirow, Heron and Reason all emphasize the importance of transformation of action in the world. Heron (1996) describes human flourishing as “a mutually enabling balance between autonomy, co-operation and hierarchy” (p. 127). Human flourishing provides a clear axiological outcome and purpose for transformation that includes and goes beyond the realm of determining what is true in the propositional realm of knowing.

Presentational Knowing

Heron makes a strong case for the importance and interdependence of all four ways of knowing. In our experience, presentational knowing provides a particularly important opportunity for adult educators in North America to move from an over-reliance on propositional knowing to a more balanced engagement with all four ways of knowing. According to Heron, presentational knowing provides a bridge between our felt experience and our thinking about that experience. Presentational knowing openly engages experience as a verb and manifests from an interaction between imaginal and conceptual processes. In presentational knowing,

a person creates a pattern of perceptual elements in movement, sound, color, shape, line . . . [that] includes not only music and all the plastic arts, but dance, movement, and mime. It also embraces all forms of myth, fable, allegory, story, and drama. (Heron, 1992, p. 165-167)

Contrary to our modern association with art, drama, music, poetry and movement, presentational knowing does not require artistic expertise. It requires participation in whatever way one chooses, with attention to the feelings and emotions that accompany the experience. Because feelings and emotions can shift during the expression of presentational knowing, presentational expression often deepens one’s knowledge.

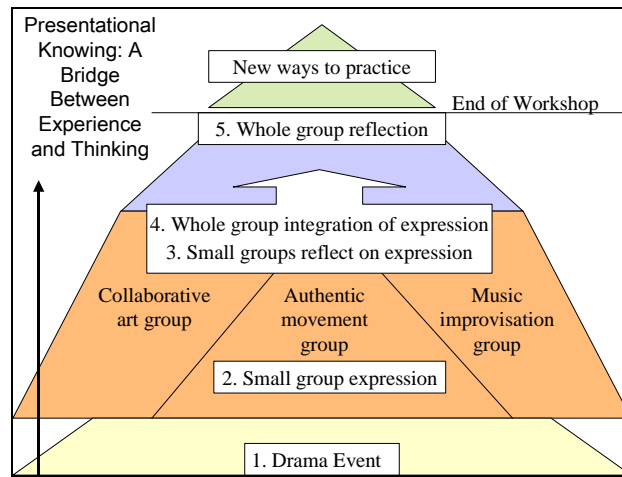
Presentational Knowing Workshop Design Overview

Our workshop helps address the expansion of transformative learning by emphasizing engagement in experiential and presentational knowing. The workshop offers participants an opportunity to engage presentational knowing through building a link from concrete experience to a form of conceptual reflection about that experience. Figure 3 illustrates the workshop sequence of events from the perspective of Heron’s extended epistemology.

First, the workshop leaders provide a dramatic event or experience for participants. This initial experience provides a direct face-to-face encounter that represents the base of Heron’s extended epistemology pyramid—experiential knowing (see Figures 1 and 3). Learners will then engage in forms of presentational knowing that emerge from the experience of the dramatic event, using expressive forms of imagery (collaborative art, authentic movement, or music improvisation). Each presentational modality group will express its imaginal presentation for the

larger group of workshop attendees. Next, the workshop attendees will reflect on their workshop experiences by discussing two questions: What is the meaning that comes from your experience and presentations? What did you learn? This final reflection represents the realm of propositional knowing as shown in Figure 3. Finally, the integration of experiential, presentational and propositional knowing might lead participants to new ways to practice after the workshop, representing the apex of Heron's pyramid—practical knowing.

Figure 3. Presentational Knowing Workshop Design Overview



Conclusions and Implications for Transformative Learning

We close this paper by revisiting our initial observation about the state of the world. People trying to cope with the challenges that currently face our global community require new forms of consciousness. New educational processes are needed to help people change *how* they know, learn, and think. Trusting that human beings have additional ways of knowing that reach beyond the propositional domain of logic and reason is no small feat for those of us with a Western education. Our workshop is designed to introduce presentational knowing as an important bridge between experience and thinking, a bridge we feel enables an important expansion of human consciousness.

We see the need to expand transformative learning theory to include and engage multiple ways of knowing as legitimate and important elements for learning and change. Suzanne Van Stralen (2003) suggests an expanded definition of transformative learning:

Learning through transformation and multiple ways of knowing is the expansion of consciousness through the development of individual epistemology, the broadening of perspective, and the enlargement of specific capacities of the self ... facilitated through ... critical reflection, multiple ways of knowing, and appreciatively accessing and receiving symbolic contents of the unconscious. (p. 23)

Practical use of Heron's extended epistemology implies a need for pedagogical changes that include the whole person in the practice of transformative learning. Practice in the use of the four ways of knowing develops conscious skills towards a "principle of human flourishing....a commitment to provide conditions within which people can in liberty and cooperation ... determine and fulfill their own true needs and interests." (Heron 1996, p. 127) We see the

application of skills that enhance human flourishing as a means to provide necessary expansion of human consciousness in many social contexts — education, politics, and economics.

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Societal Tragedy and Transformative Learning: A View From International–Multicultural Perspectives

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Rationale

People around the world have continued to explore the impact that the events of 9/11/01's tragedy had on national and global economies, politics, and international relations, but what can we learn about the meaning for adults living through societal crises? During the days and months following these tragedies, people experienced a tumultuous cascade of situations, emotions, and perceptions. After 9/11 a group of adult learners at a New York City university explored the relationship of transformative learning in understanding their experiences. Growing out of the initial qualitative study (King, 2003), an international research focus group continued to explore the meaning of their experiences and collaboratively analyzed the larger group data for many months (King, Bennett, Perera, & Matewa, 2003). We found this experience to be meaningful for us as individuals and educators and would like to extend a model of such dialogue with participants in this session. The presentation will show how people in different cultures cope with such situations and transform themselves through learning experiences, and the role of educators for such learning in various settings. We will engage participants in an authentic experience of understanding them and others in tragic events with a lens of transformative learning.

Transformative learning describes an adult learning process that centers on critical reflection, discourse, questioning, and meaning making. For those who experience the full process, new perspectives and understandings are provisionally tested and changed, more inclusive frames of reference, or meaning structures, are formed (Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Taylor, 1998). Such changes find their roots in "disorienting dilemmas" that may originate from life experiences in many domains including personal, social, cultural, professional, and more (Cranton, 1994, 1997).

Over the past 25 years of the development of the theory, many controversies have arisen. Included in these issues and particularly relevant to this workshop are questions of rationality, context, and social action (Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Taylor, 1998). When looking at learning through societal crisis, rationality separated from affective dimensions does not seem realistic. Perhaps, most salient in these examples we see evidence of the depth and breadth of transformative learning experiences' impact on the lives of adults (King, Bennett, Perera, & Matewa, 2003). Additionally, as will be demonstrated in this workshop, transformative learning in such situations is intricately wound with the context of the individual and community. And the experiences initiated by societal crisis, are at the same time intensely personal and communal. As individuals struggle with deep questions they probe not only their own values, beliefs and assumptions, but also the community's. The context of this learning is its life. In these circumstances then, growing from this context, the essential element of action in transformative learning is evidenced in social action in the cases that have been reviewed. In the cases being reviewed, coming from and through the community, learning comes full circle as it

returns to action upon the community (King, Bennett, Perera, & Matewa, 2003). This flow of action is noticeable in each example and can serve as significant illustrations for the critical place social action can take in the transformative learning process.

Considering socio-cultural and multicultural dimensions of learning brings our focus beyond the individual and cognitive perspective (Alfred, 2002). Furthermore looking across cultures to examine how transformational learning may be experienced provides another lens for examination. In the case of 9/11/01, it was seemingly so targeted to one country, yet had an impact and consequences for so many people of other countries within New York City and across the globe (King, Bennett, Perera, & Matewa, 2003). Going further we wonder how other crises have been experienced by communities and what elements of transformative learning may be learned about when using a socio- and multicultural lens with transformative learning. It is evident that the deep pain of these situations is rooted in the context and we know this to be tightly bound to culture and history (Alfred, 2002; Tisdell, 1995). How then similar or dissimilar are these experiences? What does transformative learning across these contexts begin to demonstrate in the experience of tragedy?

The following quote is taken from the actual research account and is a basis for the growing understanding of transformative learning that may be gained through activities like this workshop:

“When we convened at the one-year point, we were able to discern how re-evaluation, re-examination, and hope were surfacing in our understanding. Each member described this experience as some re-evaluated their lives and made new decisions, others reflected deeply about community and questioned political power struggles, another had reached a deep realization that tolerance and acceptance of differences needed to be widely introduced and heralded. Each in their own way identified that life had changed, they had changed, and they could not return to “normal,” because that pre-9/11/01 nature of “normal” was gone. Shifting from the brokenness of shock, fear, and great grief over 12 months adult learners experienced perspectives and resolve to understand others different from themselves, to re-evaluate their purposes, priorities, and lives, and to embrace compassion and community. The crisis had radically changed them, their world, and their perceptions. The research, reflection, and discussion were providing a basis to understand and articulate this point even further.”

The research group also identified three characteristics of the 9/11 tragedy that may be seen in other societal tragedies: the massive loss and vulnerability, the emergence of community and compassion, and the reality of diverse perspectives. The extreme sense of vulnerability can contribute to an extremely pressurized climate under which adults may be struggling to find ways to cope with not only their safety and daily needs, but also their changing understandings of their world- both immediately and distantly. As people are forced to deal with tragedy, fear, grief, and the unknown daily how can a framework of transformative learning be used to help them cope?

Based on the findings of our research. This workshop will present through active involvement in dramatic readings and case studies how people in different cultures may experience grief, self-examination, critical thinking, and trying new roles. It will also demonstrate the time factor involved in this process and how some people can remain in any stage for an extended period of time, while others transform their views. Finally, the presentation will also show how educators such as university professors and teachers in the classroom, community leaders, and religious leaders can assist adults involved in potentially transformative learning experiences.

As such, this session will focus on how people from and within different cultures and countries may view and respond to societal tragedies. Examples will include not only the 9/11 crisis, but also events in Sri Lanka and other countries. The workshop leaders represent four different countries, and while not stereotyping responses, they represent a sample and recognition of multiple perspectives.

Case Studies

The remainder of this paper will center about three more cases studies that will be discussed in the workshop. These cases will be used to consider the major questions we have proposed.

Sri Lanka Excerpt

The cruel destructive ethnic war between the Tamil militants (LTTE) and the government forces have been going on for over 25 years. The war has been fought in the North of Sri Lanka killing and displacing many Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese civilians in the North, meanwhile suicide bombers attacked several locations in Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka.

“Of all the suicide- capable terrorist groups we have studied, they (LTTE) are the most ruthless, the most disciplined, said Rohan Gunaratna, a research fellow at the center for the study of terrorism and political violence at the university of St. Andrews in Scotland. He said the group was responsible for more than half of the suicide attacks carried out worldwide.Suicide bombers killed one Sri Lankan president and an Indian prime minister. They attacked the Temple of the Tooth, home to Sri Lanka’s most sacred Buddhist relic, and Colombo’s own World Trade Center. They killed certainly thousands of civilians.” The New York Times, January 14, 2003 (<http://www.island.lk/2003/01/16/news01.html>).

Several salient quotes from the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka describe the experiences of those living through these events and are presented here, “Peace can never be achieved through war. Peace should be built on compassion. We should value human life, human resources. There is now other way;” “Ill-feeling, misunderstanding, suspicion, between the two communities presents the resolution of the conflict. Strangely enough both the parties have war and peace in mind;” “War has changed our lives so much. . . we cannot think of the morrow. . .if we go to the field and begin to till we begin to think of the calamity that befell the village. . .we do not have the heart to work. Everywhere in the village there is only fear;” “My husband served in the Sri Lankan army, and died while in service. When he died I was one month with child.” (http://www.peace-srilanka.org/npc_voice.html)

It is interesting to see how people passed through transformative stages when they lost their loved ones in the war. Some people in various ethnic groups stopped their response with anger and hatred, but many walked towards reconciliation and changing understandings of issues of justice. The online journal, Shanthi (<http://members.fortunecity.com/shanthi>), provides several examples of transformation through the experiences of those involved and activities of peace activists. (1) Forced by a brutal war the women in the conflict regions in Sri Lanka are breaking the traditional barriers and assuming new roles such as women’s organizations and setting up a Human Rights Desk to inquire into human rights violations. (2) Butterfly Garden, a healing and reconciliation center for war- affected children and communities has been organized by Rob Chase, assistant professor, University of Manitoba, Canada. For five years the Butterfly Garden has provided after-school and weekend creative play programming to over 600 school children from 20 communities around the Batticalore area representing local ethnic groups. (3) Center for Society and Religion (CSR) -- Catholic organization that organizes programs for youth in two ethnic groups to promote peace and harmony through mutual understanding.

El Salvador Excerpt

Commenting on the civil war in El Salvador, Smith said (<http://www.ied.info/books/ed/suppressing.html>), “the 1980 through 1992 suppression of El Salvador’s break for freedom parallel that of Guatemala. When tortured bodies with their thumbs wired behind their backs show up outside

the El Salvadorean capital daily....” Reinaldo Figneredo of the UN Truth Commission (<http://www.pbs.org/itvs/enemiesofwar/elsalvado2.html>) commented, “In examining the struggling breadth of the violence that occurred in El Salvador, the commission was moved by the senselessness of the killings, the brutality with which they were committed, the terror that they created in the people, in other words the madness of the war.” Personal and societal transformation can be seen amidst such tragedies such as civil war. Peace accord was achieved in 1992 between the government and the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Front). For Ana, an ex-combatant from FMLN, “there were many factors that made me involved. My sister was caught, tortured and then fled the country....My commitment hasn’t changed to those who have died to continue to struggle for a better El Salvador”. Santiago, another ex-combatant commented, “the worst were when we had to go to eight days without food and all the time we were running from the army blockades, ambushes and bombings. At least now for the moment, there is peace and a little more democracy than before. Personally, I feel just great—fantastic.” (ibid).

Educational reforms are introduced in this background, as education is a means to transformation of individuals and societies affected by civil war. Davies commented, however, “*Education is a political football in El Salvador, competing ideologies and the culture of suspicion that is a remnant of the war have left the education system very vulnerable to political pressures. There are many impediments to restrain the gains of the popular education movement that grew during the war. Dialog within the sistering movement has lately focused on this area, where advocacy efforts, especially on U.S. AID, have helped find funding for the training of popular teachers in rural areas.*” (Ian Davies, <http://forlang.edgewood.edu/ian/Education.htm>). The changes in the system of education in El Salvador show the challenges ahead of them for transformation through education.

In El Salvador, popular education has been forced to work outside of official frameworks due to the position taken by the Ministry of Education when it moved back into the conflicted zones and found itself in opposition to the established structures of popular education that had taken root there. A World Bank sponsored program was set up which wrested control from the existing structures of popular schools. This process resulted in only 4% of the school-age population getting into the system with 500,000 children being left out. Curricula had not been updated for 20 years, teachers had not been receiving refresher training, and running the schools was at the will of principals with no participation from society or from parents.

Popular education and popular schools were initially premised on community organization and cooperation, set against a background of severe poverty and material adversity in the war. They fostered a political and emancipatory vision of empowerment, participation in social struggle and the political process and ownership of the future. They were geared to the specific needs of rural communities that had been torn apart by the war and combated elitist bias against campesino culture, and promoted a holistic approach to rural development and political awareness, targeting issues and concerns that were applicable to the daily lives of the people.

They replicated the system of political education and conscientization that had emerged from the model theorized by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (Elias, 1994). To facilitate the education process, guerrilla groups established *poderes populares locales* whose duties included that of arranging schooling at the different levels. These popular movements in the former conflicted zones, promote social justice, economic reform, and lobby for educational rights.

Rwanda Excerpt

“In April 1994, the small east African nation of Rwanda became the site of one of the most violent episodes of the 20th century, over the course of just 100 days, an embattled authoritarian State organized the slaughter of at least 850, 000 Rwandans” (<http://www.nytimes.com/library/>

world/africa/index-rwanda-children.html). “The massacres have left several hundred thousand children either orphaned or separated from their parents. The family structures that used to support the child no longer exist” (ibid). Most people of the minority were killed with guns and machetes. For many women, AIDS was used “as part of their arsenal, raping them to infect them” (<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1127/p08501-woaf.html>). For example, Mrs. Uwampaliya does not know how many men raped her during the 100 days of murder and chaos that engulfed Kigali” (ibid).

In another account, Joseline Mujawamariya, huddled with her young brother and twin sister on the outskirts of her village, Butamwe, in central Rwanda. They had to hide for three days as Hutu men and boys armed with machetes began a rampage of butchery and rape. Homes were burned down. They were hunting Tutsi friends and neighbors. The Hutus did set fire on the fields.

Joseline and her sibling had to wait until nightfall with her sibling. They joined other refugees. Living for more than two months, on food scavenged from corpse littered gardens and rainwater. What Joseline feared the most was when the Hutus would stop a person and search to see if she/he was a Tusti. When they returned home, the entire village was a ghost town.

When they returned to the village, a hundred of survivors were building roads over the mountainside of the capital. Women with infants sleeping on their backs chopped through the rocky ground with hoes. Joseline realized that since all men were wiped out, she had no time to grieve but had to pick up the pieces in to order for her to survive. In 1999, with only a primary school education, she was elected as the area’s head of development. (Acquaro, 2001) (http://www.pewfellowships.org/stories/rwanda/rwanda_matriarchy.htm)

Transformational learning is seen in the attention of the international community to help these people to heal and reconcile and to seek justice through international tribunals. “The problems from the genocide do not end with the aid and the assistance that comes in the immediate aftermath in one or two years. It is important to build schools and rehabilitate health centers and train people” (<http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/africa/index-rwanda-children.html>). Mrs. Uwampaliya, a rape victim, “comes every week or so to Agahoza. The women here sit silently. . . . But they say they take comfort that they are not alone” (<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1127/p08501-woaf.html>). And also, National Council of Churches in USA provides healing and hope for Rwandans through programs such as “witness to Genocide: The children of Rwanda”, a collection of art work by child survivors of the 1994 genocide. (<http://www.papaink.org/gallery/home/artist/display/165.html>)

Other examples of transformation include: (1) Before the genocide, women in higher positions had been rare; now, women hold 18 % of all top government jobs. (2) Before the genocide, 55 % of Rwanda’s women were illiterate; 48 % of the men could not read. Today, Rwanda’s women and girls have one of the highest literacy rates in Africa, 61 %. (3) Women have the right to own property; in the past, they could not keep their homes. (Acquaro, 2001)

Questions

More information about these cases will be provided in the workshop and we will explore the framing questions: (1) How do people in different cultures experience transformational learning through crisis and grief, self-examination, critical thinking, and trying new roles? What are the similarities and differences? (2) How can educators such as university professors, teachers in classrooms, community leaders, and religious leaders assist adults involved in potentially transformative learning experiences?

Additional questions that the small and larger groups might consider include, but are not limited to: (1) As educators here in America, what can we learn from these other people to help us face what we experienced after 9/11/01 in our classrooms? (2) As educators within our local communities, nations, and world, are we equipped to help our communities, schools, and places of worship find ways

of turning a tragic, negative experience into some measure of positive outcomes? (3) Share with the group any societal crisis that has affected your local community and describe how the community especially educators coped with this. (4) Are there thoughts or perspectives that you wish to share with the others that relate to 9/11, any of these crises or any other crisis you wish to mention?

Conclusion

In considering the meaning of societal tragedy for adult learning in these examples, one can clearly see a collective response. At the same time that people struggle on an individual level, we also see evidence of their experiences translating into social movements across cultures. Thus, we can see different forms of struggles fought in different parts of the world through the examples we have discussed. These could be examples of the evolving nature of the world to make it a better place for all human beings in diverse cultural, and multi-national contexts. In this context, we as educators see the need to include facilitation of this evolution/transformation of our communities. It is in the midst of such crisis that more educators may ascribe a social dimension of adult learning than might ascribe to philosophies of radical pedagogy. In these cases societal crisis evoked responses for community intervention and building, perhaps such difficult and tragic situations build a broader base for social action to be produced through transformative learning experiences than usual. It seems that the challenge is for educators constantly to be reflective practitioners who can facilitate transformation of individuals and by extension, society, within and outside of the classroom.

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The Fabric of Our Lives: An Artistic Representation of Transformative Learning

Betty Ragland
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Abstract: *Adult educators foster transformative learning by seeking to assist learners in developing awareness of the meaning perspectives through which they construct and are constructed by the social world. This article proposes that group construction of a physical object, in this case a quilt, may serve as a powerful and accessible means of illustrating social constructionism. By contributing personal mementos and by sharing the stories of these objects, and therefore their significance for the contributor, group members are led to reflect on their understanding of their own life journeys, as well as how they see themselves engaged in a collaborative process. Further, as individual items and their narratives are incorporated, both into the quilt and into the group experience, connections are forged and assumptions are examined. The quilt serves as a focus of group effort and a metaphor for the construction of the meaning perspectives of a particular culture as well as pointing to possibilities for transforming experience through conscious collaborative efforts. While this initiative was undertaken in a formal educational setting, there are clear implications for other group settings in which a tangible representation of a particular culture may uncover both how that culture is constructed and how it might be otherwise.*

Keywords: model of transformative learning, Collaboration, social constructionism

Introduction

The perspective of this article is informed by the work of scholars who, though focusing on different aspects, are similar in their pointing toward “thinking of things as if they could be otherwise” (Greene, 2001, p.116). Gergen (1999) articulates four working assumptions of social constructionism:

1. The terms by which we understand our world and our self are neither required nor demanded by “what there is.”
2. Our modes of description, explanation and/or representation are derived from relationship.
3. As we describe, explain or otherwise represent, so do we fashion our future.
4. Reflection on our forms of understanding is vital to our future well-being. (pp. 47-50)

These assumptions both challenge the validity of taken-for-granted assumptions and hold out hope for re-inventing the social world. While Gergen focuses on the historical and cultural situatedness of our assumptions and the attendant benefits and limitations of those assumptions, Shotter (1993) directs us to “words in their speaking” as the tools by which we create a “providential space in miniature” (p. 131). Mezirow (1990) calls for examination of meaning perspectives, “for the most part uncritically acquired in childhood through the process of socialization” (p. 3), in order to transform those perspectives and act upon new understandings. Peters and Armstrong (1998) propose collaborative learning as the process whereby people work together to create new knowledge and understanding. While the chief mode of discourse in collaborative learning is dialogue, sometimes words are not enough. “The challenge, then, is to communicate in ways that invite a full range of participation—visual, emotional, musical, bodily and so on” (Gergen, 1999, p. 188).

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The quilt came into being as a result of my involvement in the Collaborative Learning Program at the University of Tennessee. It reflects deeply transformative learning, in this case in a formal educational setting, though I believe that co-constructed symbols have relevance in other transformative learning environments as well.

A Model of Transformative Learning

Paradoxically enough, the quilt began in my attending to language, particularly the metaphors of social construction. One of the distinguishing features of collaborative learning is that it requires participants to become aware of themselves as jointly constructing ways of going on together; yet it is often difficult for groups to see themselves engaging in this way. Participants in the Collaborative Learning Program at the University of Tennessee have traditionally made use of symbols for orienting participants in the task of joint construction. They sit in a circle with a candle in the center to symbolize the equality of all participants, including the professor/facilitator, and to focus attention on the center, or the dialogical space between participants. Class members refer to “the circle” or “the candle” as reminders to themselves and each other of the nature of their engagement.

A semester-length graduate course devoted to collaborative learning and social constructionism provided additional opportunities to explore the potential for joint creation. This course was comprised of three elements: readings in social construction theory and practice, online dialogue with the authors and with others participating from Australia, and Thursday evening face-to-face class meetings throughout the semester. One feature of the online dialogue structure soon drew participant comments: postings to the website were grouped into “threads” which led to numerous comments about “weaving threads into a quilt.” I could not resist the impulse to move from the online metaphor of threads woven into fabrics that become a quilt forward to a literal articulation of that metaphor. I suggested that we collaboratively construct a quilt that would represent some aspect of our individual and joint reactions to the extraordinary breadth and depth of our experience. I have found that constructing and sharing this quilt has significantly deepened my own understanding of both collaborative learning and social constructionism, and I have reason to believe that it was useful to others as well.

Supported by the facilitator, Professor John Peters, I invited the Collaborative Learning class members to bring pictures, poems, or objects that represented for them what it was like to participate in the co-construction of meaning. Since the intent was for participants to also share the personal significance of these objects, this initiative was similar to Brookfield’s (1990) use of critical incidents, with the additional tactile and visual elements. Pictures and print were photo-transferred; objects were affixed to the quilt surface. Although I assembled the quilt, I viewed my role as that of a facilitator of a space for joint action. Seminar participants appeared to share this view of my role, as they spoke of *our* quilt. The power that such an artifact can exert may be illustrated by the history of one quilt block. John was the first to bring an object and to share with the group its significance for him. As he talked about the photograph of himself with Myles Horton and Paolo Freire at Highlander Center and how Myles in particular had influenced him, he told the story of Myles’s ashes being buried in a gourd at Monteagle, TN near the first Highlander site. As I later worked with that quilt block, I was able to envision Myles’s gourd as a continuing source of life and meaning. And so I embroidered a green vine that emerged from the gourd near the bottom of the quilt and curled its way to the center of the quilt. When I later shared the quilt and the story of this block with a group of conference participants, one participant asked about this vine. She then added to the story her own knowledge of Myles’s

particularly exuberant pothos vine, cuttings of which had been shared with many Highlander visitors. Since that vine continues to flourish in windowsills across the world, I determined to extend its embroidered likeness across the entire quilt surface, touching each block, just as Myles Horton and the Highlander Center continues to inspire us all.

Each object on the quilt has its own story, and each embodies significant aspects of a participant's meaning-making in relation to our joint endeavor. Yet when these objects are joined together, they become something other than and more than (Peters and Armstrong, 1998) any one of them alone. The stories of these objects, materials and methods for construction of such a quilt, and cautionary tales are shared with interested participants in the presentation of the quilt.

The quilt has grown and changed. Throughout and even after the end of the semester, class members brought personal treasures for the quilt and spoke of their significance. Like John, others shared items evoking their histories, items that spoke of the shaping of their lives. At one point, I thought to bring fabric and marking pens to class. Class members were requested to contribute something in their own writing that would find its way onto the quilt. As I look at those words and phrases now, I can hear the voices and remember the circumstances of our speaking together.

Transformative Learning

A few months after the conclusion of the course we met again to reflect on what had stood out for us in the class, and I brought the quilt along in its unfinished state. As we talked together about what it had been like for us to participate in such a multi-dimensional learning experience, the quilt was spread on the floor in the center of the circle. One participant articulated what for me was the validation of the quilt-making: "It's been several months, and there's a lot I have forgotten. But I come here to this room, and look at the quilt, and I'm drawn back there again." Oddly enough, even when it is shown to people who were not involved in construction, the quilt seems to draw people in, particularly when it is displayed in the center of a circle.

For me the quilt has become what Wittgenstein (1953, no. 122) calls a "'perspicuous representation'—a way of making sense of things we are unable to do on our own, a way that relies upon people 'seeing' things in the same way as each other by the use of metaphor" (Shotter, 1993, p. 140). I'm not sure that the quilt will ever be finished, for it is, like collaborative learning, and indeed like life itself, a work in progress. It is a symbol of what we were together. We came to experience learning, not as passive receptors of the wisdom of experts, but as co-creators with those same experts of a new way of going on—face to face, in books, and in online dialogues. There were no models to match, no standards to measure ourselves by, and no roadmaps to point the way. There we were, facing our own learning challenges, of which we ourselves were perhaps the most daunting, learning how to become co-participants with people who have for years studied, thought, and written in the field.

While most of us who were involved in this experience have continued to examine our own meaning perspectives and to engage others in dialogue with the intent of improving our own personal lives and our practices, it must be pointed out that not all of the group members shared this outcome. One participant in particular came to this experience from a fundamentalist religious background. She found that considerations of things "as if they could be otherwise" were contrary to her beliefs. She struggled throughout the semester and concluded at the end that she could no longer remain in the collaborative learning program. Her contribution to the quilt is a line drawing of a saint with drawn sword who is "Standing on the Promises." Even this

participant, however, spoke of the experience as profoundly meaningful for her in confirming her belief system.

Implications

I constructed this quilt as a symbol of our experience in collaborative learning and observed how this physical object became more than a patchwork of individual offerings; it came to represent and remind the group of our joint purpose. It served to focus attention on the process of social construction, illustrating for participants what they were accomplishing and pointing toward future transformative possibilities. Even today class members who see it are drawn back to that experience, and so it functions to bridge the present with that shared past. Moreover, I believe there are implications for other such endeavors. Having shared the quilt with other groups who were not involved in its construction, I have seen that it has evoked responses that have changed and enriched both the experience of the object and the object itself. As facilitators of adult learning, we can provide opportunities for groups to construct symbols of their joint actions as a focus and an articulation of their efforts. These symbols can then serve as reminders and as metaphors for how it is that we may transform our ways of going on together.

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Toward a Model of Transformative Living

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Abstract: *The field of transformative learning has made an immense contribution to our understanding of how self-concept and worldview can be shaped and reshaped by learning and experience during adulthood. Relatively little attention has been paid, however, to how the capacities and perspectives born of transformative learning can be cultivated over time, translated across disparate contexts, and applied to meet the varying demands of daily life. What is missing, it seems to me, is a model for living transformatively. This paper proposes an approach to daily living designed to sustain and further develop the competencies associated with transformative learning. It considers what attitudes and qualities would be required for an individual to live transformatively and identifies the stumbling blocks and challenges inherent in approaching life from such an orientation. Finally, the paper discusses the implications of this paper's findings for educators who seek to foster transformative learning in others.*

Keywords: sustaining transformative learning, transformative living, competencies of transformative practice

Introduction

Transformative living can be defined tentatively as an active, conscious approach toward daily life that deliberately fosters and applies the competencies considered by Mezirow (2000) to be reflective of transformative learning – openness, inclusivity, flexibility, and discrimination. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of transformative living into public discourse, as a means of articulating and further developing my emerging understandings regarding the interrelationship between transformative learning and living.

The paper opens with an account of my own experiences of transformative learning and developmental growth. A reflective analysis of my journey leads me to suggest that the skills and competencies born of transformative learning can evolve into an orientation or attitude toward living, rather than a means of responding to and coping with life events as they arise. Next, I explore *how* daily life can be approached from such an orientation -- how individuals can, in essence, *live* transformatively. Finally, I call upon educators to more deeply consider their own roles, responsibilities, and assumptions in fostering transformative learning in others.

This paper utilizes transformative learning theory as a framework for analyzing my own experiences and reveals the theory's limitations in accounting for the long-term, incremental process of sustaining a learning orientation in daily life. The paper also draws from and synthesizes a wide range of alternative perspectives on the nature of learning and living in an effort to understand and articulate what would be involved in living transformatively.

Evolving from Reactive Learning to Proactive Learning

I was thirty years old, when my husband, baby boy, and I moved from the United States to Holland. In retrospect, I now recognize this event as a critical turning point in my learning and development. Moving abroad displaced me from virtually everything familiar and self-affirming and forced me to redefine myself in a radically-different milieu.

My experience of adapting to life in a foreign country was consistent with both the definition and the process of transformative learning, as defined by Mezirow (1991, 2000). Specifically, confrontation with different cultural norms than those that I had been raised with created a disorienting dilemma; many of the values and beliefs that I had unconsciously assimilated during my American upbringing (and assumed to be universal and inherently right) were suddenly revealed to be culturally-specific and incompatible with those of my host country. My inability to reconcile the conflicting truths facing me created an untenable level of cognitive dissonance that led me, in turn, to confront and challenge a number of my own deeply held beliefs and assumptions. In the process of opening myself to culturally disparate ways of seeing and being, I transformed my frames of reference, making them “more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7). Thus, it can be said, based on Mezirow’s definition, that I underwent and completed the entire transformative learning process.

This experience of perspective transformation is not the end of my learning story, however. Crossing cultures was merely the first in a series of life events that catalyzed profound shifts in my self-concept and worldview. While in Europe, by example, my world was rocked again when I returned to education in a self-directed adult learning program and earned a master’s degree in women’s studies and intercultural communications. Then, after six years in Holland, I returned to the U.S., a move that required me to renegotiate, on multiple levels, my relationship to this country and its values. Shortly thereafter, I embarked on another educational journey, this time working toward a Ph.D. in the areas of adult education and development, and, during this process, I made the significant leap from student to educator within these fields.

Each of these experiences has, in its own right, promoted transformative learning and developmental growth. Viewing these experiences cumulatively, however, I recognize that, at some juncture along the way (a juncture that is difficult to pinpoint precisely), something more significant occurred -- I took ownership of and responsibility for my own learning process. This sense of ownership promoted increased agency, which, in turn, invited continued learning and development. Over time, learning and growth no longer occurred primarily as a means of responding to and coping with challenging life events as they arose. Rather, learning became something that I actively sought and that I deliberately and methodically cultivated. Transformative learning became, for me, a way of *living*, an approach to life, rather than a response to it, an attitude, an orientation, even a philosophy.

Learning as a Way of Life

When viewing transformative learning from a developmental perspective, Mezirow (1991) asserts that “the test of a developmentally progressive perspective is not only that it is more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative of experience but, also, that it is permeable (open) to alternative perspectives so that inclusivity, discrimination, and integration *continually increase*” (p. 156, emphasis added). Thus, Mezirow recognizes the potential for transformative learning to evolve and progress on an ongoing basis, but he does not identify *how* such capacities can be cultivated over time or applied across disparate contexts. Mezirow (2000) also enticingly suggests that, “the process of transformation may itself become a frame of reference, a dispositional orientation,” but, again, he does not indicate what is involved in developing such an orientation or in acting upon it (p.19).

In my experience, cultivating such skills and learning to live life from such an orientation did not simply occur as a natural consequence of transformative learning; the development of

transformative learning into applied competencies has involved conscious intent and hard work. For me, *living* learning has been an active, day-to-day, volitional process, involving sustained will, discipline, and practice. On an ongoing basis, it has required that I strive to be fully awake and engaged in life. It has demanded that I seek out opportunities for learning and that I continually sharpen my powers of observation, attention, and openness. It has required that I methodically hone my skills in discerning the multiple and changing forces at work around me and that I remain vigilant in assessing and challenging my own biases, beliefs, and assumptions.

Physicist, Danah Zohar (2000), argues that cognitive and spiritual growth requires us to “stretch ourselves, again and again, beyond our comfort zone, to our edge, to our growing point” (p. 296). Eastern philosopher, G.I. Gurdjieff, also speaks to the deliberate, hard work involved in understanding and transforming ourselves, likening the process to strength building:

The strength I have is the strength that comes from making efforts. I cannot build stronger muscles just by wishing for them, nor can anyone else magically make my muscles stronger. I have to push and pull and strain, pushing myself to and a little beyond my limits over and over again; then I get stronger muscles. Why should psychological growth be any different?” (quoted in Tart, 1989, p. 185).

This, in turn, begs the question, why should transformative learning be any different? Learning, like muscular strength, needs nurturance though conscious effort. Emerging understandings need to be cultivated and practiced, so that they become more than just mental constructs.

The Dalai Lama (1998) also emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility and disciplined practice, saying that, “No matter what activity or practice we are pursuing, there isn’t anything that isn’t made easier through constant familiarity and training. Through training, we can change; we can transform ourselves” (p. 43).

Before we can develop a disciplined practice, however, we must foster and sustain a willingness, not merely to exist, in a process of reaction and response to life’s demands, but, rather, a willingness to reach out and actively engage in life. This involves a sustained willingness to learn; a willingness to pose challenging questions; a willingness to face conflict and disturbance; a willingness to participate in the often difficult and disorienting processes of change and evolution; a willingness to self-criticize; and, ultimately, a willingness to take responsibility for our lives.

It is the willingness to learn that Mary Catherine Bateson (2000) believes we need to “conserve and foster above all” if we are to effectively manage the complex and rapidly-shifting demands of the postmodern world (p. 17). Bateson challenges definitions of self that are based on the accumulation of knowledge and experiences, offering instead an alternative way of conceptualizing self, rooted in an attitude of openness and a willingness to learn.

Tobin Hart (2001) also emphasizes the need for us to regularly move beyond the boundaries of the known and into the realm of the unknown, where he believes transformational growth can occur.

The normal path of human development, including spiritual development, involves regularly shedding our snake skin of knowledge, attachments, and identity to make room for expansion into a larger perspective and identity... Transformation requires conscious alignment with this rhythm, which is very different from the amassing of armaments of information and the one-sided fortifying of self that characterizes our culture (p158).

“Regularly shedding our snake skin of knowledge, attachments, and identity” is an evocative image. In the processes of learning and adaptation, we periodically encapsulate and protect ourselves within seemingly reliable thought structures and belief systems. We attain a sense of comfort and control because we can fit ourselves and the world as we see it, within a framework

that feels safe and comprehensible. But any conceptual framework or ideology is, in essence, a snake skin, a static, decaying, and confining enclosure, born of preconceived expectations, beliefs, and opinions. Transformative living requires that we willingly and periodically abandon these skins so that we can see and engage in life as it presents itself.

Standing open to experience as it presents itself, day to day and even moment to moment, also requires heightened and sustained attention. It demands that we, in the words of Henry David Thoreau (1963), “learn to reawaken ourselves and keep ourselves awake” (pp. 66-67). To do so, we must view ourselves and the world, not as we have come to expect or wish them to be, but, rather, as they actually are—fluid, variable, complex, difficult, and often ambiguous.

It has often been noted that our capacity for attending to experience as it presents itself is diminished as we mature and assimilate the rules, behavioral norms, and shared beliefs of our culture. As Einstein succinctly put it, “Common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by the age of eighteen” (in Mayer & Holms, 1996, p. 25). Small, indeed, is the number of adults who “see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts” (p. 37). For the vast majority of us, attention must be deliberately cultivated if we are to counteract the often subtle, yet pervasive pressure for assimilation and conformity. To live openly and in full engagement with life, we must train ourselves to pause and to look directly upon experience as it arises, an approach Zen Buddhists term “beginner’s mind.” Through the practice of such openness and attention, we can resist the tendency to blindly and automatically categorize new experiences within existing boxes or to recognize only those dimensions that meet our conditioned expectations.

Living transformatively also requires that we regularly tune our ears inward to hear our own truths and to cultivate our own distinct perspectives. It is only through this process that truly authentic engagement with the world can be achieved (Zohar, 2000). Without awareness of our own deep motives and values, in short, without self-knowledge, we have no view that we can truly call our own. Listening to our inner voice and vision is not enough, however. To fully engage in life we must also build bridges between our inner and outer worlds so that healthy relationships can be cultivated between feeling, intuition, thought, and action.

Challenges and Hurdles of Living Transformatively

How, you might ask, can we sustain the energy and courage required for living transformatively? How can we combat the crippling and numbing effects of fatigue, fear, complacency, and frustration? How can we exist, day in and day out, in a place of uncertainty, instability, and ambiguity? How can we resist our hunger for the familiar, the seduction of comfort and security, the allure of expertise and authority? I’m not sure that many of us can, at least not entirely. The process of evolving toward a more open, discriminating, and inclusive way of being has, for me, been gradual and sporadic. It has required that I strike a balance between learning, humility, self-knowledge, and self-care.

Being fully present, awake, and engaged in life is tiring and, at times, overwhelming. Our energy levels may wane, and we may need rest. Baumeister, Faber & Wallace (1999) report an interesting series of findings revealing limitations in our capacity to sustain active, volitional response to our environment. The self’s executive function (that which is used in all volitional activities, including active response, initiative, and decision-making) is limited, expendable, and most drained in situations where “there is no clearly superior option, or feedback is ambiguous, or many responses are required” (p. 56). The most effective way for this resource to be replenished, they have found, is through rest. One form of rest is to “live without making serious demands on the self... If people can operate on the basis of very familiar patterns and habits, the self can

recover its resources better, because it will not have to expend any more of them by confronting novel situations and exerting volitional control” (p. 60). Thus, we may need to retreat periodically to the comfort and security of the familiar in order to recharge our batteries.

In teasing apart and making sense of our lives’ many dimensions, we also need time for reflection and quiet contemplation. Often, we may find our vision obscured by conditioned responses and unconscious beliefs. Recognizing and confronting our own biases, prejudices, and assumptions is a difficult task, requiring a gradual process of self-observation, reflection, and healing. Transformative living requires that we be deliberate and diligent in this endeavor, but I believe that we must also be also patient with ourselves, as we gradually learn to transcend problematic habits of mind.

Acting upon newfound understandings can also be difficult and frightening, especially if doing so requires us to swim against the cultural tide or to jeopardize our existing relationships, social position, or economic security. The demands and practicalities of our lives may require us to make compromises and to act with greater discretion than our hearts might dictate.

Implications for Educators

As educators, we often open the door to transformative learning and developmental growth, but do little to prepare students for the challenges they will face in cultivating and applying their newfound capacities over time and across changing contexts. In my opinion, it is not enough to spark the fire and send them on their way, assuming that they have the skills required to further stoke the flame on their own or that they will be prepared to manage the demands, risks, and burdens inherent in approaching life from a perspective of increased openness, flexibility, inclusivity, and discrimination.

Even more fundamentally, we need to examine our assumptions relative to the universal value of transformative learning and developmental growth. Can we say, with certainty, that this kind of progress is truly in the best interest of all of our students? Transformative learning has, for me, been a two-edged sword. As I have honed my capacity, over the years, to see the constructed, situated, and contingent nature of all frames of reference, values, and beliefs, I have often felt anchorless, as though I have taken up residence in a no man’s land of tentative best judgments and partial commitments. As I have sharpened my powers of perception and discrimination, I have periodically descended from a healthy skepticism, in assessing my own beliefs and viewing the world around me, to a disabling level of cynicism. Opening much of what I know and virtually everything I encounter to examination, challenge, and debate has periodically led to untenable levels of uncertainty and, at times, to paralysis.

As educators we should pause and question whether we are truly meeting the desires and needs of our students when we ask them to examine and challenge their deeply held beliefs and assumptions. How do we know that they wish to undertake and can manage the long and often painful processes involved in transformative learning and developmental growth? In some cases, might not the risks and demands of this path significantly outweigh the benefits?

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Transformative Learning at the Intersection of Body, Mind, and Spirit

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Abstract: *This paper is a case study, based on the experiences of Dr. Bruce Lipton, a Cellular Biologist, who contends that he was, through a sudden flash of scientific insight, “immediately transformed from a non-spiritual person to the most fully-spiritual person that [he] could imagine,” and that, as a result of this, his “life was immediately transformed.” The paper examines the cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and behavioral dimensions of Lipton’s transformative experience, as a means of demonstrating the human capacity to learn and develop on multiple levels simultaneously.*

Key words: holism, science, spirit

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the mutual interdependence of intellect, emotion, and spirituality in learning and to encourage an evolution of transformative learning theory toward a more holistic and integrative model of learning and development. The paper examines the fascinating journey of Dr. Bruce Lipton, a Cellular Biologist who experienced radical shifts in perspective, spiritual orientation, emotion, and behavior as a result of a sudden scientific breakthrough.

Data about Lipton’s experience and findings was obtained from videotaped and live lectures, published papers, a face-to-face interview, and a telephone interview.

Toward a More Integrative and Holistic Perspective

Lipton’s story is of particular interest to me because it speaks to our capacity, as human beings, to learn and grow on multiple levels simultaneously. Traditionally, psychologists and other social scientists have viewed adult learning and development as primarily a cognitive-rational process occurring at different stages or phases of the life span or in response to shifting social or cultural demands (Erikson, 1963; Levinson, 1978; Mezirow, 2000; Kohlberg, 1981; Kegan, 1994). Until quite recently, little attention has been given to the role of emotions or spirituality in these processes. Reticence on the part of scholars to examine the emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning may reflect broader western tendencies to reify reason over emotion, to fragment self and society, and to separate the sacred from the secular.

In recent years, however, several scholars have called for a more holistic understanding of learning and development, which integrates mind, body and spirit, the rational and the intuitive, and emotion (Moore, 1992; Sardello, 1992, 1995; Hillman, 1996; Borysenko, 1995; Palmer, 1998). And several educators have introduced spiritual perspectives to the field of adult education (Dirkx, 1997; English & Gillen, 2000; Glazer, 1999; Hart, 2001). Despite this growing interest in emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning and development, most definitions and descriptions of transformative learning still fail to adequately address these aspects of the phenomenon.

Interestingly, the relationship between perspective transformation and spiritual awakening is becoming steadily more acknowledged in the realm of frontier science, especially among quantum physicists. Many scientists have observed the spiritual nature of scientific inquiry and

recognized the dramatic impact that new scientific insights can have on individual and collective worldviews (Di Carlo, 1996; Einstein, 1996; Kuhn, 1970; Russell, 2001; Tarnas, 1996; Wallace, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). In fact, Thomas Kuhn (1970) considered the shift from one worldview or paradigm to another to be a conversion experience. Physicist, Danah Zohar (2000) captures beautifully the delicate interplay between intellect, emotion and spirit:

It is the feeling of holiness in everyday objects and events, the sense of the sacred in the act of loving, the almost unbearable ecstasy we feel when understanding something deeply for the first time, the sense of elation when we bring something new into the world, the sense of deep satisfaction when we see justice done, the deep sense of peace when we know that that which we serve serves God. (p. 267).

Lipton's Experience and Insights

In a videotaped lecture, titled "The Science of Innate Intelligence," Lipton (2000) introduces himself and describes his experience of scientific and spiritual breakthrough as follows:

I'm a research scientist. I'm a Cellular Biologist. My work was at the University of Wisconsin, where I was on the staff. I was teaching medical students and working on muscular dystrophy. I was cloning human muscle cells, taking them out and putting them in tissue culture, trying to understand the mechanisms behind their behavior and why they became dystrophic or healthy.

I must tell you now, very clearly, that I was a conventional scientist, meaning that I wasn't spiritual. There was zero spirituality. Why? Because, growing up, I cut my academic teeth on Charles Darwin, and he said that we're machines, made out of genes, and I was just following through, doing research on that. And for a while it looked like this might be the case.

And then there was a point, back in 1985. I can tell you exactly when; it was two fifteen in the morning, and I was up working on an outline for a presentation, dealing with cells and mechanisms of control, which I had been working on for a while, and all of the sudden I saw something, and what happened was that I was immediately transformed from a non-spiritual person to the most fully-spiritual person that I can imagine (in the sense of my own life and where it was coming from) for the following reason -- it was science, as much as two plus two equals four. So the point about this is that my life was immediately transformed.

Lipton goes on to share very interesting, even revolutionary, findings about the adaptive qualities of human cells, arguing that environmental stimuli can induce adaptive mutations within individual cells, which enable the cells to specifically alter their genes. So, in other words, how our cells behave and, by extension, how our bodies respond to experience, over the course of a lifetime, is not genetically predetermined, as many people believe, but, rather, the product of an ongoing process of learning and adaptation.

If Bruce Lipton is right, and there is a significant body of evidence suggesting that he is, it means that we are shaped and reshaped, throughout our lives, on a cellular level, by the experiences we encounter and, more importantly, by our perceptions of those experiences, because it is our perceptions of the external world that determine what kind of stimuli (or messages) we send to the cells within our bodies and, in turn, how those cells respond. It means that we are, fundamentally, adaptive creatures and that our perceptions, including our thoughts, attitudes and beliefs, are capable of transforming our emotional and physical wellbeing. And it means that each

of us is not an isolated machine, made up of individual parts, but, rather, an integrated, adaptive organism that is interconnected with, responsive to, and reflective of the environment in which we live.

Lipton's findings are extremely interesting to me because they offer an interior, cellular view of how human beings adapt and change in response to their environments, and they support the belief, shared by many in the realms of psychology, education, human development, spiritual studies, and the arts, that who we are and what we become over the course of a lifetime are not fixed and finite, determined for us at the moment of conception -- as many geneticists would have us believe -- but, rather, part and parcel of an ongoing process of adaptation and transformation.

Lipton's claim that he was, through a flash of scientific insight, "transformed" from a non-spiritual person to "the most spiritual person" he could imagine also fascinates me because it suggests that both cognitive and spiritual dimensions of self can be radically altered, simultaneously, through a single, epochal event.

In subsequent lectures and interviews, Lipton has revealed how he, over time, acted upon this initial experience of scientific and spiritual breakthrough within both his work life and his personal life. His process of further developing, integrating, and acting upon his newfound understandings is consistent with Jack Mezirow's (1991) model of perspective transformation.

Evidence of Transformative Learning

Jack Mezirow (1991) defines 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; 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 (p. 167).

An analysis of Lipton's experience reveals it to be very consistent with both Mezirow's definition of perspective transformation and the phases through which such transformation often occurs. Specifically, Lipton's account of his experience reveals that he was initially faced with a disorienting dilemma, and that, through a process of redefining and reframing the problem, he achieved a dramatic shift in perspective. This perspective transformation made him more aware and critically reflective of his own prior beliefs and assumptions. For Lipton, this process of self-examination occurred on several levels: intellectually, relative to his scientific beliefs and orientations; spiritually, relative to his relationship to his environment; emotionally, relative to his fears, needs and drives; and behaviorally, relative to his day-to-day attitudes and approach to life.

A significant turning point in Lipton's learning process occurred when he recognized contradictions between his newfound scientific understandings and his behavior. He had discovered, cognitively, how perceptions and beliefs contribute to physical health or illness, but he had not acted upon that understanding within his own life. He had not yet worked on diminishing his own stress levels or on consciously developing a positive, spiritually grounded, orientation toward life. Through conscious effort and deliberate practice, he worked to change deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviors and gradually reprogrammed his emotional and psychological patterns of response. This learning and development resulted in increased self-confidence and competence, which, in turn, lead to healthier personal relationships and to a more satisfying professional life. The process of successfully integrating his beliefs within his own life also added

credibility to his scientific discoveries and encouraged him to continue sharing his discoveries and experiences with others.

The Intersection of Science and Spirit

The cognitive nature of Lipton's experience is self evident, as is illustrated above; the process of scientific inquiry and discovery led to a shift in his frame of reference, which, over time, created "a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective." It could be argued, however, that the most significant aspect of Lipton's experience was the interplay between its scientific and spiritual dimensions.

Through a prolonged and disciplined process of scientific inquiry, Lipton arrived at a breakthrough discovery. The nature of his discovery triggered dramatic changes in his understanding of, beliefs about, and relationship with the external world. Specifically, he experienced what Kuhn (1970) termed a paradigm shift from a materialist-reductionist-determinist worldview, grounded in Newtonian mechanics, to a quantum physics-based understanding of the universe, founded on energetics, holism, and uncertainty. This paradigm shift led him to view the universe as energy-based, dynamic and interconnected and to see himself as physical compliment of this structure. This new worldview radically changed his self-concept and spiritual orientation and led to profound changes in his values, priorities and beliefs. These shift, in turn, gave his life new meaning and purpose, and set him on a long-term path of psychological and spiritual development.

Of note, Lipton's conversion from a mechanistic worldview to a deeply spiritual one came uninvited. Interviews with Lipton confirm that he had no interest in spirituality, prior to his discovery, or any expectation that his work would lead him in that direction. It is possible, in fact, that Lipton might have dismissed the spiritual implications of his findings had they not been firmly grounded in science, "as much a two plus two equals four."

The Emotional Component

Lipton's radical transformation of perspective was also highly emotional. This dimension of his experience can be viewed on several levels: the initial excitement and elation he felt upon arriving at his breakthrough discovery; the specific nature of his findings relative to the interrelationships between thought, emotion, and physical health; and his own long-term emotional development.

On the night of his discovery, at 2:15 a.m., he felt overwhelmed with joy and exhilaration. Not wanting to disturb those he knew who were sleeping, and yet feeling compelled to share his discovery with others, he went to the library, where diligent medical students could be found burning the midnight oil. He rushed to share his discoveries with whoever would listen, even though he knew that these medical students (still diligently studying Newtonian mechanics) could not truly appreciate the significance of his breakthrough. Rumors that circulated around the campus after that night revealed this to be true; the students he encountered assumed his ecstatic mood to be the product of alcohol or drug consumption. In truth, he was high on discovery, high on the feeling that he had solved a profound problem and unearthed a more accurate understanding of what it is to be human.

Lipton's scientific discovery also led him to a deeper appreciation of the central role emotion plays in physical health and illness. His findings led him, in turn, to consciously and deliberately work on his own emotional development and to encourage others to do the same.

Conclusions

Lipton's experience, the nature of his findings, the meaning he made of that experience, and the ways in which he acted upon his new understandings over time, provide an interesting lens for viewing how dramatic shifts in perspective can trigger significant and enduring changes in self-concept, worldview, spiritual orientation, and life course. Lipton's experience challenges assumptions that cognitive-rational growth is separate and fundamentally different from emotional or spiritual growth and that the realms of science and spirit are mutually incompatible. Alan Wallace (2000), in his book, *The Taboo of Subjectivity*, speaks to the need for a more integrative understanding of human experience. "Our intellect and feelings do not function autonomously," he writes. "Our thoughts are frequently charged with emotion, and our feelings arise in response to what we think to be true. To reify and alienate these facets of our inner life is to fragment each of us from within" (p. 8).

Transformative experiences, such as Lipton's, help to break down the artificial barriers dividing cognitive, emotional, spiritual, physical, and behavioral dimensions of experience and pave the way for more integrative perspectives on how human beings learn, adapt, and grow. It is particularly important that we, as scholars and educators, move beyond predominantly cognitive models of learning and development. As a wise and deeply spiritual scientist once observed, "We should take care not to make the intellect our god; it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality" (Einstein, quoted in Mayer, & Holmes, 1996, p.25).

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Changing Men: Integrating Freirian Education, Human Relations Training, and Anti-Oppression Education in a Men's Transformational Learning Experience

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Abstract: *This paper summarizes highlights of my work to help men learn what it means to “be male” in society today, how those meanings have been constructed, and how they might like to reconstruct them. It integrates and implements principles from Freire’s education for critical consciousness, human relations training groups (T-groups), and anti-oppression (social justice) education (AOE), and uses Kegan’s constructive-developmental model of transformation. Integration and adaptation of these approaches to transformative education have broad implications for engaging members of other more privileged social groups in a similar process of learning, action, and change. This paper provides an overview of course goals and methodology, describes pedagogical theories on which it is based and their adaptation to goals at hand, outlines an integrated model for a pedagogy for men’s consciousness raising, and illustrates impacts of this course on some men who have experienced it.*

Keywords: Freire, consciousness-raising, social justice education

Introduction

This paper draws on my ongoing efforts to help men learn about what it means to “be male” in our society today, how those meanings have been constructed, and how they might like to reconstruct those meanings, both within their own consciousness and their social contexts. This work has been carried out through development, in theory and practice, of a series of college courses variously titled, “On Being Male: Men and Masculinity in Contemporary Society.” In this paper, I summarize theoretical foundations of this course, briefly describe how it has been put into practice, and offer some reflections on what participants and I have learned.

A Pedagogy for Men’s Consciousness-Raising: An Integrated Approach

In working to develop this pedagogy and course design, I have drawn on and integrated principles and practices from three educational approaches: laboratory and human relations training groups (T-groups) (Benne, Bradford, & Lippit, 1964; Benne, Bradford, Gibb, & Lippit, 1975, 1975b); Freire’s education for critical consciousness (Freire, 1970, 1973, 1978, 1994); and anti-oppression (social justice) education (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Bell & Schneidwind, 1989). Teaching principles and participant objectives underlying those approaches are described briefly, followed by presentation of an integrated model that draws on the three in a synthesis of education for personal growth and social change. I explore in more depth the applicability of Freire’s approach to working with this population. The synthesis creates a model of a pedagogy for liberation that potentially can be adapted and applied to help motivate the more privileged members of society from various social groups to join with the less privileged or oppressed in working toward the creation of a new social order that is more just and more fulfilling for all.

These three approaches provide the building blocks that I have used to outline an integrated pedagogy that is theoretically capable of helping men to become both “liberated” and anti-sexist,” to develop more autonomy from the dictates of gender role prescriptions, more balance of the stereotypically “masculine” and “feminine” in their repertoire of personal behaviors, more awareness of the dynamics of sexism--personal, cultural, and institutional--and more activism in opposing it. Through an integration of some approaches that promote personal growth and others that promote political awareness and activism, it has been possible to develop a pedagogy that promotes both personal growth and social/political activism.

From the T-group approach come principles for helping men become aware of the limitations of some of their traditional “male” personality traits and develop a more androgynous repertoire of interpersonal skills. In helping participants obtain feedback about the impact of their interpersonal behavior on others and experiment with alternatives, such groups can help men to move beyond stereotypical patterns of behavior. When they increase their understanding of the roots of these attitudes and behaviors, men can develop more ability to freely and autonomously choose whether or not they wish to follow the script that has been written for them. Freire’s education for critical consciousness offers principles to use to help men identify the factors in their social/economic/ political environments that limit their growth and development, to see the connection of those limits to the oppression of women, and hence to motivate them to act against personal and institutional sexism. Through a process of dialogue, problem-posing, and action, Freirian education presents the opportunity to make connections between the limitations of traditional gender roles and patriarchal institutions and power relations in which those roles are embedded. Anti-oppression education offers strategies for helping men recognize the contradictions between their current attitudes and behaviors and the democratic principles of equality and social justice. When men’s awareness of the effects of sexism on women and on themselves is increased, it can help motivate them to take anti-sexist actions.

This integrated pedagogical model uses frameworks found within the learning theories of two of the approaches. Anti-oppression education offers a broad framework for conceptualizing the consciousness raising process as akin to the developmental change process described by Robert Kegan (1982, 2000) in the phases of defending, surrendering, and reintegrating. Each of those phases is supported by a learning environment offering confirmation, contradiction, or continuation, and on teaching strategies to provide the appropriate learning environment for each phase. To these three learning environments, I have added a fourth, “creation”, which is needed to support the process through which people can develop and experiment with new ways of thinking and acting that can resolve the contradictions or disequilibrium that they may be experiencing. The learning/change theory that underlies the T-group approach (Lewin’s model of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing) can be used to integrate the participant objectives of all of the approaches. The process described is closely related to the transformative learning process as described by Mezirow (1991a, 1991b, 2000), and as applied by others to consciousness raising about various issues (Aurerro 2001;Dirxx 1998; Hart 1991).

The following table provides a simple schematic representation of the relationship between these facilitating environments and participant objectives:

<i>Facilitating Environment</i>	<i>Participant Objectives</i>
confirmation	unfreezing
contradiction	
creation	changing
continuity	refreezing

Chart 1, the model of an integrated model of a pedagogy for men’s consciousness-raising, outlines the teaching principles to be used in the development of each kind of environment and the objectives to be achieved. These principles and objectives integrate principles of Freire’s approach with those of the T-group and AOE.

CHART 1: MODEL OF A PEDAGOGY FOR MEN’S CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

<u>Learning Environment/Teaching Principles</u>	<u>Participant Objectives</u>
<u>1. Confirmation</u> a) Set norms for creating a nonjudgmental dialogical communication process.	<u>1. Unfreezing, Part I:</u> Feeling safe and affirmed a) Feel comfortable, safe, affirmed, and accepted.

<p>b) Set norms that make the personal experiencing of learners the basic content of discussion.</p> <p>c) Structure activities that build trust and dialogue and facilitate personal sharing.</p> <p><u>2. Contradiction</u></p> <p>a) Process interpersonal behavior in the group.</p> <p>b) Present new information, definitions, and cognitive organizers about gender roles and sexism.</p> <p>c) Structure activities through which participants encounter contradictions in their present behavior and consciousness.</p> <p>d) Problematize—pose limits to men's growth and development as problems to be analyzed and solved.</p> <p>e) Praxis—engage participants in action to transform themselves and their society, and in reflection on that action.</p> <p><u>3. Creation</u></p> <p>a) Model alternative interpersonal behaviors.</p> <p>b) Dialogue/discussion involving an analysis of the causes of limits and problems, and envisioning of alternatives and solutions.</p> <p>c) Present alternative cognitive maps.</p> <p>d) Provide structure for planning actions for personal and social changes.</p> <p><u>4. Continuity</u></p> <p>a) Summarize and synthesize.</p> <p>b) Support groups.</p> <p>c) Encourage continued praxis.</p> <p>d) Gradual disengagement by the leader.</p>	<p>b) Open up and share personal feelings and experiences regarding: (1) here and now experience in the group; and (2) there and then experiences in the past and outside of group relating to masculinity, gender roles, and sexism.</p> <p><u>2. Unfreezing, Part 2: Feeling anxiety and disequilibrium.</u></p> <p>a) Experience feedback about one's effect on others and the group process.</p> <p>b) Feel heightened anxiety, dissonance, and disequilibrium about some stereotypically male interpersonal behaviors.</p> <p>c) Recognize connections between some of those dissonant behaviors and male socialization.</p> <p>d) Stretch and broaden one's scope of knowledge about gender roles and sexism.</p> <p>e) Recognize some of the dehumanizing effects on self and others of gender roles and sexism.</p> <p>f) Experience feelings of dissonance and disequilibrium regarding one's current way of making meaning about gender roles and sexism.</p> <p><u>3. Changing</u></p> <p>a) Recognize interpersonal effectiveness of a more androgynous range of behavior.</p> <p>b) Recognize some of the socio-economic-political causes of some of the limits that one experiences as a man, and the connection of those limits to gender roles and sexism.</p> <p>c) Recognize or envision alternative personal behaviors and alternative forms of social organization.</p> <p>d) Experience more satisfying and fulfilling ways of being with other men.</p> <p>e) Recognize and adopt a new cognitive map about these issues that resolves disequilibrium one was experiencing.</p> <p>f) Engage in praxis—action-reflection-action—in trying to change oneself and environment, in and out of group.</p> <p><u>4. Refreezing</u></p> <p>a) Integration of new behaviors and consciousness into relational system.</p>
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When we consider the applicability of Freire's pedagogy to the goals of this project for anti-sexist education with men, there are really two aspects of that pedagogy to consider: the *process*--which is based on dialogue, democratic social relations, and praxis; and the *content*--what people dialogue and problem-solve about, which is based on the limits they experience to their human growth and development. The effects of that educational process would appear to be just as applicable to women as to men. The effects of the content are more problematic.

Freire's pedagogy, which gives people an experience of dialogically, democratically, and collaboratively naming, analyzing, and acting on their social reality, can make two contributions to development of critical consciousness: 1) Help people realize that knowledge and social reality (including social rules and social institutions such as gender roles and male-dominated institutions), are not absolute and given, but are historical creations, which people have collective power to rename and recreate; 2) Serve the "announcing" function of giving people an experience in a more fulfilling and affirming social reality and a sense of the kind of human relationships and kind of society that they could struggle to create. Because everyone in society, oppressors as well as oppressed, is socialized to believe that present social reality is essentially

unchangeable--that is, that it is the only and the best one possible--these emancipatory effects of Freire's process can and should be experienced by members of both social groups.

Since the content of Freire's approach is based on the particular limit-situation, or aspects of social reality, that block an individual's or group's ability to be self-determining and to fulfill their human potential, the power of Freire's pedagogy to help men develop critical consciousness about the nature of sexism must be based on the extent to which solutions to that which limits or dehumanizes men in their roles as men are related to the oppression of women. In other words, to what extent must men's liberation from those limitations be based on women's liberation?

This is a complex question, but it seems safe to conclude that some limits that men experience are related to sexism and women's oppression and some are not, or some limits are more directly related than others. Some limits that men may feel and talk about may in fact be caused in the short term by women's liberation and empowerment as men lose some of their privileges, freedom, and opportunity to pursue their self-interest that those privileges made possible. On the other hand, those limits men experience through the constraints of the traditional male gender role can be traced directly to sexism and women's oppression, and as Freire (1970, p. 25) himself has pointed out, there is the dehumanization which all oppressors experience when they are in dominant/ subordinate relationships and treat others in dehumanizing ways.

Because some of the limit-situations that confront men as men are much more directly related to women's oppression than others, it makes sense for Freirian educators to focus, if possible, on more directly related limit-situations; be careful about helping men see less direct connections in regard to other limit situations by codifying and presenting limits in appropriate ways, including limits that involve class and race; and avoid focusing on limit situations whose solutions would appear on the surface to require more rather than less oppression of women.

A discussion of some specific examples will make these points clearer. One area in which many men feel limited and dehumanized as a direct result of women's oppression involves the difficulty of having equal, authentic, and satisfying relationships between men and women. (Miller, 1976). Because problem-posing and problem-solving around these issues would lead men most directly to see the need to overcome the contradiction between oppressors and oppressed, limits and themes in regard to this issue are probably the most appropriate and most promising focus. Many other limits that men experience are based on gender roles, which involve various prescriptions about personality traits and social roles men should have, or on problems in relationships between men and men. On a superficial level, it can often appear that many of these limits can be resolved by a simple "change of heart" or personality without necessarily impacting on women's oppression. When we work with men who are most concerned about these kinds of limits, it is therefore important to help them identify connections between those limits and roles, on one hand, and between sexist and heterosexist ideologies and social structures that support them, on the other. In addition, although men are not oppressed as men, many are oppressed as members of other subordinate groups; for example, working class men, gay men, and men of color. It can make sense, if men in a group are concerned about their oppression in these areas, to begin with these generative themes, but then to continue to present codifications or analyses of these limits that can help men see their connection to sexism and patriarchy, just as it is also important to see the connection of sexism to racism, classism, and heterosexism. In each case, the point is to help men see connections between the personal limits they may be experiencing and the power relations and social structures in which those experiences occur; the connections, that is, between our privilege and our pain.

To conclude, all of the key principles of Freire's approach are clearly applicable and useful in helping men develop more awareness and activism about sexism if the limit-situations focused on are those related to the oppression of women, or if a special effort is made to help men see the connections of other limits to sexism. The most relevant principles (with key provisions or qualifications in parentheses) are: set norms for dialogue (nonjudgmental listening, unconditional acceptance); identify themes and limit-situations (related to sexism and oppression of women); codify limit-situations (showing connection to sexism and oppression of women); problematize--present limits as problems to be solved; praxis--plan actions, act, reflect, act.

These principles, with their emphasis on development of awareness and activism, can be used effectively in tandem with those of T-group, which can help men become more autonomous and androgynous. Anti-oppression education provides an integrating framework.

Chart 2 (see handout) presents an overview of the course design in which this model was applied, outlining (a) the "what, so what, now what," sequencing of questions and problems (Borton 1970), both within the overall design and within each session; (b) the basic questions and problems posed within each session, which, in Freire's terms, can lead to the sort of dialogue, decoding, and analysis that can facilitate the development of critical consciousness; and (c) the primary learning environments (based on the confirmation, contradiction, and continuity model described above). This overview is presented as a generic model that can and should change in response to the particular interests, problems, and questions of concerns of those in the group. It is at that point when the men in the group, in response to the sorts of broad questions posed above, engage with specific concerns and questions regarding significant issues and limits in their own lives, that the real process of change and learning can occur. Therefore, the detailed session-by-session course experience will vary significantly in response. For a detailed description of an early version of this course design see Schapiro (1985); for a detailed course design on sexism for mixed gender groups see Goodman and Schapiro (1997).

The course can be divided into three main sections, each basically addressing one of the three questions: What? (Sessions 1-3), So what? (Sessions 4-12), and Now what? (Sessions 13-14). More specifically, the "what" in this case is: What is traditional masculinity? How have norms of traditional masculinity affected course participants as individuals? Thus the first three sessions of the course are devoted to identifying and exploring norms of masculinity, ways those norms were learned by members of the group, and some aspects of their behavior and personality that were shaped by those norms. Within the basic "what" of this first section is therefore a first "so what?": How did those norms affect the people in the group? The basic "so what?" addressed in Sessions 4-12 is really: How do those "masculine" qualities affect and relate to our relationships with women and with other men? How do those qualities support and how are they supported by institutionalized sexism? How do those qualities relate to and support racism, classism, and other forms of oppression? Some "now what?" questions are considered in the course of considering each of these topics individually, but in the final two sessions the "now what?" question becomes paramount: What do you/we want to do about what you/we have learned? What kinds of personal and social changes do you/ we want to work for? How? Through the logic of the "what/so what/now what" sequence, group members are given the opportunity to identify what that concept is, to analyze how actualization of that concept affects them and others, and to begin to develop and to put into practice a new concept of masculinity. The correlation of these steps to Freire's naming, decoding, and acting should be clear.

Men in Transition: Experiences of Change

The pedagogical model and course design as presented above may be theoretically sound, but the real test has come as that theory and model have been put into practice, and again and again, revised in response. The strongest evidence of effectiveness of this revised design has come in the words of the participants themselves, as they have reflected, both during and at the end of the experience, on what they have gained from it. In their words, which are included in a longer version of this paper, and were excerpted from some of their self-evaluations and reflection papers (Schapiro, 1999), I think we can hear a transformation process at work, a process that connects the personal and the political.

We can hear in these men's words movement away from confronting and acknowledging personal limitations and constraints, to seeing connections of those limits to systems, structures, and forms of consciousness, and their engagement in working at once toward personal and social change. As we help others and ourselves to uncover connections between our personal dilemmas and frustrations and the systems of oppression in which we live, we lay the groundwork for the sorts of personal and social transformation that can help us all live more satisfying and meaningful lives. As Freire has taught us, no one is free while others are oppressed.

As I reflect on my personal learning through this experience, I realize that this work has helped me come to some important realizations along the way. One of the things that my students have helped me to learn is the need to move away from normative concepts of "masculinity" based on the white middle-class heterosexual experience. In earlier iterations of this course, most of the readings and discussion were based around that normative concept of masculinity, and even though our purpose was to critique that concept, I came to realize how that very notion was marginalizing to gay men, men of color, and others outside of that dominant paradigm, including those who consider themselves to be "transgender." Broadening my own concept of the norms of masculinity and the masculine experience, recognizing that there is not one masculinity to critique and transform, but many masculinities, has helped me to broaden and deepen my own sense of what I am and can be as a man and a person. Working to help other men to reflect on and transform their understanding of gender, to become more whole, and more able and willing to confront social injustice, has kept me doing all of that for myself. I have allowed myself, in Freire's (1994) words, to enter into dialogue which, "as a democratic relationship . . . is the opportunity I have to open myself up to others' thinking" (p. 119) and to the possibility of being transformed in the process. For that, I am grateful.

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Culture of Relational Power: The Social Construction of Transformation

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Abstract: *Large city-wide organizations of organizations contribute to the social constructed transformation of the self, the mediating institutions and to the city structures. The objectification of images in personal stories, of relationships in mediating institutions and of issues in society at the city level provides opportunity to change structures in the psyche and the social milieu.*

Keywords: community organizing, social construction, story telling

Community organizing is inherently concerned with transforming structures and culture in society toward some sort of desired goal. Organizing people is a fertile place for adult transformation as the imagination and psychic structures are agitated to vision society in another way. The community organizations under review in this article are sponsored by the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), a national network of organizers who seek to build broad-based organizations (BBOs) in cities. Presently there are 65 organizations primarily in the U.S., one in Canada, several in the UK and two forming in Germany. The theoretical framework that guides these organizations has evolved over the 50 years of their existence; influenced by sociology, Saul Alinsky reared in the ghettos of Chicago, encountered social services, police departments, and slum landlords, along with churches, unions, schools, and community groups, as systems who failed to increase the material and social conditions of huge numbers of people. Alinsky's vision was to train hundreds of leaders in a community organizing training school to organize against dying inner cities, racialized ghettos, and poverty stricken families; the middle class is the focus for organizing. In the 1970s polarization strategies shifted to relationship-based organizing, which tends to sustain a broad-based structure in a city.

In this article, I seek to show that transformation is socially constructed in groups and in relationships. Even though individuals transform, it is within the context of relationships in a powerful organization that transformation, both social and personal, occurs. For this article there is an attempt to explicate the subject-object relationship as it pertains to the dynamics in a culture of relational power. The blending of critical social theory, psychoanalytic and analytical depth theories, as well as individual constructivism, is used as framework.

The Context

The assumptions for the research revolve around the following: for transformation to be called transformation it must involve some kind of structural change; i.e., structures in the psyche (using the triad ego, personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious structures) and structures in the social system (institutions in civil society, institutions in city/state/provincial administration, and institutions in the market which now include more than local businesses, global corporations). In this research story telling, personal and ancient, includes a mytho-poetic approach (Dirkx, 2000) to reorganization of the psyche. It seems that myths, metaphors, and symbols engage at deeper unconscious levels than the rational ego. Meaning perspectives (habits of minds) are also disturbed as participative action in power struggles transform cognitive schemas (Mezirow, 2000) and epistemological orientations (Kegan, 2000), both located within the ego or personal unconscious structures of the psyche. And transformation of society with the advent of a BBO that builds a culture of relational power (many relationships across the city) as a new institution in society is structural transformation of society. The research falls within a rich tradition of adult education as socially conscious and politically active in democratic life (see

Stewart, 1987 for Lindeman; Welton, 1995; Freire, 1970; Bell, Gaventa, and Peters, 1990 for Horton; and Holst, 2002; Spencer, 2002; Schied & Zacharakis-Jutz, 1993, for social movements.)

Broad based organizations (BBOs) are organizations of organizations, composed of mostly school councils, unions, church congregations, civic groups, and neighborhood associations, which IAF calls mediating institutions. Mediating institutions have historically buffered families from bureaucratic policies and practices, but they have weakened as the market has strengthened. The aim of BBOs is to strengthen mediating institutions, transform the people in them, and transform the society to strengthen the civil society sector, one of three necessary for democracy. (The other two are the market and the state.)

The success of IAF sponsored organizations has been heartening. A living wage is now being paid to city employees in Baltimore. Thousands of former welfare recipients in Texas are now trained and employed to run large industrial machinery in the construction industry, Project Quest. In Brooklyn, NY, 3000 new homes are now built and owned by the working poor, the Nehemiah Housing Project. In Texas, the children in 150 poorest primarily elementary schools in the state are now showing test scores at or just below the state mean in the Alliance School Project. In addition, millions of dollars have been raised for flood control, upgrading of substandard housing, prison reform, road construction, and many other projects.

Educational experiences are essential for the formation of critical citizens, for leadership development, and for the rejuvenation of democracy and civil society. There are four opportunities for citizens to experience education in IAF organizations: 1) Ten day residential training sessions run by national trainers (three per year); 2) Local Formation Learning Institutes run by local organizers and leaders (usually 6 sessions, two hours each); 3) Informal research and planning meetings; and 4) large actions at the city level. Informed by critical social theory, theological reflection, political and social theory, and an agenda to foster personal growth among citizens, IAF organizers are skilled in time-tested strategies that promote success on social issues, on public relationships, and on the development of people.

The qualitative research included interviews with ten national Industrial Areas Foundation organizer/trainers over a period of 2 years. Some people were interviewed twice; all are on the national IAF team who teach in the ten-day training and all are key organizers in the BBOs in their cities in the US. In addition the author participated in two broad-based city-wide alliances, one for twelve years, and attended two 10-day national training labs. The focus of the research was the nature of the transformation that the organizers witnessed in both themselves and their leaders as they participate in social action. Thus, the research focuses on adults' transformation as they learn in the context of urban, relationship-based, and informal settings.

The literature

For this article, transformation occurs as the intersection of the social and personal in contexts of power building and informal adult education. Substantial personal development seems to occur as external action to change public structures happens. Morrow and Torres (2002) cite the intersection of Habermas's theory of communicative action with Freire's theory of pedagogy and development as critical social psychology. For this particular blend of social and psychological theory, there are assumptions that character formation requires both dialogical and developmental processes (Morrow and Torres, p.91). Individuals grow best in dynamic environments that are educational, experiential, and respectful of differences. A critical approach assumes that structures in society are in flux, not reified but able to be influenced. If unattended to particularly by civil society, corporate capitalism (the market) will continue to govern society,

bypassing the state and citizens, proceeding without any accountability or checks and balances. Critical theorists decry the widening gap between the rich and the poor and maintain that declining social conditions have constrained the natural development of a larger and larger portion of people worldwide.

What Freire and Habermas call for is a radical democracy that is political, social, and educative. Broad-based organizing seeks changes in social policies and structures that enable citizens to provide material, psychological, and spiritual conditions for healthy families, a radical notion that departs from the state mandate to provide these functions. In the process of working to recover civil society in the public arena the quality of life and adults transform. Distorted communication among oppressors with power and the oppressed goes through a process of objectification (dialogically and experienced in action). It is a social construction of reality as groups, through interactive communicative dialogue and action, identify the assumptions and claims that presently govern society. It is transformation when groups change their way of “seeing,” a structural change in all three structures of the psyche, as people collectively build new structures in society that support humane treatment and labor that protects the family.

One cannot divorce context from internal changes that occur within the individual. A volatile context concerned about building power to make changes in society, is fraught with conflict and disequilibria, necessary ingredients for transformation (Mezirow, 2000). A relationship and experience with power seems to disrupt habits of mind and cultural customs enough to transform internal structures in the individual as well as external structures in society. Gradual changes in neoliberal government orientations that reward those already wealthy, increasing their wealth and power, have stymied citizen opportunities and growth. Social safety nets have dissolved or weakened to the point that frustration, crime, and poverty have eaten holes in society. There are repeated pleas to reclaim the lifeworld from the hegemony of the market and the state (Brookfield, 2000; Welton, 1995; Freire, 1970), and for the emergence of critical citizens who participate to rejuvenate democracy (Inglehart, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Barber, 2000).

Relationships as key to the social construction of transformation

If BBOs are based on the building of relationships across institutions in a city, what kind of relationships are we talking about? One of the tenets of social construction is that the internal construction of reality as an object, while separate from the self or subject, is socially derived. Subjectivities are socially determined and “if humans have certain innate potentials, and a given form of society systematically inhibits their realization then this factual characteristic logically entails a negative value judgment” (Morrow and Torres, p. 943). Through participation in a social context, such as a BBO, there emerges a new socialization based on building a culture of relational power. Having power is the content for building a new social reality; i.e., how do those in power use their power? What are the consequences? The content for the dialogue is about social issues that have to do with the common good, adequate education, housing, health, and food. The transformation is a shift not from what one personally thinks about social issues, to what the group thinks about them. And it is not just talk; it is action, experienced as reaction from the power elite. While this enlarges the personality, the group transforms and an external object (the issue) becomes the object/focus for relationship. The object in the subject-object relationship involves three kinds of structural changes: (1) the objects in one’s personal history three to five generations back, i.e., there is a new relationship to the internal images of the self; (2) the objectification of people’s differences (personal reality) in their church or civic group, i.e., a relationship between mediating institution and the self; and (3) the objectification of an

issue, such as housing, from the self/group, i.e., BBO's group relationship to an external objects in society (structures with power).

From an educational perspective in this research, the concern is with developmental change in citizens engaged in the practice of democracy. The small public forums within mediating institutions sort out the group's positions on issues, and become the training ground for the dynamics that occur in the larger city-wide BBO. As issues are discussed at the BBO level, people see that some groups view reality differently. Objectification occurs easier in social construction, as the object of dialogue is more tangible. For example, if finding adequate housing for families is the issue, the objects in society include the banks that give the loans, the builders who design and build on particular land sites, and government services who provide water, sewer, electricity. The dynamics include internalization of what these "objects" can do for the organization to further the goal. Through dialogue what seemed outside reality (owning a new home), goes through a process of objectification (learning about the banks, the builders, the public works) and comes into relationship with the self and the group. The possibility is glimpsed, the culture of relational power exists (organized people adept at success in action), and what occurs is transformation of reality (epistemological and ontological). Undifferentiated subjects (self, people, and civil groups), become differentiated and objects for relationship. In developmental language, "Conscientization, which is identified with cultural action for freedom, is the process by which in the subject-object relationship...the subject finds the ability to grasp, in critical terms, the dialectical unity between self and object" (Freire, 1985, p. 160).

The Self in Relation to Story

The self for this research is social, a dialogical subject whose actions cannot be reduced to individualistic self-interests alone. There is a consciousness, a mind, a sense of who *we* are, but lives are relational and who we are is ultimately socially determined. Even an individual self is derived socio-historically from genetics and previous historical occurrences. Discussions about the self are usually reserved for psychoanalytic and analytical depth psychology. The data point to inclusion of these theories in making sense of relationship-based organizing. When organizers first encounter potential leaders and groups, the initial strategy is to get in touch with one's own story and make public those foundational stories that have motivated participation in broad-based organizing. What is happening is differentiation of the subject (self) to the object of one's own personal history. Existentially the alienation is from one's self and this is becoming more reified as culture has become more mechanical and consumerist. The feeling is that one is incomplete and to become more human requires something. And paradoxically, this occurs when the internal objects in one's childhood experiences (mother, father, grandparents) are compared to events in history that influenced the direction or focus of family life. Historic migration from the land to urban industrialization, from pride in cultural heritage to assimilative homogenized traditions, from complexes that regenerate themselves throughout generations (such as abandonment and being overwhelmed), have the possibility of being objectified in dialogue and integrated. While it might look like knowledge construction, it is more like an ontological quest, a vocation, to become more "human." The key is to gain some objective distance from the specific events of one's personal and social history, bring them into awareness through an archaeological dig (de-repression), where subjective unconscious knowing is lifted into awareness and shared socially. Through collective problem solving, events in personal history are matched with social conditions of the times. The internal child has the possibility to re-view reality. Thus, the weight of personal calamity is de-subjectivized and the emotions that control and constrain the

personality are diffused and integrated. The form changes from being oppressed powerless victims, when taken-for-granted realities are challenged, as personal stories are shared and become foundation of issue identification. New ways of relating to one's self requires an integration of emotion and new knowledge, and a relationship to power (experiment with being powerful) in a social collective. The internal emotion (form) changes from explosive, highly charged emotional anger, for instance, that may erupt unsolicited in victimizing situations (encounters with power), to controlled anger that is necessary for public life.

The Mediating institutions in relation to BBOs

Mediating institutions are voluntary associations of people interested in having social relationships with each other. It is possible to have social forums in these civil spaces but communicative action requires systematic work on building relationships with Others, finding out what is in people's self interests. "If it is difficult to have a conscious relationship to our own psychological history, how difficult it is, then, to have a relationship with the Other, not only the Other as Other, but even that Other which is our own soul" (Hollis, 1998, p. 71). But at some point adults have to say: "I am not only what happened to me; I am also what I choose to become," and that requires risking disclosure to others, discovering similarities in stories.

The public relationships built in small groups designed to work on issues within a BBO and/or in mediating institutions, revolve around research, planning, and action. The Other in this instance is a public Other, not an intimate private Other in families. The purpose of the relationship with the Other is to enhance public life. These redefined public citizens aim to reorganize the social fabric of a city, to disturb it, to shake it out of its normal way of operating, and to add new leaders with different orientations to power and the way things work. For example, when there are thirty groups who have pledged membership in a BBO and who send representatives from their groups to a research or planning meeting, there are people who would normally not work or know each other around the table. When each of these people go back to their own organizations which could be a church, a school, a union, or a community group, and ask for decisions on the issue under review, it forces the mediating institutions to consider issues they would not normally consider. Most of the time, the new ideas, issues, and thoughts enliven the mediating institutions that traditionally approach family problems with charity or band-aids.

Broad-based organization in relation to society

The relationships in a city-wide BBO are composed of representatives of member institutions. The objects include multiple issues; the huge numbers of people allow work on many issues simultaneously. The object of people's historic and present frustration (examples could be substandard housing, high utility bills, closing of inner city schools, poor schools, inability to provide for families adequately, or simply lack of respect, dignity, and identity) is taken seriously and comes within the gaze of the public in an organized way. These are external objects that now must be related to; they (e.g., substandard houses) are no longer just tolerated. Because the people take the time to relate to their internal emotional complexes (highly charged energy psychic nodules that rest in the deep unconscious), stop chit-chatting to each other, and focus their conversations on relationships with Others in the public arena on larger issues than the self-derived interests, they now meet each other as subjectivities that are differentiated and known for their uniqueness. They are not just monads marching on an issue; they have both unique and socially similar personal and psychic histories organized and focused on a target.

The sense of self that is unencumbered from repressed material and related to Others makes possible a new subject—subject relationship with those already constituted in the collective. Whereas *subject-to-subject* relationships can be characterized as undifferentiated (as in semi-intransitive magical consciousness), subject-to-object relations in social theory have historically been viewed as how an oppressor views the oppressed. The oppressors hold the power and the oppressed view themselves as victims with an internalized servile consciousness. This distorted pattern of thinking keeps both the oppressors and the oppressed in bondage. When the objects have been externalized, i.e., the planning and research for action on an issue occurs in small groups, and finally the action itself occurs city-wide with hundreds of people, it is possible to transform individuals and groups into critically aware citizens with subjectivities that are known and where a subject—subject relationship exists. The objective presence of power built in a broad-based organization (organized people) is essential to see the dialectical relationship between self and society and is the key element in the social construction of transformation. The building of power in a broad-based organization requires that the oppressor views society as coercive while the oppressed de-repress servile consciousness. The social construction of transformation shifts the oppressor-to-oppressed relationship from a subject-object relationship to a stage where power is built that forces the oppressor to recognize the oppressed as capable, intelligent, and above all, organized. The final subject—subject relationship is transformed with the same people who previously viewed themselves as victims within the collective to ones who can relate to power (banks, builders, public works) in successful ways.

Conscientization is a critical process that seeks to uncover society as it really is. It requires that citizens have a structural perspective of society as a whole and requires a rethinking of the subjects' personal history in social terms. The subject-object relations of the “inquiring subject” on propositions based on empirical observations, requires in depth dialogue and questioning. If subjects are to move into critically conscious citizens, the subject—subject relations must include the existential angst (and suffering) of critical self reflection as well as self and group reflection on the issues that keep people from becoming more fully human. What is called for is hermeneutic inquiry down into understanding and causal explanations for many subjects' shared stories throughout history. A “dominated subject” is trapped within the meanings of what is taken for granted and what is assumed to be unique to one's own family. In the participative action of broad-based organizing, there is a moment of recognition (that can occur at any intersection in the self/group/mass organization) that “critique as knowledge and critique as transformation” are potentially combined in that “the agent can no longer naively participate in the repetitive actions of cultural reproduction” (Morrow and Torres, p. 128).

The complexity of this transformation cannot be underestimated. When groups begin to see that together they have more power to get something done, their imaginations are aroused, a new vision emerges. Strategies are learned that cut issues cleanly for success in action. Ideas about appropriate language, emotions, and ways of operating are objectified as people dialogue in medium to small groups about the purpose/object of the action. Leaders are recognized as dialogue and action shift into focus the way structures in society operate. Reality that was individually constructed is now decidedly social reality, hammered out in groups, and experienced in action. The new structural form is a large organization of organizations that has power to get something done that is meaningful. It requires both social and personal structural change for this to happen.

Summary

Transformation as change in structure (form) occurs within the dialectic of self and group, group and group, and group and BBO; the dualisms, subject/object, mind/world, are objectified and then reunited into a whole in the social construction of transformation. The leaders have integrated emotional content that has constrained their personalities, kept them provisional (Hollis, 1998), and this new freedom from emotional baggage has released them to relate to internal and external objects. Structural change in society, the building of a city-wide BBO, requires relationships with one's personal power (deep structures in the collective unconscious as well as epistemological ways and content of knowing) and group social power. Structural change occurs in the mediating institutions as they shift instrumental program planning orientations (using market language and band-aid/charity approaches) to critical relational power cultures. Civil society, composed of voluntary organizations primarily interested in political affairs, change into a sector that is dense with vibrant groups, all dialoguing on the common good and the public interest. The most obvious structural change is the presence of a new power structure in society, a broad-based organization. Combining the talents and energies of potential leaders across the city and including thousands of people in actions as participative democracy, a BBO is a new player on the block, the city/Provincial-State/regional block. Highly organized with a board of directors composed of representatives from the various member groups, the BBO is committed to holding its members, political leaders and other state/market players accountable, as well as to transforming democracy into a vibrant, dynamic reality.

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Investigation in Practice: Setting the Stage for Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *This paper explores signs of transformative learning in a school setting among practicing teachers. It describes some features of a professional development program, “Investigation in Practice,” which provided a structure for an entire middle school faculty to investigate student learning and to reflect on teaching practice in order to take more informed action. Cross disciplinary connections, established and maintained through partner meetings and small group sessions, built significant bridges between teachers of all levels of experience. As a result of the investigative process, almost every teacher undertook more informed action with his or her students. Many teachers added to their current thinking and repertoire. Several teachers took steps toward transformative learning as they used the investigative process to question some basic assumptions about their student’s learning and to reconceptualize their own teaching.*

Keywords: Professional Development, Action Research, Reflective Practice

Introduction

“The time set aside gave me a structure to stay with this topic when other daily tasks would have pushed it aside.”

Many teachers have raised “multi-tasking” to a high art in the rapid pace of their own classrooms. Rarely do they have a moment to stop and contemplate a specific piece of the teaching/learning picture over time. To right the balance just a bit, *Investigation in Practice* was designed to provide time and a structure for teachers to slow down and focus on just one aspect of student learning over a period of four months. Using an action research model, 66 faculty members in a suburban middle school west of Boston pursued individually selected topics about student learning. Each teacher belonged to a small group—mixed by grade and discipline—that met to support the work of the individual and to establish stronger collegial ties throughout the school.

The goals of *Investigation in Practice* were to:

- give teachers an experience with the process of action research
- support a teacher’s effort to improve one aspect of student learning in the classroom
- strengthen collegiality in a school which had recently expanded

At the close of the program, the school leaders and the teachers indicated through discussion and writing that these goals were met to a high degree. The program was not only successful in meeting its identified purposes, but it also resulted in two unexpected outcomes. First, students became more aware of their own learning when teachers involved students in collecting data about learning. As one teacher put it, “A change is happening in the whole school ...the kids are beginning to think metacognitively... because the teachers are getting kids to look at their own learning.” (PL) The second outcome regards the kind and quality of teacher learning.

Quite a few teachers used the investigative process to extend their thinking and to add to their existing repertoire of teaching practices. For some, however, questions about the assumptions that they make about their students' learning, their role, and their practice came into the foreground. For example, one teacher who investigated the quality of the learning community in her classroom wrote, "I question whether I am supporting the students as a community instead of solely thinking of how each acts and reacts individually in the classroom." (CA). The stage had been set for the possibility of transformative learning. This paper will briefly describe the models and theory that inform *Investigation in Practice* and discuss four elements of the program that seemed to support teachers towards transforming their thinking and practice.

Theoretical Considerations:

Action Research, Constructivism, and Informational versus Transformative Learning

Investigation in Practice is a professional development program that draws on action research models, such as those described in the professional literature (Calhoun, 1994; Glanz, 1998; Sagor, 2000). As with any kind of action research project, it involves teachers in a disciplined inquiry with the intent of taking informed action to improve student learning. This particular program emphasizes individual teacher selection of focus rather than having a pre-selected group of topics for investigation or a single focus for the whole school. Beginning with an initial choice of focus on student learning, this action research model is structured so that teachers collect data about learning with the help of a colleague, analyze the data individually and in a small group, read about their focus in the professional literature, and then develop an action plan based on insights gained. Throughout the project, the opportunities for examination of data, reading, and collegial conversation build teacher capacity for reflective practice.

Constructivism is the learning theory underlying *Investigation in Practice*. In her discussion of teacher learning, Virginia Richardson-Koehler offers a cogent description of constructivism: "Individuals create their own new understanding based on the interaction of what they already know and believe and the phenomenon or ideas with which they come into contact." (Richardson-Koehler, 1997, p. 3) These middle school teachers were high-performing, inquisitive educators who already had well developed beliefs and knowledge about many aspects of student learning. They were clearly capable of choosing topics that mattered to them and then directing their own learning. In the data collection phase of *Investigation in Practice*, they opened themselves to closer contact with the phenomenon of their students' learning. Through their data analysis, reading, and collaboration with colleagues, they constructed some new understanding about their students' learning and their response as teachers.

Most teachers who participated in *Investigation in Practice* made the kind of gains in their understanding and skill that Robert Kegan would term "informational learning." That is, they increased their knowledge and extended their repertoire within their currently held ways of knowing about teaching and learning. This type of gain was important and satisfied the goals of the program. Kegan asserts that informational learning "...serves the absolutely crucial purpose of deepening the resources available to an existing frame of reference." (Kegan, 2000, p. 48-49) Transformative learning, on the other hand, is learning that "reconstructs the very frame." (p. 49). Such learning is possible when the learners re-examine their ways of knowing and raise questions about the assumptions that their current frames of reference rely upon.

Several teachers in *Investigation in Practice* went beyond informational learning and exhibited early signs of engagement in transformative learning. Not only did they build on their

currently held structures but they also began to question their assumptions about their role and/or their conceptions of learning. Their comments and writing revealed that what had been invisible became visible and caused them to raise new and searching questions. The very act of collecting data changed the way they *knew* about their students' learning, making them receptive to new conceptions. The collegial questions that arose in partner conversations and in small group sessions created possibilities for examining assumptions. In some cases, readings in the professional literature caused teachers to re-formulate their conception of an aspect of student learning. For some teachers, it appears that informational learning opened the way to steps towards transformative learning as they became curious about the information they were gaining through the investigative process.

Four elements in *Investigation in Practice*, informed by the constructivist orientation and the action research structure, supported teachers' informational learning. For some, these elements also set the stage for transformative learning. The four elements are:

- Deliberate reflection on learning and teaching
- Teacher choice of topic and direction
- Focus on student learning
- Collegial collaboration

The following discussion of these elements will feature comments from teachers whose thoughts and actions indicate steps along the path of transformative learning.

Deliberate Reflection on Learning and Teaching

"I desperately needed to reflect on all aspects of my teaching rather than just teaching, teaching, teaching. So any chance to slow me down to reflect and listen to others is most welcome." (NJ)

Time for deliberate reflection was made possible by setting aside scheduled in-service time for *Investigation in Practice* and by narrowing the focus to one small topic. Teachers were invited to "go deeper" with one aspect of learning that mattered to them. They were asked to resist the "fix-it" temptation, to stay with it over time, to do some reading, and to look at it from several angles. Several teachers admitted that the admonition to hold back on "fixing" was challenging: "It was interesting, and a bit uncomfortable, to just watch and observe and not try to fix or correct the behaviors." (FB) Teachers experienced this intentional deliberation as an act of slowing down their own pace of thinking. Some noted that slowing down to examine one aspect of learning led to a decision to slow the teaching pace in order to achieve deeper learning for students: "I have had to slow down my teaching, taking time to model, explain, show, etc. This has resulted in less content coverage yet I hope that the depth of understanding is the more important result."(MN). This teacher critically appraised her students' understanding in her focus area and reconceptualized her role in order to bring out the learning she thought was important. Another teacher found that his professional reading pushed his thinking and "totally caused me to reconsider what (student) participation is and what it looks like." (MM) Sometimes, critical appraisal may involve some necessary discomfort when it reveals some unsettling phenomena. One veteran and highly successful teacher was dismayed to realize that "...many students do use strategies but they aren't necessarily the same ones I am trying to teach!" Reflecting at the

conclusion of the *Investigation in Practice* program, she wrote, “This project has raised more questions in my mind...my thinking about this subject will not stop.” (LS) Deliberate reflection, reading and discussing, reappraising – all these tasks in the investigative process enabled some teachers to raise concerns. They began to question not only what they knew but also how they knew it and what implications that might have for their understanding of student learning and for their role as teachers.

Teacher Choice of Topic and Direction

“Students tend to be focusing more on grades than on the learning process within each assignment. I want them to put more emphasis on the process than on the end result, and be able to recognize for themselves when they are learning (or not learning) something...” (MN)

A sense of urgency comes across in the way teachers describe their concern about student learning. Teachers chose topics that mattered to them in the immediate context of their classrooms. For some, the issue was about current behavior and relationship: “One section of students has not come together as a community to support each other as learners.” For others, the investigative process offered an opportunity to address a long-standing concern: “My students struggle to visualize the words we study in earth science. They tend to regurgitate definitions for tests and are unable to draw pictures or identify features they have learned.” (NJ)

The teachers’ personal and professional concern provided the energy to stick with the focus over a period of time. Such investment is necessary for informational learning and is an essential ingredient in establishing the ground for transformative learning. Jack Mezirow states it simply in his article about adults and transformative learning: “What counts is what the individual learner wants to learn.” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 31).

The topics for investigation varied. However, the language in the teachers’ final reflections for *Investigation in Practice* revealed a strong commonality in ownership of what was learned: “My focus has shown me that...,” “My data told me that...,” “My plan is to...,” “I have begun to realize....” In some cases, teachers asserted that their involvement would be ongoing: “My investigation in practice left me with more questions than answers and with a desire to collect more data and information.” (VM) Such ownership may indicate movement toward what Kegan (1983, 1993) calls the “self-authoring” stage of development. In this program, some teachers strengthened their sense of authority by gaining new knowledge about student learning in a way that they could personally verify. These teachers no longer accepted what was commonly assumed about student learning but rather, having chosen their own direction, they discovered something critical for themselves.

Focus on Student Learning

“Stepping outside the (daily teaching) process and into the student’s shoes and mind has given me great insight. I do not feel that I have any specific answers but that I have started to consider the bigger issues of learning.” (MS)

Teachers challenged to begin their investigation by shifting from their focus on teaching to a focus on student learning. This change in perspective helped some teachers begin to inhabit

the reality of the student: “The investigation process, with its inherent structure, allowed me to slowly acclimatize myself to what was going on in my classroom.” (KG) Writing about her work with teachers in a “reflective cycle,” Carol Rodgers speaks to the crucial shift that such a structured, reflective process can bring about for teachers: “The power of the reflective cycle seems to rest in its ability first to slow down teachers’ thinking so that they can attend to what *is* rather than what they wish were so, and then to shift the weight of that thinking from their own teaching to their students’ learning.” (Rodgers, 2002, p. 231)

As teachers look more closely and reflectively at student learning, they come to salient realizations that seem to have an immediate, believable quality. Commenting on her investigation about her frequent use of visuals (“my tool for clearing things up”), a teacher lamented: “...I had a disturbing realization... I failed to consider whether or not they were able to interpret the visual itself. If the tool is not understood, then you only succeed in adding an additional layer of confusion.” (JA) Some teachers who directly sought information from their students about their own learning were significantly affected by what the students revealed. “Changes in my thinking have been most influenced by hearing from the students (both orally and written data collection). They have taught me that I can’t assume their understanding...” (MS) Discomfort and some necessary tensions sometimes arose: “I was torn between coverage and the data that told me that these students do not see what I see and therefore do not find the same meaning that I find.” (JA) The data about learning, collected by teachers who wanted to know, had a ring of truth to it.

For some teachers the evidence of student learning reveals that the teacher’s habitual way of knowing and interpreting student learning is insufficient. The “disturbing realizations” led a few teachers in *Investigation in Practice* to pose more questions about assumptions and left some wondering about the solidity of their current way of knowing about their students’ learning. “Are we sensitive to what they can teach us about how they learn?” (MS) These early signs of transformative learning were also seen in comments about role: “(My investigation) has given me insight into my students’ learning styles and their own desire to learn and has made me readdress how I create curriculum.” (LF) It took some effort for teachers to suspend the tendency to attend to their own practice (“What can *I* do...?”) and instead, deepen their knowledge about student learning through data collection and reflection (“How do my students understand...?”). For many, this effort paid off in greater insight about the students’ reality and more informed choices about their own intervention as teachers.

Collegial Collaboration

“The collegial conversations truly pushed my thinking.” (MN)

The structure of *Investigation in Practice* built bridges between teachers in three different ways: data collection partner work, small group sessions, and whole faculty meetings. The small, mixed groups of faculty members, which met for six sessions, were not self-selected. Instead, they were organized for diversity in terms of levels of experience, subject area, grade assignment, and gender. The faculty overwhelmingly endorsed the value of these groups, often citing the group work as the most significant positive influence on their thinking. One veteran teacher captured the commonly felt sentiment: “The most useful and greatest gift for me was having the time to listen and discuss with colleagues the central concerns of our teaching.” (HK) Collegial conversations moved the act of reflection from a private, individual pursuit into a more public dialogue and discussion, characterized by a sense of safety and mutual respect. Through

group participation, teachers gained new perspectives on their colleagues' and their own teaching: "This interaction allowed me to step outside my own discipline into another area. Also, it allowed me to more closely analyze my own practice through the focus area of another." (MM) The group discussions also brought commonalities to light: "I was most struck by how our individual questions overlapped." (GB) The power of these groups seemed to be grounded in the equal-footing status of each teacher as an investigator and in the collective effort that group members made. Theorist Eleanor Duckworth points to the value of such egalitarian, collaborative work as part of her rationale for constructivist, adult learning, "When no one idea is presented as the official path, learners are often able to build on one another's ideas and learn more as a group than they could if each were working alone." (Duckworth, 2001, p. 185).

For those teachers who took some steps towards transforming their understanding about student learning and their own teaching, the group was most valuable when questions about assumptions were raised. "I learned that we were all making assumptions about student learning that other group members challenged in kind, constructive ways." (HK) One teacher wrote that her data did not surprise her initially but that "as I shared the results with my group, they began to ask great questions." She continued by discussing how these questions led her to uncover an assumption she had been making about student learning and she concluded, "This (assumption) is SO crucial, and basic, and it changes everything! For how long would I have assumed this had I not had these conversations?" (MN) For quite a few teachers the link between examining data and surfacing assumptions was strong. One teacher commented about the experience among members of her group: "In almost every case, our assumptions were flawed and what helped us see that was data." (HK) The testimony of these teachers about the value of a structured group of investigative teachers is in line with the findings of Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle in their work with teachers in "communities of inquiry." Such collaborative groups make it possible for teachers to "make their tacit knowledge more visible, call into question assumptions about common practices, and generate data that make possible the consideration of alternatives. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, p. 53).

Conclusion

"This investigation has broadened my focus on teaching and learning." (CS)

Teachers participating in *Investigation in Practice* took action steps on behalf of student learning based on insights gained through data collection, professional reading, and collegial conversations. The opportunities for deliberate reflection, both informal and structured, offered them a chance to step back from their fast pace and to make some new connections. For many, those connections resulted in worthy refinements of existing practice within their current view of teaching and learning. Several teachers, however, went beyond "informational learning." They used the investigative process to question some basic assumptions about their students' learning and to begin to reconceptualize their teaching. The movement toward transforming their thinking and practice started with a close examination of data and was supported by interchange with colleagues who were willing to raise searching questions. Resulting action steps reflected some transformation in thinking and may serve as catalyst for continuing investigation of learning and reexamination of teaching.

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Looking Back Five Years: A Critical Review of Transformative Learning Theory

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Abstract: *The purpose of the paper is to provide a critical review of the empirical research about transformative learning theory over the last five years. This review focuses on peer-review journal publications with a lens of analysis for new findings and insights, with less emphasis on confirming former insights. The review finds that current research is becoming more sophisticated and focused, with less research about identifying transformative experiences in different settings and more about fostering transformative learning and the complex nature of relationships, culture, power, and transformative learning. Qualitative designs still dominate, although some efforts involving mixed-method have been used.*

Keywords: Transformative learning, Literature review, Empirical research

Introduction

Since my last review of the literature in 1998 there has been a significant increase in peer-review journal publications both in and outside the field of adult education, particularly research about transformative learning theory. In response to this trend my role in this symposium is to look back since my last review and provide a review of the research literature since 1999. Before delving into the current review it is important to summarize some of the key issues that emerged from the 1998 review. In general I found a supportive, but critical picture of transformative learning theory. To its favor transformative learning did a good job capturing the meaning making process of adult learners, particularly the learning process of worldview shifts. Much of the research, past and present, continues to confirm the essentiality of critical reflection, a disorienting dilemma as a catalyst for change, and many of the phases of the transformative process. Although, at the same time, the research revealed a learning process that needs to give greater attention to: the role of context, the varying nature of the catalysts of transformative learning, the increased role of other ways of knowing, the importance of relationships, and an overall broadening of the definitional outcome of a perspective transformation. Furthermore, it found that there had been little investigation into the practice of fostering transformative learning. The intent of this review is not to emphasize findings that affirm the former review, but instead focus on new insights from the research about transformative learning over the last five years.

Methodology of the Review

Literature searches were conducted on several databases (e.g., ERIC, Wilson, Proquest) using three criteria for selecting the studies. Each of these studies had: (a) Mezirow's (2000) model of transformative learning as its primary theoretical framework; (b) a defined methodology section and (c) findings that informed the study of transformative learning theory. Also, conceptual pieces were not included. In all, 20 studies were identified. Each study was obtained, read in its entirety and reviewed, with the analysis of each study framed within Mezirow's transformative learning theory. The review begins with an overview of the various purposes, methodologies, and settings that emerge from the different study. This is followed by a discussion, thematically organized, of new findings that emerge about the nature of transformative learning, which

include: relationships, cultural difference, a perspective transformation, fostering transformative learning, power and mission. The paper concludes with a brief discussion on further research.

Purposes

To begin to understand the varying intent of these studies they are grouped in how they best inform our understanding of some aspect of transformative learning. Some studies provided insight to particular aspect or the application of transformative learning in practice, while others focused on factors that influence or shape transformative learning. The largest group contributed to our understanding of fostering transformative learning (Christopher, Dunnagan, Duncan & Paul, 2001; Jarvis, 1999; King, 2000; Pohland & Bova, 2000; Scribner & Donaldson, 2001; Sinclair & Diduck, 2001; Taylor, In-Press). Most of the settings are situated in formal higher education settings inclusive of graduate students, faculty, or conference participants involved in professional and leadership development, with little exploration in nonformal educational settings. Closely related to the previous purposes are four studies which look at transformative learning in relationship to some aspect of distance education and/or integrating technology in higher education setting (Cragg, Plotniko, Hugo, & Casey, 2001; King, 1999; 2002; Zieghan, 2001). Three studies provide insight into the nature of relationships (professional development, intercultural) and transformative learning (Carter, 2002; Eisen, 2001; Lyons, 2001). Three studies, two a follow-up to a study in the previous review, look at meaning making of personal crises and a life threatening illness (Baumgartner, 2002; Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000; Kilgore & Bloom, 2002). The final three studies looked at the relationship of power (McDonald, Cervero, Courtenay, 1999), life mission, and long term commitment (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Kroth & Boverie, 2000) and transformative learning. It is important to note that two studies (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Pohland & Bova, 2000) included in this review did not use Mezirow as their primary theoretical framework, however their findings contribute to a greater understanding of transformative learning theory in general, so they were included. The most significant change in the research focus is that there is less research about the possibility and process of transformative learning occurring in a particular context, and more about the nature of a learning experience and how it informs our understanding of transformative learning.

Methodology

The majority of the studies employed a qualitative methodology similar to what was found in the previous review, “capturing a single (often retrospective) snapshot of their learning experience” (Baumgartner, 2002, p. 56). However, there were a few studies that took a longitudinal approach (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000; Baumgartner, 2002; Taylor, In-Press). The most significant was initiated in 1995 by Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves (1998) on how HIV-positive adults make meaning of their lives. Since the original study two follow-up studies have been conducted with the same participants. In addition, the third study used a narrative design, drawing on psychological, biographical, and linguistic approaches to data analysis (Baumgartner, 2002).

There were also several mixed methods studies (Cragg, et. al, 2001; King, 1999; King, 2000; King, 2002). King’s studies involved a survey instrument (Learning Activities Survey) to identify the students who experienced a perspective transformation, along with other relevant information. Once identified, then interviews could be used for a more extensive evaluation. Cragg et.al (2001) on the other hand used a “Professional Values Scale” to identify which nursing students developed new professional perspectives from participating in a RN-BSN

degree program. Similarly, another creative approach to collecting data, is the use of photography in the exploration of transformative learning. Taylor (In-Press) who explored teaching beliefs of entering graduate students in adult education asked participants to capture their images of teaching through photography (auto-photography). These photographs were used as interview prompts (photo-elicitation device) to explore the participants' beliefs (meaning schemes) about teaching adults. A research method that is continually overlooked is action research—involving a systematic inquiry by professionals focusing on some aspect of their practice. This would help move transformative learning more into the realm of the practical.

Relationships

Previous research found that establishing relationships with others as important to the transformative experience, although not much was known about the nature of these relationships (Taylor, 1998). This review found that there are typologies (Carter, 2001); essential qualities (Eisen, 2001); chronological stages (Lyons, 2001); and challenges with (Scribner & Donaldson, 2001) relationships and transformative learning. For example, Carter (2002), who explored mid-career women's learning in work-related developmental relationships, identified four categories of relationships as significant to women's learning at work; they include utilitarian relationships, love relationships, memory relationships (former or deceased individuals) and imaginative relationships (inner-dialogue). It is love relationships that prove most significant to transformative learning. Eisen (2001), on the other hand, looked at peer-based professional development, and identified a "peer dynamic" important to transformative learning indicative of seven relational qualities: trust, non-evaluative feedback, nonhierarchical status, voluntary participation and partner selection; shared goals; and authenticity. Similar to relationships, was the significance of social interaction, where people who were diagnosed HIV/AIDS "realized they were not alone on this transformational journey" (Baumgartner, 2002, pp. 56-57). Despite the positive findings, Scribner & Donaldson (2001) found member closeness, due to external professional relationships within a cohort doctoral program, to compromise learning opportunities where some members were unwilling to flesh out complex political issues and examine their own assumptions related to education policy. An area for further research is the nature of and how to foster transformative relationships between teachers and learners.

Cultural difference

Several studies designed the selection of participants with the potential for a particular cultural perspective, such as gender and age (Carter, 2002; Jarvis, 1999; Kilgore & Bloom, 2002; Kroth & Boverie, 2000; Lyons, 2001) in relationship to transformative learning. However, most of them did not make cultural difference a central focus of their research. Similar to former reviews, much is still not known about role of difference and transformative learning. For example, Kilgore & Bloom (2002) explored the lack of a perspective transformation following a disorienting dilemma among women in crisis. They found that transformative learning theory fails to "recognize the non-unitary self and voices of women.... Because women in crisis are in constant state of fragmentation, they cannot be the subjects of a transformational pedagogy that assumes a unified self" (p. 131). In addition, Carter (2002) confirmed that relational communication (highly personal and self-disclosing) for mid-career women, not rational dialogue (analytical, point-counterpoint discussion) proved essential for transformative learning. There is still much work to be done in this area, identifying with greater depth, cultural differences in relationships to the various components of transformative learning.

A perspective transformation

A number of findings emerged from these studies about the nature of a perspective transformation and meaning scheme change (Carter, 2002; Christopher et. al, 2001; Cragg et. al, 2001; Eisen, 2001; Jarvis, 1999; King, 1999, 2000, 2002; Lyon, 2001). Most significantly, is the enduring nature and irreversibility of a transformation, revealed in the longitudinal study of how adults making meaning of HIV (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, Baumgartner, 2000) and was further substantiated by Baumgartner in 2002. In addition, these studies along with others (Carter, 2002) offer some clarity to the meaning and transformation of meaning schemes, where participants retain their larger world view (frame of reference), but their “immediate beliefs or expectations (meaning schemes) may continue to change” (Baumgartner, 2002, p. 45).

The contextual nature of a perspective transformation was also further affirmed, where certain characteristics were found to be unique to a particular learning event. For example, a characteristic of a perspective transformation included: service to others (Baumgartner (2002); Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, Baumgartner, 2000), change in practice (King, 1999), intercultural awareness (Lyons, 2001; King, 2000); changing life mission (Kroth & Boverie, 2000) and awareness of power (Jarvis, 1999). On the other hand, there are transformational characteristics that transcend context, such as greater self-directedness, assertiveness, self-confidence, and self-esteem, which support the emphasis of autonomy found in Mezirow’s (2000) interpretation of transformative learning. In addition, action is further confirmed by several studies as integral to a perspective transformation (Baumgartner 2002, Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, Baumgartner, 2000, King 2000).

Fostering transformative learning

The most significant change found in this review was the greater attention given to the practice of fostering transformative learning. Most studies confirm previous findings along with introducing several new medium (e.g., on-line education, fiction, romantic novels) for fostering transformative learning. For example, Jarvis (1999) used romantic fiction with women in an Access Higher Education Program and found novels to be a powerful tool in helping women question traditional conceptions of romantic relationships and redefine power located in relationships. She concluded “literary texts offers scope for examining and validating experience, but also for challenging the way experience is constructed and understood” (p. 49). Another medium is the on-line setting (Cragg et. Al, 2001; Zieghan, 2001). Although, these studies are only initial efforts, factors that seem to contribute to this transformative medium is the degree of life experience of the participants and the significance of having time to reflect on “written accounts of the intellectual and emotional connections” (Zieghan, 2001, p. 149) made by participants on-line. Interestingly, fostering transformative learning, as a concept and practice, was also used as an assessment tool. Sinclair and Diduck (2001) in a Canadian study of facilitating public participation in environmental assessment (EA), modified the ideal conditions for fostering transformative learning outlined by Mezirow in 1994 to assess “the extent to which the processes facilitate genuine participation and mutual learning by EA participants” (p. 114).

In addition several studies begin to reveal factors that inhibit transformative learning in the classroom. They include rules and sanctions imposed on welfare women returning to work in a family empowerment project (Christopher, et. al, 2001); the downside of cohort experiences where there is often an unequal distribution of group responsibilities and an emphasis on task completion instead of reflective dialogue (Scribner & Donaldson, 2001); and the need to be deliberate, both by the teachers and program design, for transformative learning to occur in

graduate education (Taylor, In-Press). Other questions remain, most significantly, is the long-term impact of fostering transformative learning and the ethics associated with fostering transformative learning in the classroom.

Mission and power

Two concepts, mission and power, one of which had been theoretically discussed in the past were found as powerful influences related to transformative learning. Mission, life purpose was studied by Kroth & Boverie (2000) with adults who had a positive impact on their community's quality of life. This study concludes that "without the continuing interplay between directed purpose and inquiry into that purpose, life mission may become rigid, or life itself directionless" (p. 145). Similar to mission, is a "lived stance towards a sense of call, a form of practice reflective of deep spiritual commitment" found among environmental activist (Kovan & Dirks, 2003, p. 114). In other words, understanding one's mission or call in life helps to shed light on an implicit and rarely discussed aspect of transformative learning—what is its purpose?

Power, on the other hand, has been discussed openly in relationship to transformative learning, particularly its inadequacy of explaining emancipatory learning. In a study involving the transformation of individuals who become ethical-vegans, power proves central to shaping the transformative experience (McDonald & Cervero, 1999). The study found that transformative learning does not adequately account for the enormous interpersonal and socio cultural challenges and temporal demands associated with confronting the effects of power. In addition, transformative learning "runs the risk of becoming a mechanism for self-control, evident in the gradual social conformance of these vegans, even as their personal commitment increased" (p. 22).

Conclusions

The present research continues to affirm Mezirow's conception of transformative learning, through its stability over time, its relationship to expanding the self and pursuit of autonomy, and the applicability for informing classroom practice. In addition, the research seems to have shifted its focus away from identifying transformative experience in various settings, and more towards making sense of factors (e.g., relationships, context, power) that shape the transformative experience. However, embedded in this affirmation and ongoing research, are remaining assumptions that need to be researched. They include for example, the often-unquestioned celebratory nature of transformative learning; the overlooked negative consequences, both personally and socially, of a perspective transformation (e.g., McDonald & Cervero, 1999); the role of culture and transformation; and the need for understanding the nature of readiness for or resistance to the transformative learning. Also, research is needed in on the fostering of transformative learning in nonformal educational settings.

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Women in Crisis: Transformational Learning in an Adult Basic Education Classroom

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Abstract: *The prominent theories of transformative learning suggest that individuals who are in a period of crisis in their lives, especially if they are women with limited literacy who receive welfare, cannot experience transformative learning. This paper challenges this premise by describing a project that combined case study and video documentary to present the stories of women on welfare who transformed their lives through learning. Women described the barriers they faced, their experiences in the adult literacy classroom, and accomplishment of their aspirations for a better life. Women in crisis do experience transformative learning and understanding this contributes to the theory and practice of transformative education.*

Keywords: literacy, welfare, GED

Kilgore and Bloom (2002) argue that “a crisis context presents conditions that are incompatible with transformational education” and that transformational learning “has been virtually unachievable for women in crisis.” The authors define a crisis as “extreme material, learning, or spiritual poverty” or “a situation in which the learner is in an education program under the catalyst of extreme personal duress and/or through mandatory requirements (p. 2).” The findings of Kilgore and Bloom (2002) exclude many women from having transformational learning experiences that would enable them to change their lives, especially those women who have low basic skills, are poor, and receive welfare. The authors are particularly disparaging of the possibility for women who are attending adult literacy classes to transform their lives through educational programs offered by welfare reform initiatives.

Because most women who are receiving welfare aspire to a better life (Ziegler & Durant, 2002), without having transformative learning experiences, they have very little hope of achieving their aspiration. Transformational learning, according to Mezirow and Associates (1990), is “the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation, and action” (p.1), and entails a fundamental change in one’s meaning perspective or frame of reference. Frames of reference are based on the entirety of one’s experiences and influence behavior and interpretation of future events (Taylor, 1998). Changes in perspective or frames of reference often result from a disorienting dilemma that challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about oneself and the world and filter the way a person thinks, feels, decides, and acts (Marsick & Mezirow, 2002). Because of the depth of this type of change, it occurs infrequently. Mezirow (1995) indirectly supports the conclusion of Kilgore and Bloom (2002) because he contends that to understand the meaning of one’s experience through discourse “implies, not only a basic education to develop cognitive skills, but also physical security, health, employment, and shelter” (p. 61).

Based on this view, many welfare recipients do not have the foundational requirements to benefit from transformative learning experiences. In addition to struggling with limited literacy, welfare recipients face socially constructed systems of power and oppression that limit their access to opportunities for change (D’Amico, 2003). These fatalistic assumptions about women in crisis created a dilemma for a group of us who facilitate professional development activities for adult literacy teachers who conduct classes for welfare recipients. While adults who enroll in

adult literacy classes, whether mandated or not, have a high drop out rate (Quigley, 1997), according to the teachers with whom we worked, a percentage of adults succeed in overcoming external barriers, confronting their limiting beliefs, and taking actions to achieve their aspirations. We asked, “Can individuals with limited literacy experience transformation even though they are in a mandated, school-based adult literacy class? If so, can their stories inform theory and practice of adult literacy education?” To address these questions, we planned a professional development project that combined a case study with the creation of a video documentary of the changes women made in their lives. The purpose of this paper is to describe the case study part of the project and to challenge the premise that transformative learning is unachievable for women in crisis.

Method

Participants in the project were four women without a high school credential or high school level literacy skills who enrolled in adult literacy programs as the result of a welfare reform initiative, received a high school equivalency credential or improved their skills, and went on to further education or employment. We selected four women, to participate in the case study and video documentary, two African-American and two Euro-American, from a group of 40 individuals who either self-nominated or were nominated by teachers, program administrators, or caseworkers. The case study method was most appropriate for understanding the experiences of welfare recipients in adult literacy education programs and provided a holistic understanding of the women in their sociocultural context (Merriam, 2001). We conducted multiple interviews to identify “success factors” of women who transformed their lives through education and documented their stories in their own voices using video.

Participants selected the site for the interview, and although we had a semi-structured interview guide, it was loosely followed in order to obtain the fullest account possible of the women’s transformational learning experiences. After the initial data were collected and transcribed, we began by looking for patterns (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). Even though the experiences of each individual in this study were different, the data began to reveal common themes that eventually collapsed into those that most effectively described the participants’ views of the way they had transformed their lives because of education. In the next section we introduce the four participants (using pseudonyms). Then we present themes in three chronological periods, before, during and after participation in adult literacy education.

Introduction of the Participants

Kathy, a former Iowa resident, had worked as a printer. After becoming divorced, she moved to the south to escape a violent relationship but became pregnant in her early forties. Living in poverty, homeless, and a single mother, she moved in with her sister and applied for public assistance. She began literacy classes in order to refresh her basic literacy skills. Her goal was to complete a technology degree at a local university, which she did. Afterward, she obtained a job as a technology specialist at an automobile manufacturing plant, the only woman in a traditionally male-dominated field.

Deanna was raised in housing projects in a large city and lived in poverty with her ten brothers and sisters in a violent neighborhood. Pregnant at the age of 15, she quit school to raise her child. Deanna had five children who have also faced multiple obstacles. Deanna’s daughter was raped at the age of six; her son joined a gang at age eleven; and one child died. After participating in adult literacy classes, Deanna earned a GED, and enrolled in college to pursue a

teaching certificate. Deanna's goal is to help others; she does this by being a Vista volunteer and a survival skills instructor for other welfare recipients.

Tamique dropped out of high school in the eighth grade. She worked long days for very low wages in a factory, a job that did not require a high school diploma. She married, and together she and her husband were parents of eight children. Tamique returned to school as a part of receiving public assistance where she earned a GED. She is currently working on her teaching certification at a local college.

Shalane quit school as a teen mother in ninth grade. Divorced twice, she had sole responsibility for three children. She lost her job as a factory worker when the factory moved to Mexico. Shalane applied for public assistance and chose the educational opportunity offered by welfare reform and earned a GED. She pursued a continuing education degree in computer programming, and tripled her income from below poverty to a living wage writing business applications for computers.

Findings

Among the many positive learning experiences that participants had during and after enrollment in adult literacy education, participants were also asked to speak about obstacles they faced throughout their lives, especially to any experiences that led them to adult literacy education. Therefore, the stories of women prior to participation in adult literacy education are limited to this perspective, reflecting some of the more tragic, traumatic, and disorienting periods in their lives, which were relevant to understanding and appreciating the outcomes of their transformative learning experiences.

The transformational change is evident in three chronological phases: prior to adult literacy education, during the educational experience of an adult literacy program, and after they left the program, the period where participants identified outcomes they achieved due to enrollment in an adult literacy program. The next section describes the themes in each of these categories.

Prior to Adult Literacy Education

Poverty was prevalent in all of the participants' stories. It contributes to choosing welfare, plays a role in learned helplessness, and contributes to a crisis context. Deanna and Kathy were displaced from their homes and could not find work. Shalane became unemployed as the factory where she worked moved to Mexico, and Tamique and her husband found themselves among the working poor. Prior to her experience in adult literacy, Kathy described herself as being a victim of abuse, unemployed, and an older, single mother living in a displaced home:

Lots of time when you're in the middle of your crisis, or you're in crisis mode, and you don't know these things and you can't even see the forest for the trees. You do not know how to get out. That's all you know. And it can feel safe because, you know, what are you going to do...and how?

In addition to poverty, violence emerges in more than one story. We define violence as any act that brings physical, mental, and/or emotional harm to the woman and/or her children, or as an oppressive situation that may otherwise alter their lives. Violence includes molestation and rape, abuse, gangs, and witnessing violence in the community. Deanna reflects on her first memory of community violence:

My first vision and encounter of seeing something tragic was seeing a baby fall from a seventeenth floor (window) and embedded in the pavement. . . To this day I still see that

vision...It's like, it just changed me. . . I was a kid, just goin', just playin' and bein' a tomboy actually. But when I see that baby fall, that changed me at the age of 10. I see [and hear] all these things. We so used to it we run to it, instead of running away from it. Health-related issues pertaining to self or family further compound the crisis context for some participants. Illness, including drug addiction, is pervasive in some cases, and pregnancy either early or late in their lives is common. Deanna spoke of discovering her unborn child's fatal condition of spina bifida, multiple operations, and the subsequent loss she endured. Dependence is interwoven throughout the struggles they encountered: dependence on others, codependence, dependence on welfare, and dependence on self. Kathy speaks of overcoming codependency:

One of the things that happens is when you're in the middle of the thing you tend to be alone. And you're around those other people that uh, be codependent, or keep you down there, where you're at. So when you get involved in this [education] and you break away from them and you start learning about those great words of codependency and all that...(laughs) you learn that they [others in family] aren't going to help.

Yet, despite the participants' apparent "extreme material, learning, or spiritual poverty" (Kilgore and Bloom, 2002), the desire for a better life for oneself and one's children is a recurring, if not a dominating theme reported by the participants and is a powerful motivating factor for change. Belief in self and the "just do it" attitude, coupled with aspirations for a better life, motivated participants to approach the world from a different perspective.

During the Adult Literacy Education Experience

Participants enrolled in the adult literacy education as a part of a welfare reform initiative. While education was one choice among many, participation was compulsory upon making that choice. Making the decision to attend adult literacy classes seemed to be a pivotal point in their lives, even though it was mandatory. Earning a GED was a sign of success, according to Tamique "completion of something." Deanna reported that she was so energized by her education, she volunteered at her adult education program after she earned her GED. Teachers played a significant role, according to the participants. Tamique said her teacher encouraged her and her husband to change their life situation by earning a college degree. Interwoven with the role of teacher was support from classmates, family, and children, and the support of caseworkers and a welfare system that provided educational opportunities. Kathy found the support she needed, realized that she was not alone, and developed the aspiration of owning a home. She reported the following:

You're left behind or you're left alone, or whatever happens, and you're devastated and you've got to figure out how to make all the payments... You need someone like [caseworker and friends] ... You need someone to come in and (lifts her hands) you know like, grabbing you and pulling you up and saying, 'You know, we can help you get up. When you think there's no hope.'

Mezirow (2000) explains, "But learning theory must recognize the crucial role of supportive relationships and a supportive environment in making possible a more confident, assured sense of personal efficacy, of having a self - or selves - more capable of becoming critically reflective of one's habitual and sometimes cherished assumptions, and of having the self-confidence to take action on reflective insights" (p. 25). The desire among participants for a better life remained strong while they were enrolled in adult literacy education and after they left.

Life After Adult Literacy Education

In all cases the women reported that they wanted to continue to learn. Deanna enrolled in college to work toward her dream of becoming a teacher. Kathy earned a postsecondary degree in the field of technology and was employed in the automobile manufacturing industry. Tamique enrolled in college to work towards her teaching degree. Shalane followed her GED with a degree in computer programming and increased her salary threefold. Participants spoke of discovering the ability to speak out; the power to do what they chose to do. Once that moment of discovery occurred, some reported there was no stopping them in moving towards their goals. Kathy explained that she never knew she had the right to say no or that she had the right to “make the salary that the man makes.” She explained that she learned that she could have what she wanted. “I never knew that.” She said, “I had [gotten] that attitude then that there wasn’t anything I couldn’t do. . . once you get empowered that way, that *you can*, nobody can stop you.” According to Mezirow, “Freedom involves not just the will and insight to change but also the power to act to attain one’s purpose” (2000, p. 24). Kathy and Deanna sought to help empower others by educating other women about their rights. “I don’t know how many copies I’ve made of that Woman’s Bill of Rights,” laughs Kathy, “and handed them out to other ladies and saying...you know, hello? In case nobody told you, there it is.”

Participants spoke of adult literacy education as “opening doors” to a better life and playing a significant role in “breaking the cycle” of poverty. The theme of a “better life” changes after their participation in adult literacy education. Not only does it represent an aspiration, but an *actualization*. Shalane reported, “I can (now) provide my children with college if they want it, which I hope they will.” As exemplified in Kathy’s story, the actualization of her transformative learning experience is also apparent:

I never thought I’d get this house. . . And when I told him [brother-in-law] I was buying a house, he said, ‘Yeah. Sure.’ He would not even talk about it. Would not. ‘You just got that job out at the automobile factory. There’s no way you can go from nothing, welfare, from nowhere. And they’ll check. You won’t qualify for that house.’ But I did. It was a long haul. But it’s mine. Unbelievable.

“Perspective transformation represents not only a total change in life perspective, but an actualization of that perspective. In other words life is not *seen* from a new perspective, it is *lived* from that perspective” (quoted in Mezirow, 2000, p. 197).

Deanna and Tamique voiced how pursuing an education has opened doors for them that allowed them to break the cycle of poverty in their lives, and as a consequence, it changed the values of their children. Tamique reports that her children are “on the same page” that she is with regard to education. She says, “And our older boys. . . they didn’t want to go to school. ‘Cause that’s the way we were.’ But once we changed that scenario...those mentalities were broken.” Tamique says without an education she would be “...just another stereotype. . . waiting for my check. . . Over and over again, nothing ever proceeding beyond a cycle.” She explained, “Now, that I’m here [at college], I feel like tradition has been broken. With education, I can be anything I want to be. And now my children don’t have to be caught up in the cycle.”

Conclusion

Experiences of the women in this case contradict the premise that the crisis of poverty and poor education preclude one from having transformative learning experiences that lead to fundamental and lasting changes in one’s life. The women introduced in this study experienced the outcomes of transformative learning reported in the literature: increased confidence, an

empowered sense of self, establishment of broader more open assumptions about their lives, strategies for taking action, empathy and compassion for others, and increased control over their lives (Taylor, 1998). Literacy education for this group became a forum where meaning perspectives could be questioned, power dynamics renegotiated, and critical consciousness attained. Transformation was purposeful, the participants aspired to a better life and their aspirations resulted in action. “A mindful transformative learning experience requires that the learner make an informed and reflective decision to act on his or her reflective insight” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 23-24). Taking action involves overcoming situational, emotional, and informational constraints. Learning is not a goal rather the goal is the action that follows learning (Mezirow, 1990). Participation in adult literacy education, according to the participants in this case, resulted in positive, tangible life changes. The four women faced the obstacles of poverty and the social constraints that prevent many people from overcoming its debilitating effects, yet they transformed their lives. As one participant said, “And once we accepted education, it was like righteousness, a righteous walk.” The experiences of these participants help to inform the theory and practice of adult education.

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Beyond the Classroom: Transformative Learning to Transformative Living

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Abstract: *As educational practitioners committed to creating learning environments that encourage self-reflection, growth, and the possibility of change, we have come to wonder: What happens next? Do we, can we, or should we have any further role to play once the student leaves our classroom? What might it mean to take the notion of TL beyond the formal educational setting? What, if anything, might we do to make change more likely, more permanent, more meaningful? What are the ethical, practical, and educational considerations inherent in moving from transformational learning to transformational living? Our purpose here is to provide a framework for exploring and stimulating further dialogue around these questions.*

Keywords: transformative learning, adult learning, adult development

Introduction

This paper sets the stage for a workshop to be conducted at the 5th International Transformative Learning Conference and lays the groundwork for a later paper, which will incorporate learning and insights garnered from the workshop itself. The purpose of this paper is to identify a set of questions and issues, related to the long-term processes involved in adult learning and developmental growth, which we feel have been largely ignored within Transformative Learning (TL) theory.

Our goal is to bring our own unresolved questions and concerns into dialogue with those of our colleagues and to further the conversation within the field through this process. To that end, this paper identifies some of the key issues and primary questions we intend to address within the workshop; briefly summarizes each of our concerns, biases, and perspectives; and describes our intentions for this workshop.

Key Issues

“Why didn't you tell me self-assessment wouldn't stop at the schoolhouse door?” plaintively asked a reentry learner who shortly afterward ended a long-term relationship. Though they often don't realize it, students who enter or reenter adult learning programs are often ready to rethink many aspects of their lives: job, family, place of residence, community affiliations. Ideally, being in school will bring them into contact with unexpected ideas, “otherness,” and experiences that cannot easily be integrated into an existing framework of belief and supposition. As a result, what has heretofore been *reality*—“how I am” and “how things are”—may be called into question.

Those of us who are committed to Transformational Learning (TL) try to create environments that encourage such questioning, reflection, and dialogue. We draw on the work of Mezirow (2000; 1991), Kegan (1994; Kegan and Lahey, 2001), Boyd (1991), and others to help us understand the processes of transformation and development. We also draw on practice-based literature (Brookfield, 1995; Cranton, 1994; Daloz, 1999; Taylor, Marienau & Fiddler, 2000) to offer our students support along that journey. As a result, our students sometimes find, “Things

seem to have changed . . . something is different.” By the end of the class they may even discover, “I think it’s me.”

However, much of the literature on TL seems to end there: assumptions have been challenged, consciousness altered, perspectives shifted, and frames of reference made more flexible. But *what then? What happens next?* Asking such questions places us in a theoretical and practical quandary. What might we do differently within the formal learning setting to enhance the possibility that such growth will continue? If we, as educators, create environments in which transformative learning is likely to occur—and continually reoccur—what responsibility—indeed, what *possibility*—have we to anticipate and prepare our students for the inherent consequences of such learning? Can we justify encouraging a process that may shake a student’s very foundations, without also sticking around when it does? Even more provocative, perhaps, what *right* have we to do anything other than leave the student to his or her own devices?

Who We Are

These have been some of the questions and concerns that brought us together, seeking further dialogue. Here, briefly, are the perspectives we bring.

John

For most of my adult life, I have been interested in the idea of *self-knowledge*, and I frame the notion of transformative learning within this particular context. Initially, I understood self-knowledge as simply knowing myself better, with an eye towards obtaining some sense of peace of mind, balance, or centeredness, of being less tossed about by powerful emotions, impulses, and the like. As it turns out, however, neither the ideas of self nor knowledge are all that straightforward. Initially, I used existential psychology and eastern philosophies to explore this idea further, and was drawn to practice transcendental meditation. Gradually, however, with further study my theoretical perspective on self-knowledge and transformative learning has shifted to depth psychology, primarily Jungian and neo-Jungian scholarship, where the *self* becomes the *Self*, the psyche in its entirety and wholeness. I continue meditation but now also work with my dreams, journal, and am increasingly drawn to contemplative prayer.

To me, there is, paradoxically, inherent mystery in the idea of self-knowledge. It is often quite elusive and ephemeral, shrouded in darkness. Pursuing self-knowledge is like forever chasing the wind. Yet, we get the sense that it is playing hide and seek with our conscious selves, peeking out from behind our veils of ignorance and doubt. From a Jungian perspective, these small glimpses we receive arrive from the unconscious in the form of emotion-laden images, manifesting various aspects of the Self (Dirkx, 2000). Often, they burst into our awareness, in mid-sentence with a colleague, in the middle of the night, or disrupting in some way our comfortable lives. Recently, I was talking with a doctoral student about her dissertation work. Our conversation was quite academic and focused on further analyzing and clarifying her problem statement. Suddenly, she burst into tears, deeply embarrassed by the profound sense of emotion that suddenly overcame her. Our work, as academic as it was, touched something deep within her, an aspect of her psyche that sought expression through this particular content and context. In the words of Thomas Moore (1992), such images or experiences are messengers from the soul, representing different aspects of psyche, or different selves that make up the Self. Our life is characterized by this kind of journey – the journey of the Self—whether we consciously participate in it or not (Dirkx, Forthcoming).

Transformative learning represents our *conscious* participation in this journey, mediated through the mythopoetic or imaginal capacities of the psyche (Watkins, 2000) (in contrast to rational or cognitive capacities). In transformational learning, we develop more conscious relationships with these different images, and become more aware of their presence within consciousness, deepening our understanding of who or what they are, and what they desire of us. Through this inner work, we develop a more conscious awareness of our personal myths or stories, the collective myths of our cultures, and a richer, deeper sense of who we are and what we are about.

As a practitioner, the challenge for me is to integrate these views of self-knowledge and transformation into my curriculum and pedagogy, to somehow keep this view of learning deeply connected to the subject matter and to the learners' lives. The practices of adult and higher education are grounded largely in the external and the material worlds. Knowledge is essentially regarded as an internalization of this material and social reality. A mythopoetic, image-based view of learning and who we are challenges dominant conceptions of what is real, offering not a single, unitary version but multiple perspectives on the reality of our lives, often symbolizing emotions and experiences. Developing an awareness and appreciation for this point of view of knowledge and reality within the limitations of a formal learning setting seems daunting enough. Given that this might happen for some learners, then, what next when they leave this setting? How might this budding inner work be sustained, carried through not only to the next course but into the everydayness of their lives? How do we help our adult students learn to live their personal myths? Should we? This is the profound challenge that those of us working from a mythopoetic perspective on transformative learning face.

Laura

I strongly agree with John's understanding of transformative learning as an orientation or approach to teaching, learning, and living, rather than a response to life events. While it is clear that challenging life experiences can trigger periods of accelerated learning and developmental growth, I question whether we can identify a point in time when the learning process can be considered to be complete. I envision transformative learning as a way of being, an approach to life that is cultivated and sustained through practice, much as spiritual understanding and growth is deepened through practice over time. In my view, living transformatively involves active and alert engagement with the world; conscious and vigilant cultivation of independent thought; and an on-going deepening of self-knowledge (born of inner work). Thus, I believe that educators committed to the ideals of transformative learning should provide students with tools and practices that will support and encourage active, ongoing, and conscious learning.

This belief raises a number of questions and concerns, however, which I have yet to fully reconcile or resolve. By example, what specific guidance and/or techniques might I offer learners to help facilitate learning and development over time and across disparate contexts? Should I, as part of my practice, help prepare students for the challenges, obstacles, and risks they will likely face, as they seek to further cultivate and apply their emerging understandings and competencies? Is it enough (or even ethical) to stir the hornets' nest and send learners on their way?

I also question my own unexamined assumptions (as well as those of my colleagues), relative to the universal benefits of transformative education. Are we really serving the desires and needs of all of our students, when we ask them to examine, challenge, and potentially reject their long- and deeply-held beliefs and assumptions? By example, I recently had a male student

in his early sixties, who confided that it was extremely disorienting and disconcerting to have lived most of his life “feeling firmly grounded in a concrete foundation and to suddenly look down and find it has cracks.” We discussed the challenges and demands of transformative learning, and I suggested that he tread carefully along this path. In response, he retorted, “Yeah, right. That’s like saying walk carefully into a mine field.”

I wonder, whose interests am I serving, when I nudge individuals like this down the path of critical self-reflection?

Kathleen

Like most adult students, when I went back to school in my midthirties, I saw education in terms of something I would *have*. The decision to return to school did not seem to signal major change: I never dreamed that in less than five years my life would completely transform. These profound personal changes led also to professional change based on a passionate commitment to support other returning adults who choose the challenging journey of learning and growth. Having backed into a career in adult higher education, I found my experiences and those of my students mirrored in the literature of constructive-developmental as well as transformational and experiential learning theories. Like any True Believer, I have gone through a period of certainty. Increasingly, though, there are also nagging questions.

An example I often use to illuminate the potential for transformation is the story of S. (Taylor, 2000). As he described it in a written, end-of-course self-assessment, “I have learned to put myself on the other side of what I believe”—in his case, Christian fundamentalist teachings. He had reflected on other ideas about how one constructs the world and one’s place in it and had struggled to compare and contrast them with his own beliefs while looking for advantages and disadvantages to the various approaches. There is a postscript to that story, however, that has not been widely told. Soon afterward, S. proudly told me he had begun questioning some of the dictates of his religious advisor—an unexpected but not unwelcome outgrowth of his new-found sense of responsibility for his own ideas. He no longer simply accepted the voice of Authority, but wanted to examine the thinking behind the conclusion—not necessarily to disagree, but to understand, consider, and *choose*. A few weeks later, S. called again to say he was withdrawing from college; his wife had been hospitalized with a nervous breakdown.

Perhaps I read too much into the apparent sequence of events, but might it be that, far below her level of awareness, S.’s wife felt that his new way of seeing himself and all his relationships was profoundly threatening to the fabric of their lives? My head says that I cannot take responsibility for the costs of others’ growth, but my heart aches for their pain. Yet I believe that such growth—the capacity to see the “other side” of belief—is essential to creating and maintaining a livable world. As Marton and Booth (1997) have observed, “If you become aware that something *is* in a certain way, then you also become aware that it *could be* in some other way.” How to reconcile these awarenesses—that growth can be costly, painful, and even, perhaps, damaging for some; yet that without it, we may lose the possibility to create a more just, human, and equitable society? My overarching purpose, therefore, is to help individuals develop greater complexity of mind, not just as a cognitive process, but as a way of being in the world that offers the world a new way of being. My theoretical bias is constructive-developmental; my practice is experience-based.

Our Intentions for this Workshop

As a starting point for our dialogue, we hope to invite stories that illuminate the lived experience of teachers and learners who have traveled this complex journey toward transformation of self, other, and community. Our purpose is to open a conversation and invite broader discourse. Here are some of the specific questions that we have puzzled about and that might be a starting point for exchange:

- What can or should educators do to encourage students to more deeply integrate transformative learning in their everyday lives?
- Where does the educator's role and responsibility begin and end?
- We speak of “fostering” development and TL, but what skills do we offer our students that makes it possible for them to take these discoveries into their lives more meaningfully?
- How can TL become part of everyday life? (Our own and our students'?)
- What are the ethical implications of fostering TL and development? What about those for whom, as Brookfield notes, this may be “cultural suicide”?
- We know that much of what goes on in a classroom (or other learning environments) “evaporates” soon afterward. Is this also true of TL? Why or why not?

We further intend to capture some of this dialogue in a paper to be written after the workshop.

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From Research to Practice: The Role of Spirituality in Culturally Relevant Transformative Teaching and Learning

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is twofold: (1) to briefly discuss the results of a study that examined how spirituality informed the practice of 31 adult educators directly dealing with race, class, gender, and culture in their work; and (2) to discuss a spiritually grounded and culturally relevant approach to pedagogy that was developed as a result of the study's findings.*

Keywords: Spirituality, Cultural relevance, Transformative practice

Teaching for social transformation is a work of passion for many adult educators. For many, it is fueled by a deep ethical and spiritual commitment to working for justice in the world. There are many discussions of how to teach for social transformation in the adult education literature, though these discussions are based on different theoretical premises and seem to have different working definitions of “social transformation” and how it happens. But aside from some very recent discussion that suggest that spirituality is an important influence in the lives of many adult educators and activists attempting to teach for social transformation and/or the common good (Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks, 1996; English, Fenwick, & Parsons, 2003; O’Sullivan, 2000; Palmer, 1998; Tisdell, 2003; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2001), there has been relatively little discussion about what the role is of spirituality in teaching for social transformation. After reviewing several bodies of literature that attempt to deal with social transformation both within and beyond the field of adult education, this paper will: (1) discuss the results of a study of how spirituality informs the work of 31 adult educators who are teaching for social transformation by dealing directly with issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in their classes; (2) consider the implications the study has for the a culturally relevant and spiritually grounded model of teaching for transformation.

Related Literature

Probably the best known work that focuses on teaching for transformation within adult education is Jack Mezirow’s (1995) theory of transformative learning, which focuses on how adults come to know and learn by critically reflecting on assumptions and changing their behaviors and meaning perspectives as a result of dealing with a disorienting dilemma. For Mezirow and those who rely on his work, the unit of analysis tends to be *the individual*, the apparent assumption being that social transformation is the sum of the parts, where the parts are transformed individuals. While many have critiqued Mezirow’s work as being more a theory of individual rather than social transformation driven by the role of rationality and critical reflection in challenging underlying beliefs (Taylor, 1997), his work and those who rely on it have made an enormous contribution to the understanding how individuals undergo a transformed perspective.

Because Mezirow’s theory seems to be more about individual transformation, a second body of literature has focused more on how to teach to challenge *power relations* based on race, class, gender, or sexual orientation. This literature is more informed by the critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and critical multicultural literature, which focus on an analysis of power relations between dominant and oppressed groups, and assumes that structural social change will result when power relations are challenged (Brookfield 1995; hooks, 1994;

contributing authors in edited works such as Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Sheared & Sissel, 2001; Hayes & Colin, 1994; Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Because many of these approaches have focused on the educational needs of multiple groups of adults, both the needs of individuals and particular groups have become obscured. This has resulted in the development of a third and related body of literature—more specifically on anti-racist (Johnson-Bailey, 2001; Sheared & Sissel, 2001) and/or culturally relevant forms of adult education (Guy, 1999) that more directly deals with the educational needs of specific cultural groups (Alfred, 2000; contributing authors in Guy, 1999).

With some exceptions (e.g. O’Sullivan, 2000, Tisdell, 2003; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2001), most of the social transformation discussions within the field of adult education have given little attention to the role spirituality in the process. But there is much discussion of the role of spirituality in the process outside the field. For example, Latino writer David Abalos (1998) argues that in order for social transformation to occur both individuals and cultural groups need to explore how the mechanisms imposed by cultural hegemony and colonialism have impacted their *four faces*: the personal face, the cultural face, the political face, and the sacred face. Furthermore individuals and cultural groups need to, in *reclaiming these four faces*, incorporate other ways of knowing grounded in cultural and spiritual experience, such as through music, art, poetry, to reclaim their cultural and sacred faces. When such incorporation of other ways of knowing occurs in the context of community, people connect and begin to reclaim their political face and are often moved to social action and transformation. Abalos’ concept of reclaiming the four faces is parallel to some of the more recent discussions of the role of spirituality in both cultural identity development (Myers, Speight, et al, 1991) and in sociopolitical development (Watts, Griffith, and Abdul-Adil, 1999) that build on the pioneering work of William Cross’s (1971) theorizing on racial identity development.

Given the fact that this discussion is about spirituality, it is important to be as clear as possible about what we mean by the term “spirituality.” As noted elsewhere (Tisdell, 2003; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2001), spirituality is about the following: (1) a connection to what is discussed as the Life-Force, God, a Higher Power or purpose, Great Mystery; (2) a sense of wholeness, healing, and the interconnectedness of all things; (3) meaning-making; (4) the ongoing development of one’s identity (including one’s cultural identity) moving toward greater authenticity; (5) how people construct knowledge through largely unconscious and symbolic processes manifested in such things as image, symbol, music which are often cultural; (6) as different, but in some cases, related to religion; and (7) spiritual experiences happen by surprise. Understanding how these dimensions of spirituality have played out in adult educators’ lives who see positive cultural identity development as a spiritual process can offer new direction to culturally relevant and transformative adult education.

Methodology

The qualitative research study itself (conducted by Tisdell) was informed by a poststructural feminist research theoretical framework, which suggests that the positionality (race, gender, class, sexual orientation) of researchers, teachers, and students affects how one gathers and accesses data, and how one constructs and views knowledge, in research and teaching. The primary means of data collection was a 1.5-3- hour taped interview that focused on how participants’ spirituality has developed over time, relates to their cultural identity and overall identity development, and informs their adult education practice. There were 31 participants in the study, 22 women and 9 men (6 African American, 5 Latino/a, 4 Asian

American, 2 Native American, 1 of East Indian descent, 13 Euro-American,). All were adult educators dealing with cultural issues either in higher education or as community activists, noting that their adult spirituality (either based on a re-appropriation of the religious tradition of their childhood, or a different spirituality) strongly motivated them to do their cultural work. Data was analyzed according to the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998).

It was in the context of doing this study that the two of us initially met. Derise Tolliver was a participant in the study. In the later stages of data analysis for the study, we began collaborating on doing some further work together around this topic, including teaching a class, writing articles and conducting presentations together related to this topic. As women of different race and cultural backgrounds. (Tolliver is of African descent, where Tisdell is White, of Irish-Catholic background) informed by different spiritual traditions, our collaboration as educators is enriched by the other's involvement and creates far greater possible explorations of spirituality and culture in the adult learning environment than either of us could do alone.

Summary of Findings

Major findings of the study discussed in depth elsewhere (Tisdell, 2003) focus on the role of spirituality in: (1) dealing with internalized oppression and reclaiming cultural identity; (2) mediating among multiple identities; (3) crossing culture to facilitate spiritual and more authentic identity development, (4) unconscious knowledge construction processes connected to image, symbol, ritual, and metaphor that are often cultural. These are briefly summarized here.

Many participants discussed the role of spirituality in unlearning internalized oppression based on race or culture, sexual orientation, or gender, and reclaiming cultural identity. For example, Tito, a Puerto Rican man described the process of reclaiming his Puerto Rican identity as a spiritual process. As he explains, "I found out that I was Taino [the Indigenous people of Puerto Rico], African, and European. This made me happy. But I had to learn more about the history and stories of these cultures in order for me to be 'whole'. ... But even after learning about that I felt empty... I then look into the sacred story of my ancestors." It was the "sacred stories" that helped Tito overcome his internalized oppression.

While some participants emphasized one aspect of their identity, others discussed the role of spirituality in mediating among multiple identities. For example, Harriet, a lesbian who grew up working class in the Rural South, discussed the significance of spirituality in claiming her lesbian identity, and in staying rooted in her Southern working class heritage. Aiysha discussed the role of spirituality in being Muslim, of Indo-Pak descent, an immigrant in the U.S., and a woman. Patricia, a white woman, talked about the role of spirituality in developing an understanding of what it means to be white (and to have white privilege), as well as more about her own European American cultural identity. She emphasized that this came specifically as a result of interactions with people of different cultural backgrounds, countries of origin, and religious identities. Others, such as David and Maureen, discussed the role of spirituality in crossing culture and embracing spiritualities rooted in other cultures to complement what had been missing in their own in nurturing their spiritual development.

Finally, all the participants discussed the role of unconscious and cultural knowledge construction processes through image, symbol, and music. For example, Anna, an African American education professor, who has long since moved away from the African American Christian religious tradition of her childhood, discussed Aretha Franklin and her music as an important spiritual symbol for her that connects to her cultural identity and her spirituality. Similarly, Julia, a Chicana who grew up Catholic, but no longer practices noted the significant

role of the image of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* (which she has re-framed as a feminist liberator) in her life and in her cultural heritage. Raul, a Christian pacifist, and Filipino education and sociology professor who fled the Philippines during the Marcos regime, described a symbolic gesture of a woman giving a public talk on nonviolence that sparked a painful memory of his own interrogation in the Philippines. This symbolic gesture touched off a healing process that he described as spiritual because it brought about his greater wholeness.

Implications for Practice

Claiming a “sacred face” was key to developing a positive cultural identity both for the participants in this study and for the learners with whom they worked. While discussed in detail elsewhere (Tisdell, 2003), some general guidelines for the implications of practice include the following seven principles of a spiritually grounded culturally relevant pedagogy:

1. An emphasis on authenticity of teachers and students (both spiritual and cultural),
2. An environment that allows for the exploration of:
 - The cognitive (through readings and discussion of ideas),
 - The affective and relational (through connection with other people and of ideas to life experience),
 - The symbolic (through artform—poetry, art, music, drama,
3. Readings that reflect the cultures of the members of the class, and the cultural pluralism of the geographical area relevant to the course content,
4. Exploration of individual and communal dimensions of cultural and other dimensions of identity,
5. Collaborative work that envisions and presents manifestations of multiple dimensions of learning and strategies for change,
6. Celebration of learning and provision for closure to the course,
7. Recognition of the limitations of the higher education classroom, understanding that transformation is an ongoing process that takes time.

It is through embracing these or similar principles that both adult educators and participants in their learning activities may facilitate claiming a sacred face. How any given instructor draws on these elements depends on her or his own positionality, what he or she is teaching, and the context of the educational activity. Because of the differences in our classes and our own positionalities, we have opted to keep our voices separate in sharing the following examples.

Derise Tolliver

In teaching adults in higher education settings, I try to provide a sacred space, where the learner’s more authentic self (culturally and spiritually) can show up and be honored; where they can learn and grow through various ways of knowing in connection with others; where it is safe to not-know and to ask questions; where they can find their own harmony and rhythm, and then, dance (because fun is so important in learning!). How I do this is by, first and foremost, bringing my walking-with-my-Ancestors, Ph.D.-having, Black-English-Vernacular-talking, bright-colors-wearing, dancing-when-I-hear-a-favorite-song self to the room. I celebrate who I am spiritually

and culturally, and invite others to celebrate themselves. An important part of my being is Spirit. It is my connection to something greater and grander than myself, and through Spirit, I am connected to all else that surrounds me. My core understanding of Spirit is grounded in a traditional African ethos, which has been passed down, not necessarily consciously, through the generations of my people. I have lived it for a long time, although it has become a more conscious practice over the last decade, in my life and in my work with adult learners.

I use a variety of “spiritual” technologies in my work. These are broadly described as spiritual because they, among other things, help raise consciousness, stimulate awareness, foster creativity and imagination, connect us with grander issues of purpose, and facilitate connection with that which animates us. For example, in the course that helps students plan their academic program, I always begin with a celebration, complete with food and decorations. The classroom becomes festive, and is transformed into a special and sacred space for learning. Ritual and symbols are also very important aspects of spiritual practice, in general. These have also become important elements in my classes, particularly in “Psychology from an African Centered Perspective.” In order to be culturally relevant, each class session is introduced with an African proverb that is relevant to the process and/or content of learning for that day. These succinct, yet profound, statements are very powerful instructional tools for many non-Western cultures. I use them to communicate information, to help allay fears, to stimulate self-assessment. I also begin each class with a centering exercise, which involves relaxation and guided visualization. For some, this is meditative; for others, it is a stress-reduction technique. I present this without reference to spirituality for those who may be offended or turned off by the concept. I give learners the option of participating at whatever level they feel most comfortable.

Probably the most obvious and meaningful way that I incorporate spirituality into my work is by embracing my own and acknowledging its importance in my life. In the classroom and with interactions with learners. I try to model my spiritual beliefs—belief in the importance of balance and harmony in one’s life; oneness with the Creator, nature and others; the importance of community; and the Akan understanding (from the Akan people of Ghana) that everything is good for that which it is made (the notion of everything providing a lesson). Sometimes the expression of my spirituality in the classroom takes the form of pouring libations in front of the class as I prepare for the beginning of the term, particularly in classes where such a ritual is more obviously related to the course content (such as “Psychology from an African Centered Perspective”). I explain to them the meaning and purpose of the ritual in a way that is not generally experienced as offensive, frightening or proselytizing. I have, in the past, assigned readings that address issues of social justice, oppression, and power, and the resulting discussion has approached them from a spiritual and/or religious perspective. My understanding of my own spirituality motivates me to ask of learners the questions I ask myself: Who am I? What is my purpose? Am I fulfilling my purpose? To whom and what am I connected? Exploring these questions often take us to issues of social change and justice.

Libby Tisdell.

An important aspect of learning is creating a space. Thus in my classes, I bring symbols of the elements of the world — earth, wind, fire, and water, because learning takes place in the context of our life experience in the world, and these symbols can serve as a reminder of that, and implicitly takes learning to what the heart of spirituality is about: the interconnectedness of all things. I am also trying to set up an environment, where students will explore the meaning that they map to symbol, so that learning through symbol, and affect, as well as the obvious

academic readings can be a part of the learning environment right from the beginning. I usually begin my own classes that focus on cultural issues with an assignment where learners write aspects of their own cultural story. Thus learners' initial assignment will include story readings, and a written assignment of analyzing aspects of their own story (with some guidelines) related to the content., such as how their own awareness of their cultural identity developed. I also participate in this exercise and provide them both with a written and spoken version of my own cultural story centering on developing an understanding of what it means to be white.

I rarely use the term "spirituality" in my classes. But at a point in the class, I ask learners to bring or create a symbol of their cultural identity. Often, their use of art, poetry, music, and other artform and use of this cultural symbol touches on the spiritual for some people, and encourages it to be present in the classroom. Others don't map to such activities in that way; whether or not one experiences something as "spiritual" depends on the learner. Further, learners also generally do a collaborative teaching presentation on a particular subject. They use multiple modes of knowledge production in their presentations. They often incorporate the spiritual and cultural as well as the affective and analytical in these presentations, that is grounded in their own cultural experience, and suggestions for social change. This insures its cultural relevance. In closing, we often make use of some of what they created throughout the course in a final activity that hints at a ritual through use of song, poetry, dance, art, and ideas from significant readings, while stating our intent of next steps for action.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we, the authors, believe that there is a place for spirituality in culturally relevant and emancipatory education efforts. By engaging learners on the personal, cultural, structural, political, and the spiritual levels, we believe there is a greater chance that education can be transformative, personally and collectively, both for learners and educators, although there are always limits to the extent to which an educational experience can be transformative either individually or societally. By continuing to draw on different modes of knowledge production to inform our educational work, including drawing on spirituality through the use of symbol, ritual, art, and music, there is more of a chance for learning to be transformative. It is not however, learning based strictly on the rationalistic and individualistic assumptions of Descartes, "I think, therefore I am." Rather, it is based on the collective insight of the African proverb and spiritual traditions that we believe offer some collective wisdom for the work of social transformation: ***"I AM because WE ARE: WE ARE, therefore I AM."***

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Trust-Building Communication: A Method for Creating a Transformational Environment

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Abstract: *This paper shows a way to provide practice at deeply listening to and genuinely acknowledging other views before taking issue with them. It answers the call from transformative scholars and practitioners for ways to create conducive conditions for learning. Teachers and leaders often adapt this exercise in dialogue, designed as it is to go beyond the traditional limits of debate, in order to evoke strong and often divisive feelings about a controversial issue, but then guide participants to reflect on how they are communicating as they are doing it. Through such a process, people often learn to notice their behavior, and to assume miscommunication rather than understanding, i.e. to anticipate how words can be misinterpreted rather than presume others know what one means. As a result, participants often learn to consciously choose their communicative actions, and move from mere arguing, conflict or egocentrism to nuanced sharing and negotiating meaning and difference—without necessarily agreeing or avoiding conflict. Such practice helps create a culture of trust that prompts people to ask vulnerable questions, admit what they wonder about and tolerate complexity and ambiguity in their thoughts about life issues, be they personal, professional or civic.*

Keywords: classroom teaching, transformative practice, consciousness development

[T]ransformation in the context of consciousness is facilitated most effectively when we nurture interdependent processes of discernment and critical reflection. Critical reflection is ... surfacing and challenging uncritically assimilated assumptions.... Discernment is a process of seeing patterns of relational wholeness that begins with an attitude of receptivity and appreciation. Frames of reference are transcended rather than analyzed; new frames of reference emerge.
(Kasl & Elias, 2000, p. 231)

[W]hether we are getting or testing ideas, we have two main tools or intellectual methods to use: *doubting* and *believing*. “Doubting” is my shorthand for criticizing, debating, arguing, and trying to extricate oneself from any personal involvement with ideas by means of using logic. “Believing” is my shorthand for listening, affirming, entering in, trying to experience more fully, and restating—understanding ideas from the inside. I argue for the believing game because it is so undervalued and underused—and because the doubting game is so overvalued and overused. Nevertheless, I am not arguing to get rid of the doubting game—only to supplement it.

(Elbow, 2000, p. 77)

How To Build Trust and Promote Consciousness Development

I believe that one of the strongest ways to create transformational environments in our classrooms is to build enough trust that people can ask “dumb” questions and wonder aloud, deeply and richly, before they go about critiquing any given issue. In any learning group,

advancing thinking requires that learners work at genuinely understanding one another, more than simply assuming they understand or, worse, simply not addressing others' points. (How often do we let students toss out comments without really building on each other's contributions?)

The question for me has been how to provide concrete practice in *acknowledging* others fully. Besides simply emphasizing practice at listening, I have found that learning and communication are generally aided when people self-disclose to a degree—openly discuss mistakes, admit what they don't know, reflect on their thinking as they do it in the moment—in order to create a culture that encourages conscious reflection. This trust-building process is often particularly effective if the instructor also self-discloses, modeling a kind of “confessional consciousness” that an assiduous learner needs for life (Torosyan, 2000). Such “practicing what we preach” on the part of teachers answers recent challenges to transformative learning theory, which oppose divorcing theory from content, and endorse ways of teaching consistent with the content taught (O'Sullivan, Morrell & O'Connor, 2002). If the content or subject matter involves understanding meaning richly, then the mode of teaching and learning should match such aims.

Conditions of trust, then, are arguably necessary to achieve the wider aims of learning from experience and being open to transforming one's habits of mind (Mezirow, 1990). More widely still, they aid in developing “consciousness” or awareness of one's overriding mental frameworks and systems of beliefs, assumptions and values (Torosyan, 2001). In this vein, Belenky and associates have valued “really talking” as opposed to “didactic talk in which the speaker's intention is to hold forth rather than to share ideas” (1986, p. 144).

One way to encourage such genuine dialogue is for the educator to act as “empathic provocateur” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 360), behaving so as to:

gently creat[e] dilemmas by encouraging learners to face up to contradictions between what they believe and what they do, disjunctures between espoused theory and actual practice, and discrepancies between a specific way of seeing, thinking, feeling and acting and other perspectives that may prove more inclusive, differentiating, and integrative of experience. (p. 366)

To foster such “facing up” to thinking, I build on the idea that “the way we talk can change the way we work” (Kegan & Lahey, 2000), by proposing that the way we *listen* can change the way we *think*. By listening, I mean not just aural hearing, but receptive reading of any “text,” be it spoken, written or otherwise. Particular important is the frequently overlooked step of acknowledging what is said before taking issue with it. For these multiple purposes, the below device offers an opportunity both to practice listening and to build trust through dialogue.

Learning Activity: “Group Empathy: Understanding, Interpretation and Trust”

1. *Finding a topic.* (5 mins.) As facilitator, help the group find a controversial topic about which people genuinely care and there is a split in opinion. Ask “how many are for,” and then “how many against” issues such as: abortion, death penalty, US foreign policy, polygamy, legalizing marijuana, assisted suicide, parental spanking (or with faculty: lecturing vs. discussion, grading vs. self-assessment, etc.). Inform *neutral or undecided* participants they will serve as *official observers*. Keep proposing topics and counting hands until you find a topic for which a) at least one third is “pro,” b) at least another third is “con,” and c) each group is most equal in size (avoid having a majority of observers).
2. *Caucusing.* (5 mins.) Separate people into Group One (pro), Group Two (con) and Observers. Groups One and Two, remaining separate, discuss their views simultaneously,

- preparing to have each member (not a spokesperson) articulate reasons for their position. Observers visit both groups and listen. (Limit statements to 30-60 seconds each; remind groups the important part is yet to come.)
3. *Sharing.* (5 mins. max.) Give this instruction only once: “This is an exercise in Group Empathy: You’re going to Listen, then Acknowledge, and only afterwards Share your view (LAS). Now all Group One members express their reasons. Then Group Two members acknowledge what they heard.” (Limit to 30-60 seconds each if needed; again, remind all that the most important part is reflecting on the process itself, hence the need to be brief.)
 4. *Listening and Acknowledging.* (10 mins.) Group Two members listen while the other group shares, and only afterwards Group Two members say back what they heard in their own words (not agreeing, disagreeing, or presenting their position, yet). After “acknowledgers” finish, they should ask whether they acknowledged all Group One members’ points fully. Group One corrects misunderstandings and Group Two repeats “Acknowledging” as needed, until Group One members say they are satisfied with being fully heard and understood.
 5. *Pausing to Reflect.* (10 mins.) Beginning with observers, all share a) how they felt during the process, b) what made listening and acknowledging difficult, c) what they noticed and learned. (Keep reflections focused on the process as opposed to topic content.)
 6. Repeat the whole LAS process (15 mins.), with Group 2 expressing views and Group 1 acknowledging. (Listening and acknowledging may well occur more quickly this time.)
 7. *Summing Up.* (15-20 mins.) Finally, all note emotional reactions, observations on the process, what made listening easier or more difficult, applications to life and other insights.

Building a Foundation of Trust in the Classroom

Used relatively early in a course, Group Empathy teaches interpersonal sensitivity in classroom discussions. Students begin at least to notice and sometimes even to value different viewpoints. Encouraging such respect is especially important in a class devoted to personal transformation, where learners worry about what others think of their ideas—the more so because their ideas are in the process of changing. I therefore find such a trust-building activity has most impact if timed sometime after a class’s initial sessions (for learners to get comfortable) but within the first third of the course (to take advantage of the atmosphere thus created).

Done right, the exercise helps build trust quite directly. Just the act of hearing someone else acknowledge you with care tends to instill mutual respect. Thus, when time is devoted especially to the “Pausing to Reflect” and “Summing Up” steps, people can better deal with intense feelings they may experience in hearing views that offend them or with which they vehemently disagree. Especially in encounters where people disagree with your view, should they demonstrate willingness to put aside their agendas long enough to understand how you see things, you may each see each other as relatively reasonable.

Perhaps most interestingly, the exercise is even more effective if, as the teacher, I am willing to admit my own struggles with empathizing as they arise “live” during discussion. I learned this ‘the hard way’ when I taught the Group Empathy exercise, and later reviewed a video recording of it. One student (pseudonym John) opposed the whole exercise. He complained, “I feel the whole thing with this—this empathy is—is very *unnatural* and causes more stress than it—it relieves.” The video revealed that I had not fully attended to his protests, prompting him to object repeatedly.

At the time, students chuckled at his outburst. Frustrated, John responded: Why is everyone laughing at me? I'm trying to be serious and make a serious point. Because when you're sitting there, and we have to suppress our feelings in order to, like, sit there and logically evaluate what they said... we, like, we *know* what they said. Like, we both speak English here.

To John, paraphrasing felt mechanical and unnecessary, and as I later realized, many students often share his concern. In hindsight, I could have explored this concern rather than press my own. Instead, sadly, I only replied, “You've got some responses from people,” and moved on quickly to other students' comments—possibly because I felt the protest threatened my teaching objectives. John then repeatedly raised his hand in protest, soon enlisting a classmate to join his cause. My own refusal to deal with a difference of opinion, during a discussion about dealing with difference, distorted the communication even further.

Only after the fact did I realize I missed an opportunity to use myself as erring example to illustrate the lesson. With John's protest, had I noticed myself ignoring and deferring his protestation, I might have admitted it and said:

Wait, did you notice what's been happening? Even *I* had difficulty acknowledging John's point—because it was against something *I* care about deeply. I wanted you to value this idea, so I feared that to acknowledge his point that this suppresses feelings might somehow ruin my position. What a challenge: Can we acknowledge an opposing view *without* necessarily losing our own point?

Integrated into the lesson this way, John's comment might not threaten my teaching objectives, but instead invite critique of my point (thus enhancing students' critical thinking), and let me put my suggestion into practice (thus modeling empathy during real disagreement).

As the Chinese classic the *Tao Te Ching* instructs, “If you want to lead the people, / you must learn how to follow them” (Lao-tzu, 1992, ch. 66). The more I as a teacher can go *with* contrary comments and trust my students, the more that many students gain courage to do likewise, thereby freeing everyone up increasingly for the entire learning process (Torosyan, 2001). As Cook has shown, teachers can examine their own “successful blunders” with students to get students in turn to take responsibility for how they construct knowledge (2002-03, p. 53).

To truly examine my own thinking practice along *with* my learners, and respect their objections to my planned direction, I must value “use of the situation-at-hand” (Fonow & Cook, 1991, p. 2). But to ‘think on your feet’ like this can be demanding. As Donald Finkel describes eloquently in his slim *Teaching With Your Mouth Shut*, “The most difficult challenge for the teacher in the open-ended seminar derives from the unpredictability of spontaneous human conversation,” (2000, p. 41). In answer, the author recommends we tolerate unpredictability, use open-ended questions, and all the while stay with our own sense of surprise and learning anew.

Implications: Inevitable Bias, Ambiguity and Democracy

Without truly empathizing with people day to day, outside of structured exercises, we may not reach many of our objectives—be they in the classroom or in any communicative context. As Gadamer argued, “The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias,” and to let whatever one is trying to understand “assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings” (1975, p. 238). Rather than immediately subject what I hear to my own judgment, or assert my view in the foreground, I should be more receptive, perhaps simply sit with a new understanding, and allow it to work “against” my own view in my mind.

As a teacher, I struggle to practice what I preach. While I want to teach less by words and more by lived example, I must ask whether I can accept my own *inability* to escape my own bias or sometimes, even to simply understand something different. As Vygotsky found, “Direct communication between minds is impossible... Communication can be achieved only in a roundabout way” (1934/1962, p. 150). Despite my best efforts to understand, I must tolerate a core ambiguity in attempting to grasp any other view. Such awareness becomes crucial when dealing with “identity conflicts” where the very attempt to understand another challenges one’s ethnicity, nationality or other personal source of identification (Rothman, 1997).

Yet my deepest interest in empathy is in fact less in its impact exclusively on teaching any subject per se than on a far wider agenda, namely that of creating little democracies in every classroom (Lauer, 1996-97, 2001), and, beyond teaching, of providing people with skill-building in the dying practice of respect worldwide (Sennett, 2003). The problem of understanding is, as Vygotsky observed, not restricted to students: “It is not only the deaf who cannot understand one another but any two people who give a different meaning to the same word or who hold divergent views” (1934/1962, p. 141). I wonder what impact a pervasive empathic receptivity could have at the level of world leadership. If a “felt sense” (Gendlin, 1981, 1992) of empathy could be gained—incorporating ways of thinking from game theory, such as the Prisoner’s Dilemma (Wright, 2000) and other revolutionary win/win, trust-building problem scenarios (Fisher & Ury, 1991)—then our leaders might model ways of talking and thinking, even in the face of inevitable power dynamics.

Finally, after observing many miscommunications in academe, I wonder whether a new way of “being” as teachers is needed on a grand scale. If the ultimate aim of education is improved reflection and understanding, then we as teachers may need to do more than merely construct classroom experiences and artificial exercises that simulate what we want students to learn. Rather, we can and indeed arguably need to take on the spontaneous happenings in our classrooms that lead to or erode trust, because these build the foundations for explorative inquiry. In particular, the times when students genuinely differ with each other are arguably the most teachable moments in a class—when learners are keyed in and most engaged with what is going on, and therefore most ready to consider other ways of thinking and being.

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Paulo Freire, Education and Transformative Social Justice Learning

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Abstract: *Freire addresses a serious dilemma of democracy, the constitution of democratic citizenship. In the sixties he suggested a model of diversity and crossing borders in education which became a central tenet in the discussion of transformative social justice learning. As a social, political and pedagogical practice, transformative social justice learning will take place when people reach a deeper, richer, more textured understanding of themselves and of their world and when they are prepared to act upon this new understanding. Based on the normative assumptions of critical theory that most social exchanges involve a relationship of domination, and that language constitutes identities from a meaning-making or symbolic perspective, transformative social justice learning attempts to recreate the various theoretical contexts for the examination of rituals, myths, icons, totems, symbols and taboos in education and society seeking to understand and transform social agency and structures.*

Keywords: Transformative Social Justice Learning, Paulo Freire, Conscientização

Freire addressed a serious dilemma of democracy, the constitution of a democratic citizenship. Then, he advanced in the sixties, quite early compared to the postmodernist preoccupations of the eighties, the questions of diversity and border crossing in education—central tenets of transformative social justice learning. Freire taught us that domination, aggression and violence are intrinsic elements of human and social life. He argued that few human encounters are exempt from one type of oppression or another; by virtue of race, ethnicity, class and gender, people tend to be either victims or perpetrators of oppression. Thus, for Freire, sexism, racism and class exploitation are the most salient forms of domination. Yet exploitation and domination exist also on other grounds, including religious belief, political affiliation, national origin, age, size and physical and intellectual abilities, to name just a few.¹

Starting from a psychology of oppression influenced by psychotherapists like Freud, Jung, Adler, Fanon and Fromm, Freire developed a pedagogy of the oppressed. With the spirit of the Enlightenment, he believed in education as a means to improve the human condition, confronting the effects of a psychology and a sociology of oppression, and contributing, ultimately, to what he considered the ontological vocation of the human race: humanization. In the introduction to his highly acclaimed *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire states, "From these pages I hope that my trust in people, my faith in men and women, and my faith in the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love is clear."²

Freire was known as a philosopher and a theoretician of education in the critical perspective, an intellectual who never separated theory from practice. In *Politics and Education* he forcefully states that "Authoritarianism is like necrophilia, while a coherent democratic project is biophilia."³ *It is from this epistemological standpoint that Freire's contribution resonates as the*

¹ In this paper I focus on transformative social justice learning but I am aware that this construct needs to be enriched, reflecting the diversity of oppressive situations.

² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Montevideo, Editorial Tierra Nueva, 1972, page 19.

³ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy and Politics*. Los Angeles, Latin American Center, 1998, p. 56.

basic foundation for transformative social justice learning. The notion of democracy entails the notion of a democratic citizenship in which agents *are active participants in the democratic process*, able to choose their representatives and to monitor their performance. These are not only political but also pedagogical practices, because the construction of the democratic citizen implies the construction of a pedagogical subject. Individuals are not, by their own nature, ready to participate in politics. They have to be educated in democratic politics in a number of ways, including normative grounding, ethical behavior, knowledge of the democratic process and technical performance. The construction of the pedagogic subject is a central conceptual problem, a dilemma of democracy. To put it simply: democracy implies a process of participation where all are considered equal. However, education involves a process whereby the ‘immature’ are brought to identify with the principles and life forms of the ‘mature’ members of society.

Thus, the process of construction of the democratic pedagogic subject is a process of cultural nurturing, involving cultivating principles of pedagogic and democratic socialization in subjects who are neither *tabulae rasae* in cognitive or ethical terms, nor fully equipped for the exercise of their democratic rights and obligations.⁴ Yet in the construction of modern polities, the constitution of a pedagogical democratic subject is predicated on grounds that are, paradoxically, a precondition but also the result of previous experiences and policies of national solidarity (including citizenship, competence-building and collaboration).⁵

A second major contribution of Freire is his thesis advanced in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and reiterated in countless writings, that the pedagogical subjects of the educational process are not homogeneous citizens but culturally diverse individuals. From his notion of cultural diversity, he identified the notion of crossing borders in education, suggesting that there is an ethical imperative to cross borders if we attempt to educate for empowerment and not for oppression. Crossing the lines of difference is, indeed, a central dilemma of transformative social justice learning.

How can we define transformative social justice learning from a Freirean perspective? As a social, political and pedagogical practice, transformative social justice learning will take place when people reach a deeper, richer, more textured and nuanced understanding of themselves and their world. Not in vain did Freire always advocate the simultaneous reading of the world and of the word. Based on a key assumption of critical theory that all social relationships involve a relationship of domination, and that language constitutes identities, transformative social justice learning, from a meaning-making or symbolic perspective, is an attempt to recreate the various theoretical contexts for the examination of rituals, myths, icons, totems, symbols and taboos in education and society, an examination of the uneasy dialectic between agency and structure, putting forward a process of transformation.

Language constitutes identities. However, language works through narratives and narrations, themselves the product of social constructions of individuals and institutions—social constructions which need to be carefully inspected at both their normative as well as at their conceptual and analytical levels. From a sociological perspective, transformative social justice

⁴⁴ We are thankful to Walter Feinberg for this suggestion in a personal communication to the author.

⁵ O’Cadiz, M. P., and C. A. Torres. “Literacy, Social Movements, and Class Consciousness: Paths from Freire and the São Paulo Experience.” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 25, no. 3, 1994; Torres, C. A. *Pedagogia da luta. De la pedagogia do oprimido a la educación publica popular*. São Paulo, Brazil: Cortes Editores and Institute Paulo Freire, 1998; Pilar O’Cadiz, Pía Linquist Wong, and Carlos Alberto Torres. *Democracy and Education. Paulo Freire, Social Movements, and Educational Reform in São Paulo*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998.

learning entails an examination of systems, organizational processes, institutional dynamics, rules, mores and regulations, including prevailing traditions and customs—that is to say, key structures which by definition reflect human interest.

Though they represent the core of human interests, these structures expressing the dynamics of wealth, power, prestige and privilege in society constrain but also enable human agency. Therefore, a model of transformative social justice learning should be based on unveiling the conditions of alienation and exploitation in society, thereby creating the basis for the *understanding and comprehension* of the roots of social behavior and its implications in culture and nature. This understanding could be enhanced if one considers both the theoretical contributions of Pierre Bourdieu on habitat and habitus, and how social capital impacts and is impacted by the construction of ideology in education.⁶ Likewise, one may resort to Basil Bernstein's analysis of class, codes and controls, which offer, particularly linked to class analysis, a horizontal and a vertical modeling of social interactions in education.⁷

Transformative social justice learning is a teaching and learning model that calls on people to develop a process of social and individual conscientization, a process encapsulated in the famous term of 'conscientização,' popularized in the sixties in Brazil by the Bishop of Olinda and Recife, Helder Camara. Paulo Freire himself adopted the notion of conscientização at some point in his work, calling for a comprehensive challenge to authoritarian and banking education, but he gave up its use when he saw that it was being employed as a ruse to mask the implementation of instrumental rationality under the guise of radical education.⁸

Reclaiming conscientização as a method and substantive proposal for transformative social justice learning entails a model of social analysis and social change that challenges most of the basic articulating principles of capitalism, including frivolous hierarchies, inequalities and inequities. This poses an interesting contradiction in teachers' training. One may argue that a principle of social organization of schooling in capitalist society is to reproduce the conditions of production of that society. Then how could one advocate and in fact produce social change?⁹

Conscientização is not only a process of social transformation. Conscientização is also an invitation to self-learning and self-transformation in its most spiritual and psychoanalytical meaning, a process in which our past may not wholly condition our present, a dynamic process which assumes that by rethinking our past, we can fundamentally gain an understanding of the formation of our own self, the roots of our present condition and the limits as well as the possibilities of our being a self-in-the-world, reaching the 'inedito viable', that powerful concept elaborated by Freire in the sixties.¹⁰

⁶ See Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction, critique sociale du jugement*, Minuit, 1979. See also the 30th anniversary edition of Michael Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York, Routledge, 2003.

⁷ Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control* (4 volumes). London, Routledge, several years.

⁸ See Carlos Alberto Torres, Torres, C. A. *Education, Power and Personal Biography: Dialogues with Critical Educators*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

⁹ Carlos Alberto Torres, "Schooling in Capitalist America: Theater of the Oppressor or the Oppressed?" In Dennis Carlson and Greg Dimitriadis (editors), *Promises to Keep: Cultural Studies, Democratic Education, and Public Life*. New York, Routledge, 2002, pages 263-275.

¹⁰ Jose Eustaquio Romão aptly distinguished three sociological categories associated to Freire's notion of the 'inedito viable', *incompletude* (incompleteness), *inconclusão* (inconclusiveness), and *inacabamento* (unfinishedness). "Pedagogia Sociológica ou Sociología Pedagógica." Paper presented to the Mid-Term Conference of the Research Committee of Sociology of Education, International Sociological Association, Lisbon, Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, September 18-20, 2003. See also Isabel Bohorquez "Lo inédito Viable en Paulo Freire. Tras el perfil de un sueño." Cordoba, Argentina, unpublished paper.

Thus conscientização as a process of social introspection and self-reflectivity of researchers, practitioners and activists invites us to develop a permanent ethical attitude of epistemological and ethical self-vigilance. Concientização invites us to be agencies of social transformation facing potentially transformable structures. To this end, the notion of dialogue, so well developed in the Freirean opus, becomes an agonistic tool of social agency, critically emblematic of its limits and possibilities.

Dialogue appears not only as a pedagogical tool, but also as a method of deconstruction of the way pedagogical and political discourses are constructed.¹¹ More than thirty years after Freire's major books were published,¹² the concept of dialogical education which challenges the positivistic value judgment/empirical judgment distinction appears as a democratic tool for dealing with complex cultural conflicts in the context of unequal and combined development of Latin American education though its applicability in industrial advanced societies.

In summary, Freire's contribution provided us with a pedagogy that expanded our perception of the world, nurtured our commitment to social transformation, illuminated our understanding of the causes and consequences of human suffering, and inspired as well an enlivened ethical and utopic pedagogy for social change. With Freire's death we were left with the memory of his gestures, his passionate voice, his prophetic face accentuated by his long white beard, and with his marvelous books of Socratic dialogue.

As an appreciation and celebration of his work, and of his contributions to transformative social justice learning, I would like to quote Paulo Freire himself when he spoke at the University of San Luis, Argentina, in 1996. He remarked:

...as an educator, a politician, and a man who constantly re-thinks his educational praxis, I remain profoundly hopeful. I reject immobilization, apathy, and silence. I said in my last book, which is now being translated in Mexico, that I am not merely hopeful out of capriciousness, but because hope is an imperative of human nature. It is not possible to live in plenitude without hope. Conserve the hope.¹³ A mystique of hope is another fundamental principle of transformative social justice learning.

¹¹ See Carlos Alberto Torres and Adriana Puiggrós editors, *Education in Latin America: Comparative Perspectives*. Boulder, Colorado, Westview University Press, 1996.

¹² Paulo Freire, *La educación como práctica de la libertad*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 1978; *Pedagogía del Oprimido*. Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 1978; Carlos Alberto Torres, *Estudios freireanos*. Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Quirquincho, 1994.

¹³ Varios. *El grito manso, Paulo Freire en la Universidad de San Luis*. Unpublished manuscript, 1996.

The Transformative Learning Experience in the Process of Immigrants' Identities Negotiation

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Abstract: *Within the cross-cultural context, new immigrants inevitably negotiate their new identities due to the numerous interactions among individuals' internal states, observable competence and the reactions that they receive from the new society. Mezirow (1997) notes, "transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference." This frame of reference consists of coherent experiences such as concept, values and conditional responses. Accordingly, it is reasonable to suspect the process of immigrants' identity negotiation may involve transformative learning experiences. Until now, the literature regarding these two bodies of knowledge has not been linked. This paper attempts to bridge the gap between these two bodies of knowledge through investigating the relationships between the theory of transformative learning and the theories of identity negotiation.*

Keywords: transformative learning, identity, immigrants

Introduction

The concept of culture can provide ways of explaining and understanding human behavior, beliefs, and values (Berry, 1980). Cross-cultural contact refers to person-to-person interactions between members of culturally different groups (Diaz-Lazaro & Cohen, 2001). In cross-cultural contacts, each cultural group can potentially influence members of other cultural groups through intercultural interaction. Acculturation is the term used to describe an ongoing process through which the individual is simultaneously influenced by his/her original culture and by others' cultures (Atkinson, et al., 1998; Berry, 1980). Specifically acculturation refers to the changes in people's social and work activities as well as in their thinking patterns, values, and self-identification (Quintana, 1987). Accordingly, acculturation is an identity negotiation process.

As a Taiwanese in the United States who has experienced identity negotiation, I have come to realize that this process has led me to new attitudes about the ways that I engage in my roles and about the relationships that I have with others. This self-changing process seems to share many of the features of "transformative learning." Transformative learning is viewed as a theory of adult learning that discusses self-change as a learning process; therefore, I assume that immigrants' identities negotiation may involve transformative learning. My research interest is to learn how Taiwanese immigrants' identity negotiation might lead to self-change or transformative learning. This paper is a presentation of my findings in the literature review for my research interest. Through a discussion of transformative learning and identity negotiation, I attempt to connect the two bodies of literature.

Identity and Identity Negotiation

Identity, as an element in communication, is a crucial interface between individuals and between individuals and society. In my investigation of the relationship between identity negotiation and transformative learning in cross-cultural contact, I employed three identity theories to answer my research question: Eriksonian, symbolic interaction, and the compromiser.

Erikson (1968) and his followers' studies of identity arise from a psychological aspect and emphasize the importance of identity development in mental health. Identity negotiation for Erikson (1968) is identity development. There are eight stages in Erikson's theory of identity development. In each stage, the task is to resolve a crisis. These crises occur because of the individual's psychological and physiological development (maturation) and his/her continual confrontation with different contexts. When a crisis cannot be resolved, the individual experiences role confusion.

Erikson (1959,1980) notes that the individual's identity has two functions in dealing with the crises of his/her life cycle. From the individual's internal need, identity has to provide a sense of persistence, a sense of self-sameness and continuity in the stages of the life cycle. For instance, I am Hui-wen. I know ten years from now I will still be identified as Hui-wen even though my shape, my behavior, or my values may have changed.

According to the Eriksonians, an individual can sense his/her identity consciously when he/she is about to negotiate his/her identity. However, this does not mean that the individual consciously senses his/her identity all the time. A person may unconsciously strive to sense the continuity of the characteristics of his/her identity. Erikson (1959) notes the ego becomes a synthesizing power when the sense of identity is dangling between the conscious awareness of reality and the unconscious striving for continuity. Ideally, this ego is a guide for the individual to engage in social life with conscious management. For instance, the ego helped the Taiwanese Hui-wen in Indiana, Pennsylvania, to recognize that her Chinese name had become a barrier for her in the new society and led Hui-wen to change her name. This process involves the individual's self-objectification. However, this ego emanated from individual's subjective sense of self, which contains an unconscious self-bias (e.g., the ego subjectively led Hui-wen to choose Kitty instead of other names. Kitty is a name of a popular cartoon figure in Asia. Kitty is a product of cultural bias.) Therefore, the individual's control of identity development for the Eriksonians is limited and is culturally influenced (Erikson, 1959). This last viewpoint is shared by the school of symbolic interaction, which emphasizes the importance of mutual influences between individual and society.

Herber Blumer coined the term "symbolic interactionism" in 1937. According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism proposes three fundamental premises. First, a person acts toward things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for him or her. Second, the meanings of such things are derived from the social interaction that a person has with others. Third, these meanings are modified through interpretation processes used by the person who confronts and manages the things. Symbolic interactionism supposes that people are consciously involved in symbolic interaction. Every individual in society is viewed as being capable of reflexivity, to reflect his/her identities in different contexts and culture. From this viewpoint, symbolic interactionism shares the Eriksonian idea that asserts humans have a fundamental ability to perceive the self through self-objectification. Through these practices, individuals gain the social meanings that help them to predict and evaluate the self's and others' roles and the behaviors that match up to the roles.

A person gains role and has identity when he or she is situated in an interactional context. This identity has to be defined and redefined through symbolic interactions. According to Mead (1934), this process is as follows: individual A gains and conceptualizes individual B's perspective about his/her identity from the verbal or behavioral signals that individual B sends out. Within the interpretation process, individual A modifies his/her behavior based on the meaning of the symbols he/she receives and interprets. According to the knowledge that is

gained from his/her self-objectification, the individual is able to define his/her identity in the relationship (McCall & Becker, 1990).

Because symbols are mental representations of objects and events with agreed upon social meanings, the verbal and behavioral symbols that individuals adopt must bestow meanings that are interpretable by both receiver and sender. Different culture groups have their own meanings for languages and behaviors. In other words, people with different cultural backgrounds may have difficulty in efficiently acting in a symbolic interaction.

The compromisers are those who stand between Erikson and symbolic interaction. The compromisers recognize Erikson's psychological viewpoint of identity; however, their research approach to identity tends toward social behaviorism, which is proposed by the school of symbolic interaction.

Ego identity in Erikson's theory of identity development is partly developed unconsciously. The compromisers adopt the concept of "ego-identity" and maintain that this approach to the individual's identity formation is limited (Rossan 1987). The compromisers think social culture as an impact to identity negotiation. They note that there are many external resources where individuals can negotiate their identities, such as social class, family, and community.

Rossan's (1987) research on identity shows how the compromisers utilize the theories of both Erikson and symbolic interactionism. Rossan argues that there are three principal components of identity: core, generalized traits and subidentities. The core may begin early in life. The core includes the most generalized, salient attributes. The core is the fundamental sense of self. The core attributes may be a self-awareness of gender, race, or religious beliefs. For instance, Confucian tradition is thought as the heritage code that becomes a core of Taiwanese identity. Education is highly valued in the Confucian tradition. Most Taiwanese immigrants give a high priority to academic achievement (Lee, 1998).

The second component of identity is generalized traits. Generalized traits are characteristics that individuals attribute to themselves. Generalized traits are common to role enactment or are related to a particular salient subidentity, such as describing him/herself as a nurturing person or an intelligent person.

Subidentities are restrained in social structures (such as roles in the workplace or the family). When the context changes, subidentities often change. Subidentities are particularly meaningful to the individual when the position has specified role partners. For example "mother" is usually a more salient construct than "member of the minority" because "mother" requires children to interact with her, whereas "member of minority" does not imply intimate interaction with a designated partner.

The definition of subidentities, according to Rossan, is changed without negating the sense of continuity. Does this statement imply that people who change subidentities can also maintain self-sameness and continuity? In fact, people may struggle as they act in many subidentities. A mother may sense herself as a mother forever even if her child dies before she does. This example implies that subidentities may become the character for a person to feel self-sameness and continuity. Subidentities may become part of the core of identity when individuals internalize their subidentities. Erikson notes that self-sameness and continuity are crucial to the individual's identity. The internalization of subidentities (to be part of core identities) is the change of self. Transformative learning theorists regard adults' self-change as a learning process. It is therefore reasonable to suspect that identity negotiation may involve transformative learning experiences.

Transformative Learning

Mezirow notes, “transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference” (1997, p. 5). This frame of reference consists of coherent experiences such as concepts, values and conditional responses. The frame of reference is a person’s meaning-making structure. When people encounter an experience or information that is incompatible with their existing references, they have to reorder their meaning-making structures in order to accommodate the new materials. This is the occurrence of transformative learning.

According to Mezirow (1997) a frame of reference is made up of two dimensions: habits of mind and points of view. Habits of mind are more durable than points of view. Habits of mind may include feelings and habitual ways of thinking. These habits of mind are affected by assumptions that contain a set of codes, such as culture, education, and psychological state.

Points of view according to Mezirow are “subject to continuing change as we reflect on either the content or process by which we solve problems and identify the need to modify assumptions” (1997, p. 6). Points of view may be a complex of feelings, beliefs, judgments, and attitudes. Points of view may occur whenever individuals try to understand actions that do not work the way they expect. In order to solve this problem, individuals try out other people's points of view, interpret other people's points of view with a habit of mind, and modify the self's assumptions. A change in points of view leads to new actions. Thus, the whole process changes the frame of reference.

Mezirow (1997) notes that people transform their frames of reference by critically reflecting on the assumptions upon which people's interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based. Critical reflection, therefore, is asserted as central to transformative learning (Brookfield, 1990).

Many theorists criticize transformative learning theory for its over-reliance on critical reflection and rationality (Clark and Wilson, 1991; Collard and Law, 1989; Taylor, 2001). Taylor (2001) points out that many studies show that meaning-making structures were altered on a non-conscious level. Individuals were not aware of their change of assumptions. This viewpoint is similar to the Eriksonian idea of identity development that is primarily developed without consciousness.

Transformation learning and identity negotiation

From the discussion above, the “change in frame of references” discussed by transformative learning theorists seems related to the “change of self” discussed by identity theorists. (See table 1.) How are these two ideas linked? For instance, is a change in someone’s sub-identities sufficient to constitute a transformative learning experience? Or does a transformative learning experience necessitate changes in the core aspects of a person’s identity?

Table 1. Self-change in transformative learning (TL), and identity negotiation theories

	TL: Change of frame of references	Eriksonians	Identity negotiation Symbolic interactionism
Motivation to Change	Problem resolves	Problem resolved (Crisis)	Desire/ reward, need of security (by predicting other's reaction with self-action)

Implicit Self	Habits of mind: habitual ways of thinking, feeling	Core, unconscious	Mind: through mind, the actor performs internally with symbols, by which one becomes aware of self.
Explicit Self	Point of view	Self consciousness	Role taking: through action the actor performs to become aware of self.
Medium to connect implicit self and explicit self	Assumption	Ego synthesis	Self in symbolic interaction
The way to sense self	Critical reflection	Self-objectification	Self-objectification

Note: The compromisers' study of self is based on the Eriksonian school; therefore, I do not list it on this table.

When comparing the differences between transformative learning and the studies of identity negotiation, there are four results that provide answers to my research question. First, transformative learning theory does not discuss the importance of maintaining self-sameness and continuity for individuals. In fact, Taiwanese immigrants somehow feel the loss of self-sameness as an emotional trauma in acculturation (Tsai, 1998). Second, transformative learning does not discuss an individual's unconscious self. The unconscious self may affect the meaning-making process. It is possible that the unconscious self has been more or less attached to critical reflection and rational thinking. Therefore, the bias that comes from the unconscious self is taking part in the process of decision making. Young Taiwanese immigrants choose to become a "banana" (assimilated in white-dominated culture) because they were haunted by the negative "coolies" image of early Chinese immigrants (Tsai, 1986). Third, the change of assumption of transformative learning is the change of core in identity negotiation theories. The change of assumption in transformative learning is a meaning-making activity that is conducted with self-awareness. The change of core in identity negotiation theories may not be conducted with self-awareness. "Learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 5). Accordingly, only the change of core in identity negotiation that is conducted with self-awareness has the possibility of becoming a learning activity. Fourth, self-objectification (in identity negotiation) is conducted under one's self-awareness. Therefore identity negotiation contains the potential of transformative learning.

Conclusion

Two suggestions come from comparing the bodies of literature. First, maintaining self-sameness and continuity is important to immigrants' self-change in identity negotiation. Though the comparison between the theory of transformative learning and the theories of identity negotiation implies that immigrants' identity negotiation may involve transformative learning, the struggle in maintaining self-awareness and continuity may become a barrier not only to immigrants self-change, but also to the possibility of their transformative learning. Second, it is expected that the immigrants have the capability to conduct and determine their identity negotiation. Adult educators may apply this information to facilitate immigrant learners in conducting identity negotiation in cross-cultural contact.

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Strategic Storytelling as a Tool for Communicative Learning

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Abstract: *Based on research on the use of storytelling in for-profit settings as an element of learning and knowledge transfer strategies, this paper links the concept of strategic storytelling with Mezirow's ideal conditions for rational discourse and adult learning (Mezirow, 1991, p. 198). Following a brief explanation of strategic storytelling, it considers each of the conditions individually as it relates to stories and storytelling. It concludes with some thoughts on the facilitation of post-story connections that can foster critical reflection and perspective transformation.*

Keywords: Storytelling, Communicative learning, Facilitation

Introduction

Storytelling has been enjoying a revival in America since the late 1970's. (Sobol, 1999) Since the late 1990's that revival has been dancing in and around the edges of business. Books on stories and leadership (Gardner, 1995), books that identify stories as both an element and a product of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and books that position storytelling as the lynchpin of knowledge management (Denning, 2001) have recovered stories from their domains of bedtimes and campfires. Carefully facilitated, face-to-face storytelling in business settings can foster the achievement of both learning and bottom-line business goals.

The strategic application of storytelling as a business process can foster learning on individual and organizational levels. In particular, the communicative learning on which businesses fundamentally depend, the individual and organizational capacity for critical reflection and dialogue, can be fostered through strategic storytelling. Stories are a natural for the communicative learning process since "the focus of communicative learning is not establishing cause-effect relationships but increasing insight and attaining common ground through symbolic interaction." (Mezirow, 1991, p. 80) Stories are patterns and rhythms of speech and gesture wrapped around experience. Their language-based character renders them highly symbolic and their narrative nature moves beyond a skeletal structure of problem and dénouement, of cause and effect, to shine a light on those points where stories of personal experience for the tellers and the listeners intersect and overlap.

All this will work, of course, only if there is a clear contribution to the "bottom line" of the business. One beauty of storytelling lies exactly in its ability to foster learning, to shift meaning perspectives and establish shared understanding at the same time that it can generate new ideas, develop new approaches to work, establish shared values, motivate an employee, shift a culture. By achieving business objectives that include learning as first among equals, business can become storytelling's new campfire.

This paper links strategic storytelling with Mezirow's ideal conditions for rational discourse and adult learning (Mezirow, 1991, p. 198). It begins with a brief explanation of strategic storytelling in business settings, as distinguished from storytelling for other purposes such as entertainment and healing. It then considers each of the conditions individually as it relates to stories and storytelling. It concludes with some thoughts on the facilitation of post-story connections that can foster critical reflection and perspective transformation.

Strategic Storytelling

First there were stories. Then there was business. And then there were business stories. Business is a social activity, and social interaction is the basic fiber of stories. So business produces stories. Stories are of the business, by the business and for the business. Every day, new stories are woven out of the rich fabric of conversation and action that propel commerce and keep business alive. And, in the telling, stories produce more business activity. They transfer knowledge and foster learning. They spark new ideas, deepen understanding and model new behavior or skills. They have the power to broaden and shift perspectives, and they can connect people and ideas in new ways that leap gracefully over organizational boundaries. Moreover, they do these things in ways that feel natural and fun to human beings – the way that work at its very best can also be. Stories and business are good partners.

Every day business people collaborate with each other and the world around them to create new stories. And then they tell them. They tell these stories because they are funny, sad, important, and curious. Telling them is fun, and telling them is necessary. Business people tell these stories because, in the telling, they interpret their world, they learn from it and they pass that learning along. Storytelling is an act, a process, a dynamic that is carried out in organizations every day. It's a natural part of the business, and it happens whether the stories are good for the business, bad for the business or simply benign.

Strategic storytelling is a thoughtful process of harnessing stories that will promote learning and action aligned with the mutual interests of the organization and the people who work there. The process is depicted graphically in Figure 1. It begins when a practitioner draws on the real-world experiences and wisdom of the people in the business, identifying stories that are directly linked to their business goals. This link, this careful selection of real stories that will resonate with the listeners and are clearly aligned with the business goals, is a critical element that distinguishes business storytelling from other, perhaps more familiar, forms of storytelling.

Thoughtful practitioners can use a filter of organizational elements such as the vision, mission, values, strategy and culture to identify stories already swirling about as a result of organizational events. These stories will have the most impact on the achievement of key goals. These informal stories are then crafted in to “tellable” tales with a structure and elements that will appeal to the listeners and spark their imaginations.

Practitioners engaged in the strategic storytelling process have other decisions to make beyond story selection. These include determining who will tell the stories – the protagonist(s), natural storytellers, leaders etc. – and who will have an opportunity to hear them. The stories may be integrated into naturally occurring events, such as training programs or staff retreats, or they may be the main attraction in dedicated storytelling events that are invitation only, or that are open to the general population. In any case, a second distinguishing characteristic of business storytelling is the need to provide time for listeners to reflect and make connections through dialogue after a story has been told.

Thoughtful facilitation of post-story connections is at the foundation of practical application of the stories to the work of the business. It is through the good use of questions, silence and listening that authentic dialogue can result, in turn producing both cognitive and behavioral action that will benefit the business. Herein lies an opportunity for communicative learning, for the shifting of meaning perspectives and establishment of common ground. The understanding, ideas and convictions that result from this alchemical combination become the seeds of new organizational events that will generate a new set of stories, thereby beginning the strategic storytelling cycle anew.

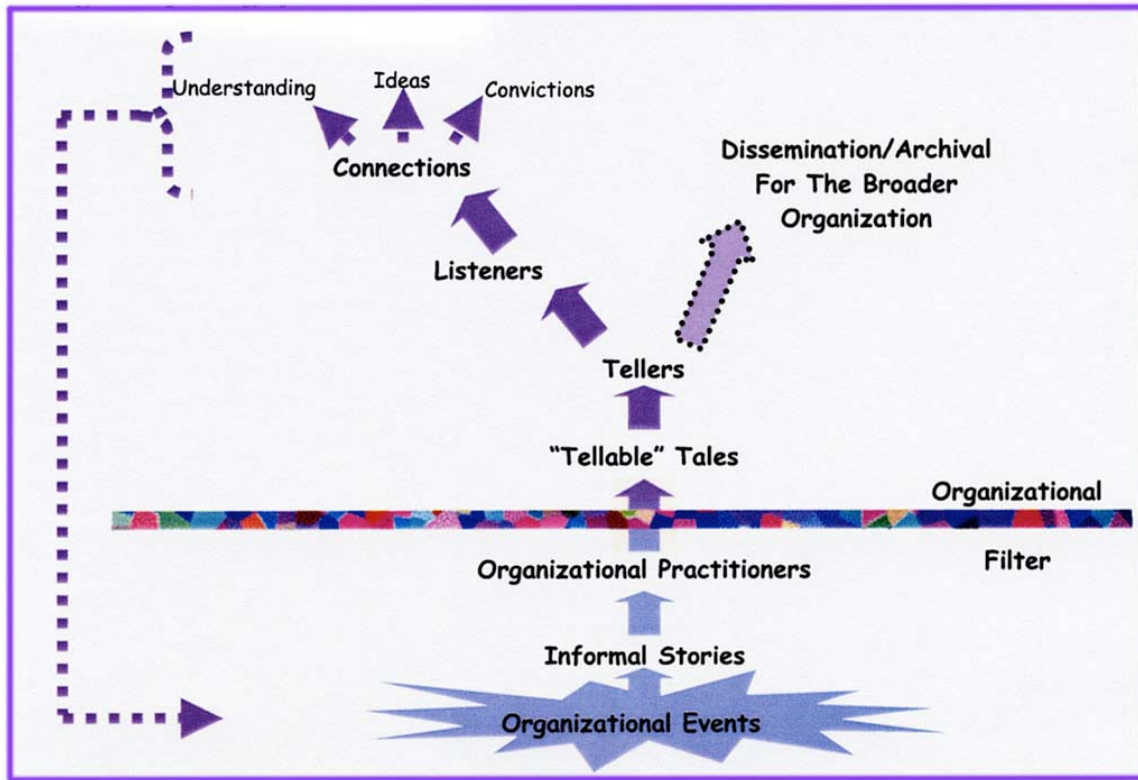


Figure 1 – The Strategic Storytelling Cycle

Supporting the Ideal Conditions of Rational Discourse and Learning with Storytelling

Mezirow offers us a set of ideal conditions for participation in critical discourse and adult learning that he holds to be the “essential components in the validating process of rational discourse through which we move toward meaning perspectives that are more developmentally advanced, that is, more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative of experience.” (1991, p 198)

Each of the seven conditions he cites has one or more implications for the use of storytelling as a tool for learning, for making meaning of the experiences listeners (and tellers) have in business settings. These conditions are considered individually below.

Participants will have accurate and complete information. The research that supports this paper indicates a number of elements or dimensions of stories and tellers that seem to enhance their appeal to listeners. Ranking highest among these elements is authenticity. Because businesspeople have well developed sensors that assess all of their decisions for risk and safety, they don’t like to be misled. They have been taught to rely on data. They seek “truth,” accuracy, and they have a sharp ear for scams. If a story is inauthentic, or if the teller is not comfortable telling it, business listeners will know.

One test that listeners use to check for authenticity is reliability, that is, the presence of facts. References to people and places are details that perk up the listeners’ ears and signal that the

story is reliable. Along with a believable chronology and reasonable cause and effect relationships between events, the inclusion of factual elements in a story gives listeners the sense that they could go “check it out themselves” and they would find evidence that would back up the story.

Indeed, business people live in a world of facts. They are confronted with facts – lots of them. They come in the form of spreadsheets and bullet points and business graphics. Typically, these facts get discussed, analyzed, even debated, but they consistently come alive when the story that generated the facts, the story that lies behind them, is revealed. Stories are rich with context . They weave the facts into an emotional and sensory tapestry that enhances the listeners’ ability not only to remember them, but to interpret their meaning in more sophisticated ways, in ways that are likely to be both more accurate and more relevant to the work of the business.

A story’s relevance to the listener and to the business is enhanced by the inclusion of context-rich details that help the listeners imagine the events of the story more clearly and situate themselves in it. Descriptions with just enough detail to conjure up clear images of place and time, and which convey the characters’ appearance, mood and personality invite the listener into the story. These details create in the listeners’ minds a vivid image of the story that they can then more easily connect with their own experiences. The contextual, emotional and sensory depth of good stories, well told, can provide a more complete rendering of events than a typical business presentation, and the tapestry stories weave provides a rich backdrop for reflection and dialogue.

Participants are free from coercion and self-deception. The highly matrixed power dynamics of business make the issue of coercion a particularly complicated one. It’s more than just ensuring that listeners come to hear and tell stories of their own volition. There are questions of whose stories get told, who tells them, and to whom. The process is rife with the possibility of coercive persuasion (Schein, 1999) and it is the job of the practitioner to carefully consider how the storytelling strategy can overcome the power dynamics to support the business better.

The careful practitioner will understand the distinctions between the stories selected for increased visibility within the organization, for public consumption as it were, and those that are in effect de-selected. These stories do not disappear. They remain part of the larger narrative of the organizational fabric and they will inevitably have some influence over a segment of the organization’s population. The practitioner will benefit from an awareness of these stories, and may well decide that it is in the best interest of the organization to give certain difficult or highly specialized stories more exposure.

Weigh evidence and objectively assess arguments. Three aspects of live storytelling support this condition. The first of these, that stories can deliver facts and events in greater context than other types of communication, was touched on earlier. A second aspect is the opportunity offered by face-to-face storytelling for listeners to ask both clarifying and exploratory questions of the teller. These two aspects allow for gathering of additional evidence and the dissipation of assumptive thinking. The third aspect that supports the objective assessment of arguments is firmly rooted in post-story facilitation that is generous with its elapsed time, and expansive in its willingness to explore arguments fully.

Have the ability to be critically reflective. Mezirow distinguishes critical reflection from other forms of reflection, reserving it “to refer to challenging the validity of presuppositions in prior learning.” (Mezirow, 1990, p 12) Carefully chosen stories that are well told can pose precisely this challenge. Stories can be selected on the basis that they run contrary to conventional wisdom and experience inside the organization, and become the launch pad for questioning assumptions and presuppositions. This launch pad has some ideal conditions of its own – namely time for reflection, dialogue, exchange of additional stories and perhaps some consensus building

around possibilities for behavioral action. Critical reflection engendered by storytelling shares the same learning goal as critical reflection sparked by any other means – to understand “the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling and acting.” (Mezirow, 1990, p 13) As with any other “triggering event,” the results may not be immediately evident, and will require trust, patience and consistency on the part of the practitioner for them to be made explicit.

Be open to alternative perspectives. Storytelling, by its nature, provides perspective. It may overlap with the perspective and experience of the listeners, or be contrary to it. Often a story will present the listeners with a surprise, an unexpected turn of events and related outcomes that take them off balance. In some circumstances these stories may actually act as a “triggering event” that, with the support of post-story dialogue and subsequent actions, fosters critical reflection that could ultimately shift a listener’s meaning perspective.

The use of multiple tellers who have shared in an experience, but who participated from very different intellectual, emotional or positional points of view, can help to develop the listeners’ appreciation for alternative perspectives. Having each teller convey the story through his or her personal lens leads to the construction of a robust rendering that can be a great proving ground for relationship building across organizational boundaries.

On a related note, some of the best practitioners establish a protocol for storytelling that involves some risk. There is, for example, the risk of telling the controversial or difficult tale, the tale that articulates an organizational “undiscussable.” This may in fact be a perspective that employees know exists, but that they never expected to hear in a forum endorsed by “management.” Making perspectives that run across the grain of the organization’s espoused theory more visible can increase the listeners’ sense of authenticity, generate a new depth of dialogue and win the respect of employees.

Have equality of opportunity to participate. At the strategic level, the practitioner implementing storytelling will have a responsibility to draw on and consider stories from all corners of the organization, adopting the stance that many story themes are universal. The quest is really for those stories that will have the greatest chance of relevancy to the listeners. As channels for soliciting stories open up in the organization, steps should be taken to ensure that everyone has easy access to those channels. A website aimed at collecting good stories might be supplemented, for example, by a paper format sent in by regular mail for those who do not have ready access to the company online network. A lopsided implementation will quickly send an Orwellian message about the equality of stories.

At live storytelling events, facilitators tasked with opening up reflection and dialogue following a story have a big responsibility. Not only do they need to foster the kind of reflection and exchange that will help the listeners connect to the story personally, reflecting on what it might mean for them in terms of action, but they have a responsibility to help a group of individual listeners connect to one another, allowing alternative perspectives to be freely voiced and treated with respect. Facilitation that achieves this will allow all of the voices in the group to be heard, and will successfully crush any attempts by individuals to dominate on the basis of their personal position power or community membership. In business, this can be tricky, but it is important work necessary to support this democratic condition.

Accept an informed, objective and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity. An advantage of live telling is the power inherent in groups of listeners to gather together, share in the experience of the story, and work together to begin to understand it. With sufficient time for questions, reflection, related stories from the listeners’ own experience and the development of

alternative scenarios can, under the watchful eye of a skilled facilitator build to an informed, objective consensus. Again, this process can be tainted with the influence of the power dynamics of the organization; it is the facilitator's responsibility to thwart attempts to manipulate conclusions and decisions to the point where they are no longer consensual and therefore no longer valid.

Thoughtful Facilitation

A key player in support of Mezirow's ideal conditions for learning in a live storytelling context is clearly the facilitator whose role it is to foster reflection, dialogue and connections after the story is told. It is impossible to discuss, much less foster, Mezirow's ideal conditions for adult learning through storytelling without the role of the facilitator featured in the mix. It is the facilitator who ensures that through storytelling "the learner actively and purposefully negotiates his or her way through a series of specific encounters by using language and gestures" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 79). The research around post-story facilitation that supports this paper has revealed a few considerations that the reader may find useful.

A primary task is to create an atmosphere of safety, so that people will speak their truth. This can be accomplished easily as soon as the facilitator demonstrates a willingness to take a risk, perhaps by telling a story, revealing something personal yet relevant to the topic at hand. Having seen the facilitator and then the teller accomplish this personal unmasking, listeners tend to be more willing to take the same chance. It can also be helpful to maintain a self-effacing posture. These actions reduce the distance between the facilitator and the group.

The best facilitators are not afraid of silence. They let the story and the comments from the group sink in. They give the listeners the freedom to come to the conversation in their own time. When they do finally fill in the silence, it is in the interest of sending the conversation deeper, striking and following the rich veins of insight that emerge. They use questions, simple ones, that help reach down below the surface of the politics and pleasantries. They ask "Why?" and "How?" and "What else can you say about that?" or "Can you tell me more?"

Finally, skilled facilitators are not afraid of risk, and they stay open to negative or difficult stories and commentary from listeners. Just as they create a clearing for the upbeat and optimistic, they graciously welcome the serious, sad or scary. They invite the listeners to explore what others bring to in that clearing. The most successful facilitators trust the process, relaxing into it even though the stories and the dialogue feel messy and emotional. They keep it going because they know that the messy and emotional are the allies of the creative. They are the allies of learning.

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Synergies—Transformative Learning and New Teacher Support: Connections, Communities, Complexities

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Context

Supporting new teachers by facilitating their transition and retaining them in the teaching profession is critical for student success. “Regular opportunities for substantive talk with like-minded colleagues help teachers overcome their isolation and build communities of practice” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1). Stemming from the belief that new teachers should be supported through collaborative, job-embedded, and sustained professional learning opportunities throughout their first year, the Teachers College New Teacher Academy (NTA) was created as a unique model of professional development.

Specifically, the NTA is a professional development program consisting of 15 bi-monthly sessions in which cohorts of 12-20 new teachers work with an experienced program facilitator on topics relevant to the new teachers’ experiences. The program is unique with respect to how it incorporates principles of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, 2000) and constructivist-developmental (Kegan, 1994) theories within its interactive, district-wide “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1998) to provide new teachers with multiple dimensions of support.

Over time, learning has occurred on multiple levels of the organization. Not only do new teachers show evidence of increased capacity and quality, but also the program facilitators and the program staff with whom they work demonstrate some notable shifts in thinking. The myriad learning processes of those involved in the NTA – individuals, formal and informal groups, learning communities and networks – are sometimes parallel, convergent, divergent, begin in different places and proceed at varying rates and levels of reciprocity. Different theories of learning help explain and facilitate this learning.

Overview

This session invites participants to consider transforming beliefs and approaches to adult learning and teacher development. Through this innovative, interactive multimedia session, participants will come to understand how the core principles of transformative learning theory have influenced the development of the Teachers College New Teacher Academy (NTA) over a period of five years. Using transformative learning theory as the common element, three different theoretical dimensions of the NTA’s work are explored to find the synergies between and among them that magnify and accelerate how we understand and shape learning experiences for new teachers, program facilitators, and program staff.

The perspectives center on guiding questions that shape this 1-hour, three-paper session:

- How has Mezirow’s (1991, 2000) transformative learning theory grown out of and informed the learning and support of new teachers in the NTA?
- Where are connections between transformative learning theory and constructivist-developmental theory (Kegan, 1994) that can synergize increasingly complex epistemologies?

- In what ways does transformative learning theory support *communities of practice* (Wenger, 1998)?

Session Outcomes

In addition to being introduced to connections between transformative learning, constructivist–developmental, and communities of practice theories, participants will:

- Consider implications of these theories for new teacher development.
- Understand how purposeful application of these theories helps define and differentiate professional development from training.
- Experience and reflect on the theories, techniques, strategies, and habits of mind, undergirding the NTA.

Note: These are the general outcomes of the session at this proposal stage. We are still thinking about the particulars of the session given what potential intersections might emerge from the further development of our papers and ideas.

The Theories

Transformative learning theory encompasses learning that creates a change in meaning perspective—a perspective transformation—through shifting frames of reference that are inherently multidimensional (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Transformation theory, with its holistic integration of cognitive, affective and conative dimensions, discussion of frames of reference which are more or less useful for learning and change, and its inclusion of habits of mind evolving to points of view, adds multiple lenses through which to examine the change process. These slightly divergent lenses and angles may reveal a panorama containing new clues to teacher development, change, and school improvement.

Constructivist-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) posits that critical to being able to make meaning and organize perceptions of the world in growing levels of complexity is the movement, in stages, of that which is subjective (what we are) to that which is objective (what we have). The stages of development are more appropriately termed orders of consciousness or increasingly complex epistemologies, each with its own mental schemas for organizing cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal aspects of being, and each with a foundational logic or epistemologic. Each level of consciousness or principle of mental organization is characterized by a subject-object relationship, and connects to the other levels in ways that are transformative in terms of how one level or principle moves to the next. The principles of one developmental stage become incorporated into the next, and can be used as tools for more expansive understandings.

Communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) is the phrase used to name a social learning theory that assumes “engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are.” Wenger argues that everyone belongs to multiple communities of practice simultaneously (e.g., at home, work, school, through leisure activities), and that much learning occurs through engagement in these participations. The intersecting components to the theory are: community, practice, meaning, and identity, and these components are mutually defining and interconnected. These components situate learning in a unique way, as a form of participation.

When Learning Goes To Your Head: The High Hat Kingdom

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Abstract: *The purpose of this workshop is to create a container without a strictly preimposed structure and form that allows adult learners to interact with each other and examine shared meanings, frames of references, assumptions, habits of mind and/or points of view about organizations. This capstone activity has been used for courses in organizational leadership with graduate and undergraduate students in a university classroom setting.*

Keywords: transformative learning, simulation, open space technology

Introduction

Passing by the television one day I heard Joseph Campbell use a Polynesian saying “standing on a whale fishing for minnows” (Moyers & Campbell, 1988). Teaching adult learners – in both the classroom and the workplace – about how organizations and/or cultures form, function and interact is complex and difficult to fit into semester courses. Sometimes teaching organizational studies by both informational and experiential means feels as though students are getting only small bits and pieces, missing the “whale” entirely.

To be honest, I didn’t know there was such a thing as “transformative learning” when I first began thinking about these things. In fact, as I think so often happens, I wasn’t looking for a theory. I was searching for a tool, technique or structure that would serve my students better. I was searching for something practical, some way to teach without teaching. I wanted to find a form of teaching where I don’t interpret the meanings for students, but they do it for themselves.

As luck would have it, I am “geographically challenged.” While attending the 2002 Organizational Behavior Teachers Conference (OBTC), I got lost trying to find my scheduled room and found my way instead into a room full of inviting sounds, intriguing visuals, and smells. When I found out it was a simulation, George Leonard’s *The Samurai Game™* (Giroux, 2002), I wanted to leave but I was just too tired to hunt down another room.

Beginning the experience that day I was not a “true believer” or a game player, disliking simulations as learning tools because they usually felt so contrived. Lance Giroux and Kathy Kane, Ph.D., managed to lead that disparate group in a perception-altering experience. For hours and weeks afterwards, I related some learning or insight to what I had done, thought or tried during the *Samurai Game™*.

It was sometime during that Game that I was struck – viscerally – with the realization that assumptions about how the world works and our collective values are embedded and readily perceived in simulations and play, if we bothered to look for them. The *Samurai Game™* uses a warrior/war model, a masculine model that implies, among other things, that organizations must fight to the death to survive, and that folks must sacrifice – possibly even their lives – for honor, for the leader, and to ensure the group’s continued existence.

I wondered what a collaborative simulation might look like, one with a feminine orientation – one that uses networking, dialogue and connection as its baseline. I realized that whereas an organization might look like (and behave like) a warrior on the outside in its dealings with other organizations, inside its heart and guts it is a tangled and connected system of

interactions within and between departments, roles and individuals. A web-like model that could somehow capture that interplay and make visual the schemas students use in the workplace (and then later bring into the classroom and use to understand organizational studies) might be exactly the learning technique that might transform theory into learning for my students.

Discussion of the Workshop

In an attempt to recreate the inner workings of an organizational system for a classroom experience I decided to give participants the opportunity to construct the “perfect culture or organization” – limited only by participants’ imaginations and in which they undergo the consequences of their choices. In trying to find the right *container* for this interactive exercise, it seemed important to use an archetypal organizational form that would allow students to enact many of their beliefs and learnings about working as individuals within organizational groups in relation to other groups or departments and in a choice of roles. It had to be fast to “get into,” with relatively easy guidelines, allow the possibility of short sessions or extended play, have the capacity for many outcomes, reversals and consequences for choices that could provide learning moments. It had to be fun. It needed a variety of artifacts or “props” for people to use to stimulate multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983).

A kingdom like those in the historical period when the craft guilds were strong and vital seemed like a good archetypal container since most students had some familiarity with kingdoms, it is far enough removed from contemporary models that participants could feel free to try out new ways of being, and the structure could be seen either as a flat or hierarchal, though students are not constrained to recreate any particular form. Additionally, craft guilds could parallel departmental interrelationships.

To begin the process: participants come into a space that is prepared with a circle of chairs, with renaissance music playing, and areas/offices for each guild ready with a large number of tools available for each guild. Participants are welcomed into The High Hat Kingdom and given some guidelines. They randomly select a role from a basket by choosing “decrees” of their guild assignment. They assemble in their designated areas and begin to do their “work.”

There are three guild assignments: the Royals (which include The Royal, the Royal Do and the Royal Mouthpiece), a guild of knowledge workers, and a guild of production workers. To indicate differing positional levels hats were used – the higher the hat, the higher the status. Additionally, the facilitator(s) act as Wizard(s) of Learning to establish the initial conditions and setting of the game, and keep the game in play.

The production guild is responsible for keeping busy doing something at all times that benefits the kingdom. Their tools consist of blocks to build a castle, a puzzle, banner and paper hat making materials. The knowledge workers’ role is to contribute their expertise to the kingdom by designing and implementing a ceremony for the entire kingdom’s edification and participation. To this end they have books on ceremonies and quotations, musical instruments like kazoos, banner and hat materials, bubbles, CDs and a player. Both guilds elect a Guild Organizer (GO) who acts as the go-between for the group. Each guild selects a name and creates a banner.

The Royal guild works to ensure that the kingdom is “on track,” getting the right things done in the right way at the right time. The Royal guild and GOs select The Royal by offering the tallest crown to one participant at a time. The first person the crown fits becomes The Royal. The Royal is charged with assuring that the kingdom is successful. The Royal selects a Royal “Do” who does whatever the Royal needs doing – especially overseeing personnel and

production – and wears a crown, a Groucho Marx nose and carries a sword. Also selected is a Royal Mouthpiece who wears a tiara, wields a megaphone, and gets markers and flipcharts with which to write and post laws. The Royal guild has pen and paper, play money, candies, and banner material. They also create a banner and select a group name. Other positions may be created by The Royal or requested by the group.

As in Open Space Technology (Owen, 1999), the space is opened and the “players” are left to create a culture by enacting a shared reality (Morgan, 1986) in a real-time unfolding of events. To aid in this, all guilds and the Royal are given bags with tasks in them, and one task for each is drawn at set time periods. Examples of tasks are: The Royal is required to make a inspiring speech, see that the kingdom has a vision and statement, make rules, pay workers; the Royal guild must create a performance appraisal system, survey the kingdom, promote, demote, hold meetings; the knowledge guild must write a song or cheer for the ceremony, design props, find and use quotations; while the production guild must design the space for the ceremony, build the block castle and puzzle, etc. To be “successful” the groups must manage and cross inter-group boundaries. No two groups go through this experience in the same way.

Three questions are the focus of the group dialogue at the conclusion of the experience: What happened? Why did it happen? What can we learn from it? (Wheatley, 1992). First, each guild describes *what* they think happened from their point of view, and then the whole group jointly discusses the experience. Each question is addressed, and all participants are given a chance to discuss what they learned while interacting in their assigned role, one that may not match their workplace persona. Individuals are encouraged to reflect on their behavior, feelings and actions in the High Hat Kingdom and apply their learning to their own lives and organizations. The post-Kingdom discussion with graduate students has equaled or surpassed the amount of time actually spent playing the simulation, though the undergraduate discussion usually takes less time. Students are also asked to write a reflection on this experience.

During the dialogue participants report that they are amazed to realize that they construct their own organizational reality and are responsible for their organization’s function and form. For the first time many participants are aware of the “big picture” and what a given situation looks like from different points of view for different organizational sub-cultures. One graduate student who played The Royal had never had the opportunity to be an administrator in her organization and enthusiastically tried out and learned from the opportunity. She reported that for the first time she knew she had what it takes to do a high level job, and understood where her strengths and weaknesses are if she chose a managerial position. Others who held administrative positions in their work lives and were arbitrarily assigned to the production guild gained new appreciation of how tenuous the connection is between workers and organizational leaders, and how assumptions create misunderstandings. One student shared that she had an extremely negative response to an overbearing male Royal Do and influenced her guild to include his execution in the culminating ceremony. Later she revealed this was a repetitive pattern she had with bosses in her work life, and realized that she could change her response.

Facilitators have been struck with the surprising amount of compliance enacted. Groups are often required by the Royals to follow ridiculous rules, which they do quite readily. Guilds subdue and internally “punish” those who might express the desire to rebel, question, or act outside assumed norms. Most guilds seem to do what is expedient and expected, with little or no “thinking outside the box” evident. Guilds seem to focus their energy internally toward the success of their sub-culture, but do not seem to be aware of larger group needs. Those who are assigned or elevated to positions of power often “change” and seem to act out stereotypic

“bossy” or “bullying” behavior styles. Sometimes, the behaviors exhibited during the simulation are often not how participants report that they expect to behave and they are surprised at their own actions. During their coursework students learn leadership values and tools (e.g., how to create powerful mission and vision statements, develop performance appraisal systems, the value of innovation), but in this experience “old” workplace models proved to be the basis of most behavior. This can be deep and rich material for dialogue.

Purpose of the Workshop Related to Transformative Learning

After unanticipated revelations of students rethinking and re-evaluating their behavior following the first classroom activity, a colleague and fellow teacher, Liz Clark, pointed me in the direction of theories and readings in transformative learning. It looked as though students were both learning through objective and subjective reframing (Mezirow, 2000).

The High Hat Kingdom attempts to encourage learning along Kathleen Taylor’s (2000, (p. 161-162) developmental dimensions: “toward knowing as a dialogical process” by “(2) Surfacing and questioning assumptions, underlying beliefs, ideas, actions, and positions,” and “(3) Reframing ideas or values that seem contradictory, embracing their differences, and arriving at new meanings;” toward a dialogical relationship with oneself” by “(3) Exploring life’s experiences through some framework(s) of analysis;” “toward being a continuous learner” by “(2) Challenging oneself to learn in new realms; taking risks;” “toward self-agency and self-authorship” by “(1) Constructing a values system that informs one’s behavior;” “toward connection with others” by “(2) Experiencing oneself as part of something larger.”

Simulations are interactive learning environments that develop expertise along six dimensions: metacognitive skills, learning skills, thinking skills, knowledge and motivation, and competence of acting (Klabbers, 2001). Although called a simulation, the High Hat Kingdom is not meant to approximate a real workplace, just the opposite! It is very improvisational. Miner, Bassoff and Moorman (2001) found a unique characteristic of improvisational learning is that experience and change occur at the same time. The High Hat Kingdom also engages individual and group imagination. “Imagination is central to understanding the unknown; it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by ‘trying on’ another’s point of view. The more reflective we are to the perspectives of others, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 20).

The format for the High Hat Kingdom uses up-front preparation of the space, artifacts and theme but no “*preimposed* structure and control” and is somewhat similar to Open Space Technology (Owen, 1999), a systemic change process in organizations that is self-organizing and where the process and content, structure and control are “all emergent from the people involved, the tasks they perform, and the environment in which they are operating” (p. 243). Owen says fundamental to Open Space is passion which engages participants and responsibility for getting tasks done, and four principles: “Whoever comes is the right people; whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened; when it starts is the right time; when it’s over it’s over” (Owen, 1999, p. 237). These ideas were loosely woven into our *container* for the action of the High Hat Kingdom. Unlike a typical classroom experience, this format challenges learners to shift the form by which we make our meanings (Kegan, 2000) by purposefully leaving the “space” open to any belief, value or idea to be addressed and acted out *and on* by participants, moving from received learning to procedural learning (Belenky, 2000).

At the heart of this process is a commitment to an appreciative or affirmative approach to change, as with Appreciative Inquiry, “the cooperative search for the best in people, their

organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system ‘life’ when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms” (Cooperrider, 1999, p. 247-248).

Anticipated Outcomes Related to Transformative Learning

This experience allows for both group and individual learning. Kasl and Elias (2000, p.233) expand Mezirow’s definition of transformative learning to include “the expansion of consciousness in any human system, thus the collective as well as the individual.” Because each individual or group engaged in The High Hat Kingdom is unique, and is given the freedom to act on their own assumptions regarding organizations (or not), there is no *one* outcome. We have seen groups enact and struggle with the concepts of power, compliance, psychological “shadow” issues (like overreaction and irrational responses to seemingly innocuous situations), inclusion/exclusion, replaying “scripts” of stereotypical “bad” leader styles, inability to “think outside the box,” and the inability to apply organizational theories and knowledge the participants “know” in a classroom setting to a working situation. This simulation provides an “open space” or container in which transformative learning may take place, but the form alone does not guarantee transformative learning.

Potential Uses and Outcomes of this Approach to Transformative Learning in Other Contexts

This learning experience is still an experiment and being refined. Although this simulation is designed for organizational classes, it may have a use in other subject areas and in other contexts if adapted. However, the use of an “open space” and appreciative belief in the ability of groups to create a place for their own transformative experience may have value. All too often adult students act as if the classes they take and the material they are taught are like pearls on a string – just adding one to another until graduation. Providing a place and structure for praxis – simulating “real” experience – where students can safely try out their learning about organization then reflect on the outcomes, encourages critical reflection and may challenge some to transform their way of knowing and begin to see the “whale” on which they are standing.

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Transformative Learning, the Fallacy of Substitution and the Resulting Trivialization of Adult Education

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Abstract: *In an attempt to find an identity of its own, adult education often rejected traditional methods in education, such as instruction and training, and developed new methods such as problem-posing education, facilitation and critical reflection. The often naïve application of these new methods has led in many instances to a trivialization of adult education. The central problem is that these new methods are effective only in the support of advanced learning processes. When the new methods are applied in basic adult education, they should be combined with traditional methods, such as instruction and training, to support the less advanced learning processes. Facilitation and reflection must be treated as supplements and not as substitutes for traditional methods.*

Keywords: adult education practice, application of theory, teaching methods

Two years ago Jack Mezirow and I brought together a group of experts in learning theory to produce a book that would look critically to the state of art in adult learning theory. The group agreed that each of us should produce a chapter that would indicate what the author saw as the main problem in his or her own experience with developing and applying adult learning theory. The paper that I present here was developed originally as my contribution to that book. Unfortunately the plan of the book died in an early stage, because many of these people were much too busy to deliver their drafts in time. But I am happy to be able to present at this conference my contribution planned for that book. I still believe in the need to look more critically to learning theories in adult education. Too often we embrace new approaches in adult education without a critical assessment of possible negative effects.

My contribution to this discussion presents a central problem both in my practice as a beginning adult educator and in my experience in later years as a researcher of community education. *Why is it that our sophisticated theories on self-directive and transformative learning lead in practice so often to trivialization of adult learning?* I shall start with short summaries of three adult education theories. Next I will describe what I mean with *trivialization* by giving examples of that phenomenon from my early practice as a professional adult educator. Finally I will share with you what I see as the fundamental problem and describe two examples of learning theory that help to clarify this fundamental problem.

Theories of Adult Education

During the last decades the emerging theory of adult education has sought an own identity through the development of theories that reject the traditional school education and more in general rejects traditional instruction and training, based on just the transfer of knowledge and skills. Below I shall illustrate this development through a summary of the theories of problem-posing education (Freire 1970), facilitation of self-directed learning (Brookfield 1986) and transformative learning through critical reflection (Mezirow 1990).

Problem Posing Education

Freire (1970: 57-64) makes a distinction between “banking education” and “problem-posing education”. Banking education is typically the traditional form of teaching, instruction. In his early work Freire rejects banking education categorically. Instead his problem-posing education stimulates within literacy programs dialogue and reflection on the hidden messages in language, which should raise consciousness of illiterate people of their oppression as poor peasants. According to Coben (1998: 84) Freire modified his position in later years “acknowledging that under certain circumstances elements of both traditional and democratic teaching may be appropriate, for example, in the initial stages of working with adults who are accustomed to traditional approaches”.

Brookfield (1986: 65) makes a distinction between “didactic instructors who have all the answers” and facilitators of learning, who “see themselves as resources for learning”. Brookfield clarifies facilitation further by saying, citing Carl Rogers, that facilitators offer “exciting possibilities for the development of creative, adaptive, autonomous persons”. While Freire promotes problem-posing education as a method for political consciousness raising, Brookfield promotes facilitation as a method for self-directed learning.

Mezirow argues that his concept of transformative learning is an umbrella concept that covers both transformations in political consciousness (cf. Freire) and transformations in personal “humanistic” development (cf. Brookfield), although his theory has been attacked in the past that it does not cover sufficiently transformations in political consciousness (Tennant 1993). When it comes to education Mezirow (1990: xvi) seems to prefer terms such as *critical reflection*, probably because also this term has to serve as an umbrella for more specific terms such as consciousness raising and facilitation.

I have no problems with these theories as such, but I became worried about the process of applying these theories in practice. As I came to see it, many attempts to apply these theories were rather naïve. I will illustrate this with two examples from my own early practice as an adult educator. But these are not unique experiences, I share these experiences with a whole generation of adult educators active in the seventies and eighties.

The Trivialization of Literacy

I was involved in literacy programs in the Netherlands from 1976 till 1983. At the end of the seventies adult educators in Europe “re-discovered” the existence of illiteracy (about 5% of the adults). Moreover, the number of immigrants in Europe at that time rose sharply and consequently the need for language courses. The books of Freire were right there, and we enthusiastically started to apply his problem-posing methods in this new wave of literacy and language courses. After some years we had to conclude that the method of Freire did not work. Even worse, it leads, compared to traditional approaches, often to a trivialization of literacy projects. What happened?

We tried in our literacy projects to organize the themes, the discussion and the reading and writing exercises in such a way that, according to the idea of Freire, a political discussion would emerge about the position of low-educated workers in the society at large. Well, forget it. Most of the illiterate participants were scared like hell when it came to political discussions and avoided deliberately to get involved in such discussions. But we managed a facilitative style, very much in the non-directive humanistic tradition as described by Brookfield, focussing on the everyday survival problems of illiterate people.

But our disappointment grew deeper. After some years it became clear that many of our participants became not fluent in reading and writing and, in case of the immigrants, not fluent in speaking the foreign language either. It was a consequence of the fact that we did not spend enough time on the hard job to master technical skills of reading, writing. Instead we were busy with time consuming quasi-therapeutic facilitation of their personal problems such as the dependence on others and their deep shame and feelings of inferiority.

So, many of us decided to change our approach. We adopted a framework where instruction to write and read was the dominant goal and activity. For instance I started to work with the standard schoolbooks and learned to apply methods developed in special education for participants with severe dyslexia. It was not so much a “back to basics”, but a “basics first”. Still there was some room for facilitation not so much concentrating on the problems of participants but supporting their growing personal self-confidence that comes with an increasing technical mastery. A comparable example of combining a tough course in workplace literacy with such positive facilitation can be found in Langer (2002). But I have given up completely Freire’s idea of consciousness raising through literacy. That’s really one step too far, too fast.

The Trivialization of Community Development

My experience in community development taught me a different, more complicated lesson: how adult education theory that wants to escape from traditional methods can easily lead to trivial education. Community development has different educational functions (Van der Veen 2003) but I focus below on the important educational function of consciousness raising. Hirsch (1999: 48) gives an excellent description of consciousness raising activities in social movements that applies fully also to community development. Essentially, as Hirsch says, consciousness raising can have two forms. One form is consciousness raising through discussions organized for *people not yet active* in a form of community development, in order to stimulate future engagements. This form can be found for example in church groups, in institutions for community education, in outreach campaigns of social movements, etc. My personal experience with this work started with my job from 1971 till 1975 as a course leader at a Dutch residential folk high school. The other form of conscious raising happens in sessions with people *already active* in community development, who engage occasionally in discussion sessions on deeper causes of problems and long term strategies and alliances in social action. I learned more about that form of conscious raising in case studies for my dissertation on community development completed in 1982.

Again, as in literacy, in my naïve years I felt, like most of my colleagues, that we should free ourselves of the traditional role of teacher that informs people. We happily embraced the idea of being just a moderator who facilitates in an empathic way all sorts of critical discussions. I even neglected all outspoken requests from group members to give them some more information, supposing that their experience as adults, workers, parents itself was a rich source of the sort of information you need in a critical discussion.

So as an adult educator I became a reluctant observer of discussions that indeed were often painful trivial. Partly because people were badly informed, and as an expert moderator I did not much to help them by giving them the needed information. Partly because of a process called “groupthink” (Janis 1982, in: Johnson & Johnson 2000: 301-304) i.e., a strong concurrence-seeking tendency in groups that leads to oppression of dissenting opinions or inconsistent information. And again as moderator I was just nice and understanding and did not

ask the tough “Socratic” questions such as what evidence there was for their opinion, what flip sides of an argument needs to be taken in account, etc.

It was particular this experience, which made clear to me what was wrong exactly with my naïve application of concepts such as facilitation and reflection. I started to understand that facilitation and reflection were methods to support rather advanced forms of learning and that this doesn't work when participants still wrestle with basic forms of learning. Gradually I began to understand that consciousness raising is a continuing interplay of advanced forms of learning, such as self-directive and transformative learning, with more basic forms of learning, such as the acquisition of knowledge and the training of communication skills.

Instead of just facilitating reflection, the educator should make sure that there is sufficient information, and if not he must interrupt the process to deliver that information. The educator should make sure also that the discussion is sound and he must slow down the reflective process for training participants in the basic rules of arguing, to make sure that the consensus is based as much as possible on what Habermas (1981: 141-147) calls “communicative rationality”. We should not substitute our role as instructor and trainer by just being the moderator of “critical” discussions. Instead we should be competent instructors and trainers to build on that solid ground the practice of consciousness raising. It is long way towards truly self-directive and transformative learning.

A Theoretical Clarification

My distinction above between basic forms of learning and more advanced forms of learning supposes a hierarchy of forms of learning. I will illustrate that below with two recent theories on adult learning.

Illeris (2002: 27-37; 2003: 4-6) makes a distinction between cognitive, emotional and social dimensions of learning. The central idea, following Piaget, is that the results of each form of learning are stored in the central nervous system as a scheme or mental pattern. A new scheme or pattern is established by *cumulative* or mechanical learning. This is the lowest level of learning. Cumulative learning is most frequent during the first years of life, but occurs also later in special situations where one must learn something with no context of meaning, for example a telephone or pin code number. Illeris supposes that cumulative learning is rare in the adult years, but I am not so sure at all. For instance in adult literacy it takes often a long time before adults can memorize the meaningless and irregular spelling rules of a language. Illiris describes the next (his second) level of learning as *assimilative* or additive learning, meaning that a new element is linked, as an addition, to a scheme or pattern that has been already established. He sees it as by far the most common form of learning. However, in some cases, situations occur where something takes place that is difficult to fit into an existing scheme or pattern, something one cannot really understand or relate to. In such cases a third level of learning can occur, called *accommodative* or “exceeding” learning, which implies that one breaks down (parts of) an existing scheme and transforms it so that the new situation can be linked in. So in a limited sense one may define accommodative learning as transformative; i.e., in the sense that an older scheme or pattern transforms into a new one. Nevertheless, Illiris understands Mezirow's concept of *transformative* learning as a special case, a fourth level of learning, because Mezirow's transformative learning implies real personality changes and therefore is characterized by a simultaneous restructuring in the cognitive, the emotional and the social-societal dimensions.

While Illeris calls the central element of learning a “scheme” or “mental pattern,” Kegan (1994) refers to it as a “level of consciousness.” Kegan uses these levels of consciousness also to

describe cognitive, intrapersonal (cfr. emotional) and interpersonal (cfr. social) developments. During the first years of life (2-6) a child develops the consciousness of separate objects. Next, and this can last till the teenage years, children develop a second level of consciousness, in which it develops “durable categories”, classifications for objects. Adolescents have to develop a third level of consciousness that consists of cross-categorical or trans-categorical principles to organize durable categories. Central in Kegan’s theory is the assumption that within traditional cultures this third level of consciousness was sufficient to survive. Nevertheless, and this is the main substance of his book, in modern times adults have to develop a fourth level of consciousness, a competence to handle complex systems. In the cognitive domain this means abstract thinking, in the intrapersonal domain it means understanding of one’s multiple societal roles and identities and, most important in the emotional domain it means self-authorship (self-regulation, self-formation, autonomy). It is exactly here, at the fourth level of consciousness, that Kegan (1994: 271-304) locates the competence of self-directive learning. With respect to adult education he states that adult educators too often expect that their learners are already on the fourth level of consciousness, while they often are still struggling to master the third level of consciousness. Finally Kegan formulates also a fifth level of consciousness that is typical for post-modernism. In this post-modernist consciousness individuals have learned to transcend modernist thinking, they understand the relativity of ideologies, the relativity of social conflicts and the relativity of their own identity. According to Kegan only very few people in our time are able to reach this fifth level of consciousness.

The first lesson I take from these theories is that the concept of self-directed learning is a rather high level of consciousness. I agree fully with Kegan that much too often adult education takes the capacity of self-directed learning in adults for granted, where in fact often more support for the learning process of the adult is needed.

My second point is more complicated and poses a big question about what exactly is meant by transformative learning. Illeris refers to transformation in two ways. On the one hand he uses the word transformation sometimes as a synonym for accommodation. On the other hand he sees Mezirow’s definition of transformation as a special advanced form of accommodation because it refers to a simultaneous accommodation in all dimensions of the learning process. Something comparable can be said for Kegan. On the one hand he uses the concept of transformation to indicate each change in level of consciousness. On the other hand when he defines the fifth (post-modern) level of consciousness, he uses the concept of “self-transformation” to indicate the transformation in the intra-personal development to the fifth level. This idea of self-transformation as a transition to post-modern thinking is not accidental, you may find it also in literature on the psychology of corporate management where transformation exactly refers to this type of transition: the caterpillar that transforms in a butterfly. I use Illeris and Kegan here as examples for a typical ambivalence in the concept of transformative learning. *Is transformative learning just a synonym for each accommodation, which leads to a higher level of consciousness, or refers transformative learning to the typical accommodation that leads to a post-modern level of consciousness?* If the latter is the case, it is, following Kegan, a level of consciousness that is even more advanced than just self-directed learning.

Conclusion: The Fallacy of Substitution

I still think those adult education concepts such as problem-posing education; facilitation and self-reflection added an enormous important extra element to the practice of adult education.

It helps adult educators to focus on more advanced forms of learning. This is important in a learning society that requires not only more learning but also more sophisticated forms of learning. And in fact adult education got credit for that in the more recent changes in school education too, which now moves also in the direction of “active learning” applying many of these concepts (problem-oriented learning, facilitation and reflection) so well known from adult education theory.

But the mistake, which made adult education so often trivial, is that we did not see facilitation and reflection as *extra* elements, but we used it too often as a *substitution* for more traditional forms of education and learning. This became particularly disastrous in basic adult education. We wanted too much by combining on the one hand the support of advanced forms of learning and on the other hand the engagement in the education of the disadvantaged. Especially in the education of the disadvantaged we should restrain our interest in advanced forms of learning and make sure that we take care through traditional forms of education that the basic forms of learning are taught also.

This does not mean that I want to translate a hierarchy of learning mechanically in a hierarchy of appropriate educational forms, for instance banning facilitation completely from literacy programs and banning reflection completely from consciousness raising. But we have to be aware of the interplay between more advanced and more basic forms of learning, or to be more precise, anytime that facilitation and reflection becomes trivial, we should slow down and take care that also the basic instruction and training is done, very well done. There is no standard, let alone hierarchical or mechanical, solution for that. In each type of adult education we should design the right mix of traditional methods and facilitation or reflection.

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Transformative Learning in a Classroom Context: Examining Habits of Mind as Curriculum

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Abstract: *This paper describes a retrospective case study of a graduate level course titled Self, Systems and Leadership. As part of an MA in Organizational Learning Program, this course provided the context for exploration of the research question: Can a university graduate level course be structured in such a way as to promote transformational learning among the participants? As I analyzed the experiences as noted in conversations, classroom-based critical reflection, completed student assignments including in-class facilitations, and my notes, I conclude that there was transformational learning among the majority of the students.*

Keywords: Transformative learning, case study, graduate course curriculum

Problem Statement

Transformative learning is at the heart of significant adult learning and central to adult education (Mezirow, 2000). Nonetheless, many courses for adult learners do not promote transformational learning experiences. The purpose of this retrospective case study is to answer the following research question: “Can a university graduate level course be structured in such a way as to promote transformational learning among the participants?”

Theoretical Framework

This value of transformational learning is fundamental to the MAOL at Chapman University. This Program dedicates itself to the principles of servant leadership and to overcoming organizational dysfunction by promoting individual and organizational transformation within a values-centered framework. The MAOL Program mission includes these values: (1) Provide education not only *about* leadership, but *for* leadership; (2) Prepare students to become more innovative members of the workforce; and (3) Enable students to make powerful and positive differences in their chosen organizations. These values, and moreover, the theoretical framework of the MAOL Program are so aligned with the basic tenets of transformational learning that it would be surprising if its students did *not* experience at least one of the ten phases of transformation (Mezirow, 1991) sometime during the Program. Therefore, this retrospective case study looks at whether and how a specific graduate course in the MAOL Program promotes transformational learning for its adult learners.

Methodology

Setting

The course being reviewed to answer this research question is one of the required courses in the MAOL Program and titled Self, Systems & Leadership. The University Catalog description of this Course is: “Examines organizations and individuals as

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learning systems. Emphasizes structural influences on individual leadership and deep understanding of self as core resource for learning and leadership development. Focuses on role of mental models, shared vision, team learning, and personal mastery, stressing awareness of sociopolitical tensions as catalyst for individual, organizational learning.”

The central Course goal was to facilitate student understanding of systems thinking and the value of deep understanding of oneself and others as a component of effective leadership. Additionally, the intent was also to help students understand the concept and value of the learning organization and its critical interrelationship with individual development. The course texts, additional readings, assignments, class discussions and experiential activities were designed to create the conditions for students to reformulate their structures of meaning by reexamining their assumptions about themselves as leaders and agents of change in their organizations.

The in-class sessions built upon the aspects of curriculum just described, and were designed and facilitated so as to create the conditions essential for the three key components of transformation to occur: critical reflection, constructive discourse and action decisions (Mezirow, 2000). These conditions included a safe place for: honest sharing of personal values, beliefs, situations and their impact on the learner; openness to alternative viewpoints; empathetic concern by other students; open questioning of statements that didn't ring true; increased awareness of assumptions individuals make in organizational contexts and their impact on them; cooperative approach to mastering content from leaders in the field of individual and organizational leadership.

Process/Conditions for Transformative Learning

The core curriculum, assignments, initial classroom activities, self-assessments, and me in role of facilitator-about-to-turn-collaborative-learner offered students tools and a context within which to examine and understand their assumptions and resulting points of view regarding self, systems, and leadership. I will discuss these and how they encouraged the transformational learning many students experienced in the Course.

The key texts used in this Course were The Fifth Discipline and The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook by Peter Senge, and The Empowered Manager by Peter Block. The Course was designed to use the five disciplines of a learning organization (Senge, 1990) to examine topics central to transformative learning and habits of mind including: lifelong personal growth and learning; deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, and images and the value of uncovering, reflecting upon and improving them; the value of engaging in critical self-reflection and discourse; understanding systemic interrelationships; new ways of seeing the interdependent relationship between growth, learning, and advancement of the individual in the organization and the organization itself; and aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create desired results.

During the first session I introduced the concept of systems thinking and showed the film “Mindwalk.” Following the film, I introduced the concept of the learning organization and the five disciplines therein. Senge describes learning organizations as places “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.” (Senge, 1990). Briefly, the five disciplines are:

1. Enhancing Personal Mastery-learning to expand our personal capacity to create the results we most desire over a lifetime;
2. Surfacing Mental Models-clarifying my internal pictures of the world, seeing how they shape my actions and decisions; learning to scrutinize them in organizations;
3. Building Shared Vision-and a sense of commitment toward a desired future; developing guiding practices to get there; recognizing people excel and learn when there is genuine vision.
4. Facilitating Team Learning-is greater than the sum of individual learning; intelligence and ability of team is greater than sum of individuals’.
5. Systems Thinking-a way to describe and understand interrelationships; highlights how to change systems more effectively and how to act more in tune with the environment; helps improve perceptual capacity over a lifetime; and so makes it hard to go back to seeing things the way one did before.

Students formed small groups during the first session and selected one of the five disciplines to present. They researched and gathered additional material and incorporated personal examples in order to facilitate learning related to their ‘discipline’. For example, the first group incorporated Covey’s work on the seven habits of highly effective people in its facilitation of personal mastery and led experiential exercises including writing/re-writing our personal mission statements. During the second session I introduced the seven learning disabilities, and the students participated in activities where they linked each disability to actual organizational situations. For example, one student described how the learning disability Senge refers to as “the enemy is out there” was prevalent throughout her entire organization as she could find very few examples of leaders in her organization taking accountability for operational or financial problems that plagued the organization. We also discussed Senge’s laws of the fifth discipline, such as “today’s problems come from yesterday’s ‘solutions’.”

In addition to providing the framework for class discussions and facilitations, these tenets of systems thinking served as the backbone for the Midterm and Final assignments. The Midterm required the students to apply what they had learned in the first half of the Course by (1) describing how the readings, class discussions, and activities/exercises enhanced their personal mastery during the first half of the term, and (2) compile a briefing on the learning disabilities present in their organization/department/unit. The Final assignment asked them to (1) clarify the systemic nature of the challenges facing the organization and which were described in the Midterm, as well as suggestions for what to do to resolve them; (2) identify and explain the five disciplines and how they relate to each other; (3) leverage personal learnings from our work in The Empowered Manager to discuss how they can become an empowered manager as well as help others empower themselves; and (4) describe at least five key lessons learned in the Course.

The other significant assignment in the Course was the Self-Assessment of Commitment to learning. Twice during the term each student wrote a short Self-Assessment describing their commitment to the Course thus far and commitment goals for the second half of the Course.

As one of the texts, The Empowered Manager was a critical component of the context for the transformational learning experiences described by many of the students. Block’s description of the importance of choosing autonomy over dependency inside the organization (Block, 1991) blended particularly well with the concepts of enhancing

personal mastery and challenging one's mental models. Combined, the material from the two texts underscored the importance of: (1) continually clarifying what is important to me; (2) continually learning to see reality more clearly (not getting stuck so often in unproductive entanglements); (3) my vision becoming my calling (vs. a good idea) so that I approach work *with* the forces of change vs. resistance; (4) asking lots of questions; and (5) realizing I influence (vs. control) a larger creative process.

Throughout the term, our class discussions were deep, personally challenging and provoking as we challenged ourselves to choose more autonomy throughout our lives rather than dependency. This showed up most often in organizational/career examples, but students also applied this continuum of autonomy $\langle \rangle$ dependency to other personal contexts. Dependency was identified as the part of us that believes our survival is in someone else's hands, and that our purpose for working is to get ahead and to serve our own ambition. This has us conclude that our only choice is to sacrifice and postpone the time when we begin living out our own personal vision. Conversely, we discussed how we can claim our autonomy when we accept the fact that the things essential for our survival are the things we have to create for ourselves, such as my freedom and my self-esteem. I can choose empowerment, or the belief that my survival is in my own hands. I do this by identifying and living out my purpose – by committing to that purpose, now, in this job, in this project, in this room, with this person. The challenge and benefits of creating an organizational culture characterized by autonomy vs dependency, and by the characteristics of a learning organization, gave us a rich context for personal critical reflection, constructive discourse, and ultimately, decisions to act.

The initial classroom activities set the stage early on for a safe, open learning environment and catalyzed individual reflection from the start. During the first session I facilitated the use of the Kolb Learning Styles Instrument to help the students understand the stages of adult learning and their preference for one or more styles. In a later session I facilitated an experiential learning activity on the use of power; both activities created a richer context within which to explore aspects of individual learning, and in particular, parts of ourselves that were likely candidates for review and possibly transformation.

I considered my formal role as “teacher” to be much closer to that of “guide,” and even “co-learner,” with those taking the Course. I wanted my relationships with the students to be viewed as supportive and I wanted them to be able to see me walk my talk, which meant being appropriately open about my career transition from the corporate world to full-time teaching – a transformation that was well underway but less well understood when I was teaching this Course. My commitment to being a lifelong learner came through and was a main reason we developed the environment we did.

Results and findings

Various transformative processes occurred among the students during this Course. Some phases of transformative learning had begun prior to the students enrolling in the Course, and some began during the Course. Though I know individual details in only a handful of students' situations, I know from what numerous students shared that they experienced ‘disorienting dilemmas’, ‘self-examination’, and ‘exploration of options’ as a result of their work in this class. In fact, when asked in their Masters Capstone Course this term what the most pivotal point in their MAOL Program had been to date, most

students answered “the Self, Systems & Leadership class with Dr. Wallis.” Here are a few examples of their experience of transformational learning and their decisions to act:

1. Changes in how they viewed themselves in relationship to their current organizational roles, organizational dilemmas, and to their careers – where and why they are headed – and what it would mean to contribute to the organization in a more self-honest and integrated way. Tammy wrote:

“Systems thinking is helping me to understand the importance of viewing reality in a different, much broader perspective as well as from an inner perspective. I truly want to learn and feel like there’s a greater purpose to my life rather than being focused on collecting material things and egotistical pleasures, of which I once thought was the meaning of success and happiness.”

2. Changes in assumptions and therefore decision to drop out of the MAOL Program. One student identified a new desire (and ability) to learn at a deep level and to perform successfully in an academic environment. Susie said in class:

“I’ve heard it said that in AA they tell alcoholics AA will ruin drinking for them forever because every drink they ever have again will make them feel guilty. This class is like that – I can never see anything the same way again.”

3. Doing the work of expanding one’s personal mastery in the context of a leadership role in a highly visible, mission-critical, large-scale organizational initiative (i.e. what am I willing to risk to grow/speak out/lead courageously and do what I must to contribute my best work to this organization such that I am energized and integrated)? Pam wrote the following:

“Hi Nancy, I need your advice. I am struggling with this class and do not now whether I should drop it or not. It is not the content that I am struggling with, it is the time commitment and the conflict with my current situation with Company X. As of this week, I no longer have office space, Company X doesn’t know where to put me, my son has no daycare and I am slowly losing my mind. I find I simply do not have the time to do a good job with the midterm and fear that if don’t do something about it now, I may fail the class...I am becoming increasingly jaded and find I really don’t fit in well in a dysfunctional corporate environment. It feels as if I was better off not knowing what I have learned because now I am able to pick out more problems. It is a very discouraging feeling that is making me think about getting out of the corporate world all together. With that said, if I am out of the corporate world, what good is the MAOL program? In my mind it becomes irrelevant. I am basically questioning everything, including my motivation, and am looking to you for some sound advice before I do anything rash. Can you offer any wisdom?”

(We spoke outside of class and I encouraged her to consider the possibility that she was in an extremely powerful ‘learning curve’ and if she hung in there, the learnings could be transformational). Later, in her Midterm, she wrote:

“What I have come to realize is that I do not necessarily know more based on experience, but rather the experience is shaping my mental models and sometimes hinders my learning. Additionally I have come to the understanding that the experience I was supposedly learning from, may not necessarily be over yet. In other words, the conclusion of the experience as well the consequences of my actions may be out of my line of sight or “learning horizon”. The idea that there

is no way to tell when the experience is over and lessons truly learned is a powerful revelation....Learning is always happening on some level and I now realize that I always affect someone's learning. I am acutely aware of what hinders learning, and how I should respond to benefit the learning process. Going forward, my goals are to continue to learn but I will hold myself accountable on a different level in a self directed, self-aware manner. I now understand that some of the most valuable lessons come from within and are not necessarily learned from a textbook. I also understand that in order to learn, the lesson is always connected to something greater than myself. It is an ongoing process which I influence yet cannot control. It is always bigger than myself yet nothing without my presence."

Conclusions and recommendations

In these examples I have tried to describe the nature of the transformation that took place. In each case it was something different: a new perspective; being able to step outside their familiar way of looking at things in order to see contradictions and complexities exposed by a new willingness to explore personal work; and rigorously distinguishing between evidence and dogma while envisioning different choices for themselves, for their teams, and their organizations. The various experiences as noted in conversations, classroom-based critical reflection, completed student assignments including in-class facilitations, and in emails from students, support the conclusion that there was transformational learning among the majority of the students in this graduate course in Organizational Leadership. This Course, complete with its curriculum, students and faculty, has truly been an example of how one graduate Program meets the objectives of the adult learner and the goals of adult education. In reflecting upon the findings of this retrospective case study, it appears to me that a possible direction for theory development is requiring courses like this earlier in graduate programs in order to facilitate transformative learning at an earlier point in the educational program of the adult learner. Furthermore, such research would contribute to new knowledge in transformative learning by increasing our understanding of how curriculum, teaching methods, and learning environments encourage graduate-level transformative learning.

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Black Mama Sauce: Integrating Theatre of the Oppressed and Afrocentricity in Transformative Learning

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Abstract: *Transformative learning theory has been effectively organized within the confines of white, middle-class academic contexts. This paper seeks to expand the borders of transformative learning theory to include other voices, specifically an Afrocentric voice. The author shares his experience as a transformative learning scholar-practitioner and the unique political ramifications of his work based upon the social identities he carries as a working class man of African ancestry living and working in the United States. The author also presents the methodology, Theatre of the Oppressed, as an example of transformative learning methodology.*

Keywords: afrocentricity, Theatre of the Oppressed, transformative learning

Transformative learning occurs when people are brought into a deeper, richer understanding of themselves and their world. Transformative learning creates a context for the examination of the systems, processes, institutions, customs, and structures that organize power, privilege, and disadvantage in society. Transformative learning calls people to a consciousness of the intrapersonal and social consequences of the current social order while also encouraging an indigenous vision of what could be if only we make the effort to change and transform.

For much of my work, I have created transformative learning environments without using the vocabulary of transformative learning. This is not surprising. As a man of African ancestry from a working class background, I've been inspired by the work of Malcolm X, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, the Black Panthers, and other frontline grassroots organizers. It wasn't until I entered the white academy that I began to be exposed to the theorizing that white middle class men and women were doing on topics and practices that many people of color and poor women had been engaged in for years (Collins, 2000: p.4-8; hooks, 1994: p.93-110). Transformative learning theory is but one example.

Traditionally, African people have had systems of education that were transformative. Rites of passage and rituals are among the many forms Africans have created to nurture the consciousness of every member of society into greater connection with the Self, the Community, and the Universe (Mbuti, 1969; Somé, 1993 and 1998). The irony is that while these systems have been under attack by European religious, economic, and social power systems Europeans have struggled to come up with ways to deal with the effects of the lack of such systems within their own culture – transformative learning theory is one such attempt.

My dual identity, as a member of the white academy and a member of the community of oppressed people struggling from the ground up for freedom, justice, and equality for all, calls me to challenge the Eurocentrism of white middle class theory by sharing examples of non-white praxis. Oftentimes, white scholars use the fact that much of the theory-building of people of color comes in the form of practice-based or grounded, experiential processing to de-legitimize the work of scholars of color. Praxis, the integration of theory and action, is, however, a theoretical counter-argument to such criticism of the work of scholars of color. Afrocentricity is another.

Afrocentricity is an epistemological framework that draws upon African cultural resources both traditional and contemporary to construct understanding of the world (Asante, 1987 and 1988; Reviere, 2001). Afrocentric research practice demands the use of praxis. Afrocentric scholarship calls for both the examination of the lived experience and the exercise of theory in service of the transformation of the lived experience toward the proliferation of the African-centered understanding of the concepts of peace, justice, and harmony.

This paper will explore my work, as an Afrocentric scholar-practitioner, in transformative learning through the practice of the Brazilian-born methodology, Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). Central to this work is my commitment to the investigation and assessment of oppression.

The History of Theatre of the Oppressed

The roots of TO are to be found within the agit-prop (theatre which has as its purpose to **agitate** the masses and disseminate “leftist” political **propaganda** to the masses) theatre of Latin America. In the early 1970’s, director, actor, and activist, Augusto Boal experimented with ways of using theatre as a way to create social change for social justice. Originally developed in Latin America as Boal worked with rural and urban people who were experiencing economic and social oppression and repression, TO, one of the major results of Boal’s work, was a return to the communal nature of theatre where all members of the community participated and enjoyed the spectacle.

In TO, the distinction between actors and spectators does not exist. In TO, all are *spectactors*—which means the expression of theatrical action is shared by all. Although the TO methodology seeks to tear down the European, bourgeois politics of theatre, it retains and maintains certain tools of theatre in service of its social justice agenda.

Two of the original forms of TO are: Image Theatre and Forum Theatre. Image Theatre is the foundational form for the other forms of TO. Image Theatre is the use of the body to construct forms and images of reality that may be used to discuss and critique social reality. The approach to the body in Image Theatre is in itself liberatory; the body is liberated from unconscious movement, routine movement resulting from socioeconomic exploitation, and from the reduction of the body into an automaton.

Forum Theatre is a method of analysis and strategic planning. Forum as it is commonly called begins with a script that depicts a person experiencing an oppressive situation which is common to the members of the community who are in attendance. The play is performed once to allow members of the community to see the oppression take place. The Joker (a TO facilitator) entices and challenges members of the community to come up with alternative responses to the oppressive situation that the protagonist might employ. As alternatives are suggested, The Joker encourages and challenges those offering the alternatives to actually set into the role of the protagonist and attempt their alternatives as the play repeats with the other characters seeking the same conclusion as was presented in the first performance—the persistence of oppression. As each person attempts his or her alternatives, they are supported and offered opportunities to think out loud with the rest of the members of the community about the results of their alternative actions. Forum Theatre is a rehearsal for life; people try out strategies to issues that have real meaning in their lives in a “forum” that is relatively safe. The community gains greater insight into the issues as well as greater awareness of the options and choices available. Forum is a collaborative problem-solving, strategic planning method.

**In the Field: My Theatre of the Oppressed Experiences
Worcester, Massachusetts: Undergraduate Students of Color**

For four years, I had the pleasure of working with a minority affairs office at a prestigious technical college in Massachusetts. The majority of the student population at the school was of European-ancestry and male. Every summer the minority affairs office at the school, organized a two-week orientation program for incoming students of color. My portion (usually the first week) of the orientation program was designed as a forum for the exploration of personal and social identity. We covered themes related to race/culture, gender, class, and sexual orientation. The objective of the program was to offer a holistic, systematic treatment of the themes in a way that provided for self-reflection on the part of the participants as well as a rich sociopolitical analysis of power and the ways it plays out in educational settings. It was our hope that, through this experience, students would become more able to effectively navigate the European-dominant, male-dominant culture of the college through the development of tools of observation, meaning making, synthesis, analysis, and self-examination.

The first year I worked as a lone consultant. The following years I worked with a Latina colleague. Over the years we experimented with uses of TO, while also using methodologies and forms with which we were familiar from other contexts outside of TO. In my first year with the group, the majority of the tools I used were from the Arsenal of TO. The Arsenal is a collection of games, exercises, activities, and techniques that are used in TO. The Arsenal was formed from decades of experiments with TO in various parts of the world. Some elements of The Arsenal were invented within TO. But much of The Arsenal has been borrowed and adapted from pre-existing theatre exercises and techniques, children's games, and party games indigenous to various communities around the world. The Arsenal is a collection of gifts that the world's people have contributed to TO. I used Image Theatre mostly. In subsequent years, we used Forum Theatre to help students rehearse scenarios that were volunteered by the returning students from their personal experiences on the campus.

We experimented with the inclusion of Afrocentric ritual experience in the process to allow a deeper, richer experience to unfold for the group. Out of respect for the sacredness of such practices I will not detail them here. But there are a few things that should be said. The ritual experiences created an out of the regular world experience that we all felt. These experiences bonded us to the process and to each other. The experiences were not religious – there was no mention of God. What we did in these times was to honor the sacredness of our lives and all life, of our humanity and all humanity.

The response from the students was profound. Year after year, students achieved a level of sophistication in their ability to observe, making meaning, synthesize, analyze, and self-examine that was very moving to witness. We challenged the students to apply a critical lens to their interactions as a vehicle for perceiving the larger structures and systems in schools and in society. Male students were challenged to examine the impact of male privilege and sexism within a social justice framework. Heterosexual students were challenged to examine the impact of heterosexual privilege and heterosexism within a social justice framework. Students were challenged to examine white supremacy and racial prejudice within a social justice framework. They responded back with tenacity.

During the academic years following the orientation program, students acted to name and challenge structures, policies, and procedures of the institution that they deemed white supremacist, sexist, and/or heterosexist. Although inundated with work indicative of an applied science and technology college with very little in the way of social science studies or liberal arts

studies, students found ways to organize and cultivate sources of support, strength, and resistance. My colleague and I were invited to facilitate annual leadership retreats for the group to aid them in their strategic planning.

In our fourth year, the original director of the minority affairs office resigned her position to pursue a doctorate and a more supportive environment in which to develop as a professional. In the wake of her resignation, the institution sought to re-direct the program. My colleague and I were branded as troublemakers. We completed the orientation program under much pressure and stress. We were not expecting to come back to facilitate the annual leadership retreat for the students. The students were told as much by the student affairs administrators with whom the decision rested. We were blamed for the students being isolated/alienated from the larger campus community. Our position and the position of the students was that to the degree the students were isolated and alienated from the largely white male campus community it was largely due to the institutional structures, culture, and processes that promoted and enforced white heterosexual male supremacy and European cultural hegemony.

Of course our position did not have an affect on the decision-making of the administrators “in charge”. But the students made *their* decision-making irrelevant. They organized a plan to hold a leadership retreat independent of the institution in an off-campus venue and hired my colleague and me to facilitate the retreat. It was a potent moment in the development of the sociopolitical lives of these students. They had acted upon their synthesis of their individual experiences in the orientation program to act out of their own sense of empowerment and their collective critique of the system in which they existed.

My Reflections on the Work in the Field

Freire (1993) makes a distinction between systemic education and educational projects. Freire makes the distinction that until the oppressed have the political power to control the educational system and thereby implement a systemic education for liberation the efforts by individuals and groups within the system of oppression to implement education for liberation are projects and organizing efforts leading to the day of the attainment of political power on the part of the oppressed. My TO work is an example of such organizing efforts.

Although I have consistently employed a systemic, reflective approach to this work, my work has always existed in opposition to and antagonistic to the sociopolitical mechanisms of the systems of European supremacy and cultural hegemony which were operating. The groups that I have worked with have all been targets of European supremacy and cultural hegemony. This has made the creation of ongoing projects difficult. As the work progresses, the self-sustaining mechanisms of European supremacy and cultural hegemony are triggered to fight against that which is perceived as a threat to the survival of the system. Those who wish to use TO or other forms of liberatory, non-bourgeois, non-Eurocentric transformative education must be mindful of the possible ways the mechanisms of self-preservation of European supremacy and cultural hegemony will act to maintain the system. Fear, money, authority, and geographic distance can all be utilized as weapons in the struggle to maintain the systems of oppression that persist. I have frequently been confronted with the question of how much compromise compromises the integrity of the work. Ultimately my decisions to stay on a project or amend the design of a project have been based upon the degree to which I felt I could persist of doing the work to which I was committed from the beginning.

Essential to my work has been the critical examination of the ways in which power, privilege, and disadvantage have been socially distributed based upon the social identities of race, gender, sexual identity, and class. When TO or transformative learning is implemented by a

working class man of African ancestry in the United States in the context of the examination of these issues, there is an additional political problem which is raised within the framework of European supremacy and cultural hegemony, one that my middle class white colleagues don't confront in their work.

My work is intrinsically dangerous, revolutionary, and counter-productive to the interests and aims of European cultural life in its current configuration as European supremacy, cultural hegemony, and world domination. My work in transformative learning puts my life in greater danger. To the degree that I am able to exact the same kind of benefits that my white middle class colleagues in transformative learning enjoy such as publication credits, faculty positions, consulting contracts, etc. it is because of my ability to "hustle". "Hustling" is a skill that most black folks learned as a result of their experience of the system of European supremacy and cultural hegemony known as the slave trade and slavery. Hustling is the utilization of the social resources made available to a black person in white society in combination with the intrinsic personal resources a black person possesses in an effort to survive and thrive in a hostile environment.

TO, as a methodology, can be dangerous, revolutionary, and counter-productive to the interests and aims of European cultural life in its current configuration as European supremacy, cultural hegemony, and world domination. The way that TO employs the body in the development of critical theory is dangerous and revolutionary. TO enlists the body and the mind in their collective struggle for liberation from the systems of repression and oppression that persist. The body and mind collaborate to interrogate social reality and to rehearse the re-making of social reality toward the transformation of social reality. Because TO values the body in such a way it ruptures social convention through a political sensuality that is profane and ugly, ritualistic and beautiful, engrossing and nasty.

The combination of my personal politics and the politics of TO gives rise to what I call, Black Mama Sauce. Black Mama Sauce is the nasty nectar that comes from fertile Black Madonna. Black Mama Sauce is sensual and black. It is sexual and gendered. Black Mama Sauce is also the slave stew that black women made to nourish their families through slavery and bondage. Black Mama Sauce is what Mississippi Blues players drank at 3am in the morning to keep playing on into the dawn. Black Mama Sauce is what freedom-fighting maroons shared with each other as they sat and had ritual around the fire. Black Mama Sauce was what initiates took to begin their rites of passage. Black Mama Sauce could be a poison or a healing elixir depending on who you were and what was within your heart.

It is with authority and honor that I offer Black Mama Sauce as a contribution to transformative learning theory. Although I present my work as an example of Black Mama Sauce, it should not be concluded that Black Mama Sauce is unique to my work. There are thousands of African people who have used Black Mama Sauce for millennia to bring about transformation and healthy development of the individual and of society. It is to all those who have gone before me to whom I owe my gratitude and my epistemological allegiance.

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Opportunities for Social Change in Times of Crisis: A Case Study of Afghan Refugee Teacher Education

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Abstract: *This paper argues that education and social change are important issues to address in conflict-affected countries and that contexts of crisis present real opportunities for social change if attention is given to fostering the spaces to support it. This argument is explored through the lens of the IRC, a humanitarian relief organization, and its Afghan refugee teacher education project. D.W. Winnicott's notion of transitional space and imaginative living is used to suggest one way of understanding transformative learning and provide insight into why the education project was successful. This case study is meant to serve as one example of how opportunities for social change can be fostered amidst crisis and chaos. The paper concludes that carving out supportive spaces is key for harnessing social change opportunities in crisis.*

Keywords: countries in conflict, social change, refugee education, transitional space

Introduction

In this paper I argue that education and social change are important issues to address in conflict-affected countries and that contexts of crisis present real opportunities for social change if attention is given to carving out spaces of support. I explore this argument by discussing the ways in which education can be used to foment conflict or foster peacebuilding and the reasons why situations of war and violence can potentially provide opportunities for transformative learning. I use the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian aid organization, as a lens through which to examine in depth the existence and creation of these potential opportunities by presenting a case study of an Afghan refugee teacher education project, which was successful in enabling participants to alter traditional conceptions of children and the child-adult relationship. I turn to D.W. Winnicott's notion of transitional space and imaginative living to suggest one way of understanding transformative learning, including insight into why the education project was successful. This case study is meant to serve as one example of how opportunities for social change can be fostered amidst crisis and chaos. I conclude that carving out supportive spaces is key to capturing these opportunities for social change.

Opportunities for Social Change in Times of Crisis

Unfortunately in the world today, an unprecedented number of countries are plagued by war and violent conflict with an estimated 50 countries affected by conflict (AED, 8). I argue here that it is important to attend to issues of education and social change in these countries because of the vast scope of the problem, the role education plays in conflict and peacebuilding, and the opportunities that do exist for fostering social change in these difficult times. The number of countries affected by conflict shows that the problem is widespread and not insignificant, especially when considering issues of global poverty and development (AED, 8).

Additionally, education has a potential role in fueling conflict. Research shows that in conditions of conflict, education is often targeted because the notion of personal and social development and change that underpins many people's conception of education frequently appeals to those in power or those seeking power as a mechanism for influencing, shaping, or

producing people and societies (Bush, 2). Many parties of political, ideological, religious, cultural or ethnic conflicts use education as a tool for achieving their goals, which means education can foment war through promoting social exclusion, cultural repression, and/or personal demonization of the other. The methods for doing this are numerous but can include control over educational access, biased content, language of instruction, and authoritarian pedagogy (Bush, 9). For example, in Kosovo, the Serbian government excluded the Albanian minority from attending schools. In Rwanda, Belgian and German colonial textbooks disparaged the Hutus as stupid and animal-like and held up the Tutsis as intelligent and capable. In southern Sudan, the Arab north decided to “Arabize” their Christian and African neighbors in part through installing Arabic as the language of education thus eliminating native language education for the southern Sudanese (Bush, 10).

While contestations continue during conflict over power and authority between political, ideological or other parties, there are opportunities to foster social change and harness the power of education to support the work of peacebuilding instead of supporting the marginalization and exclusion that contributes to conflict. Refugee settings are often especially conducive to such opportunities. This is due to practical reasons such as the existence of a minimum level of security and the relative amount of free time available to people due to isolated camp living. It is also due to the disruption of social networks during crisis and upheaval, which challenges frames of understanding and uproots traditional positions of power. This often chaotic setting leaves many in desperate circumstances but also in some cases provides opportunities for exploring new ideas and conceptions of the world (Bush, 24). Attending to issues of education and social change is not just important because it is possible, but it is also key in working to transform some of the worldviews that contributed to the conflict in the first place. History has a way of repeating itself and leveraging opportunities for social change during conflict is one way to attempt to stem this trend.

Afghan Refugee Education – A Case Study of Social Change in Times of Crisis

To examine in depth the argument that opportunities to foster social change exist in times of crisis, I turn to an Afghan refugee education program supported by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The teacher education project under this program is an example of fostering social change through transforming conceptions and understandings of children and pedagogy. This case study and the following discussion of why the program worked is meant to serve as *one example of how* opportunities for social change can be fostered in contexts of conflict. These opportunities can arise around a wide range of subjects, including oppressive or inequitable conceptions of education, an important element as we have seen for long-term peacebuilding.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), a non-governmental relief and development organization, has been working with the Afghan population for the past 23 years. From the Soviet invasion to the Taliban, conflict plagued Afghanistan and drove almost a third of the population to seek refuge in Iran or Pakistan (Omidian, 6). In 2002, the IRC supported education services for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, which consisted of 38 primary and secondary schools and 50 community-based classes located both in refugee camps and urban settings, serving approximately 23,000 students and employing about 1,000 Afghan refugee teachers. The IRC’s approach to refugee schooling is “education for repatriation”, meaning it prepares children and youth in exile to one day return to their home country. While this approach requires adherence to native languages and home country government recognized curriculum, it allows for a great deal of flexibility for the ways in which learning can be supplemented and schools can be structured,

including providing teacher education that covers diverse topics not included for teachers inside Afghanistan under the Taliban. IRC has a core group of teacher trainers that provide on-going feedback and staff development opportunities to the 1000 teachers on such subjects as classroom management, pedagogy, including interactive teaching styles, working with parents, and curriculum content.

Inside classrooms, teachers' interaction with students varies, but one element that is common is the ways in which teachers understand the possible natures of adult-child interactions and relationships. The Afghan conceptions of these interactions tend to give primacy to adult's knowledge, understanding, and authority. There is not a tradition of consulting children and seeking their input on how they feel, think about, and understand situations, issues or contexts nor is there the idea that this is a potential way of relating between adults and children. A characteristic classroom interaction illustrating this is when one teacher tries to encourage his student who is not behaving properly in class to do better by telling him to "pay attention", "focus", and "that if you don't work hard you will fail" and talking to the school headmaster and the student's parents about the student's behavior (Adamson-Koop, 10). While the teacher and headmaster do try to ascertain whether there are any structural problems affecting the student, such as the student going hungry because the family is poor, it is unusual for the teacher, headmaster or the parents to involve the student/child in an open dialogue about why he is misbehaving or how he is feeling.

It is in this context that the teachers and teacher trainers in IRC's education program requested assistance in the aftermath of the September 11th. During and in the wake of the U.S. bombing in Afghanistan, Afghans streamed across the border into Pakistan with the rapid influx overwhelming the refugee camps and refugee families in urban areas. Teachers struggled with swelling class sizes and experienced difficulties in coping with the influx of newly arrived students. Common complaints included: varied ages of students in the same class; many newly arrived students, especially girls, had large gaps in their education or were unfamiliar with a formal school setting; many students had difficulties concentrating; some students would "act-out" displaying aggression while other students would cry frequently and still others would be withdrawn and severely shy; students were separated from their primary care-givers and were not receiving optimal levels of care and attention, such as food, clothes, daily washing; students were living in overcrowded situations and could not do their homework; classrooms were overcrowded; and there were not enough school materials for all students (Omidian, 10). Overwhelmed, teachers turned to IRC teacher trainers for help and specifically requested guidance on how to deal with swelling classrooms of distressed children.

IRC staff used this request as an opportunity to amid crisis and chaos carve out spaces in which to consider how to deal with distressed children inside the classroom. A series of three-day workshops were held for teacher trainers with two weeks in-between each session. Consultants with experience in communicating and working with children, and trauma and coping mechanisms, developed and led the workshops. The first set of workshops concentrated on communication and covered four main topics: developing communication skills, identifying students with special needs and giving them comfort and advice, conducting effective group discussions, talking about death and separation. The second set of workshops focused on psychosocial well-being and covered three main topics: exploring psychosocial wellness, resilience and positive emotions; stress, normal childhood development and coping methods; and painful emotions, listening and helping children talk with adults.

The workshops were conducted in small groups of colleagues who knew each other well and used a participatory, experiential, and culturally grounded approach. Topics were introduced by asking participants to reflect upon and articulate how they understood the topic. New ideas on the topics were introduced and participants were asked to explore the scope, depth, and relevancy of the ideas both in the workshop and at home. Between each workshop, participants worked with the new concepts for several weeks when training teachers and these experiences were reviewed collectively in the next workshop.

Participants spoke positively about the workshop process. They talked about the usefulness of having “time to play” with the concepts introduced in the workshops both at home and between sessions (Reich). Many of the ideas were new and it took time for participants to work through how the ideas could be incorporated into current modes of interacting with children. The space for personal reflection, experimentation with the concepts and on-going discussion and support around understanding and using the concepts were key in facilitating this process. Participants also talked about the ways in which the various ideas introduced in the workshops had changed their understanding of children’s needs, patterns of communicating, supportive behavior and the role of a child’s internal reality in his or her ability to engage with others and the external world.

Several months after the workshops and after trainers were able to begin working with teachers on these issues, a short evaluation comparing teachers who had received communication and psycho-social wellness training and those who had not showed that those with the training felt more “relaxed” and “confident” and their classrooms reflected this by being “more friendly” and more focused on student’s needs (Adamson-Koop, 5). Teachers and trainers felt they now had skills to better manage classes with distressed students because they could identify and understand why children acted “strangely” and could communicate with children to either help them directly or get them the help they needed. Participants in the workshop reported that they continued to adapt the training in their work with teachers (Reich). In addition, several participants talked about how the workshops informed their interaction with their own children, “as mothers we started listening to our children and talking to them differently”. One participant talked about how when she saw that her children were sad or upset she thought she was consoling them by distracting them through telling a story or some other means. But she says “now I realized that I can talk to them [my children], and I started to ask questions about their feelings and emotions” (de la Soudiere).

Understanding Changes in Teacher Trainers’ Conceptions of Children and Pedagogy

By all accounts, this training was quite successful; participants incorporated the new ideas about children and teaching into their work and allowed the ideas to inform their way of understanding themselves and their children and their way of interacting with their children. The question is why was it successful? Many other trainings have been done with the same group on various subjects, including pedagogy, using participatory methodology and while these trainings have built skilled teacher trainers, seldom have these trainings moved participants to take on new worldviews, both informing their understanding of themselves and their families and their work.

One way of helping to understand why this training might have been different is to think of it as a “transitional space” that helped to foster “imaginative living”. These concepts belong to D.W. Winnicott and can be one way of thinking about transformative learning. For Winnicott, imaginative or creative living is when the inner reality of the self meets with the “shared reality of the world that is external to individuals” in a manner that enables aliveness and the ability to

challenge the given conditions of the environment or world in which the self lives (Winnicott, 64-5). For Winnicott, this personal capacity to live creatively or imaginatively means individuals are able to engage actively with the other in a manner that is spontaneous, flexible, true to the self and hence inherently individual and idiosyncratic. Illness in his work is often epitomized by “uncreative living”, which could be an internal state that makes the external environment or the outside world be seen as a fixed and unchallengeable force that requires the individual to comply or “too creative” living, which means the individual’s internal world is not grounded in reality (Winnicott, 68). Winnicott uses the notion of a “transitional space” to describe how creative living can be fostered. In Winnicott’s words, transitional space is ‘an intermediate area of experiencing to which inner reality and external life both contribute’ (Winnicott, 2) and it is located in the “potential space between an individual and their environment” (Winnicott, 100). It is in this area of the in-between that the individual has the potential to be true to herself while at the same time be in relation to others. Key to the existence of a transitional space is that it functions as a “holding environment”, “a congenial milieu analogous to [good-enough] maternal care” (Phillips, 11). It must be a space where individuals can relax and feel free to explore their inner reality and the external world without censure and have access to guidance if the individual so chooses, thus ultimately finding ways to engage the self creatively with the world. Winnicott stresses the importance of play and “non-purposeful thinking” as a way of engaging in this exploration within a transitional space. For Winnicott, people cannot be made to develop and grow, but they can be provided with an environment that would allow for the possibility (Phillips, 99).

It is possible to understand the workshops as a type of holding environment or transitional space. Perhaps the intimate atmosphere of the workshop, the participatory, experiential and culturally grounded methodology that emphasized self-reflection and exploration, and the subject matter of the training all combined to provide an environment in which participants felt able and confident to explore new worldviews. When participants expressed their appreciation for having “time to play” with concepts, it echoes Winnicott’s discussion of the importance of “non-purposeful” thinking or playing as a way of engaging the self with the outside world in a manner that does not shut either down. The fact that the request for the training came from the participants themselves is also potentially important if we see it through Winnicott’s understanding that people cannot be made to grow or take on new worldviews, but if they are ready to, which the participants demonstrated by requesting training, *and* given a supportive/holding environment, such as the workshop, then people have the real possibility of choosing to change. This observation is in line with Winnicott’s theory that a transitional space will allow an individual to have access to guidance if the individual so chooses.

It is also possible to understand the ways in which participants were affected by the training as enabling imaginative living. The core element of imaginative living, the continual balance between self and other, was evident in the way the participants talked about the ideas they learned in the training. By talking about their new ways of understanding themselves in relation to their children, namely that they had the ability to relate to their children and that their children could respond accordingly, the participants are at once bringing themselves and their external world into new and adaptive ways of relating. Participants did not show any signs of Winnicott’s “uncreative living”, namely rejection of the new ideas because of complete compliance to the traditional external worldview or acceptance of the new ideas without any ability to integrate them into external life. The varied ways that participants took the new ideas

and incorporated them into their personal relationship with the external world suggests that the training did foster creative living, which according to Winnicott is an individual and hence idiosyncratic way of relating to the world. Each participant found what it meant for herself and her children to “talk” and “relate” differently. If all participants started doing the exact same things (such as the examples given in the workshop) with their children, then the existence of imaginative living would be doubtful. The participants on-going adaptation of the ideas in the training in their work with teachers further points to creative living, which as Winnicott suggests it is a continual adaptation in and of itself between the internal world and the external world in a manner that responds freshly to change.

Conclusion and Implications

Issues of education and social change are important to attend to in countries of conflict. While education is easily manipulated to foment conflict, it is essential to work to enliven transitional spaces, imaginative living, and social change during conflict if we are serious about harnessing the power of education to work towards peacebuilding. The case of IRC’s teacher education project is one example of how opportunities for social change arise in crisis. Winnicott’s theory of transitional space and imaginative living are helpful in thinking about potential ways to foster transformative learning amidst chaos and catastrophe. Carving out spaces, both literal and figurative, that provide a supportive environment in which people can struggle to make sense of their new environment seems from this case study a key to enabling social change in these contexts.

What implications, if any, does this case study and Winnicott’s notion of transitional space and imaginative learning have for North American educators and the transformative learning community? Does the idea of capturing opportunities for social change amidst crisis have more currency in the developed world post September 11th?

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Facilitating Transformative Learning Groups: Reflections on Mexico and Highlander

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Abstract: *In the mid nineteen nineties the authors participated in two journeys to learn about facilitating group transformative learning in different contexts. The purpose of traveling to Mexico was to engage in the systematic process of learning about popular adult education as implemented in Mexico and in Latin America. The second journey was to Highlander, which was held as an international conference with representatives attending from Canada, the United States and Mexico. The purpose of both of these educational experiences was to learn more about the methods as well as issues related to implementing transformative learning from an international perspective. Hence, the purpose of our paper is to provide a summary of what we have learned about methodological strategies for the implementation of transformative learning across contexts. We present lessons learned from an experience that was extraordinarily successful and contrasting it with another which was not so well implemented (group consensus opinion). We hypothesize that collective determination of goals, attending to group structure, creating participatory learning conditions, and developing continuity of group experiences outside of structured experiences contribute to the success of transformative learning groups. Finally, further research on the applications of systematization across differing contexts is needed.*

Keywords: transformative learning groups, systematization, methodology

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

In the mid nineteen nineties the authors participated in two journeys to learn about facilitating group transformative learning in differing contexts. The purpose of traveling to Mexico was to engage in the systematic process of learning about popular adult education in Mexico. The second journey was to Highlander, which was held as an international conference with representatives attending from Canada, the United States and Mexico. The purpose of both of these educational experiences was to learn more about the methods as well as issues related to implement transformative learning strategies from a cross-contextual perspective. We reflect upon our experience in order to provide guidance for implementation, presenting lessons learned from an experience that was extraordinarily successful and contrasting it with another which was not so well implemented (group consensus opinion).

In order to study transformative learning in Mexico, the Popular Adult Education Group (PAEG) of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, was formed. PAEG actually adopted the principles of popular education (systematization) to facilitate our learning about its principles when we journeyed to Mexico. In Highlander, the atmosphere was more collegial and participatory, with less rigorous emphasis on participatory preplanning, reflection, group process and experience.

It is our contention that what we learned from our experience in Mexico was deeper and more profound because of the meticulous attention paid to facilitating group process through the process of systematization (Cadena, 1990) which was thoroughly and successfully implemented. Through reflecting upon our experiences and analysis of the group's "memory" at

Highlander, we conclude that the Highlander experience was much less successful because key elements of group process were not implemented. It is important for us to note that Highlander's memory is a 20-page document developed by the Collective Memory commission. Thus, our analysis and recommendations are not only based on our personal reflections, but also based on an evaluation of the thorough documentation of the collective experience.

Problem and Purpose Statements

A process for facilitating systematic group process for the facilitation of transformative learning has been established in Mexico. Can this methodology be implemented successfully in other contexts? What lessons can we learn from our experiences investigating this methodology? The purpose of this paper is to share these experiences, our reflections, and to present our findings of lessons learned investigating this methodology and its implementation in differing contexts. We remind our audience of the critical importance of the establishment of group goals through consensus and attending to group process and maintenance functions.

Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Some Limitations

We draw our research paradigm from Kolb's four-stage model of experiential learning (concrete experience > observations and reflections > formation of abstract concepts and generalizations > testing implications of concepts in new situations (yielding, of course, more concrete experience). While we realize that this is only a rudimentary presentation of his model, we feel it serves the purpose of this paper. Further, because of the limitations of comparing only two such experiences, we offer our conclusions merely as hypotheses to be further tested through concrete practice experience. Starting with PAEG's concrete experience in Mexico and at Highlander, observations and reflections (group reflections, memory books, and personal and interpersonal reflection of the authors) led to a formation of abstract concepts and generalizations (this paper and presentation), leading to testing implications of concepts in new situations (what we hope others will be able to do).

We use as our frame of reference our Mexican experience. While in Mexico, our Mexican host, Felix Cadena has promoted a form of critical reflection which he has called *systematization*. Systematization, it is believed, helps to make critical reflection more participative. By engaging in it, transformative learning can successfully take place.

Formally defined in Cadena (1991), systematization is:

The conscious process of creating theoretical knowledge and practice participatorily using emancipatory transformation in the belief that it is the best way to obtain our objectives. At the same time, we understand that transformational practices aim to develop peoples' empowerment so that they can be true protagonists in the identification and resolution of their needs and aspirations, thus overcoming the relationships and means of subordination opposed to this transformation. (p. 62)

In the Mexican context, group process, participation, and collective dialogue are emphasized. People identify their own needs collectively, and search for ways to engage in the world as protagonists in their own lives. Systematization is about the *group's* reflecting on practice. Popular educators throughout Mexico have adopted systematization in their *own* practice. They

help groups overcome relationships of subordination. Critical knowledge or conscientization in the Latin American context is fundamental as “an instrument of resistance against centuries-old subordination” (Cadena 1991, p. 65). Note that the adult education enterprise in Latin America serves marginalized people living predominantly in rural areas. However, Cadena argues, if praxis is not engaged in a systematized way, the whole process may fall apart and in short, fail.

Members of PAEG learned about systematization by engaging in it themselves. Participating in systematization ensured our *collective* success. Prior to venturing to Mexico, there was a participatory planning meeting with the goal of consensus building, as well as an overall orientation to our collective journey to Mexico. For our journey to Mexico, six groups were formed: logistics, inclusion, systematization, auto-evaluation, coordination, and memory. Each group participated in a group process to learn from one another and reflect upon our experiences in Mexico together. In essence, systematization helps ensure that critical reflection that is essential to praxis, will be based in the “true experience of the program’s participants rather than on conjecture, supposition or myth.” (Cadena 1991 p. 65).

An integral part of the group experience was participation in daily group reflections on what we had learned, seen, and experienced. The ongoing reflection upon our experience, practice, and theory made these experiences meaningful to us. Systematic facilitation of reflection helped to give these experiences deeper and more profound meaning to our lives.

Logistics worked with the Mexican host organization to help decide where we were going. *Inclusion* was responsible to monitor individuals so that everyone had a voice, so that no one was left out. Inclusion facilitated discussion examining how each person felt about the sessions. *Systematization* presented in the evening. They were to produce an organized collective collection of reflections which consisted of individual evaluations of the groups’ experiences. This information evaluated the action that took place regularly and had revealed meaning to each person. *Auto-evaluation* was the quality control group that worked every morning and evening. These people presented to the total group and kept a handle on how well the group and individuals were adapting to their new environment (Mexico). *Coordination* was involved with keeping an eye on the big picture; they were responsible for how the “course” was to be presented, providing directions and making it move forward. *Memory* kept the collective record.

Findings

The stated purpose for traveling to Highlander was to “exchange theory and practice of popular education, especially in the Mexican and Canadian contexts, so we could apply those ideas to many served communities”. The conference was attended to by Popular Adult Education Group of Rutgers University (PAEG), Felix Cadena from Mexico, 2 Canadians and a group of younger adults from California who came in with their own expectations. The conference was planned ahead of time by PAEG (perhaps ironically) without engaging other participants in the planning process.

Hence, the fundamental problem at the outset of the workshop was threefold:

- People clearly had a variety of differing goals and objectives
- There were a variety of people with different levels of understanding
- There were a variety expectations and not all the same

While commissions such as Community, Auto-evaluation, Collective Memory, Logistics, Future, Finance and Scholarship were established at Highlander, there was no “inclusion” committee whose sole mission was to attend to issues of group ownership and belonging.

Further, “Community” commission had multiple roles of keeping “community” by attending to the total group as well as to individuals. Hence, it was not clear who was to attend to systematization.

PAEG wanted to share notions of popular adult education, which is in service of the marginalized (disadvantaged) poor of Mexico. (Popular education is most effective in Mexico because these poor landowners have a vested interest in self-empowerment to enhance their economic and political power). The schedule was pre-planned. Cadena was invited from Mexico to present on the topic. The actual program consisted of five days: These were based on a traditional classroom method which included, among other things, two days on how to systematize practice and two days on popular economy. Unfortunately, many did not feel that traditional lecture method with small group discussion was appropriate to the context that was Highlander. Indeed, even Cadena confided with one of the authors that he felt a bit “out of place”.

Some (from Canada) wanted to challenge popular education while at the same time came to have their assumptions challenged. Others were interested in how to apply Popular Education to their own programs. Common questions included for example: What is critical reflection? How could it be used? How did popular education influence social movements globally? How do you help disadvantaged using this method? How to motivate adults to volunteerism? Can this help inspire commitment?

In Mexico, a cohesive group, with the same expectations, from the same organization, had a singular goal. Cadena was an expert who was a trained facilitator in the process with a wealth of concrete experience and willingness to provide the concrete examples of the group process working in action. We were a smaller group struggling with the same questions, many revolving around problems of cross cultural translation, both in terms of language, history, and culture. Participatory pre-planning was actually done prior to venturing to Mexico. However, what was being taught at Highlander was Mexican theory, presented outside of the context of the Mexican experience.

Of course, there were highlights. “Cultural Sharing” night brought an overwhelming response by all who attended. Poems, songs, animations, games, and storytelling brought each person there together with the others. Also, Aimee Horton invited all to her home for a relaxing evening. Indeed, sharing did take place, but in many informal ways. During an informal discussion, Aimee said the focus should not be on her, but on the “here and now and the needs of the participants” and that, “It takes time, a lot of time for the process to work, but it can work.”

Analysis (Results and Findings)

Cafarella and Merriam (2001) note that, “... the learner’s situation and the learning context are as important to learning as what the individual learner and/or instructor bring to that situation.” (p. 59). Indeed, our contribution acknowledges the importance of the context of learning situations and aligns with this contextual perspective on learning. However, we believe lessons can be learned and hopefully applied across differing contexts. We are trying to build a bridge across disciplines and contexts.

At Highlander, a historical locale noted for its tradition of participatory process, the lecture method was the predominant methodology employed, rather than drawing upon the rich experiences of *all* participants and the resources Highlander had to offer. Rather than providing time for a structured dialogue about the California, Canadian, or even the experiences of PAEG participants (for example, with Head Start, Agricultural outreach in the United States, or even

from the experience of the inner city poor of Trenton), we learned about systematization, a theory particular to the context of Mexico. Many complained about too much presentation of “complex issues in a large group” or “big language”. Ironically, theory was presented at Highlander out of the cultural context from which it emerged. Reflection was turned into a celebration. Of course, hindsight is always 20/20. Group determination of learning goals was not attended to as these goals were mostly predetermined by PAEG. Finally, there was no committee attending to inclusion and systematization proper. Perhaps this was too much for the Community Commission, which had multiple roles.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Attention needs to be focused on the development and maintenance of the group (including group process factors) in order for a group to engage successfully in transformative learning in the contexts we experienced. From our experience, important recommendations include, but are not limited to, (1) *Engage the collective group in the determination of common group goal(s)*. Group consensus of goals and roles was reached *prior* to our trip to Mexico; yet this process was not engaged in prior to attending Highlander. Without clearly defined group goals derived at from consensus, it is more difficult to maintain group coherence. (2) *Attend to the continuity of structured interactive experiences*: This was attended to at both Highlander and in Mexico yet without careful attention paid to developing collectively clearly defined goals at the outset, obtaining total group participation and enthusiasm may prove problematic (3) *Create the conditions where participants can begin learning from one another*: This clearly took place at Mexico and at Highlander. Formal and informal opportunities to learn from one another were critical to success in both contexts. Trust needs to be established and it takes deliberate and concerted effort of the group to build trust and to trust one another. This was reasonably successful in both contexts. However, we found that without trust committees dealing with inclusion and systematization proper, difficulties with the group could arise. (4) *Develop a continuity of group experience outside of structured interactive experiences*: Creating opportunities for collective engagement outside formal group activities was critically important. For example, evening celebrations and informal get togethers, such as at Aimee Horton’s home were perceived by all to be some of the most rewarding of experiences. (5) *The group needs to ask itself if the methodology of collective engagement is most appropriate to the setting?* This question is perhaps the most important for future researchers to ask themselves, and perhaps the most profound. Is the methodology for collective engagement appropriate to the set and setting (including cultural context) where the learning is to take place?

Finally, we believe that our analyses can be informed by the literature on small group dynamics. For example, Benne and Sheats (1948) identify three major group roles: group task roles, group-building roles, and maintenance roles, as well as individual roles. From our experience, when individuals engage in group task and group building roles, goals and roles are more clearly defined, thereby leading to success in group process. However, we would suggest, as is consistent with systematization theory, if group consensus on group goals was not reached participatorily in these contexts, then problems relating to morale and confusion could materialize.

Contribution to Knowledge in Transformative Learning

At Highlander and in Mexico we learned that for those wanting to participate in group transformative learning projects, it is important enough to try to share it with others. Indeed, we

believe that we can learn as much from experiences that were not so successful as much as we learned from experiences that were extraordinarily meaningful.

We hypothesize that groups function better when common goals and objectives are established *through group consensus* when engaging a group in transformative learning experience. Group building, group maintenance, and individual roles need to be established and maintained for satisfactory group functioning. Finally, overall, the methodology and learning content need to be appropriate to the setting where the learning takes place. Again, we believe that this can be achieved through group consensus. All of these questions are, of course inter-related. Indeed, our overall finding and conclusion is that without careful attention paid to all of these components, the whole process can break down, and in short, fail.

In conclusion, from our experience, systematization can potentially inform those involved with groups engaged in transformative learning in other settings as well as across disciplines and contexts. However, more research needs to be done on the application of systematization across different contexts and it needs to be implanted consistently.

Finally, resources need to be available for the process to function as planned. The dedication of Hal Beder and Felix Cadena, needs to be acknowledged. Without their extraordinary courage and vision these experiences would have not take place at all. We hope others who follow will carry on with further research into this method with belief in the potential of adults to act in the world as “true protagonists in the identification and resolution of their needs and aspirations.”

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Reviving Paulo Freire in East Asia as a Way of Democratization and Decolonization: Case Study of South Korea

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Abstract: *Paulo Freire and his revolutionary thoughts for social transformation through education emerged in Latin America. Since Paulo Freire was introduced to Korean intellectuals, his thoughts on education have influenced popular education and the social movement for transformation. It is doubtless that Freirean thoughts have been influential in the process of Korean democratization; however, his theory became dogmatic and leaned toward methods. Other countries in Asia show similar phenomena in terms of adopting Freirean pedagogy. The experience of colonization, complicated processes of modernization, and deep-rooted biased relations between educators and educatees comprise of the feature. In conclusion, Freirean pedagogy is neither for imitating nor repeating what he did, but for re-inventing in each context of every corner of the world.*

Keywords: Paulo Freire, Korea, popular education

Introduction

Paulo Freire left grand works about the topic of politics of nonformal education not only in Latin America and the Caribbean, but also the other continents. After Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published in 1970, he became an icon of critical education in terms of both theories and practices. Even though his early work focused on critical literacy programs for adults, his utopian educational thought has been applied to all areas of education. After his death in 1997, it became increasingly more important to reevaluate his educational thought and to reinvent his critical reflection (Godonoo 1998; Hall 1998; Roberts 1998; Schugurensky 1998; Torres 1998; Gibson 1999; Mayo 1999; McLaren 1999; Steiner, Krank et al. 2000; Joldersma 2001; Richards, Thomas et al. 2001).

Meanwhile, it is not easy to find studies to deal with Paulo Freire in Asia. To be certain most of Asian countries has been influenced by Paulo Freire and his works. For example, critical social movement during the 1970s in South Korea has been actively interpreted within revolutionary discourse among Neo-Marxists who were influenced by Freire (Han 2001), Freirean pedagogy played a crucial role to raise people's critical consciousness in the Philippines (Floresca-Cawagas 1996). In addition, educational problems in India (Basuray; Freire 1980; Peritore 1986; Maybin 1994; Mayo 1997; Shefner-Rogers, Rao et al. 1998) and Thailand (Matzen 1996) are studied from the Freirean perspective of education. Even though there are some references on Paulo Freire in Asia, those are neither specifically nor profoundly touched with respect to "a" Paulo Freire in Asian context.

Thus, Paulo Freire in Asia bridging educational anticipation for social change will be observed in relation to popular education in South Korea.

Conscientization and Democratic Revolution in Korea

Critical Tradition of Social Education

In every community, there is an educational tradition for the purpose of making it more democratic. Such an educational practice pursues the bottom up, community-based, human-

oriented, and face-to-face education. These educational endeavors have their own regional names. The most general term is “popular education,” and in other regions, it is often called “people’s education,” “liberation education,” “social education,” and so on (Han 2001: 81-2).

Following Paulo Freire, popular education is defined as critical adult education based on a certain community with a view to more democratic communication among people (Prajuli 1986; Torres 1990; Hurst 1995; Sandra 1997; PEPE 1999). Popular education has its own characteristics: political-oriented activities (Prajuli 1986; Torres 1990; Hammond 1997; PEPE 1999); participatory research as a major methodology (Torres 1990; Infante and Letelier 1994; Hurst 1995); and community-based education (Prajuli 1986; Torres 1990).

Man-Hee, who manages literacy classes in Anyang People’s College, defines popular education as all educational actions to conduct popular movements. In specific, she emphasizes that popular education in Korea plays two important roles: (1) to bring up popular activists to responsibly conduct transformative movement and increase the organization for popular movements; (2) to conscientize populaces who identify themselves as the oppressed, justify the movement for human rights, and is willing to participate in popular movements (Man-Hee).

Korea has its own tradition of popular education, so called “social education”(Oh 1996; Han 2001). With regard to social education, Korea can be characterized as follows: (1) education is considered as the best way for social mobilization; (2) the public school system has been well managed by the state for very short term; (3) experiences such as colonization by Japan, the war between two Koreas, and dictatorship under sequential militaristic regimes have caused distortion of consciousness; and (4) high and speedy economic growth was attained at high expense for people who were rewarded much less than properly expected.

The characteristics of social (popular) education in Korea are as follows: (1) even though educational activities could not be separated by political struggle for democratization, nobody has well been concerned to the relation of education to politics; (2) a radical perspective to social transformation has been apparent toward the oppressed such as labors, peasants, women, the urban poor, and the illiterate; however, educational activities have been conducted by elite intellectuals (Han 2000); (3) religious groups such as Christians and Catholics played a leading role to initiate popular education (Jung 1998; Lee 1990); and (4) complicated politics regarding North Korea prohibited from expression of social transformation through education (Asia 2000; Ben; CEDMW 2000). In conclusion, humanistic approaches to social movement have shown dual aspects by elite intellectuals: one is religious for “social salvation,” and the other is nationalistic toward unification of two Koreas.

Conscientization and Democratic Transition

Paulo Freire was, at first, introduced at 1971 by Dong-Hwan Moon, who was a professor of Christian Education Department in Hanshin University (Hwang 2000). While Freire’s revolutionary educational thought closely stuck to a “theology of liberation” that requested a new role of church in Latin America, it was not surprising that revolutionary theory of education in Latin America was introduced by a theologian who was exploring social transformation. It might be by his engagement to WCC (1965-1970) and sabbatical year in the Union Seminary at New York that he came to realize the oppression in the ‘Third World’ and brought Paulo Freire to Korean context (Shin 1992, p.14; Hwang 2000, p.28).

In addition to those in Christianity, radical intellectuals actively adopted Freire’s thought to social movement for democratization. In fact, it must be unthinkable that radical theory such as Paulo Freire could be brought into Korean society where people were under harsh dictatorship

by Park's regime. The Congress granted Park's regime a new constitution that prolonged the life of the regime without risk. The constitution, named Yushin-Heonbub, was used for the purpose of maintaining political power.¹ Besides, it played active role to demolish any resistance against it and Park's regime and, as a result, to prohibit people from claims for democracy.

To be interesting, although Freire's theory for liberation through education came from adult literacy programs in Latin America, it did not greatly influence adult basic education so much. It can be noteworthy that the literacy rate in Korea had already come up to high level compared to other countries in the world. After gaining independence from Japanese colonization, the Korean government initiated national campaigns for adult basic education, including literacy with help by international organizations (Kim and Yoo 2001).²

As the definition of literacy grew complicated with the terms of "post literacy" and "functional literacy", literacy education revived as a new tool of civic education. It happened at the time to community movement. Paulo Freire and his method of literacy inspired elite groups on how to meet the populace in shanty villages, what to use as a teaching/learning materials, why then populace needed to become literate, and the intellectuals to teach. Even it is not quite well proven that teachers were discussing Paulo Freire and his program, Paulo Freire was the name to be recalled when teachers then were asked what to learn and what to discuss about among colleagues (Yoo 2000).

Freire's thought has been closely related to education in critical social movement such as community movement (Yoo 2000), labor & union movement (Cho 1998; Jung, 1999; Lee 1991), peasants' movement (Lee 2000), college student movement (Park 2001), and adult basic education (Noh 2001) as well Christian movement (Lee 1992). Social movement to "democratization" in the Korean context can be defined as "political, economic, educational, and cultural movement for social transformation to vindicate the benefits of the populace and to stand by popular people as a subject"(Man-Hee; translated by author).

In 1987, Korea had a historically transformative experience that has been referred to as "the revolution of democratization." Through this experience, people could elect a president by themselves. The most important thing is that the change did not occur by a top-down policy, but by bottom-up pushes from the masses. Freire played a crucial role influencing critical consciousness among people.

Paulo Freire had been read with respect to two ways: one is conscientization and the other is as a new method for social change. Conscientization meant to Korean intellectuals the same as humanization (Han 1976, p.16). Besides, there are, typically, three types of steps in terms of people's consciousness for social change: semi-intransitive, naïve-transitive, and critical transitive consciousness. Therefore, people who stay at the stage of semi-intransitive or naïve transitive consciousness can, theoretically, be educated to the level of critical transitive

¹ The constitution of 'Yushin' means to create the new, even though its reality was totally different from its meaning. It gave exclusive power to the President, who would be able to enact emergent laws in order to control national security. Actually President Park depended on the arbitrary power nine times until killed by his loyal person in October 26, 1979.

² The illiterate rate in a 1948 study was 78.8%, which was too high even if Japanese was enforced to use during the colonial period. However, according to Jong-Suh Kim, in the end of 1950s the literate rate of Korea increased to 94% (Kim 1959). While considering the fact that there was the Korean War between the two indicators, the increase in illiteracy could be the most remarkable in the world. Therefore since the 1960s, there was no national level literacy program. The government thought that the percentage of literacy rate, 94%, seemed satisfactory enough (Kim and Yoo 2000). Hwang et. al., however, revealed that the indicator of the latter might be wrong, for research reported that the literacy rate was around 80% in the mid-1980s (Hwang et. al., 198?).

consciousness through conscientization. Even though Freire denies that the concept of conscientization is neither dogmatic nor sequent, Freirean pedagogy was engraved as a dogmatic axiom to those who wanted clear methods for social transformation in Korea. In summary, the actual meaning of conscientization could not be detached from practical methods in the social movement (Kim 1973; Lee 1992; Shin 1992; Lee 1998; Hwang 2000; Lee 2000). While Karl Marx became an axis for social change with the term of ‘class struggle,’ Paulo Freire was positioned in another axis with the term of ‘conscientization.’

Discussions

Recent critical theories of education such as Marxism, post structuralism and post modernism are major western traditions. The West as a political and economic predator to non-western countries during periods of colonization now plays a significant role to again colonize theoretical frames within the West. Theoretically critical thoughts of education are deeply rooted in actual struggles of third world countries and, particularly, the oppressed in the developed. Even though populaces in the Third World has been the ones who have suffered by both oppressors and the western culture, their tortured-experiences were exported to the West and been re-imported to the Third World as theoretical frames, that the people to be tortured cannot understand well.

This study looks forward to demonstrating that Paulo Freire has been re-created appropriately in the Asian context with the case of Korea. The educational practices in Latin America gave inspirations in terms of how to change the world. But sympathy to their hard struggles is not the answer about how to resolve the problem in Korea. Every community has its own moments of delight and sorrow within its context. This study starts to trace how a certain community has re-created (or re-invented) Paulo Freire. Here, there are three points how Paulo Freire is related to social, cultural, and educational problems in the context of Asia.

First, many countries in Asia have been colonized politically and culturally for a long time. For instances, Korea had been colonized by Japan for thirty five years and the Philippines had been colonized by Spain, the United States, and Japan for four and a half centuries. The colonization does not change only political institutions. Through the experience of colonization, the colonized in general are taken away from their own language, religious beliefs, communal feasts, social customs, etc. Worst of all is that people do not act voluntarily, but reluctantly, which is also closely related to the issue of cultural identity. In cases where indigenous culture has been distorted by a ruler’s oppression, it is hardly possible to revive the original spirit of the culture. While Freirean pedagogy is about enjoying people’s culture and their language and about practicing politics for themselves, people will be hopeful with its message to liberate themselves from a distorted colonized legacy.

Secondly, Asia has suffered from complicated processes of modernization. What a nation is pursuing is dependent not on national vision, but on global fluctuations especially with respect to the economy. Therefore, modernization has been harshly criticized and has been changed into other trends that global societies enforce. Following the experience of colonization, there are many countries to have suffered from dictatorship. Korea, for example, achieved economic growth very fast after the Korean War. But the high industrialization in Korea was led by the relentless dictatorship of Park regime for 18 years. As a result, Korea had put aside many issues such as preserving traditions, protecting human rights, promoting social justice, and resolving ideological conflicts. In addition to the case of Korea, the recent history of the Philippines shows that the dictatorship by Marcos neither brought about economic development like Korea, nor

expanded Filipino's capacity to the world. Both countries failed to understand modernization as "full development of both industries and human capacity" (Prajuli 1986).

Thirdly, Asian experiments of social revolution have to be challenged by the questions of how elitism can be resolved, and how the populace can become the subject of social movement. Paulo Freire through his whole life tries to break down the thought that education belongs only to educators. Popular education "challenges the traditional way of 'teaching' people, an 'education' that makes them passive learners; one that silences them and makes them conform. It challenges attitudes and social structures that oppress people" (PEPE 1999). Han argues that popular education has been in the tradition of the "old" social movement and has been used as a tool for political domination (Han 2001). He continues that the most important thing of popular education is to break down the boundary between who teaches and who learns, between high culture and popular culture, and between academic knowledge and popular knowledge.

Conclusion

This study to trace Paulo Freire in Korea is important. At first, Paulo Freire has greatly influenced popular education in Korea across the Pacific from Latin America, which means that Freirean pedagogy, originated in Latin America, is not limited to a certain region, but is applicable to the global context. Secondly, Freirean pedagogy does not merely imply educational changes between educators and learners, but also suggests social transformation among peoples from different social classes, ethnic groups, and religions. Mediated by Paulo Freire, social possibility for democratic transformation has been achieved in Korea. Thirdly, it is not a kind of authentic theory on education to assert its own methodology and field, but it has maintained very flexible and corporative features according to the contexts where it stands.

In conclusion, even though Paulo Freire gave inspirational thoughts in both local and global contexts, it is not necessary to repeat his words or to imitate the methods he practiced in Latin America. Social transformation is totally dependent upon those who feel responsible for the society where they themselves stand. Actually re-inventing Freirean pedagogy in Korea should begin from now on, even though it is true historically that he and his theory have encouraged Korean society to be democratized so far.

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Crossing the Threshold: Adult Literacy, Transformative Learning, Institutional Change

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Abstract: *Narrative and imaginative processes have the power to extend transformative learning theory to include multicultural groups marginalized by lack of formal education and strengthen the link between perspective transformation and social action. This paper describes a distinct model of literacy education that engaged parents of school-age children in storytelling experiences that led to individual and collective transformative learning. Parents increased their involvement in their children's schools, transcended linguistic, racial, and ethnic boundaries, and became advocates for improving the educational experience for their children. Teachers and administrators reframed their interpretation of the educational role that parents play in the school. The project is an example of practice that has the power to inform theory.*

Keywords: literacy, narrative, social action

Elisa, the parent of a child in a school located in a poor urban neighborhood explained that when she took her daughter to school, she would line up the toes of her shoes with the doorway to the school and command her feet to cross the threshold. She reported a burning desire to enter the building where her child attended school. Instead, each day, for almost two years, “my feet just turned and walked away, ran away some days.” Elisa (a pseudonym) is one of a group of parents marginalized by urban school structures. Schools are inaccessible to many because they often fail to involve families and engage parents (Tett, 2000). Differences between home and school literacies are often unexamined and when school-based literacies are privileged over family and community literacies, parents can be seen as a problem to be solved rather than purposeful partners in the educational process for their children. This paper describes the transformational learning experiences of groups of multicultural parents from economically disadvantaged urban neighborhoods who, although they had little formal education, were able to cross new thresholds of experience and influence institutional change in their children's schools. Their participation in a unique literacy project that linked personal narrative and social change led to individual, collective, and institutional transformation. I begin with a description of transformative learning theory and the potential of narrative to expand the theory to include imaginal modes, marginalized groups, and a stronger conceptual link to social action. Next is a description of an innovative literacy project that illustrates the expanded theory. The paper concludes with implications for theory and practice.

Image and Narrative as a Gateway to Transformative Learning

Mezirow's (1978) theory of transformative learning is the foundation of one of the most generative themes in adult education (Taylor, 1998). According to this theory, transformative learning leads to fundamental changes in one's perspective that is the result of critical reflection on unexamined assumptions which results in a more inclusive, discriminating, integrative, and open perspective of one's experience (Mezirow & Associates, 1990). Taylor (1998) explains that although Mezirow (1995) views transformative learning as the foundation of social change, most research in this area focuses primarily on the individual transformation. Researchers have highlighted the need to broaden the concept of transformative learning beyond rational discourse

(Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Dirkx, 2000; Kasl & Yorks, 2000) and include groups marginalized by race, class, gender, and lack of education (Ettling, 2000). Transformative learning as a nonrational, intuitive, creative, and emotional process is emerging in the literature (Cranton, 1997) but this affective aspect of transformative learning is rarely connected to social action. Kasl & Yorks (2000) explain that Mezirow's conceptualization of rational discourse describes a social act rather than an act of full personhood because the rules of free and open discourse deal primarily with ideas rather than affective and imaginal modes. Dirkx (2000) contends that a focus on the rational ignores the role that nonrational processes play in the development of meaning. Narrative that includes images and symbols extends the concept of transformative learning by making it accessible to a wider audience, particularly those who may not have benefited from education, economic security, stability, and safety—the preconditions of rational discourse described by Mezirow (1995). Belenky and Stanton (2000) argue for the inclusion of people who are marginalized. “Not only would participation and reflective dialogue support their development as individuals, it could also support the development of a more inclusive, just, and democratic society” (p. 74). Narrative, according to Rossiter (2002), is deeply appealing and richly satisfying to the human soul, with an allure that transcends cultures, centuries, ideologies, and academic disciplines. Commenting on the use of narrative during times of social change, Dominice (2000) claims that recounting life histories is a way to put words to social and cultural heritage, thus making them visible. Narrative, especially autobiographical narrative, is a fundamental structure of human meaning-making (Bruner, 1986) and shapes the texture of one's life at every crossroad. Stories based on one's culture or autobiography shape the ways in which people develop their distinctive ways of knowing. The dominant culture, particularly that of schools, may not value these ways of knowing, leaving them hidden, lost, or viewed as illegitimate or unnecessary (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Yet stories link listeners to their own life experience and, perhaps more importantly, to the life experiences of others.

Participatory, culturally situated literacy programs based on narrative illustrate how to expand the transformative learning model to include those who may be more inclined to engage in storytelling as the first step in a transformative learning process rather than enter into the rigors of rational discourse. *Tellin' Stories: Connecting Parents, Schools, and Communities* is an urban literacy project that values narrative and assumes that stories lead to transformative experiences for individuals and groups and that this experience of transformation results in collective social action.

Tellin' Stories: Connecting Parents, Schools, and Communities

According to the brochure, “The *Tellin' Stories* project is based on the belief that all parents regardless of their nationality, cultural background, native language, and level of formal education can draw from their knowledge and experience to create their own literature, and serve as sources of literacy at home, in the school, and in the community.” Through meaningful narrative activities, the project attracted multi-cultural groups of parents and school personnel, groups rarely accustomed to collaboration with one another. This paper describes the experiences of participants in one project as an illustration of the promise of narrative for social transformation. Data for this paper resulted from a three-year action learning process to evaluate the project from multiple perspectives (Ziegler, 1998). My role was to facilitate the evaluation; as a part of the evaluation process, I joined parents and project staff in examining project documents, audio taping public performances, interviewing teachers and school administrators, and participating in dialogues to better understand how the opportunity to engage in storytelling

impacted people's lives. Since this part of the evaluation was completed in 1998, the project has grown and expanded to become an award-winning example of parents acting as purposeful partners in the educational process of their children.

Coordinating the project were two program staff and two parents recruited to serve on the staff. As their goal was to establish storytelling workshops in multiple schools, they began the project by widely distributing information to elementary schools in the metropolitan area. The project was initiated in a particular school when someone from that school (a teacher or principal) responded to information about the project and requested a workshop. In each case, school administrators had to be receptive to the idea. Staff invited parents, using a variety of communication strategies, to join the Tellin' Stories workshops to listen to stories and to tell and write stories about their own lives and concerns. The focus of the project grew organically as parents contributed their ideas and identified ways to expand their experience of narrative.

In a three-year period, 22 different schools were attracted to the project and more than 600 parents participated. Parent participants mirrored the multicultural make-up of the project staff and the neighborhood. Workshops, conducted in at least two languages, were ongoing and occurred over weeks or months. The workshops were customized based on the context, needs, and interests of the groups of parents from a particular school. As a result, parents created literature that described their journeys and their culture. Storytelling crossed linguistic, racial, and ethnic boundaries and was applied in different ways. "The transformative dynamic of the self-story lies in the profoundly empowering recognition that one is not only the main character but also the author of that story" (Rossiter, 2002). The more distant one is from mainstream society, the more important narrative becomes in making one's life real (Meyer, 2000); a concept reinforced by the enthusiasm parents had for the project. Hopkins as cited in Rossiter (2002) says, "Our narratives are the means through which we imagine ourselves into the persons we become" (p. xviii). This sharing took different forms depending on the particular group of parents; some stories were written, others were told, illustrated, or performed.

Project Activities

Project activities and processes evolved over the three-year evaluation period. Project workshops often began with poetry, stories from literature, oral stories related to particular cultures, and stories written by parents. As one parent said, "The poems and stories related to my life. They helped me tell my own story." Parents' personal stories were compiled into 50 books and anthologies that were distributed to school libraries and classrooms. Along with their autobiographies, many parents recalled stories told to them by their parents and grandparents. In addition to sharing these stories with peers, more than 50 parents received training so they could learn the art of telling stories to others, particularly children.

Autobiographical narrative of the family provided the theme for colorful quilts that depicted each family's story in symbols or words on large squares of fabric. Quilts and the stories woven into them became conversation pieces that led to fundamental changes in perspective among those involved. One mother said, "We don't know each other. But when a person says something about their life, then that changes things." As parents worked on quilt pieces and told their stories, they socially constructed a collective story through conversation (Gergen, 1994) that transcended linguistic, ethnic, and racial barriers. A parent commented, "We wove felt pieces together to make a quilt and we wove our lives together too." The multicultural emphasis of the project surfaced the challenges that parents faced as they crossed the often seemingly impenetrable boundaries of language, race, and culture. A powerful motivator to

overcome differences was the common bond of wanting a better life for one's children and the unifying influence of narrative. A teacher commented, "The language barrier does not take away from real communication that happens. Bringing different people together leads to a better understanding between them. Parents' ideas are valued and meaningful to others."

Stories were grounded in lived experience that encompassed themes such as childhood, immigration, loss, discrimination, as well as aspirations for the future. These accounts became catalysts for important changes in perspective and behavior. Because all parents had a story to tell, no one was excluded regardless of their literacy skills. According to Brooks (2000), "As the participants create new meaning out of the gestalt of all their narrated experiences, they construct a new shared narrative. Because it is shared, and because it is social, it begins to eclipse the more limited reality of each individual participant's narrative. A transformation of meaning occurs, and thus, transformational learning takes place" (p. 167). One mother metaphorically described the social milieu of the workshop. "Being in this workshop for me was like watching flowers bloom."

From Individual Transformation to Social Action

Although parents expressed a vital interest in their children, few parents who attended the Tellin' Stories workshops had ever participated in their children's education, or had even ventured into the buildings where their children attended school. They found no meaningful point of entry. Parents described transformative learning experiences as they reinterpreted their life stories as literature. Thus, they produced valuable literacy products that ushered them through a dual gateway; one that led to meaningful and accessible literacy practices in the home and one that led to involvement in their children's schools.

Literacy Practices in the Home and in the Schools

Parents agreed that the project created a legacy. "Tellin' Stories gives you something that really lasts because you can keep reading to your children even after the project is over." With a growing awareness, another mother said she never knew that she could tell stories to her children. "I grew up on a farm. I haven't thought about that for a long time. I wrote about the farm. Something I would never think of doing. I passed that on to my kids and it made us closer." Another commented on the magical way that stories teach valuable lessons in ways that one does not even realize they are being learned. Active engagement in creating and illustrating stories gave parents meaningful ways to engage in literacy activities with their children, regardless of the literacy skills of the parents.

In many schools, parent volunteers are relegated to cafeteria clean-up or playground duty—powerless, invisible positions. "What's different about this project," said a project staff person, "is that parents enter the school in a position of power . . . they have something valuable to offer." Because of the confidence she gained from telling stories, one mother reported, "I never talked to teachers. I had a huge fear because I did not speak the language. Now I go to the schools. I talk to teachers, to principals. I have no fear. I really enjoy it." Through storytelling, parents assumed the role of the teacher, told stories, and exposed children to multiple literacies. Another mother explained, "In the beginning I said, 'I just can't do this.' Now I think it is easy and I can see the children love the stories by their faces." A parent commented, "As a parent involved in the school, it is much easier for me to confront the problems that I see." This individual sense of power is linked to a collective identity as parents. A mother said vehemently, "When we are united, we can make changes." From the context of shared narrative, groups of

parents that participated in the workshops described experiences of personal and collective transformations that reframed their identities and roles in their children's education.

Over a three-year period, stories paved the way into the school for parents who before had felt pushed to the side as problems to be solved. With enthusiasm and a sense of purpose, groups of parents entered their children's schools, brought their stories (in multilingual format) to share in classrooms, and became regular contributors to their children's education. As a result of the influx of multicultural parent storytellers, schools began to slowly change in varying degrees. Schools collected the parents' stories in the library, displayed story quilts made by parents in hallways, and one school even translated parent/teacher meetings from English only into the native languages of those present because more parents who spoke languages other than English began attending the meetings. In other schools, teachers regularly included parent storytellers in their schedules and even tied the themes of the stories to the lessons they were teaching. Although space was at a premium, two school administrators established physical "space" in the school for parents to meet, converse, tell stories, and prepare stories for telling in the classroom. Parents who were previously unable to cross the threshold of the school became active partners in their children's education. Teachers and administrators responded by reframing their interpretation of the parent's role and the meaning of learning.

Conclusion

The actions of parents and the reciprocal responses from schools are powerful testimonies of the transformative potential of narrative and collective learning. The most descriptive metaphor for the link between personal transformation and social action came from a father who was participating at a celebration event for parent authors and storytellers. "This project turns a light on inside of people that was there all along and then the light spills over into everything." Many parents experienced a fundamental change of perspective about learning, literacy, individuals from different sociocultural backgrounds, and the school system. Teachers and administrators also reported having learning experiences that were transformative regarding their previously held assumptions about parents' disinterest and lack of participation in their children's education. School personnel witnessed the strength of transformative learning and this may lead to the successful application of transformative learning models in schools.

Tellin' Stories is an example of practice that has the power to inform theory. Elisa, the parent who was introduced earlier in this paper was an active participant in the project. Because of her involvement, she became a parent storyteller in her child's school, worked on a multicultural team with other parents, and eventually accepted a paid position as parent coordinator at the school—the same school she was previously afraid to enter. The experience of parents, project staff, and school personnel expand the application of transformative learning theory in a challenging practice setting and contributes to understanding the role that context and narrative play as a backdrop for inviting adults to explore and transform their worldview. This project underscores the power of nonrational discourse in the transformational process that leads to social change. Ettling (2000) states, "Transformative Learning theory as it is presented in the literature often reflects solely the values and experience of an educated, middle class population and may assume certain conditions or available resources to act on change" (p. 103). Extending the theory of transformative learning, the Tellin' Stories project highlights the importance of conversation that extends beyond the rational, personal stories as the foreground of learning, and relationships that transcend sociocultural differences. This project resulted in a transformation of collective meaning perspectives for individuals, groups, and institutions. It yielded a distinct

model of literacy and social action that holds great promise for helping people on the margins cross thresholds of understanding and for helping those in institutions become sources of authentic learning in their respective communities.

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