

START HERE! A BRIEF HISTORY AND CONVERSATION ABOUT TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

What IS Transformative Learning (TL)? If you are asking this question, join us for a roundtable discussion where you will get a brief history of TL, its origins and development, and an understanding of what it looks like today in higher education. Through dialogue and sharing, we will explore ways to begin integrating TL into our teaching practices. The session will begin with a brief examination of the circumstances and influences leading to the development of Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning (TL) Theory, and how scholars interpret it today. Once we have a common understanding of TL, we will discuss its relevance in higher education and potential short-term and long-term implications for learners. Participants will "follow" a learner through a transformative learning experience using a common learning activity, the group project, as an example. The example will look at each of the 10 phases of TL: 1) Experiencing a disorienting dilemma; 2) Feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame; 3) Questioning one's assumptions; 4) Recognizing the need for personal transformation; 5) Exploring new roles, relationships and actions; 6) Planning a course of action; 7) Acquiring new knowledge and skills; 8) Provisional trying of new roles; 9) Building confidence in new roles and relationships; 10) A re-integration of a new perspective into one's life We will review two components frequently used in TL practice today, discourse and critical reflection, and discuss ways to integrate these in participants' teaching practices. The session will conclude with participants creating basic strategies for encouraging transformative learning in today's learning environments.

SELECT REFERENCES

- Cranton, P. (2002). Teaching for Transformation. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2002: 63–72. doi:10.1002/ace.50
- Kitchenham, A. (2008). The Evolution of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(2), 104-123.
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 1997(74), 5.

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