JOURNAL OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING
The Journal provides a forum for perspectives on the practice and application of transformative learning. JoTL is an Open Access journal published by the University of Central Oklahoma at jotl.uco.edu.

# Moving Toward the Centre: Transformative Learning, Global Learning, and Indigenization

THOMAS BARKER
University of Alberta

**Abstract**

*Transformational learning, global learning, and indigenization are three synergistic trends in higher education today. The shared characteristics and challenges among these three trends are illustrated using transformational learning as a lens. This analysis helps identify strategies to support the mutual goals of transformational learning, global learning and indigenization. The article concludes with a proposal for a five-stage (inclusive, reflective, connected, and powerful) transformational learning maturity model that may serve to measure an organization's readiness to implement transformational learning.*

*Keywords:* transformative learning, global learning, indigenization, pedagogy, higher education

## Introduction

As universities begin to address global concerns, and while enrollments and strategic partnerships continue to reflect global situations, curriculum administrators look for pedagogical theories and models to achieve educational outcomes in services like cultural sensitivity programs, immersion language instruction, study-abroad programs, and international internships. Some universities, like the University of Central Oklahoma, have met the challenge by adopting *transformational learning* as a central educational paradigm. Transformational learning is often the pedagogy of choice for cultural awareness programs in education, native studies, language arts, and increasingly in business and finance. Transformational learning is a broad theory with roots in the writings of educational theorist Paulo Freire (Freire, 2014) and psychologist Jack Mezirow (Kuiper, 2017; Mezirow, 1997). Among these and other scholars, transformational learning means that the learner develops a new perspective. The term often used is a "shift" in thinking. For some learners, the primary transformational shift in thinking requires them to see how local outcomes are embedded in or connected to global concerns and vice versa. For other learners, transformational learning means setting the "deep needs of the planet over the needs and priorities of the competitive marketplace" (*Global Education for Canadians*, n.d.; O'Sullivan, 2003, p. 327). Colleges and universities rely on a transformational teaching model as a framework to support learning about climate change and sustainability. According to O'Sullivan, the perspective engendered by transformative learning is "the fundamental educational task of our times" (O'Sullivan, 2003, p. 327). Although transformation learning is recognized as the more foundational learning paradigm, is not the only theoretical model available to program planners and administrators at universities, and, as we will see, the interrelationships among competing paradigms remain unexplored.

In scholarly discussions of directions in higher education, one also encounters a related trend in higher educational pedagogy: *global learning*. Because developments in climate, communication technologies, and media platforms have kept global issues at the forefront of social and political life, leaders in higher education have been seeking ways to refocus colleges' and universities' missions around such global themes (Anderberg, 2009; Donnelly-Smith, 2009). This trend is called *global learning* or *global citizenship* (Banks, 2014; Cherkowski, 2010; Robbins, Francis, & Elliott, 2003). Global learning initiatives can be seen in international culture programs, collaborative research paradigms, and programs that introduce students to the global interconnectedness of societies and businesses (Kahn & Agnew,

2017; O'Hara, 2007; Cronjé, 2011). For some, global learning is associated with diversity and inclusion initiatives (Farndale, Biron, Briscoe, & Raghuram, 2015; Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015), while for others it is associated with programs in sustainability and the environment (Anderberg, 2009; Cherkowski, 2010; Siemieniuch, Sinclair, & Henshaw, 2015).

Along with these two trends, a third trend, more like a movement, in higher education, especially in Canada, known as *indigenization*, is growing in response to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* report of 2014 (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Joseph, 2017). Indigenization "is about incorporating indigenous worldviews, knowledge, and perspectives into the educational system, right from primary grades to universities" (Joseph, 2017). At the University of Saskatchewan, the inclusive notion of "Indigenous humanities" can be seen, for example, in the STEM mentorship program for Indigenous women, or in its study-abroad program (*Indigenous Engagement - Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement - University of Saskatchewan*, n.d.). While such initiatives may raise concerns about inauthenticity or the "perfunctory reinscription of cultural traditions" (Kuokkanen, 2011, p. 143), indigenization promises a "deeper, fuller, and more accurate understanding of the world (ontology) and beliefs about knowledge (epistemology)" (*Indigenization - Teaching and Learning - University of Saskatchewan*, 2015). Indigenization is a step toward inclusivity and an appropriate response to the directives of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. If allowed to fulfill its promise, indigenization could assist in the on-going struggle for Indigenous rights to self-determination, sometimes characterized as "decolonization." To the extent that indigenization demands that we fundamentally revise theories of knowledge and learning, it is appropriately considered a trend to be pursued by university planners.

*A core interest of this scholarly exploration is to analyze these three trends in higher education to derive a unified concept for study-abroad and cultural sensitivity programs, of use to planners and administrators at universities.*

## Research Questions

These three large-scale trends—transformational learning, global learning, and indigenization—pose a number of questions for study-abroad and cultural sensitivity program planners and administrators. For example, university curriculum administrators might start by asking how one or all of these initiatives could help frame proposals for programs, activities, or courses. Are these three trends all versions of a larger pedagogical shift in higher education planning, similar to competence orientation in European education (Grollmann, 2008)? Will continuing education, adult education, life-long learning, and internships become the norm? Will cultural sensitivity courses replace first-year composition as the central starting place for student discovery? How can program planners and administrators see unity or alignment in a variety of new approaches?

These are interesting implementation questions, but for those interested in higher education theory, we might take the inquiry a step further. There is an abundance of scholarly writing on the theories of transformational learning and the related concept of experiential learning (Brock et al., 2012; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Assuming that transformational learning is offered as a contrast to domain- and corpus-based education, and that it is a foundational movement underway now in higher-education, could its characteristics, its underlying challenges, be applied to global learning and indigenization as a critique? Furthermore, if that approach seems reasonable, might such a critique be used to reveal overlapping programming ideas and measures for success: an analysis that could be useful to the program administrators and designers mentioned earlier.

Critiques also exist among the working definitions of *transformational learning, global learning,* and *indigenization.* What characteristics overlap in these definitions? In the pushy competition for top of mind among higher-education planners, might they all three be pushing in the same direction? A second question is: In what kinds of programs and educational services, like university or undergraduate research, might we find examples of these trends? I have uncovered the practice of global learning in the student experiences of study-abroad programs, while education on indigenous perspectives is sometimes situated in cultural-sensitivity classes. From a practical standpoint, how can theory and programming connect

more ontologically? Carrying that point forward, a third question connects to the project of discourse analysis of transformational learning scholarship. How can scholars enhance our understanding of transformational learning theory and the experience of human understanding by seeing its relevance to these other approaches?

In this paper I suggest that answers to these questions may be found, first, by analyzing these three pedagogical approaches. I propose to critique the rationales for them put forward by scholars in educational theory, and then to compare these rationales point by point. In doing so, we will also see not just the arguments in their favor, but the challenges they face. From this challenge perspective, administrators can more easily assess institutional readiness for these changes, and identify next steps to achieve transformational learning outcomes. This analysis can lead to insights into the complexity, usability, and adaptability of a model of institutional transformational learning capacity. So to begin, what are the pedagogical dynamics of transformational learning?

## Transformational Learning

Transformational learning is an approach to education that recognizes changes in the learner's perspective and not just the acquisition of facts. This kind of education is often found in liberal arts and it involves a holistic, learner-centred way of knowing. It's roots lie in psychological theories of personal change and development (Kuiper, 2017; Mezirow, 1997). According to Baumgartner, transformational learning is characterized by four principal elements. It is: 1) *emancipatory* in that it redefines the learner's perspective on the self, 2) *interpretive* because it uses cognitive-rational processes to achieve understanding, 3) *developmental* in that it uses life narratives and mentorship to embed learning in personal transformational contexts, and 4) *spiritual*, in that it evokes extra-rational ways of knowing (Baumgartner, 2001).

On the one hand, these characteristics describe desirable transformational outcomes, but on the other hand, many universities struggle to achieve these outcomes (Banks, 2014; O'Sullivan, 2003; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015). If we briefly examine the analysis of these four characteristics closely, with the help of discussions by higher-education scholars, we can see corresponding challenges to the promise of transformative learning. The four corresponding challenges are as follows:

1. Overcoming disciplinary silos. Universities are founded on lines of demarcation among scientific and social disciplines, and boundary-crossing or "cross-cutting" often results in turf conflicts. Transformational approaches face challenges because of the need to inform the learner about seemingly unrelated disciplines, cultures, and epistemological approaches (Mutz, 2002; van Winkel et al., 2018).
2. Countering positivist perspectives. Transformational learning often means questioning received scientific/rational perspectives. Durie (2005), for example, notes that, for scientific understanding, "method is all important and objective measurement is the final arbiter" (p. 305). Such positivist-style approaches, based on observation and ever-smaller analysis, are often antithetical to resistance from transformational knowledge systems built on models of multiplicity and complex reciprocal interactions.
3. Overcoming psychological disorientation. For some, the very idea of destabilizing one's knowledge base is threatening. Kirkness and Bearnhardt (1991) quote an Indigenous student as saying, "I would like to tell them (at the university) that education shouldn't try and make me into something I'm not" (p. 5). Unless transformative learning is clearly focused, such student resistance is understandable given the history of residential school education in Canada.
4. Overcoming institutional resistance. Robert Diamond, writing for *Inside Higher ED* cites no less than 12 reasons why curriculum (and other) changes take so long: among them "traidition," leadership weakness, loss of support, and the learning culture itself, indicate resistance to change and maintenance of the status quo (*Why Colleges Are So Hard to Change | Inside Higher Ed*,

n.d.). Powel points out a number of teacher and staff resistance vectors that point to this institutional resistance (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015).

These challenges to transformative learning are outlined in Table 1: Learning Model Chart.

Table 1

*Learning Model Chart*

| Ontological Level | Transformative Learning | TL Challenges | Global Learning | Indigenization |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Emancipatory*** | Redefines the learner's perspective on the self | Overcoming disciplinary silos | Individual in a global context | Individual in a land context |
| ***Interpretive*** | Uses cognitive-rational processes to achieve understanding | Countering positivist perspectives | Reflection as an alternative to science | Reciprocity |
| ***Developmental*** | Narratives and mentorship to embed learning | Overcoming psychological disorientation | Connections across cultures | Storytelling |
| ***Spiritual*** | Extra-rational ways of knowing | Overcoming institutional resistance | "Citizen" perspective | Decolonized relationships, Resurgence |

Transformative learning holds power as a foundational movement, but as we have seen, it also faces implementation challenges from students, researchers, and instructors because of that very foundational quality. For the argument put forward in this article—that transformational learning is ontological to curriculum initiatives—it is important that we see that the four elements in the definition illuminate stages of a learning process. Transformative learning follows four stages of the learning process: 1) the learner is first "challenged," then 2) led to interpret and act across boundaries to solidify new knowledge, and then 3) motivated to move ahead in new understanding and 4) able to reflect and connect to larger meanings (Baumgartner, 2001; Clark, 1993). If we accept these elements as both stages (ontological) and concepts (understandings), we can see that specific instances of transformational learning opportunities (such as might fall under the rubric of global learning and indigenization) would also, in their characteristic ways, reflect similar institutional challenges. The next section, therefore, explores how these institutional challenges to a transformational learning paradigm constitute an expanded lens on global learning and indigenization. We begin by defining global learning.

## Global Learning

Global learning is an approach to teaching that situates local experience into the context of global concerns: international relationships, diversity of cultures and societies, diverse political realities, and sustainability of resources (Liao et al., 2019; O'Hara, 2007; Slimbach, 2012). The foundations of global learning, as Kahn and Agnew suggest, lie in the following areas:

> an emphasis on the processes of learning, the importance of digging deep into the complexity of the subject matter, thinking about the world relationally through plurality and multiplicity, and the significant roles of self-reflection and recognition of interconnected lives. (Kahn & Agnew, 2017, p. 57)

This definition makes the term sound like a recipe for good learning in general. It is akin to the concept of intercultural learning, and is the basis for cultural simulation games and other forms of cross-cultural learning (Cronjé, 2011; Kuiper, 2017). Like intercutural learning, global learning is a widely accepted model for academic programs. It is natural in that way, as a matter of perspective: seeing the big, cross-cultural, "global," perspective as a meaningful thought context for all educational experiences. In this way, global learning is not just accumulative (of cultural facts) but is transformative, bringing a jolting expansion in the learner's scope beyond limited national or regional solutions. Assuming a global perspective is a matter of making connections between the "nearby" and the "worldwide." Brunold (2005), for example, observes that global learning mediates "a perspective, which assembles connections of nearby, observable problems to worldwide processes and lines of conflicts" (p. 297).

Global learning is not, as some might think, learning in physically remote, global settings, or investigating worldwide concerns, although this technique is sometimes used in teaching (Kahn & Agnew, 2017). Studies on learning in global settings (Anderberg, 2009; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Liao et al., 2019; O'Hara, 2007) indicate that global learning models are guiding the development of instructional engagement, such as field trips, study-abroad programs, and cultural-diversity programs (Liao et al., 2019). Anderberg (2009) covers a number of existing models of global learning from the perspective of sustainability. However, for my argument, global learning pertains to the educator's capacity to disorient the learner, and expand and contextualize local events and experiences in the meaning context of global systems of politics, biology, and commerce.

Global learning in this context is a matter of kick-starting a learner's capacity to "learn globally." To *learn globally* refers, at one level, to knowledge areas (topics), but also skills, and attitudes. For example, the capacity for or competence in global learning, is, as Baartman observes, a matter of *integrating* topics so the learner may then apply them to a professional task or educational outcome (Baartman & de Bruijn, 2011). Global learning integrates knowledge about culture itself, one's own culture, and other cultures (their histories, values and practices), skills in listening, self-assessment, and reflection, as well as attitudes of reciprocity, trust, and inclusivity (Banks, 2014; Kahn & Agnew, 2017). The learning *outcome* of global learning is, as Brunold points out, "competence," or *global learning* itself.

Above all, however, global learning feeds on the physical, concrete reality of Earth and world-wide interconnectedness (Kahn & Agnew, 2017, p. 56). The term "global" suggests that the transformative realities of planetary sharing of resources and risks, distinguishes this way of learning from visual, textual, or other taxonomies of learning (McFarland, 2017; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008). Global learning is distinct from other models because of the finite, planetary constraint (Lipschutz & Mayer, 1996; Wenger, 2004).

Global learning has the advantages we have been discussing, but also its drawbacks or challenges. O'Hara, for example, asserts that university learners "are ill prepared for the actual challenges of contemporary life, often feeling bewildered and overwhelmed and like 'strangers in a strange land'" (O'Hara, 2007). Kahn and Agnew lament that, "Although the focus of [global] learning has broadened and shifted to the process of learning, institutions of higher education have been slow to respond to this new reality" (Kahn & Agnew, 2017, p. 53). That slow response may be because of the challenge of integrating a distant, global perspective within a concrete, local sensitivity or experience.

**Challenges to the Global Learning Framework**

It is one thing to define global learning, but quite another to identify how it can be taught. Students in business programs are increasingly interested in local problem solving: applying expertise-based-practice to local domains in the social and political economy. In contrast, the boutique-oriented, adult students want nothing but mind-expanding cultural experiences. These student models constitute contrasting personae that can confound administrators wanting to shape transformational pedagogical techniques to achieve global learning outcomes (Erickson, 2007).

Operationally, global learning is often implemented in far-away regions through study-abroad programs that themselves pose questions about the equitable reach. Despite the claims that global perspectives can be taught using active or immersive experiential learning in classrooms that "mirror the

world" (Kahn & Agnew, 2017, p. 56), it is difficult to engender a global perspective without the experience of other cultures and regions. Some students may lose out. As one call for papers by the AAC&U reads, how can global learning models "work for all or many students" (*Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers*, 2019)? Among the problems inherent in any change in higher education (calcified disciplines, communication challenges and funding constraints) global learning has yet to achieve a "strategy that sets clear targets and responsibilities" (*Global Education for Canadians*, n.d.).

If we accept that global learning seeks to evoke a new, global perspective among students, we might, as a thought experiment, plot its characteristics along the same lines as those of transformative learning. In this way, the challenges to transformational learning (Table 1) can be used to articulate challenges to global learning.

As a starting point, we might assume the following challenges to global learning:

1. Emancipatory. Global learning places the learner in a much larger context than that of local problem solving. As O'Hara (2007) puts it, the challenge is to break out of "the habits of mind and frames of reference of an Industrial Age." Global learning acknowledges the world-level systems at work in all endeavors. Such a global perspective could be industrial, social, economic or political.
2. Interpretive. Global learning need not just be a body of content, but an interpretive, sometimes non-scientific, *way of seeing* current and historical events. Kahn and Agnew (2017) assert that global learning has promise, even to change the ways "in which knowledge is produced and taught through difference in the 21st century" (p. 54).
3. Developmental. Global learners need to uncover meaningful similarities, connections and common threads among concerns and issues. The nature of these connections is often personal and highly experiential. Despite the claim that global learning can be accomplished "without leaving home" (Liao et al., 2019), the connections one needs to make, like points on a map, mean that students require guidance and mentoring to establish their new networks (O'Hara, 2007).
4. Spiritual. Global learning needs to lay the foundation for active and productive interaction with like-minded individuals and groups. The term often used for the resulting impulse to social action is summed up in the words "global citizenship." Banks's (2014) analysis of global citizenship, identifies three conceptions of the term: "assimilationist, liberal, and universal." In doing so, Banks moves the discussion into civil rights and social justice issues, claiming that, "citizenship education should be expanded to include cultural rights for citizens from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, and language groups" (p. 1) This conception of citizenship, among kindred spirits, aligns with ideas of action and the pursuit of a transformative global vision.

The challenges posed in global learning are summarized in Table 1.

Global learning, cast in this way, shows it to be a learning approach that is synergistic with those of transformational learning. One might even assert that the learning outcomes of one contribute to the learning outcomes of the other. The overlap of defining elements and challenges in Table 1 suggest that transformational learning concepts illuminate global learning concepts and *vice versa*.

To carry the parallels further, course administrators wishing to implement transformational and/or global learning models might want to consider yet a third trend in higher education: *Indigenization*. As the following discussion will demonstrate, these three approaches share some of the same dynamics of thinking: 1) the existential, epistemological, and ontological starting place (land/planet systems), 2) an emphasis on universal connectedness, and 3) a social-justice agenda (Kaukko & Fertig, 2016). These shared dynamics, as shown in Table 1, map to the elements of transformational learning. Teasing out the shared dynamics of these related transformational approaches with Indigenization can help us understand it, as an educational trend, and also lead to insights into institutionalized transformational learning capacity.

## Indigenization

While some universities are gearing up for stronger global learning initiatives, others, especially in Canada, are gearing up for *Indigenization*. Based on Indigenous frameworks for knowledge and learning, Indigenization (sometimes with a lower-case "I") is receiving attention as a major trend in higher education in Canada. According to Gaudry and Lorenz, "Canadian post-secondary institutions are now struggling with how to ethically engage Indigenous communities and Indigenous knowledge systems" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). This motivation is strong, but might be stronger if it is seen in tandem with mutually reinforcing trends in transformational and global learning.

### Examples of Indigenization

According to Lewis Cardinal (2001), the walk with Indigenous people brings not one Indigenous perspective but many; all of which reflect the born-of-the-land foundation on which Indigenous culture and life experiences derive. Cardinal continues,

> When you create something from an Indigenous perspective, therefore, you create it from that environment, from that land in which it sits. Indigenous peoples with their traditions and customs are shaped by the environment, by the land. They have a spiritual, emotional, and physical relationship to that land. It speaks to them; it gives them their responsibility for stewardship; and it sets out a relationship. (p. 180)

Cardinal's view of a common Indigenous perspective, thus, comes from an impulse to achieve something from which some people have been "far removed," not measured in time but in consciousness and awareness. He is prompted to ask a similar question to that which we pose for this investigation: How can program administrators evoke an indigenized worldview, bring it forward, and implement it?

A brief look at examples of indigenization in academic and professional disciplines in Canada shows the potential of the indigenous perspective to achieve transformational learning outcomes in higher education. In health care, for example, Curtis (2014) shows how indigenization in learning can validate Indigenous ways of knowing through "interventions in keeping with Indigenous pedagogical imperatives" (p. 161). Similarly, at Dalhousie University, Loppie shows how researchers can "incorporate the paradigmatic and methodological traditions of Western science and Indigenous cultures" (Loppie, 2007, p. 276). In addition to these examples of indigenization in health, sustainability researchers also find themselves aligning with indigenous perspectives. Johnson, writing about sustainability programs, claims that "Indigenous observations and perspectives are critical for establishing or expanding collaborations with sustainability scientists" (Johnson et al., 2016). The work of Johnson and colleagues at the University Manitoba in the special issue of *Sustainability Science* explores indigenization "to cultivate mutually conducive and appropriate principles, protocols, and practices that address humanity's collective need to sustain landscapes that demonstrate the ability not only to maintain human life but more crucially the interrelated more-than-human biosphere" (p. 1).

#### ***How do scholars articulate these connections?***

Anderberg (2009) finds an important interface between global learning and sustainability perspectives, noting that,

> There is an increased awareness in the academic [sustainability] community of the global perspective. The global perspective can stimulate students to widen their thinking and go beyond their own national context, by being more critical and imaginative when considering how classical concerns of social policy are developed in a global context. (p. 372)

Indigenization, or doing public work in alignment with Indigenous perspectives, is also present in policy thinking about law. Napoleon and Frieland note that the key overlapping concepts lie in Indigenous

thinking about law. “By bringing common pedagogical approaches from many Indigenous legal traditions together with standard common law legal education, we hope to help people learn Indigenous laws from an internal point of view” (Napoleon & Friedland, 2016). Perhaps most importantly for higher education program administrators, the motivation toward Indigenization is fueled by developments in research policy. Incorporating an Indigenous perspective in research is one of the most urgently needed but challenging areas of Indigenization. As pioneer thinker on Indigenous research, Tahwai Smith writes, “The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples” (Smith, 2013). In terms of what comprises an Indigenous perspective, Durie has identified a number of characteristics of “Indigeneity” (2005). These concepts, shared among actual Indigenous groups, include: balance, nature, respect and reciprocity (relationships), and storytelling.

So the point here is that Indigenous frameworks and “indigenization” are relevant to a variety of domains when seen as a revision framework for higher education: a variety suggesting commonalities with global and transformational learning. In the next section we expand these known commonalities, drawing out the institutional challenges found among the three pedagogical trends.

**Challenges to the Indigenization Framework**

The possibility of a mutual interface among these perspectives has not gone unnoticed. Durie (2005), for example, explains an “interface” area of research that, while it starkly contrasts scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge, is a shared conceptual area for learning and research which blends the “two systems of understanding in order to create new knowledge that can then be used to advance understanding in two worlds” (p. 306). In this article I take a similar approach; only I assert that the intersection of global learning and indigenous learning may be profitably assessed by seeing them as mutually accelerating. Together they push transformational learning from the margin to the centre of the higher-education world. A fruitful thought experiment is to see the obstacles facing Indigenization in light of the four challenges facing transformative learning: silos, positivism, disorientation, and apathy.

In the next section we briefly analyze how indigenization, and the perspective it brings on the knowledge and learning characteristics of Indigenous culture, aligns with the four challenges to transformational learning discussed earlier. Table 1 summarizes how Indigenization reflects these challenges seen through the analytical lens of the transformative learning model.

In this brief analysis, I address each of the four challenges to transformative learning, and extend them by turning to Indigenization concerns that have been expressed in scholarly literature. The challenge with the *emancipatory* element, or goal, is putting the individual into the context of “the land.” Indigenous knowledge is based on the land; the land is a kind of textbook for learning (Johnson et al., 2016; Mamers, 2017). Indigenous perspectives are thus “redefining” for administrators as for students. The disorientating redefinition pushes the learner to decouple with existing disciplinary “turf” as well as from physical land. Many researchers, such as myself, routinely acknowledge the importance of territorial “starting points” for all learners. In universities, the challenge lies in *presence* and *origin* as a starting place, rather than school experiences. Likewise the rubric of *interpretive*, non-Western scientific methodologies is manifest in knowing and learning not by science, but by a sense of reciprocal interaction with human and non-human people. *Developmentally*, the connect-the-dots element of indigenization is storytelling. Storytelling reorients the individual to his or her narratives of community after the disruption of learning and reconnecting. Part of the storytelling struggle connects it with research and research reporting, in that many have yet to reconcile the storytelling or narrative framework with the more Western-oriented, expository, “main point up front” approach so often taught in universities (Grabe, 2002). The connection with the *spiritual* challenge highlights the parallel between citizenship and personal identity. However, as we will learn from Gaudry and Lorenze and others, the spiritual element of indigenization lies in relationships of social justice and equity. The spiritual connection that results from transformative learning should be a refined relationship of equality (assumed in any “decolonized” situation) among Indigenous people and the rest of society. These interpretive parallels with transformative learning form the basis for looking at the institutional challenges to Indigenization.

Kirkness and Barnhart challenge the transformative mission of universities when seen from the perspective of the Indigenous person "going to" the university rather than "coming to" the university to begin a process of enculturation and assimilation (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Transformative learning does not entail a kind of brain-wash transformation: learning that separates a student from his or her cultural background or ethical foundations. Perhaps a better way to see transformative learning is that the students' scope of understanding and perspective is challenged and expanded, bringing an accumulative awareness of the issues facing others on a global scale. As with other models of cultural and empathetic capacity, a person does not lose his or her identity, but rather accumulates and accommodates other identities into living relationships.

Gaudry and Lorenz focus on Indigenization as "a move to expand the academy's still-narrow conceptions of knowledge, to include Indigenouse perspectives in transformative ways" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 218). These efforts are analyzed under three "distinct uses" or levels of Indigenization, briefly summarized below.

***Indigenous inclusion***

Merely enrolling Indigenous students and creating courses is a good start, but it is the least disruptive for the institution. It is, however, disruptive of the status quo and is seen as a rhetorical advance. Inclusion is a matter of numbers and, as the authors point out, often a co-objective of both diversity and inclusion measures. However, the burden of change remains with Indigenous people and students: change as in once they are here Indigenous students, faculty, and staff are "expected to adapt to the intellectual worldview, teaching, and research styles of the academy" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 220).

***Reconciliation Indigenization***

This type of indigenization occurred in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2012) The authors see this document as creating a watershed consisting of "the establishment of Indigenous advisory and/or reconciliation committees" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 222). This indigenization effort created an administrative and pedagogical working space for all parties, beyond the window-dressing metaphors. This is the "course requirement" level of indigenization.

***Decolonial Indigenization***

Decolonial indigenization is identified as "a transformative indigenization program rooted in decolonial approaches to teaching, research, and administration" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 223). Decolonization has to do with power, class, and settler relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenos people. This level of indigenization only lives in scholarship, but with a voice that is increasingly heard (Aikenhead & Elliott, 2010; Manuel & Grand Chief Ronald, 2015). One voice of this level of change is the scholarship of Indigenous resurgence, which sees a pathway to a decolonialized future achieved through practices occurring within Indigenous communities (Asch et al., 2018; Barker, 2015; Corntassel, 2012). So with a university or university program, decolonizing indigenization would result in knowledge and learning addressed from the perspective of a person who disburdens him or herself of a colonial social influence. The adaptation process would follow local or Indigenous practices such as knowledge circles, storytelling, and land-based learning.

## Analysis

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) point out that much of what appears to be indigenization is actually limited to inclusion of additional Indigenous students, faculty, and staff, or superficial accommodation to Indigenous ways of knowing without substantive ("decolonializing") implementation (p. 223). Their discussion acknowledges that much has yet to be done to implement deeper-level indigenization in

Canadian universities, an implementation that would require a decolonizing impulse. But a decolonizing motivation is often missing in programs and administration.

**Vectors of Adoption**

From our analysis, program administrators interested in transformative learning can see how elements of transformative learning show it to be a link between global learning and Indigenization. But to take the analysis a step further, the elements of transformative learning may themselves reflect stages or various depths of implementation—here I call them "vectors" because they seem to "point"—similar to the surface-to-deeper direction seen in Gaudry and Lorenz's discussion of the adoption of Indigenization (*Vector Definition*, n.d.). These vectors of adoption map the way to levels of capacity maturity (e. g. surface to depth, temporary to sustainable, piecemeal to integrated). As such, these vectors reflect/suggest important measurement criteria for transformative learning capacity of an institution or program. Challenges to the indigenous trend in higher education make evident the connections to transformative and global learning that are implicit in the argument so far. What else can we learn by analyzing this progressive structure of ideas?

We can assert special consideration to these incremental stages because the three levels of indigenization reveal a process that is also *accumulative*. As we have seen inclusion comes first, then reconciliation, then decolonization. Each stage lays the groundwork for the next, so that an advanced organizational capacity would exhibit at the same time all the previous stages. The process follows or deepens, like a vector from inclusion to reconciliation to a decolonizing perspective. The three trends push in the same direction. Transformative learning, global learning and indigenization work as accumulative processes, from more to less superficial, from token to transformation, from the margins to the centre.

**The Transformative Learning Capacity Maturity Model**

The intention of this article is to look at transformative learning as a lens for framing two related trends: global learning and indigenization. A high-level thoughtful analysis of these three learning models suggests a number of similarities among them. What this paper has shown, however, is two things: 1) that those similarities actually exist at the level of learning theories, knowledge definitions, and learning processes, and 2) that the defining elements of the three trends may be matrixed with an action sequence or productive series of steps. These steps have the special characteristic that each step implies the accomplishment of the previous step. In this way, the building blocks or defining characteristics are indicative of or *ontological to* a stage of accomplishment arrayed along vectors of shared learning outcomes. The name often used for the resulting cumulative process framework is a "maturity model."

Maturity models are conceptual devices for measuring competency, or, to use a more current term, *capacity*. In our era of organizational accomplishment and agency, it is often convenient to see an organization or group as having a capability to produce or achieve organizational outcomes. For example, organizations develop advanced financial processes or industrial processes that consist of integrated and cumulative operations for maximum efficiency. Some software companies have a more mature production cycle, just as some universities have matured in areas like diversity, inclusion, or strategic planning. These are characteristics of the organization itself that exhibit best practices like integration with supply and workforce, education and training, and above all, the impulse for recursive examination of capacity toward the goal of continuous improvement. These points of definition are summed up in the definition offered by de Bruin, Freeze, Kulkarni, and Rosemann., "Maturity models have been designed to assess the maturity (i.e. competency, capability, level of sophistication) of a selected domain based on a more or less comprehensive set of criteria" (2005).

The previous discussion of the defining elements of transformative learning, when seen as challenges or outcomes to be achieved, showed interesting parallels with the challenges facing the two similar trends of global learning and indigenization. Such an alignment suggests a further step, inspired by the work of Gaudry and Lorenz, that identifies levels of implementation of indigenization (inclusion, reconciliation, decolonializing). Following their analysis, we can begin to construct parallel levels of

implementation, or implementation capacity, back to transformative learning. The argument or warrant for this de-construction uses the theory of communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) to trace the ontological sources and results of discourse behavior (Wilhoit, 2018).

In the case of detecting the ontological *roots* of process maturity of implementation, the scholar needs to rely on the scholarship of constitutive structures (or "elements") (triangulating with the structures found in global learning and Indigenization) as a reverse scaffolding, then trace possible levels (and names for levels) that might constitute the levels of a maturity model for transformative learning. By articulating the defining elements of each level as parallel with a capacity descriptor (at varying levels of detail) the resulting matrix of level names and process characteristics comes clearly into view. Table 2 contains a list of the four steps of a prototype for a maturity model of transformative learning.

Table 2

*Transformative Learning Maturity Model*

| Level | Capacity Descriptor | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Inclusive | The lowest level of maturity is indicated by creating educational space for a variety of local/global perspectives. Activity is local, enrollment driven, and quantitative. |
| 2 | Reflective | At this level transformative learning is inclusive plus follows a process of reflection, review, and reciprocity. |
| 3 | Connected | This level is inclusive, reflective, and embedded in networks of collaborative learning and sharing of narratives. |
| 4 | Powerful | At this level transformative learning encompasses the first three levels, and has the potential to meet social justice and decolonization goals. This level is rarely if ever achieved. |

## Conclusion

This article has examined the defining elements of transformational learning. These elements reflect on the definitions of global learning and indigenization as promising trends in experiential learning in higher education. We saw how these trends share an emphasis on common elements of transformational learning, emphasizing the *emancipatory*, *developmental*, *interpretive* and *spiritual* dimensions of transformative learning. Global learning tends to reorient the learner's experience to broad or physically remote locations, while indigenization tends to reorient the learner's experience to the immediate vicinity of the land. Together, these three dominant currents interact at the level of ontology as witnesses to us about how institutions of higher education are, for the most part, charting future core elements of learning. For this kind of analysis, the comparison of global learning and indigenization is highly instructive. The resultant maturity model builds on existing scholarship to trace the interaction of defining characteristics and implementation practices. Such a model combines both nominal definitions and process stages. This matrix of ideas is a star to help program administrators design transformational or experiential courses and programs that meet the capacity of a given university.

For the readers of this article, the takeaway from this analysis is how we can examine cross currents of defining elements and, by looking at the practical realities of implementation, begin to realize that movements in pedagogy in colleges and universities, seen through analysis, reveal broad vectors of development and significance. In this way the context of implementation connects ontologically with the theory and ideas of the trends. In the case of international students or culturally isolated students, the need is to bridge the divides between dominant cultures by fostering transformative cultural awareness and broadening experiences. Providing opportunities is just the start. For readers of this work, the need is to track trends in university learning in ways that measure the goals of inclusiveness, reflect on that inclusion, connect reflection and inclusion through study and collaboration with others, and build power by shaping these transformational impulses towards social justice and decolonization.

References

Aikenhead, G. S., & Elliott, D. (2010). An emerging decolonizing science education in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, *10*(4), 321–338.

Anderberg, E. (2009). Global learning for sustainable development in higher education: recent trends and a critique. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, *10*(4), 368–378.

Asch, M., Borrows, J., & Tully, J. (2018). *Resurgence and reconciliation : Indigenous-settler relations and Earth teachings*. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ualberta/reader.action?docID=5592950&ppg=14

Baartman, L. K. J., & de Bruijn, E. (2011). Integrating knowledge, skills and attitudes: Conceptualising learning processes towards vocational competence. *Educational Research Review*, *6*(2), 125–134.

Banks, J. A. (2014). Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age. *Journal of Education*, *194*(3), 1–12.

Barker, A. J. (2015). “A direct act of resurgence, a direct act of sovereignty”: Reflections on idle no more, Indigenous activism, and Canadian settler colonialism. *Globalizations*, *12*(1), 43–65.

Baumgartner, L. M. (2001). An update on transformational learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *2001*(89), 15.

Brock, S., Florescu, I., & Teran, L. (2012). Tools for change: An examination of transformative learning and its precursor steps in undergraduate students. *ISRN Education*, *2012*. http://downloads.hindawi.com/journals/isrn.education/2012/234125.pdf

Brunold, A. O. (2005). Global learning and education for sustainable development. *Higher Education in Europe*, *30*(3-4), 295–306.

Cardinal, L. (2001). What is an Indigenous perspective? *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *25*(2), 180–182.

Clark, M. C. (1993). Transformational learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *1993*(57), 47–56.

Corntassel, J. (2012). Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *1*(1). http://www.academia.edu/download/33589010/Re-envisioning_Resurgence_(Corntassel).pdf

Cronjé, J. C. (2011). Using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions to interpret cross-cultural blended teaching and learning. *Computers & Education*, *56*(3), 596–603.

Curtis, E. (2014). Decolonising the academy: The process of re-presenting indigenous health in tertiary teaching and learning. In P. Reid (Ed.), *Māori and Pasifika Higher Education Horizons* (Vol. 15, pp. 147–165). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

de Bruin, T., Freeze, R., Kulkarni, U., & Rosemann, M. (2005). *Understanding the main phases of developing a maturity assessment model* (B. Campbell, J. Underwood, & D. Bunker (eds.); pp. 8–19). Australasian Chapter of the Association for Information Systems.

Donnelly-Smith, L. (2009). Global learning through short-term study abroad. *Peer Review: Emerging Trends and Key Debates in Undergraduate Education*, *11*(4), 12.

Durie, M. (2005). Indigenous knowledge within a global knowledge system. *Higher Education Policy*, *18*(3), 301–312.

Erickson, D. M. (2007). A developmental re-forming of the phases of meaning in transformational learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *58*(1), 61–80.

Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *14*(3), 218–227.

*Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers*. (2019, October 15). Association of American Colleges & Universities. https://www.aacu.org/conferences/global/2019

*Global Education for Canadians*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 26, 2019, from http://goglobalcanada.ca/

Grabe, W. (2002). Narrative and expository macro-genres. *Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives*. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=VDKRAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA249&dq=narrative+vs+expository&ots=2m1cgJDuy5&sig=0VrKuJoUVZrV0XhI9hQr48EXb5g

Grollmann, P. (2008). Professional competence as a benchmark for a European space of vocational education and training. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *32*(2/3), 138–156.

*Indigenization - Teaching and Learning - University of Saskatchewan*. (2015). https://teaching.usask.ca/curriculum/indigenization.php

*Indigenous Engagement - Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement - University of Saskatchewan*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 26, 2019, from https://indigenous.usask.ca/

Johnson, J. T., Howitt, R., Cajete, G., Berkes, F., Louis, R. P., & Kliskey, A. (2016). Weaving Indigenous and sustainability sciences to diversify our methods. *Sustainability Science*, *11*(1), 1–11.

Joseph, B. (2017). *A brief definition of decolonization and indigenization*. https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/a-brief-definition-of-decolonization-and-indigenization

Kahn, H. E., & Agnew, M. (2017). Global learning through difference: Considerations for teaching, learning, and the internationalization of higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *21*(1), 52–64.

Kaukko, M., & Fertig, M. (2016). Linking participatory action research, global education, and social justice: Emerging issues from practice. In *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning* (Vol. 7, Issue 3, pp. 24–46). https://doi.org/10.18546/ijdegl.07.3.03

Kirkness, V. J., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First nations and higher education: The four r's — respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, *30*(3), 1–15.

Kuiper, A. (2017). Learning and teaching intercultural communication: Challenging and transforming cultural identities. *Journal of Transformative Learning*, *4*(1). https://jotl.uco.edu/index.php/jotl/article/view/162

Kuokkanen, R. (2011). *Reshaping the university: Responsibility, Indigenous epistemes, and the logic of the gift*. UBC Press.

Liao, W., Kilcoyne, M. S., Parker, C., Perez-Mira, B., Jones, C., & Woods, L. (2019). Engaging students globally without leaving the comforts of home. *Journal of Global Education and Research*, *3*(1), 22–36.

Lipschutz, R. D., & Mayer, J. (1996). *Global civil society and global environmental governance: The politics of nature from place to planet*. SUNY Press.

Loppie, C. (2007). Learning from the grandmothers: incorporating indigenous principles into qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *17*(2), 276–284.

Mamers, D. T. (2017). *Settler colonial ways of seeing: Documentary governance of Indigenous life in Canada and its disruption* [Western University]. https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/4651/

Manuel, A., & Grand Chief Ronald. (2015). *Unsettling Canada: A national wake-up call*. Between the Lines.

McFarland, H. S. N. (2017). Learning and learning theory. In *Psychological Theory and Educational Practice* (pp. 140–164). https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315226521-6

Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *1997*(74), 5–12.

Mutz, D. C. (2002). The consequences of cross-cutting networks for political participation. *American Journal of Political Science*, *46*(4), 838–855.

Napoleon, V., & Friedland, H. (2016). An inside job: Engaging with Indigenous legal traditions through stories. *McGill Law Journal/Revue de Droit de McGill*, *61*(4), 725–754.

O'Hara, M. (2007). Strangers in a strange land: Knowing, learning and education for the global knowledge society. *Futures*, *39*(8), 930–941.

O'Sullivan, E. (2003). Bringing a perspective of transformative learning to globalized consumption. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *27*(4), 326–330.

Powell, W., & Kusuma-Powell, O. (2015). Overcoming resistance to new ideas. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *96*(8), 66–69.

Puzziferro, M., & Shelton, K. (2008). A model for developing high-quality online courses: Integrating a systems approach with learning theory. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, *12*, 119–136.

Slimbach, R. (2012). *Becoming world wise: A guide to global learning*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Smith, L. T. (2013, October 10). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. https://market.android.com/details?id=book-8R1jDgAAQBAJ

Taylor, E. W., & Cranton, P. (2012). *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice*. John Wiley & Sons.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2012). *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: interim report*. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

van Winkel, M. A., van der Rijst, R. M., Poell, R. F., & van Driel, J. H. (2018). Identities of research-active academics in new universities: towards a complete academic profession cross-cutting different worlds of practice. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *42*(4), 539–555.

*Vector Definition*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2019, from https://techterms.com/definition/vector

Wenger, E. (2004). Learning for a small planet. *A Research Agenda*. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.469.4664&rep=rep1&type=pdf

*Why Colleges Are So Hard to Change | Inside Higher Ed*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 15, 2019, from https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2006/09/08/why-colleges-are-so-hard-change

Wilhoit, E. D. (2018). Space, place, and the communicative constitution of organizations: A constitutive model of organizational space. *Communication Theory: CT: A Journal of the International Communication Association*, *28*(3), 311–331.

*Author's Note:* Thomas Barker is a professor in the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta.

*Citation:* Barker, T. (2020). Moving toward the centre: Transformative learning, global learning, and indigenization. *Journal of Transformative Learning 7*(1), 8-22.