Applying Transformative Learning to Curriculum and Community Development: An Interview with Mina Wilson

ANNA DORÉ
University of Central Oklahoma

This editorial interview was conducted with Mina Wilson, who works as a principal consultant in the Center for Health Systems Performance for the national consulting arm of the Kaiser Permanente in the Care Management Institute. Wilson creates and teaches curriculum to improve her field, applying transformative learning in each area of her life and work. She was interviewed by editorial research assistant, Anna Doré.

Anna: *Tell me a little bit about yourself—your professional, academic, and personal background.*

Mina: My name is Wilhelmenia Wilson. I'm called Mina, a name I gave myself in kindergarten when my given name challenged dexterity. I am a socially, relationally, and culturally aware business/education professional, mother of two teenagers, descendant of the African diaspora with some Native American heritage, community activist, and social entrepreneur. My life experience has, of necessity, made me an avid practitioner of code switching; a skill required to navigate the various sociocultural landscapes that comprise my world. These skills are cross-generational and were skillfully modeled for me by my parents and other elder members of the community in which I was raised.

I am the youngest of five children born to my parents, Lucy and the Honorable Judge Charles E. Wilson, during their 55 years of marriage. Products of the Jim Crow south, they learned code switching as a survival mechanism, as the terrorism of white supremacy swirled and raged in their external environments. In contrast to this external vitriol, a nurturing insular community of visionaries supported them towards actualizing talents and gifts in explicit efforts to evolve the African American community through social and economic disadvantages erected by structural racism; the byproduct of sanctioned institutional slavery in the USA. African American leaders sought to instill the goals of academic, social, and cultural excellence on the horizon of their souls to elevate their consciousness and position them as future leaders and social strategists.

In the early 1930's, these community leaders, troubled that no institution of higher learning in the Tidewater area of Virginia would allow African-American students to matriculate, created a two-year collegiate program initially called the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University. My parents were part of this demonstration program. It evolved to become Norfolk State University. In many ways, these forward-thinking leaders leveraged transformational learning; imbuing this community of young people, through education, with new ways to see the world, creating agency and allowing them to bring forward positive change in their own lives and the world. My parents went on to complete their undergraduate educations at Virginia Union University in 1939.

With his eye on the GI Bill to support advanced degree aspirations, my father volunteered for WWII after marrying my mother, serving as an Army lieutenant leading a regimen of African American soldiers in a segregated Armed Forces. During this time, my mother worked at Hartford Seminary, later moving to New York to attend Columbia University. She completed a master's degree in Library Science. After returning from military service, my father joined her, graduating Summa Cum Laude from Columbia School of Law in 1947.

Post-graduation, they decided to move to San Francisco; finally settling in El Cerrito, CA in 1963. The move was purposeful and strategically orchestrated with other African American families, intent on bringing diversity to segregated communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. They formed a community inside the community to shelter us from a, unbeknown to us, treacherous environment. True to their values, they, at every perceived opportunity, pushed the boundaries of the racist social construct to create a more equitable world.

My mother worked as a Librarian and while my father worked as a civil rights attorney. He was, ultimately, hired by Governor Pat Brown to author the Equal Employment Opportunities Law for the State of California, founding the California Fair Employment Practices Commission, where he served as legal counsel for much of his career.

On this landscape, I grew up in El Cerrito, reveling in music, the El Cerrito Gators swim team, El Cerrito NAACP Youth Council, St. Peter CME Church, the only African American church in the city, and the Thespian acting group at the high school. After high school, I attended Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, CA, Hampton University in Hampton, VA, and Georgia State University in Atlanta on my pathway to obtaining a BBA concentrating in accounting with a minor in computer science. Most recently, I returned to school and completed a master's in leadership at St. Mary's College of California where I was introduced to and immersed in the experience of transformative learning.

Anna: *Tell me about your definition of transformative learning.*
Mina: Transformative learning, for me, begins with a transparently honest inward journey of personal inquiry, creating a depth of self-knowing. This "inward journey" allows an individual to identify/discover the values, beliefs, and assumptions shaping our perspectives and creating our worldview. From this place, transformative learning allows us to expand, deepen, and continuously evolve our knowing of the world and our life experience.

Anna: *How were you introduced to transformative learning theory and/or practice?*
Mina: I was first introduced to transformative learning as a theory at St. Mary's College. My initial experience was through the Hall-Tonna Values Inventory. Values Technology is a framework for identifying and developing knowledge of human values. The tool was used as a framework for our learning during the master's program. The well-researched and independently validated theory was developed by Drs. Brian P. Hall and Benjamin Tonna. I was introduced to my own values and coached by skilled values practitioners to more deeply understand the report data that reflected my personal values. I began to know myself in deeper ways and experienced extreme personal transformation resulting and a new level of personal agency that enriched and enhanced my life. I now live in the question of how leveraging transformative tools and methodologies might catalyze transformation in social arenas that I care deeply about.

Since, I have become a certified Values Coach. I have used the tool with my family, church community, in professional career, commissions and boards upon which I serve. I find these methods are effective ways to evolve human consciousness and enhance/expand individual and group capacity to make meaning and leverage that meaning to co-create based on shared values.

Anna: *How did you choose your field and how/why did you become an Education Systems Strategist?*
Mina: Although, we like to think that we choose our space in the world, I am led to believe that my space in the world was pre-destined for me. It was not my intention to function in the world as an educational strategist. As the child of people entrenched in the struggle for social justice and equity, I was weaned on advocacy which created deep resonance for it in me. It was the values I received from my upbringing that grounded me in the importance of working for a more just world and sensitized me to the reality of how social inequity impacts lives and communities.

Through observing the work done by stalwart leaders in my community, I became aware of ways that I could use my life energy and personal power to effect positive change.

After Georgia State University, I found employment at a regional Bank in Atlanta. I found Southern racism culturally and professionally stifling. Assumptions and pre-conceived notions held by mainstream culture about who I was as a Black person were debilitating. These dynamics and other social moirés were like anvils placed upon me that I continually had to throw off so that I could authentically navigate in the culture.

I departed from the banking industry to accept an opportunity at Morehouse School of Medicine; a historically Black college/university (HBCU). The environment also helped me escape the deeply racist social and cultural bias. The President of Morehouse School of Medicine, Dr. Louis Sullivan, had secured funding to implement an integrated network to manage operations for the institution. The project was cutting edge. It excited me, and I immersed myself. There was a need to develop curriculum and training for the end users. I took on the task. It was my first training rodeo, large scale and extremely successful, I discovered a passion for supporting people in developing capacities to do new things; to comprehend new concepts. This planted the seed for a career shift.

With that as my backdrop, I returned to California in 1989. It was during the Reagan era. As I navigated familiar spaces, I was appalled at the impoverished condition of inner cities. It was, I thought, time for me to begin giving back. I began to work in vocational training. I landed at The Center for Employment Training, worked there for 4 years and left to open Vocational Concepts, my own educational consulting firm, in 1993. My consulting practice focused on adults making career transitions; moving from welfare to work, injury to new career, drug addiction or incarceration to re-entry to society. In late 1996, I began working for University of California Extension in the International Programs Department repurposing, channel marketing and delivering university curriculum to key international business sectors. I left the University to explore opportunities in the growing dotcom industry. After several years, a marriage and two children, I landed a position at Kaiser Permanente. Currently, I work for the Kaiser Permanente as a Principal Consultant in the Care Management Institute, the national consulting arm of the organization, in an organization called The Center for Health Systems Performance. I am part of the Learn arm of the organization. In this role, we support the development and delivery of national training programs intended create a culture of and to grow the capacity for continuous improvement across the enterprise. As a national function, we serve eight regions from Virginia to Hawaii. In addition to this professional role, I serve as the Chair of the Board of Directors for Amethod Public Schools; a Bay Area Charter School District comprised of six schools; K-12 in Richmond and Oakland, CA. I serve on the City of El Cerrito Human Relations Commission and provide consulting support for a variety of other organizations through MIKAI and Associates, a consulting firm that I founded in 2016. I also co-chaired the committee that developed the Transformative Listening Project (TLP) for the 2018 International Transformative Leadership Conference. I have used transformative learning techniques in support of all these spaces with some success.

Anna: *How did you decide upon transformative learning as a useful theory for your practice?*
Mina: In 2011, I founded and was leading a non-profit organization, Community Engagement Initiatives. While our board had developed a strong mission and vision, we were challenged to actualize those in the world. I sought broader learning that would support the actualization process. In my seeking, I found the Master of Leadership program at St. Mary's College of California and enrolled. As I entered the program, I was partnered with a man who was less than ideal for me, dealing with strained family relationships as we struggled to take care of my ailing mother, working in a fragmented training operation and wearing on the sinews of my capabilities to hold it all together. The Hall-Tonna Values Inventory tool revealed a plethora of high function goals and capabilities. Surprisingly, the focus during my coaching session was around my lack of

foundational capacities around self-care and a break in my "self" pathway around self-worth. This manifested as lack of boundaries along with a preference for providing and supporting the well-being of others as I ignored my own need for care. I was motivated to make shifts in my life, to create boundaries with my children; private space for me to meditate and commune with myself before engaging with them each day; to create time to immerse myself in experiences like long baths, swimming, writing, and reading. I began to understand how caring for myself enhanced all the aspects of my life. Every aspect of my life shifted, and I began living a more aligned, enjoyable, and effective existence. My personal transformation using the tools and theories drew me to explore these methods with my family, in the spaces where I work professionally and in the community work that I support.

After I completed my master's degree, I received a promotion within my organization. I became a principal consultant for an organization called The Center for Health Systems Performance. I am responsible for developing and delivering performance improvement training programs intended to create a culture of continuous improvement across the organization and develop capacity and skills across the enterprise. During the first year, I evaluated existing programs and began to identify learning opportunities by using Bloom's Taxonomy. Based on those results, we began moving the learning to deeper levels through incorporating simulation activities to allow for embodied experiences. We began with a cultural simulation called BARNGA which allowed participants to feel the energy of cultural conflict. Following that success, we've added more simulations to drive learning deeper.

I've also used transformational learning in several environments and community, organizational settings including book talks, facilitating commission planning meetings, public celebrations, and events. With these successes, I am encouraged about the efficacy of transformative learning models to enhance engagement and capacity for organizations. I have begun exploring how to use transformative learning at the systems level in other organizations and sectors that are important to me.

Anna: *What is the most practical advice you would give others who desire to use Transformative Learning in their practice?*

Mina: I believe, most importantly, that one cannot effectively support transformation if they are not willing to be an authentic participant in transformation. As they instruct on every airline flight, you must put your oxygen mask on first; meaning that those who seek to support transformation must be willing to take the "inward journey" of transformation themselves, to identify the values they hold, query their perspective and mental models, in order to create a body of personal experience and pliancy to shepherd others along the journey. That personal experience builds the capacity for leading such vital work.

Anna: *How do you see Transformative Learning, as a theory and practice, evolving in the upcoming years?*

Mina: It is my hope and objective to support communities in making transformative learning common practice as applied methodology. I hope to see practitioners move theories and practices to a more translational research approach, incorporating them into work being done in critical spaces in our society, documenting the outcomes and growing knowledge and capacity of researchers and practitioners to study, analyze, implement, document, continuously improve, and evolve the models. The potential, in my experience, is great for expanding individual and collective consciousness. That gives me hope.

I am deeply grateful to have the opportunity to engage with the transformative learning community. It has been enlightening to have a lens into the ways that other are using the methods and tools, the various challenges that exist around the work and, while different in circumstance, how aligned and common they are in our global human community. The interactions have

expanded my frame of reference and provided me with a community of kindred colleagues to sharpen my thinking, skills, and practice.

Anna: *You have been involved with a specific effort called the Transformative Listening Project. Would you describe that for me?*

Mina: The Transformative Listening Project (TLP) was born as part of the development of the 2018 International Transformative Learning Conference. It was in response to the growing divisive narrative crafting that was evolving globally causing increasing polarity amongst social and racial groups. Victoria Marsick and Marguerite Welch, co-organizers of the 2018 International Transformative Learning Conference as representatives of Columbia University in New York and St. Mary's College of California, sought input from the community by convening a series of focus groups. I attended the group that was convened at St. Mary's and provided input. As we were closing out the session, they asked if any of us would like to participate more deeply in work of producing the conference. I was intrigued by the idea of transformative listening and volunteered. That resulted in my co-chairing a committee to explore what a transformative listening approach may look like, co-creating a model, conducting cycles of prototyping, testing, and documenting the approach in the quest to develop a model that could be shared with the International Transformative Learning Conference community. The model is intended to expand and deepen ways of listening to support evolution of knowing, consciousness in a way that will support individual and collective transformation.

Anna: *That's all of my questions, thank you for participating in the interview.*

Author's Note: Anna Doré is a JoTL editorial research assistant and Diverse Student Scholar pursuing a masters of arts in creative writing at the University of Central Oklahoma.

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Growth and Meaning through Study Abroad: Assessing Student Transformation with Mixed Methods

TANJA SEIFEN
University of Mississippi

YOLANDA RODRIGUEZ
University of Mississippi

LAURA JOHNSON
University of Mississippi

Abstract

International experiences are touted as a life-changing experience that can enhance cultural and global competencies in college students. However, results are mixed, based on outcomes assessed and methods used. This study sought to examine students' international learning experiences by looking at sense of purpose, meaning in life, intercultural and social attitudes, expectations, and outcomes. A total 123 students completed self-report measures and an open-ended questionnaire before and after studying abroad. Quantitative analysis of data indicated a decrease in search for meaning, but no other significant changes. Qualitative data suggested an increase in personal growth and uncertainty about how to interpret the international experience. Findings indicate a gap between quantitative and qualitative assessment, suggesting that open-ended questions give students a better chance to reflect on their personal experiences. More research is needed in order to investigate meaning and growth through study abroad.

Keywords: international education, meaning, student growth, mixed methods

Traveling, living, working, and studying in a foreign country has, for centuries, been reported as deeply meaningful, offering opportunities for creativity, cognitive flexibility, and powerful revelations. The net effect of such travel expereinces is frequently reffered to as life changing (Dwyer & Peters, 2004), indicating a transformative experience. Given the personal and interpersonal benefits, colleges and unviersities are increasingly recommending study abroad as key to student development. The new experiences, challenges, and perspectives gained by students is considered essential for student success in a global, multicultural environment (Gill, 2007).

It is commonly assumed that cross-cultural experiences afforded via study abroad will increase positive intercultural attitudes, such as sensitivity, openness, and cultural competence (defined as awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to function effectively in diverse cultural contexts, e.g. American Psychological Association, 2002). Numerous studies have explored the benefits of study abroad participation, which may include increased international understanding, interest in international affairs, cultural sensitivity, language gains, and personal growth (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; McCabe, 1994; Dolby, 2004; Hadis, 2005; Kitsantas, 2004). Overall, there is an escalating recognition of the importance of international education in an increasingly global society (Tabi & Mukherjee, 2003), and with that, a growing number of students who study abroad each year. Indeed, according to the lastest data of the Institute for International Education, the number of students studying abroad for academic credit is constantly increasing (IIE, 2017). With more students venturing out and being encouraged to do so, there is an increased interest in assessing the outcomes of international experiences.

A New Global Ethos through Transformative Learning

Students often describe their study abroad experience as life-changing, deeply meaningful, and a time of tremendous personal growth and development (Gill, 2007). Personal growth is often characterized by the development of a *new global ethos,* which includes self-confidence, new ways of coping, a more independent and courageous lifestyle, as well as new civic attitudes, a commitment to make a positive difference in the world, and finding purpose in life (Carlson, et al., 1990; Rahikainen & Hakkarainen, 2013). The outcomes and processes inherent in the study abroad experience can be accounted for using Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory (TLT; Mezirow, 1991).

According to Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991), new learning experiences will lead to perspective transformation, i.e. a change in the way learners interpret and reinterpret their experience to make meaning and learn from it. Mezirow (1991) proposed that individuals go through phases of transformative learning, which are initiated by a disorienting dilemma and are followed by self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions, and exploration of new ways of action and roles. Ultimately, transformative learning should result in successfully integrating the new information, beliefs, and perspective into one's life and world perspective. The main goal of transformative learning is for an individual to create a more valid, meaniful perspective to guide future actions (Kiely, 2004). Lange (2004) suggested that the disorienting dilemmas proposed by Mezirow could be considered as "pedagogical entry points" (p. 183), which will lead students to engagement and assessment of the situation and may result in tranformative learning. Research suggests that changes in attitudes and beliefs are often outcomes of the study abroad experience (Gill, 2007); therefore, going abroad appears to provide students with the 'entry point' needed to transform their perspective. For example, in a study by Trilokekar and Kukar (2011), participants reported encountering several disorienting experiences during their study aboard experience (e.g. racial dynamics, risk taking behavior), which the authors described as a crucial first step for tranforming perspective. However, some of their participants struggled with relating these experiences in ways that would lead to perspective transformation and meaning making, which Trilokekar and Kukar (2011) attributed to individual differences between students.

Limitation in methodology and difficulties operationalizing the study abroad experience have led to scarce exploration of growth and meaning resulting from studying abroad (Durrant & Durious, 2007). Meaningful living is theorized to be connected to well-being, personal growth, and psychological strength (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006; Kenyon, 2000). Thus far, meaning and personal growth have been expressed and investigated as an important component of studying abroad in qualitative descriptions (Rahikainen et al., 2013; Mapp, et al., 2007), but have not been widely explored using standard psychometric measures, such as the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger et al., 2006). Importantly, there are an array of factors related to study abroad experiences that stand to influence processes and outcomes.

Factors Influencing International Study Experiences

According to Engle and Engle (2003; 2004) the following seven variables distinguish study abroad programs: length of student sojourn, language competence upon entry, language used in course work, context of academic work, types of student housing, provisions for guided/ structured cultural interaction and experiental learning, and guided reflection on cultural experience. All variables need to be taken into consideration in order to maximize outcomes. Further, program components (e.g. length of stay, student housing) are considered the most important predictor for the use of a second language (Dewey et al. 2014). Findings from Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige (2009) suggest that students who lived with other students from their home country or with students from their host country showed significant gains in intercultural learning, which were not found in students who lived with international students or host families. According to Berg et al. (2009), staying with a host family does not necessarily lead to oral and intercultural proficiency, but students who take advantage of the potential in a host family environment make significantly more progress in their language and intercultural skills compared to students who do not take adavantage of it. Further, findings from Berg et al. (2009) suggested that the presence or absence

of a cultural mentor who meets frequently with the students is an important component to improve students' learning during study abroad experiences.

Today, the majority of students in U.S. colleges tend to participate in short-term study abroad experiences during the summer term, such as faculty-led programs, field schools, and focused areas of study within certain cultures and regions (Perry, Stoner, & Tarrant, 2012). With the rise of popularity of short-term study abroad programs, it is important to explore if shorter stays have the same positive effects on students' perspectives and skills as long-term study abroad programs. Research shows that short-term study abroad programs have an influence on students' cross-cultural awareness and competence (e.g. Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Nyaupane, Teye, & Paris, 2008; Van't Klooster, Van Wijk, Go, & Van Rekom, 2008), personal development and growth (Harrison, 2006; Mapp, et al., 2007) , as well as functional knowledge and learning (Berg et al., 2009). Mapp, et al., (2007) found that students who participate in a short-term study abroad experience tend to show an increased interest in a longer study abroad experience (e.g. mid-length and full-term). Overall, results suggest that similar to long-term stays, short-term study abroad programs are educational, foster personal growth, and can be considered a promising alternative to a long-term stay (Chieffo et al., 2004; Mapp, et al., 2007).

Measuring the Outcomes of Studying Abroad

While the benefits of studying abroad are increasingly stressed in academia and students often describe their experience as life changing and deeply meaningful (Clark, Flaherty, Wright, & McMillan , 2009), getting a handle on the actual 'outcomes' is not so straightforward. Given the complex processes involved in such transformative learning, measuring processes and outcomes can be a messy. From a practical perspective, rich retrospective accounts and simple post surveys are typical methods, because pre-test data is often not available, sample sizes are too small, and appropriate control groups are difficult to obtain (Hadis, 2005; Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). Random assignment and other types of programmatic control are limited.

Further, quantitative and qualitative investigations of the outcomes of study abroad often differ in the variables that they assess. Quantitative research often relies on scales and indices that measure cultural competence, world-mindedness, adjustment, political attitudes or personality (Poole & Davis, 2006). On the other hand, qualitative research assessing the outcomes of study abroad programs often consists of reflection papers and open-ended questions in order to capture students' subjective understanding and interpretation of their experience (e.g., Schwarz et al., 1999; Healy, Asamoah, & Hokenstad, 2003) For example, Caldwell and Purtzer (2015) conducted a qualitative descriptive study to investigate long-term learning outcomes in nursing students that participated in a short-term study abroad. Participants were given a set of open-ended questions one or more years after their return from studying abroad. Students were asked to describe their study abroad experience and to elaborate on the personal and professional impact it had on them. Authors used a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the data, which offered a close interpretation of the data and allowed for subtle distinctions among responses. Results suggested long-term learning effects as evidenced by four learning themes that were found (Embracing Others, Gaining Cultural Competencies, Experiencing Ethnocentric Shift, and Negotiating Ethical Dilemmas). In order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of studying abroad, researchers may choose mixed methods. Some studies that included both, quantitative and qualitative data, suggest that qualitative assessment data can show benefits higher than those measured with quantitative assessment. For example, Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) conducted a study in which she used quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the link between students' development of intercultural sensitivity. Results showed that qualitative data revealed higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than quantitative data. Mapp, McFarland, and Newell (2007) tried to look at students' change through a short-term, two-week study abroad trip to Ireland by using both, quantitative and qualitative assessment. For the quantitative assessment, they chose the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) in order to measure personal development and growth through studying abroad. For the qualitative assessment, each student in this study completed a reflection paper after their return. The quantitative data did not reveal significant changes, however, the qualitative data suggested a change in attitudes regarding global understanding and

cross-cultural knowledge. Including both quantitative and qualitative assessment helps to ensure objective assessment without losing the rich, subjective meaning of the study abroad experience students report and its influence on their personal development and growth (Poole et al., 2006).

Current Study

The current study aimed to explore students' transformational learning and development of a new global ethos as defined by sense of meaning, purpose in life, and social and civic attitudes. Several different indicators of intercultural ethical reasoning and interpersonal growth were examined including social justice attitudes, political awareness, diversity attitudes, cultural empathy, and intercultural communication apprehension. Measures to investigate personal growth of students, including meaning and purpose in life, were included in the study. Further, an open-ended, qualitative question was included and results were compared with the obtained quantitative data. Finally, program factors, such as length of stay, language fluency, and living arrangements as they relate to changes in civic, social, and personal attitude development over time were examined.

Hypotheses

Taken together, the study focused on three research questions. The first one addressed findings already present in the literature (Carlson et al., 1990; Gill, 2007; and Hadis, 2005),; namely, the transformative benefits of study abroad participation. It was hypothesized that students would report increased purpose and meaning in life and show a change in social and civic attitudes toward their community after studying abroad. We expected students to report expectations for change before the excursion and then to report an array of growth experiences upon return. The second research question addressed the impact of educational program factors (such as length of stay, language fluency, and living arrangements abroad) in desired outcomes. It was hypothesized that, as suggested by Chieffo et al., (2004) and Mapp, et al., (2007), program factors would be correlated to participants' social and civic attitudes. Lastly, the third research question aimed to compare and contrast obtained results from quantitative to qualitative data. It was hypothesized that both sets of data would provide a complementary understandings of the study abroad experience that allowed for both objective data and subjective, self-perceptions of change (Poole et al., 2006).

Methods

Participants

Participants consisted of 123 college-aged students (83% Caucasian) who completed a survey prior to and after a study abroad trip. Of the 123 participants, 88 were majors in International Studies predominantly traveling to countries in Europe, Asia, and South America. The remaining 35 students were students in a variety of academic disciplines participating in short-term study, such as environmental psychology in Tanzania or business-focused studies with international colleagues in China. Approximately 84% of the total sample was enrolled in a study abroad program for less than six months. The rest of the participants (roughly 14%) were enrolled for six months to a year. Two percent of the sample did not indicate length of stay. Regarding living arrangements, the largest percentage of students lived with a host family (39%). The remaining percentages were fairly divided evenly among various living arrangements (e.g. apartments, dorms, roommate of a different culture). The majority of participants reported being semi- or highly fluent in the language of their host culture (approximately 57%). Many participants had previous experience traveling abroad. Approximately 55% had spent 0-3 months abroad, 15% were abroad for 3-6 months, 2% were abroad for 6 months to 1 year, and 15% had been abroad for more than 1 year. Thirteen percent of participants did not have prior study abroad experience.

Measures

A total of four measures were chosen to evaluate several aspects of the study abroad experience, including civic and political attitudes, apprehension towards intercultural communication, and meaning in life.

The Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (CASQ; Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron, & McFarland, 2002). Four subscales from the CASQ were used: Political Awareness (perceived awareness of current events/political issues, higher scores indicate more awareness), Diversity Attitudes (interest in relating to others culturally different than oneself, higher scores suggest higher interest), Social Justice Attitudes (attitudes about poverty/social problems, higher scores indicate recognition of need for system-level changes), and Civic Action (intent to become involved in community service, higher scores indicate more involvement). Sample items from each of these scales include "I am knowledgeable of the issues facing the world" (Political Awareness), "I enjoy meeting people who come from backgrounds very different from my own" (Diversity Attitudes), "People are poor because they choose to be poor" (Social Justice Attitudes), and "I plan to become involved in my community" (Civic Action). Internal consistency (Cronbach's coefficient alpha) of the CASQ was determined across two large samples, and values ranged from .69 to .88. The Political Awareness subscale consists of 6 items (sample 1 α = .80; sample 2 α = .79), the Diversity Attitudes subscale consists of 5 items (sample 1 α = .70; sample 2, α = .71), the Social Justice Attitudes subscale consists of 8 items (sample 1 α = .70; sample 2 α = .69), and the Civic Action subscale consists of 8 items (sample 1 α = .86; sample 2 α = .88).

Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). The PRICA is a measure of real/anticipated interaction with people of different cultural groups, higher scores indicating higher levels of communication apprehension. This measure consists of 14 items, with a reported internal consistency reliability coefficient alpha of .941 (Neuliep et al., 1997). Sample items include "I dislike interacting with people from different cultures", or "I am afraid to speak up in a conversation with a person from a different culture."

Purpose in Life-Short Form and Meaning in Life Questionnaire. Two measures were chosen to evaluate sense of meaning and purpose in life because of the purported relationship to study abroad experiences: the Purpose in Life test- Short Form (PIL-SF; Schulenberg, Schnetzer, & Buchannan, 2010; measure of meaning in life, with higher scores indicating higher presence of meaning), and the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ, Steger et al., 2006; presence and search for meaning, higher scores indicating higher perception of life meaning and high strive for finding meaning, respectively). Schulenberg et al. (2010) reported an internal consistency reliability coefficient alpha of .86 for the four items of the PIL-SF. The MLQ consists of two scales (Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning) with five items each. Sample items from the Presence of Meaning scale include "I understand my life's meaning" or "My life has a clear sense of purpose", and sample items from the Search for Meaning include "I am always looking to find my life's purpose". Internal consistencies for both scales are reported to often exceed .80.

Open-ended question. An open-ended question was included in the pre-departure and re-entry set of questionnaires to capture the students' experiences beyond what quantitative measures could potentially capture. Pre-departure, students were asked the following question: "What are your expectations for how you might change during this experience?" After return from study abroad, students were asked a similar question: "How do you feel your trip has changed you? Explain."

Procedure

Participants were recruited from a mid-size University in the Southern U.S. through which they participated in a variety of study abroad programs. Programs included short-term focused immersions, a traveling program with international colleagues, and more typically, summer, semester, and year-long programs. Participants had to complete a pre-departure and/or re-entry workshop related to their study abroad trip during which they were asked to participate in the present study. In the beginning of each workshop (pre-departure vs. re-entry), participants were presented with a consent form, which included information about the study, institutional review board approval, and the voluntary nature of the participation in this study. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to completing the survey packet.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS), Volume 22, was used for statistical data analyses. Analyses began with calculating descriptive statistics for the measures including means and standard deviations. Dependent samples t-test were used to investigate differences between pre and post study abroad reports. Correlations and linear regressions were calculated to investigate the relationship between program features and outcome measures. Given the variety of programs from which participants were recruited, sample sizes per analysis vary depending on the measures that each group completed.

The open-ended question was analyzed by an extensive coding procedure that involved two independent raters. Initially, a review of the literature was conducted to recognize the different categorical systems used by previous studies that were found to be both informative towards the research question and comprehensive towards capturing the participants' experiences while studying abroad. Eleven categories were formulated based on the recommendations of Carlson, et al. (1990), a study by Rahikainen et al. (2013), and the characteristics of the data (i.e. creating a category for those who did not have any expectations or were unsure about their answers to the questions). The categories were 1) Language abilities (improvement of foreign language skills), 2) Gaining a new perspective on home country (United States), 3) Gaining an increased understanding of the host culture, 4) Gaining new perspectives on the world as a whole, 5) Developing an interest in international affairs and politics, 6) Personal growth (defined as gaining new perspectives on life, broadening their world-view, becoming more appreciative of life, increasing their self-efficacy, becoming more independent, and engaging in a process of self-discovery), 7) Academic and Career goals (including gathering information to further inform their thesis or help them discern their academic major), 8) Creating new friendships, 9) Traveling and exploring the host country, 10) Having no expectations, and 11) Being unsure or not providing an answer.

Two independent raters were provided with separate copies of the database for open-ended answers and with the list of the 11 categories. They were asked to approach the data using a top-down strategy where they would place each item under its corresponding category. Upon completion, researchers gathered to discuss the items that had been codified under different categories by at least one rater. These items were then categorized through discussion and mutual agreement between the researchers. In addition, inter-rater reliability was assessed for each category using Cohen's kappa.

<div align="center">

Results

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Descriptive Analysis

Means and standard deviations were calculated for each measure pre and post study abroad total score (see Table 1). For the four subscales of the Civic Action and Skills Questionnaire (CASQ: Political Awareness, Diversity Attitudes, Social Justice Attitudes, and Civic Action) an average of the mean for each scale was calculated.

Table 1 *Measure Means and Standard Deviations Pre and Post Study Abroad*

		Pre-Study Abroad		Post Study Abroad	
Measure	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
CASQ Political Awareness	119	3.66	.62	3.57	.71

Table 1 *Measure Means and Standard Deviations Pre and Post Study Abroad Continued*

		Pre-Study Abroad		Post Study Abroad	
CASQ Diversity Attitudes	119	4.17	.59	4.15	.57
CASQ Social Justice Attitudes	117	3.91	.63	3.94	.63
CASQ Civic Action	91	4.06	.63	4.06	.72
PRICA Total	119	27.20	9.31	27.83	9.53
MLQ Search for Meaning*	114	26.16	6.64	24.84	6.80
MLQ Presence of Meaning	97	27.19	4.37	27.70	4.58
PIL-SF Total	86	22.47	2.58	22.24	3.00

Note. Due to missing data from either prior or post studying abroad, *N*< 123 for the quantitative data.
*statistically significant difference between pre and post score (p < .05)

According to the results of the descriptive analysis, pre and post study abroad, students tend to score highest on the Diversity Attitudes scales of the CASQ, followed by the Civic Attitudes, the Social Justice Attitudes, and last the Political Awareness scale. The CASQ was designed to be sensitive to change over time as a result of service-learning experiences. Scores for these students are, overall, in line with norms among college students in the U.S. when given prior to a service learning experience (range from 3.58 to 4.3.) There was no difference in pre-departure and post scores on the CASQ for any scales measured.

On the measure of intercultural communication apprehension (PRICA), means suggest no obvious difference between the pre and post scores. A PRICA score under 31 indicates a low level of intercultural communication apprehension (CA), thus the participants show relatively low levels of apprehension overall, which may have contributed to the lack of change.

On measures of meaning and purpose (MLQ and PIL-SF), scores pre-departure appear similar to scores post study abroad, except for the MLQ Search of Meaning scale. Here, scores indicate a decline in search for meaning in life after returning from studying abroad.

Quantitative Analysis

Statistical tests on the dependent samples revealed no statistically significant difference between pre and post study abroad scores on the four scales of the Civic Action and Skills Questionnaire. Means and standard deviations for the paired differences are as follows: Diversity Attitudes $M = .02$ ($SD = .65$); Social Justice Attitudes $M = - .03$ ($SD = .33$); Political Awareness $M = .09$ ($SD = .70$); and Civic Action $M = .001$ ($SD = .66$).

Similarly, no statistically significant changes in intercultural communication apprehension (PRICA) from pre to post-test were found, yet these scores are reflective of low apprehension at both pre and post-test. Means and standard deviations for the paired differences are as follows: $M = -.63$ ($SD = 11.08$).

For the MLQ, a statistically significant difference was found between the pre-departure and post scores on the Search for Meaning scale ($M = 1.32$ ($SD = 6.06$); t = 2.32, p < .05). Descriptive analysis showed that students' scores post study abroad were lower than pre-departure. No statistically significant

difference between pre and post scores was found for the Presence of Meaning scale of the MLQ ($M = -.52$; $SD = 4.34$). No significant difference was found for pre and post scores on the Purpose in Life – Short Form measure ($M = .22$, $SD = 2.42$).

   Relationship Between Prosocial Attitudes and Meaning in Life. Correlations among prosocial attitudes and meaning in life on both pre and post surveys suggest an interesting relationship as a function of the study abroad experience. Specifically, intercultural communication apprehension is negatively correlated with Purpose in Life pre and post travel (pre: $r = -.207$, $p < .05$; post: $r = -.499$, $p < .001$). Further, intercultural communication apprehension is negatively correlated with Presence of Meaning post travel, but not pre-departure ($r = -.282$, $p < .05$). Purpose in life is significantly correlated with Political Awareness and Civic Action prior to study abroad ($r = .214$, $p < .05$; $r = .209$, $p < .05$), and significantly correlated with all four scales of the CASQ (Political Awareness, Diversity Attitudes, Social Justice Attitudes, and Civic Action) post study abroad ($r = .388$, $p < .001$; $r = .416$, $p < .001$; $r = .470$, $p < .001$; $r = .324$, $p < .001$). Also, Search for Meaning is positively correlated with Political Awareness, Diversity Attitudes, Social Justice Attitudes, and Civic Action post, but not prior to study abroad ($r = .221$, $p < .05$; $r = .213$, $p < .05$; $r = .296$, $p < .001$; $r = .395$, $p < .001$). Finally, after study abroad, Presence of Meaning is significantly correlated with Political Awareness, Diversity Attitudes, and Civic Action, but not with Social Justice Attitudes ($r = .204$, $p < .05$; $r = .236$, $p < .05$; $r = .288$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that after studying abroad more meaning and purpose in life relates to less intercultural communication apprehension, and more political awareness, civic action, and prosocial and diversity attitudes.

   Relationship Between Program and Personal Features and Outcome. Pearson correlations were used to explore the relationship between variables such as length of stay, language fluency pre-departure, prior length of time abroad, living arrangements, and post study abroad scores on prosocial attitudes (CASQ, PRICA), and meaning and purpose in life measures (MLQ, PIL-SF). Language fluency pre-departure is negatively correlated with post travel scores on the PRICA ($r = -.263$, $p < .05$). Length of stay is negatively correlated with post scores on the MLQ Presence of Meaning scale and the Purpose in Life questionnaire ($r = -.220$, $p < .05$; $r = -.215$, $p = .05$). No significant correlations for living arrangements and prior length of stay with post travel scores on the different measures were found.

   Linear regressions were calculated for each of the measures to further examine the relationship between personal and program features and post travel scores. Only language fluency pre-departure and length of stay were used in the regression analyses, because they were the only variables that showed significant correlations (see above). For post travel scores on the PRICA, the regression model was significant ($F = 5.21$, $p < .05$), with length of stay serving as significant predictor. The regression model accounted for 5.6% of the variance ($R^2 = .056$). Further, the regression model for the post scores on the Purpose in Life questionnaire was also significant ($F = 4.75$, $p < .01$), and accounted for 5.5% of the variance ($R^2 = .055$). Again, length of stay served as significant predictor. The regression model for the CASQ scale Diversity Attitudes was also significant ($F = 4.06$, $p < .05$), with length of stay again serving as a significant predictor. The model accounted for 4.5% of variance ($R^2 = .045$). The regression model for the CASQ scale Social Justice Attitudes was significant ($F = 8.77$, $p < .01$), with both variables, length of stay and language fluency, being a significant predictor for post travel scores. The model accounted for 16.6% of variance ($R^2 = .166$).

Qualitative Data Analysis

   For the 11 categories drawn from the open-ended question, interrater reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa. Kappa values ranged from extremely strong to weak, although the majority reflected a moderate level of agreement between raters. In most occasions, weak level of agreements proportionally related to the number of items in each category. In other words, kappa values in small categories (with less than 10 items) were more severely affected by one or two interrater disagreements than those in larger categories (with more than 60 items). Kappa values for the 11 categories were as following: Language skills ($\alpha = .95$), New perspective on home country ($\alpha = .62$), New understanding on host country ($\alpha = .67$), New perspective of the world ($\alpha = .53$), Interest in international affairs ($\alpha = .49$), Personal growth ($\alpha = .86$), academic/career goals ($\alpha = .46$), New friendships ($\alpha = .92$), Traveling/exploring host country ($\alpha = .73$), No expectations ($\alpha = .93$), and Unsure/no answer ($\alpha = 1.00$).

Table 2 *Categories with Percentages of Endorsement on the Group Level*

Categories	Pre-Study Abroad % (256)**	Post Study Abroad % (180)**
Personal Growth*	28.13	42.55
New understanding of host culture	19.92	12.77
Language Skills	17.19	6.92
New perspectives of the world	7.42	3.72
No expectations	5.08	1.60
Traveling/ Exploring host country*	4.30	5.32
New friendships*	3.91	4.26
Academic/ Career goals	3.91	2.66
Unsure/ No answer*	3.52	12.23
New perspectives on home country*	3.13	6.38
Interest in international affairs	3.13	1.06

*Percentage of answers in these categories went up post study abroad
**Refers to the number of responses given by the 123 participants

Descriptive analyses of qualitative data indicated a slight shift in expectations and goals of participants before and after their study abroad trip (see Table 2). In the pre-departure packet, participants indicated being highly interested in becoming more fluent in the language of their host country ("more proficient in my foreign language skills", "more willing to speak a foreign language"), learning from the host culture through their immersive experience ("hopefully I will improve my understanding of Chinese culture", "learn more about the Spanish culture"), and overall personal growth in terms of independence ("Being a more independent person", "hope to learn more about myself"). Upon re-entry, participants indicated some changes with regard to their perspectives on their host country ("more aware of foreign culture", "I have a greater cultural understanding of people from South America"), an increase in being unsure of what their experience meant for them (e.g. did not answer the question), and a great increase in personal growth in terms of increased self-efficacy, broadening their world view, and being more appreciative of their lives (" Made me much more patient, yet adventurous", "I am more confident/flexible", "I am more open minded").

Due to these findings, a supplemental analysis was run in order to further investigate the changes in responses on the open-ended question from pre to post studying abroad. A McNemar test for paired nominal data was run for each category to compare student's responses pre to post studying abroad on an individual level. Significant changes were found for the following variables: Language ($p < .001$), No Expectations ($p < .05$), and New Understanding of Host Culture ($p < .001$). Results suggest that after returning home from their international experience, students report less language gains and understanding

of the host culture than they expected to have prior to their trip. On the other hand, fewer students reported no change compared to responses of 'no expected change' prior to going abroad.

Table 3 *Categories with Sample Quotes*

Categories	Quotes pre-departure	Quotes post return
Language Skills	"I want to become more fluent in the language";	"I feel like my language acquisition has improved";
New perspective on home country	"I also want to be more appreciative of my home county…"	"Notice the negative nature of people in the U.S."
New understanding on host country	"To better understand a foreign culture";	"It helped me become more accepting of other cultures"
New perspectives of the world	"I think I will gain a broader perspective of the world"	"It has made me look at the world in a different way"
Interest in international affairs	"Better understanding of economy"	"…more familiar with issues regarding reconciliation in South Africa…"
Personal growth	"Being a more independent person"	"I am more confident and self-reliant"
Academic/career goals	"I also plan to do thesis research while in Germany"	"I learned more about what kind of work I want to do."
New friendships	"I expect to develop a more diverse group of friends"	"I have made new friends"
Traveling/exploring host country	"Travel in Europe"	"I am much more comfortable with traveling"
No expectations	"I have no expectations for this trip"	"No"
Unsure/ no answer	"I am unsure"	N/A

Discussion

This study was conducted to explore the transformative effects of study abroad experiences on students using mixed methods. It aimed to assess student growth and transformation by assessing changes in personal, social, and civic attitudes as well as meaning and purpose in life through a set of quantitative measures. We also aimed to illuminate student perspectives on self-growth and change by including an analysis of their open-ended response about expected and actual changes (outcomes) of study abroad.

The results on quantitative measures revealed no statistically significant differences between pre-departure and post study abroad experiences on most measures, including the four scales of the Civic Action and Skills Questionnaire (CASQ) and the intercultural communication apprehension questionnaire (PRICA). On measures of meaning and purpose, quantitative findings were limited, too. No significant change in scores were found on the Purpose in Life questionnaire (PIL-SF) and the Presence of Meaning scale of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ). However, a decrease in the Search for Meaning was detected on the MLQ. This finding suggests that students do not strive for meaning as much as they did prior to their study abroad experience. A possible explanation for this could be that students have recently come from a period that might be considered a 'search' of sorts. That is, they have just been out in the world experiencing and seeing new things, on a search for new scenery, experiences, skills, relationships, and other discoveries. Using Mezirow's TLT framework (1991), these students' recent study abroad experience might have served as a disorienting dilemma followed by self-examination, critical assessment, exploration for options etc. Since presence of meaning did not increase, it is likely that these students still need time to consolidate their experiences and have not yet completed their transformative learning process.

Analysis of the relationships between prosocial attitudes and meaning in life suggests an interesting relationship as a function of the study abroad experience. Results suggest that after returning from studying abroad, more meaning and purpose in life is connected with less intercultural communication apprehension. Students who are less afraid and aversive towards interacting with members of different cultures appear to experience more purpose in life. Further, students with higher scores on measures of political awareness, diversity and social attitudes, and civic action after studying abroad, report more purpose in life and search for meaning. Similar results were found for political awareness, diversity attitudes, civic action and presence of meaning.

Further, results suggest that language fluency pre-departure and length of stay play an important role in the study abroad experience. The role of other variables examined was not affirmed (e.g. prior length of time abroad, living arrangements).

While many expectations for gains during study abroad expect a linear trend, with an overall increase in positive outcomes from pre to post study abroad, there is reason to speculate that benefits may be variable, fluctuating in a temporal pattern along with cultural adjustment and re-entry processes, which may include multiple disorienting experiences that include both positively and negatively valanced thoughts and emotions. For some students, re-entry is perceived as a shock (reverse culture shock), and they experience a decline in psychological well-being after returning home. It might take one to two months before their psychological well-being returns to pre-departure baseline again, especially for students who adapted well to their host country (Bikos and Dykhouse, 2015). As such, the transformative learning and outcomes of study abroad likely entail multiple disorienting events, adjustments and consolidations. Consideration of students' psychological and cultural adjustment states is important in assessing outcomes. For example, student 're-entry' after study abroad is viewed as a "W" shape graph, indicative of changing and unstable mood and adjustment (the re-entry worm; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) wherein students' psychological and internal experiences can be understood as a series of fluctuating high and low points which vary based on individual adjustment patterns and contextual factors. Measuring outcomes of one phase of transformation may be pre-mature or ill-advised when the students are in the midst of a second period of adjustment. Scores on post-study measures could vary as a function of time, type of adjustment required, and other personal or contextual factors related to re-entry. Critical reflection, consolidation, and transformation resulting from the initial study abroad experience may take time and be inseparable from the secondary experience of re-entry (which can be as equally transformative). The story of how life changing the experience really was, may not be fully written. In the present study, students completed post study abroad packets at the first if the semester after returning home, capturing a range of time points in their re-entry process. In general, conducting research with study abroad participants can be a messy process. Data collection is often slow and attrition maybe be high in longitudinal designs. This speaks to the practical nature of the retrospective approaches so commonly used.

Compared to the findings of the quantitative assessment, the open-ended question in this study tended to report gains not reflected in the psychometric measures (e.g., "It has transformed my entire life."). Overall, students reported gains across a number of different domains when openly asked about the effects of their experience. Further, analyses of qualitative data indicated a slight shift on the group level in expectations and goals of participants before and after their study abroad experience. Prior to their trip, students reported being highly interested in becoming more fluent in the language of their host country, learning from and about the host culture through their immersive experience, and overall personal growth in terms of independence. After return, there was an increase in the number of students that did not supply an answer, which could potentially be a result of not knowing what their experience meant for them. In this case, this would add support to the notion that personal development outcomes may be unclear, slow, multifaceted, and/or transient. Further, reports about personal growth, in terms of increased self-efficacy, broadening their world view, and being more appreciative of life, doubled after return. On the individual level, this increase in answers related to personal growth did not reach statistical significance. However, statistical analyses on the individual level showed that students' reports of language gains and knowledge about the host culture decreased significantly after return. Oddly, this may be an actual reflection of their learning (e.g., I now realize how little I knew before about the language or host culture.) Compared to answers of no expected change prior studying abroad, fewer students reported that they did not change at all through their international experience.

Implications

Findings of the present study indicate a gap between presumed transformative outcomes and their measurement among students returning from study abroad. Moreover, quantitative and qualitative assessments showed different pictures, which is similar to that found by other researchers (e.g. Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Mapp, et al., 2007). In this study, the open-ended question appeared to give students a better chance to reflect on their experiences and express personal changes. This is consistent with Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory (1991), which emphasizes that individuals differ in the way they learn and interpret their experiences. It is important to provide students with adequate ways and opportunties to interpret and make meaning from their international experience (Perry et al, 2012). For most participants in this study, an open-ended question that required them to pause and reflect upon their time abroad seemed to be an appropriate way to encourage meaning making. However, after return from studying abroad, there was also an increase in participants who appeared to struggle with providing an answer to how their study abroad experience had impacted their lives. It is possible, that they needed more support, or a different medium (e.g. photography, focus groups) in order to adequately benefit from their learning experience. This is consistent with Kortegast and Boisfontaine (2015), who pointed out that studying abroad does not automatically result in expected learning and gaining new skills. More specifically, it is important to understand how students create meaning from their international experience in order to assist them in reaching desired learning outcomes. Kortegast et al. (2015) provide recommendations and guidelines for how to help reach these outcomes: 1) provide students with re-entry workshops to share and reflect on their experience, 2) ask students to complete reflective papers and presentations to articulate what they learned, 3) provide information to students' families in order to facilitate communication, and 4) use photography as a medium to highlight the most important parts of their international experience.

Further, current findings from quantitative data suggest that students experienced more personal growth than other areas, such as improved language abilities. These findings could be helpful when preparing students for their international experiences. More specifically, when planning and designing pre-departure workshops, educators should find a way to help students form realistic expectations that will ideally lead to less disappoitment and a better use of their time and resources abroad.

Limitations

Given the diversity of the population of interest and the small number of students who studied abroad, the selected sample was too limited to allow for randomization or the creation of a control group. The quasi-experimental design of the study has limitations regarding the self-selection bias of the sample

(with the majority of the participants being international study majors). In addition, the pre-designed time regulations of study abroad programs nullified the possibility of administering post measures at equal intervals for all participants. In order words, the variability between the programs and within the students of each program (i.e. length of stay, time of departures and arrivals, overlap at different points in the academic year) created obstacles to equalize the administration of the post measures. The same challenges prevented researchers from including follow-up measures to assess if more post changes occurred over time.

It is also important to note that the study's external reliability is limited by the homogenous nature of the sample obtained from a university in the southern United States. Their specific demographic characteristics (predominantly Caucasian, 18-24 years old college-students) limit generalization to other study abroad students. Lastly, the self-report nature of the measures placed the results at risk to reflect the participants' social desirability and other biases that may not accurately reflect their experiences while studying abroad. On the other hand, self-report measures did contain reversed items to discourage social desirability and particular response sets.

Future Directions

Despite these findings and numerous studies that have explored the benefits of study abroad participation in the past (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; McCabe, 1994; Dolby, 2004; Hadis, 2005; Kitsantas, 2004), the number of college students studying abroad each year is still miniscule. Even with the reported increase, during the academic year of 2015/16, less than 2% of students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States participated in a study abroad program (Institute for International Education, 2017). For the majority of undergraduate students in the United States, a study abroad experience is still not part of the regular curriculum. Often these experiences are restricted to the wealthy students and those with high grade point averages. Lack of flexibilty in regular college schedules, extra time needed for study abroad, and costs keep many students grounded. Some may be afraid to venture out of their comfort zone. Others have never considered the idea since the opportunity may not be known or offered. More research is needed in order to determine and investigate reasons and barriers, and possible ways to better incorporate study abroad type experiences into the regular curriculum. Further, future research with mixed methods is needed to better capture how, when and in what way outcomes of study abroad manifest themselves. Future directions should also be focused on obtaining measures that better capture the study abroad experience using quantitative measures at many different points in time.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Overall, findings from the current study supported the notion that studying abroad is a valuable and meaningful experience for college students. Qualitative reports indicated change and there was a significant reduction in search for meaning. Although lacking in other quantitative outcomes, results do provide some support for a shift in perspectives and beliefs as postulated by Mezirow's Theory of Transformational Learning (1991). Students initially believed that their study abroad experience would lead to language gains and cultural knowledge. However, upon return students reported more personal changes instead (e.g. self-confidence), indicating personal growth and transformed perspectives.

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Author's Note: Tanja Seifen, Yolanda Rodriguez, and Laura Johnson are graduate students in the Psychology department at the University of Mississippi.

Reflective Teaching: What Instructional Assistant Reflection Can Inform Us About Transformation in Higher Education

PATRICIA HEMANS
University of California

MAXIE GLUCKMAN
University of California

LAUREN FERRY
University of California

JACE HARGIS
NYU Shanghai

Abstract

This study discusses the transformation and challenges of Instructional Assistants (IAs) as they engaged in a quarter long professional development (PD) course concurrent with their first teaching experience. Universities have responded to the need to prepare these future instructors for the demands of teaching in higher education in diverse ways. However, past research has not focused specifically on IAs' perspectives on these institutional offerings of PD. This study addresses this gap in the literature by carefully examining the views of IAs participating in an eight-week, non-credit bearing course offered by the Institutional Teaching Center. We detail the action research case studies of three IA participants engaging in the first offering of this "Survival Skills for IAs" course. The participants engaged in multiple levels of guided reflection during the course, providing insight to their transformation, mainly as it relates to self-efficacy and sense of community with the other participants. Barriers to transformation from the perspectives of the IAs are also addressed, with implications for generating solutions to address challenges IAs face as new instructors in higher education settings.

Keywords: reflection, reflection in higher education, transformative learning, professional development

As an integral part of teaching and learning in higher education, Instructional Assistants (IAs) are encouraged to be prepared to meet the learning needs of a diverse student population, while also balancing their own responsibilities as students themselves. Yet new IAs often have limited, if any, teaching experience. Universities have responded to this need in diverse ways, relying on the body of research focusing on standards of teacher proficiency by practice and instruction (Lambert & Tice, 1993). Although andragogical support may exist in higher level institutions, levels of support for IAs vary by institution, and few opportunities may exist for these new educators to consistently reflect on their teaching practices, potentially hindering their resilience and persistence while seeking improvement (Yost, 2006).

Past research has not focused specifically on IA perspectives in the context of a campus-provided professional development (PD). This pilot study attempts to address this gap in the literature by examining the views of IAs participating in a professional development course where they engaged in discussions surrounding andragogy, active teaching and learning, and lesson design. Participants took this course concurrent with their first teaching duties and had the opportunity to learn through consistent practice and reflection-on-action, a method by which most professionals learn (Schön, 1983).

Using ethnographic field notes taken throughout the course and interviews, this study seeks to reveal the process of IA transformation through their engagement in regular reflection, as well as explain some of the barriers to transformation they currently face in higher education. The following three research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What emerges when Instructional Assistants have a shared space to routinely reflect on their teaching?
2. Is the reflection process leading to transformation?
3. What can reflection reveal about the barriers to transformation IA's face in higher education?

Definition of Key Terms

Reflection

John Dewey (1933) described reflection as, "turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration." For teachers, Dewey encouraged a reflective practice in order, "to act in a deliberate and intentional fashion" (1933), rather than simply impulsively. Teachers, like most professionals, learn through a cycle of practice and reflection and can learn how to improve their practices in multiple ways, one being reflection *on* action (Schön, 1983). According to Schön (1983), "we reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action [knowledge gained from other/similar situations] may have contributed to an unexpected outcome." In other words, after an event, educators reflect on how their prior knowledge created by similar events may have led to unintended or undesired outcomes, as well as what deliberate actions they can take to promote different results in the future. This is different from reflection *in* action, which happens during the act of teaching, garnering more immediate change (Schön, 1983). It is also different from metacognition (Flavell, 1979), where learners "think about thinking" rather than "thinking critically about…practice" (Schön, 1983). For the purpose of this study, the focus was placed on developing IAs' reflection on action to help mobilize their transformation. Since most data was collected during a professional development course for new IAs working with undergraduate students, the study pertains specifically to the role of reflection on action in higher education.

Transformative Learning

For Mezirow (1978), critical self-reflection is essential to achieving transformative learning. His theory of transformational learning details how learners "construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experiences" (Cranton, 1994). Perspectives, frames of reference, and attitudes change as learners integrate new ideas into existing schema. According to Mezirow (1997), "We must make our own interpretations rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgements, and feelings of others. Facilitating such understandings is the cardinal goal of adult education. Transformative learning develops autonomous thinking." Learners must question their experiences and what led to specific outcomes in order to justify new knowledge. When transformative learning is the goal of adult education, it is the role of the educator to assist learners in recognizing assumptions, reflecting on alternative perspectives, and encouraging discourse.

Professional Development

Professional development colloquially refers to a wide variety of specialized trainings, formal education, or opportunities for advanced learning—all with the purpose of improving educator's knowledge, skills and effectiveness. In the context of transformative learning, the role of professional development is more specifically to assist educators in gaining awareness of their perspectives and habits regarding teaching. PD can allow instructors to critically examine their assumptions and the consequences of those assumptions in order to transform teachers' philosophies (Cranton & King, 2003). The PD course in which this study was conducted was designed to "discuss and implement practical strategies to survive and thrive as an IA." Its goals included: (1) Integrating evidence-based practices and techniques to

support instruction and higher-order student thinking; (2) Engaging in active and productive discussion; and (3) Providing resources and support for continued instructor development.

Literature Review

Encouraging Reflection

A considerable body of literature supports the popularity of reflective strategies as a means of increasing teacher effectiveness. It is widely presumed that by encouraging reflection teachers will become "better" educators. Surprisingly, work on reflection has remained theoretical more than empirical, and evidence of this assumption is limited (Bain et al., 2002). However, research, particularly in K-12 education, has demonstrated that student learning is linked with educator learning (Ingavarson, Meiers & Beavis, 2005). Further research indicates that growth in thinking can be achieved by modeling reflection through guided practice and communicating that knowledge is tentative and incomplete (King & Kitchener, 1994). Reflective teachers are also more likely to engage in culturally appropriate teaching (Kleinfeld & Nordhoff, 1988) and discuss their ethical responsibilities towards students (Hursch, 1988).

However, university cultures do not always promote teacher reflection. Instructors often work in isolation and have infrequent opportunities to be observed by their peers. This places an additional burden on professional development programs as a space for teachers to discuss and reflect on their teaching practices (Cranton & King, 2003). In these spaces, the ability to assist in a teacher's development of higher level reflection may not be limited to a highly trained professional; sharing reflections with a peer, or "critical friend," could also be beneficial (Hatton & Smith, 1995). According to Hatton and Smith, "a powerful strategy for fostering reflective action is to engage with another person in a way which encourages talking with, questioning, even confronting, the trusted other, in order to examine planning for teaching, implementation, and its evaluation" (1995). A safe environment can be fostered between "critical friends" sharing experiences of similar struggles as new teachers, allowing for, "giving voice to one's own thinking while at the same time being heard in a sympathetic but constructively critical way" (Hatton & Smith, 1995). By sharing reflection on action with a peer, a safe environment can be built where "critical friends" can help one another reach higher levels of reflection.

Measuring Reflection Through the 5R Framework

Bain et al. (2002) posited that reflection on action could be enhanced through reflective writing and thinking, which prompted the creation and revision of the 5R Framework, a scale for measuring different levels of reflection. The Five R's are:

1. *Reporting: a descriptive account of the situation, incident, or issue;*
2. *Responding: an emotional or personal response to the situation, incident, or issue;*
3. *Relating: drawing a relationship between current personal or theoretical understandings and the situation, incident, or issue;*
4. *Reasoning: an exploration, interrogation, or explanation of the situation, incident, or issue; and*
5. *Reconstructing: drawing a conclusion and developing a future action plan based upon a reasoned understanding of the situation, incident, or issue (Bain et al., 2002).*

The final two levels–reasoning and reconstructing—are considered to be transformational, since it is where new knowledge is formed and future plans for action occur. According to the research, most new teachers are unlikely to improve their levels of reflection without assistance (Bain et al., 2002). With the aid of an instructor or mentor, transformational levels of reflection are more likely to occur. This study focused on these five levels of reflection, defining the first three levels as "lower level reflection" and the last two levels as "higher level reflection" for the purpose of measuring growth in the participants' reflections.

Methods

To better understand IAs' transformation as new teachers, Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) took ethnographic field notes during all eight sessions of the "Survival Skills for IAs" course. These classes were taught by an instructor from the "Teaching Center" (TC),[1] and had one GSR as a participant observer and one GSR as a full observer in all eight classes. Field notes were taken by hand for the first two sessions and later digitally transcribed. Notes from the later sessions were taken directly on laptop computers, as many participants utilized laptops during class themselves and did not seem distracted or concerned by the GSRs' use of technology.

Reflection on teaching has been consistent throughout the course, with early ethnographic data collection revealing the IAs engaging in lower level reflection-on-action, such as reporting their experiences and their responses to those experiences. However, as the course and ethnographic field note-taking continued, it was evident the IAs were engaging in higher levels of reflection-on-action that seemed to be reconstructing their teaching practices. GSRs were able to capture evidence of transformation through IA reflection, which prompted interest into the following questions halfway through the course:

1. What emerges when Instructional Assistants have a shared space to routinely reflect on their teaching?
2. Is the reflection process leading to transformation?
3. What can reflection reveal about the barriers to transformation IA's face in higher education?

The instructor of the "Survival Skills" course gave multiple opportunities for formal and informal reflection, both in and out of class. Participants were encouraged to reflect immediately following their teaching experiences by producing a media artifact, such as a picture with a caption related to their teaching and shared to social media, or a written reflection or voice memo submitted to the Teaching Center via a Google Form. All reflections were to address the following questions (Tanner, 2012):

1. How do I think today's class session went?
2. Why do I think that?
3. What evidence do I have?

During class sessions, the first few minutes focused on debriefing teaching experiences of the previous week by the instructor producing a Google Slide titled "Focusing on Your Experiences," which would have a quote from one of the submitted reflections along with the three questions. Participants were encouraged to respond to the quote and relate it to their own experiences, or answer any or all of the reflection questions based on their own experiences. The instructor also encouraged informal reflection opportunities throughout the class, such as asking questions on previous experiences with active teaching and learning strategies like Think-Pair-Share or various technology tools; the GSRs would also record these informal opportunities for reflection in their ethnographic field notes.

The GSR, who had been a full observer throughout the course, also conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each participant during the last session of the eight-week course where each participant was asked the following questions:

1) Why did you decide to take this Survival Skills course?
2) Reflecting on the past seven weeks, how and to what extent has this course changed you?
3) Has being given the space to reflect on your teaching practice been beneficial to you?

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[1] We have given our center a pseudonym in an effort to anonymize the institution in which the "Teaching Center" resides for the purposes of review and publication

a) If so, what have you learned from the weekly reflection?
4) What struggles do/did you face as an IA?
    a) To what extent does the "Survival Skills" class help?
    b) How can the Teaching Center continue to support you?

Interviews were transcribed and coded using the qualitative software MAXQDA at the conclusion of the Survival Skills course. Ethnographic field notes from all eight weeks were also coded at this time. The first round of coding included five predetermined codes to help gauge IA reflection and transformation to help address the three research questions that were formed halfway through the course: change, transformation, barriers/issues, lower-level reflection, and higher-level reflection. After reading all field notes and transcriptions at the conclusion of the course, eight more codes emerged: reasons (for taking the course), role (anytime participants referred to their perceived role as IAs or the roles of professors), suggestions (to improve the PD they were receiving), thoughts regarding reflection (mainly in regard to its value), teaching (participants' thoughts on teaching, their own practices and as a general concept), agency (when participants expressed their perceived power in enacting change), self-efficacy (participants' beliefs in their ability to control their situations), and social talk (when participants engaged with each other in talk not associated with class materials). After the first round of coding, the initial thirteen codes were consolidated due to overlap and to better address the research questions. For example, the codes "agency" and "self-efficacy" were consolidated to the code "confidence in teaching," since this allowed for more focus to be placed on the confidence of each participant, or lack thereof, in their teaching ability, which could reflect growing self-efficacy or improve individual agency. The codes "change" and "transformation" were consolidated simply to "transformation" since this was essentially viewed as the same. The code "thoughts regarding reflection" was changed to "the value of reflection" since examples always indicated the importance of reflection. The codes "social talk," "suggestions," "reasons," "role," and "teaching" were cut due to their lack of direct relevance to the research questions. "Shared reflection" was added since we noticed that an individual may have exhibited lower level reflection, but, with the help of peers, would eventually reach higher level reflection, especially later in the Survival Skills course. The second round of coding yielded the following six codes: the value of reflection, shared reflection, confidence in teaching, higher level reflection, lower level reflection, and barriers to transformation. Definitions and examples for each code can be found in Table 1.

Results were analyzed for frequency, aggregated as a whole group (see Table 2). Results were also disaggregated by each participant (see Table 3) since it was instrumental in gauging individual transformation, their perceived barriers which contained some variance, as well as how they helped each other achieve higher levels of reflection. Upon analyzing participant reflection, several themes emerged. The stated value of reflection was high among all participants, with two stating the importance of sharing reflection with others with regards to both professional and emotional support. Shared reflection seemed to benefit all participants in terms of their own transformation, whether acknowledged or not. Reflection revealed the development of self-efficacy, as can be seen in analyzing their confidence in teaching. Reflection revealed and led to transformation in all participants, yet how they transformed and to what extent were each unique. Reflection also revealed participants' perceived barriers to transformation, yet some of these barriers were seen as surmountable. Overall, their reflection had led to an increase in sense of community, self-efficacy, transformation, and acknowledging barriers.

Setting

This study was conducted at a large public, research intensive university located in the southwestern part of the United States. The data was collected during an eight-week pilot course under

Table 1: *Codebook*

Codes	Definitions	Examples
The Value of Reflection	Referring to what the participant explicitly reports as the value of reflection in this context or implies by thoughts towards the reflection process	J: "It has for me. I like to, like I said, I like to hear other people's frustrations or what they're going through. I don't really talk to any other TA, other than the one that I work with. I like to just hear from different people and get different perspectives and also advice and feedback."
Shared Reflection	Referring to making suggestions or asking questions to prompt higher levels of reflection in others, or reflecting on a shared experience	D: "I usually have main points to make and it usually goes off topic…I enjoy the organic nature…but at the same time I don't get to hit the main points of the course…I'm not making excuses but there are many main points…me and the course together are very unorganized…goes mainly to my philosophy on learning…personal interest leads to more learning." B: "I wasn't sure what we were doing, but I liked it a lot…the knowledge was good, I liked your tone, you made me feel like I was with you there on the importance on all of the topics" J: "I agree it was really relevant…the stake we have with nature…the carbon footprint we have on it. I think it'd be cool to start with padlet…having different things of what they think it is…or in the 70's it was this and in the…"
Confidence in Teaching	Referring to explicit reports one's of self-confidence or reports that imply one's self-confidence in pursuing certain actions	J talked about the class that she got to guest lecture, saying that the professor first told the students that class was cancelled that day, but then remembered J was to lecture; she said she felt that the students already hated her because of that. But she said overall she had a positive experience: "Most of the room was full, and I felt pretty comfortable because the professor wasn't there, I felt more at ease…it was a little more interactive…so I think that kinda woke them up…I think it went well, and after some of my students were really sweet ,and said that I did really well….professor asked class what they learned [during lecture] and they didn't speak for like 2 minutes, but…" they did end up saying some things and "sounded smart...They even said things I didn't say…I took their SGP, I took some of the feedback and they wanted some examples so I sent an email…and I think it was helpful."

Table 1: *Codebook Continued*

Higher Level Reflection	Referring to the top two levels of reflection - reasoning and reconstructing - according to Bain et al. (2002)	D: "I usually have main points to make and it usually goes off topic.... I enjoy the organic nature…but at the same time I don't get to hit the main points of the course…I'm not making excuses but there are many main points…me and the course together are very unorganized…goes mainly to my philosophy on learning…personal interest leads to more learning."
Lower Level Reflection	Referring to the bottom three levels of reflection - reporting, responding, and relating - according to Bain et al. (2002)	B: "Last week we were talking about protein gels…" (B stops momentarily, unsure how far in depth to get into explaining the subject, and M prods him to go on) "...they looked like jelly, you put a dye on the protein samples...it separates protein based on size...we were doing that...I was asking a lot of questions...I asked until they stopped knowing the answer...then I would explain to them…"
Barriers to Transformation	Referring to what participants perceive as impediments to their change or growth	B: Yeah, it's just, to me it seems like the lab is designed to just do the lab and like nothing else. Like, I feel like I'm not even supposed to be teaching, like that's just the environment seems like, and that's what the other TAs kinda do too. It just doesn't seem like an actual teaching environment, so I don't know, I don't know. And of course, the professor wasn't any help to that because he, he's...he's awful.

development titled "Survival Skills for Instructional Assistants," offered by the university's Teaching Center. Classes were offered at the Center, where participants met for one hour, once a week, where they learned and discussed evidence-based teaching strategies, practiced their teaching skills, and reflected upon their teaching experiences.

Participants

The participants for this study were three graduate students from different fields (Oceanography, Literature, and Biology) who volunteered for the pilot of the "Survival Skills for Instructional Assistants" course. They will be referred to by the pseudonyms Darryl, Jasmine, and Brandon throughout this paper. Darryl is male and in the final year of his PhD program. Jasmine is female and in her third year. Brandon is male and in his first year. This data was collected during the fall quarter of 2017, the first quarter in which each of these participants held teaching roles as IAs.

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Summary of Findings

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Initial findings of the action research case study of the three participants show promising answers to the research questions. The following themes and answers emerged after the completion of the coding process.

Table 2: *Frequency of Codes – Aggregated*

	Value of Reflection	Shared Reflection	Confidence	Higher Level Reflection	Lower Level Reflection	Barriers to Transformation
Week 1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Week 2	0	1	0	4	9	2
Week 3	0	0	0	1	10	7
Week 4	0	1	4	2	4	6
Week 5	1	1	7	4	2	5
Week 6	0	1	2	3	1	8
Week 7	0	3	9	3	9	8
Week 8	0	1	1	0	3	1
D Interview	2	1	3	2	1	2
J Interview	1	2	2	1	0	0
B Interview	2	0	1	2	0	4

These results reflect the total frequency of codes each week (and with each interview) between all participants.

Question 1: What Emerges When Instructional Assistants Have a Shared Space to Routinely Reflect on Their Teaching?

The Value of Teacher Reflection

During a Small Group Perception, collected in week four of the eight-week class, where participants were asked about their thoughts on the course and the instructor, one of the participants anonymously submitted feedback to the instructor stating that the group reflection at the beginning of class was something that was working well in the course. During the interviews, each participant was asked to comment on the value of reflection on their teaching, each replying positively. Brandon mentioned that, "a time period to actually think about my teaching, because I just get caught up in other things and never actually think about it," has helped him become a better teacher. Darryl agreed that the set time to reflect was beneficial, making the suggestion that,

> *"I think personally there should be more reflection on how each week went. I mean I can even imagine a weekly gathering that's separate from this that is just an hour reflection with everyone. I think I can learn a lot about how each of you guys, each of the other [IAs], are dealing with their personal experiences in [IA]ing, cause everyone's a little different and what's their approach and I think that's, that's something I really value."*

Jasmine agreed with Darryl's sentiment that there needs to be a shared space to meet with other IAs to reflect, saying, "I like to hear other people's frustrations or what they're going through. I don't

Table 2: *Frequency of Codes – Aggregated*

	Value of Reflection	Shared Reflection	Confidence	Higher Level Reflection	Lower Level Reflection	Barriers to Transformation
Week 1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Week 2	0	1	0	4	9	2
Week 3	0	0	0	1	10	7
Week 4	0	1	4	2	4	6
Week 5	1	1	7	4	2	5
Week 6	0	1	2	3	1	8
Week 7	0	3	9	3	9	8
Week 8	0	1	1	0	3	1
D Interview	2	1	3	2	1	2
J Interview	1	2	2	1	0	0
B Interview	2	0	1	2	0	4

These results reflect the total frequency of codes each week (and with each interview) between all participants.

really talk to any other [IA], other than the one that I work with. I like to just hear from different people and get different perspectives and also advice and feedback."

While Brandon relayed that the set time to reflect was important to enable him to focus on his own teaching practice in order to improve, Darryl and Jasmine disclosed that another value was the reciprocal sharing of their reflections with their peers.

Building Community with Shared Reflection

The importance of sharing reflection with others was directly stated by both Darryl and Jasmine, as a way to learn from other IAs who are dealing with the same types of struggles and experiences. Darryl mentioned that reflection on teaching can be done on his own time, "but there's something different about being in a room together and knowing that you're being heard." He had also stated that he has "kinda anxieties in social settings," so being able to discuss and reflect on his teaching in a small group setting with fellow IAs he has built community with over the past eight weeks helped foster his growth as a teacher. Jasmine stated something similar, saying, "I have a lot of anxiety about molding young people's minds and so I just wanted to do something where I felt like I could learn more about it. Also, be[ing] with people who are [IA]ing and share my struggles and frustrations." She mirrored Darryl's apprehensions of being a new teacher and reinforced the claim that there is value in sharing reflection with others.

Although Brandon did not mention outright that he valued the shared reflection, he benefited from it with his peers. There were many times over the quarter that Brandon reflected on his struggles and

Table 3: *Frequency of Codes – Disaggregated*

	Value of Reflection	Shared Reflection	Confidence	Higher Level Reflection	Lower Level Reflection	Barriers to Transformation
Week 1	D1	0	0	D1	0	0
Week 2	0	JB1	0	D3, JB1	D4, J3, B2	B2
Week 3	0	0	0	D1	D2, J3, B5	J4, B3
Week 4	0	DJB1	D2, J2	D1, B1	J2, B2	D2, J1, B3
Week 5	D1	DJB1	D2, J3, B2	D1, J1, JB1, DJB1	DJ1, B1	D3, J1, B1
Week 6	0	DJB1	J1, B1	J1, B2	DB1	D2, J1, B4, DJB1
Week 7	0	DJB2, JB1	J4, B4, DJB1	DJ1, D2, B1	J5, B3, DJB1	D2, J4, B2
Week 8	0	DJB1	J1	0	D1, J1, JB1	D1
D Interview	2	1	3	2	1	2
J Interview	1	2	2	1	0	0
B Interview	2	0	1	2	0	4

These results reflect the frequency of codes each week separated by participants. D is Darryl, J is Jasmine, and B is Brandon. Where there are multiple letters not separated by a comma (for example, DJB), it means that those participants all took part in that coded section of conversation.

the other IAs asked him questions and gave suggestions that provided him emotional support and suggestions to improve his effectiveness. For example, here is one interaction:

> *After giving a sample lesson to his peers, Brandon reflected, "I do this a lot when I'm presenting my own science, I misattribute time to certain details...so it ends up confusing people and wasting time that I could have put to different parts of the presentation...I should be more organized at using better images." The Instructor interjected and told Brandon, "give yourself a positive compliment." Brandon returned, "positive? I knew the stuff," as he laughed. Jasmine says to Brandon that he was, "good at breaking it down," and complimented his use of language (he used the term "hijack" and Jasmine referred to imagery from the Hunger Games). Jasmine asked if students could draw these out since they are supposed to come in with prior knowledge. She asked if they could show images of what bioluminescence is in the end and the Instructor agreed. Brandon mentioned that he didn't have a projector. Several people tried giving examples of how to incorporate imagery, like asking students "where have you seen this before?"*

This example shows the value of shared reflection: before his peers interjected, Brandon was being extremely hard on himself as a new teacher, trying to teach something he was not yet familiar with. Upon verbalizing his thoughts, his peers were able to offer their positive support of his teaching strengths,

as well as give suggestions to some of the issues he reported. This specific interaction happened towards the end of the course, where participants had already established a sense of community, allowing for non-judgmental support from "critical friends" (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Based upon his previous statement that he did not reflect on his teaching other than in this specific space, it is unlikely that he could have received this support elsewhere. These reflections provide evidence that there is value to shared reflection on teaching, whether this value is acknowledged or not.

Question 2: Is the Reflection Process Leading to Transformation?

The Development of Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1995) describes self-efficacy as an "individual's confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment." The participants in this study all displayed increasing confidence in their teaching abilities. For example, after Brandon described his failure in giving out instructions on the expectations of a lab report assignment to his students, which resulted in some turning in one-page assignments and others turning in, "like a million pages for a lab report," Jasmine asked, "do they know what a lab report is?" Brandon replied, "I agree they didn't know. I will do it better next time...I can do anything I want." This statement displays his reflection on some initial missteps but also confidence in his ability to execute improvements in the future. Brandon also directly attributed his self-efficacy to his reflective teaching practice, saying, "I think [reflection] will help me in the future think more about the way I'm teaching"; from other quotes from Brandon, it is clear that he attributes more time thinking about his teaching to his improvement in teaching.

Other participants' reflections during class sessions revealed how positive student feedback helped raise their confidence levels. Darryl reflected on one of these interactions:

> *"Also, these kids are just figuring out...life!...the first week I talked to them a lot about perspectives and attachments and this girl came up to me at the end of class crying saying, 'I am so attached to my hometown,' and I said to her to stick with it and last week she came up to me and said 'thank you so much.' And I'm seeing that this is part of my job. I'm not a parent, but I feel like this is kind of related."*

Darryl recalled this experience, which displays his growing confidence in his ability to affect his students in non-academic ways. It is unknown if reflection led to his developing self-efficacy, but in this example, it has shown to reveal its evolution.

Jasmine displayed the highest degree of self-efficacy as evidenced by her multiple reflections on positive student feedback in class. In one such instance, she described:

> *"Friday, they turned in their papers, so I used the poll thing you showed us. And it was cool, the first section felt 'eh.' The second felt 'cool!' and the third felt 'anxious...' I used padlet too. I've having trouble with the same people keep answering. So, this was a good way to see what everyone was saying and who was getting it. And it was cool because they posted multimedia things and videos and we could go through it. And a student came up to me and said, 'this was so cool and so great!'"*

Jasmine had many of these reflections throughout the course, where she implemented a new teaching strategy and then would get immediate positive feedback from students after her classes. Being able to reflect on her teaching, and then reconstructing her practices based on her assessments, led to more effective teaching and learning, which garnered her constant encouragement from students. This cycle of reflection helped develop self-efficacy, her confidence to exert control over her motivation, behaviors, and social environment of her classroom.

Transformation in Different Forms

The process of teacher transformation due to reflection was unique to each participant. Participants' reflections were coded using Bain et al.'s (2002) 5 R's of Reflection: Repeating, Responding, Relating, Reasoning, and Reconstructing, considering the first three R's "lower level reflection" and the last two as "higher level reflection," where transformation of thought and potential action occur. Each participant needed to be considered holistically to gauge their transformation throughout the course.

Darryl

Darryl was already engaging in higher level reflection (reasoning and reconstructing) at the beginning of the course and continued to do so throughout. He talked about an experience early in the quarter where a student gave him feedback after class one day. "At first, I was like, 'screw you!' but after a while..."; Darryl reflected that he was taking the Survival Skills course to positively transform his teaching, so, he tried to remain open to suggestions from his students.

Towards the end of the course he articulated his philosophy of education: "I usually have main points to make and it usually goes off topic. I enjoy the organic nature...goes mainly to my philosophy on learning…personal interest leads to more learning." Due to the difficulty in gauging Darryl's transformation based on his consistent high level of reflection throughout, his explicit statement of his transformation in his interview was needed:

> *I'm definitely more aware of kinda some of the subtleties of teaching and, you know, what sticks and why and definitely a little bit more confident in doing activities that group people up or kinda force some interaction...I feel a lot more confident in those kind of activities. Definitely learned a lot about technology and you know, how we can implement that in the classroom, which is pretty cool. It's changed, I think a lot of it's awareness for me, I think this is kind of a survey type of class where I'm now more aware a lot more that can go into planning, teaching.*

Jasmine

Whereas Darryl displayed a high level of reflection throughout the course, Jasmine started with a lot of lower level reflections (reporting, responding, and relating) on her teaching earlier in the course, which steadily increased to higher levels. She reported, among the three participants, the most changed action throughout the course to transform her teaching, such as using different active teaching strategies that were introduced in class; she was also the only one that volunteered to have the center for teaching support come to her classroom to do a Small Group Perception to gather feedback on her teaching from her students. She reflected that:

> *"It's helped me really think about teaching differently, especially in active learning tools. I tried to implement a lot of the things that we learned, and some of them, well most of them were good, some of them I'm not sure how they felt. I'd have to ask them, but I think for me it was helpful also having the Small Group Perception come in, helped me see what else I could do, so I think the students appreciated and it helped me feel like I knew what I was doing."*

Although there were no field notes gathered from her classes to cross-check her transformation, which could be an interesting area for future research, her reflections revealed higher reflection levels of reasoning and reconstructing. She also became adept at facilitating higher level reflections of her peers, as evidenced by her questioning Brandon if his students knew what a lab report was, to help him reason why he got the response of assignments that he did. Jasmine did the same thing with Darryl during the group debrief at the beginning of class on the same day:

> *Darryl: "Last week I had a bunch of things going on so I wasn't prepared...it was fine...I have*

this issue that kids aren't coming to class..." Darryl also mentions issues of students being disengaged.
Jasmine asks Darryl: "Is [the class] mandatory?"

Whereas most of the early group reflections at the beginning of each class were facilitated by the instructor to encourage deeper reflection, the participants started to facilitate higher level reflection with each other during the later classes, Jasmine often being the one to ask questions to facilitate reasoning and make suggestions for reconstructing future actions. Her transformation was revealed through her reflections, as well as was facilitated by her depth of reflection.

Brandon

Brandon started and continued with lower level reflection, mainly reporting and responding to others' questions, throughout the course. For example, early in the "Survival Skills" course he reflected, "I didn't eat before lab. I was so angry. It felt like daycare. We went the full 5 hours." The instructor asked if the students saw him struggle, to which he replied, "yeah, I was visibly getting angry. I kept getting called over...I was getting really angry and I was trying not to explode." However, later in the course he would reach higher levels of reflection when he was prompted with questions and suggestions from the instructor and other participants, as seen in the previous example regarding the lab report assignment. During his interview he also revealed his internal process of reflection and transformation

> *"I definitely feel like I could [reflect] more. Definitely when I'm preparing my teaching, cause as of now I just learn the material and then kind of just, like just describe it to the students, but the other day I was thinking about it. I was like, wait, I could totally have explained it this way that was more interesting and relatable for the students, and I was just, I was upset that I didn't do that, and so, yeah. I just think, rather than just describing the knowledge as I learned it, I should actually reform the ideas into something more, you know, palatable for the students."*

This is an insight that helped confirm Brandon's transformation during the course: he may not have reached higher levels of verbal reflection on his own during the course, but he has shown evidence of reconstructing his current knowledge of his teaching practice to change his future teaching behaviors. Reflection during class and his interview revealed some transformation, and in his own words, has also helped facilitate his improvement as a teacher.

Question 3: What Can Reflection Reveal About the Barriers to Transformation IA's Face in Higher Education?

Permeable Barriers to Transformation

Through examining participants' reflections, numerous perceived barriers to their transformation had been identified. Some of those were "permeable" barriers, meaning those that could potentially be surpassed due to the participants' own agency. For example, one permeable barrier was the independence one of the IAs had with designing his classes. Darryl reflected that his professor, "doesn't have a lot of expectations...at first the independence was really difficult," but later he seemed to embrace the independence which fit his teaching style of letting organic conversations happen, based on student interest.

Another permeable barrier was the structure of the specific course the participant was teaching. Jasmine displayed not only self-efficacy of her teaching, but personal agency as well, saying she may need to have a talk with her professor because, "[the Small Group Perception] was helpful for me...going into last leg of the quarter," so if the professor needed to improve the course in the future, then it could be done with student feedback. Jasmine did not see the professor nor the design of the course and the designated learning outcomes as a fixed barrier, but something that she had some agency to enact future

change.

Impermeable Barriers to Transformation

Some barriers that were identified in participants' reflections were regarded as "impermeable," or rather, fixed and unalterable by personal agency. One impermeable barrier to transformation was simply the stress of the multiple roles these Instructional Assistants filled: doctoral students writing their dissertations, teachers to undergraduate students, and Instructional Assistants to their respective professors. Both Darryl and Brandon had remarked several times throughout the course that they were under a lot of stress due to their many responsibilities. Darryl mentioned one class that he had a postdoctoral proposal due the following week, along with preparing for teaching his classes. Also, although Brandon valued reflection and the space to think about his teaching, he would not be taking the follow-up course to "Survival Skills," saying, "I've got too many things, I'm just new and all stressed out already."

Another impermeable barrier seemed to be the teaching practices of the professors the IAs were assisting. Darryl reflected his difficulty teaching one week, saying, "there is a midterm tomorrow...and I just got the midterm yesterday and it's not even finished." He went on to say that he feels like he is, "put in a bad position, not knowing what she's looking for, not knowing where the class is going." Darryl continued, saying he could come to "Survival Skills" and, "I can have all the tools in the world," but it did not make much of a difference if the professor was not prepared for class, put up materials on the website late, or used slides in class that were not relevant. Darryl's reflection revealed that he believed he had some control to improve his teaching to be effective, but his effectiveness was limited by the incongruence with his professor's teaching practices.

Brandon also revealed barriers due to his own professor, reflecting one time that he had an argument with the professor in front of the class. On another occasion, Brandon explained, "the professor is lazy. He comes in asking the students what they're doing...it's the worst." The data here is limited to Brandon's own accounts of the events, but in the very least they reveal a negative relationship and possible miscommunication with his professor, which he did not see a transformable.

Unlike Jasmine, who saw the design of her course as changeable, Brandon identified the design of his laboratory class as another impermeable barrier to his transformation. In his interview, he explained,

> *"my struggles were kind of inherent to the lab class, and yeah, I feel like some of the things discussed here couldn't have helped me entirely just because of my class. It was just the way it is...to me, it seems like the lab is designed to just do the lab and nothing else. Like, I feel like I'm not even supposed to be teaching, that's just what the environment seems like, and that's what the other [IA]s kinda do too. It just doesn't seem like an actual teaching environment, so I don't know, I don't know. And of course the professor wasn't any help to that because he, he's...he's awful."*

Brandon's reflection reveals his difficulty in applying his knowledge of evidence-based teaching practices due to his beliefs about the fixed nature of the design of his lab, as well as not having a mentor or peer to discuss and address his particular challenges. On a separate occasion, he had reflected on his disappointment of how the students lacked creativity during a lab assignment, attributing it to the lack of creativity in the STEM field, reflecting his own biases of the field. Brandon's beliefs regarding these impermeable barriers could also have contributed to his difficulty in individual transformative reflection and transformed teaching practices.

Discussion

Ethnographic field notes taken during an eight-week professional development course provided a unique opportunity to learn about the needs of IAs who are starting their teaching careers while balancing

their other responsibilities. These field notes, as well as the interviews at the end of the "Survival Skills" course, provided insight into their development as teachers, the role reflection plays in their transformation, as well as revealed their perceptions of barriers to their transformation.

The implications of this research are important in informing future development of IAs specifically and adult learning more broadly. Through this study, we provide new evidence and replicable measurements in support of the benefits of reflection. We document that reflection can lead to transformation in observable and measurable ways, a piece that is often missing from the theoretical literature. We highlight the role of reflection in developing self-efficacy as teachers, which may be validated through further action research studies. We further emphasize the importance of shared reflection on teaching experiences. We find evidence of a cohort effect, where critical friends at the same stage of their professional development are an important asset in achieving transformative learning experiences.

Through participant reflection, barriers to their transformation have also been identified, as either permeable or impermeable. Permeable barriers include the independence one of the IAs is given in designing course activities, as well as the structure of the course that another IA assists with. Impermeable barriers include the stress of the multiple roles IAs fill, the incongruence between IAs' teaching practices with those of their professors, the negative relationship one IA has with his professor, and the design of a course one IA sees as fixed.

Future Research

Research about the role of reflection in transformative learning will continue to expand, aided by the use of new methodologies and data collection practices. To help increase our understanding of the reflective process in the context of adult professional development settings, avenues for future research include:

1. Future studies focusing on IAs' reflective teaching practices. The limitations of this study did not allow for data collection to occur outside the sphere of the Teaching Center or in a larger sample. Expanded data collection across settings and additional participants would strengthen the conclusions drawn from this pilot study.
2. Observing IAs' teaching practices in their classrooms along with their reflection could provide more insight into how they develop as teachers, as well their needs that arise, and the challenges they face.

Recommendations

To help improve IAs' teaching abilities and address the perceived barriers to IA transformation, recommendations for future action include the following:

1. Expand professional development opportunities for new IAs in higher education that focus on andragogy and developing self-efficacy through collaborative, transformative reflection. Sharing reflections of successes and struggles with others in similar positions may help IAs feel less isolated and aid in transformation.
2. Increase the level of support from departments and instructors of record to effectively mentor and collaborate with IAs. Increased communication regarding learning outcomes, course design, and effective and consistent teaching practices may alleviate issues exacerbated by miscommunication or perceived low levels of support.
3. Encourage all those in teaching positions to use empirically-based methods for transformative learning in order to have more consistency in andragogy between professors and their assistants.

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Author's Note: Patricia Hemans, Maxie Gluckman, and Lauren Ferry are PhD students in the Department of Education Studies at the University of California. Jace Hargis is the Clinical Professor of Teaching and Director for the Center of Teaching at NYU Shanghai.

Transforming Students through Integrative and Transformative Learning in a Field-Based Experience

CHRISTIAN ROGERS
Indiana University

Abstract

Projects that consider integrative and transformative learning theories challenge students to consider their own biases and their place in a larger community. A project such as this has the potential to increase a student's civic mindedness as they are taken to places outside of their comfort zone. This project and study involved twenty-one freshman, sophomore and junior-level students from a video production course at an urban Midwestern university. The project design was posited in integrative and transformative learning theory and followed the Intercultural Competence model as students created a documentary interviewing individuals incarcerated in multiple prison systems. The purpose of doing so was to increase the students' awareness of an unfamiliar and oftentimes intimidating environment, providing them with a unique learning experience where they could develop their skills in video production and intercultural awareness.

Transforming Students through Integrative and Transformative Learning in a Field-Based Experience

Students do not learn in a silo of discipline-based knowledge. The environment in which the student learns can inform their way of thinking and challenge their frame of reference. As higher education continues to face challenges, it is imperative to consider development of the student holistically as they are presented with course material and engage with given projects. Employers are not only seeking graduates with content knowledge but also soft skills. Hart Research Associates (2015) found that 91% of employers say that critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving abilities are more important than a potential employee's undergraduate major. It is valuable for a student to learn how to communicate, listen, and adapt as one works with those of other points of view in a society that faces multiple issues. "Real learning means that the student must be prepared to change and to risk having his or her prejudices, priorities, habits and values altered" (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2013). Students need the opportunity to work within a diverse environment and adapt within that environment. In a university setting, students may interact with others but may not have the opportunity to face issues such as poverty, social injustice, or the justice system.

What if instructors who teach courses such as video production, film, or art saw their projects as a vehicle for integrative and transformative learning that teach the technical and creative skills of the discipline but may also create opportunities that challenge a students' frames of reference and allow them the opportunity to see themselves as citizens in a larger community? Video production courses are integral to a student's career as they enter the fields of media, art, design, film, marketing, documentary creation, and journalism (as well as others). Many different skills go into the process of creating a quality production. This includes audio, lighting, camera operation, editing, and also client communication, respect, presentation, and teamwork. Thus, each student must learn more than just the technological and creative skills needed to produce media. Part of replicating the working

environment should include incorporating a diverse environment that provides each of the students the opportunity to work with others unlike themselves by exposing each in the class to various cultures, races, and ways of thinking as a part of the course. This can be done by taking them to places outside of the institution. While students may have an experience such as this within a social justice course or cultural studies course, they may not in a video production or art education course.

Background

As a newer faculty member in a new city, it is valuable to network with others both inside and outside of the institution. Through a casual event for new faculty, I met the director of the Solution Center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). The Solution Center is a community engagement office charged with managing relationships with the university and city. Through conversations with the director a partnership with theIndiana Department of Corrections and their industrial organization titled PEN Industries was formed.

PEN Industries produces multiple items such as license plates, office furniture, and clothing. The organization develops business-to-business relations in order to create these products and provide work for the incarcerated individuals at each prison facility within the state. The purpose is to equip offenders for successful re-entry by providing meaningful work and career development opportunities. PEN Industries needed a marketing video to create awareness to the general public and to other potential business partners. By increasing their reach PEN Industries hoped to manufacture more products and provide more inmates the opportunity to work which could lead to greater restitution of existing inmates.

The objective for each student in the class was to participate in an authentic learning experience where they could develop technical and creative skill but also gain opportunity to have their biases and view of themselves in society challenged. Through initial surveying of the students it was realized that many of these students had little to no experience outside of the state of Indiana and many were from rural farming-based towns. Before the project started each student answered survey questions related to their comfort level. Students were also asked whether the instructor should have any concerns about each of them entering a prison. If a student had any ties to an individual in the prison system it could cause anxiety for the student. Additionally, many of the students had never picked up a camera prior to this course and were fairly new to video production.

Literature Review

The Need for Integrative Learning

Integrative learning is learning that takes place when a student can make connections to previously learned experiences to inform new experiences. For a college student this type of learning can take place in many forms.

1. Students can blend knowledge from previously learned skills to help create something new (such as a signature work).
2. A student can put theory into practice (such as a clinical experience).
3. Students can consider the perspective of multiple individuals when solving a problem. This can be done within a team-based environment or as an individual.
4. Students can adapt a skill they have learned from one situation into another.
5. Students may be asked to reflect on connections that have been made over time between curriculum and co-curricular opportunities.
6. Students may be placed in an interdisciplinary setting where they are interacting with students from various programs. (American Associate of Colleges & Universities, n.d.)

When developing an experiential (or field-based) experience multiple factors may come into play outside of the discipline-based skills needed to complete a project. Integrative learning allows the instructor to consider these soft skills (such as communication, teamwork, intercultural skills) and

factor those components into assessment and the holistic learning of the individual. Students within this project were asked to put theory into practice within a very short time period. Students received lectures, were given lab assignments, and also reviewed tutorials given by the instructor. Much of this curriculum was given during the first project. The second project (where the students created the PEN Industries video) students were given some instruction but they were treated as professionals already in the field as they participated in the video shoots at each of the prisons.

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning is the process of changing an adult learner's frame of reference such as their assumptions through which they understand a certain experience (Mezirow, 1997). Originally developed by Mezirow (1978), transformative learning theory posits that adults have a strong tendency to reject ideas that are outside of a person's preconceptions. Those items are then rejected and labeled as unworthy or irrelevant (Mezirow, 1997). By having students participate in situations that challenge these preconceptions, such as a traumatic situation, the goal is to transform the learners' frames of reference into something that is more inclusive. This is done so by creating opportunities for self-reflection. According to Williamson (2017), "Transformative learning theory explores the kinds of changes that result from processes of examining, questioning and revising perception. Things previously unconsidered or unexamined are questioned and looked at in a new way through critical dialogue and critical reflection and this may lead to transformation" (p. 3). Since its inception in 1978, transformative learning theory has become one of the most developed theories in adult education (Kappel & Daley, 2004). Various studies have explored how educators can utilize transformative learning theory both inside and outside of the classroom, allowing students to act on new insights from various experiences (Taylor, 2017).

"Art-based courses have been acknowledged for their importance in the role of stimulating, fostering and supporting transformative learning" (Cranton & Hoggan, 2012). In an exploration of how the arts can promote transformative learning in adult education contexts, Lawrence (2012) found that if the art itself is evocative or provocative, it has the potential to facilitate transformation. The creation of art for public works allows the transformation by the student to take place, not just because of the work being done, but also the context of that work such as creation of a documentary within a prison system. Students were all from Indiana and grew up in a rural or suburban environment. None of them had interactions with incarcerated individuals previous to the project and each of them were asked to state their preconceived notions (or assumptions) of incarcerated individuals. After the project students were asked to state if their assumptions had changed having worked in the prison system.

Growing Intercultural Skills

In order to understand the implications for fostering intercultural skills, research on the value of including diversity-rich components was conducted. It was noted that many students often volunteer for individual activities but that there is often a disconnect between their volunteer activities and academic pursuits. Universities recognize that this type of exposure is not enough. According to Farrell (2006), "Students do not learn enough about how they can become responsible and engaged lifelong citizens"(p. 1). Instructors need to consider infusing intercultural development into their curriculum. Doing so can allow students the opportunity to develop a greater social awareness and help the students develop as workers in a society.

Schwartzman (2001) offered the purpose for civically-based activities "as a mechanism for raising consciousness and creating a 'heightened social awareness' and instillsa sense of caring for others in an education system that tends to equate learning with individual effort" (p. 423). Students who completed the PEN Industries project had the opportunity to engage directly with those who are in the prison system and get a sense of what life was like for each individual. They were also able to see how mechanisms such as industrial work can help those in the prison system leave the system.

Not only does including a diversity component confront students with their own prejudice, but it also aides in their development as a worker of society. Swenson-Lepper (2012) stated, "The workforce in the United States is becoming more diverse and over the next century it is expected to

reach a point where Caucasians are in the minority" (p. 1). Educational institutions must reinforce the value of creating experiences that promote diversity education. Yeates, McVeigh, & Van Hemert (2011) stated:

> Ideally, the significant outcomes of any pedagogical strategy framed within an 'internationalized curriculum' (limited though the term may be) would be the development and refinement of 'transcultural' skills and competencies, which all students will take with them beyond the academy (p. 73).

Exposing students to service or civic-based projects replaces a fabricated scenario with a real-world project. Moreover, it places the student into a diverse situation to which they may not normally be exposed. This helps the student develop the transcultural skills and competences that Yeates discusses.

When designing curriculum that supports intercultural development, instructors should structure purposeful interactions that give each student the opportunity to confront previously held knowledge with complicating human realities (Lee, Williams, Shaw, & Jie, 2014). Students that participated in the PEN Industries project visited three prisons (one in the city and two outside of the city). Not only did they face the struggle of utilizing new-found skills to develop a marketing-related video, but they also had to face other social issues such as the state of the judicial system and the purpose for incarceration.

Whether it be a project for one student or an entire class, Schwartzman (2001) argues that service-learning projects should engage participants in three levels of relationships that integrate the student, the community, and the academy. The value of a civic partnership should be measured against its benefit for the student, the institution and the community at large. The PEN Industries project integrated the student work with the community partner and also involved others at the institution (such as the Solution Center) and faculty who offered expertise in visiting the prison system.

Faculty who desire to include intercultural development in their course curriculum should also consider opportunities to network with others at their own institution. Many institutions offer service learning offices or other offices that have direct contact with the community and can provide opportunities for faculty to engage their students with outside organizations and civic entities.

A Model for Intercultural Competence

Partnering with a civic organization while focusing on a student's values, ideals, and views can challenge the students to engage civically. With this in mind, the Process Model of Intercultural Competence was utilized to guide the students through the experience (Figure 1).
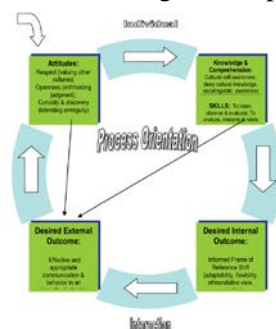

Figure 1. Process Model of Intercultural Competence.

Developed by Deardorff (2008), the Process Model of Intercultural Competence is an ongoing four-part cycle that involves attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, desired internal outcomes and desired external outcomes.Attitudes are comprised of respect (or valuing other cultures), openness (withholding judgment), and curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity). Knowledge and comprehension involves cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge, and social

linguistic awareness. Skills that are developed in this stage are the ability to listen, observe, and evaluate. Desired internal outcomes are to shift students' frames of reference from ignorance to informed. Desired external outcomes are effective and appropriate communication and behavior (based on ones intercultural skills, knowledge and attitude). The student moves through each of the cycles as they are involved with the project. Students move from individual levels (attitudes, knowledge, and comprehension) to interaction (outcomes).

Students evaluated their own attitudes, beliefs and views on incarcerated individuals during the provided pre-survey. Students attended a presentation with a faculty member who conducts research and takes students to multiple prison systems. It was through this presentation they gained a greater understanding of the expectations of being in a prison and how to operate while there. Students also gained an understanding of the types of people who are incarcerated. As students entered each of the prison systems they gained new knowledge and challenged their own views (internal incomes). They then finished each experience by interviewing incarcerated individuals (external outcomes). Students finished the experience by participating in a post-survey.

Methodology

The Computer Graphics Technology (CGT) video production course was made up of one freshman and twenty sophomores and juniors. All students were Caucasian with the exception of two. The students were all in the age range of 18-22 years old. Many of the students grew up within the greater city of Indianapolis and had little exposure outside of the general city area which is rural and farm country. The students were presented with two project options for their second assignment of the eight-week course. The prison project video was one option while creating a video montage was another. While each project had a different process and outcome, the rubrics for grading the assignments were the same. Students were graded on the criteria of shot selection, pace, mood, storyline, utilization of text, utilization of keyframe animation techniques, and flow. Institutional Research Board approval was obtained for this study.

The concept for the prison video was presented to the students during an hour-long discussion with a representative from the department of corrections for the state. Students involved with the project were also given another presentation by a professor in Criminal Justice which provided an opportunity for students to understand the experience of being in a prison and how they should operate while visiting.Students were given the opportunity to ask questions about what it would be like to go into a prison and what they needed to prepare for.At the completion of both presentations each student was given the opportunity to choose the montage project or the prison project.

Being that this was the second project of the semester each student had some exposure to the video production process. The first project of the course was for each student to create a commercial. To allow each student to build on these skills students were asked to individually create a treatment, script and storyboard based on their perception of the finished video. While the content of the video was known (specifically interviews of the incarcerated individuals and b-roll footage of each facility) the structure of the video was open to interpretation. Each student chose which of the three prison shoots to attend. The instructor participated in all three shoots.

Survey Instrument

A pre and post survey was developed in partnership with the Office of Service-Learning at IUPUI. The purpose of the survey was to provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience before entering a prison and also after the experience of conducting a video shoot and interview (with incarcerated individuals). The pre-survey was disseminated before the production (video shoot) process started. The post-survey took place at the completion of the project. Questions were asked related to emotional state and their views of incarcerated individuals. Due to the fact that the group that completed the project was N=7, quantitative data was invalid. The qualitative survey questions are as follows:

Pre-Survey
What are the primary emotions that you are feeling in considering the possibility of visiting a prison and participating in a video production at that location?

What are your views/opinions of incarcerated individuals?

What are your views/opinions of incarcerated individuals who are making attempts at rehabilitation?

Post-Survey
What are the primary emotions that you are feeling having attended and participated in this project within a prison?

What are your views/opinions of incarcerated individuals now that you have completed this project?

What are your views/opinions of incarcerated individuals who are making attempts at rehabilitation now that you have completed this project?

Student Experience

The first prison visit was to a manufacturing facility on the grounds of a prison yard. Upon entering the gates of the facility, the camera and microphones were evaluated by security and individuals went through a basic security procedure and pat down by prison guards. Once entering the prison, the students were given a general tour of the facility. The tour led to the manufacturing floor where a few hundred incarcerated individuals sorted hygiene and food-based products for other prison facilities. Each of the students took a camera. One student chose to obtain b-roll of the shipping and loading procedure while another went on a platform to obtain wide shots of the facility. A prison employee was on-site to offer any support but students were given the opportunity to move throughout the space to take the footage that was needed. Each of the two students then conducted interviews with five different inmates. The inmates ranged in age from early twenties to late fifties and were selected by management of the facility for interview.

The second visit was considered a location with higher security measures. Two of the students and the instructor, along with the organization employee,travelled one-hour north of campus by car. After going through a pat down and a security process that was similar to that of an airport system, two students and the instructor were escorted through the prison yard to the facility. At that time, the prison yard had been cleared to avoid contact with inmates as this was a maximum-security prison. Each student took a camera and obtained b-roll footage of inmates conducting their specific jobs on the manufacturing floor as a tour of the facility was given. The students were able to get close to the inmates with the camera and were just asked to avoid any major equipment (i.e. forklifts). Both security and staff of the prison were present. No interview footage was obtained at this facility.

The last facility was considered to be the most similar to an office setting. Inmates dressed in business casual attire. Five students participated. Students were given an initial tour and were then allowed to obtain footage around the office facility. Students were allowed to roam freely as they collected footage of workers at desks and on phones or working on projects. At the completion of the b-roll shoot, all students gathered in one area to conduct interviews of five inmates who were chosen by the management of the organization.

All inmates who were interviewed were male and of varying race. Some came from more crime-ridden areas and backgrounds while others were white-collar workers. The following questions were developed in partnership between the instructor, the students, and PEN Products prior to the video shoots:

What type of work are you doing with PEN Products?
What is your experience like working at PEN Products?

What has PEN done for you?
How has PEN prepared you for your release?
What skills have you learned here?

The students conducted all of the interviews (at the first and third location). One student operated the camera while another student asked each of the questions. While the questions did not directly ask about their individual backgrounds, the individuals questioned did discuss how they got there and what led them into the prison system. The instructor and prison employee were onsite for all interviews as well.

Results& Discussion

All students were asked questions both before and after the experience (from meeting with the prison employee for the first time to the final editing of the video). The two primary questions related to their emotional state and their views of incarcerated individuals were noted. The following are the results and discussion on both of those questions.

Emotional State

The qualitative responses and the observations of each prison visit provided interesting insights. Students were asked on the pre-experience survey to describe their emotional state as they thought about going into a prison. Students responded with the following:

- "I find it interesting, I actually decided this project because I was intrigued by the chance to visit and see how life is inside of a prison."
- "I am a little nervous of how I will be treated by the people who are incarnated but anxious to start."
- "I am excited to see how these people's lives have changed."
- "I am excited to participate in the video. I'm slightly nervous to be working with the incarcerated individuals but I know we will be safe."
- "The primary emotions that I feel are that of interest and curious to see how these facilities are run and how they rehabilitate these offenders."

Students were asked how their emotional state had changed after the visit. Students responded with the following:

- "I feel that it was an overall good, enriching experience and feel that I am glad that I participated in this project. I also feel that I have a better understanding of those who are incarcerated and feel that they can become good people again."
- "I feel like there was no reason to be worried or nervous like I was before going."
- "I was nervous going in but excited to see what it would be like. I'm very happy with my experience, the PEN workers were nice and for the most part accepting of us being there. I really enjoyed my time with them."

Discussion on Emotional State

The two primary emotions felt before the prison visits were that of nervousness and also curiosity. The primary responses after the visits were related to relief or a feeling that it was different than what they expected and that their nerves were put at ease. As students began their experience and prepared to go into the prison system, they were unaware of what the situation would be like. Often our only exposure to the prison system is by watching the news and seeing an individual mugshot or arrest. The students do not get a full understanding of the individual person who is incarcerated but merely hear of their crime. As students interacted with those in the prison system (whether it be workers or those incarcerated) they gained a better understanding of what the individuals and the

environment was like. Their emotional state changed from one that was focused on a lack of understanding to greater understanding and empathy.

Views on Incarcerated

The qualitative responses and the observations of each prison visit provided interesting insights. Students were initially asked on the pre-experience survey to discuss their opinion of those unlike themselves and incarcerated individuals who were involved with an industrial prison program. Students responded with the following:

- "Some are bad some are good, just because they are on the inside doesn't mean they created a major felony, sometimes it was a simple mistake."
- "I don't have any sort of opinion on them as a group, I feel that my opinions would develop after meeting them individually or hearing their story."
- "I think that it shows that they are ready to change and are trying to do better and turn their lives around."
- "I think they are doing the right thing and have some respect for these individuals for taking these steps in order to become good again and want to prosper in life."
  At the completion of the experience, students were asked how their perceptions had changed.

Students responded with the following.

- "I feel that it was an overall good enriching experience and feel that I am glad that I participated in this project. I also feel that I have a better understanding of those who are incarcerated and feel that they can become good people again."
- "I feel like there was no reason to be worried or nervous like I was before going. I was nervous going in but excited to see what it would be like. I'm very happy with my experience, the workers were nice and for the most part accepting of us being there. I really enjoyed my time with them."
- "I have a much better opinion of them now. I hate to admit but before actually meeting with them and learning of the program I had a negative attitude toward incarcerated individuals and judged them without realizing it. After this experience I feel that I've become more accepting toward them and realize that you can't judge someone off of a bad decision in their past."
- "I believe that the second chances that we are giving them are a good idea and not all prisoners are all bad, but just make stupid mistakes. I don't think that my opinion has changed much."
- "I have a lot more respect for the program and the people participating in it. I think that before I was hesitant whether or not they could really change but now that I have seen the soon to be released people in the program, I've changed my mind and it definitely made me respect them more."

Discussion on Views of Incarcerated

Students indicated they were indifferent to their views on incarcerated individuals when taking the survey before the project began. It wasn't until after the project finished that students indicated they were nervous and that their opinions had changed. My observations as the instructor validated that the students were more at ease as the experience continued. The students' confidence increased as the interviews were conducted and b-roll was shot at each location. Each of the students appeared somewhat timid at the start of the site visits. During the visit, each of the students took a level of initiative when asked to set up for interviews and obtain b-roll footage.

Instructional Notes

As the instructor, I had my own hesitations that were predicated by three concerns. Being a newer faculty member at the institution, the students were unaware of my teaching style or of me as

an individual. It was overbearing to have an initial introduction and then present the students with the possibility of conducting an authentic project in a prison system. The second concern was that students had never been exposed to the subject of video production before. For many they had never picked up a camera. The class is elective so most of them may never choose video production to be a part of their career path. The third concern was the makeup of the students. Most of them are primarily from the Indianapolis area and live with their families. Thus, the idea of going into a prison system would be something they may have never had any experience doing before. Each of these concerns became the very reason for having the students participate in the project. Students could build their intercultural skills by gaining exposure to a prison system and meeting individuals from varying backgrounds. They could also practice a skill they had never learned before (video production) which would foster integrative learning. Students could also have their assumptions challenged which could transform their learning.

I noticed that the students moved from a state of timidity to one that was relaxed and showed a desire to take ownership over the project. Students also felt great freedom and ownership of the project as they obtained b-roll during the third prison visit. Based on the responses that were received but also on my own observations, I found that the students' eyes were opened to what it was like to work with individuals unlike themselves. Both the students' emotional states and views toward incarcerated individuals changed from one of being nervous and lacking of understanding to one of empathy.

The presentations before the project were beneficial. The presentation from the PEN Industries employee was valuable but I would also consider including a presentation that discussed the diverse working environment that is media production. By offering a presentation such as this, I can provide a greater justification for developing intercultural skills and the need for working in a diverse environment. This would be difficult to obtain but may present valuable. This could possibly increase the opportunity for meeting the goals I had outlined for the project. Bringing the professor in from criminal justice was also greatly beneficial as it gave students a greater sense of what to expect when entering the prison system. I would also consider more opportunities to reflect on their experience in the prison, different modes of reflection (i.e. Video reflection and written) and a shorter gap in time from experience to reflection.

Those who teach in liberal arts (such as video production) have been including projects with outside clients for many years. Some specifically work with not-for-profit organizations or government entities. But I think we often fail to understand the value of why we include these projects other than to allow students the opportunity to work with outside clients. This project focused on the students' interaction with an outside client but specifically placed value on working in a diverse environment that a student would typically not go.

Conclusion

As an instructor, it is invaluable to focus on the discipline-base skills needed to obtain a job. But the need to integrate all types of skills (specifically intercultural skills) is crucial. Students need to understand how to communicate, how to solve problems from various perspectives, and how to work in a diverse environment where multiple people from varying backgrounds canwork together. Courses such as video production need to consider more than just including experiential components within the curriculum but how those experiences can better shape their own students into becoming engaged citizens. Students also need their biases and frames of reference challenged through transformative experiences that cause them to reflect on why they believe what they believe. The adoption of integrative learning with a focus on integrative skill development allows students the opportunity to have their own prejudices challenged and can produce the intended outcome a four-year institution hopes to obtain. As well, universities need to consider the use of art, design and media production courses as another opportunity to partner with a communityorganization that can provide an opportunity for the students, the organization and the university.

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Author's Note: Christian Rogers is an Assistant Professor in Computer Graphics Technology in the Purdue School of Engineering & Technology at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

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The Role of First-Person Inquiry and Developmental Capacity on Transforming Perspectives About Facilitating Organizational Change

PAUL RAYMOND RAPTIS
University of North Georgia

Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to examine through the lens of first-person inquiry, what it means to be a change agent attempting to navigate the complexities of organizational change. By engaging in first-person inquiry, facilitators can gain tremendous insight not only into the system, but their own capacity to effect organizational change. Through the process of critical reflection, transformative learning occurs when we connect new information and experiences with our existing frames of reference. Examining the inherent individual, group, and systemic challenges that can seem disorienting to facilitators, especially when they are attempting to create conditions for organizational change within a system that resists change and pushes back, can help change agents gain insight and transform their perspectives on the role of facilitation. Critical reflection can generate opportunities for transformative learning when facilitators reassess their assumptions and expectations about what it means to lead change within the systemic constraints of their organizations. By engaging in deep reflection and active collaboration, facilitators can transform their understanding of themselves, how they relate to others, the way they and others make meaning, and how learning and change take place within organizational contexts.

Keywords: transformative learning, first-person inquiry, developmental capacity, organizational change, facilitation

Introduction

In this essay, I examine the disorienting dilemma facilitators may face when adapting to the individual, group, and systemic challenges interfering with their attempts at effecting organizational change. More specifically, I draw upon my personal experience of working with stakeholders within my own organization to facilitate change during a period of rapid growth and uncertainty. Attempting the process of change as an insider transformed my understanding of how facilitating groups requires patience, the ability to listen, recognizing individual, group, and systemic constraints, reacting to that which is emerging in the context around you, and adapting accordingly. This is not always easy, as facilitating groups also means considering where you are developmentally and becoming comfortable with not having all the answers. Moreover, there must be individual, group, and systemic readiness for change to take place. Even when there is readiness on the individual and group levels, change will not occur if the system does not support it. Consequently, my attempts at facilitating change increased my awareness of the tremendous influence the system has on organizational members. Those attempting organizational change should also remember it is extremely difficult to subsume a system of which you are a part. The challenges posed by the system can lead facilitators to feel frustrated in their change efforts. However, by adopting the method of first-person inquiry, facilitators can gain tremendous insight not only into the system, but their own capacity to effect organizational change. Hence, my purpose here is to explore how the practice of reflection *in action* focuses not only outward in examining the changes

taking place in the organization, but also inward in terms of exploring the transformation taking place among those directly involved in the change process. Furthermore, this essay also examines the opportunities for transformative learning that come with facilitating change along with the challenges and complexity arising from negotiating the constraints imposed on organizational members by the system.

Describing the significance of reflection in transformative learning, Mezirow (1997) discusses how we "transform our frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based" (p. 7). Through the process of critical reflection, transformative learning occurs when we connect new information and experiences with our existing frames of reference. After experiencing a disorienting dilemma, one of the subsequent phases of transformative learning Mezirow (2012) discusses involves "a critical assessment of assumptions" (p. 86). Merriam (2004) explains our critical reflection on assumptions as premise reflection involving "assumptions we hold about self…cultural systems in which we live…our workplace…our ethical decision making…or feelings and dispositions" (p. 62), supporting her contention of the crucial link between critical reflection and transformative learning.

Coghlan and Brannick (2010) explain how reflection in action "occurs when you are in the middle of an action and you ask questions about what you are doing and what is happening around you" (p. 19). In terms of facilitating change, reflection in action involves engaging in first-person inquiry and taking into consideration your own assumptions as a facilitator as well as actor and director playing a significant role in trying to initiate some type of organizational change effort. As a result, reflecting in action can help facilitators increase their capacity for understanding the inherent complexity involved in effecting change. While organizational change can be tremendously rewarding, it is also extremely difficult. Nevertheless, engaging in the process of critical reflection also has the potential to increase the developmental capacity of those who lead change efforts. In the next section, I examine how first-person inquiry and engaging in self-reflection impact developing the capacity for facilitating change within organizations as well as within one's self. As for my own practice as a change facilitator, even now, my journey continues.

First-Person Inquiry

In discussing the validity or quality of first-person inquiry as a research method, Marshall and Reason (2007) contend "quality becomes having, or seeking, a capacity for self-reflection, so that we engage our full vitality in the inquiry and attend to the perspectives and assumptions we are carrying" (p. 369). Hence, reflection is a key indicator of quality in first-person inquiry. Since first-person inquiry involves facilitators inquiring directly into their own intentions, assumptions, experiences, and behaviors, the focus is on reflecting *in* rather than *on* action. Marshall (2001) discusses the self-reflective nature of first-person inquiry by describing three frameworks around which to structure such practice. First, inquiry requires moving between the inner and outer arcs of attention. By being mindful of their inner arcs, facilitators can increase their awareness of how they frame issues, make meaning, and choose to speak out. Pursuing their outer arcs of attention requires moving outside themselves and actively engaging in second-person inquiry with others to raise questions, test assumptions, and learn through collaboration. The second framework involves the classic action research format of engaging in cycling between action and reflection consisting of planning, acting, and reflecting while also maintaining the inner and outer tracking of attention; which are key aspects of self-reflective first-person inquiry. Adopting the practice of planning, action, and reflection are essential skills for facilitators to develop. The third framework involves being both active and receptive of one's behavior and being. Referring to the work of Bakan (1966), Marshall (2001) describes the dual notions of agency or independence and self-control within one's environment and communion or interdependence and connection with others and how these approaches influence acting, speaking, and meaning-making.

Marshall and Reason (2007) point out that first-person inquiry involves adopting an attitude of inquiry that "incorporates noticing how identity, ethnicity, class, our positioning in the world impact our research, and being aware of the creative potential that this awareness makes available in speaking a perspective and acting inquiringly" (pp. 369-370). Marshall (2004) also examines the practice of first, second, and third-person inquiry. Through the process of engaging collaboratively in second-person inquiry, individuals must also exercise self-reflective first-person inquiry which, as their understanding increases, encourages them to engage further in third-person inquiry to influence wider systems. Reason and Marshall (1987) describe first-person, second-person, and third-person inquiry as integrating three audiences—in that research exists for me, for us, and for them.

Reason (1991) illustrates how "the origins of first-person inquiry lie in the work of Argyris and Schon and their descriptions of action science to explore the fit and misfit between theories-in-use and espoused theories (Argyris et al., 1985) and the 'reflective practitioner' (Schon, 1983)" (p. 187). Reason and Bradbury (2001) define first person inquiry as "the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act awarely and choicefully, and to assess effects in the outside world while acting" (p. xxv). When engaging in first-person inquiry, Marshall (1999, 2001, 2016) and Taylor (2004) point out how we often choose topics of inquiry reflecting our own lives and experiences in order to make meaning. Torbert (2004) explains first-person inquiry occurs when "we seek the attentiveness—the presence of mind—to begin noticing the relationships among our intuitive sense of purpose, thoughts, behaviors, and effects. In this way we gradually generate increasing integrity within ourselves" (p. 38).

In addition, Torbert (2004) discusses how, by using second-person inquiry in our conversations with others, we can more effectively seek to establish a sense of mutuality or mutual commitment between our experiences and those of others by interweaving the four parts of speech consisting of framing, advocating, illustrating, and inquiring to influence action. Hence, by adopting a more collaborative approach to inquiry, facilitators can gain self-awareness and realize they are not alone in their experiences. By engaging simultaneously in the processes of first-person and second-person inquiry, facilitators can also gain greater insight into organizational culture, allowing them to adapt to the individual, collective, and systemic forces potentially challenging their organizational change efforts. In the next section, I examine more specifically the impact of developmental capacity in facilitating change.

The Role of Developmental Capacity in Facilitating Change

By engaging in first-person inquiry, I have come to understand how the questions we ask or fail to ask as facilitators significantly influence the outcomes we experience. Therefore, a key takeaway for facilitators attempting the difficult task of leading change is to acknowledge and confront the tremendous barriers to change existing within ourselves, our stakeholders, and the system. Practicing first-person inquiry has encouraged me to become more aware of how facilitators must first have clarity in their purpose, the outcomes they want to achieve, and the questions they ask. Lacking clarity in any these key areas can lead to tremendous confusion and misdirection for all concerned. Clarity becomes especially important during times of rapid organizational change where organizational stakeholders are searching for answers to reduce the uncertainty inherent in the change process. However, before creating the conditions necessary for stakeholders to adapt to change, facilitators must first come to terms with their own developmental capacity for navigating change.

According to Nicolaides and McCallum (2014), "increased developmental capacity at the individual and collective levels allows for (though does not guarantee) greater ability to undertake the challenges of action research, and to engage a wider range of skillful, creative, and even transformational actions" (p. 55). Moreover, Nicolaides (2015) explains the experience of ambiguity has the potential to generate the capacity for learning and meaning-making through reflection by intentionally connecting with others who are also encountering the experience in question. In discussing the connection between development and transformative learning, Merriam (2004) argues "although transformative learning

appears to lead to a more mature, more autonomous, more 'developed' level of thinking, it might also be argued that to be able to engage in the process in the first place requires a certain level of development, and in particular, cognitive development" (p. 61).

My attempts at facilitating organizational change forced me to consider where I was at developmentally and how my own level of development impacted my attempts at facilitating change. Critical reflection helped me better understand how my own lived experience impacted the choices I made or perhaps failed to make. In addition, I was also confronted by the systemic boundaries of an organization that resisted change and rewarded maintaining the status quo. As an insider I played it safe in terms of my own comfort level combined with operating safely within the limitations of the system. However, by playing it safe, I also avoided controversy and confrontation by giving in to systemic constraints. Through the process of first-person inquiry, I realized how the system exerted its influence in terms of how I approached facilitation and interacted with stakeholders. My questions were enough to spark interest but not controversy; and discussion without resulting in meaningful action. While not serving as an excuse for inaction, systemic push back can present a major dilemma for change agents. More specifically, if facilitators have not yet reached the developmental stage where they can confront their own limitations, as well as those imposed by the system, how can they expect to effectively create the conditions necessary to help others?

The Role of Facilitation in Organizational Change

From my own experiences at attempting to facilitate organizational change, I learned to examine how my own assumptions and positionality can impact the change process. For example, Coghlan and Brannick (2010) and Scharmer (2009) maintain there must be a readiness within the system to engage in meaningful organizational change. According to Schein (1996), Lewin thought you cannot really understand a system until you attempt to change it. Mezirow (2000) explains how learning can be enhanced or inhibited by the environment or physical setting. Scharmer (2009, 2018) describes the holding space as the context which allows for a shift toward a deeper understanding on both individual and collective levels.

My own realization of the system exerting influence on when, what, and if change occurs is a phenomenon I had to experience firsthand to fully comprehend. The system resisted change by creating a culture of fear and intimidation insiders knew not to cut across. When pushed, the system, like HAL in the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968), sustained its equilibrium by pushing back against those who attempted to disrupt the status quo. Those within the system quickly learned just how far they could push before they found themselves on the receiving end of disciplinary action or in some cases termination. Consequently, an unsafe systemic culture can contribute to both facilitators and stakeholders developing a sense of learned helplessness or "paralysis" that prevents them from feeling empowered to act. Instead, they merely go through the motions thinking their efforts have little or no real impact.

In addition to contending with systemic influences, facilitators must also grapple with group and individual influences impacting change. Facilitators attempting to create holding spaces encouraging stakeholder collaboration may not begin to really understand themselves until they confront the numerous individual, group, and systemic hurdles challenging their efforts to create conditions for change. Therefore, before helping stakeholders navigate the complexity of organizational change, facilitators must first become aware of their own developmental capacity by gaining self-awareness. According to Merriam (2009), researcher positionality or reflexivity involves critical reflection on the self as a human instrument to take into consideration "biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken" (p. 219). Maxwell (2005) explains "the researcher is part of the world he or she studies" (p. 109) while Coghlan and Brannick (2010) discuss how reflexivity explores "the relationship between the researcher and the object of research" (p. 41). As applied to facilitating organizational change, through the processes of first-person and second-person inquiry, facilitators can develop greater awareness by

examining the self as an instrument for facing the inherent challenges that come with attempting to facilitate organizational change.

One of the goals I set for myself as a novice facilitator was something as simple as finding and expressing my voice and having a purpose. My perspective and perhaps confidence in facilitating change transformed when I realized I did have to possess all the answers, and for that matter, it was not my role to come into the situation providing stakeholders with a neat package of ready-made solutions. Of course, I needed to help stakeholders remain focused and on track, but it was their responsibility to actively engage and risk getting messy with the task at hand. Moreover, I also had to get messy and confront the individual and systemic influences impacting my efforts at attempting organizational change. Consequently, a key takeaway for facilitators is to first confront the messiness of knowing yourself. Gaining insight into the system and its influence is also extremely beneficial. In the next section, I examine the transformation in my own understanding of taking on the difficult task of facilitating organizational change. More specifically, I explore how facilitators must confront the inherent individual, group, and systemic limitations impacting change and how reflection and awareness into the influence of developmental capacity can transform our notions of facilitating organizational change.

Transformative Learning and Facilitating Organizational Change

Mezirow (2000, 2009, 2012) explains transformative learning begins when we experience some disorienting dilemma or problem that causes us to question our fundamental assumptions or habits of mind making up the frame of reference or meaning perspective by which we cognitively, affectively, and instinctively structure our assumptions and expectations. Brookfield (2000) argues "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). Taylor (2009) describes individual experience, critical reflection, dialogue, and awareness of context as core elements of transformative learning. Cranton (2006) points out transformative learning takes place "when people critically examine their habitual expectations, revise them, and act on that revised point of view" (p. 19). In my own experience, the major dilemma I faced regarding facilitating change was coming to terms with defining my role as a facilitator and critically assessing my assumptions on what that role meant. Looking back, I lacked not only experience in method and approach, as well as clarity of purpose, but also the confidence to think my efforts could lead to meaningful change in an organizational context that rewarded maintaining the status-quo.

My experience became transformative when, through the practice of first-person and second-person inquiry, I made meaning around my role as a facilitator and recognized my own vulnerability and reticence around the issue of pushing back against systemic constraints. For example, I have come to understand the disorienting dilemma of my tendency to shy away from confrontation, controversy, and action. Interestingly, the very system of which I was a part fed and rewarded my pull toward inaction. In retrospect, I appreciated the boundaries the system imposed because they provided me with a convenient excuse for not pushing myself or my stakeholders beyond those limits. The process of reflective first-person inquiry helped me transform my understanding of how the system can influence and constrain individual and group efforts to effect change. By shedding light here on the impact systemic influences can have on our efforts at facilitating change, I hope other facilitators can recognize their limitations, test their assumptions, and push beyond their boundaries.

As noted earlier, Merriam (2004) contends, "Critical reflection on experience is key to transformational learning" (p. 62). The ability to engage in critical reflection and reflective discourse requires advanced cognitive development. According to Mezirow (1991), development is central to transformative learning. Through the process of self-examination and critical assessment, I recognized the need to redefine my role in the change process and gain greater confidence in asserting my voice. The experience was humbling in that I realized change agents often go into organizations thinking anyone can effect change in any system. However, this is a major misconception. There is no "one size fits all"

formula for successfully implementing organizational change that works consistently every time in every organization.

It is especially difficult to change a system of which you are a part. This conclusion leads me to advise facilitators to recognize the importance of the self as an instrument. The methods we select will not be effective if we cannot consider, through the process of engaging in first-person inquiry, our own capability to bring about change. The energy to engage collaboratively with others in the process of co-inquiry into organizational change must flow through us. Fundamentally, we must know what we can and cannot do intellectually, physically, spiritually, and emotionally to be effective in helping bring about change. If we cannot, then perhaps it is time to step back until which time we can be more present.

Facilitators must also be aware of how individual and organizational dynamics impact their change efforts. Brookfield (2009) maintains "critical reflection focuses not on how to work more effectively or productively within an existing system, but on calling the foundations and imperatives of the system itself into question, assessing their morality, and considering alternatives" (p. 127). Critical reflection can generate opportunities for transformative learning when facilitators reassess their assumptions and expectations about what it means to lead change within the systemic constraints of their organizations. By engaging in deep reflection and active collaboration, facilitators can transform their understanding of themselves, how they relate to others, the way they and others make meaning, and how learning and change take place within organizational contexts.

Implications and Conclusions

One suggestion I would like to offer facilitators of organizational change relates to the difficulty of subsuming the system of which you are a part. Understanding the self as an instrument means examining individual, collective, and systemic limitations as well as the readiness for change on each of these levels. Coghlan and Brannick (2010) and Scharmer (2009) point out organizational change will not occur until there is a readiness from the system. As I have attempted to illustrate in this essay, individual, group, and systemic factors interfere with our change efforts. However, as Mezirow (1997) argues, transformative learning can take place through the process of critical reflection and changing existing frames of reference. If becoming an effective facilitator involves gaining insight into one's limitations as well as strengths, then my experiences have taught me to recognize how easy it is to give in to the influence of the system and avoid action. Then again, engaging in critical reflection has encouraged me to question why this phenomenon occurs and how to adapt more effectively to the challenges that come with attempting to effect change.

Even in situations where individual and group readiness exists to discuss organizational change, a similar sense of readiness may not be present within the system. When this occurs, the system can push back and discourage change and instead reward maintaining the status-quo. The takeaway for facilitators is they must not only consider the limitations of their own developmental capacity for effecting organizational change, but also understand the influence the system has in contributing to the complexity and uncertainty of their efforts. Realizing this as they go into organizational settings can be tremendously helpful as facilitators can recognize and respond to these multifaceted conditions more effectively. If they are not careful, facilitators can often fall into a pattern of replicating the very systemic practices they espouse to change. Hence, these suggestions underscore the importance of facilitators engaging in the process of reflective practice both in and on action.

Adopting an attitude of inquiry means not only understanding how to make meaning in action, but also realizing how meaning is distinct for each person. As a result, each person must develop their own practice, attend to their inner and outer arcs of attention, and become mindful about how they engage in the process of reflection. Some additional examples of individual and group reflective practice include action inquiry (Torbert, 2004) as well as U-journaling and social presencing theater (Scharmer, 2009). Through the reflective practice of first-person inquiry combined with engaging with others in second-

person and third-person inquiry, I have come to better understand how my own stage of development impacts how I make meaning around learning and facilitating change. Likewise, through the process of reflective first-person inquiry, facilitators of organizational change can attempt to recognize their limitations and push beyond their boundaries, leading to greater possibilities of transformation. Furthermore, by engaging with others in second- and third-person inquiry, facilitators can better understand how their own stage of development impacts the way they approach learning and manage the complexity of leading organizational change.

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Author's Note: Paul Raymond Raptis is an Assistant Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication, Media & Journalism at the University of North Georgia.

Combatting Plagiarism from a Transformational Viewpoint

JULIA COLELLA
University of Windsor

HANIN ALAHMADI
University of Windsor

Abstract

Plagiarism is an increasing issue in higher education. The current research on plagiarism predominantly focuses on plagiarism engagement rates and reasons why students plagiarize. Many studies reveal that students plagiarize unintentionally. Unintentional plagiarism is a result of limited plagiarism understandings combined with inaccurate academic writing convention perceptions. Transformational teaching can be used as a tool to educate students on plagiarism. Through questioning plagiarism assumptions and perspectives, students reevaluate their beliefs. The primary goal of this paper is to outline practical strategies that educators can implement in their classes to transform student plagiarism perspectives, which in turn, may decrease the number of suspected plagiarism cases on campuses.

Keywords: plagiarism, unintentional plagiarism, transformative learning, higher education

Plagiarism Overview

Plagiarism, a form of academic misconduct, is a growing concern for college and university educators (Elander, Pittam, Lusher, Fox, & Payne, 2010; Ford & Hughes, 2012). According to the literature, the number of students who engage in plagiarism in higher education is continuously rising. As a result, universities are dedicating time and resources to tackle the plagiarism phenomenon (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010). The research on plagiarism typically falls into one of two categories: student plagiarism engagement rates, which is usually done through self-reporting, as well as exploring reasons why students plagiarize (Dawkins, 2004; Gourlay & Deane, 2012; Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; Selwyn, 2008).

The concept of plagiarism in higher education dates back to the 1960s. Bowers (1964) was one of the first researchers to collect plagiarism data using university students as participants (Ballantine & McCourt Larres, 2010). Today, an abundance of plagiarism research is available, yet the number of college and university students who plagiarize increases each year. It has been suggested that the amount of plagiarism that occurs on campuses is at an all-time high (Bennett, 2005; Voelker, Love, & Pentina, 2012).

Plagiarism occurs in all disciplines: it is not discipline-specific (Holt, 2012). Business instructors, nursing instructors, psychology instructors, etc., all experience cases of student plagiarism. Further, plagiarism occurs in all years of study. Instructors who teach first-year, second-year, third-year, fourth-year, and graduate students all encounter plagiarism.

Plagiarism Engagement Rates

As mentioned earlier, the plagiarism rates across studies vary. Chuda, Navrat, Kovacova, and Humay (2012) had undergraduate students self-report their engagement in plagiarism. They found that 33% admitted to plagiarism. Cochran, Chamlin, Wood and Sellers (1999), who also had students self-report their engagement, found 19% reported to have had plagiarize at least once within the previous year. Ellery (2008) found 26% of participants submitted an assignment that contained plagiarism. Although

some researchers credit the Internet with the rising amount of plagiarism, Selwyn (2008) found that this may not be the case. In this study, 61.9% of participants admitted to plagiarizing using material found online, and 61.9% of participants admitted to plagiarizing using material found offline. As demonstrated above, the self-reporting rate across studies vary.

Some studies examine particular plagiarism behaviours. For example, Bennett (2005), who examined specific plagiarism behaviours, found that "25% of participants submitted an assignment in which the entire piece was plagiarized" (p. 150). Trushell, Byrne, and Simpson (2012) found that 17% of participants created false research to use in an essay. Unlike studies that look at overall plagiarism engagement rates, Bennett (2005) and Trushell et al. (2012) investigated what students exactly do that constitutes plagiarism. Although studies like these provide richer information regarding student plagiarism behaviours, the method of self-reporting is employed. Self-reporting is problematic for a number of reasons.

The method of self-reporting is questionable, even more so when participants self-report on engaging in dishonest behaviours (Kier, 2014; Scanlon & Neumann, 2002, p. 378; Youmans, 2011). Students may under-report their engagement in plagiarism (Culwin, 2006; Thurmond, 2010). One of the major limitations of utilizing self-reporting to collect engagement in plagiarism data is that students may not understand what plagiarism entails. If they are asked to report their overall engagement in plagiarism, they may unintentionally self-report inaccurate numbers. This questions the reliability of self-reporting (Power, 2009). If students do not understand what plagiarism is, how can they provide their engagement in it? Some studies do provide plagiarism definitions for participants, but this does not guarantee that students understand the definition or all of the behaviours that comprise the given definition. Also, studies follow different plagiarism definitions, so comparing rates of plagiarism across studies is difficult (Bennett, 2005).

Reasons Why Students Engage in Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a relevant and important issue in post-secondary education. Plagiarism takes different forms. Some types of plagiarism include copying someone's text and passing it off as one's own to purchasing work or hiring someone to write an assignment (Stolley, Brizee & Paiz, 2013). Although research suggests that the plagiarism rate tends to increase each year and that students engage in a range of behaviours that all violate academic misconduct, the question, *Why do students plagiarize?* needs to be discussed.

There are a number of students who commit plagiarism with no intent to do so. Plagiarism can occur as a result of poor understanding, especially for first-year students. These students may engage in it the most as the literature suggests that this cohort of students holds the lowest knowledge of how to avoid it (Flint, Clegg, & Macdonald, 2006). Some of these students believe that using content of research studies without providing appropriate citations and references is acceptable. International students, in particular, have a greater likelihood of engaging in unintentional behavior due to cultural differences and plagiarism perceptions. Anyanwu's (2004) study on plagiarism utilized case studies with students who submitted assignments that contained plagiarism. Anyanwu (2004) found that international students were unaware that what they did in their assignments was considered plagiarism. Cultural differences result in international students having a difficult time in "their new academic environment" (Chen & Ullen, 2011, p. 209). Writing practices in one culture can be very different from another, and if plagiarism is acceptable in an international student's home country, it is unreasonable to expect them to learn another country's proper citing/referencing practices without being educated on it. International and domestic students, although differing in plagiarism engagement rates, both have a limited awareness about academic writing conventions.

Some students are aware that what they do constitutes plagiarism. This, however, does not stop them from turning in plagiarized work. Some studies reveal that students may plagiarize as a result of pressure to gain satisfying grades, especially for students on scholarships, as well as their rigorous academic schedules (Ashworth, Bannister & Thorne, 1997). Other researchers believe that students may

plagiarize because of "ineffective institutional deterrents and condoning teachers" (Davis, Grover, Becker, & McGregor, 1992). It is suggested that a high probability of being caught for plagiarism greatly reduces the number of plagiarism cases (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). However, some students who are accused of potential plagiarism have misunderstandings of specific plagiarism behaviours (e.g., referencing confusion, how to paraphrase, etc.) (Anyanwu, 2004).

Although schools may have plagiarism policies and regulations in place, many students continue to submit papers that contain plagiarism and/or improper citations. In fact, plagiarism among students has proven to be a full-blown epidemic (Devlin, 2006). Many studies indicate that a misunderstanding of plagiarism, which often has serious consequences, is a common excuse offered by students who are accused of it (Devlin & Gray, 2007; East, 2010; Flint et al., 2006; Power, 2009). For example, in one study, undergraduate and postgraduate psychology students' understanding of plagiarism was examined. The results demonstrated that first-year psychology students scored the lowest in knowledge regarding how to avoid plagiarism (Elander, Pittam, Lusher, Fox, & Payne 2010). If students are not properly educated on the correct documentation styles, it becomes questionable as to whether or not they should be held accountable if they have these types of errors in their submitted work. Clearly, students need awareness in term of academic writing styles as well as practical strategies on how to avoid plagiarism. It is suggested that providing such education may be the best way to reduce plagiarism instances (Evering & Moorman, 2012). This paper provides ways to utilize the transformative teaching and learning theory in order to help students develop a better understanding of the issue of plagiarism.

Current Plagiarism Education

As demonstrated above, plagiarism is a growing concern in post-secondary education and much of the literature demonstrates that students plagiarize as a result of not fully understanding what plagiarism is, particularly, which behaviours constitute plagiarism. The single best way to tackle the plagiarism phenomenon may be by providing students with plagiarism education (Chuda et al. 2010). If students are aware of what plagiarism is, as well as, how to properly cite/reference their work, they may be less likely to engage in it. Although several schools pay large subscription fees to plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin.com, it needs to be questioned what benefits students receive from submitting their work to such sites. Student plagiarism may be detected through these types of software, but it does not prevent plagiarism (Marshall, Taylor, Hothersall, & Perez-Martin, 2011). Using such software has been compared to "putting a Band-Aid on a bruise" (Evering & Moorman, 2012, p. 38). A proactive approach, instead of a detection approach, should be utilized (Evering & Moorman, 2012; Owens & White, 2013).

The number of educators who provide their courses with plagiarism education is limited (Evering & Moorman, 2012). Few instructors do more than refer their class to the course outline/syllabus to obtain plagiarism information in the first week of classes. Anderman and Murdock (2007) share that students who have developed skills to avoid plagiarism are less likely to plagiarize. A common misconception is that students who enter post-secondary education have the practice and knowledge needed to avoid plagiarism (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010). Many students who enter college/university are unaware of plagiarism behaviours, and through education, such as in-class activities or online plagiarism tutorials, students can practice citing/referencing skills which can decrease the number of plagiarized assignments submitted.

So far, this paper has provided a literature review highlighting the key themes present in the plagiarism literature. An overview of plagiarism, plagiarism engagement rates in higher education, reasons for student engagement in plagiarism, and a discussion on plagiarism education were provided. The next section will discuss transformative teaching and learning theory, and strategies that educators can use with their students to help combat plagiarism, from a transformative framework, will be outlined.

Transformative Teaching and Learning

The concept of transformational learning emerged in 1981 by Jack Mezirow (1991). It has been referred to by other titles in the literature. For example, Elizabeth Kasl notes in her reflections at a recent Transformative Learning Conference (2006) that "currently there are three different concepts that have become muddied: learning, transformation, and pedagogical practices" (p. 148). Transformative learning can be defined as learning that reinforces students' educational processes, especially learning experiences which shape students and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner's subsequent experiences (Clark, 1993). The core of this process is to provide a student with enough capacity to move from simple to far more sophisticated ideas and capabilities, rather than a predefined set of knowledge and skills. Specific teaching strategies and methods of classroom management are designed in order to facilitate a developmental nature of teaching.

Transformative Teaching and Learning theory implies the three-dimensional process of "perspective transformation" (Clark, 1993, p. 48). These three dimensions are the following: psychological (concerning the change of self-perception), convictional (the change within the system of personal values and believes), and behavioral (changing the habits or behaviors) (Clark, 2006, pp. 48-49). Such teaching methodology encourages students to reflect, reevaluate, and reconsider some notions and issues on the deep level. With the key elements of active learning, persistence and collaboration promoted through transformational learning (Fuglei, 2014), it involves taking care of students' attitudes and perceptions, focusing on their inner thoughts and feelings, thus raising the level of their self-awareness. Transformative teaching helps to trace and develop students' apprehension and analysis capacities and bring forth some insights connected to their studying. As this theory appeals to the students' consciousness, it definitely succeeds at helping to reduce plagiarism. While the students can reflect critically on their own self, actions, beliefs and values, they come to understand the unethical aspect of plagiarism and the primary reasons why it is wrong to plagiarize (Mezirow, 1997).

Specific teaching strategies can lead to transformative education, which includes a set of pedagogical practices that are designed to enable students to experience transformative learning. These strategies and methods of classroom management are designed in order to facilitate a developmental nature of teaching. The major peculiarity of transformative learning is that it provides for the expansion of consciousness, rather than provides one with a specific set of facts and skills (Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock, 2012).

Transformational Teaching Strategies

This section will address some transformational teaching strategies that educators can use in their classrooms with students, regardless of the class size, to help combat plagiarism. These strategies have the most meaning for students when used in the first week or so of classes.

1. *Instructor as plagiarist.* In this activity, students are asked to anonymously write a response to a question—usually a question that pertains to the course content. The instructor then collects the responses and provides an answer to the class plagiarizing student responses. A class discussion takes place. As the instructor reads his or her answer, the students start to notice that the instructor is using their answer as his or her own. This allows the students to experience how an author feels when their work was used within them receiving credit. For large class sizes, a handful of responses to save on time can be done.
2. *Student case studies*. This quick, interactive activity allows students to put themselves in the role of the instructor, which addresses plagiarism behaviours and consequences for behaviours. Instructors create brief plagiarism synopses and have students work with a partner to discuss the consequence for each case. A class discussion takes place. This activity gets students thinking about behaviours that violate academic misconduct, it

allows them to interact with classmates and consider others' perceptions, and it gets them thinking about the importance of why plagiarism should be avoided.

Case Study Example: Tina's Statistics professor assigned the class a lab in which each student has to create five statistic questions based on the class material and provide the answers. The professor teaches four different sections of the statistics course. There is a Facebook group in which some students have posted their assignments for students in other sections to see. The professor is unaware of this Facebook group. Tina is on her school's volleyball team and is vice president of the student council. She is a full-time student, and statistics is her least favourite course. Tina completes her assignment. Before submitting it, she looks at the questions from peers on the Facebook group. She feels the questions posted are much stronger than most of hers. She decides to borrow two questions posted by students on the Facebook page and use three of her own. One student informs the instructor that students are posting questions on the Facebook group. Her instructor reads the Facebook group before marking any of the assignments. He notices Tina copied two questions posted on the Facebook group page (Colella, 2016).

Case Study Discussion Questions (works best if students discuss the questions with a pair and then as a class).
1. *What could Tina have done differently to avoid plagiarism?*
2. *How should the instructor handle Tina's plagiarism?*
3. *What should the instructor do regarding the Facebook group?*
4. *Should anyone else be punished for plagiarism?*

3. *Encourage reflective learners:* Provide ongoing reflection sheets to students as they begin their writing assignment. This can be especially helpful in the draft phase. Students can include information about their sources, assign due dates for different parts of the essay, etc. The on-going reflection can also include questions that encourage students to consider the overall goal of the assignment. Reflective learners consider their perceptions about topics and may alter them when faced with new information. These reflections, given by transformational educators, help students reconsider their ways of thinking and provide a means for students to re-evaluate and assimilate new knowledge into their pre-existing schemas.
4. *Discussion of future consequences:* Instructors should initiate discussion during class, where students would be able to share their perception of plagiarism, as well as the aspect of morality and ethics within it. Raise the question on how such an action like plagiarism could impact their behavior in long term. Introducing studies and research that indicted the relation between plagiarism/cheating and committing deviant behavior in work place. In this kind of discussion students will be aware that plagiarism during school life may unconsciously make them more acceptable to unethical behavior in the future.

Plagiarism, Students, and Transformative Learning

As demonstrated throughout the literature, transformative teaching facilitates a learning environment that challenges students and encourages students to think critically. These ideas contradict how students are educated on plagiarism. Plagiarism education is presented in a passive format, and in turn, this type of education limits students' development of critical

thinking, particularly on the topic of plagiarism. When plagiarism education is presented in a passive format, student productivity and creativity are reduced (Dey & Sobhan, 2006). This may impact the overall educational experience and self-growth of students.

Transformative teaching utilizes a fresh approach to learning and teaching which centers on the purpose to create self-awareness, self-motivation and independent learners (Kegan, 2000; Stevens Long et al., 2012). Transformative teaching uses a range of diverse methods and activities, which can raise plagiarism awareness among students.

Understanding the phenomenon of plagiarism may come to students through class discussions, where students share their perceptions of plagiarism and how morality and ethics is encompassed within plagiarism behaviours (particularly, academic fraud). Transformational teachers should guide their students through such discussions by a means of facilitation and modeling, including elements of analysis, synthesis, connection and interpretation (Fuglei, 2014).

Transformational teaching, with respect to plagiarism, can provide students learning experiences that will allow them to grasp the concept of plagiarism and avoid it in future assignment submissions. If plagiarism is not discussed, it is unlikely that students will view it as important. If students do not view abstaining from plagiarism as essential, why would they refrain from engaging in it? Most higher education instructors inform their students, typically on the first day of class, to look at the course outline for the plagiarism policy and information. Seldom do instructors arrange in-class plagiarism activities that allow their classes to work with plagiarism material. Failing to model plagiarism as an important aspect of higher education will lead to students thinking that it is not a priority. If it was a priority, the instructor would spend time addressing it. The instructors who do provide in-class activities are going one step further, but one cannot conclude that the activities will have positive impacts on students. Unless the activities have a transformational design, students' viewpoints about plagiarism will not change.

As it was already mentioned, active learning via transformative approach lead to increase of students' responsibility for the outcomes of the learning process. Increasing student responsibility can be reached in multiple ways as discussed above, such as negotiating the problems, contents and design of the course with students. Getting their critique included and emphasizing the impact of plagiarism for real-life performance, would help them rethink their assumption on plagiarism.

Overall, adopting transformational strategies for plagiarism instruction will allow students to consider what plagiarism entails and how it can be avoided. Unless students experience it, which can be done through the strategies discussed above, their understanding of it will remain limited.

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Author's Note: Julia Colella is a PhD student at the University of Windsor. Hanin Alahmadi is an Education Management student at the University of Windsor.