Transformative Effect of Profession Change: An Explanatory Framework

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Abstract

Career theory regularly discusses the process and dynamics of the phenomenon of "profession change." However, somewhat underrepresented is the transformational aspect of this phenomenon. This paper presents an explanatory framework which draws from the domains of career theory, adult learning, and transformative learning to describe the transformative effects of profession change. Important stakeholders have been identified and practical implications for career planning and management have been discussed.

Introduction

Stories of profession change often cause curiosity and reflection. For instance, Astronaut Helen Sharman was an industrial research technologist and a chemist earlier (Sharman et al., 1993). Similarly, a practicing surgeon - Dr. Ronald Kaplan, became an attorney (Kaplan Legal, n.d.). It could further be reasoned that, due to better access to information today, more people may consider changing their profession than before. This paper is based on the thought that such a transition leads not just to change in the profession, but also to change in the person, thereby implying a transformative dimension.

Career theory offers multiple approaches to understanding profession change. For example, studies which focus on causative factors usually mention "triggers" which may lead profession changers to critical reflection and discontentment. After experiencing such a mental state, some decide to switch over to a new profession and some tend to find ways to live with the status quo. Further, it may be argued that studies from this domain are usually focused on vocational behavior and may not lay as much emphasis on the transformational aspect (Carless & Arnup, 2011; Ibarra, 2004; Rhodes & Doering, 1983; Smart & Peterson, 1997). In contrast, this area of adult learning offers numerous theoretical conceptions to build a nuanced understanding of personal transformations. The father of Transformative Learning (TL), Jack Mezirow (1978, 1991) described TL as an emancipatory learning process of personal change which usually begins with a set of disorienting life events, employs critical reflection throughout, and leaves the learner with new mental schemes for meaning making. Interestingly, profession changers have often been viewed as transformative learners in the TL literature, but systematic studies have remained scarce (Snyder, 2011; Terblanche, 2019).

This paper presents an explanatory framework to elaborate the transformative effects of profession change by combining relevant concepts adapted from the work of Ibarra (2004) on career transitions and Mezirow (1991) on TL. In doing so, it serves the practical purpose of informing profession changers and employer/facilitative organizations for better career planning and management.

The rest of this paper has been organized into three sections. The following section presents a review of select literature from the areas of career theory, adult learning and TL. Subsequent section presents a commentary on the explanatory framework (henceforth referred as "the framework") and its

utility for profession changers and for organizations involved in such a transition. The final section presents a summary and lists some directions for future research.

Literature Review

This section presents a succinct review of the extant literature, thereby situating and describing the foundations of the work. The first subsection presents a description of the methodology adopted for search of literature. Subsequently, select insights from the domain of profession change (i.e., concept and attributes of profession, reasons and contributory factors for profession change, identity transformation, and transition support needs) are presented. The next subsection provides a revisit of some relevant ideas from the domain of adult learning like philosophy and practice, learning theories, learning motivation and persistence, meaning making, and the role of educators. Insights from Mezirow's work on TL are presented in final subsection to illustrate the transformative foundations of this work.

Search of Literature

The "scoping review methodology" of Munn et al. (2018) was the methodological inspiration for this work. The search for literature was focused on three domains: (a) career theory and profession change; (b) adult learning and transformative learning; and (c) intersection of domains (a) and (b). Highest preference was ascribed to works located in domain (c), followed by domain (a) and (b) respectively. Hence, many combinations of multiple search keywords (e.g. "career change," "profession change," "transformation," "framework," "model") were used. Internet based meta-search engines (i.e. Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic), research databases (i.e. JSTOR, Emerald, and Web of Science) and libraries (traditional and digital—e.g. Safari Books Online and National Digital Library) were the sites for search. "Journal of Transformative Education" and "Journal of Transformative Learning" were given greater importance as specialty journals. Perusal of search results was also guided by proximity of the work to this study's objective.

Change in Profession

Ideas relating to "morality/ethicality," "specialized training," and "occupation" are dominant underlying themes in various definitions and descriptions of the concept of profession. For instance, Christensen (1994, p. 28) defined profession as: "*an occupation where taking advantage of the customer is against the rules.*" The definition by Cambridge Online Dictionary is another good example: "*any type of work that needs special training or a particular skill, often one that is respected because it involves a high level of education*" (Cambridge, n.d.). It may further be argued that the concept of profession, though very old, may still be partly ambiguous. Some of the earlier researchers escaped this ambiguity by describing what does it take to be a professional, rather than defining a profession. For example, Klass (1961) described the *scholarly* and *gentlemanly* requirements of becoming a professional and attached need for legal validity, spirit and the notion of progress with a profession. Moline (1986) seems to have avoided this by comparing a professional with an amateur to argue that a professional associates honor with their calling and enjoys a socially recognized proficiency (Barker, 1992; Flexner, 2001; Pellegrino, 1983). Some of the vagueness around concept of profession may also partially be repelled by examining efforts to characterize profession like that of Greenwood (1957) who took a philosophical approach to list five attributes of a profession (see Table 1).

Table 1

Attributes of a Profession (Greenwood, 1957)

Attribute	Short Description
Systematic Theory	The existence of a supporting body of theory which serves as a base for rationalization of operations.

Table 1 Continued

Attributes of a Profession (Greenwood, 1957)

Attribute	Short Description
Authority	Through education, the professional acquires and exercises authority over (parts of) subject matter (e.g. like a subject matter expert or a consultant).
Community Sanction	The extent to which the community approves (whether formally or informally) of professionals' authority over matters relating to the subject. This, sometimes bestows a form of immunity.
Ethical Codes	Monopoly of a profession can be hazardous; hence, professional bodies often evolve their own ethical codes to regulate behaviors (e.g. the Hippocratic Oath of physicians)
Professional Culture	Every profession entails formal and informal organizations. There are social roles, symbols, artefacts, and jargon. These are signs of emergence of an observably distinct culture.

Insights may also be drawn from the phenomenon of profession change, as it has contributed significantly to the area of vocational behavior. For instance, it has been argued that for a radical career change to happen, one must get dissatisfied with the first occupation and find the second attractive enough to be pursued or tried (Neapolitan, 1980; Rhodes & Doering, 1983; Richardson & Watt, 2005). However, simultaneous existence of these two conditions may not be sufficient to trigger an actual change. This is so because there could be certain "obstacles to change," which when combined with personal, organizational, and environmental factors, could inhibit or delay the transition. It may also be noted here that those who are forced to change (e.g. due to retrenchment or job-automation), are likely to observe less satisfaction in their new vocation than the old one (Carless & Arnup, 2011; Neapolitan, 1980; Rhodes & Doering, 1983; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Smart & Peterson, 1997; Super, 1990).

Ibarra (2004) posits that people change their profession due to three main reasons. First being "self-conception" since it changes with time. Present identity may start appearing inconsistent in comparison to the envisioned identity thereby encouraging and/or triggering action for congruence. The second reason is the prohibitive or supportive "role of social network." A social network may provide role models who play inspirational and/or navigational roles. Further, there is some evidence that higher diversity in one's social network increases the chance of profession change. This is so because a diverse social network is more likely to bring opportunities in terms of referrals and exposure. Finally, Ibarra argues that certain life events can act as "triggers" and stimulate critical reflection. This may eventually lead to a "turning point" or "brink of change." Such triggers could be noticeable or unnoticeable, big or small, positive or negative, and personal or professional. It is not necessary that a trigger should be dramatic to be effective as even everyday interactions have been known to be influential in sparking a consideration (Oleski & Subich, 1996).

It has been argued that profession change leads to movement from one identity to another. The new identity evolves interactively due to demands of role and self. Here, Van Gennep's model may be used to conceptualize the process of *separation, transition,* and *incorporation* (Ibarra, 2004). Such a transition could be long and gradual, and institutionalized approaches are not common. Whether profession changers juggle with both the professions simultaneously to avoid risks or not, the journey may include a 'liminal period'. Such a period is characterized by feelings of being "mid-air" or being lost. Opportunities for such a transition may also emerge from "side bets" like hobbies, amateur activities and voluntary works. The matter of selection of new profession could be determined by factors like "reversibility of exit," "existence of golden handcuffs," "degree of social support" (Gibson, 2004; Higgins, 2001; Ibarra, 2004). Further, early indicators of a possible transition include "thoughts about

leaving" and "actual job search behavior." It has also been argued that people with better education and shorter tenure are more likely to change their profession than ones who came in with lesser education and have longer tenure. There is also some evidence that individual characteristics like extraversion, age, gender, and organizational factors like job security could influence the decision (Carless & Arnup, 2011).

People intending to change their profession rarely begin with a clearly stipulated plan. In some cases, even the act of choosing a new career may not be a straight pick. The effects of such a transition (e.g. psychological and monetary) and subsequent settlement issues (e.g. workplace adjustment) may pose great challenges. It is also known that profession changers do better by increasing control over their career situations, by being committed to change, and by staying confident while keeping an optimistic approach towards future. Hence, it must be explicitly highlighted that instrumental and social support could help profession changers in dealing with stress and strain encountered during transition (Brown et al., 2012; Doehrman, 1982; Super, 1990; Terblanche, 2019).

Clearly, a framework designed to explain the educative dimension of profession change should posit learning as a multi-stage process—which, in turn, may begin due to intrinsic and/or extrinsic reasons. The framework should therefore pay attention to profession changers' personal situations and context. Further, since such a transition may be an uncertain and dynamic experience owing to the likelihood of indeterminate start and non-planning, the framework should highlight the need for assistance and social support.

Adult Learning and Its Transformative Dimensions

An educational philosophy serves as a frame of reference for the educators since it provides the rationale and principles for action. Conversely, thoughts related to purpose, practice and educational outcomes of an educational endeavor reflect underlying philosophical beliefs. Further, from the point of view of practice, any polarization in the dichotomy of *practical relevance* vs *philosophical sophistication* may not be ignored, and work should be practically relevant and philosophically sound. Hence, there is a need for well thought after philosophical frameworks suited for adult education and not copies/derivatives of philosophies originally developed for conventional education (Conti, 2007; Finger, 1990; Paterson, 2010; Tisdell & Taylor, 2000; Zoellick 2009).

It is safe to assume that learning theories are closer to practice than educational philosophies. While situational suitability and effectiveness of a learning theory may be debated, its informative influence may not be dismissed immediately (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2008; Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019; Schunk, 2012). The world of adult learning theories is rich and regularly witnesses contributions from various disciplines. A well-formed learning theory would identify and describe the constellation of elements (e.g. actors, contextual factors, resources), relationships, processes and expected outcomes. Further, from a practical perspective, utility of such a theory lies in areas like learner support, instructional design, teaching, and assessment (Knowles et al., 2005; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019).

The relationship between learning and motivation is often seen as obvious and a notion of "purposiveness" has been associated with this connection. It therefore is not surprising to find that inquiries into this matter have taken various directions and methods. For instance, it is known that adult learners may get/stay motivated due to factors like self-directedness, responsibility, value of experience, and cultural relevance. Role of motivation as a mediator and as an outcome has also been demonstrated. In the quest of nuances, some have also studied the relationship of learning styles on motivation. Some of this has contributed to the collective understanding of learning motivation being either be intrinsic or extrinsic. It has also been argued that intrinsic learning motivation maybe more sustainable. Quite naturally, all of this has been connected with the matter of "persistence" of adult learners. For instance, "social integration into the institution" and "support from family and faculty" have been found to boost the intention to stay (Alhassan, 2012; Gom, 2009; Knowles, 1973; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Schunk, 2012; Sogunro, 2015).

Construction of meaning has been historically seen as an important activity in adult learning. Largely, people use lenses of their own making to construe meaning of experiences. Such a construal is

contextually situated, and it usually flows like a developmental process with fuzzy beginnings and ends. Unsurprisingly, critical reflection is taken as an important tool for (re)construction of meaning. It may be noted here that the work of Mezirow (refer next section) has been identified as an important connector between meaning-making and adult learning (Brookfield, 1984; Coffield et al., 2004; Cranton, 2006; Gardner, 2011; Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002; Jung, 2014; Merriam & Heuer, 1996; Mezirow, 1991).

Talking of the role of educators, Lindeman (1926) remarked that educators must carefully observe to know what drives an adult learner intrinsically. He lamented against the secondary treatment of learners and against the preoccupation with "subject oriented" approach of adult educators so much so that he declared teachers as seekers of wisdom and not oracles. Since then, new approaches and recommendations have emerged. For instance, constructivists hold that educators could play facilitative roles, and believe that the educator may even need to fill in for family support thereby influencing the intent of staying or dropping out. In contrast, critical theorists reason that "authenticity" in the educator-learner relationship is important and educators should tactfully use power, throw challenges, and be critical. Since Mezirow built his TL work using Critical Theory, naturally, it would safe to assume that a practice informed by his work could consider using distinct roles while working in different epistemological areas (Alhassan, 2012; Brookfield, 2005; Cranton, 2006; Knowles, 1973; Knowles et al., 2005).

Sources of informal knowledge are closely linked to culture and learning almost always starts with socially situated experiences and the effect of context on learning is well noted. Hence, educators could expect to be more effective if their practice regularly took a note of it (Hollander, 2004; Illeris, 2009; Jarvis, 2012; Kroth & Cranton, 2014; Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

In conclusion, to explain the educative dimensions of profession change, the framework must posit profession changers as adult learners on a transformative course. Specifically, such a position would yield more only if the framework includes insights from subdomains of adult education/learning, like educational philosophy, learning theories, learning motivation, meaning-making, educator-learner relationship, and importance of social context.

Transformative Learning

The field of Transformative Learning has history of more than four decades and multiple conceptualizations have emerged. With due regard to other conceptualizations, this work draws primarily from Mezirow's writings on the topic from mid-1970s until late 2000s. His processual approach deemed hypothetical mental structures like frames of reference, meaning perspectives as central to personal transformation (Mezirow, 2003: pp. 58). Transformative journeys often have a non-deterministic start, and from a temporal perspective, mostly incremental and not epochal (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1981, 1985, 2000; Nohl, 2015).

Mezirow (1991, 1997) posited TL as a ten-step process which employs critical reflection in almost every stage. He always held that critical reflection is key to meaning making. When compared to other contemporary adult learning theories (like Knowles' take on *andragogy*), TL is characteristically emancipatory, and therefore it requires learners to be critically reflective to improve their self-direction and self-concept. Further, it is not necessary that TL must be experiential, but it is prerogative of those who play adult roles. TL may also not entirely be a solitary journey since discourse with others with similar journeys offers avenues for corroboration and consultation (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1981, 2003). Finally, from the perspective of measurement, the constructivism inherent in TL poses challenges for quantitative measurement. Naturally, primary studies often employ qualitative research designs, and in case of quantitatively oriented studies, indirect measures are seen common (Cheney, 2010).

Since this paper relies on Mezirow's conceptualization of TL, the framework should therefore adapt his TL process for the case of profession changers. Naturally, this means critical reflection would play a major role in meaning making and in transformation of mental structures. Furthermore, the framework should stipulate the possibility of corroborative and/or consultative role of others in such a transition.

Transformation Due to Profession Change: An Explanatory Framework

The case of profession change almost always involves multiple types of learning: formal, non-formal and informal. It also features commonly in the stories of TL. However, studies which keep profession changers at center and pay systematic attention, are scarce (Cheney, 2010; Cranton, 2006; Snyder, 2011; Taylor, 2008; Terblanche, 2019).

The following subsection describes the methods and tools employed for synthesizing the framework. The next subsection introduces the framework, comments on the underlying TL process, and elaborates the journey and role of profession changer as a transformative learner. Subsequently, results of a survey are reported to inform the readers of some empirical observations made regarding the underlying TL process. The final subsection discusses practical implications for profession changers and organizations involved in such a transition.

Origins and Process of Synthesis

The framework was synthesized using a multi-step process specially designed by authors for this purpose. This process consumed insights mainly obtained from published literature, interactions with profession changers, feedback, and critical thinking. Readers may note that the initial idea and description of TL process of profession changers emerged before the framework.

The first step was to review extant literature and combine the perspectives so obtained. This activity led us to following theoretical propositions (TPs) which provided the conceptual ground for the emerging framework:

TP1: Profession change is a multi-stage process
TP2: Process of profession change is initiated and influenced by internal and external factors
TP3: Critical reflection is instrumental to sustainable personal change
TP4: Mental structures for meaning making may change due to change in profession
TP5: Resettlement of the profession changer is intertwined with their learning
TP6: Effort to change one's profession may fail due to internal and/or external factors

The second step was to obtain empirical insights for expansion of conceptual understanding. For this, six exploratory interviews were conducted: three interviewees had successfully negotiated the change, two were contemplating to change, and one admitted to have failed and quit the pursuit. Interestingly, preceding steps led to the thought that Mezirow's (1991, 1997) work should be adapted in a manner which is more accommodating of case-to-case variabilities to the extent possible. In the third step, the combined understanding of previous steps was presented to a peer group of researchers to seek critical and creative feedback. This led to the first articulation of the process describing the transformative journey of a profession changer. Subsequently, twelve profession changers were identified and interviewed in a semi-structured manner (interviewee selection criteria in a later subsection). During these interviews, a schematic and a description of the TL process was presented for critical feedback. The response was mostly encouraging; hence, the conceptualization of TL process was expanded to create a framework which drew from all the conceptual understanding so far (Ibarra, 2004; Mezirow, 1991). In the final step, the framework was presented to a peer group of researchers (same group as described in third step above) for critique. The feedback so received was employed to arrive at the final version of the framework—better illustrated and better described.

The Framework

The framework views profession changers as transformative learners, and therefore, at the heart of it is a multi-stage Transformative Learning Process (TLP) (refer Figure. 1). This also rhymes well with Mezirow's (1991: pp. 26–27) commentary on Transformative Logic. Every stage in this TLP has a main theme and every stage is intricately fused with preceding and/or succeeding stages.

Consequently, it may not be possible for learners to clearly point out their graduation from a stage to another, even in retrospect. It is also quite likely that learners branch-out, regress or even abandon their pursuit due to appearance of variety of reasons like financial, medical, or familial exigencies.

Figure 1

Framework to Explain Transformative Aspect of Profession Change
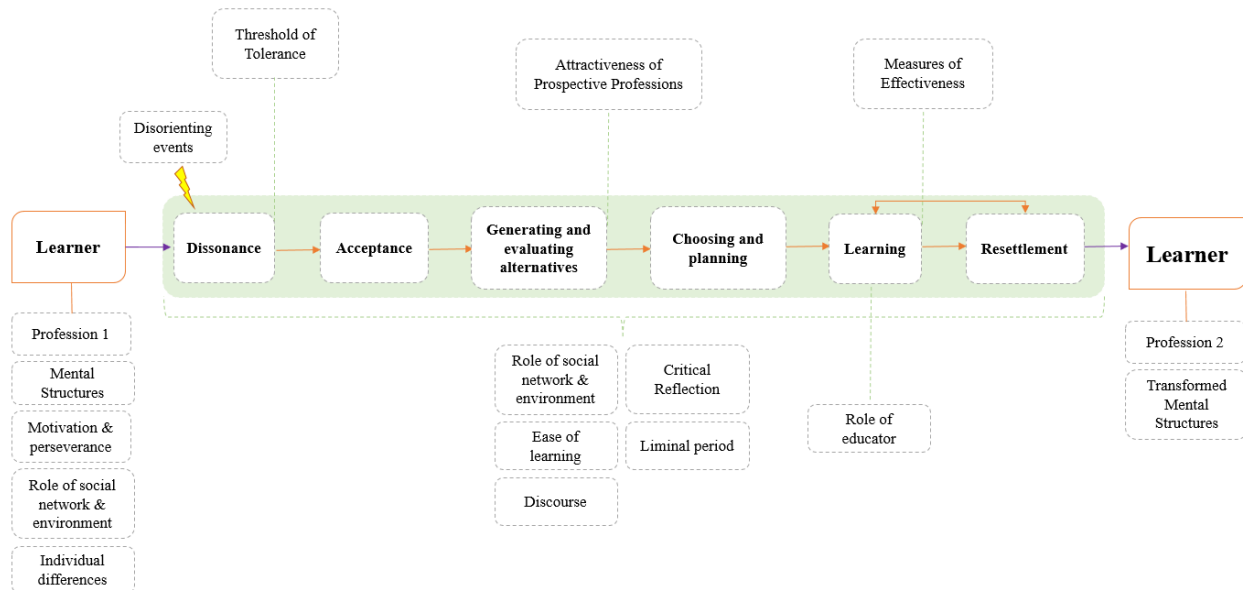
The following section presents a description of the TLP and of directly linked concepts. The subsequent section comments on the journey and role of the profession changer when viewed as a transformative learner.

Transformative Learning Process of Profession Change

The TLP typically starts due to a set of life events with disorienting influence. Such an event, whether sudden or anticipated, exerts unique effect on every learner (Negi & Akhilesh, 2018). The stress caused by such events may not be ignored as it could moderate the progress of a learner during the TLP. The effect of these events (whether direct or indirect), usually manifests as a "dissonance" in state of mind wherein one starts to observe: (a) inconsistencies in the trusted ways of meaning making and/or (b) fundamental internal misalignment/dysfunction in the way one looks at certain aspects of life. The dissonance puts the learner at discomfort and triggers critical reflection to help understand and/or to justify the inexplicable. Normally, acceptance of disharmonious mental state is gradual and taxing as learners tend to stay in denial unless a subjective "threshold of tolerance" isn't breached. Sometimes, this breach is partly fueled by imminent maturity of side-bets, and sometimes, it is a strong sense of urgency due to perception of risk or loss (Doehrman, 1982; Ibarra, 2004; Mezirow, 1991).

Only after the existence of dissonance is accepted from within, learners start thinking of looking for ways to reduce or alleviate the mental discomfort (Cranton, 2006). A lot of times, these ways are not clearly stated or thoughtfully considered. But every learner does a create unique mental method to evaluate and rank order the alternatives in terms of their attractiveness. Learners' subjective assessment/impression of factors like "ease of resettlement," "entry barrier type," and "sophistication or novelty of the profession" contribute to the degree of attractiveness. This mental scheme subsequently feeds into the decision of choosing a set of alternatives for pursual and planning of a course of action. Such planning may very well be vague and/or tentative (Ibarra, 2004; Richardson & Watt, 2005)

Learning to perform acceptably and settling well in the new profession may prove to be a fluidic experience for many. In fact, it isn't uncommon to see learners swinging in between these stages until they become comfortable in the new life. The unfortunate possibility of learners reverting to their earlier profession in special circumstances may also not be ruled out. Support and assistance by significant others during these stages could help the learner sustain and thrive (Cranton, 2006; Ibarra, 2004; Terblanche, 2019).

Since learners' social network and environment provides the social context for the transition, it is reasonable to believe that TLP may not entirely be a solo journey. For instance, many learners occasionally engage in a corroborative and consultative discourse with significant others and/or with perceived specialists during such a transition. However, whether the learner is forthcoming and enterprising or not, greater knowledge of his/her individual preferences and differences may certainly help explain some patterns in learner's participation and behavior during a transformative discourse (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991, 2003).

Learners invest in reskilling for the new profession, usually unaware of the fact that personal transformation is a latent outcome. Naturally, a frequently occurring impediment is low metacognition of their (ongoing) transformation. Therefore, people in educative roles must find ways to foster critical reflection to raise self-consciousness (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). This requirement becomes even more pronounced during "liminal period" considering chances of abandonment (Ibarra, 2004). Learner's pursuit could also be aided by educator's competence in instructional strategies because learners tend to prefer: (a) learning journeys which are not very complex; (b) appropriate mix of formality/non-formality and informality in learning methods; (c) judicious use of time; and (d) tolerable inconvenience and ambiguity (Cranton, 2006).

It is hardly any surprise that every profession changer's journey is unique. The constructivism inherent in the TLP could partially be credited for this. This means there may not be a simple and straight walk to measurement of indicators like achievement of personal objectives, development across multiple learning domains and satisfaction with resettlement. Therefore, mixed method studies employing longitudinal designs may be appropriate (Fullerton, 2010; Snyder, 2011; Terblanche, 2019).

Profession Changer as a Transformative Learner

Early motivation to change one's profession usually originates from meaning and strength of disorienting experiences (Laros, 2017; Negi & Akhilesh, 2018; Nohl, 2015). Along the journey, as the learner transforms, this motivation starts changing its form and strength. For instance, the causative influence (whether intrinsic or extrinsic, or both), may lose its value with time and the learner may require external support or assistance to wade through the liminal period (Cranton, 2006; Ibarra, 2004). Yet another way of guessing the intent and direction of a learner could be through the set of learning objectives or desired outcomes. However, unfortunately, it is not uncommon to meet learners who haven't articulated down their learning objectives explicitly. Sometimes, this is so because many don't even recognize that they are transiting let alone identify as a learner. Therefore, as an experiment, it would be interesting to see if profession changers persevere better if they were required to write and review their learning objectives regularly (Ibarra, 2004).

Even when the disorienting events were experienced by many together, it is unlikely that two (potential) learners would have the same response. Everyone has a unique way to acquire and process information - partly due to their mental structures. Mental structures are employed in everyday life and for special purposes to make meaning of experiences. The absence of fully developed structures or inconsistency in these structures becomes the ground for formative and transformative learning – respectively (Mezirow, 1991; Negi and Akhilesh, 2018).

Given the premise that development of a learner is socially situated, their social networks and environments play an important role in their journey. In fact, learner's influence and skill in using his social network and environment is crucial in bringing relevant resources and opportunities. Considering

the stakes involved, it is also natural to assume that the social network usually exerts a mixed influence as some forces push for the transition and some against it (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Hollander, 2004; Jarvis, 2012).

Some Empirical Observations

After synthesizing the framework, in order to sense the practical worth and relevance of the TLP described above, a structured questionnaire was created and administered to a group of profession changers. However, this endeavor should not be taken as conclusive evidence in favor or against the hypothesized TLP. Rather, it should be viewed as an additional curious effort to expand the understanding. The following criteria was used to locate and invite potential participants is presented below:

1. Indian adult national engaged in legally valid profession
2. Minimum tenure in previous and current profession: one year
3. Superannuation not the cause for change of profession
4. Compensation expressible in monetary terms
5. Cases involving natural career progression to be excluded
6. Side bets, part-time and amateur work to be excluded
7. Job-roles from same or similar job family to be excluded
8. Transitioned from employee to entrepreneur to be included

Guided by the criteria above, a list of more than 750 potential respondents was prepared by approaching sources like professional social networking websites, organizations which frequently employ or support profession changers. All listed were emailed a copy of the questionnaire and invited to participate in the study. Of those, 335 chose to participate and return the questionnaire; however, 16 questionnaires had to be discarded as those were incomplete. Data from remaining 319 questionnaires was scrutinized, transcribed, and prepared for analyses using guidelines discussed by Hair et al. (2017: pp, 56–62).

In the sample, 224 participants identified as males and the rest as females. Average tenure in previous profession was 7.5 years. From the point of view of professional history, 266 participants did not change the economic sector; however, 272 admitted having entered a new industrial sector. Only 10 participants could transition into a new career while staying with the same employer; 20 started a (new) business and the rest had to move to a new employer. 104 participants reported witnessing a change in their marital status and only 40 participants saw a change in their socioeconomic class, i.e. 37 climbed up and 3 slipped. Precisely 179 participants witnessed no change in their monthly family income group; 117 reported upward movement and the remaining 23 slipped. From an educational point of view, 78 reported earning a higher degree, 132 gained new professional qualifications. Further, 156 participants claimed that it takes more than a year to be comfortable in new profession.

The survey questionnaire had five questions to understand the way participants saw the TLP in the light of their own journey. Approximately 70% of the participants agreed that their transition was similar to the hypothesized TLP. More than 76% of the participants found the description of various TLP stages appropriate. From the perspective of progress, about 34% participants claimed to have noticed whenever they transitioned from a stage to another. Hence, it is no surprise that more than 73% participants admitted having felt lost at some point during their transition. Further, quite interestingly, about 27% participants don't see value in coaching in the context of profession change while 24% had mixed thoughts.

Recommendations for Application

At the highest level of abstraction, the framework could be used to explain and characterize the process of profession change with due regard to preferences, choices and context of profession changers. However, when employed properly, the information derived from the framework may be used in many

ways. Notably, there are direct practical implications for three groups: (a) profession changers; (b) organizations where profession changers may be commonly employed (e.g. BPO Contact Centers and Training companies); and (c) organizations which offer assistance and support to prospective/in-transition profession changers (e.g. soldier resettlement organizations and trade schools). The following description would use this categorization to explain possible approaches for practical application.

Primary utility of the framework for the first group is almost obvious, with information to better understand one's (forthcoming) journey leading to practical insights for career planning and management. In contrast, organizations or institutions belonging to groups (b) and (c) may assume educative, consultative and/or administrative roles. This conjecture is based on examination of scenarios in which (prospective) profession changers are likely to interact with the other two groups frequently. Unsurprisingly, such scenarios are embedded within routine organizational activities like recruitment and selection, job placement and training, and coaching and career counseling. What stand outs in these interactions is the focus put on factors like "transferability of skills," "work efficiency," or "need for support." This, in turn may partially be related to the "potential" that organizations or institutions see in (prospective) profession changers.

The logical step for group (b) described above should therefore be to create special policies, provisions and programs to address the needs or aspirations of (prospective) profession changers. Such an endeavor may manifest internally as policies and processes for managing "internal job postings" or externally as programs like Genpact's Career 2.0 and Amazon's Rekindle (Amazon, n.d.; Bidwell, 2017; Mehta, 2016). At the same time, since the nature of primary function of group (c) is assistive/facilitative, it would be prudent for them to run transition assistance programs (e.g. assessments, trainings, and counseling), create/join network of employers and similar others, build/collect resources, or sometimes even act like an employment bureau. Hence, it is only reasonable to believe the framework could provide nuanced insights for matters like policy making, process design, program and resource management, and outreach all for the goal for improving the efficiency of the assistive/facilitative function (Career Transition Partnership, n.d.; Sofat, 2015).

Concluding Remarks

This study was motivated by three observations: (a) scanty literature on transformative effect of profession change; (b) greater media visibility and discussion of cases of dramatic profession change in recent times; (c) social apathy towards challenges and needs of profession changers. Insights were drawn from the domains of adult learning, transformative learning and career theory, and from the experiences of profession changers to synthesize an explanatory framework using a systematic approach. The framework visualizes profession changers as transformative learners and illustrates their journey through a transformative learning process. Empirical insights from a short survey on the transformative learning process were added to expand the understanding regarding the transformative learning process. Further, possible application areas for profession changers and for employer and facilitative organizations were discussed.

In addition to practical utility, the framework could provide theoretical grounds for conceptual and empirical studies. For instance, considering the uncertainties involved the journey of a profession changer, it may be valuable to take a longitudinal, multi-method observational study. Similarly, it may also be worthwhile to conduct comparative studies to bring out the contrast between similar journeys situated in different contexts, or the contrast between similar journeys of different genders. Further, practical insights may be drawn from studies which describe and critique the organizational/institutional efforts on the matter. All of this could contribute significantly to a more nuanced understanding of the TLP of profession change.

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Facilitated Learning Spaces for Intentional Belonging in Post-Secondary Education: Bridging the Chasm Dividing Education and Community

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Abstract

In a competitive, managerial, and reactive post-secondary educational environment, the authors believe that the sense of campus community is hindered. As complex issues continue to emerge on college and university campuses, reactionary approaches serve to diminish the transformational and humanizing purposes of learning in educational settings. The authors, Black and Dutta, both employees at a community college, reflect on their recent graduate-level education, as well as their roles at their college as they explore the tension between education and community development. The concepts surrounding the dialogical method—transformative learning, placemaking, and use of self—are explored to tune into these larger purposes of post-secondary learning. Principles of community development are used to integrate these theories into a framework that promotes facilitated learning spaces in colleges and universities towards the goal of engaging a sense of belonging for students, faculty, staff, and administration. Preliminary recommendations are proposed to implement and evaluate this framework.

Keywords: belonging, learning spaces, campus community, community development, post-secondary education

When reflecting on our experiences in post-secondary education, we note a tension between education and campus community development. We posit that post-secondary education, in an effort to promote both, is more reactive rather than responsive in its approach to community enhancement on campus. Such reactivity stems from institutions competing for the same students, the need to compete on the world stage, the desire to expand programming to a far wider population, and the ever-present concerns around funding (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Sommer, 2014). Moreover, education reform to enhance campus community consists of marketing, managerialism, and performativity, which are pre-conditions for various forms of "privatization" and "commodification" of core public services (Ball, 2003, p. 215). In turn, these limitations on who can participate in post-secondary education often permit individuals to occupy public space only as spectators and passive consumers (Kohn, 2008; Sandlin, Burdick, & Norris, 2012).

The problem with a reactive and passive approach lies in its compromise of participation, collaboration, awareness, and empowerment. These active principles promote community building and belonging to more tangibly support learning in post-secondary education, particularly for equity-seeking groups as defined by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (2015). Several authors name examples of where the challenges and opportunities lie in community development in post-secondary learning spaces. Burack (2005) finds the discrepancy for lowest-paid workers and higher-paid staff to limit participation in a more fulsome campus community. Geiger et al. (2017) examine whether comprehensive campus resources can promote a feeling of belonging in foster care students on campus. Scherrer and Morrison (2015) propose that, to more effectively support students living in poverty, campuses must use

collaborative resources to combat the poor decision-making and poor health that come with poverty. Students who struggle with mental illness worry about stigma (Beatie, Stewart & Walker, 2016) and require a campus environment that promotes awareness and respect for students to feel like they belong (Linden & Stuart, 2020). Regarding issues around race, educators are recommended to move toward addressing the deep emotional complexities that surround race for both racialized and white students (Zembylas, 2012). Post-secondary institutions are compelled to explore decolonization as a way to incorporate Indigenous science and methods of teaching, as well as research, and community building (Mitchell, Thomas, & Smith, 2018). Moreover, community collaboration within post-secondary institutions is pivotal in achieving greater gender equity on and off campus to overcome obstacles in representation and opportunity (Edge, Kachulis, & McKean, 2018). While campuses have provided numerous services such as student engagement, LGBTTQI+ groups, Indigenous student services, and collaborative learning spaces, the overall reactive approach to creating these services have perhaps compromised a more comprehensive way of community building and belonging.

Purpose – The Reminder and Return to Transformative Education

This paper introduces a conceptual framework of post-secondary education that reflects the values in what we outline as *intentional belonging*. It synthesizes themes of Indigenous education, experiential learning, belonging, and community development. The rationale for this paper and the proposed framework is to give voice to the gaps described above and to remind educators of our interest in employing education as a vehicle toward transformative social change. An analysis and integration of three theories (dialogical method, transformative learning, and placemaking) and the incorporation of one's self in this process will be provided. The framework is proposed as a heuristic device to ground post-secondary administration and employees in the work of both challenging the tensions in education and implementing an educational approach that reflects inclusivity and belonging.

Conceptual Framework – Intentional Belonging in Facilitated Learning Spaces

Education is the primary and most comprehensive format through which transformative social change takes place (Freire, 2000; Sinclair, 2015; TRC, 2015). The following framework (see Figure 1) meaningfully combines the dialogical method, transformative learning, placemaking, and use of self (four cogs) with four principles of community development (participation, awareness, collaboration, and empowerment) to humanize post-secondary education. We propose the notion of *facilitating learning spaces* to demonstrate how these elements interact to minimize the negative aspects of post-secondary education (consumerist and competitive) and reactivate the more meaningful principles of education founded in community development. Centering learning spaces around those interacting within the space enhances a sense of what we term *intentional belonging* as part of a campus community, which in turn fosters an environment conducive for transformation to occur.

As outcomes, the proposed conceptual framework below (see Figure 1):
- illustrates a systems approach to post-secondary education and community development within a facilitated learning space (as all the cogs interconnect);
- mediates gaps and tensions between social change theories related to education and community development (spaces between larger cogs);
- reconciles these gaps using four common principles of education and community development: participation, collaboration, empowerment, awareness (smaller red cogs);
- enacts these principles through the relationships between three pillar social change theories (dialogical method, transformative learning, and placemaking) and a depiction of the self (one's nature, experience, and self-understanding) (large gray cogs);

- sets outlying gray cog into motion, promoting simultaneous motion amongst the other cogs including the central cog of intentional belonging, while mediated by the smaller red cogs; and,
- supports the balance of intentional belonging through one's choice to belong and community-based responsibility within the facilitated learning space.

Figure 1

Fostering Intentional Belonging in a Facilitated Learning Space
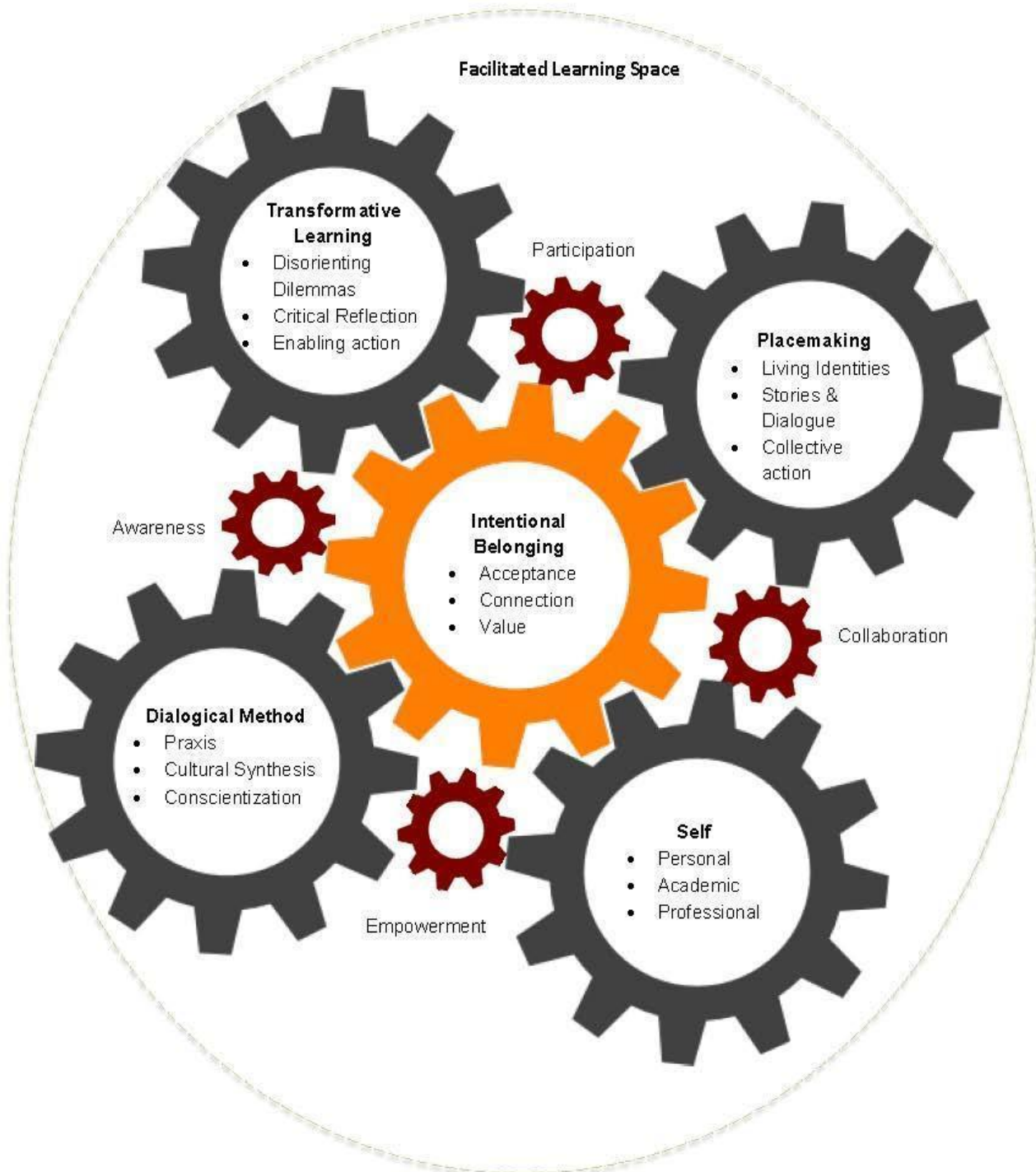
Defining the Framework's Overarching Concepts

We use the following key concepts to ground the foundations of the proposed framework. While we name and define these concepts distinctly, we see them as intertwined and layered in the larger implementation of the framework.

Campus Community

Post-secondary education is, in and of itself, a community that holds an integral role in transformational education. Peter Block (2018) states, "Community offers the promise of belonging and calls for us to acknowledge our interdependence" and draws on social capital, social fabric, association, and communal power to illustrate the transformational potential of a community to overcome problems (p. 4). There are a range of applications to post-secondary education. Heasley, Boone & Davidson (2020) use a "sense of community" model to identify membership, influence, reinforcement of needs, and shared emotional connection as important elements that link students living in residence to overall campus community enhancement. The connections between the professional field and the classroom are also ways in which mutual awareness and collaboration can be enhanced (Baechler, 2017) to foster community. The elements of sensemaking, namely campus identity, geographical place, institutional resources, and institutional image, can be harnessed to promote community building on campuses (Weerts, 2019). These examples of community highlight post-secondary education as a forum for transformational social change.

Facilitated Learning Spaces

A campus community is its own system and, in this framework, the cogs interact in what we call *facilitated learning spaces*—the space that sustains the learning community and promotes transformational change. We suggest a learning space is virtually any environment where community members share knowledge, engage in dialogue, hear one another's ideas, and nurture the functions of teaching and learning. Adding the term *facilitated* to learning spaces embodies a deliberate process with respectful and respectable leadership, defined purposes, and learner-grounded needs to further enhance the functions of teaching and learning (Moyer & Sinclair, 2020). Facilitation engages these functions, as well as the whole environment. As such, facilitated learning spaces are fluid, yet managed and constructed.

Intentional Belonging of Learners

Post-secondary institutions aim for all learners to feel a part of the campus community and learning spaces. Adult learning principles—including making learning relevant, ensuring interactions amongst learners and their environments, and linking to the student's knowledge and experience—are important to community building and student empowerment (Palis & Quiros, 2014). As such, intentional belonging for adult learners is more purposefully and meaningfully fostered because of its deliberateness, premeditation, and planning. Belonging means that one has a sense of their purpose in a space, that they can make meaning for themselves within that space, and that they can have relationships in that space. Therefore, in this framework, intentional belonging is incumbent upon the institution to 1) foster a learning space where students feel like they are accepted as individuals as part of a larger community, 2) promote and create opportunities for connections between the learners and the various components of the institution, and 3) engage learners in ways that help them feel valued individually and as members of the community. In concert with adult learning principles, intentional belonging also reflects the choice of the individual to belong to the extent that they wish (Banas & Wartalski, 2019). Even as the institution is responsible for fostering and intentionally creating a sense of belonging, it also respects the choice and consent of people to participate in the institution to their comfort and need (Shepherd, 2020). Therefore, interdependence and reciprocity are rooted in intentional belonging within this framework.

Community Development Principles

In this interdependent framework, fluid learning space is mitigated by principles of community development to manage any overreaching or overemphasis of the theories. In short, community development ensures that all the cogs (components) operate in synchronicity with one another. To generate communities for intentional belonging, we explain the following four terms as action-based principles.

Empowerment

Understanding empowerment is challenging, partly due to the need to operationalize empowerment within the context of those persons being empowered (Keough, 2008; McWhirter, 1991; Rappaport, 1981, 1987; Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b). As such, personal empowerment emphasizes obtaining skills, experiencing self-efficacy, exerting influence, and strengthening capacities to contribute to greater control over one's life and impact on the environment (Zimmerman, 1990b). Empowerment also translates to organizations and communities by providing opportunities and outlets for members to participate, influence, protect interests, and use collective action to improve their communities (Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b).

Awareness

Gaining a critical awareness or consciousness is the process by which an individual is better able to assess and understand their environment (Miller & Keys, 1996). This requires one to make note of their position in society and examine where they fit and where they do not fit. Critical awareness encompasses the ability to identify those with power and resources, as well as understand the impact that such allocations have on society and oneself (Miller & Keys, 1996). Such awareness then leads to an understanding of what one might do about their situation.

Participation

Participating is an important means of gaining self-help, skills, knowledge, and practice that aid the growth of individual empowerment and foster collective action (Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Involvement can "help decrease the sense of powerlessness, alienation, and withdrawal from community living" (Zimmerman, 1990a, p. 9). Engagement provides opportunities to take risks, relate one's own experience, receive feedback, and obtain mutual support (Miller & Keys, 1996). Participation may be active or passive, but there is a level of engagement beyond the self. This engagement is reflected in campus citizenship initiatives at colleges and universities across the West with departments that now focus on citizenship, campus life, and student engagement (Oikonomidoy, 2018).

Collaboration

Tyler et al. (1983) suggest collaboration to be a bi-directional model of helping in which both parties recognize each other's resources and limitations and acknowledge reciprocal gains resulting from working together. Developing relationships and reciprocity through collaboration allows groups to accomplish what no one individual could achieve on their own (Miller & Keys, 1996), whether toward individual or collective goals. Collaborative practice necessitates collective action as stated above. In education, this manifests in the co-ownership of learning (Owusu-Agyeman & Fourie-Malherbe, 2019).

Sensitizing Theories for Transformative Practice

Together, while these components of community development can be practiced in post-secondary settings, we assert that there is something in the intentional embodiment of these principles that transcends their apparent definitions. The insertion of *belonging* into the learning space means that community development principles in post-secondary settings need a more thoughtful approach as shown above. Since the framework is centered on transformative learning principles, community development must, therefore, also be transformative. Various institutional departments must transcend their often

singular and siloed foci, and move more meaningfully towards awareness and collaboration. Keeping in mind that the student is more than a passive recipient of education can help institutions make efforts for an engaged citizenship that promotes inclusiveness and belonging. The following theories are explicated to make links between their underpinnings to suggest how post-secondary learning spaces can be facilitated for these purposes.

Cog 1: The Dialogical Method

Freire (2000) proposed an educational model rooted in the dialogical method, emphasizing processes such as praxis, cultural synthesis, and conscientization. As per the cog in the framework above, this model of facilitation moves the organization toward transformative social change, with the goal of freeing learners from oppression. This process empowers learners, groups, and communities toward social change (Lee, 2001); in so doing, learners engage in and take ownership of their learning by becoming critically aware of their place in society, and their potential for further participation. Dialogic learning engages learners to explore their own self-reflections by developing empathy-based respect for others (Wells, 1999). The assertion that there is no "one" method and format for learning (Arnett, Bell, & Harden Fritz, 2010) engages dialogic learning by exploring, and then exposing, one's own biases (Freire, 2000). Thus, power emerges as an analytic focal point since power shapes knowledge. Dialogic learning challenges this power by naming bias, thereby engaging the learner in deepening self-knowledge. For this awareness to occur, the learning space needs to facilitate safety for growth for both the institution and the learners who comprise it.

Dialogic learning requires "praxis" (Freire, 2000) where a teacher or facilitator supports a person's increased awareness of how they identify, deconstruct, and reflect on problems in their lives. However, praxis uses reflection to more deeply explore one's positionality, i.e., knowing one's place in the world, to then emerge from it (Freire, 2000, p. 51). This process engages the individual to observe a nuanced understanding of their position in society, and then take a stance against it (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Such an approach also challenges the idea of singular learning styles (Hutchings, Scammell, & Quinney, 2013) to a position where inclusivity and wholeness are valued over compartmentalizing the student's identities. Praxis then engages the teacher to premise their work on co-intentional education to guide the student to expose the reality of their life, thereby furthering one's knowledge of their problems and possible social action (Freire, 2000), to release oneself from these oppressions. This praxis enhances reflection, which lies at the heart of empowerment. Post-secondary institutions can engage praxis by promoting student engagement in community initiatives, on and off campus, that raise social conscience, citizenship, and peer responsibility. Educators can also engage praxis by inviting students to participate in power-sharing in the co-creation of services and campus-based opportunities (Coffey & Elsawy, 2017). Such an approach then embodies inclusiveness and belonging for students.

The final term in the dialogic method is Freire's (2000) conscientization, "a mobilization of consciousness aiming to produce historic knowledge about oneself and about the groups to which one belongs, thereby producing a different understanding, and giving sense to one's temporal and spatial place in society, and in one's specific life-world" (Montero, 2009, p. 73). Through conscientization, the learner interrogates the realities of their own social world and their positions in this world to assess how such factors impact and shape their lives (Fook & Askeland, 2007; Heron, 2005). This knowledge-development approach is cumulative, building through socialization. Thus, the importance of reflective dialogue is a key process in conscientization (Sleeter, Torres, & McLaughlin, 2004) drawing upon a scaffolded learning approach (Vygotsky, 1978) where students' learning increases as they complete general tasks and engage in interactions with one another. Applied to the framework, colleges and universities can facilitate learning spaces that bridge the gap between the classroom and the campus. Activities in this regard include cross-program projects, shared classroom lectures, and team-teaching.

In sum, Cog 1 is rooted in Freire's (2000) process of "problematization" whereby learners question and are skeptical about beliefs and assumptions they previously took for granted (Montero, 2009). In other words, "the way things are" is no longer a valid statement. Problematization helps to name oppressions as the learner and other oppressed groups understand how to make sense of or interpret the

world. This helps the learner deepen their understanding of themselves (Martín-Baró, 1994). Learners not only recognize their place in society but, utilizing the same processes, then explore education as a route toward liberation from oppression. Therefore, the experience helps learners experience the shared aspects of community building and participatory citizenship. However, for this liberation, community building, and citizenship to take place, the post-secondary environment must open up its spaces to share power and, at times, be led by students. By engaging in education, learners acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote citizenship and professional engagement, thereby reducing their own oppression.

Cog 2: Transformative Learning

The critical awareness ignited by the dialogic method is also embodied and sustained in transformative learning. Transformative learning starts with the notion of "disorienting dilemmas" whereby learners are compelled to reconsider and critically reflect on the world and their place in it. In this process, Mezirow (1991) uses critical reflection to encourage people to be reflective and emotionally available for transformative change. This requires genuine relationships (Cranton, 2006), the reconstruction of personal meaning (Dirkx, 2006), and enabling action to embody new worldviews. Transformative learning results from challenge and struggle whereby one's consciousness and knowledge increase drastically (Mezirow, 1991). However, this transformation is a movement upward, a release from unconsciousness and ignorance to a level of self-awareness that vastly increases one's knowledge of one's place in the world (Cranton, 2006). Such knowledge takes place in the context of increasing diversity, shifts in the political landscape, and fuller recognition of events in the world that are now closer to home than ever before (Sleeter, Torres, & Laughlin, 2004). The implication for transformative learning here is that constant change in our socio-political environment necessitates the need for lifelong learning (Dirkx, 2006). In a post-secondary setting, transformative learning takes place in the exploration of ideas through vehicles of debate, discussion, and an application to the learner as an informed citizen who can employ critical thinking (Hayden & McIntosh, 2018). For the institution, the learning place is where the primary disorienting dilemma for the student to explore and resolve revolves around their immersion into higher learning, ethical scholarship, and engaged professional practice (Schon, 1987). The institution can, therefore, provide a place of transformative learning where the student incorporates many perspectives into their repertoire of growth and development. This requires expanding traditional approaches to teaching (e.g., lectures, presentations, and group work) to more creative venues for growth. Examples include community engagement (Ricke, 2018), autoethnography (Cebrera, Gilmour & Lovell, 2019), photovoice (Licthy, 2013) and blogging (Alexander & Bach, 2014).

When exposed to transformative learning, a person endures major adaptations in one's personality, ego, understanding of self, and even an organization of the self (Mezirow, 1991). Whereas reflection on a change is limited to thinking about an issue, transformative learning is a fundamental shift in one's identity (Brookfield, 1984). The changes are integrated as a part of one's personhood, reflected *within* rather than reflected *upon*. There is a sense of profoundness and extensive depth for someone who experiences transformative learning (Polkinghorne, 1988). Furthermore, transformative learning changes one's assumptions about the world around them, to a point where underlying cognitive structures of understanding and meaning-making alter and shift (Cranton, 2006). A poignant aspect of transformative learning is that, beyond personal shifts and movements, it also invokes one to transform their actions and behaviors (Mezirow, 1991). Through intentional belonging, as proposed by the framework, the institution is thus charged with the duty to go beyond classroom learning into engaging the student into a holistic campus community. The campus community then provides a safer environment to challenge one's assumptions and behaviors to facilitate a more socially informed and personally responsible way of being in the world.

Disorienting dilemmas and a reorganization of the self-engage the learner in critical pedagogy and critical reflexivity. Critical pedagogy is a method of educational practice based on examining dominant and oppressive organizational structures in society. Its task is to expose and undermine forms of subordination by challenging the power-based dynamics that marginalize people. Its goal is to work toward emancipation: the freeing of people who are oppressed, otherwise silenced and

made invisible (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Specific to power dynamics in education, critical pedagogy aims to challenge and topple institutionalized inequalities and inequities. Colleges and universities are uniquely positioned to create spaces and places where 1) the institution can model how it navigates such power sharing, and 2) the student can practice the skills necessary to upset such power inequities. In other words, the institution has a responsibility to practice and model critical reflexivity for its students, so that they may engage in this vulnerable, yet highly reflexive process.

Critical reflexivity goes beyond reflection; when combined with critical pedagogy, the aim is toward three areas. First, the educator or practitioner examines the state and status of knowledge in the field. Second, the educator explores their own self in the context of education by exploring how their position is conceived and given power. The third area is for the educator to understand their power in practice. This combination implores the educator to understand their own anxieties, inner tensions, and difficult feelings as they examine the power in their role (Glisczinski, 2007). If educators are to engage in critical reflexivity, they must explore issues concerned with how knowledge is constructed, the implications of subjectivity, and how power relations play out (Trevelyan, Crath, & Chambon, 2014). Applied to our proposed framework, higher learning must facilitate these learning places for students and all employees, where the exercise of reflexivity can be practiced without the threat of reprisal from higher levels. Concurrently, such exercises must be conducted in ways that enhance the integrity of the institution as it practices facilitating such places.

Cog 3: Placemaking

Facilitating learning spaces requires an acknowledgment and understanding of participation with a location, i.e., placemaking. When considering land pedagogy (Styres, 2017; Haig-Brown & Hodson, 2009; Donald, 2009), there is a connection to the concept of place, something grounded and unifying. "Place" conceptualizes how people ascribe meaning to their physical and social surroundings, as well as their emotional effects. Placemaking encompasses interconnections about stories and experiences between learners, teachers, and their communities. It is an emerging movement where teachers and learners (and administrators) participate in creating and transforming learning spaces to "strengthen the connection between people and the places they share" (Project for Public Spaces, 2017). This entails recognizing that the term *space* in itself suggests an area that is available or unoccupied, rather than *place* which is grounded in purpose for those connected to it. In this process-oriented model, there is great emphasis on the act of observing beyond the object of observation. This reflects an Indigenous worldview of the processes and interactions between all spiritual entities including animals, the earth, the heavens, people, trees, rocks, and rivers (Donald, 2009). In a similar vein of interconnectedness, when alumni of colleges and universities return for homecoming events, career forums for students, and even to mentor students, the institution can build on these relational areas by supporting students to appreciate and acknowledge how they were shaped and supported to be transformative citizens in that place.

Critical placemaking functions by accessing and transforming public places into spaces of dialogue, inclusion, and democratic participation. These storytelling and dialogical functions create the platform for conscientization and empowerment. Critical placemaking negotiates and communicates *who* belongs in a place through symbolic features of the physical environment. It also reveals the active, creative role of learners as agents of change rather than as passive consumers of place (Toolis, 2017), allowing for the representation and remembrance of histories previously rendered invisible by master/dominant narratives. These memories represent familiarity, recognition, and expectations that, developed over time, may lead to strong attachments to place (Knez, 2005). The sharing of these stories validates Freire's (2000) dialogical method, which can counteract a culture of silence and invisibility. Our proposed framework represents a solid shift that can facilitate community building and belonging through collaboration, dialogue, discussion, engaging the campus community, and promoting campus citizenship.

Another function of placemaking is embracing living identities: an embodied experience where our norms, identities, and behaviors shape and are shaped through these places of collective meaning-making (Toolis, 2017). Placemaking is a bottom-up, person-centered approach that emphasizes collaboration and participation to enhance the student experience (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). While

post-secondary education certainly has venues for some level of person-centered, bottom-up actions, placemaking is all-encompassing and transcends inclusivity and respect to more fulfilling ideas about unconditional belonging. This necessitates the campus to be far more intentional as it not just aims towards inclusivity, but looks to where it has marginalized members of its community. Placemaking may be a way to develop, beautify, and regenerate spaces perceived to be neglected (Bedoya, 2013) but placemaking also risks contesting and erasing histories and identities connected to that place and those who are framed as "out of place" (Loewen, 1999; Sharp, Pollock, & Paddison, 2005; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Tileagă, 2007). Therefore, placemaking has the potential to challenge the status quo by promoting social inclusion and a sense of belonging (Thomas, Pate, & Ranson, 2015), rendering the stories and histories of marginalized groups visible (Baca, 2005; Hayden, 1994), and providing a unifying framework for mobilizing collective action (Martin, 2003). As all members of a campus community experience engagement and belonging, there is an overall higher sense of self-esteem and pride, stronger neighbourhood ties, collective efficacy, and civic engagement (Brown et al., 2003; Lewicka, 2011). This process connects placemaking to transformation by praxis: "By facilitating dialogic encounters, recovering plural and contested histories, revealing the socially constructed nature of spatial relations, and articulating the important social issues of one's local context, critical placemaking can serve as a pathway for critical awareness and critical action" (Toolis, 2017, p. 189). Through the community development principles of awareness, participation, collaboration, and empowerment, campuses can indeed move beyond efforts towards inclusivity to places of transformation for both students and staff. For example, Ryerson University engaged in a process to reconsider the symbols and names of people on its buildings, originally who contributed to Indigenous genocide (McQuigge, 2017).

Cog 4: Use of Self

Thus far, placemaking, transformative learning, and the dialogical method are found to be key components of facilitating learning spaces. The fourth cog that activates the framework is via the various "selves" (i.e., student, faculty, staff, and administrators) that embody the post-secondary environment. As such, the use of self in this synthesis is necessary to reflexively articulate and position oneself in terms of social location, resulting in implications for power and privilege, as well as limitations. Intentionally making space for the self allows learners to be cognizant of the perspectives and interests they bring to learning (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Inserting all aspects of self (personal, academic, and professional) into the learning space humanizes education. For this section, we intentionally and consciously use first-person language to offer a brief example of the use of self in its three aspects as per this framework.

When I examine my *personhood*, I (Black), identify as a cis-gender, heterosexual woman in my early thirties. I come from relative stability and I recognize the privilege I have by being white. I actively partake in self-care to manage stress and well-being to counteract mental health concerns. I am socially well-connected throughout my family and community in various ways. *Academically*, I excelled in secondary and undergraduate studies, resulting in numerous awards. I immersed myself in the process of education through activities that contributed to the development of my entire self. Soon after my B.A., I saw my college as a forum for community building (e.g., dignity, self-determination, respect, advocacy). Ideas around equity and inclusion were prominent in my mind and, ultimately, the transformative experiences I encountered were what I wanted for all students. After a few years of working in my college, I sought the M.Ed. for additional theory and context through which I could focus my interests and ideals. As a *professional*, I am highly motivated by collaboration, connection, and community. I support campaigns promoting inclusion and respect, which requires connections with people and attentiveness to a process that nurtures relationships and enhances outcomes. I have a full-time, permanent position at my college, which includes a middle-class income and a comprehensive benefits package. The unique positions I have held necessitate productive working relationships with fellow employees. I was approached for many of these opportunities specifically because of my collaborative leadership skills and my philosophies around social change. In addition to supporting students, for me, these connections are value-based, intentionally directed activities that require risk, vulnerability, trust, and compassion.

As for my *personhood*, I (Dutta) am a cis-gendered, heterosexual male in my early fifties. I am a racialized person. I am aware of the power I have given my positionality, and the comfort I have in many ways due to my social and economic standing. In terms of *academics*, I was an average student through my secondary, undergraduate, and graduate education. School for me has been a challenge as, while I enjoyed learning, I find reading and persistence difficult and encountered cultural expectations that did not always align with my experience. After my B.A. and B.S.W., I immediately entered an M.S.W. program, and then practiced social work for many years. I began teaching at the college and university levels and, 15 years after the M.S.W., I entered a Ph.D. program. What my teachers and professors gave to me, are what I wanted to give to clients and students: care, guidance, acceptance, and community. *Professionally*, I experienced a career that is fulfilling and traverses a wide range in the social work field. At the micro-level, I aim to help people feel validated, cared for, respected, and acknowledge that their oppressions are real. As someone who works behind the scenes, I tend towards building services, programs, and approaches that empower, include, and nurture. I contribute to others' bigger pictures, by concretizing their visions into workable entities.

The above mini-autobiographies are intended only to exemplify how we bring our "selves" into this framework. The implications of who we are position us with our tasks and roles at our college. For example, I (Black) have a significant influence in shaping policy, while I (Dutta) significantly influence classrooms. Together (and with additional peers), we envision community at our college and in our roles. We support each other (Black at the macro level and Dutta at the micro-level), as we implement our vision as much as possible. We consciously maintain a position of respectful curiosity and always interrogate our own assumptions (and that of each other) in the face of students and employees who are vulnerable, marginalized, or disempowered. We engage in this dialogic praxis together and remind one another about the fact that, in the work we do, there are significant aspects of our identity, voice, and being. In retrospect, when we fully participated in our various roles academically as learners (and educators), we were empowered to engage, learn, and transform in these spaces. As a result, we sought out collaborations to further connect with the learning community. In turn, intentional collaboration led to further awareness and empowerment within the learning space, leading to a more realized sense of belonging in the campus community.

Applied to the framework, we assert that the use of self pervades the work that we all do at our respective colleges and universities. As a way of recognizing the importance of facilitating place, we believe that all staff have a role to play in noticing and being aware of people who "don't fit" and "don't belong." Just as important, staff must also notice, contribute, and amplify the privilege and gifts of each other to dismantle systems that harm, as well as hold space for those who experience that harm, directly or indirectly. The use of self, therefore, allows us to intentionally practice inclusion, belonging, and transformational learning.

Conclusion

As a systems approach, the proposed framework's effectiveness and functionality are dependent upon buy-in from a larger educational system, the relative speed of motion and change of the community development principles, and any institutional barriers that may impede the motion. However, the facilitated learning space allows openness for other components to be applied to better support the system and counteract barriers, such as consumerism culture. Implementing this framework requires intentionality, balance and context, which in turn, requires awareness about the tensions that naturally occur with the above framework.

To begin, we suggest that each department in post-secondary settings initiate conversations that traverse their individual roles into interdependent functions. The basis for such conversations requires collaboration and creativity. Further, we suggest that institutions invite and incentivize student participation in the planning of such cross-collaboration. In addition to engaging students, this increases organizational transparency and decreases the impact of institutional hierarchy. Students can share the specific ways departments can contribute to their citizenship, learning, and belonging experience.

Students and staff can act as co-ambassadors to the larger campus community as they intentionally facilitate these spaces.

A second recommendation we suggest is ongoing and frequent evaluations of these processes. Similar to *temperature taking*, institutions can engage students to evaluate how they experience belonging and community. Measures such as the University Connectedness Scale (Stallman & Hurst, 2016), the School Belongingness Scale (Arslan & Duru, 2017), Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks (O'Mara & Richter, 2017), and the Belonging to University Scale (Karaman & Cirak, 2017) can be drawn upon to solicit student feedback. Concurrent with administering such scales, we suggest focus groups and community town hall forums to hear in-the-moment reflections of student experiences, which can help strategize practices that dismantle and transform campus systems that perpetuate harm and exclusion. Again, not only does this engage students, but it also models the activating of these transformative places and processes, whereby the institution shifts its engagement of students from passive recipients and providers of feedback to participation and practice in co-creating spaces that transform learning.

A third recommendation we suggest is intended as cautionary. Proposed shared spaces must also embrace the natural tensions caused by competing human rights, misinterpretations of academic standards, language and cultural differences, and power dynamics and injustices. As institutions transition into facilitating learning places, they must go beyond acquiring or speaking to a knowledge of inclusivity and equity into demonstrating true environments of citizenship, belonging, and participation. This entails processes for building trust, communication, and understanding, equity-informed departments, and objective ombudsperson offices.

The framework we propose is reflexive and does indeed humanize education via the use of self. It is a reminder that humanizing education necessitates humanizing ourselves and the institution. Such a balance also must consider diverse and intersectional identities. Otherwise, there is a risk of alienating the self linked to the displacement of individual qualities and introjection in response to external contingencies, resulting in inauthentic practice and relationships (Ball, 2003, p. 223). For instance, the newcomer student faces language barriers and acculturation challenges while they are attempting to engage with their education. The student who identifies as LGBTTQI+ struggles with marginalization while seeking gender-safe and neutral washrooms. The student struggling with mental illness faces stigma and challenges to their confidence and competence. Therefore, the institution needs to ready itself around the community principles (awareness, participation, empowerment, and collaboration) to intentionally account for, and include, diverse identities and experiences as part of belonging.

We acknowledge the primary limitation of this paper as theoretical. As we contemplate this synthesis, we see ourselves transcending defined roles such as "administrator" and "teacher" by more actively tapping into our common identities as a professional, academic, and person. In other words, the synthesis is less about the roles and more about the functions and activities within, and outside, these roles. Subsequently, the implications for personal growth and professional development are directed at functions such as leadership, coaching, and mentorship. A second limitation, in line with the theoretical approach to the paper, is the lack of a more thorough review of the literature around evidence of these concepts in post-secondary education. Future research that implements and evaluates the proposed framework would be better positioned to gather existing literature that examines how colleges and universities operationalize, implement, and evaluate these concepts.

As we balance and integrate social change and education, we look to employ *facilitated learning spaces* to maximize belonging for marginalized and Indigenous peoples, fellow employees, and learners. To broaden this framework's application, we endeavor to encourage and support others as they practice reflexivity and insert themselves into the framework. This framework is meant to facilitate dialogue with colleagues at professional development workshops, conferences, and collaborative working groups. Since the general principles of humanization ground this framework, we foresee further opportunities for applications in elementary, secondary, private, familial, and public education facilitated learning spaces. For accountability and growth, these opportunities will require measuring and evaluating principles qualitatively and quantitatively with assessment tools developed by social change leaders. Intentional belonging is, therefore, an ideal as well as an action.

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Spiritual Practices and Adult Transformative Learning

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Abstract

Spiritual practices, such as meditation and prayer, as well as transformative learning apply reflection to help make sense of our lives. When something in life takes an unexpected turn, it promotes reflection and reflection plays a pivotal role in adult learning. Adult learners reflect in various ways; when something arrests our attention such as a disorienting dilemma, we may find ourselves reflecting on consciousness and unconscious thoughts and beliefs. A disorienting dilemma is when a person's current understanding of the world; described as a frame of reference or habits of the mind is found to be invalid, inauthentic, or inconsistent in a new reality, situation, or experience (Mezirow, 1991). In those critical moments of life, it becomes increasingly important to make sense of contradictions and uncertainties. Dirkx (1997) pointed out that, "ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox invite expressions of soul" (p. 82). When faced with a jarring experience in life, we may find ourselves questioning what we believe at the deepest level of who we are. The path forward after a life-altering experience includes reflecting upon thoughts, attitudes, and actions to make sense of the new reality. The human soul, often referred to as the mind, will, and emotion, appears to have an innate need to make meaning and find congruence; spiritual practices can help us do that. As an adult educator and counsellor, I believe there is a role for spiritual practices such as reflection for living a meaningful life that may even contribute to transformative learning.

Keywords: Spirituality, adult development, psychological development, adult psychological development, spiritual development, consciousness development, transformative learning, spiritual practices, and transformative learning.

Perspectives on Adult Development

During middle adulthood, adults experience ongoing mental, spiritual, and psychological development (Fowler, 1981; Merriam, et al., 2007; Schaie, 1983) that may lead some adults to a natural place of change impacting self-concept and other areas of life. By adult psychological development, I am referring to thoughts, feelings, and actions that inform our understanding of self and way of being in the world. Until adulthood and often into mid-adulthood, an individual's self-concept is largely influenced by genetics (nature) and environmental (nurture) factors. During middle adulthood, an individual has an opportunity to re-evaluate external influences and re-interpret their lived experiences by examining the meaning structures that inform their choices, actions and interpretation and understanding of self (Mezirow, 1991). In conducting a review of adult psychological development, I have attempted to apply a holistic approach by also considering how adults develop greater conscious awareness and how adults develop spiritually during midlife. The following section will summarize select literature on the topic of adult psychological development, including consciousness and spiritual development.

Psychological Development

There are a few ways to conceptualize adult development. For instance, Merriam et. al (2007) pointed out that "psychological models of development have been used to explore faith development (Fowler 1981), moral development (Kohlberg, 1976), identity development (Erikson, 1968; Loevinger, 1976), and intellectual development (Perry, 1999)" (p. 299), and more recently transformation (Illeris, 2013) as well as self-development (Gould, 1978; Kegan, 1994, 2009). Kjellström and Stålnep (2017)

suggest that adult development theories provide a framework to better understand the challenges and social problems of our time.

> Adult development theories provide an explanation of why people have qualitatively different ways of thinking, talking, and acting. People's stations in life have a profound influence on what they notice and are aware of and how they act in the world. These different ways can be ordered by stages of development, through which some people have the potential to evolve. (p. 274)

Furthermore, Erikson's (1978) adult development eight-stage theory offers a lens to view adult development as a balance between the needs of self with the needs of society. Explaining Erikson's theory Merriam et al. (2007) posited that as adults develop, the individual is faced with a choice between opposites, one positive and one negative. Before moving to the next stage of adult development, it is necessary to choose more positives than negatives. For instance, in middle adulthood, resolving the tension between generativity and self-absorption allows individuals to care for others. In the "generativity vs. stagnation" (Slater, 2003) stage, generativity involves finding meaningful life work that contributes to society and the development of others and may consist of activities such as teaching, mentoring, or volunteering. Stagnation, on the other hand, may be experienced if the adult does not find meaningful life work in which case the individual may become disconnected from others and/or have little interest in self-development. Also, according to Erikson's theory, in older adulthood, resolution between integrity versus despair provides the capacity for wisdom.

Haynes (2009) pointed out that adult development is not restricted to biological, cognitive, or social/emotional development, rather it is important to consider all aspects of the human psyche for holistic human development. "Holistic thought is concerned with bridging the divide between the egotic self and the true self; [it] is also spiritually attuned and oriented. Holism is an inclusive, meaning-centered, experience-focused paradigm that emphasizes the intrinsic connectedness in life" (Haynes, 2009, p. 55). Adult spiritual development is explained further in the sub-section below, however, initial context follows. Sinnott (2002a), suggested that "developing individuals express their belief that spirituality plays a key role in their development, yet developmental psychologists have given comparatively little attention to this factor. [Furthermore], the concept of spirituality is seldom considered separately from that of religion" (p. 199). Weaver et al. (2006) conducted an extensive search of academic databases for articles published between 1965–2000 on the topic of spirituality and religion. They found that while there was a growing interest in spirituality, there was a declining interest in religion. "Spirituality has come to be seen as more open, inclusive, and more important than religion, at least as traditionally defined" (King, 2011, p. 20). Yet overall, spiritual development has received less academic attention than other types of development. Given that spiritual development has received less scholarly attention than biological, cognitive, or emotional development, topics such as meditation-reflection, non-religious spirituality, and the concept of the soul are important to promote a balanced developmental perspective (Haynes, 2009). For scholarly investigation of the spirit and holistic human development research to become viable, according to Haynes it has some catching up to do.

The various perspectives above provide insight into the ways adults develop. Erikson's (1978) theories focused on identity development by examining the self in relation to others (Slater, 2003). Haynes (2009) emphasized the need for a holistic approach to adult development, one that is inclusive, meaning centered, and experience focused. Sinnott (2002c) pointed out that some individuals find spirituality plays a role in self-development. Developmental stage theories have a long history; however, according to Kjellström and Stålnep (2017), adult developmental meaning making stage theories arose only within the last 40 years. Furthermore, Kjellström and Stålnep posit, "adult development is a subfield within developmental psychology that traces development beyond adolescence and into adulthood" (p. 267). Although adult development meaning making has found a place in developmental psychology more recently, adult spiritual development is not widely accepted because it is difficult to operationalize and test. It appears that a concrete positivist paradigm remains the preferred way of conceptualizing adult development. However, by overlooking adult spiritual development, are we perhaps missing an important

link between adult development and consciousness development? Building further upon this notion, next I will summarize key findings around consciousness development and spiritual development.

Consciousness Development

An important part of adult psychological development is consciousness development, or evolution of consciousness. Consciousness assists in meaning making as well as shaping and interpreting lived experiences. Developing greater levels of consciousness is necessary in adulthood to solve the complex problems that face our world so that we may sustain our planet and promote survival of the human race. It has been suggested by radical thinkers such as Einstein that it is not possible to solve problems by applying the same type of thinking that created the problems in the first place. Developing consciousness in adulthood allows us to look more deeply into ourselves and the world around us. To move from our current state to a future state, a new order of thinking becomes necessary.

> The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And because we fail to notice that we fail to notice there is little we can do to change until we notice how failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds. (R.D. Laing,1970 as cited by Mezirow, 1991, p. 19)

Robert Kegan, an American psychologist and professor in Adult Learning and Professional Development at Harvard Graduate School of Education, pointed out how increasing levels of consciousness become possible as the individual develops. Each developmental stage of consciousness is a triumph over the limitations of the distortions of a prior meaning system, and the development stages are also a limitation to future developments (Kegan, 1994). Kegan's theory of identity development is a constructive-developmental theory that focuses on how people construct meaning from their lived experiences. It was first introduced in 1982 in Kegan's book *The Evolving Self.* The theory was revised in 1994 in his book *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life.* Kegan's theory is about "the evolution of consciousness, the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of mind" (Kegan, 1994, p. 9). Progression through the orders of consciousness may represent transformation in the way adults think and make sense of their lives. The five orders of consciousness are as follows:

Table 1

The Five Orders of Consciousness

Order of Consciousness	Characteristic	Perception
First Order: Impulsive	The child-like mind perceives and responds by emotion	Social relating is egocentric
Second Order: Imperial	The instrumental mind, motivated primarily by one's desires	Focus is on self and what the self wants
Third Order: Interpersonal	The socialized mind, defined by the group	Seeks reciprocal, mutually rewarding relationships and meeting other people's expectations
Fourth Order: Institutional	The self-authoring mind, self-directed	Self-authoring your own identity. For instance, establish own set of values and ideologies and becoming own person

Table 1 Continued

The Five Orders of Consciousness

Order of Consciousness	Characteristic	Perception
Fifth Order: Inter-individual	The self-transforming mind, generally occurring after the age of 40	Interpret self and surrounding systems. Adults can see beyond themselves and others and understand how all people and systems are interconnected

Adapted from *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life,* Kegan, 1994, p. 29.

It is important to note that Kegan's fifth order of consciousness development is more likely to occur after the age of 40, which may suggest that increased levels of consciousness may be attainable in midlife and beyond. One way that adults could potentially expand consciousness and attain Kegan's fifth order of consciousness leading to greater awareness of self and surrounding systems is the use of spiritual practices such as contemplation and reflection. To that end, I will take a closer look at adult spiritual development in the following sub-section.

Spiritual Development

From a holistic perspective of adult development, consideration of spiritual development should not be excluded. "Anything that moves the individual towards a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning perspective, the validity of which has been established through rational discourse, aids an adult's development" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 7). When considering spirituality, the word *soul* often appears and is sometimes used synonymously with the word *spirit*.

> Soul has to do with authenticity, connection between heart and mind, mind, and emotion, the dark as well as the light. Learning is not simply a preparation for life. It is life, the experience of living. Coming to know ourselves in the world and how we make sense of the other within this world are critical aspects of learning. (Dirkx, 1997, p. 83)

Furthermore, Dirkx (2012) links spirituality to deep meaning and purpose that may "align with particular faith-based expressions" (p. 357). Spirituality is not synonymous with religion even though "the concept of spirituality is seldom considered separately from that of religion." (Sinnott, 2002, p. 199, part I). When I use of the word "spirituality," I am not referring to organized religion or religious practices or traditions, but rather to individual practices used to cultivate and nurture self-awareness, self-understanding, and interpretation of existential reality. "Spirituality is about an individual's personal experience with the sacred, which can be experienced anywhere. Religion, on the other hand, is about an organized community of faith, with an official creed, and codes of regulatory behavior" (Tisdell, 2008, p. 28).

Spirituality often relates to the human mind, psyche, and consciousness, and by nature these concepts are abstract. No one has ever seen a human mind, psyche, or consciousness, yet we have all seen and experienced the outcome of these essences, which allow humans to reason, contemplate, and reflect. Spirituality, which may be cultivated by applying spiritual practices, has been applied by many as a useful construct for understanding the self, contributing to self-consciousness, social consciousness, rationality, and ethical conduct. The concept of spiritual development is important because unless the human spirit is cultivated and nurtured, it does not necessarily flourish. Like other learned skills, the skill of spirituality can be learned with intentionality, achievable through spiritual practices. Spiritual practices are personal practices applied to connect with a purpose and power greater than oneself; for instance, contemplation, reflection, meditation, prayer, and reading sacred text (Dirkx, 1997; English, 2001; Groen, 2018).

Spiritual development is, in some ways, similar to cognitive development (Cartwright, 2001); "even among adults, there is tremendous variability in levels of cognitive functioning and spiritual understanding" (p. 216). If adults have varying degrees of cognitive functioning, then it stands to reason that adults also have varying degrees of spiritual functioning. Some adults may not have the capacity for spiritual understanding, for instance in the case of severe mental or cognitive impairment, still others who are capable may view spirituality as being of little importance. Regardless of the individual's capacity for spiritual development or interest in spiritual development, for spirituality to develop it must be intentionally learned and cultivated. Intentionality is essential because the busyness of life is often not supportive of spiritual development and is perhaps one of the reasons why spiritual development has become a secondary priority. To nurture spiritual development, an intentional sacred space may be created in our lives for the spirit's presence to dwell and make itself known (Tisdell, 2008). The cares, concerns, and struggles of life often crowd out the sacred dwelling space of the spirit leaving the spirit at times abandoned, unattended, undernourished, and undeveloped.

Although not without controversy, James Fowler (1981) provided a basic model to conceptualize spiritual development in *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. Fowler's work outlined six stages of faith. His model was influenced by the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg. Fowler proposed six stages of faith as outlined below, and he suggested that not everyone moves beyond stage three or four, and those who do often revert to earlier stages. Note, the listed ages are not prescriptive rather they suggest the age when the individual is able to view the world in a certain way.

Table 2

Stages of Faith

State/Age	Stage Characteristics
1 (age 2–5)	**Intuitive-projective** • world viewed through imagination and wonder • self-centered ("me") • "sin" is punishment/reward for specific acts • awakening to world beyond brings self-doubt
2 (age 6–12)	**Mythic-literal** • value being part of group, yield easily to its authority • faith relies on stories, rules, and values of family and church • concrete thinking; e.g. sin is specific act, not inherent nature • do not feel accountable before God • world becomes more linear, orderly, and predictable
3 (age 12–14)	**Synthetic-conventional** • faith perceived with mind as important as heart faith • thinking in abstract terms about God and world • become creatures of choice and exercise will • synthetic in bringing together inherited values, beliefs and self-reflection, but conventional in that beliefs derived from others, not yet owned • want to know who God is and what God requires

Table 2 Continued

Stages of Faith

State/Age	Stage Characteristics
4 (age 15–18)	**Individuative-reflective** • self-authorization emerges, choosing one's beliefs and commitments • faith of mind and heart at odds with each other • doubt may be necessary part of journey toward personal faith • "our faith" becomes "my faith"
5 (age 30 and beyond)	**Conjunctive faith** • awareness of need to hold polarities, contradictions, and paradoxes together • "living faith while holding doubt" • may go through "dark night of the soul" • beyond propositional truth to "second naiveté" (post-critical thought) • open to other traditions while holding to own faith
6 (comes in later years to a few)	**Universalizing faith** • see corruption of old regime and rejoice in the new • beyond self, see through eyes of persons, motives and faiths other than our own • invest in ultimate values that give life meaning and worth • emptied of self (Gelassenheit), even to death

Stages of Faith (Fowler, 1981, pp. 1–2)

Fowler studied hundreds of individuals to understand the different modes of meaning making across the lifespan (Cartwright, 2001). "Fowler (1981) suggested that individual faith development reflects a 'meaning making' process in which individuals seek to understand their own lives and the values and commitments that guide them" (Cartwright, 2001, p. 216). According to Fowler, faith development is the way in which individuals come to understand themselves, the other, and the world around them. Critics question if it is possible to reduce faith development to six clearly defined stages that apply to all people everywhere. What about individuals who live in a different cultural context other than America or who would not identify as a United Methodist Christian (Fowler was a minister in the United Methodist Church)? Is it plausible that faith development is universal and that all cultures (collectivist and individualist) would assign the same meaning to the values, images of power, and master stories that are inherent in Fowler's stages of faith? Despite the controversy that cultural context is taken for granted in Fowlers model, Fowler offers one way to conceptualize stages of faith development.

Fowler's research is now dated, but more recently, Fenwick and English (2004) proposed eight dimensions of spirituality that may also be useful in defining the meaning making process in terms of how spirituality helps the individual make sense of their life. The eight dimensions of the Fenwick & English model may promote greater clarity of self-concept through critical reflect on each of the dimensions. The eight dimensions are as follows:

1. Life and death (the meaning of life on earth or beyond)
2. Soul and self (the nature of spirit)
3. Cosmology (the nature of the spiritual universe, including higher powers)
4. Knowledge (the nature of truth)
5. The "Way" (the nature of the spiritual journey or search)
6. Focus (the purposes of spiritual seeking)

7. Practices of spirituality and the role of others
8. Responses (action and application arising from spiritual pursuits)

Lastly, Jankowski (2002) indicated that "spirituality involves finding meaning in adherence to a set of larger beliefs, the exercise of faith as a way of knowing, and an experience of connection with [a higher power] and others" (p. 69). "Spirituality is about being aware and honoring the wholeness and interconnectedness of all things through the mystery of a higher power. It is about seeking a sense of purpose and ultimately making meaning in our lives" (Groen, 2018, p. 121).

In summary, spiritual development and spirituality has received less academic attention than other types of development; however, to gain a holistic perspective of adult development, it is necessary to also consider adult spiritual development. Dirkx (1997) pointed out that soul is central to learning for life and that spirituality is about deep meaning and purpose. To that end English and Fenwick's as well as Fowler's constructs may be of value in the meaning making process. Acknowledging and nurturing the soul through spirituality is like other competencies and is a learned skill through the application of spiritual practices. Perhaps spirituality and spiritual practices is a skill that can contribute to consciousness building, as identified in Kegan's (1994) orders of consciousness, and inform self-concept. Next, I will explore what specifically is being transformed in adult transformative learning.

What is being transformed

When an individual experiences a disorienting dilemma, it has the potential to bring evolution or revolution to one's meaning structures and increase one's conscious awareness. We use our meaning structures to make meaning and they consist of our thoughts and beliefs, passions and values, actions and contributions. Our meaning structures are made up of our ontology and epistemology. Ontology encompasses how we view reality and how we expect reality to operate in which our meaning schemes (Mezirow, 1991) may play a role. Our epistemology forms our meaning perspectives and how we come to know or arrive at understanding. It is these meaning structures that may experience a transformation.

A transformative learning experience needs to be distinguished from a non-transformative learning experience. Kegan (2009) proposed the question in relation to transformative learning: "What form transforms?" In response, Illeris (2014) suggested that it is the individual's self-concept or identity that is being transformed. An adult's self-concept is shaped and re-shaped within the context of meaning structures represented by epistemology and ontology. The individual's epistemology is a type of meaning scheme used to interpret experiences and construe meaning through observation or participation. Mezirow (1991) pointed out that meaning schemes made up of our beliefs, knowledge, values, judgement, and feelings are used to interpret our experiences and guide our actions. Ontology on the other hand is one's expectation of how thing exist or occur a type of meaning perspective which Mezirow (1991) referred to a "habitual set of expectations that constitutes an orienting frame of reference that we use in projecting our symbolic models and that serves as a (usually tacit) belief system for interpreting and evaluating the meaning of experience" (p. 42).

Portraiture of Transformative Learning

Perhaps a transformative experience can best be demonstrated using an allegory that illustrates a revolutionary transformation of self-concept. Reflecting on my life experiences as I contemplate what transformative learning may look like, I have scripted the following allegory.

Once upon a time not unlike the 21st century, in a land not so different from the world today, there lived Folly and Wisdom. Both Folly and Wisdom wanted to live a happy and meaningful life, and both would make several choices that would impact the outcome of that shared goal.

Focusing primarily on his own happiness, Folly was easily distracted by temporary and short-lived promises of power, wealth, and pleasure. Folly carefully studied the successful leaders of the Kapo concentration camp where Folly, himself a prisoner, was determined to rise to the top. Each time he brutally abused, oppressed, and exploited fellow prisoners, he would gain special rewards from the guards such as extra food and cigarettes, which satisfied his desire to consume. He learned to slander and tell

malicious tales about prisoners that would bring about their death but would reward Folly with special recognition from the guards. Folly thought to himself, "Nothing will stand in my way of climbing to the top and gaining more and more power each day and consuming more and more each day." The more power, wealth, and pleasure Folly secured for himself, the greater his appetite grew for yet more.

Wisdom was careful in action, thought, and deed. Wisdom, not much interested in power, wealth, pleasure or consuming for the sake of consuming, gladly gave his time to make the world a better place. He carefully nurtured his relationships and regarded fellow humans as equal and free agents and took the time to listen to and understand their unique perspectives. Others had come to know Wisdom as a person of compassion, grace, and integrity who wanted to do the right thing by conducting himself morally and ethically in all his dealings and relationships even when no one was watching.

One day, seeking a disguise that would permit him to ruthlessly indulge in all his indiscretions without consequence, Folly crafted a clever plan to change his appearance. He would find a way to fit in with the most popular, the most beautiful, and the wealthiest people. He would use his clever disguise to gain friends and secure even more power, wealth, and pleasure for himself. On that day, in his disguise, Folly met another cleverly disguised individual who was even more ruthless in his pursuit of power, wealth, and pleasure. But Folly did not know that he was in the presence of The Fierce Consumer. Before long, Folly found himself used as a tool by The Fierce Consumer who was restrained by nothing in his endless pursuit of consumption. The Fierce Consumer said malicious and slanderous things about Folly that led Folly to lose his popular, beautiful, and wealthy friends and nearly cost Folly his life.

For the first time, Folly paused and pondered his choices. He began to question his pursuit of power, wealth, and pleasure, and at that very moment Wisdom walked by. Admiring the meaningful and happy life of Wisdom, Folly stopped the man and began to ask questions. Before long, Folly and Wisdom became friends. When their eyes met, Wisdom instantly recognized himself. Wisdom was looking at a younger version of himself. As Wisdom extended his hand of forgiveness (a spiritual construct) to Folly, their chance meeting that day saved Folly's life. Applying reflection and meditation (a spiritual practice), Folly questioned the social and cultural norms that had guided his life till now. He began to recognize dehumanizing ideologies within his social, political, and economic surroundings upon which he had become dependent and accept without question and that had, until now, left him merely exploited and oppressed. That day, Folly learned what it meant to move from being merely an egocentric consumer to also being a mindful contributor within society. To envision what it means to consider society in addition to self, Folly found his spiritual practices such as meditation and reflection useful for evaluating and re-evaluating his personal values and the guiding principles that govern his live.

Is the single moment of transformation identifiable? I have invested a considerable amount of time contemplating this question to understand this intangible and abstract phenomenon. The way that I conceptualize the moment of transformation is when new life is breathed into one's mind or consciousness. Ancient Greek philosophy identifies a word which I think helps to conceptualize transformation. The word is *Pneuma* (πνεῦμα) which literally translates to *breath,* and in some instances, I have seen it referred to as *breath of life* which also refers to *spirit* in the religious context. I think Michelangelo provided a visual depiction of the concept of *pneuma* in his famous work *Creation of Adam,* which adorns the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The picture displays Adam's lifeless hand and body infused with life, breath, and consciousness by the powerful extended hand of God. At that very moment when their fingers meet, a spark of new life is released into Adam's limp hand and his mind, spirit, and body come alive. It is at that single moment that Adam's identity as a human being is formed, his purpose and potential for being in the world is birthed, and the actions he must take to sustain life and the world become a life-long mission.

Perhaps the reason why the exact moment of a transformation seems nebulous is because the work of transformation is ongoing and never entirely completed. As outlined throughout this essay, adult development is ongoing, self-concept is continually evolving because of interpretation and reinterpretation of lived experiences and the transformation of meaning structures in which spiritual practices may also play a role.

Spiritual Practices and Transformative Learning Summary

The phenomena of spiritual practices and transformative learning share some attributes in common, for instance, both make use of reflection to help make sense of our lives. Reflection may support consciousness development (Kegan, 1994), support greater understanding of self (Fower, 1981; Fenwick & English, 2004), and help us connect with our deepest values (Dirkx, 1997). As demonstrated in the allegory above, spiritual practices may also be useful for understanding relationship with self and others and may help inform our relationship to society. Transformative learning also increases understanding of self and relationship with others by informing meaning structures, attitudes, and behaviors (Mezirow, 1991).

In my own adult learning journey, I apply spiritual practices when there is a gap in my understanding that stands in the way of my ability to make sense of my life. True of my own life experience, transformative learning may occur when there is a misalignment or incongruence between my expectations and reality and is sometimes initiated by a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991). When I have an experience, I struggle to make sense of, I apply critical reflection, spiritual practices, and transformative learning to reflect on my meaning structures and interpret or re-interpret my experiences. Additionally, both spiritual practices and transformative learning may contribute to a new paradigm or a new way of viewing things and may even result in creating new or reformed/transformed meaning structures culminating in a different lifestyle or altered actions.

Transformative learning begins with critical reflection and rational discourse (Mezirow, 1991). Both spiritual practices and transformative learning may apply reflection to interpret and re-interpret lived experiences, resulting in a new paradigm or new or transformed meaning structures and potentially result in different actions. "Mezirow (1998) posited that adult learning occurs in four ways—elaborating existing frames of reference, learning frames of reference, transforming points of view, and transforming habits of mind—and named critical reflection as a component of all four" (Brown, 2004, p. 85). For a learning experience to be considered transformative, its impact must be observable by others, for instance, a notable behavioral change (Taylor & Cranton, 2013). An added benefit of applying spiritual practices to reflect is that it facilitates psychological decentering by adopting a comparative frame of mind to call into question culturally informed meaning structures and consider other perspectives. When we begin to notice what we had previously failed to notice, consciousness may be expanded thereby promoting adult psychological development and may even result in transformative learning. As outlined in this essay, psychological development, consciousness development, and spiritual development all play an important role in holistic adult development by assisting the individual with establishing "a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning perspective" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 7). With expanded meaning structures we may be more equipped to understand ourselves, others, and solve the complex social problems in our world today.

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Transformational Education in Brazil

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Abstract

The Brazilian educational system has always been considered extremely complex, both from the political and financial aspects, as well as from the social-democratic aspect. Overcoming structural difficulties like this leads us to remember the transformational format, proposed by Mezirow and subsequently studied by many other authors. The relationship between this format and the Brazilian educational system can be considered a little difficult to understand, but when related to the little aspects that make transformational education what it is, it creates a self-desire that is born from the inner psychological acknowledgment of the need to act, which can promote a powerful impact in the lives of our students.

Keywords: Transformational education, Brazilian education system, Freire, Habermas, School, Society

Transformational Education in Brazil

The Brazilian educational system has always been very complex and difficult to amend due to the many public policy flaws of the past. According to Vaconcelos and Campos (2004), the educational reforms implemented by the Brazilian government in the 90s were characterized by such flaws in the system as a lack of efficiency and not ensuring universal access to education. The vision of education developed over the subsequent years in adherence to these policies continued to deny many young people the benefits of a system that could transform their lives.

The issue that arises here is, how the learning process can have the maximum impact on the lives of students. Although the debate on different types of education systems is ongoing, in recent years, we have been able to extend our understanding of how education changes the manner in which we interpret the world (Laros et al., 2017). This resulted in the creation of several theories that introduced new possibilities for human development. Of them, the most recent and promising one seems to be transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978). This theory is focused on adult learners. Many other authors have devoted much time to research and analysis of this theory and improved upon its concepts, increasing its practicality in the educational environment. This study attempts to highlight the strongest contributions of this theory in the field of education as a foundation for the best proposals regarding the Brazilian education system.

Although the transformative learning theory is aimed at adult education, several of its concepts can be applied to meet the various needs of basic education in a way that can deeply impact the final result of how the learning process occurs at school. It should be noted that many authors who have discussed transformative learning (Laros et al., 2017; Taylor & Cranton, 2013; Hoggan, 2016; Illeris, 2018) agree that the links between experience and didactics are intimately related at all stages of the individual's education. Thus, a discussion about its possibilities is more than necessary. By analyzing its implementation from a socio-educational perspective, this study will make recommendations for implementing transformative learning, which could result in the reduction of the socio-educational gap in the country.

The Brazilian Education System and its Problems

The Brazilian education system is defined by two main legislatures: The Law of Directives and Bases of Education—or Law No. 9,394 of 1996, also known as LDB—and the general guidelines of the Federal Constitution of 1988, Chapter III of which determines that basic education is a right of all citizens (Campioni, 2018). These guidelines authorize government spheres to conduct and maintain educational programs designed based on the Common National Curriculum Base or *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC). The BNCC is envisaged in the LDB as a set of guidelines for students to achieve educational goals (De Melo, 2016). It seeks to ensure that all students have access to basic and indispensable knowledge, regardless of their background, origin, or the condition of their educational environment. Mainly, it is up to the union, states, federal districts, and municipalities to plan, finance, maintain, and execute teaching policies as defined in the BNCC, the LDB, and the constitutional guidelines.

Let's highlight the views of some of the leading Brazilian educators on education:

- Anísio Teixeira, opines "The school is a space for the exercise of democracy and is the main republican institution, whose function is to guarantee the autonomous and free-thinking of students to prepare them to build the desired society." (Teixeira, 1996).
- Darcy Ribeiro is a defender of the comprehensive education program, who mainly supported the integration of school and family.
- Paulo Freire believes that cultural history should be integrated with pedagogical teaching and that adult students tend to learn more from their history and experience.
- Maria Nilde Mascellani believes in the power of a student's personal decisions to try different classes and choose their destiny through trial-and-error.

All these educators have emphasized the need for a renewed focus on education and investment in this sector. They have made it clear that this is the minimum expected of any country anticipating the development of its people. It is also in accordance with the Brazilian constitution which stipulates very clearly that education is the state's obligation (Brazil Gov., 2010). However, there are several problems that inhibit the educational development of Brazil: the lack of efficient systems and improvement, training and continuing education of teachers; a curriculum that is uninteresting and disconnected from reality; insufficient public investments to meet educational needs; excessive use of outdated teaching methods (questionnaires, copies of the lessons on the blackboard, theoretical classes without student participation etc.). These problems are symptomatic of a neglected education system that is always in need of effective administrative, financial, and social policies.

Understanding Transformative Learning and its Effects on People's Lives

There are some moments in life when we are inspired to give our lives a new meaning. Such moments make us see reality from a new perspective and radically change our mentalities. They enable us to criticize long-standing beliefs and conventions. These are transformative experiences that awaken our minds, stir up powerful emotions, and leave lasting impressions.

Many of these events transform our thoughts, perspectives, attitudes, and behavioral patterns. This evolution is of great importance to the theory of transformative learning which explains how adults learn through these transformative moments. The theory is connected to the belief that learning occurs when new meaning is attributed to previous experience or an old experience is reinterpreted and seen from a new perspective. These new interpretations of old experiences and meanings, and the behavior they transform, are means of learning and understanding. They are possible thanks to the changes in the frames of reference that transform the meaning of the accumulated experiences of an individual (Mezirow, 1990).

Based on the transformative theory, it is indeed possible to create moments of inspiration for students. The learning advocated in this theory is not isolated; instead, it is closely related to the individual's perception of truly transformative experiences. It is connected to the very human essence. It is important to note that transformative learning is not independent of content or curriculum (Kelly,

2009). A student with a transformational vision does not simply accept knowledge, but rather engages in debates and discussions that lead to an ideal cycle of knowledge construction.

Through her many contributions, Kathleen P. King (2019) reinforces the idea that transformative learning "describes how people react when they encounter difficult points and what they learn from them." Similarly, Illeris (2014) reflects on how the criticisms directed at his first contributions led Mezirow to emphasize that an individual's emotional and social conditions are also important in their education. It reinforces the importance of each person's unique identity in the learning process. Therefore, the impacts of critical mentality, reaction, and the socio-emotional capacity of the individual are important in the process of transformative learning. This reinforces the idea that the individual becomes the real protagonist of the knowledge to be built through this process. We can observe that this viewpoint places educational practice as the main determining factor in people's choices and lives.

How Transformational Education Was Created

When he began developing the transformative learning theory, Mezirow credited Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas for his inspiration (Fleming, 2018). Through Freire's works, we can observe the effects of transformative learning on both educators and students. A study at the University of Recife showed that 45 days of transformative education enabled cane cutters to read and write (Kirylo, 2011). Transformative learning is imparted in the following stages:

- Research stage: Joint search by the teacher and student for the most significant words and themes in the student's life, from the student's known vocabulary and the community where they live.
- Thematization stage: The moment of becoming aware of the world through the analysis of the social meanings of themes and words.
- Questioning stage: The stage in which the teacher challenges and inspires the student to overcome a general and uncritical view of the world for conscious observation.

Freire argued that the success of this method was directly related to the cultural reality of the students (Freire, 1971). These arguments are also related to their personal experiences, which theoretically reinforces that transformative learning promotes the cognitive development of the individual with the help of his own reality. Jürgen Habermas (1984) argued:

> The actions of the agents involved are coordinated, not through successful egocentric calculations but through acts of reaching understanding. In communicative action, the participants are not primarily oriented towards their success, they will seek their individual goals respecting the condition that they can harmonize their action plans based on a common definition of the situation. In this way, the negotiation of the situation definition is an essential element of the interpretative complement required by the communicative action. (p. 285–286)

Therefore, that it is important to valorize the communication between environment/content and the process of self-knowledge/construction. However, it should arise from the inspiration of the students themselves.

Through the analysis of these two educators' works, we can understand how to base this theory in the Brazilian context. There is clearly a need to inject real meaning into educational values, actions, and structures to enable the students to take control of their learning process (Illeris, 2018). Combined with a transformative orientation, it can lead to easy access to properly systematized education. It is important to note, therefore, that the transformative theory created from the views of Freire and Habermas has the potential to bring an educational evolution in the country. It also allows us to understand that social scientific theories are not products of single optics and that we do not necessarily need to have absolute focus on the suggested structures. A specific example of this is how, on some occasions, Mezirow applied the observations of the potential influence of the social implications to education as a whole.

Transformative Learning to Potentialize Social Participation through Intensive Real-Life Experience and School Integration

Based on the reflections of the famous authors presented here, we propose to use the theory of educational learning to potentialize Brazilian schools and social participation by creating a relationship between content and real-life experiences. Designing and delivering a learning process that adheres to the reality that people live in would be the best way to attract their attention to the content and will, therefore, be the best way to build the learning process (Freire, 1971). This format could overcome the aridity of sequential learning from textbooks and contribute to the development of interdisciplinary proposals. It involves strategically selected activities, values, knowledge, students' intellectual advancement and enables the evolution of students' concepts (Gonzalez, 1999).

An effective and efficient way to start would be to use the desire of different companies to demonstrate the use of content. Every company likes to have its image linked to actions that can enhance their participation in social conversations and eventually lead to profit. If they do not like such linking, it may be because they are doing their business incorrectly. However, it falls to the educators to notice students' interests, understand where they come from, and what is important to them at that moment. It becomes the teachers' job to connect the content to reality. To gain an understanding of a student's reality, it is also important to avoid questionnaires or any other indirect means of information gathering. An empathetic conversation about family and life is the simplest way to get honest answers.

Integration of School and Society

Social participation in the school valorizes the knowledge and affective assimilation of parents and students. Both features are extremely important in times of a financial (which is a reality in public schools) or moral crisis (the current situation in Brazil) (Cowan, 2016). This connection establishes values and expectations on both sides that can be promising for the student's learning life.

In world where technology prevails, Zoom, Skype, and other such applications make meeting across great distances possible. If such contact is not possible, then personal visits become necessary. It is also important to note the possibility of the constant social demonstration of what the school has been developing. For students, this is very important for the formation of social bonds. Experimenting with real-life activities, such as socio-environmental and socio-economic ones, is of utmost importance and must be restored and implemented.

Many schools, in an attempt to reinforce the importance of certain content, put up demonstrations or fairs. However, not many students want to participate in these events. From the transformative point of view, this behavior must be countered through an analysis that would help in creating events of interest to the students. The success of these educational fairs can then be enhanced and consequently, the pleasure in learning will become more evident.

Conclusion

These proposals are neither innovative nor new to the Brazilian education system. Their essence is simplicity, which increases the chances for many educators and schools to succeed in their missions. It is understandable that, within a legal framework, education is a right and is guaranteed to every Brazilian. Unfortunately, this does not always transform into reality. What is proposed here, however, is a return to the transformative practices that are inherent in each educator. In many cases, this manifests itself as the feeling or perception that we have long been stuck with wrong beliefs or that we do not know what we should. This is often the trigger for digging up information or revising our mentalities and thought patterns. Not knowing or realizing that we have the wrong information is deeply disturbing for all of us.

The main transformative idea is to recognize the educators' doubts and point out to the audience what they do not know to make them curious about what is being taught. It would establish personal relevance for the students. It is important for teachers to ask themselves, "What is it about me that inspires people and can promote their learning?" The context can be personal, professional, or social and they must establish the context at the beginning of every new project or when presenting an idea to stimulate interest and reiterate it often to keep learners connected. Students, in general, are

motivated to learn when they see the results of their efforts (Taylor & Cranton, 2013). It is extremely important when teaching certain subjects, such as math or the sciences. Applying the use of numbers and theories in real-life everyday tasks can engage students' interest in these subjects.

It should also be recognized that students gradually develop their cognitive abilities. Therefore, the teachers must create opportunities for critical reflection to encourage them to re-examine their beliefs and attitudes (Cranton, 2016). When they are allowed to evaluate their feelings and thoughts, they can realize for themselves what they need to believe or what they must adjust their perception about. Thus, they will become more willing to accept and assimilate learning.

In a society dominated by professional and social injustices, educators must know how to separate their needs from their goals as human beings and create in themselves a passion for their profession. Not much is required to transform the lives of students, only a little bit of interest and goodwill. It is through their relentless desire to help students and society that educators may help students to develop their ideas and contribute to society's progress.

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Reflective Metacognitive Teaching, Productive Learning: The Right Amount of Confusion, Discomfort, and Success

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Abstract

The primary goal of this research was to demonstrate how the instructor's reflective metacognition can act as a powerful tool for real-time course modification as well as an effective means for reevaluating longitudinal data of students' feedback for the course. The key to this approach was timely, frequent documentation based on a set of insightful prompts, which elicited deeper contemplation, rather than placing a superficial judgment whether we or the students believe the class session went well. By collecting additional qualitative data, such as midterm student perception surveys and final student evaluation of teaching (SETs), particularly the student narrative feedback, we were able to triangulate the data, creating areas of agreement and outlier data. Ultimately, we found that by using several data collection instruments for reflection of teaching and documenting the data on a regular basis, we were able to collect and make sense of the methods that worked well in the course and be better prepared to redesign our course for the next term. Longitudinal data of students' perceptions three months following the course indicated they still (1) are using course specific terminology; (2) are sharing the major course themes with others; and (3) can articulate central ideas. In conclusion, we propose the methods entailed in reflective metacognition can offer an effective toolkit in real-time teaching, especially for junior scholars and first-time teachers in the early stage of their career paths.

Keywords: Reflective Metacognition, Active Teaching Methods, Formative Self-Assessment, Student-Narrative Feedback

Introduction

How can reflective metacognition, when methodologically applied in teaching, help improve transformative learning? How can early career faculty assess and improve their active teaching methods in real time? How to manage productive discomfort among first-year college students in a diverse study setting? To address these questions, this study was performed at a small, private university in China where half of the student population is from China and the other half are international students. The result of this study shows a positive connection between the methods of reflective metacognition, the short- and medium-term retention of students' memory of class contents, and the overall improvement of teaching quality through formative self-assessment, especially among the early career faculty with limited teaching experiences.

Our reflective metacognition method is derived from the early conversations between the author and co-author, discussing how they collect and interpret data in their respective field. We believe that there might be several ways to generalize this method to other disciplines, as every area has developed their own way of observing, communicating, classifying, inferring, measuring, and predicting. For example, the co-author is an environmental chemist trained to take detailed notes of the environment and determine if there is any correlation between the data and the contaminants, like collecting student behavior data and determining if instruction is having the desired effect.

The first author, trained as a professional anthropologist, pays close attention to the relationship between observation, action, and reflection in various social settings. From an anthropological perspective, education is a key channel through which ideas and actions could be communicated, cultivated, observed, and transformed in a society (Ingold, 2017; Zaharlick, 1992). For that end, the professional skills of participant observation and note-taking of behaviors as indicators are useful for reflecting upon one's approach to teaching. Through such metacognitive reflection, we can start to notice patterns and exceptions in (in)effective teaching manifested through students' behaviors in class, performance in assignments, course evaluation and feedback, as well as future development.

Furthermore, as the title of this study suggests, "productive discomfort" is one of the many perspectives on effective teaching methods. Liu et al.'s (2013) article, "Sequences of Frustration and Confusion, and Learning" support this approach. They share literature on how confusion and frustration can assist in learning if they are offered, monitored, and addressed in intentional ways. The major findings suggest that the effect may be stronger for frustration than confusion and is strongest when these two affective states are taken together. They found a pattern where confusion and frustration are associated positively with learning for brief episodes and negatively for lengthy episodes. This study shows that reflective metacognition can help the instructor self-monitor and modify the effects of confusion and frustration in pedagogy in real time and the duration of the course.

Hypothesis

1. In a common first year experience (FYE) large enrollment recitation, a combination of three factors—the instructor documentation, reflective metacognition, and course feedback inform current and subsequent active teaching methods—is effective for improving and evaluating the FYE course.
2. Early career faculty, especially someone with limited teaching experience, can apply this reflective method to improve their teaching methods.

This research used a real-time note taking data collection approach followed by a qualitative data analysis to produce suggested methodologies for possible integration into first year experience recitations.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework for this study centers around reflective metacognition. This approach aligns well with the interdisciplinary approach of this study and the course. We will first define terms in the construct of education, then through the discipline of anthropology.

Reflective Metacognition

A typical definition of metacognition from an educational perspective can be defined by Flavell (1976) as one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes or anything related to them, e.g., the learning-relevant properties of information or data. There is a direct connection between reflection and productive metacognition. Hemans et al. (2019) found evidence and replicable measurements in support of the benefits of reflection. They document that reflection leads to transformation in observable and measurable ways, a piece that is often missing from the theoretical literature. King and Kitchener (1994) found that growth in thinking can be achieved by modeling reflection through guided practice and communication. Reflective instructors are also more likely to integrate intercultural teaching methods (Kleinfeld & Nordhoff, 1988) and demonstrate ethical responsibilities towards learners (Hursch, 1988).

There is an on-going connection between the concept of metacognition and transformative learning. Minnes et al., (2017) found significant improvement in the quality and depth of students' written reflection at the end of an internship enriched with regular writing. These findings align with how metacognitive reflections facilitate Mezirows' (1997) transformative learning theory during the internship

experiences. The writing exercises helped students attend to Mezirow's two attributes of instrumental learning (task-oriented problem solving) and communicative learning (evaluation of cause-and-effect relationships). Another key connection between transformative learning and metacognition is reflection as part of integrated High Impact Instructional Practices (HIIPs). Kuh et al., (2017) detailed eight "key features" of HIIPs that could account for improved student learning outcomes. Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels; significant investment of concentrated effort by students over an extended period of time; interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters; experiences with diversity, wherein students engage in ideas that differ from their own; frequent, timely, and constructive feedback; opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications; public demonstration of competence; and periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning.

From an anthropological perspective, the concept of metacognition aligns with the "reflective turn" since the 1970s as critical, feminist, and postmodern perspectives flourished in humanities and social sciences. Similar to metacognition defined above, the reflective turn means that the ethnographers turn to the self as a subject for observation, inquiry, and reflection while interacting, observing, and writing about the people they study. Early anthropologists such as Malinowski (1922) and Mead (1943) have long explored the relationship between their research interlocutors and their own cultural backgrounds. Yet, it was not until the 1970s that scholars such as Asad (1973), Hurston and Washington (1979), Clifford and Marcus (1985), Marcus and Fischer (1986), and Rabinow (2007) began to critically analyze the various power dynamics in the fieldwork that affect both ethnographers and their interlocutors. Moreover, Vankatesh (2016) noted that this reflective turn is often marked by the adoption of the first-person narrative voice. The use of "I" in writing shows a strong commitment—both ethical and methodological—to understanding personal biases and even cultural conflicts during the processes of interpersonal interaction and knowledge production.

A key outcome for integrating metacognition is to reflect upon the type of instructional approaches that can lead to student engagement through the use of active learning methods.

Active Teaching Methods

Active learning can often be associated with discomfort. Taylor and Baker (2019) found potential benefits of "discomfort" while learning, differentiating from cognitive dissonance—the psychological reaction to inconsistency in two or more thoughts—as the catalyst for these processes (Festinger, 1957; Gao & Hargis, 2010). The authors describe "discomfort" as an aversive psychological and physiological state (Elliot & Devine, 1994) as a consequence of experiencing dissonance. Ultimately, the authors found that when students' discomfort is part of the process and when they have the support, the experiences may lead to learning. They argue that three conditions distinguish productive from unproductive: discomfort should not be due to trauma or external threats; be attributed to internal causes; and should be paired with support.

Formative Self-Assessment and Student-narrative Feedback

There are several ways to collect empirical self-assessment data of teaching. One method is to collect midterm small group student perception data (Hargis & Soto, 2017; Hargis, 2014) (Appendix C). A study by Cohen (1980), replicated by Murray (2007), found that students' mid-semester perceptions of teaching can have a positive effect on instruction and learning; provide specific areas for improvement; and potentially lead to higher final evaluations. Another is to collect narrative feedback from students several months after the course ends in order to evaluate the medium- or long-term effects of active teaching methods (Svinicki et al., 2016).

Methods

Setting

This study was conducted at a small private international university in China with a joint US partnership. The data for this study was compiled through instruction in a common first year large enrollment recitation course. The enrollment in this course and other break-out sessions was approximately 16 students. The university mission focuses on preparing globally minded citizens. The goal of the first-year common course is designed to expose students to a broad scope of thinkers and practitioners, as well as to the diverse approaches to thinking about and understanding the world. This course is valuable to the humanities student because it exposes them to canonical texts and theories. It is valuable to business students, because it informs their later careers within the contexts of societies, economies, and nations. And it is valuable for science students, because it shines a light on the potential for biases within the scientific fields.

Twice a week during the fall semester, first-year college students attend lectures with themes such as City, State, Media, Capital, Empire, and Environment. Readings from political economists to poets are assigned to complement the lectures. A team of "Fellows"—postdoctoral scholars from a range of specializations in the social sciences and humanities—then lead weekly "recitations" for small groups of students, where they discuss ideas raised in the texts. Occasionally, guest speakers are invited to give short lectures on a specific topic related to their expertise. Fellows also take initiatives to organize short field trips to local museums whose exhibitions are particularly relevant for the course. Overall, the first-year students are exposed to a wide variety of topics, perspectives, and teaching methods based on who their specific instructor is. After an in-depth discussion between two authors of this article, we find such settings are particularly fit for the collection of qualitative rather than quantitative data given its diverse thematics and highly individualized approaches. Our study aims to reveal how reflective metacognition and transformative learning can mutually reinforce each other through a semester-long real-time formative self-assessment.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a real-time note taking method during the fall semester, 2019. Data was gathered through instructor reflections after each class based upon the following prompts and research:

1. In what ways did I engage students this week? Do I think the activities were successful, i.e., did they align with the class outcomes? What type of indirect (perceptions) and/or direct (artifacts, products, media—anything students produced that could be an indicator of performance) measures of evidence did I gather (Schraw & Dennison, 1994)?
2. Did I share a roadmap with students at the beginning of the term? If so/or not, do I continue to share the roadmap, with benchmarks to show where we have been / where we are going? Again, what evidence do you have of effectiveness—student voices, formative assessments, student response systems, etc. (Flavell, 1976)?
3. Were there key ideas or concepts that you shared and you felt students have used to begin making critical connections in the content? Did you capture these moments from students, either with succinct statements or things they produced that align with the concepts (Ottenhoff, 2011)?

After the author discussed with the co-author at the beginning of fall semester about her intention to take notes for teaching purposes, the co-author suggested the three prompts based on research. We created a shared Google Document (GDoc) for sharing data. The basic idea was to answer those prompts after the two recitation sections on each Wednesday and Thursday. The author could flexibly take notes based on her own schedule and re-organize those notes while answering those questions. Throughout the semester, the author usually took notes on Friday or during weekends. But during some busy weeks, she also postponed writing in the shared GDoc. Usually, such a delay would not exceed two weeks.

Data Analysis Procedure

A mutli-faceted qualitative analysis was used to produce suggested methodologies for possible integration into first year experience recitations.

1. The written responses to the three prompts were documented weekly in the shared GDoc for final critical analysis. Key teaching methods were identified each week to address a certain teaching goal, with the instructor's formative self-assessment on a regular basis.
2. Case studies of specific scenarios in which students experienced productive discomfort and frustration were carefully documented in the data collection. This case-specific approach can help instructors reconstruct scenarios and processes through which transformative learning takes place.
3. Besides written responses and case study, all collected data—weekly notes, midterm student perception surveys, final student evaluation of teaching (SETs), and the student narrative feedback—was presented as Word Clouds, Tables, and Figures. This text-based qualitative analysis with the aid of quantitative tools helps identify common patterns as well as outliers.

Results

Written Response to Prompts

The following represent the prompts which the instructor used to capture her thoughts during the term. See Appendix B for a sample response from Week 01.

1. In what ways did I engage students this week? Do I think the activities were successful, i.e., did they align with the class outcomes? What type of indirect (perceptions) and/or direct (artifacts, products, media—anything students produced that could be an indicator of performance) measures of evidence did I gather?

Mutual Intro Warm-up: I buy a set of meme-featured poker cards and use it as an aid for introduction. First, students make a blind draw from the pre-selected poker cards. Those who get the same number with different patterns randomly pair up. I ask them to know each other's names, know how to pronounce them, and share one or two things about themselves. Then each pair comes to the center of the room, introducing each other rather than themselves. Given the odd number, I also pair up with one student. We introduce each other as a demo. Students are at first quiet. But they get to know at least one person quickly and become more relaxed at the beginning of the class.

2. Did I share a roadmap with students at the beginning of the term? If so/or not, do I continue to share the roadmap, with benchmarks to show where we have been / where we are going? Again, what evidence do you have of effectiveness—student voices, formative assessments, student response systems, etc.

Besides the general syllabus, each fellow has their own syllabi. So, I develop a separate syllabus, print it out, and distribute it among students in Week 1. Students get an overview of all readings and topics, general objectives, and a basic structure of our recitations. The current link offers an updated version after several rounds of consultations with students in the weeks to follow. The original version was more inflexible and less considerate of what students need. In that sense, I do not include student voices, formative assessments, and student response systems in the syllabus itself. I also do not question what a syllabus really is, what is my relationship to it as an educator, how students can relate to it as an educational tool and guide.

3. Were there key ideas, concepts that you shared and you felt students have begun to make critical connections in the content? Did you capture these moments from students with statements or things they produced that align with the concepts?

I introduce the idea of the "Golden Triangle" as a guiding structure throughout the semester. This could be seen as part of the intellectual roadmap, too, for the entire semester. Basically, "close reading" represents Prof.'s major intervention in all her lectures as a literary/feminist scholar; "philosophical questions" reflects the professor's approach as a philosopher; "ethnography/ethnographic methods" speaks about my approach in pedagogy and research as an anthropologist. Then, I use this Golden Triangle to show students how our text in Week 1 could be comprehended by integrating these three aspects together. Podcast is one of the examples to show how ethnographic methods work and how students can practice those methods in class to better understand the text and the philosophical questions. Students express confusion when I explain the terms. After we do a close reading of the text and listen to the podcast, some can quickly articulate what they see as methods in both the text and podcast. Some students are still confused and say this is the first time they hear about such methods.

Case Study: Scenario of One Specific Incident
(Partly reconstructed from Week 10 notes, see Appendix B)

Students were uncomfortable on a topic, but the instructor created an open environment, so students approached the instructor, but still they engaged in uncomfortable chats. After time, students integrated the concepts into subsequent papers, assignments, etc. The reader can view the connections of these events when compared to highlighted raw data in the appendix.

One class reading was Appadurai's "Disjunctures and Differences" on the five cultural scapes and globalization. Meanwhile, students were really interested in the events happening on the university campus in Hong Kong around the time when our classes took place. I noticed that the protests on campus created fractured reactions among students who came from different backgrounds. Rather than ask them to offer their opinions, I used the class activity to let them examine and reflect what shaped their views on certain events in the global era.

Based on the key concepts in the reading, I designed a class activity which I called the "Intentionally Fractured Ideoscape." I selected four news sources (CNN, BBC, GLOBAL TIMES, SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST) and their respective reports on the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) campus one day before the class. Students sat in the roundtable form and were each given one piece of news randomly. I gave them a basic sheet of what to look for in a news report and the criteria. They read it in five minutes. I asked them to identify which news source they had. Then, each group presented what they just read and commented on what they learned or not from that specific angle. As one student put it in class:

> We are all blinded by our own viewpoints or the sources of news we read. If we don't share with others, we may continue in our narrow views. But even if we share with each other, we still don't know for sure what is going on from far away. It is better to understand the complicated situations first than to make a quick judgement.

Yet, this activity also made one student from mainland China very uncomfortable. He stayed after class and approached me to further discuss the issue for more than one hour. Since he was drafting his writing assignment, I asked him to integrate his reflections in the essay. At first, he found it hard and struggled in the second draft. He then visited me during the subsequent office hours to talk about his reflections and struggles in writing. We worked through his specific examples and arguments in relation to the course readings as well as the most updated news in Hong Kong. In the end, he turned in his assignment with a more critical perspective on how the protesters exerted their agency through photography and social media in the age of globalization. After this incident, the same student showed more enthusiasm toward analyzing contemporary events in relation to the course.
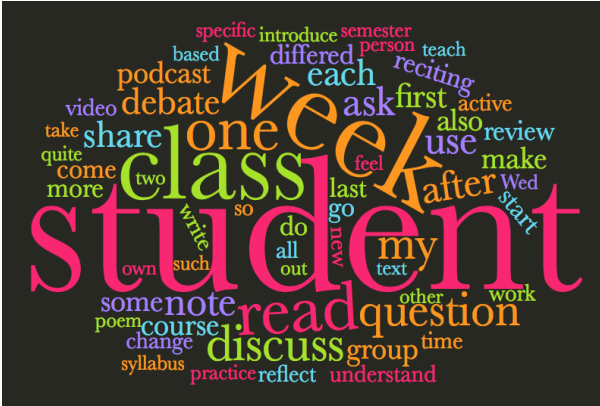
Data Presented as Word Clouds, Tables, and Figures

The data was reviewed to identify common themes, then coded based on the theme. Codes were analyzed quantitatively and for patterns or trends. Outliers are stated. Following the structure of Table 1, these are the common themes for each of the word clouds:

I.   Class design and instructor reflection from the word cloud. Terms included "Discuss" (15), "Read" (20), "Question" (14), "Note" (12), "Debate" (11), "Group" (9), "Podcast" (9), "Video" (7), "Syllabus" (6), "Poem" (6), and "Practice" (6).

II. Midterm student perception feedback (Appendix C). This included cooperative group activities (3), videos (3), debate (3), concept maps (2), posting on discussion forum (2), class participation/discussion (2), as well as taking polls, physical copies of feedback, creating their own government, enthusiasm of instructor, revising lecture materials, additional resources provided by instructor, office hours and workshop.

III. Final Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) included major terms, such as "Help," "Readings," "Improve," "Feedback," "Writing," "Encouraging," "Questions," "Activities," "Appreciate," "Learning," "Understand," "Discuss," and "Academic."

IV. Longitudinal Student Perception Data included the retention of key concepts from the course, such as feminism, otherness, gender (in)equality, climate change, cityness, postmodernism, and neoliberalism. The data also shows the retention of active teaching methods such as the use of debate, group activity, video, office hours, art, reading, concept map, and workshop.

Table 1

Word Cloud Summary

I. Instructor Reflection to Four Prompts	II. Student Responses during Midterm

Table 1 Continued

Word Cloud Summary

III. Student End of the Term Evaluation	IV. Longitudinal Student Perception Data

Note: All words and word clouds are linked to Appendices.

       For the word cloud labeled "Instructor Reflection to Four Prompts," we used terms that were written at least six times or more.

       For "Student Responses during Midterm," we did not include the following terms as they could have different meanings by showing higher or lower frequencies (larger/smaller words):

1. What might need improvement to enhance learning?
   a. Beanbag chairs and ice cream/candy
   b. Comb through ideas in articles
   c. More discussions
   d. More electronic devices

       For "Longitudinal Student Perception Data" (Appendix E), words provided only once or twice were deleted.

Discussion

       Overall, the findings have shown reflective metacognition the act of reflection to be powerful in examining and re-examining course design and instruction. The authors found the documentation of reflective metacognition useful while the course was being offered. Because the events were documented, the instructor was able to reflect through time and reconsider initial ideas. Students, on the other hand, were able to actively learn through productive discomfort and to retain memories of course content in the short- and medium-terms.

       We believe that our approach aligns well with the university mission of preparing globally-minded citizens, as the goal of this course was to "expose students to a broad scope of the thinkers and practitioners, as well as to the diverse approaches to thinking about and understanding the world." Since the goal was focused on a "broad scope" and "diverse approaches", we thought that aligning the teaching methods would also be helpful given that a broad approach to methodology was integrated. Since there were many different activities, the instructor wanted to ensure she was creating an inclusive environment, and at the same time trying to realize how effective her methods were addressing students' needs and helping them connect the concepts in her class as well as the broader common lecture sessions.

Therefore, we believe that the background, setting, and approach supported our initial hypothesis of determining if the documentation, reflective metacognition, and course feedback inform current and subsequent active teaching methods.

Hypothesis 1

In a common first year experience (FYE) large enrollment recitation, a combination of three factors—the instructor documentation, reflective metacognition, and course feedback inform current and subsequent active teaching methods—is effective for improving and evaluating the FYE course.

The research on effective practices of large first year common courses with multiple recitations or break-out sections is rather extensive (Coker, Haskell & Nelson, 2014; Fuller, 2014; Padgett, Keup & Pascarella, 2013; World Economic Forum, 2016). These courses are often the foundational aspect of FYE seminars. The current research on FYE instructor development finds that these courses offer fertile ground for innovative strategies (faculty who participate typically enhance their other courses). Many FYE provide faculty development sessions for the new instructors (Fellows) which might include pertinent sections of a Course Design studio (CDS). Common elements of CDS include learning outcomes, aligned assessment and active teaching methods. Active methods can include experiential learning, collaborative projects, discussions, role play, cooperative learning, oral presentations. Many universities offer FYEs and continue to struggle on an effective structure within a general education program (Thibodeaux, Deutsch, Kitsantas & Winsler, 2017). Traditional institutions frequently use regulatory and financial considerations to drive practices; whereas progressive universities are exploring programs aligned with desired outcomes of graduates. Historically, these outcomes included communication and study skills; time and financial management, etc. Recently, some institutions have explored skills identified through employers anticipating the future needs of society (Singer-Freeman & Bastone, 2016). These skills include social emotional competence, active listening, and learning to learn (self-regulated learning) (World Economic Forum, 2016).

With reference to teaching large classes, Nilson (2010) reinforces the research on effective teaching, which include writing specific and measurable outcomes using Bloom's Taxonomy, basing your active learning strategies on those outcomes, spending time designing activities related to essential concepts ("less is more"), making the material relatable, using a variety of active teaching techniques, being clear in your inclusive syllabus, and offering transparent pedagogy.

To support our findings, we summarized the qualitative data in Table 1, Word Cloud Summary in the Results section by creating word clouds to compare them with three sets of data: instructor reflection, mid-term small group student perception survey and final student evaluation of teaching (SET). The data for each of these instruments afforded different, but similar prompts. The following summarizes the prompts for comparison:

Instructor Reflection
1. In what ways did I engage students this week? Do I think the activities were successful, i.e., did they align with the class outcomes? What type of indirect (perceptions) and/or direct (artifacts, products, media—anything students produced that could be an indicator of performance) measures of evidence did I gather?
2. Did I share a roadmap with students at the beginning of the term? If so/or not, do I continue to share the roadmap, with benchmarks to show where we have been / where we are going? Again, what evidence do you have of effectiveness—student voices, formative assessments, student response systems, etc.
3. Were there key ideas, concepts that you shared and you felt students have begun to make critical connections in the content? Did you capture these moments from students with statements or things they produced that align with the concepts?

Midterm Small Group Student Perception Survey
1. What is contributing to student learning in this class (what is going well)?
2. What might need improvement to enhance learning?
3. What is one concrete action which the instructor can do now to improve learning?
4. What is one word that describes how you feel about this course now?

Final Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)
1. Overall evaluation of the instructor.
2. Overall evaluation of the course.
3. Provided an environment that was conducive to learning.
4. Provided helpful feedback on assessed class components.
5. Course objectives were clearly stated.
6. Course was well organized.
7. Course was intellectually stimulating.

Course Questions
1. My primary reason for taking this course:
2. How many hours a week did you work on this course?
3. What grade do you expect to earn in this course?

Instructor Questions
1. What was effective in helping you learn?
2. What would you suggest to improve the course?
3. If multiple instructors, would you like to evaluate another?

Our goal was not to norm these prompts, but more to triangulate the data, i.e., creating some commonalities, but also offering a place where we might be able to gain data that could fill potential gaps, which we could analyze for trends or patterns that might be noteworthy.

To specifically address our research question, we have seen that through instructor documentation, metacognitive reflection, and feedback does inform current and subsequent active teaching methods. Trends that were common through data sets included:

Table 2

Frequency of Word Usage, Part 1

Instructor Reflection	Midterm Small Group Perceptions	Final SETs
(56) student	(3 for each of the following): coop group activities, videos, debate	(9) help
(37) week		(7) very
(31) class		(6) class, my
(20) read	(2 for each of the following): enthusiasm, we love her, concept maps, posting on discussion, participation, discussion, taking polls, relaxed, happy	(5) improve, readings, writing
(19) one		(4) also, always, recitation
(15) discuss		(3) course, during, essay, feedback, fun, hour, lot, made, me, more, office, really, than, way
(14) my, question		
(12) after, ask, note, use		
(11) debate, each, share		
(10) first	(1 for each of the following): physical feedback copies, creating own government, revising lecture,	(2) discuss, give, ****, optional, professor, academic, activities, advisors, appreciate, assignment,
(9) also, course, group, make, podcast, some,		

Table 2 Continued

Frequency of Word Usage, Part 1

Instructor Reflection	Midterm Small Group Perceptions	Final SETs
(8) come, differed, do, go, last, more, reciting, review, start (7) active, all, change, new, reflect, so, time, understand, video, work, write (6) Wed, based, feel, two, introduce, other, out, own, person, poem, practice, quite, semester, specific, such, syllabus, take, teach, text	(1 for each of the following): materials, additional resources, office hour, workshop, play music, active, inspiring, interested, welcomed, sleepy, stressful, curious, engaged, normal, bored, foolish, feel like home, keep doing what she's doing	(2) context, encouraging, feel, future, interesting, learning, lectures, much, open, put, questions, so, student, understand, were

Table 3

Frequency of Word Usage, Part 2

Instructor Reflection	Midterm Small Group Perceptions
(56) student (37) week (31) class (20) read (19) one (15) discuss (14) my, question (12) after, ask, note, use (11) debate, each, share (10) first (9) also, course, group, make, podcast, some (8) come, differed, do, go, last, more, reciting, review, start (7) active, all, change, new, reflect, so, time, understand, video, work, write (6) Wed, based, feel, two, introduce, other, out, own, person, poem, practice, quite, semester, specific, such, syllabus, take, teach, text	(3 for each of the following): coop group activities, videos, debate (2 for each of the following): enthusiasm, we love her, concept maps, posting on discussion, participation, discussion, taking polls, relaxed, happy (1 for each of the following): physical feedback copies, creating own government, revising lecture, materials, additional resources, office hour, workshop, play music, active, inspiring, interested, welcomed, sleepy, stressful, curious, engaged, normal, bored, foolish, feel like home, keep doing what she's doing

Table 4

Frequency of Word Usage, Part 3

Midterm Small Group Perceptions	Final SETs
(3 for each of the following): coop group activities, videos, debate	(9) help
	(7) very
	(6) class, my
(2 for each of the following): enthusiasm, we love her, concept maps, posting on discussion, participation, discussion, taking polls, relaxed, happy	(5) improve, readings, writing
	(4) also, always, recitation
	(3) course, during, essay, feedback, fun, hour, lot, made, me, more, office, really, than, way
	(2) Discuss, Give, ****, Optional, Professor, academic, activities, advisors, appreciate, assignment, context, encouraging, feel, future, interesting, learning, lectures, much, open, put, questions, so, student, understand, were
(1 for each of the following): physical feedback copies, creating own government, revising lecture, materials, additional resources, office hour, workshop, play music, active, inspiring, interested, welcomed, sleepy, stressful, curious, engaged, normal, bored, foolish, feel like home, keep doing what she's doing	

Table 5

Frequency of Word Usage, Part 4

Instructor Reflection	Final SETs
(56) student	(9) help
(37) week	(7) very
(31) class	(6) class, my
(20) read	(5) improve, readings, writing
(19) one	(4) also, always, recitation
(15) discuss	(3) course, during, essay, feedback, fun, hour, lot, made, me, more, office, really, than, way
(14) my, question	
(12) after, ask, note, use	(2) discuss, give, ****, optional, professor, academic, activities, advisors, appreciate, assignment, context, encouraging, feel, future, interesting, learning, lectures, much, open, put, questions, so, student, understand, were
(11) debate, each, share	
(10) first	
(9) also, course, group, make, podcast, some	
(8) come, differed, do, go, last, more, reciting, review	
(7) active, all, change, new, reflect, so, time, understand, video, work, write	
(6) Wed, based, feel, two, introduce, other, out, own, person, poem, practice, quite, semester, specific, such, syllabus, take, teach, text	

Note: "****" replaces the instructor's name.

A student comment that supports the hypothesis and the data collection well is, "*You challenged my thinking through the scope of different styles of writing. You also challenged my creativity.*"

Hypothesis 2

Early career faculty, especially someone with limited teaching experience, can apply this reflective method to improve their teaching methods. Although this reflective method seems to be time-consuming at the first sight, it turns out to well complement the existing teaching programs in the university where the data was collected.

First, we find this method does not require much pre-training while yielding a consistent, semester-long result ready for further analysis and improvement. Higher education institutions, including the university where both authors are working, often offer faculty development programs for its faculty through the Center of Teaching and Learning (CTL). For new and/or early career faculty, the CTL in our university includes programs such Pedagogy Workshops, Course Design Studio, Consultations, Classroom Observations, Graduate Seminars, etc. While such programs are carefully designed to meet faculty's needs, individual faculty members always have their own specific questions. We also notice the common trend of attendance reduction in the CTL programs as the semester progresses. Taking these into consideration, the self-motivated reflective metacognition based on notetaking can be offered during a 45-minute or one-hour training session at the beginning of a semester when the attendance rate for the CTL program is still high.

Second, the metacognitive reflection method helps early career faculty focus on the continuous progress of their teaching rather than sporadic or once-/twice-in-a-semester evaluation. Compared to more experienced faculty, early career faculty often struggle to gain more feedback to improve their teaching. Yet, the current student-evaluation-based model only offers anonymous feedback once or twice in a semester. Such evaluations often come too late for faculty to incorporate into their active teaching methods. Besides, the lack of context-based observation and follow-up mechanism tend to obscure the meanings of students' feedback, thus making the early career faculty feel even more uncertain or insecure about how to interpret those evaluations. Our method offers a real-time dataset to compare, cross-check, and balance with the current student-evaluation-based model. Reflective mode can help relatively inexperienced faculty focus on their longitudinal progress without losing sight of students' reactions. The data we collected (see the word cloud Table 1 and the data analysis in Hypothesis 1 show 1) "students" (56 times) remains the center of faculty's attention; 2) the instructor could return to her notes and check the self-recorded observation of students' receptivity to the methods and contents she used in class; 3) the notes remain helpful for reflection when comparing with students' feedback from a longitudinal perspective (Appendix E).

Since this method requires weekly notetaking, one effective way to prevent procrastination is to use the shared GDoc with another colleague (such as one of the co-authors in this study) and to check in from time to time. One method is to put aside 15 to 30 minutes every week and set it up in your calendar with automatic, repeating reminders throughout the whole semester. Another tip is to take quick notes during or right after every class to record key things you notice. The cues accumulated from those quick notes can become very useful when reconstructing the memory of the class.

Third, this method gives much flexibility to early career educators who embrace necessary modification in their teaching without feeling stressed toward the third-party evaluation. Early career faculty often face pressures from multiple sources, which affect their teaching quality and personal wellbeing (Hollywood, McCarthy & Winstone, 2019). Rather than mechanically filling out an evaluation form or following a quantitative procedure, early career faculty are encouraged to add modification based on their own schedule and subsequent reflections.

In the first week, the instructor strictly followed the three prompts and answered in meticulous details, adding her notes after answering three questions (e.g. W01, Appendix B). However, as the workload quickly became heavier, the author organically deviated from the original Q&A structure. From Week 02 to Week 14, she did not answer each prompt individually but developed a hybrid approach. Each week, she used quick notes from class to record major class activities. While the two sections on Wednesday and Thursday were repetitive in methods and contents, she took notes of adjustments or

differences (e.g. W07, Appendix B). She sometimes added a section of "personal reflections" to specifically record her own emotional stress or uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of her teaching (e.g. W04 & 08, Appendix B). Such reflections, though, were not all recorded under a specific section since the instructor would highlight some specific changes in the teaching methods and learning responses based on the previous weeks' observation (e.g. W05, 09 & 10, Appendix B). The instructor also developed a narrative approach in some weeks to remap the class plan (e.g. W01, 11, 13 &14, Appendix B) or to reconstruct some specific scenarios during which a method, text, students' reactions, and her own reflections were combined (e.g. W10, Appendix B). The last point—the narrative approach—is particularly useful for tracing students' frustration and confusion as well as for reflecting upon how the instructor could (or not) effectively work with students to enhance their learning afterwards.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified for this study. The following variables were identified:

1. The data is only collected within one semester in one university. Its replicability and applicability need to be tested by additional early career faculty who are interested and willing to try out this method.
2. The method depends on a highly intrinsically motivated faculty member.
3. Having a CTL, a colleague, or some entity that a faculty can consult, discuss and at least get started is a key factor for success.

Future Work

The first author plans to collect additional data during the next time this course is taught, fall 2020. The overarching course will be undergoing major revisions, which include:

1. The course syllabus may be modified, as the material could potential be updated that one third will be changed for the fall 2020 course;
2. The Fellows will lose and gain new members, thus adding new dynamics to the collective teaching experiences;
3. Student recruitment and composition are uncertain given the COVID-19 situation; and
4. Teaching methods might include blended and/or online teaching methods given the COVID-19 situation.

The primary author plans to use the data and findings of this research to update the assessment and teaching methods for the next time this course is taught.

Conclusion

Overall, our study shows that reflective metacognition is conducive to creating an inclusive environment in which a certain amount of productive discomfort in class can improve students' learning experience. We also find that formative self-assessment allows the instructor to employ a diverse range of active teaching methods while aligning well with the pedagogical outcomes through constant modification and reflection. Our data further suggests that a real-time formative assessment development could be well integrated into the existing CTL resources and student evaluation system in a university.

We also believe that the act of reflective metacognition holds important implications for instructors (both early career and more experienced) and their students. We approach this study as one accessible to all instructors, which could benefit their teaching and student learning. Emphasizing the implications for an on-going practice, and the ways in which reflective metacognition can transform

teaching and learning, would strengthen individual teaching methods, provide institutional resources for colleagues, add an important dimension to assessment accreditation, and overall provide important additions to the literature.

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Author's Note: Jing Wang is a Global Perspectives on Society Fellow at NYU Shanghai. Jace Hargis is a Professor and Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at NYU Shanghai.

Appendix A

Teaching Materials (Course Syllabus with Learning Outcomes, Assessments and Teaching Methods)

Appendix B

Raw Data Gathered Through Reflections After Each Class based upon the following prompts:
1. **In what ways did I engage students this week?** Do I think the activities were successful, i.e., did they align with the class outcomes? What type of indirect (perceptions) and/or direct (artifacts, products, media – anything students produced that could be an indicator of performance) measures of evidence did I gather?
2. **Did I share a roadmap** with students at the beginning of the term – if so/or not, do I continue to share the roadmap, with benchmarks to show where we have been; where we are going? Again, what evidence do you have of effectiveness – student voices; formative assessments, student response systems, etc.
3. **Were there key ideas or concepts that you shared and did you feel students were beginning to make critical connections in the content?** Did you to capture these moments from students, either with succinct statements or things they produced that align with the concepts?

Week 1, Sept 2-6, 2019
1. **In what ways did I engage students this week? Do I think the activities were successful, i.e., did they align with the class outcomes? What type of indirect (perceptions) and/or direct (artifacts, products, media - anything students produced that could be an indicator of performance) measures of evidence did I gather?**

Mutual Intro Warm-up: I buy a set of meme-featured poker cards and use it as an aid for introduction. First, students make a blind draw from the pre-selected poker cards. Those who get the same number with different patterns randomly pair up. I ask them to know each others' names, know how to pronounce them, and share one or two things about themselves. Then each pair comes to the center of the room, introducing each other rather than themselves. Given the odd number, I also pair up with one student. We introduce each other as a demo. [Students are at first quiet. But they get to know at least one person quickly and become more relaxed at the beginning of the class.]

Podcast: I produce a special podcast for the first class on cities and cityness. During the pedagogy meeting, one GPS fellow [Pippa Morgan] indicates she used to live in the neighborhood in the same area in which one of our texts focuses on. I interviewed her during the weekend before Week 1. Then I make the content into a podcast for students to hear about her experiences as a former resident. To accompany the podcast, I provide a sheet with five note-taking prompts. Students fill out the sheet while listening to the podcast and share their thoughts in relation to the reading after listening to the podcast in class. [More than one student note that the sound effect is helpful for them to understand the content. Some also note that the complicated feelings the interviewee has toward the neighborhood reflects their own mixed feelings toward the development in a cosmopolitan city like Shanghai.]

Students take a survey in the last ten minutes of the class. This is something I learned from my former colleague [Svetlana Borodina]. She gives students surveys at the beginning of her course and does another one at the end of the semester. She says it helps her understand students' motivation in taking her class, their needs, expectations, and questions from the beginning. I find the idea quite compelling. So I email her to get her questions and adapt it to my recitations. [I collect all surveys, read through them after class, and make a few notes. Also, I produce a WordCloud image of all cities that students come from and/or interested based on their survey answers. I share this image with all of them as part of the warm-up for Week 2. I also ask some of them to explain to me some cities in the image to the rest of the class. Another thing I do with the survey is to encourage them to come to my office hours. Some students are clearly very confused and feel disoriented, as they write in their response. So I reach out to them to invite them to come to my office hours and have a chat to further see what their specific questions are and how we can work together in the rest of the semester.]

2. Did I share a roadmap with students at the beginning of the term? If so/or not, do I continue to share the roadmap, with benchmarks to show where we have been; where we are going? Again, what evidence do you have of effectiveness—student voices; formative assessments, student response systems, etc.

Besides the GPS general syllabus, each fellow has their own syllabi. So I develop a separate syllabus, print it out, and distribute it among students in Week 1. Students get an overview of all readings and topics, general objectives, and a basic structure of our recitations. [The current link offers an updated version after several rounds of consultations with students in the weeks to follow. The original version was more inflexible and less considerate of what students need. In that sense, I do not include student voices, formative assessments, and student response systems in the syllabus itself. I also do not question what a syllabus really is, what is my relationship to it as an educator, how students can/should/might relate to it as an educational tool and guide.]

3. Were there key ideas, concepts that you shared and you felt students have begun to make critical connections in the content? Were you to capture these moments from students, either with succinct statements, and/or things they produced that align with the concepts.

I introduce the idea of "Golden Triangle" as a guiding structure throughout the semester (see below and PPT for Week1). This could be seen as part of the intellectual roadmap, too, for the entire semester. Basically, "close reading" represents Prof. Edwin's major intervention in all her lectures as a literary/feminist scholar; "philosophical questions" reflects Prof. Weslake's approach as a philosopher; "ethnography/ethnographic methods" speaks about my approach in pedagogy and research as an anthropologist. Then, I use this Golden Triangle to show students how our text in Week 1 could be comprehended by integrating these three aspects together. Podcast is one of the examples to show how ethnographic methods work and how students can practice those methods in class to better understand the text and the philosophical questions. [Students express confusion when I explain the terms. After we do a close reading of the text and listen to the podcast, some can quickly articulate what they see as methods in both the text and podcast. But some students are still very confused and say this is the first time they hear about such methods. Since Week 2 material is connected to ethnography, I take students' questions and use them to prepare for the recitation sections.] to be elaborated in Week 2 with a quiz, discussion.
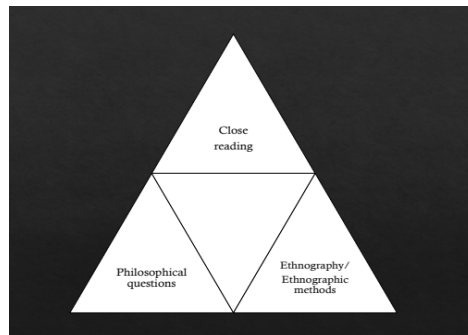
4. Notes: This is the first time I lead semi-independent classes after graduation. During my graduate study period, I was the head TA of an Introduction to Anthropology course for one semester. However, that course did not ask us to lead independent recitation sections after the big lectures. I did some community-based teaching during the fieldwork period. However, after my fieldwork, I spent most of my time away from my home department. As an F-1 student, I could not legally work off campus. Therefore, in the past two years, I mainly worked on my own research and dissertation in another city—no teaching at all. Even when I was applying for the GPS position and eventually got the position, I was very worried that the time gap between the last time I

taught on campus and this time I'll teach in Shanghai might have a huge impact on my ability to teach. Lack of experience and lack of access to teaching resources were two of my biggest fears when I started this semester.

Week 2, Sept 9-13
1. Quiz. Use a comparative case for understanding the story of Sundiata: Epic of King Gesar, the longest epic in the world but very little known among majority of students (I have two Mongolian students in Thursday class so I expected them to know a little bit of the story by including the Mongolian text. It turned out that one Mongolian student is a practicing Buddhist and was reciting the story of King Gesar for the transition from summer to fall that week.)
2. Use of video clips.
3. Group discussions: 3 groups, starting to practice how to use evidence/examples to back up their claims. Review of discussion questions. ARC fellow visit.

Week 3, Sept 16-20
1. PollEverywhere: (1) change syllabus, (2) key elements that make an ideal society, (3) what to change
2. Two students on Wed want to present something on the caste system in India
3. Intro the debating activity through reading: How to argue like Dr. Ambedkar → pair debate
4. Review of discussion questions
5. Explain the grading rubric before the first assignment

Week 4, Sept 23-27
1. Pair debate: debating sheet, based on class materials (Descartes vs Vasubandhu), introducing a new element (artificial intelligence—video clip)
2. Design studio: Impossible Ideal Society Association commission

Week 5, Oct 30-Nov 4
1. Quick notes: Make changes in the syllabus and signing up for museum visit in PollEverywhere
2. Video: Simone de Beauvoir, #MeToo
3. Concept mapping: prompts (thanks to Roslynn) → similar to pub crawling
4. Review first assignment
5. Writing workshops: Friday (sentence, grammar, etc.), Monday (outlining), Tuesday (outlining)

Personal reflections: Outstretching myself a bit: workshops are fun but also exhausting. Other people usually advise students to use ARC resources. Am I doing too much? But again, the response from the students who attended was quite positive. And I can tell from their second assignments that they did learn a lot from those workshops (for those who attended).

Week 6, Oct 7-11
1. Notes: Reading on language, mestiza, feminism, intersectionality
2. Video clips: Coco (film), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Jakelin Caal
3. Prep for debating practice on Language policies in NYU Shanghai (specific prompts in a single shared google doc so that everyone can see each other's work).

Week 7, Oct 14-18
1. Notes: Guest speaker (Brett): Stolen Generation in Australia, Wed
2. Xinjiang video: Wed, Thur
3. Feminist video (Yuan shared): Thursday

Wed: debating practice (specific guidelines in google docs only within the same group)

Thur: cancel the debating activity at the last minute because of a student's email and organized roundtable group discussion

Personal reflection: How to develop a preventative/responsive mechanism to deal with more personal issues, such as sexual harassment and domestic violence---how to develop professional language, attitudes, and appropriate means to communicate with students.

Week 8, Oct 21-25
Quick notes for writing: Debating activity → graded (specific prompts and guidelines in google docs only within the same group, design rubric, students vote for best debaters of the day)
Personal reflection: Teaching is really an unpredictable adventure. Last week I feel the Thur class went much better while the Wed class somehow got stuck. And I expected students to perform better in Thur this week. Then it turns out that the Wed class students got a better sense of the debating activity and enjoyed it more while the Thur class was more tense and stressed.
How to develop a preventative/responsive mechanism to deal with students' personal issues, such as mental stress.

Week 9 Nov 4-7
1. Notes: Use of discussion forums more productively

I ask students to post images, analyze the photographic techniques, and comment on the effects of photography. The practice is intended to help students understand the readings from Week 8 after the lectures and recitations. The warm-up in Week 9 starts with students' sharing some of the images they posted, why, etc. I provide both contextual information and visual commentaries after their discussions.
I integrate the Assignment requirements and this week's readings together. The focus is to show them how the claim and counter-argument (in Assignment) work through a re-reading of the lecture contents.

Week 10 Nov 11-14
1. Notes: This week's reading is about the division of labour and political economy (Adam Smith and Karl Marx). So I start the recitation session by asking them to write down their dream jobs (at the end of the class, we will go back to the jobs and challenges).

I have a mini writing workshop on how to revise thesis statements (4 tips and 4 exercises) for their final essay. Students were quite engaged and told me in the office hour that they found such mini-sessions quite useful.
After reviewing the course content, I design a class activity which might be called **"intentionally fractured ideoscape."**
Context: One class reading is Appadurai's "Disjunctures and Differences" on five -scapes and globalization. Students are really interested in the events happening on the university campus in Hong Kong around the time when our classes take place. Rather than ask them to offer their opinions, I use the class activity to let them examine and reflect what shape their views on certain events in the global era.

Design: I select four news sources (CNN, BBC, GLOBAL TIMES, SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST) and their respective reports on the CUHK campus one day before the class. Students sit in the roundtable form and are each given one piece of news randomly. I give them a basic sheet of what to look for in a news report and the criteria. They read it in 5 minutes. I ask them to self identify which news source they have and have the group present what they just read. We go over four groups one by one. Students realize in the end how each news source has a different focus and highlight different aspects of the events. But they also realize, as one student puts it in class, "we are all blinded by our own viewpoints or the sources of news we read. If we don't share with others, we may continue in our narrow views. But

even if we share with each other, we still don't know for sure what is going on from far away. It is better to understand the complicated situations first than to make a quick judgement."

Week 11 18-20
1. Notes: The class structure is different this week--two recitation section students come together. I need to go to a conference in Vancouver. Students agree to merge two sections. So, 29 students in total (2 absent).

The theme for this week is climate change.
In the first half, I open the class by **"A Letter to Future."** I give each student an envelope and an A4 paper with a written opening. The letter is addressed to the future generation in 2100. I ask them to keep thinking about the letter and leave the last five to ten minutes for them to write the letter as part of class participation. Then, I quickly review the question of climate change and ask them briefly to discuss the phenomenon of young climate activists such as Greta Thunberg.

In the second half, students use **active learning tech (Padlet) and visit an art exhibition**.

NYU Shanghai Art Institute has an ongoing exhibition on the first floor. It features three sections: eco-socialist gardens, pteridophilia, and goldenrod. Since the feature fits well with our theme, I talk to the curator Michelle together with Chenshu about taking our students there.

My plan is (1) to ask students to visit the exhibition by themselves and submit a comment in the discussion forum as their weekly assignment; (2) to update students with their comments before going to the exhibition and encouraged to look more closely after listening to the curator's introduction and contextualization; (3) to require students upload their photos and comments in Padlet while exploring the gallery; (4) to come back to the classroom, have a discussion and let students share their views on art and Anthropocene based on what they share in Padlet.
The last task is to finish writing a letter to the future.

Week 12 Nov 25-28:
No class this week. I asked students to submit questions in the discussion forum. A specific requirement is to submit an audio file of themselves reading one of the poems from that week's reading. In the following week, I will make a sound collage based on their audio files.

Week 13 Dec 2-5
1. Notes: This week, I use Kahoot.it as warm up. The content is about David Harvey's article on neoliberalism. Students seem quite excited to play the game. Their attention level becomes quite high when it comes to winning the game.

Then, we review Xu Lizhi's poems by listening to the audio collage I make based on students' own recordings. They choose one poem to read, record, and upload to the NYU Classes discussion forum as part of the weekly assignment. After letting them hear their own voices, I invite them to speak about their feelings, understandings, and reflections of the poems based on the course materials.
Then, we watched a video of black lung in China. It is about 10 minutes long, telling a story of a family destroyed by the black lung and coal industry. Again, students are invited to compare the poems and video in relation to the class readings. I ask them to discuss in small groups "What would you do, if you were a policymaker/journalist/activist/entrepreneur, to change or ameliorate the situations of the workers like Xu Lizhi or coal miners?" They come up with different answers but also initiate debate on whether their proposals could ever be realized in the Chinese context.
Since it is the last but the second week, I start to review the themes of the whole GPS course before directly going into this week's specific topic on post-isms. I start reviewing the course by giving

them the framework of modernity and how our perspectives on the world have differed and changed around the world. I share with them how we typically view the triad of pre-modern--modern--post-modern. Then, I introduced the historical contexts of the emergence of the postmodern by using course readings from different weeks. The class ends with three questions on post-isms that students raised in their discussion forum.

Week 14 Dec 9-12

This is the final class. It starts with the prep for final exam. We go over the basic requirements and question types. I remind them what to prepare on the day of the exam and offer accommodation contact. Memes such as "KEEP CALM AND DESTROY FINAL EXAM" are used to make them feel relaxed.

The lecture starts with the three questions we leave last week. We go through three sessions one by one, each followed by a small discussion.

At the beginning of the second session, I also designed a game in Kahoot. Students choose to decide which art works are modernist or postmodernist.

Then we wrap up the class by:

1. Fill out the student evaluation
2. Introduce some summer courses they might be interested
3. Read a short poem by Xu Lizhi
4. Take group photos

Appendix C.
Midterm Small Group Student Perception Summary.
A midterm Small Group Student Perception data collection was requested for classes that met on October 10, 2019 on the NYU Shanghai campus. For this service, the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) visits the instructor's class during the final ten minutes of a class session. After the instructor departs, the CTL divides students into small groups and facilitates a discussion asking students to record their thoughts on the following four prompts.

1. **What is contributing to student learning in this class?**
2. **What might need improvement to enhance learning?**
3. **What is one concrete action that the instructor can do now to improve learning?**
4. **What is one word that describes how you feel about this class now?**

The data was gathered, analyzed and summarized by the CTL and presented below as an anonymous aggregate for the instructors consideration. The () at the end of the comment is the number of times this comment was provided by students.

1. What is contributing to student learning in this class, i.e, what is going well?
- Cooperative group activities (3)
- Videos (3)
- Debate (3)
- Concept maps (2)
- Posting on discussion forum (2)
- Class participation/Discussion (2)
- Taking polls
- Physical copies of feedback
- Creating own government
- Enthusiasm of instructor!
- Revising lecture and materials
- Additional resources provided by instructor
- Office hour
- Workshop

2. What might need improvement to enhance learning?
- Beanbag chairs and ice cream/candy (3)
- Comb through ideas in articles
- More discussions
- More electronic devices

3. What is one concrete action which the instructor can do now to improve learning?
- We love her (2)
- Keep doing what she's doing
- Play music
- Higher grade

4. What is one word that describes how you feel about this course now?
> Relaxed (2), Happy (2), Active, Inspiring, Interested, Welcomed, Sleepy, Stressful, Curious, Enthusiastic, Engaged, Normal, Bored, Foolish, Feel like home

Appendix D. Final Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)

Recitation Instructor Questions

Score range is 1 - 5

Question	Average	# of Students Who Answered the Question	# of Responses to the Answer		
			Answer	# of Responses to the Answer	Answer %
Overall evaluation of the recitation instructor.	4.8	17	5 - Excellent	14	82.4%
			4 - Good	3	17.6%
			3 - Adequate	0	0.0%
			2 - Poor	0	0.0%
			1 - Very Poor	0	0.0%
The recitation instructor provided an environment that was conducive to learning.	4.6	17	5 - Strongly Agree	11	64.7%
			4 - Agree	6	35.3%
			3 - Neutral	0	0.0%
			2 - Disagree	0	0.0%
			1 - Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
The recitation instructor provided helpful feedback on assessed class components (e. g., exams, papers).	4.8	17	5 - Strongly Agree	14	82.4%
			4 - Agree	3	17.6%
			3 - Neutral	0	0.0%
			2 - Disagree	0	0.0%
			1 - Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

What about the course or the instructor was effective in helping you learn? (Optional)

Professor Wang is easily my favorite member of the NYU faculty. She was easy to understand and an amazing person in general. She kept the class interesting and had a much more clear and diverse way of analyzing the readings than the lecturers. I was so surprised at how much I enjoyed this class.

The recitation advisors were one of the most helpful advisors I have met at NYU Shanghai. She organized the recitations in a very fun way which gave a lot of room for learning. She constantly included the student's opinion and was open to different responses to the readings. She made the class extremely fun through various activities like debates, writing a letter to the future which made us put the readings in the contemporary context.

- very organized classes, helpful feedback on my writing
- explaining readings, getting help in academic writings

She always tried to make the course readings fun and effective, even if it was boring. I really appreciate her and I love the recitation classes.

Excellent instructor! very helpful in understanding the context and writing essays.

Professor Jing is very kind and helpful. She voluntarily opened workshops for us and prepared snacks for every class.

Her class was warm and thought-provoking. She made us feel at home.

She arranged many interesting after-class activities (e.g. Museum & Exhibition visiting)

During office hours, she not only answered my questions, but also offer ideas and advice that could help me improve my writing as well as course learning. She also corrected my mistakes in an encouraging way. It's a pleasure to talk with her during her office hour.

She replied to the email very quickly.

Her comments on essays were very helpful and encouraging.

From Jing, I learnt more than academic skills and knowledge, but also a positive attitude towards life and work.

She is always willing to help us during office hours time. Give a lot of useful feedback on each assignment. Discuss with me about how to construct my final essay.

She is always so friendly and cares a lot about us student's feelings, I really appreciate this. Also, she always gives us very detailed feedback on our assignments, which really helped me to realize what I have improved and what can still be improved in the future.

Slides; relative videos; concept map

What would you suggest to improve the course? (Optional)
- Ideally, put more emphasis on the recitation potion than the large lectures.
- Optional discussion questions.
- Too good to improve

Appendix E.
Letter to Students Sent February 29, 2020 to gather longitudinal data.

Dear all,

I hope that you are all safe and sound during the coronavirus outbreak. I'm writing to ask if you would like to help me reflect on our learning experience by sharing your thoughts on three questions (listed below) to improve the GPS class for the next semester. Your input will be really appreciated as I will be incorporating your feedback into my future classes.

1. Over the past several months, did you have conversations with your family or friends in relation to what we learned in the GPS class in 2019? If so, what are the things that you talked about and what responses did you get?

2. Which active teaching methods that I offered were the most effective for you in terms of learning? Please describe how such methods helped you learn.

3. Hypothetically, if you were going to be my teaching assistant in this course, what would you include in terms of teaching methods, tools, topics, assignments, etc.? Why would you want to include these approaches?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let me know. Thanks a lot!

Response 01
February 29, 2020

1. Regarding the 2019 GPS, I thought I had introduced the idea of feminism to my family and friends. We spent lots of time discussing this topic and I construct essays on this topic, so it's impressive to me. That is the reason why I introduced it to people surrounds me.

All of my friends and family agree that female should gain more rights on society, especially China. I am not surprised that they all support feminism, since this idea has been on trend for many years.

2. I love the background you provide.
My only suggestion is to provide the background or related information before I start reading the articles, i.e. a week before?, so that I can understand these weird and ancient articles better and save my time.

3. I would like to… read your students' drafts…

Since every instructor has his/her standard, sometimes ARC cannot give us the best and most effective response. Hence, I would like to help you read the drafts.

Response 02
February 29, 2020

1. Yes! I've talked about climate change and my education in GPS course on this topic with my friends in high school as well as my parents during winter break. I had gathered more perspectives on this issue.

One response left me with a deep impression: Greta and those who are against her have very different logics and angles of thinking about this problem. Greta, as well as those calling for immediate actions in climate change mitigation, has the logic of saving more and consuming less, with resources' utilization remaining the same. Those against it has the logic of consuming more but utilizing better, with optimization of the economic system and technology. Two different

thinking modes provide two kinds of solutions. And there's not a better-or-worse between them since both solutions are unrealistic when it comes to operation... But from these discussions I feel that there's limitation in GPS course materials. Since our lectures and textbooks all have a pre-existing value that those who are against climate change mitigation are morally corrupted. Voices from these people are absent.

I had a very thorough discussion with my new classmates in WAI in the forum. This discussion is about Vice Chancellor Lehman's testimony in the congressional hearing on whether the academic freedom is harmed by Chinese government interference. I attached the course materials and my detailed replies below.

2. I think one of the most effective teaching methods you offered was the office hour. It offered us a chance to ask personal questions and solve personal problems, which may be impossible during limited lecture time. I really gained a lot from in-depth discussion with you about the class materials as well as my essays.

The other one is concept maps. We were divided into groups and asked to draw connections between different concepts after a few sections were taught. Through this method, we became active thinkers and were incentivized to understand these concepts more deeply. It was a very effective way to review what we've learnt. At the same time, cooperation with classmates and you also brought in new perspectives. I remembered after your drawing the mindmaps on the topic Capitalism, some very complex concepts became clearer.

I also appreciate your efforts to sacrifice your leisure time and organize Q&A workshops. They helped me a lot on how to write essays, how to read effectively and how to understand a specific topic.

3. I think we can include more discussion on the forum. Although we had assignments post questions in the forum, we didn't need to reply to other students' postings or replies. Therefore, we weren't motivated to absorb perspectives from our fellow students. Since this course is about "Global Perspectives", perspectives from students are also valuable. Also, active interactions on forum can prompt us to think deeper and more carefully. It has a similar effect with a debate but we have more time to respond and understand the arguments of others as well as to organize our thoughts.

Response 03
February 29, 2020
    1. I did have some conversations with my family and peers, especially about feminism and otherness. GPS really helps us to notice some voiceless people or minorities that we might don't notice before. I was amazed by the big difference existing especially when talking to my family as they might hold a relatively traditional opinion on those things. I also found a difference when I met my high school friends. They hold the opinion as I did, and most of them don't care about the minorities as they are not included in that group. I found even though I didn't read too much on GPS, but the environment and atmosphere that the GPS courses and our peers provided to me pretty much influenced me.

    2. I still remember the Week 13 recitation on post-modernism and Neo-liberalism. I mean, that was the class I found myself most dedicated to. I believe the reason why is I can find something that connects to my experience or observation, whether in real life or on TV. Compare to Descartes and Vasubandhu's life story or history that cannot hook my interest, I prefer a thorough understanding of their theory and important notion with our real-life example.

3. If I am a teaching assistant, I think I would like to include an academic-oriented assignment that requires one group of students to finish every week. The assignment is to find and explain some of the critical notion and sentence that appears in that week's GPS reading. Therefore, the students won't need to spend too much time on their exam preparation. And I believe they will be excited to see how much they have done after the teamwork throughout the semester. Another thing I want to mention is to connect the topic with some of the incidents that we might experienced or experiencing. Especially the things happened after 2008, I think for most of the student, they might remember more clearly for the thing happened after that year, whether international or Chinese students. The last thing I would like to suggest is maybe for the student who doesn't have such an ability to finish all the GPS reading like me. That is to set a minimal reading requirement that requires students at least to read some of the essential paragraphs that will be discussed in the recitation. Therefore, they can be more engaged in class.

Response 04
February 29, 2020

1. I talked to my uncle about it. And he is very impressed by the way we read and learn all those stuff. He said that the English major students in China should practice the same thing.

2. I think it was the "relevant topic extensive reading." I started to do it when I began to read about Marx. It was really helpful through finding relevant articles which provided me a bigger picture of different authors.

3.I would say "skimming. " Reading GPS took me quite an amount of time, part of which was not productive. If I had handled this skill, I would have done a better job. Also, I strongly suggest to delete one chapter (any chapter) so that students will not be in a rush.

Response 05
February 29, 2020

1. Over the break, I have incorporated the contents I've learned in GPS into my life in many ways I had not expected. Because I was largely focused on global perspectives on women during the course and I took up Simone de Beauvoir's writings even after, I've had the wonderful opportunity to discuss women's rights and the normalization of women's oppression with my friends. After many discussions and arguments with my friends and family, I've realized that they do not seem to care about such issues as much as I do. Perhaps I was also like that before the GPS course.

2. I have always thought the visuals you showed us, whether that be the videos or the photos, were such excellent representations of what we were learning about. It made the class more engaging and fun. I especially enjoyed and appreciated your offering office hours for us. It gave us an opportunity to get feedback on our essays while discussing the material at a deeper level.

3. If I were your TA, I would include more class sessions like the one we had with the art exhibition. I think interactive classes are fun and stimulating for the students and it is fun to hear people's interpretations of art. I saw that you liked art a lot, so I also think it would be fun for everyone to include self-expression in terms of art and paintings in your classes. Overall, you are a great instructor!

Response 06
March 01, 2020

1. I have had some conversations with friends, but I have only mentioned the content we learnt in passing, like Descartes. I have, however, thought more about what we have learned in the class personally, especially Tomasello, Haxan, Bordo, Sontag, Xu Lizhi, and On Cityness.

2. I felt the biggest help for me were concise summaries and main ideas from the main lectures, and maybe elaboration on key terms. I felt it was fun when you included your own take and examples on some of the readings.

3. Maybe create presentations on writing, in-depth citations, and other technical stuff, arrange for a time outside of regular recitations for people to sign up for and give a general guideline or example to follow. This way, those who don't feel confident can specifically aim to go to those, and it will be slightly different from the ARC because ARC might be more general. Also, maybe consolidate a list of key terms over the course of the semester and distribute word lists near the final. It took a long time for me to actually locate a lot of words, and even then I missed a few that cropped up in the final. I felt I could have used the time looking for key words to actually read back to the context it was used in and see interpretations of that context.

Response 07
March 01, 2020

1. Yes, I did. We talked about the three assignments I wrote last semester. My parents are very glad that I can have a chance to learn what we learn throughout the GPS classes and hope that I can develop my global acumen.

2. I really love the group activity in class, which asked us to work together and find relationships among several articles from the GPS textbook. It helped me to organize the whole structure and relationship between the articles as well as the important points in the articles. During this process, I can also learn from other students and figure out things that I cannot figure out by myself.

3. For this question, I cannot think of any specific approaches... For me, I think it's already very great! 😜

Response 08
March 09, 2020

1. I talked to my family about gender equality and climate change. I personally think that the topics discussed are closer to reality. Topics such as Sundiata and Vasubandhu may be too obscure to discuss with family and friends. Besides, I get a lot of different opinions on each subject. Taking gender equality as an example, some people support that women deserve equality. Others, especially the elders in the family, believe that women's abilities and duties are different from men's.

2. It's hard to say which method is the most effective because sometimes the article itself is the biggest reason for my learning effectiveness lol. But I have to say that the debate was indeed the most memorable and helpful. You need to prepare a lot of materials before class; you need to listen to others intently in class; you also need to find other people's logic loopholes in the shortest time. Of course, a debate can put a lot of academic pressure on students. So I suggest maybe it shouldn't be placed in the midterm week.

3. I suggest that students take turns to make a brief summary of the article in the first few minutes of class. This approach may allow the classroom to quickly enter a relatively academic atmosphere. On the other hand, this method can also help to understand or review the textbook, so this lesson can be more efficient.

Transformative Learning Streams Running Through Digital Theatre in Adult Education: The Case of a Second Chance Education School

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Abstract

The field of digital theatre in education (DTiE) has been gaining momentum in the last two decades in increasingly diverse learning contexts. Applications pertaining to the field can be described as educational interventions in which theatre/drama-based teaching and learning methods combine with digital technologies, thus organically integrating physical and digital content. DTiE interventions currently focus on other subjects of the curriculum besides the subject of theatre/drama, such as language arts, language literacy, and foreign languages. Discerning the many possible affordances of DTiE in adult education settings, but also the transformative potential of learning experiences built upon the field's principles and practices, the author set out to investigate them systematically and in action. As part of the author's postdoctoral research, an alternative methodology for the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language was developed which brings together theatre tools with various digital means and conventions, and which is informed by the transformative learning theory and by the multiliteracies pedagogy. The methodology has so far been applied in the form of a short-term educational intervention in a Greek Second Chance School targeting at-risk adult learners. Besides assessing the contribution of the methodology to the promotion of the English, digital, and cultural literacy of the participants, the author sought to probe and respond to the following research questions: Does a DTiE intervention focused on English literacy involve transformative experiences for adult learners with regard to their perspectives on English language and literacy, digital technology and literacy, theatre, culture, and their sense of self in contemporary culture? To what extent does the intervention transform learners' perspectives on the above areas? The mixed-method analysis of data collected before, during, and after the intervention answered the former question in the affirmative and shed interesting light of the latter. The participants' learning outcomes and the overall research findings open new vistas of possibility for a socially responsive and critical educational praxis targeting adult learners from less privileged backgrounds.[1]

Keywords: transformative learning, digital theatre in education, multiliteracies

Introduction

The advent of the digital age and the torrential flow of new technologies have had profound effects on all areas of life and production, whose long-term import cannot yet be appraised with certainty. The impact of the digital paradigm for education, especially the affordances and dangers involved therein, has become a matter of concern for professionals and scholars of education, as discourses about learning and social engagement in *e*-culture are gaining in intensity (Anderson, Cameron, & Sutton, 2012). Besides educational circles, international organizations such as UNESCO underline the pressing need for effective and prospective responses on the part of education systems to the challenges attending the world's digital turn. A recent "concept note" published by UNESCO (2018) argues for educational initiatives centered on "developing capacities for anticipating the changing needs for digital skills for work and life" (p. 4). The urgency of that issue for adult education actors, particularly for those targeting learners from less socially privileged backgrounds, is obvious considering that many of these learners are "digital immigrants" (Prensky, 2001, pp. 35–36),

who face the risks of job displacement and social exclusion if unable to keep up with the shifts and swerves of our digitally attuned social futures.

Incorporating digital literacy (usually framed as Information and Communications Technology or ICT training) as a separate course/module in the curriculum or in the study program, however, rarely proves an adequate strategy for addressing the imperative of digitally reskilling/upskilling less privileged adult learners. Three observations based on the author's experience as an adult educator regarding the foregoing point in fact propelled the conception of the research project on which this paper is based. First, the purposeful integration of digital technologies in courses/modules other than ICT is usually neglected. This results in lost opportunities vis-à-vis the learners' acquisition of digital competences, on the one hand, and their understanding and appreciation of the affordances of digital technologies in diverse content areas and areas of life on the other. Second, even when digital technologies are integrated in the teaching and learning routines for non-ICT subjects, these "new technologies" are often used, as the multiliteracies pedagogy scholars Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis have put it (2009b), "to learn old things in old ways" (p. 88). In these cases, computers, new media devices, visuals, and other digital learning objects are basically used to "re-create traditional, transmission pedagogies […] : absorb the theories, practice the formulae, learn the facts, appreciate the greats of the canon, internalize the socio-moral truths that others have deemed will be good for us" (p. 88). The third observation is causally related to the first two: adult learners may learn how to use some of the available digital technologies by means of the ICT-centered training they receive without really attaining functional and critical digital literacy. "[T]he limited nature of much so-called digital learning," as David Buckingham terms it (2007, p. 15), frequently creates the semblance of the attainment of digital literacy (Anderson et al., 2009) but leaves learners unable to employ the tools of digital creation across their lifeworld, critically, and to their benefit.

The above observations triggered a process of investigating creative, interdisciplinary ways of supporting at-risk adult learners[2] to gain access to the tools of digital creation so that they can gain also access to "the social capital on offer" across economic and cultural divides (Anderson et al., 2012). The author's experimentation, in the same period as the said observations were made, with forms of integration of digital technologies in English as a foreign language (EFL) courses and theatre education courses almost inevitably oriented the investigation toward the nascent field of digital theatre in education. These inquiring efforts issued into a postdoctoral research project that centers on developing, applying, and assessing an alternative methodology for the teaching and learning of English literacy in which strategies from theatre/drama-based pedagogies together with material from the resources of myth reception are interlaced with digital means and conventions. The methodology seeks to facilitate the learners' acquisition of English language skills, promote their digital literacy and cultural literacy, while also enhancing their role as active agents and co-creators of culture. The transformative learning theory and the multiliteracies pedagogy were ideally fitted to buttress the design and application of the methodology as well as advance the foregoing objectives.

Literature Review

Digital Theatre in Education

The influence of the digital paradigm and its sweeping progress in the past four decades led to an interesting development in the field of theatre in education, which can be broadly defined as the theory and practice that revolves around the application of theatre/drama-based pedagogies and methods for the teaching and learning of various subjects besides the subject of theatre/drama itself. The experimentation of theatre in education, combined with the integration of digital technologies, dates back to the 1990s (Anderson et al., 2009). Gradually, as the synergy between theatre and digital "toolboxes" for educational purposes began gaining momentum as well as some theoretical and conceptual grounding, digital theatre in education emerged as a distinct subfield. Today, digital theatre in education (DTiE) usually refers to the integration of digital theatre methods in diverse educational settings as well as the integration of digital learning environments, processes, and objects in theatre education (Anderson et al. 2009; Anderson, Cameron, & Sutton, 2012).

All around the world, more and more educational interventions resting on time-tested theatre/drama-based methods, such as process drama, materialize through digital technologies (Caroll & Cameron, 2003). Although most of these early interventions were designed to inspire learning

about theatre/drama, the past decade has witnessed an increase of interventions designed to encourage learning about other subjects: from social sciences and history to language arts and foreign languages, with the method of process drama being preferred in language-centered interventions (Bowell & Heap 2013, 2017; Winston, 2012; Winston & Stinson, 2014). In these cases, digital means are combined with strategies belonging to the repertoire of theatre-grown educational approaches in order to support the learning community, the learning process, and the achievement of set learning outcomes within the frame of diverse educational programmes and contexts.

Although the field has not yet received ample theorization, a recent volume by Cleio Fanouraki (2016) has shown that its practices are grounded in some of the most significant theories of learning, from Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Fanouraki convincingly argues that influential approaches to education such as those found in Carl Rogers' person-centered model of education (1989), Ira Shor's and Paolo Freire's transformative pedagogy (1987), or Jonathan Neelands' work on theatre/drama pedagogies (1984), fortify the field's theoretical underpinnings. With a talent for advocating the field's solid premises and breadth of potential, Neelands (2009) has claimed that it can fulfill the need of embracing and integrating "the benign and empowering uses of technologies" to further learner-centered and pro-social objectives (xiv). For Neelands, using new technologies in their "representations of a technology-saturated world," DTiE interventions can help learners make sense of as well as "more accurately describe and communicate their lived experiences and responses" to "a world in which the human and the technological, the real and the mediated have become increasingly blurred and inseparable" (xiv). Thus, they will have more meaningful opportunities to develop ownership, responsibility, and control "over the means and uses of technology" and to, ultimately, become critically aware of the ways in which new technologies shape their personal and social identities, as well as of ways to become their own authors and authority (xv).

Interestingly, this is a constellation of objectives aligned with the core ideas of transformative learning theory, as set down by its architect, Jack Mezirow (1991a); it is to these ideas—which we will return to—that Neelands nods, albeit unintentionally. Several contemporary studies that describe and document the results of DTiE interventions targeting adult learners lend credence to Neelands' arguments. Indicatively, the research studies of Kirsty McGeoch and John Hughes (2009) and McGeoch (2012), based on interventions where theatre and digital tools are jointly used in the frame of English as foreign language education, showcase the multiple benefits learners reaped therefrom. The success of such intrepid endeavors served as an additional incentive for the research project that is presented in what follows.

Myth Reception in DTiE

Besides the aforementioned studies, the author's prior research on the theatre reception of ancient Greek tragic myth and on the myth's educational uses in applied theatre contexts furnished inspiration for this project, and, specifically, for the incorporation of material from the resources of myth reception in the methodology. Moreover, two recent studies which testified to the benefits entailed in the inclusion of the said material in DTiE interventions shored up the project's orientation and the methodology's composition. These are the "Antigone Project" by Lynn Winters, Theresa Rogers, and Andrew Schofield (2006) and "E-Antigone through Drama Education with the Use of Digital Technologies" by Fanouraki (2017). Both succeeded in fostering the language literacy (English and Greek respectively) and cultural literacy of non-adult participants through an inventive combination of the myth of Antigone and theatre-grown techniques which were digitally supported and enhanced. More than that, evidently influenced by the legacy of transformative pedagogy, both sought to empower participants by cultivating their critical (self)consciousness through but also toward novel forms of meaning-making and representation. Therein the author discerned sound possibilities of bringing myth-inflected DTiE into fruitful alliance with the theory of transformative learning and the multiliteracies pedagogy, on whose special place in the project we will expound in the section about the intervention's design.

In light of the above, the decision was made to build the methodology for this research project on the "intersection" of process drama strategies, digital technologies, and mythical, or myth-derived, material, but also to oriented it toward adult learning and attend to the latter's particularities and challenges. In our project, the myth-derived material was intended to offer—and did offer—various

con/texts and themes for inciting critical reflection and self-reflection among the participants, which would also draw on their capital of knowledge and experience in accordance with the key tenets of transformative theory (Mezirow, 2000), thus enhancing the educational and sociocultural import of the endeavor. It was also intended to offer revisionary approaches and patterns that would enrich the corpus of strategies available in the method of process drama, thus rendering the learning experience more aesthetically and poetically rewarding for the participants, and, by extension, strengthening their commitment to learning so that they could gain more from it as a result (Bowell & Heap, 2013).

The Intervention: Methodological Caveats

Context and Pretext

Once the first application of the methodology was set up in a Greek Second Chance School—specifically, a group of 16 at-risk adult learners in their second year of study[3]—and the intervention was put into action, the stage of diagnosis of the learners' educational needs revealed that the myth of Antigone was more familiar than other myths among them: 13 out of 16 participants were cognizant of the myth's basic narrative core. Soon after the completion of the stage of diagnosis and the subsequent adjustment of the content of the intervention to its findings—and in accordance with the school's specific context, material/technical resources, and timetable—the myth of Antigone was introduced in the initial session to the group. It is worth stressing that, since that first session, the group was framed as a learning community in which the facilitator/researcher and the students would act as collaborative learners, in keeping with a principle central to both the transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991b) and the multiliteracies pedagogy (Cope & Pullen, 2009).

The myth served as what Cecily O' Neill terms "pretext" (1995, p. 20); that is, as the launching strategy, "source or impulse for the drama process" that the learning community pursued in the course of the intervention (Taylor & Warner, 2006, pp. 5–6). To borrow from Philip Taylor's and Christine Warner's (2006) analysis of the specific functions of the pretext in process drama, throughout the intervention, the myth of Antigone would "[ring] up the curtain by framing the participants effectively and economically in roles that have a firm association with the potential action"; it suggested purposes and tasks; it had a structural function as it set up expectations, hinted at previous events and foreshadowed future ones, established patterns, implied roles, and a setting; it set in motion "the weaving of drama," feeding into the collaborative development of a (non-written) dramatic text by the participants; and it gave birth to various themes on which the participants reflected (pp. 6–7). Once the functions of the myth as pre-text were explained to the participants in the initial session, and they understood that during the intervention they would basically attempt to develop a revision of the myth through theatre/drama-based strategies and digital technologies using the English language, most were keen to contribute to the creative endeavor. By the end of the initial session, they had all consensually agreed to transpose the myth of Antigone to their familiar contemporary context: their version of the myth would be set in a dystopic, fictional Greece in the year 2020.

Here we should underline that the decision of the entire group to join in the endeavor was positively surprising considering the findings that issued from the diagnosis. The latter comprised a short questionnaire to capture each learner's educational profile; adapted EFL placement tests to assess their level of English literacy with respect to hard skills; another more extensive and comprehensive questionnaire to find out more about their level of English literacy with respect to soft skills, digital literacy, and cultural literacy; as well as semi-structured interviews to probe into the above areas of competence, but also to focus more closely on their perspectives on culture and their sense of self within contemporary culture. The analysis that ensued revealed that, in the terms set by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages[4], only 3 of 16 participants were above the level of "Basic User" in English literacy, while the other 3 could be described as "Independent Users." Regarding their level of digital literacy, determined in the light of E.U.'s Digital Competence Framework[5], 12 out of 16 participants had low and only 4 relatively high digital skills. To this we should add that 5 of them stated during the diagnosis that they were not interested in the incorporation of digital technologies in educational practices and admitted that they were negatively predisposed toward that prospect. As for the participants' cultural literacy, for which the project drew on the E.U.'s Cultural Analysis Framework[6] while also including a theatre-specific dimension, the group

was found to hold diverse but relatively positive attitudes toward some of the central components of cultural literacy, such as cultural heritages, tolerance, inclusion, empathy, and social responsibility. However, none of the participants had prior experience of the theatre's use in education, 12 stated that they have little to no knowledge about theatre in general, and 4 that they were not interested in using theatre tools for educational purposes and that they could not see how theatre/drama-based strategies could promote learning and the acquisition of useful skills. Still, even those who expressed disinterest in the use of digital technologies and theatre tools resolved by the end of the initial session to give this unfamiliar learning experience a chance.

Design

Within the frame of the intervention, application of the methodology was designed to consist of a series of 40-minute sessions, or sequence of linked episodes in process drama terminology (Bowell & Heap, 2013, p. 116). Throughout the episodes the participants actively engaged in the development of a multimodal and transmedial revision of the myth of Antigone using an integrated combination of the English language, process drama strategies, material drawn from the reception of the myth, and digital technologies. The language content of the episodes corresponded to the regular English literacy curriculum the school had planned for second-year students, but went beyond it to accommodate the diverse language needs of the participants in the mixed-ability group, as well as align with the thematic foci of the episodes and the more general thematic content of the intervention.

Process Drama

With respect to the method of process drama that was employed, the design drew on the six principles of planning set forth by Pamela Bowell and Brian S. Heap (2013), which are presented, for reasons of clarity, in Table 1:

Table 1

Process Drama Planning Principles of the Design

Principle of planning	Translation into the design
Theme	The plural and myth-inflected learning area.
Dramatic context	The fictional circumstances in which the themes are explored.
Roles	The roles that the facilitator and the learners take on in the drama, while engaged in dramatic playing and improvisations in order to explore the themes and propel the action forward.
Frame	The point of view of different roles, the communication frames they shape, and the dramatic tension they generate as a result.
Sign	All signs used to engage and stimulate learners by bringing significance to the drama, such as learning objects, including digital technologies, images, sounds, documents, and so on.
Strategies	Different ways of working based on performance forms and known theatre/drama-based learning techniques, that make the drama happen, move it forward, and enable contemplation on it and on the themes explored through it.

The foregoing principles of planning were used along Julie Dunn and John O' Toole's template for designing process dramas (2002), which includes three phases: In the phase of initiation, "a shared belief in roles and situations is negotiated with the students" (Piazzoli, 2012, p. 174). Although the phase of initiation corresponded more closely to the content of the initial session, where the pre-text was introduced and the learning/dramatic contract formed in collaboration with the learners, each individual episode included a brief initiation unit to remind learners of the content of the previous session/episode, resume the pre-text, facilitate their language and drama warm up, and

prepare them for what would follow. In the experiential phase, the participants experienced the interweaving of process drama strategies, digital means and conventions, as well as language learning and training. The theatre tools, technologies, and language items introduced and employed during this phase in each episode were adjusted to the creative and linguistic input of the learners. The reflective phase, where participants "process their experiences to make meaning from them" (Dunn & O'Toole, 2002, p. 24), was designed according to Erica C. Piazzoli's (2012) approach to reflection in process drama. It involved four types of reflection exercised via a variety of means, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2

Multifold Reflection Built into the Design

Type of reflection	Means
Dramatic reflection	De-briefing activities, with the participants sometimes in role ("writing and/or speaking the thoughts of characters") and sometimes out of role ("through discussion and analysis"), either collectively, in pairs, or individually (pp. 179–180).
Linguistic reflection	Analysis and review of the language items that were introduced and/or emerged during the drama facilitated by the teacher/researcher; provision of relevant feedback by the latter; exchange of peer-feedback; formation of conceptual links and patterns; and, when pertinent, introduction of useful and usable theory in relation to "grammar structures, semantic areas and idiomatic expressions," enabled by the teacher/researcher (p. 180).
Intercultural reflection	Written and oral activities as well as informed discussions that pivoted on the participants' views, assumptions, and values on various sociocultural issues related to the themes explored.
Digital reflection[7]	Provision of feedback by the teacher/researcher and peers regarding the use of digital technologies by the participants, the technologies' contribution to learning, as well as critical review of other uses they have in contemporary culture.

It is worth noting that the reflective phase weaved in and through the episodes, usually occurring between units of action, to add depth and meaning to the experiential phase and thus promote learning.

Multiliteracies pedagogy

The influence of the multiliteracies pedagogy and of the transformative learning theory, both of which have been pivotal to the development of the methodology, was clearest in the experiential and reflective phase of the intervention. Aligned with the cornerstone ideas of the multiliteracies pedagogy, the design as well as the "in action" unfolding of the intervention placed emphasis on the multimodal and multilingual making and representation of meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009a). The participants were encouraged and facilitated throughout to engage in meaning-making processes involving different modes, genres, discourses, and registers. Moreover, the intervention drew on the

model of knowledge processes that Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope have proposed (2015). Specifically, it incorporated activities and tasks corresponding to the categories of "pedagogical moves" that the scholars have identified and whose interweaving they have theorized as conducive to effective learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, pp. 15–22). These are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Knowledge Processes Accommodated by the Design

Category	Subcategory	Pedagogical moves
Experiencing	*The known*	Drawing on existing knowledge, experience, and familiar forms of representation.
	The new	Encountering unfamiliar situations, texts, and information.
Conceptualizing	*By naming*	Categorizing information and concept development.
	With theory	Shaping interpretative frameworks and building mental models.
Analyzing	*Functionally*	Establishing functional relations and figuring out connections.
	Critically	Interrogating motives, interests, and thinking processes.
Applying	*Appropriately*	Using knowledge and skills in predictable and structured ways.
	Creatively	Using knowledge and skills in new and innovative ways to reflect learners' needs and interests.

The intervention was also based on the view of multiliteracies pedagogy on the designing of meaning according to which the latter has three aspects (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009a):

1. "Available Designs," found/findable representation forms and resources of meaning that the learners already possess and those that are introduced in the learning process through the materials selected to support it (pp. 175–176).
2. The "Designing" learners do, or the work they perform in the process of representing meanings "to oneself in sense-making processes such as reading, listening or viewing, or to the world in communicative processes such as writing, speaking," or creating multimodal/transmedial texts; how they "appropriate and transform Available Designs" (p. 177).
3. "The Redesigned," or "how, through the act of Designing, the [social] world and the person are transformed" as "new resources for meaning" enrich "the open and dynamic play of subjectivities and meanings" (pp. 177–178).

The theory of transformative learning resonated with that last point, but it also served to qualify it in more adult-proper terms.

Theory of transformative learning

From the point of view of the multiliteracies pedagogy, the transformative potential of a learning process along the aforementioned lines resides in that "[t]he act of Designing leaves the designer Redesigned" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009a, p. 177). "As the designer makes meanings, they exert their subjectivity in the representational process, and as these meanings are always new ('insights,' 'expressions,' 'perspectives'), they remake themselves"; that is, their subjectivity is transformed (p. 178). Although the theory of transformative learning builds on the idea of learning as transformation, too, it places emphasis on the sociocultural dimension of adult learning, while also taking into account the factors that render adult learning distinctive from children's learning (Mezirow, 1991b, 2000). According to Mezirow (2000), learning can contribute to the transformation of adults' subjectivity by transforming their "taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning

perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (pp. 7–8). By extension, it can even contribute to beneficial social change over the long run (1991b, 2000). But in order to do that, it should engage adult learners in critically reflective discourse and critical (self)reflection upon (a) the content of an experience or area of concern; (b) the process by which the latter is being interpreted; and, most importantly, (c) on the underlying premises, beliefs, and assumptions on which current interpretative schemas hinge (1991b, 2000). A learning process that begins from a disorienting dilemma, or an experience that the person cannot integrate into the fabric of their lives due to the lack or inadequacies of existing frames of reference, and that involves that person in reflective discourse and in the exercise of critical (self)reflection can enable them to transform their current habits of mind and points of view which, due to the influence of various "biographical, historical, cultural" forces, compose their frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 16–17).

Although the research project and the methodology were already strongly invested into the tenets of transformative theory, the need to act upon them in the intervention was confirmed by the findings that issued from the stage of diagnosis. It became plainly evident both during the latter, but also during the initial session, that the combination of EFL education, theatre, and digital tools in the same educational program that was put forward to this group of learners constituted a disorienting experience, especially since most (12/16) held conservative assumptions about how teaching and learning were supposed to occur, owing to previous, negatively-colored educational experiences. As we have already noted, some were even disinterested in the use of theatre/drama-based strategies and digital technologies in their education. Thereby, every effort was made to lend the intervention the features and import of a transformative learning process along the tracks of the transformative learning theory, by setting up the conditions for reflective discourse to take place and by including numerous stimulae and opportunities for the participants to exercise critical (self)reflection. Yet, reflective discourse and critical (self)reflection as they developed in the episodes were not only oriented toward the integration of English language learning, theatre and digital tools—which lied at the heart of the disorienting experience—and the specific meaning-making function(s) of each component in the units of action comprising the episodes. They were also oriented toward the various themes that were explored through(out) the participants' multimodal and transmedial attempt to revise the myth of Antigone by all available means and in keeping with their concerns and interests; themes which related to the cultivation of the learners' cultural literacy and sense of self in contemporary culture. In other words, the reflective phase of the intervention, on which we elaborated earlier, was purposefully geared to activate and sustain a transformative learning process targeting both learning and epistemic assumptions, and sociolinguistic, psychological, and aesthetic ones (Mezirow, 2000).

Findings: Transformative Experiences

Although the intervention did not entail a one-to-one correspondence between the unfolding of the episodes and the progression of the transformative learning process (TLP) with respect to all areas of interest along the ten phases which Mezirow has identified (1991b, 2000), certain correspondences did emerge. These were more obvious in the case of the participants' response to the integration discussed above; that is, to an interdisciplinary, multimodal, and transmedial educational praxis, with which all of them were unfamiliar. Table 4 presents the said correspondences drawing on the design[8] and on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data collected during the intervention's monitoring and formative assessment through: video recordings, the participants' portfolios, the facilitator/researcher's self-assessment rubrics, and observation rubrics documenting the participants' changing perspectives on English language and literacy, digital technology and literacy, theatre, culture, and their own sense of self in contemporary culture. However, it should be stressed that the response of the participants was not uniform but, rather, manifestly variant. Table 4 reflects this by also indicating the number of participants who transitioned from one phase into the next.

Table 4

The Intervention in Terms of the TLP

Sessions	Focus	Adapted TLP Phase	Number of Participants
Initial Session	▪ Negotiation of learning/dramatic contract ▪ Launching the pre-text via anglophone digital story (animation) about the myth of Antigone ▪ Critical analysis of the myth; reimagining/reconfiguration of the characters of Antigone, Creon, Polynices, Ismene, Haemon in small groups, using material from the digital story	The participants acknowledge and start processing the disorienting dilemma/experience.	16/16
Episode 1	▪ Critical and linguistic analysis of the "Ode to Man" based on a digital video from a contemporary theatre production of Sophocles' *Antigone* ▪ Creation and presentation of a whole-group chorus-like structured improvisation, which draws on the above material and involves the participants' interaction with it; critical reflection on the improvisation	They examine their negative feelings that result from the discrepancy between what they know/expect/assume to be true about teaching and learning and the new experience.	16/16
Episode 2	▪ Critical and linguistic analysis of the phenomenon of civil war and related language items in connection with the participants' unfolding revision of the myth of Antigone based on the "Ode to Man" and on a digital video with the facilitator in the role of narrator	They perform critical assessment of their existing epistemic assumptions and assumptions about teaching and learning.	14/16

Table 4 Continued

The Intervention in Terms of TLP

Sessions	Focus	Adapted TLP Phase	Number of Participants
Episode 2	▪ Critical reflection on digital images about civic and cultural life before and after the civil war ▪ Creation and presentation of small-group structured improvisations based on the above images, which function as digital scenography, using the "freeze frame" technique; critical reflection on the improvisations	They perform critical assessment of their existing epistemic assumptions and assumptions about teaching and learning.	14/16
Episode 3	▪ Critical analysis of "before the civil war" and "after the civil war" digital photographs based on the improvisations in Episode 2 in connection with the revision ▪ Creation and presentation of digital dramatic comic strips in small groups using Microsoft PowerPoint, in which the participants add dialogue to the above photographs; critical reflection on the task and its products	They negotiate their discontent and its sources with the facilitator and the participants; the process of transformation of existing assumptions is shared among the members of the learning community. They explore options for new or alternative assumptions about teaching and learning, roles in the learning process, relationships (with the facilitator, the other participants, the material), actions within and approaches to the unfamiliar learning experience.	13/16 13/16
Episode 4	▪ Critical reflection on the post-civil war context of their revision via digital videos with the facilitator in the role of narrator (1) and Creon (2); creation and presentation of individual semi-structured improvisations centered on citizens' diverse responses to Creon's decision to forbid Polynices' burial in which the participants-as-citizens interact with the second digital video	They explore options for new or alternative assumptions about teaching and learning, roles in the learning process, relationships (with the facilitator, the other participants, the material), actions within and approaches to the unfamiliar learning experience.	13/16

Table 4 Continued

The Intervention in Terms of TLP

Sessions	Focus	Adapted TLP Phase	Number of Participants
Episode 4	▪ Creation and presentation of digital "roles of the wall" for Creon and Antigone to elaborate on/add depth to the two characters in small groups using Microsoft Word, online search engines, and online interactive dictionaries; critical reflection on the task and its products	They explore options for new or alternative assumptions about teaching and learning, roles in the learning process, relationships (with the facilitator, the other participants, the material), actions within and approaches to the unfamiliar learning experience.	13/16
Episode 5	▪ Creation and presentation of electronic correspondence between Antigone and Creon on the subject of Polynices' burial in small groups, using free web-based email services, online search engines, and online interactive dictionaries; critical reflection on the task and its products	They plan courses of action, namely ways to proceed in the learning process and develop the revision using all available resources and means, in which they act upon the options that have emerged; they take initiatives, express a sense of ownership about their learning, and demonstrate greater commitment to it.	11/16
	▪ Critical and linguistic analysis of digital video in which Antigone (facilitator in role) and Ismene (colleague in role) disagree on how to respond to Creon's decision; creative reinterpretation and reconstruction of the dialogue in the direction of negotiation and reconciliation to elaborate on the characters and their relationship in pairs; critical reflection on the task and its products	They actively seek to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to put their plans into practice, or act upon the options that have emerged; they experiment more freely with the resources and means; their agency in looking for new sources of information to use is foregrounded.	10/16

Table 4 Continued

The Intervention in Terms of TLP

Sessions	Focus	Adapted TLP Phase	Number of Participants
Episode 6	▪ Critical and linguistic analysis on Antigone's and Ismene's hidden thoughts as opposed to their actual words, based on the material of Episode 5 and on the participants' own insights; creation and presentation of small group improvisations for which the participants draw on their analysis and in which they interact with a digital music background	They actively seek to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to put their plans into practice, or act upon the options that have emerged; they experiment more freely with the resources and means; their agency in looking for new sources of information to use is foregrounded.	10/16
	▪ Creation and presentation of a whole-group improvisation on Antigone's dilemma, based on the formulation of arguments in favor and against her compliance with Creon's decision, using the "corridor of conscience" technique and interaction with a digital music background; critical reflection on the improvisation	They start to provisionally put their plans into practice; that is, act upon the new options that have emerged; their experimentation with the resources and means becomes bolder; the learning that takes place within the context of the intervention is extrapolated and starts influencing their out-of-school life and their more general outlook on teaching and learning and the latter's impact on life.	10/16
Episode 7	▪ Critical and linguistic analysis of a digital mind map about the concepts of conflict and negotiation; critical reflection on the drama in relation to the above concepts and their derivatives	They start to provisionally put their plans into practice; that is, act upon the new options that have emerged; their experimentation with the resources and means becomes bolder; the learning that takes place within the context of the intervention is extrapolated and starts influencing their out-of-school life and their more general outlook on teaching and learning and the latter's impact on life.	10/16

Table 4

The Intervention in Terms of TLP

Sessions	Focus	Adapted TLP Phase	Number of Participants
Episode 7	▪ Introduction of the digital technology of the blog and of "Antigone's blog," which serves as her digital journal; creation and presentation of blog entries by the participants in the collective role of Antigone in small groups; critical reflection on the task and its products	They actively seek to build competence and self-confidence in the new approaches, perspectives, and assumptions they have developed while practicing.	9/16
Episode 8	▪ Critical and linguistic analysis of the literal and symbolic use of five objects (red scarf, tan with dry soil, pitcher with wine, bouquet of withered flowers, some incense) in familiar and foreign cultural traditions by small-groups using the "objects and transformations" technique ▪ Critical reflection on a digital excerpt from a documentary about ancient Greek burial practices in relation to contemporary practices, those of other cultural heritages, and their contribution to world culture; online search for more information on the above; documentation of findings in visually enriched "reports" using Microsoft PowerPoint; formulating connection between the objects and the drama using the "compound stimulus" technique	They actively seek to build competence and self-confidence in the new approaches, perspectives, and assumptions they have developed while practicing. They express their commitment to reintegrate into life on the basis of the conditions dictated by the new perspectives they have acquired.	9/16 6/16

Table 4

The Intervention in Terms of TLP

Sessions	Focus	Adapted TLP Phase	Number of Participants
Episode 9	▪ Introduction of the "mystery" of Polynices' secret burial via a digital video with the facilitator in the role Creon's guard; whole-group improvisation on the guard's interrogation with the participants in the role of forensic experts ▪ Critical and linguistic analysis of a digital video featuring the facilitator in the role of eyewitness to the burial; figuring the testimony's connection with the five objects of Episode 8 and with the burial practices discussed therein using the "compound stimulus" technique ▪ Creation and presentation of whole-group improvisation in the collective role of Antigone centered on the ritual use of each object, which involves the participants' interaction with the digital video of the eyewitness' testimony during the burial's creative re-enactment; critical reflection on the improvisation	They express their commitment to reintegrate into life on the basis of the conditions dictated by the new perspectives they have acquired.	6/16

At some point before the eighth episode, the upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic started threatening the regular operation of the school and of all other educational institutions in Greece, as in other countries around the world. By the ninth episode we expected their shutdown to be announced soon, which it did, thus interrupting the intervention earlier than scheduled (the initial plan provided for sixteen episodes in total). Nevertheless, the support of the school's principal, of digital technology, and, most importantly, of the participants themselves allowed for a final, summative assessment to be conducted smoothly. The data that was gathered while monitoring the intervention and in its formative assessment, together with those gathered in the final assessment by means of questionnaires (digitally delivered, completed, and collected), semi-structured interviews (by phone and the *Viber* platform), and the participants' creative and reflective responses to the learning experience, permitted the author to draw sound conclusions despite the abrupt stop to the intervention's progression.

According to the findings of the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the collected data, the short-term, English literacy-focused DTiE intervention did involve transformative experiences for adult learners with regard to their perspectives on English language, digital technology, theatre,

culture, and their own sense of self in contemporary culture. Their perspectives on the said areas were, in fact, transformed to a significant extent. Although a detailed exposition of the findings that pertain to the development of the participants' knowledge and specific skills with regard to English, digital, and cultural literacy falls outside the scope of this paper, it is worth noting, before turning to their transformed perspectives, that 50% to 75% of the learners displayed marked improvement in the use of English literacy (4) hard skills and 81.25% to 100% of them improvement in a range of (7) English literacy soft skills. Additionally, 43.75% to 75% of the learners displayed improvement in the use of a range of (7) digital literacy hard and transversal skills corresponding to different competences. With respect to cultural literacy, 37.5% to 81.25% of them displayed improved ability to act upon a range of (7) skills, from acknowledging, respecting, and be willing to better understand other cultural heritages and values (37.5%) to critically reflecting on the influence, reception, and interaction of the Greek culture with other cultures (81.25%). The findings are quite promising when it comes to the transformed perspectives noted above:

Perspectives on English language and literacy
- Due to the contribution of their learning experience in the context of the intervention, 13 out of 16 participants (81.25%) developed more positive perspectives toward learning the English language, training in English literacy, as well as toward the benefits involved therein in relation to different spheres of life and activity.
- 14 out of 16 participants (87.5%) would now prefer EFL education targeting themselves and others (including their children) to incorporate theatre/drama-based strategies over conventional EFL education methodologies.
- 16 out of 16 participants (100%) would now prefer EFL education targeting themselves and others (including their children) to incorporate digital technologies over conventional EFL education methodologies.

Perspectives on digital technology and literacy
- 10 out of 16 participants (62.5%) developed more positive perspectives toward the benefits involved in the use of digital technology in various spheres of life and activity. Among them, 37.5% acknowledged that digital technology can facilitate their participation to social initiatives and actions of various kinds and 43.5% a more meaningful and purposeful access to cultural life in general.
- 10 out of 16 participants (62.5%) developed a more critical understanding of the challenges entailed in the use of digital technology across different domains.
- 14 out of 16 participants (87.5%) developed more positive perspectives toward the creative integration of digital technology in all levels of education targeting themselves and others (including their children).

Perspectives on theatre
- 10 out of 16 participants (62.5%) developed more positive perspectives toward the benefits involved in the use of theatre/drama-based methods and/or techniques as educational tools besides artistic tools.
- 11 out of 16 participants (68.75%) developed more positive perspectives toward the creative integration of theatre/drama-based methods and/or techniques in all levels of education targeting themselves and others (including their children).
- 8 out of 16 participants (50%) found the connection between their unfolding revision of the myth of Antigone and the real world on which we reflected in each episode was the most constructive and personally rewarding component of the entire learning experience.

Perspectives on culture
- 7 out of 16 participants (43.5%) developed a far more profound and broad understanding of contemporary culture, while 6 out of 16 (37,5%) an enriched and modified understanding of contemporary culture.

- 10 out of 16 participants (62.5%) actively reassessed and explicitly reconsidered prevalent ideological threads woven in and through contemporary culture.
- 9 out of 16 participants (56.25%) found that they came substantially closer to the Greek heritage, gaining a deeper and more intimate understanding of it.

Perspectives on one's own place in contemporary culture

- 12 out of 16 participants (75%) found that the learning experience reinforced their role as cultural agents in contemporary culture by making them think, feel, and act as co-creators of a significant cultural product.
- 5 out of 16 participants (31.25%) actively reassessed and explicitly reconsidered their stance toward their own potential to function as cultural agents and co-creators of culture.
- 6 out of 16 participants (37.5%) committed to find more outlets for acting upon their role as cultural agents based on the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they developed during the learning experience.

The above results, which form part of the larger corpus of findings that was derived from the analysis of intervention-based data, testify to the multiple affordances of digital theatre in education. If an intervention hosted by an under-resourced, albeit very hospitable, adult education institution targeting at-risk learners—an intervention applied amidst the onslaught of a world-wide health crisis no less—entailed transformative experiences and other significant benefits for the participants involved, one cannot but be optimistic as to the outcomes of more long-term applications of the methodology in more favorable circumstances. The interventions that have been planned for the next school year in different Second Chance Schools are expected to enrich the current corpus of findings, if not opening it up to new directions now that, under the pressure of the pandemic, the educational praxis in both public and private educational institutions invest more and more in the potential of the "phygital" mode to promote not only learning but also a much-needed critical sociocultural awareness.

Conclusion

In this paper, we foregrounded the potential of digital theatre in education to support adult learning about other subjects besides the subject of theatre/drama, namely English as foreign language education, even in more demanding educational settings targeting at-risk learners. For this purpose, we focused on an educational intervention that was applied in a public Second Chance School as part of an ongoing postdoctoral research project that seeks to develop, implement, and assess an alternative methodology for the promotion of English literacy that also responds to the increasingly urgent need of equipping at-risk adult learners with transferable digital literacy and cultural literacy skills. The methodology on which we elaborated brings together theatre/drama-based strategies, specifically those commonly associated with the method of process drama, material from the resources of myth reception, and digital technologies, but it is also informed by the pedagogy of multiliteracies and the transformative learning theory. Based on the said methodology, the intervention engaged a group of 16 adult participants in the multimodal and transmedial revision of the Greek tragic myth of Antigone through an integrated combination of the above means.

The analysis of data collected in the stage of diagnosis, in the process of monitoring the intervention, and in its formative and summative assessment revealed that the intervention not only contributed to the improvement of the English, digital, and cultural literacy skills of learners, but it also involved transformative experiences with regard to their perspectives on English language and literacy, digital technology and literacy, theatre, culture, and their own place (or sense of self) in contemporary culture. By the end of the intervention, and despite its interruption under the pressure the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant number of the participants had reassessed and reconsidered prior assumptions they held in relation to the foregoing areas of interest, while some of them manifested transformed perspectives on them. Although only 6 of the 16 learners expressed strong commitment to take further action on the basis of their transformed perspectives, especially those that

concern their sense of self as cultural agents and co-creators of culture, we interpret these findings as far from negligible in view of the learners' existing frames of reference, background and the challenges they face due to the latter.

<div align="center">References</div>

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[2] We employ Qing Li's and K. A. Edmonds' (2005) description of at-risk adult learners as those with some type of learning barrier, such as learning disabilities or risks, low literacy rates, language barriers, and/or life struggles, who have not completed their secondary education due to one or more of these barriers (p. 144).

[3] Second Chance Schools are educational institutions whose central mission is the fight against the social exclusion of individuals over 18 who did not complete their compulsory education. Their flexible curriculum is aimed at equipping adult learners with basic knowledge and skills, forging positive attitudes toward learning and the ability of learning to learn, as well as facilitating the learners' psychosocial development and access to the labor market. Those who complete the two-year educational programme are awarded a certificate equivalent to secondary school diploma.

[4] See: https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97.

[5] See: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/measuring-digital-skills-across-eu-eu-wide-indicators-digital-competence.

[6] See: https://dialls2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/resubmitted-cultural-analysis-framework-with-coversheet-.pdf.

[7] Digital reflection was another thread added to enrich Piazzoli's approach to the reflective phase. It revolved around the digital technologies used in each episode and sought to advance the critical digital literacy of the learning community.

[8] Ideas about theatre/drama-based techniques to be adapted to the purposes of the design, some of which are mentioned below, were also drawn by Somers (1980) and Govas (2003).

Should We Start Coaching Young Leaders Through Transformative Learning Experiences Before They Enter the Workplace?

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Abstract

Coaching, assessments, self-driven discovery, and the non-traditional measures of success that initiate leadership growth are critical, but missing pieces, in current leadership development. Integrating these alternative methods has proven to help the development of necessary leadership skills, such as goal-setting, active listening, self-awareness, commitment and resiliency, in addition to uncovering the obstacles that stand in the way of their improvement. This study investigates the impact of adding a Transformative Learning Experience (TLE) to a leadership development course at a Canadian university undergraduate business program, with the intention to provide students with lifetime career skills. The effects of this learning experience were found to be powerful and persistent, with the benefits carried beyond the classroom and into the workplace. The impact on those enrolled during the intense 12-week course is examined, in addition to following up with two post-graduation cohorts. The results suggest the presence of greater personal and professional advantages when leadership characteristics are developed well before reaching mid-career management level. Future leaders—and the corporations they join — benefit when applicants undertake personal growth and reflection before they join the workforce, instead of waiting until they have climbed their career ladders.

Keywords: leadership development, transformative learning, resiliency building, self-awareness, leadership coaching, assessment-based training, Life-Styles Inventory (LSI)

Introduction

Until recently, leadership development predominantly took place in the corporate environment, targeting mid-level managers and above. Although this original purpose and strategy has evolved to some extent, one critical issue remains embedded in today's complex and global corporate world; new graduates may enter the workforce equipped with the technical skills to succeed in their field, but their leadership skills are traditionally considered less important—at least until they reach a higher level in the corporate structure (Boyatzis, Smith & Blaize, 2006). "Unique stressors facing organizations throughout the world today call for a renewed focus on what constitutes genuine leadership" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 316). A call in the literature has argued that to be effective, leaders need essential competencies, such as emotional, social, and cultural intelligence, self and other types of regulation. Additional characteristics, such as compassion, reliability and ethical standards, are now increasingly sought after in entry-level hires, and necessary long before promotion to corporate leadership. However, little research has explored the value and effectiveness of developing these skills in the business school curriculum before and after young leaders embark on their careers.

This paper aims to address this gap, and the findings suggest that leadership characteristics should be developed at an earlier stage in life. The research sets out to discover whether a Transformative Learning Experience (TLE), based on the work of Mezirow (2000), was beneficial for students in the development of their leadership thinking and associated behaviors, as well as in their growth during the academic term, and their lives beyond the classroom. The overall effectiveness of a final-year Leadership Development course at the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada, was assessed. The professor strategically crafted the material with the intention of applying a TLE, incorporating the use of coaching, assessment-based training, evaluations, self-driven discovery, and non-traditional success measures throughout the course. The aim was to allow students to use these methods, and to equip them with tools to develop and work towards a vision for their own leadership identity, both while studying and as they went forward. Once undergoing this experience, the expectation was for them to continue to apply self-reflection and self-discovery, in order to take steps towards continually making positive changes in their lives. A study followed cohorts of students two and three years after they graduated and entered the workplace. This enabled the real-world impact of this academic training to be identified.

The prospect of a clear correlation between Transformative Learning Experiences and leadership development in higher education is timely and relevant. The educational community recognizes, and is interested in its impact: "the development of leadership among college students is one of the goals often cited in the mission statements of higher education institutions" (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999, p. 51). However, many researchers have questioned whether higher education has the empirical data to determine whether leadership development programs in college are truly effective for the students participating in them. According to Posner (2009):

> Despite the plethora of leadership programs scattered across college campuses, scant empirical investigation has been conducted into the benefits of such educational efforts. Many have asserted that research examining the impact of various leadership development programs and classes, especially over time, would assist greatly in understanding just how leadership is developed. (p. 551)

We believe self-discovery to be a positive driver of leadership development, and that other educational institutions, as well as organizations, could adapt these types of processes in the development of their current and future leaders.

This paper begins with a literature review. The methodology and research methods are provided, and the results presented. Limitations and ethical considerations are also addressed. Finally, insights and future directions for both the course and research are discussed.

Literature Review

Our main area of interest was to examine how leadership development was currently being taught in higher education. In particular, the aim was to demonstrate a clear relationship between leadership development and Transformative Learning Experiences in the context of a course at a Canadian university business school, in addition to tracking graduates as they began their careers. Mezirow (1997), the grandfather of TLE, stated:

> Transformative learning is not an add-on. It is the essence of adult education. With this premise in mind, it becomes clear that the goal of adult education is implied by the nature of adult learning and communication: to help the individual become a more autonomous thinker by learning to negotiate his or her own values, meanings, and purposes rather than to uncritically act on those of others. (p. 11)

Torrez and Rocco (2015) wrote that transformative learning "does not simply provide new insight for future experiences but actually transforms the individual into a new, more complex way of knowing and being" (p. 21). Avolio, et al. (2005) posit that "understanding the moments that matter in life that accelerate authentic leadership development and recreating those moments may help to accelerate leadership development faster than life's program." Young adulthood is one of those moments, and developing leadership through Transformative Learning Experiences at the university level capitalizes on this. Avolio et al. stated that a "critical issue that deserves research attention is how authentic leadership develops and evolves" (p. 815).

There is strong evidence that "engaging in leadership roles as an adolescent improves one's chances of getting into college and has a positive impact on future earnings" (Samardžija et al, 2017, p. 85). However, the current business world literature has largely focused on leadership, defined as the leader of a corporate team, and tended to ignore the greater, more personalized meaning of the term (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006). Self-driven discovery has been shown to maximize the effectiveness of building leadership capacity. This is true for a number of reasons, most notably that leadership development should always be guided by values and authenticity. As Ross (2014) suggested, the most effective and efficient leader is grown from the true self, and a "critical factor is the individual's desire to want to become a self-leader by making personal choices that gives the individual greater responsibility for his or her personal actions" (p. 302). The importance of this self-driven discovery process comes into play with the realization that leaders, by definition, impact other people. Ross (2014) added that "if an individual is unable to lead his or herself, then the individual cannot expect to be able to lead others. Leadership involves the individual exercising responsibility and control over his or her personal actions" (p. 300).

Best (2010) proposed that among other professional skills, the benefits of leadership development included active listening, self-awareness, empathy, process observation, giving and getting feedback, cognitive restructuring, learned optimism, effective use of reinforcement, as well as resistance management. Reports of changes in perspectives, beliefs, self-talk, decision-making powers, clarity of ideas etc. are labeled as a core category under "Mind Experiences." Mental "ah-ha" moments are related to a change in beliefs or perspectives, or a strengthening of the ego through the release of negative self-talk or thinking patterns. Of course, mind and body are not separate, so in some ways this is a false distinction, but nevertheless, "changes in mindset have a huge effect holistically in the client's life" (Longhurst, 2006, p. 68).

Mintzberg (2004) noted "we need leaders with human skills, not professionals with academic credentials." In larger organizations, especially, success depends not so much on what managers themselves do, but rather "on how they help others" (Samardžija et al, 2017, p. 87).

Coaching has been recognized as an important aspect of leadership development, with two elements of particular note. First, it is seen as crucial (and of particular relevance to this research). Ting and Riddle defined the intent of leadership coaching as "helping leaders understand themselves more fully so that they can draw on their strengths and use them more effectively and intentionally, improve identified development needs, and develop untested potential" (Ting & Riddle, 2006, p. 11). Second, Boyatzis (2006) discussed that coaching, as part of a leader's responsibility, can sustain effectiveness, and it should therefore be emphasized as a key component of a leader's role and behavioral habits.

A vast body of research has also demonstrated the importance of coaching. It is "now one of the dominant methodologies for developing leaders" (Mackie, 2014, p. 119). According to Mackie (2014) it can result in a significant increase in a number of beneficial characteristics, including goal attainment, well-being, and a reduction in stress. He also discussed how goal-striving— particularly within the realm of goal setting and attainment—increased hope, well-being, cognitive hardiness and mental health, with its impact extending beyond the leader. Another observation noted how participants experienced statistically significant increases in their "transformational leadership behavior after coaching, and this difference was perceived at all levels within the organization" (Mackie, 2014, p. 118). Commitment to goals can also reduce workplace stress and anxiety (O'Connor & Cavanagh, 2013). While considering

mentoring in business, Luecke and Ibarra (2004) pointed out how important timely coaching was for enhancing effective manager teams' performance. Samardžija et al (2017) continued to observe that:

> Coaching and mentoring help employees grow professionally and achieve their goals. Managers therefore need to learn how to master mentoring challenges, improve their listening skills, and provide ongoing support to their employees. Within an educational environment, professors and the administration should do the same, providing students with support and enhancing the development of their potential. (p. 86)

Mezirow (1997) identified self-awareness as one of the key concepts of Transformative Learning theory, along with other elements such as autonomous thinking, self-reflection and establishing new points of view. Assessment-based training has incorporated this, and proven to be a complementary tool to personal and leadership development coaching, with evidence "that 360-degree feedback and coaching was correlated with enhanced workplace performance" (MacKie, 2014, p. 119). Particularly in its 360-degree form, there are two clear aspects: the first, and potentially most important, is setting a baseline. Thinking and behavior are crucial to leadership development, and for advancing leadership efficiency. Research by Best (2010) found assessments that measure thinking styles as "particularly important, given that while the skills associated with effective leadership can be cultivated through training, the personality traits that influence leadership style are less amenable to modification" (p. 25). Addressing a characteristic that can be changed, in this case thinking styles, is key when discussing leadership development.

Feedback is the second important feature of assessment-based training. Humans have blind spots, and are prone to treat others differently for a variety of reasons. "Feedback has long been known to increase performance by both motivating individuals and directing them to correct performance strategies" (Ashford, 1991, p. 251). The use of feedback is an instigator of transformative learning. When people "receive feedback that differs from their own perceptions and assumptions about their performance, the noted difference can be a disorienting dilemma, and this is where transformative learning may take place" (Mezirow et al, 2011, p. 148).

A deeper and longer-term perspective has been advocated. Avolio, et al. (2015) claimed that "too often the focus of leadership programs remains on specific leadership behaviors and the attempt to change them at the surface level [...] leadership is considered an outcome when in fact it should be viewed, treated, and practiced as a continual learning process" (p. 32). Haber-Curran and Tillapaugh (2015) also advocated for:

> … examining the long-term impact of this course on students through a follow-up study on the perceived impact of the course on their life choices, approaches to learning, personal and professional relationships with colleagues/peers and persons in authority, and career choices. Expanding this study longitudinally would be helpful to further explore the transformative aspect of students' learning. (p. 82)

This belief is echoed by Kuvaas (2009) who suggested that the contributions of their research were limited by the being gathered at one point in time, "making it impossible to draw inferences of causality" (p. 230). Carmeli et al (2006) also stated that in order to substantiate a causal relationship, a longitudinal design is needed.

It is also important to note that leadership coaching is no longer restricted to executives: while the elements surrounding successful leadership development have been researched in the workplace, the literature indicates a need to examine the application of TLE in the teaching of aspiring young business leaders, in addition to tracking the impact of such training after graduation. (Yarborough, 2018) suggested:

Leadership coaching can significantly impact a young person's growth, especially when coupled with a developmental experience that incorporates meaningful assessment, challenge, and support. To have the greatest impact on a student's growth, the coaching process should be developmental (not directive) and it should focus on the coachee's objectives, not the coach's objectives. Whether someone is a professional leadership coach, novice coach, or peer coach, it is important that the coach and learner have a clear sense of both the leadership development context and the coachee's learning agenda. (p. 60)

This study aims to provide some longer-term insight, as well as to offer a number of tools to effectively provide students with Transformative Learning Experiences. Mezirow (2011) pointed out that although "there is little agreement as to what constitutes transformative learning or how it occurs within practice, it seems even more difficult as a practitioner to perceive and understand this process in action" (p. 64). We believe that the relationship between TLEs and leadership development can be discussed through four aspects; self-driven discovery, non-traditional success measures, coaching, and the use of assessments. By surveying business school cohorts two years after they graduate, our paper is able to suggest that the positive impact of TLEs carries them forward as they embarked on their careers.

Methodology

This study used a mixed methods approach: student journals from the undergraduate course provided qualitative data analysis, and an online survey collected both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the course experience, as well as its longer-lasting effects. An additional area of focus was to understand the effects of self-directed learning on the students.

TLE 1 and 2

Throughout the course, non-traditional methods and evaluations were used as Transformative Learning Experiences. The students were asked to write two Transformative Learning Experience (TLE) papers that formed the framework for their leadership journey. By demonstrating both the desired action and achieved results, these papers acted as main sources for this study. Both the TLE 1 and TLE 2 compiled by the research participants were used to collect data in order to analyze the overall course and strategies employed. TLE reports were collected from 10 students in 2016 and 12 in 2017.

In the first week of the Commerce Leadership Development course, students underwent assessment-based training. They were required to complete a variety of diagnostic surveys used in corporate leadership. The primary assessment tool was the Life Styles Inventory (LSI), leveraged to "identify thinking and behaviour styles" (Human Synergistics). Essentially, the LSI helps individuals better understand and change the way they think and behave by measuring 12 thinking styles associated with a number of effective and ineffective leader behaviors (Human Synergistics). This intervention was particularly selected because it evaluated the students' current "approaches to motivation" and maintained a track record for "promoting more effective management and leadership strategies" (Human Synergistics).

The students began with what they believed was an understanding of who they were, while their assessment results disrupted or affirmed the areas on which they needed to focus. Completing the inventory provided them with a deep level of awareness on how they were showing up in the world, for themselves and others, and gave them a perspective on the effective and ineffective leadership styles they were currently using. This was the first step towards building a foundation for their leadership development.

They discussed their results in the TLE 1, created a leadership vision statement, and built goals with action steps to work towards their desired leadership state. The students described their disorienting dilemma (DD), as identified by Mezirow (1991), which forced them to become self-reflective. This was essential to the transformative experience. Undergoing this process enabled them to examine their beliefs, values, behaviors, and assumptions that made them *them*. They also gained a starting point from which to

begin their journey of self-improvement. As the course progressed, writing in reflection journals (TLE 1 and TLE 2) helped with this transformational journey. A student's current state was identified by diagnostics in TLE 1, coupled with their ideal leadership identity, or the person and leader they wanted to become. At the end of this journal, they were asked to devise a strategic, detailed and individualized plan to bridge the gap between their current and desired states. The TLE 2 report was written and completed during a six-week intended change journey, and served as a self-assessment of their progress to date, as well as a place for them to identify future goals for continued improvement and development of self.

Three researchers conducted a thematic analysis across the dataset (Appendix A) which consisted of six phases. They discussed broad data patterns and themes, creating relationships between the codes, and examined how the emerging mapping addressed the research questions. These themes were then connected back to the raw data to ensure they were true to the participants' voices. A primary researcher reviewed the assumptions and variations, before a final set of qualitative codes was collectively agreed upon. An independent team of researchers wrote a cover letter to participants (Appendix B) and created a questionnaire (Appendix C) to identify and better understand the real-world impact of the transformational, self-directed leadership course on both the professional and personal lives of previous students.

Longitudinal Survey

The questionnaire was designed to collect data from a total of 42 McMaster University's business school graduates of 2016 and 2017, (20 and 22 respectively). In their final year, these cohorts had attended the leadership development course that exposed them to the TLE. The survey examined their thoughts about the curriculum, their experiences in taking it, and the personal and professional impacts on them as individuals and leaders. The 15 questions were strategically composed; eight used a Likert scale, coupled with an option to provide complementary commentary, and where applicable, seven were open-ended. All questions were designed to gain deeper insights into five key areas: experience; application; growth; preparation and timing; and final thoughts.

1. Experience: Understanding the overall experience of students, the impact of class participation and of the assessments.
2. Application: Understanding the application of the action plan, goal-setting activities, and leadership concepts.
3. Growth: Understanding the impact of the student's leadership development and growth as a leader.
4. Preparation and Timing: Gaining insights into the impact of timing of the course, academic readiness and academic requirements.
5. Final Thoughts: Gaining insights on areas of opportunity, personal and professional impact, and key success factors.

The following multiple sub-research questions were developed to support the overarching area of inquiry, explored through data analysis:

1. How did the TLE process affect the students' learning and development of leadership related skills?
2. What were the common challenges they experienced throughout this learning process?
3. How did students experience and react to the initial disorienting dilemma? Was this a critical point in the development experience for them?
4. Were students able to develop realistic and effective action plans? How did they adapt to challenges, and pivot their action plans to navigate through crisis and ambiguity?

Descriptive statistics from the closed-ended questions were used to support the qualitative findings. The survey responses were independently analyzed to learn more about the longer-lasting effects of the

course, where the students gained insight and felt they needed self-improvement. Open-ended questions were coded following the same thematic analysis processes as the TLE dataset.

The sample size was approximately 66.7% of the combined number of students in both cohorts. Participation rates were limited by a lack of student contact information: many students no longer used their previous university emails, and/or were not in contact with prior classmates. However, the research team achieved a high 75% response rate, as 28 students who completed the course in both cohorts agreed to take part. The extremely positive feedback provided the research team with additional qualitative and quantitative insights. Responses to the 15 survey questions are provided in the Findings section.

Ethical Protocols

Ethical protocols were taken into consideration, especially since the leadership journey is personal. The participants consented to the collection of their TLEs, which were written during their academic semesters. Following completion of the course in 2016 and 2017, the journals (TLE 1 and TLE 2) had been collected and stored. Three independent researchers familiarized themselves with them, and then coded five sets individually. The data were safely stored, with great care taken to ensure all materials were kept in a locked and secure location, only accessible to the research team. The survey was executed through McMaster's Online Survey platform to ensure full anonymity, legitimacy, and privacy, and was open for two weeks, from July 26th to August 9th, 2019. Those contacted to take part were informed that their answers would be used for pedagogical research purposes. The survey data were stored on a secure server under password protection, again only available to the research team. Confidentiality was assured; to maintain anonymity, a numerical coding system was instated to identify each participant, and to prevent disclosure of any private information. To avoid a potential conflict of interest, the professor was not involved in this process. All responses to the online survey were anonymous, and the questions were designed to avoid influencing or bias in any way. While created to elicit optimal information, sensitive language was used. The skip question feature was enabled, so respondents could opt not to answer a question if they felt uncomfortable doing so.

Findings

TLE 1 and TLE 2 Results

The results from coding the TLEs 1 and 2 across both 2016 and 2017, were astoundingly clear. Throughout the Transformative Learning Experience process, the students showed a capacity to discuss their fears, lack of motivation and direction, a strong willingness to start defining success for themselves, and to pursue personal and professional growth. One student discussed how their "personal transformation was deeply rooted in my self-awareness" and went on to acknowledge that the process had allowed them to better manage stress and make decisions.

The results from the TLEs 1 and 2 make it evident that the student's benefited from the Transformative Learning Experience, expressing statements that included "I learned the importance of making choices that I truly believe in," "when reflecting on the overall outcome of my action plan, I very clearly see that time management is definitely an issue for me," "I am now more aware than before of when and why I try to take control of things and what the negative consequences of doing so are," and "my perception of what my behavior and attitudes were was way off from what they actually were." The impacts of the TLE are now discussed in more detail.

Finding 1: Fear.

The students expressed self-awareness in how they described their feelings. Fear was an overarching theme in the results. This included fear of failure and an uncertainty about their abilities with respect to life in general. While a seemingly broad category, some definite impactful trends emerged, including fear of failure, fear of doing the wrong thing, fear of opening up to others, and getting hurt. This often manifested itself as high avoidance, or high passive-defensive tendencies. It was evident that the

Lifestyles Inventory (LSI) tool provided the students with clarity, helping them to admit "it is obvious that I found fear [to be] my greatest barrier" and "I typically shy away from setting high, realistic goals for myself in fear of failure. I never want to disappoint others or myself, so I convince myself that striving for a lesser goal is better, as it is more attainable."

Fear was often attributed to a tie between both achievement and avoidance thinking. One student explained that "this is an important bowtie for me to work on because my high avoidance is creating a level of self-doubt and fear of failure that is limiting my ability to live in the moment and embrace opportunities." Another said "I truly disdain the fear within me, yet in a classically avoidant manner, I flee from my fears and I try not to think about what the act of avoidance is doing to me both cognitively and spiritually." The action steps taken in this transformation brought further attention to the fear that may not have been obvious to them at first. It was interesting that a student stated that they "didn't realize how uncomfortable it actually is to confront conflict in relationships, especially when I struggle with a fear of rejection," and that this awareness and experience had them reaching even deeper conclusions about their ability to overcome their fearful feelings. This student reflected:

> I wanted to express that the choices I had ahead of me are choices I can make for myself— not to satisfy the expectation of others, or because of my fear of disapproval. This situation proved that I could overcome my fear of rejection and failure in relationships.

Finding 2: Lack of Motivation and Direction.

Lack of motivation and direction was another concern and a commonly-discussed theme among the students, specifically when entering the TLE 1. Many indicated experiencing stress, depression, self-doubt, or anxiety as a result of their current thinking styles. Multiple behavioral, psychological, and physiological symptoms were also described. Students listed stomach pain, shaky hands, sweating, loss of sleep, hives, avoiding confrontation, and restlessness as some of the most troublesome symptoms. A common issue at the outset of the course was being wary of personal resistance to change, as well as recognition of an end-goal mindset rather than one focused on the journey. One student noted, "typically my focus is on the prize and not necessarily on the process of getting there."

Interestingly, fear collided in this theme as well. Another student wrote "it is hard for me to start a task without clear direction from a manager, as I fear that making my own decisions pertaining to the task will result in failure or being wrong." This particularly outlines the importance placed on direction and motivation, and the fear experienced if it weren't present. Of note is the awareness the students gained around their lack of direction and motivation, as well as their need for it. One reflected that "my inability to make decisions and stick to them often leaves me struggling to finish something once I start it, and I often overreact in those situations." An additional student said "due to my dependency on others, especially on my family, I tend to feel uncertain about my future and worry about myself more than usual." Overall, when these Seniors wrote their TLE 1, the lack of direction and motivation they felt provided a particularly interesting observation, which begged the question, if they didn't have direction now, when would they get it?

Finding 3: Importance of Defining Own Success/Independence.

Several transformational experiences were reported. Success, or rather self-defined success, emerged as one theme. Interestingly, how this was defined shifted slightly between the two TLEs. Throughout the TLE 1s, the acknowledgement of other-defined successes or goals was apparent. Many students shared the sentiment that they need to "worry less about impressing others and focus more on pleasing myself", as well as a shared reflection that they too often "prioritized career-related tasks before personal happiness." This transformational experience is significant, as it allowed them to see these errors, work towards changing them and evolve into their desired leadership state. Most shared that they wanted their "success to be motivated by my own values, beliefs and ambitions" and that they had "learned the importance of making choices I truly believe in." While there would be no overnight shift, this transformation resulted in an altered perspective with the acknowledgement that they "want to

measure success in life through love and happiness, rather than wealth or status." Another student's comment seemed to encapsulate the inherent message of the course that, "at the end of the day, the only one who can truly motivate you to change is you."

Finding 4: Desire for Personal/Professional Growth.

The students' passion for both growth and transformation was evident, and they often used the words transformation and transformative learning synonymously. Growth arose as a theme on different fronts in both TLE 1 and the TLE 2. One student wrote "growing is something that I believe never stops, and all people are able to do so as long as they really want to." Another articulated where they thought their own growth was necessary, saying "my desire is to continue to grow in truthfulness, respect and humility with the intent to behave with integrity."

The discussion of balance was an interesting piece to this theme, the notion of wanting growth but not in the sense of wanting more, or to be more, but the need to gain more balance. One student said "I want to have a healthy balance between 'a desire' and 'the need' for approval to increase feelings of self-worth." Many others also echoed a desire for this kind of growth which would give them more balance in their lives. This theme appeared frequently in the TLE 2s, sometimes out of pride, other times expressed as a simple reflection of the further solidified importance of continued growth. Students reflected on how important they found both supporting others, and the help they received in return. One wrote "by helping others grow, I myself have grown and feel confident going forward."

Discussion of TLE 1 and TLE 2 Results

The TLE 1 and TLE 2 results largely focused on overall growth through the academic term. It is also interesting and important to discuss the themes that arose during the course itself, including fear, lack of motivation and direction, the importance of defining one's own success/independence, and the desire for personal/professional growth. All the students were given an honest picture of what to expect from the curriculum, which included the many ways they would be challenged. They were told they would be graded according to how reflective and open they were to the experience, and how seriously they took it. The 42 students taking the course needed a willingness to grow, and an openness to change. With a strict and required commitment to the process, they reported investing over 100 hours to the transformative learning process. They were obligated to complete the assessments, and be dedicated to creating an evolving goal and action plan. It was additionally made clear that they were not expected to complete the process alone, and instead to find and incorporate social support to help them along their journey. The suggested guideline was to bring in five to seven people to walk alongside them throughout the Transformative Learning Experience. For most students, the breakdown was roughly 50% family/friends and 50% past employment relationships. Between 10–12% students across both cohorts chose to drop out after learning what was being asked of them, but the majority stayed.

From the moment they entered the 25-seater, oval classroom, the students encountered a learning environment that differed from any they had experienced before. They first underwent assessments that measured their current leadership thinking styles to act a baseline for the start of their journey, the LSI being the primary diagnostic. The process created a disorienting dilemma (DD) for many, as they were made aware of uncomfortable behaviors that required change. After receiving a brief on their results, the students were asked to reflect on what type of leader they wanted to be, and how they planned to reduce the dissonance between their current and desired states. Students were coached on how to write their individual Leadership Vision Statement that described who they wanted to be, how they wished to be remembered, and what their legacy would look like. All were then asked to complete their first TLE 1 report, which as mentioned earlier, formed the qualitative data analyzed for this research. Here, they discussed their own self-perception when embarking on the course, their feelings as they began their journey, their reactions to the DD, as well as indicating three thinking styles they needed to work on. This provided an opportunity to express self-perception, and discuss any reservations or positive feelings about starting the journey.

The responses to the DD were quite mixed, but a few key ideas emerged during analysis of TLE 1. Essentially all the students accepted the results they were given, whether they were pleased with them or not. Some displayed negative reactions. One wrote "I was not raised to be this way" and "I am ashamed of the person I have become" when referring to their low scores on humanistic encouraging and affiliative thinking styles. Another said "I was surprised and upset by how low my achievement [thinking style] score was, but it was definitely a wake-up call to kickstart necessary change." Yet another who reacted negatively, explicitly stated that they accepted the results and were not particularly surprised by them. Interestingly, many students who had either negative or positive reactions also expressed no surprise. When discussing their low scores in a number of areas, one expressed that "[the results] support my belief that I rub people the wrong way, and have difficulty being friendly and tactful." Overall, 100% of students embraced their assessment results, along with the idea of working towards making change.

Fear of failure, as well as an uncertainty about their abilities towards the TLE—and life in general—arose as another theme. The students expressed how these emotions were affecting their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and often manifested as highly avoidant behavior. One student even noted that until completing their TLE "I didn't realize how afraid I was of making the wrong choice, having the wrong opinion." And further that "I could overcome my fear of rejection and failure, I do have the strength to not shy away from life." This also ties into the lack of direction and motivation that were other common concerns.

Finally, there were many commonalities in the thinking styles the students chose to improve. Every student created a unique action strategy for each of their three chosen styles, and most included a plan for intentional reflection. Many wanted to work on a range of mindsets. These included: boosting their achievement thinking (a belief in the importance of setting goals and striving towards them); raising humanistic-encouraging thinking (a belief in the importance of helping others to be their best self); and self-actualizing thinking (a belief in the importance of always striving to be their best self). They were also interested in reducing their dependent thinking (believing they needed to ask others for help with their decision-making); decreasing their approval thinking (that people must like them); and changing their avoidant thinking (a belief that conflict and difficult situations should be averted). There were frequent mentions around choosing goals that aligned with each style, and many incorporated another individual to act as a support. All 42 students kept a journal to reflect on their advancements, as well as regularly tracking their progress on a daily or weekly basis. The students then embarked on implementing their action plans to move towards their ideal self over a subsequent six-week period.

Self-controlled thinking styles and habits were the primary concerns mentioned by both classes as they started TLE 1. Many students indicated they were experiencing stress, depression, self-doubt or anxiety as a result of their current thinking styles. Multiple psychological, behavioral and physiological symptoms were described. As noted earlier, the most troublesome were stomach pain, shaky hands, sweating, loss of sleep, hives, confrontation avoidance and restlessness. A common concern at the outset of the course was the wariness of personal resistance to change, as well as recognition of an end-goal mindset, rather than one that focused on the journey. Many students shared the experience of shying away from setting goals altogether.

In TLE 2 journals, students described how they would create a future action plan to continue the changes they had begun in TLE 1 that worked towards addressing the main themes found earlier in the implementation section. One student wrote about the decision to keep writing in order to self-reflect: "another aspect of the TLE that was particularly effective that I will continue doing is nightly journaling." Another wrote "moving forward, any action plan that I have will change to include more people, and not solely focused on work but also include my family and friends." An additional common implementation change was around goal-setting: "When I create the next action plan, it will be much more realistic with respect to workload. Seven goals at a time was not realistic ... the next action plan will have only one goal at any given time." Students also mentioned setting more specific goals, creating more contingency plans, and allocating more time for reflection. In terms of peer support, students were asked to choose five to seven accountability partners, and most chose three. In the TLE 2 reflection many students decided that their future plan would include far more help from friends and family. With respect to more meaningful

changes, the students expressed the importance of constantly acting with intent, and focusing on changing cognitive processes, rather than simply gaining skills.

Survey Findings and Post-Graduate Results

The purpose of the longitudinal component of the research was to identify and better understand the real-world impact of the transformational, self-directed leadership course on both the professional and personal lives of students. Although one participant indicated they did not feel prepared for the course, and another called the TLE "exhausting," the takeaways were significant overall. Many expressed how experiencing "temporary discomfort" opened their eyes to future possibilities and positioned them to take small steps towards their goals.

The lessons learned varied, but included: creating stronger social relationships, learning to deal with change (particularly through turbulent and ambiguous times), and developing greater self-awareness. They reported that they learned how to make themselves a priority, while others wrote they felt more confident in their leadership abilities, were better self-managers, and had a healthier self-image. Several were explicitly grateful for the TLE journey, stating that they were "thankful for this TLE ... because of it I have made my way to becoming the person that I desire to be." The unique design of the course allowed students to delve deeper than ever before, opening their eyes to who they were, who they wanted to be, and how to become that ideal version of self.
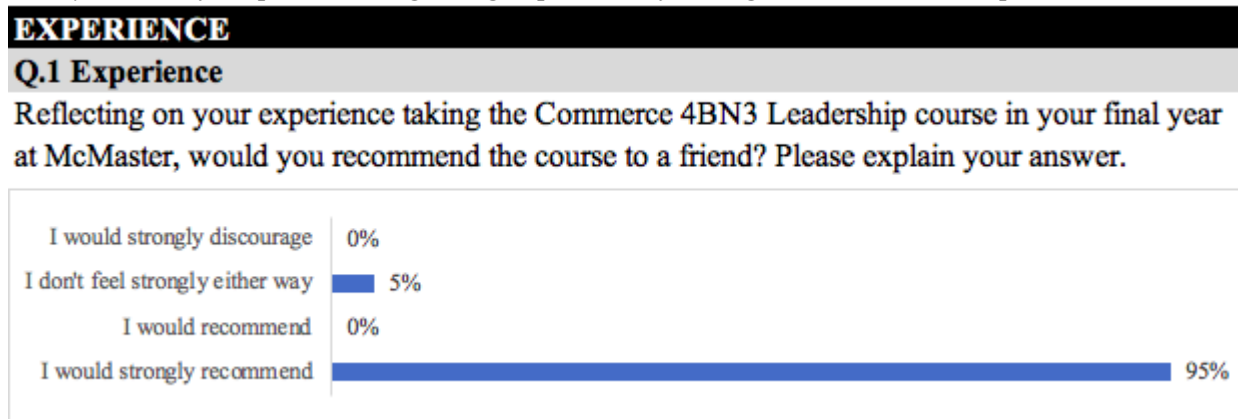
The post-course survey was specifically designed to gain deeper insights. Topics included whether the curriculum was a meaningful experience in the student's lives to date, their practical understanding of the concepts of the Transformative Learning Experience, and if the participants continued to leverage their learnings two years after completing the course. The questionnaire (Appendix C) was strategically created to gain qualitative and quantitative insights, in addition to measuring certain aspects of the class experience. It also provided an outlet for students to give their feedback. The results (Appendix D) are grouped according to the survey's five themes: 1) experience; 2) application, 3) growth; 4) preparation and timing; and 5) final thoughts.

Experience (Appendix D)

The results of this section were extremely positive: 95% of students stated they would strongly recommend the course to a friend. The majority described the course as "very positive," "life-changing," and they highlighted the fact that it encouraged self-reflection and self-awareness.

Table 1

Survey Results of Responses to Regarding Experience of Taking the 4BN3 Leadership Course

EXPERIENCE

Q.1 Experience

Reflecting on your experience taking the Commerce 4BN3 Leadership course in your final year at McMaster, would you recommend the course to a friend? Please explain your answer.

I would strongly discourage	0%
I don't feel strongly either way	5%
I would recommend	0%
I would strongly recommend	95%

One student wrote that "the course really pushed me beyond my limits and forced me to reflect on who I wanted to be as a leader." Another said "[it] was the most beneficial class of my degree!" It became
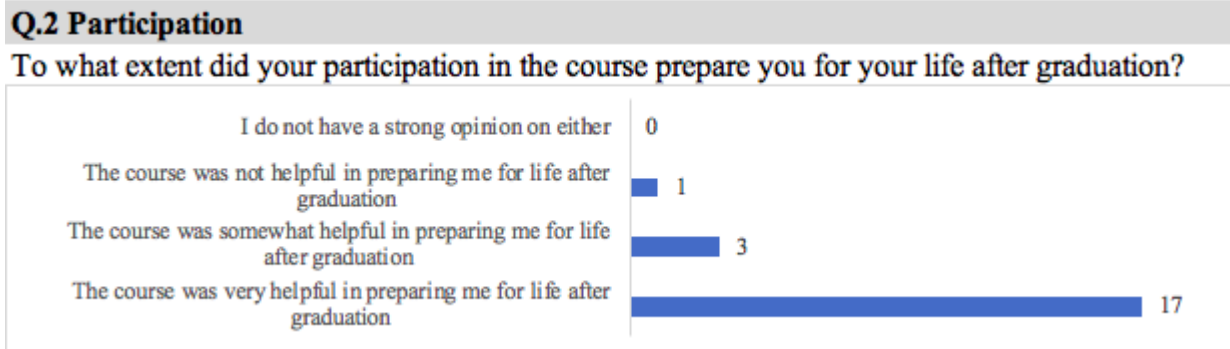
evident that the common themes in this section included a substantial increase in self-awareness around personal strengths and areas of opportunity.

From a preparation perspective, 81% of participants claimed the course was *very* helpful for life after graduation. Students commonly mentioned that it had given them a realistic understanding of what it would take to be successful in the workplace, and that they now had a better understanding of themselves as leaders. The participants expressed how they were able to make better decisions, collaborate with team members more effectively, and have a greater understanding of how to leverage different characteristics to enable synergy. These learnings helped the students adopt the TLE approach as they deepened their knowledge about themselves, both personally and professionally, and increased their market readiness. One student summed up this insight:

> I found this course to be of great value to me, both professionally and personally, after graduating. Professionally, it allowed me to be more aware of my weaknesses, and how they may affect my ability to grow and contribute to a team. It also made me much more conscious of how other people's behavioral patterns at work may be connected with experiences and challenges in their personal lives. Personally, this course taught me some valuable skills related to self-reflection and goal setting.

Table 2

Survey Results for Responses to Question 2, Regarding How the Course Prepared Students for Life Beyond University

Q.2 Participation
To what extent did your participation in the course prepare you for your life after graduation?

- I do not have a strong opinion on either: 0
- The course was not helpful in preparing me for life after graduation: 1
- The course was somewhat helpful in preparing me for life after graduation: 3
- The course was very helpful in preparing me for life after graduation: 17

The last question in this section was about the effectiveness of the self-assessments completed as part of the course. Here, 95% of participants expressed that they would re-do the assessments if they had the opportunity, and that they found the course transformational. One student wrote:

> The final assessment [course process] is something that I believe everyone should complete before graduation. It really pushes you to take a step back and evaluate the most important things in your life and which direction you want to head into. More importantly, it encourages you to reflect on the why and how of it all.

By acquiring the tools to develop fundamental skills at the beginning of the course, this demonstrates the value the students associated the TLE with their measure of success beyond graduation.

Application (Appendix D)
The second section of the survey (Appendix D) attempted to further understand the impact of the action plan application, goal-setting activities, and leadership concepts. Students continued to demonstrate strong application of the TLE concepts by describing their learnings as "relevant," "powerful," "fantastic *real-life* course," and "adding to my tool kit." Positive feedback was consistent, yet also highlighted

potential opportunities. The survey revealed that 71% of the students agreed that the course taught them how to create and implement realistic action plans, and when they create them today, 76% of them continue to use similar goal-setting techniques.
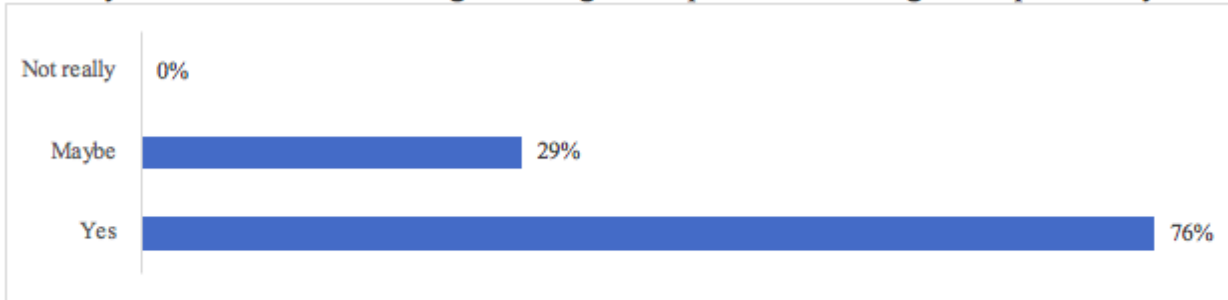
Table 3

Survey Results for Responses Regarding Goal-setting Techniques for Action Plans
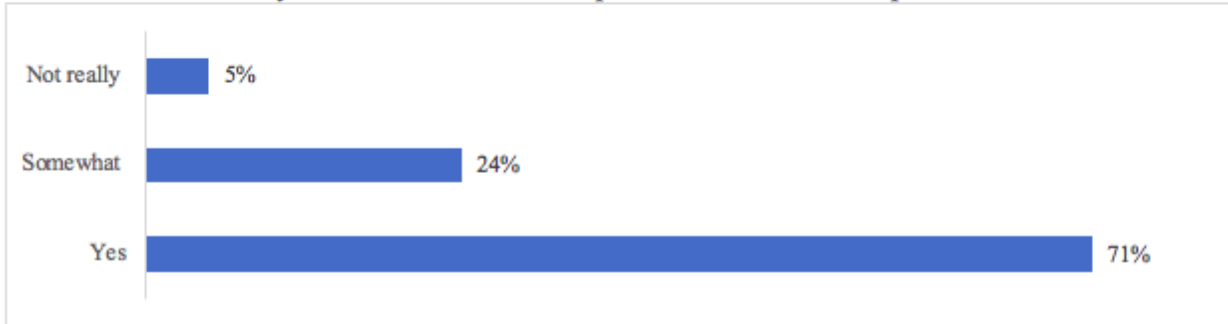
APPLICATION

Q.1 Action

Would you continue to use similar goal-setting techniques when creating action plans today?

Not really	0%
Maybe	29%
Yes	76%

Q.2 Plans

Did the course teach you how to create and implement realistic action plans?

Not really	5%
Somewhat	24%
Yes	71%

Only 5% of the participants said they did not apply or implement realistic action plans from the course teachings. Overall, the participants placed importance on being skilled at creating and implementing realistic action plans, and expressed the need for it to be taught more frequently, rather than just one course in their final year. One student wrote "It's hard to develop practical action plans, and it's even harder to follow through [in a short period of time]." Another was self-compassionate: "I didn't fully achieve my goals but it was a step in the right direction." This suggests that the goal-setting technique impacted and influenced all the students to some extent, while highlighting the need for increased opportunities to develop realistic action plans for themselves throughout their undergraduate degree.

On graduation, 100% of the students were able, or partially able, to make connections between the theoretical and practical aspects of the course. They believed the blend of reading books, articles, and class presentations was the most effective way to learn many concepts. One student expressed that "[it was a] great way to get through so many leadership books" and that "I often find myself recalling things that were discussed in class when relevant situations arise at work." Another commented "it all made sense from [the professor's] teachings. It made me a better leader in my life!" This strong correlation continues to suggest that students understood and carried with them the concepts gained during the
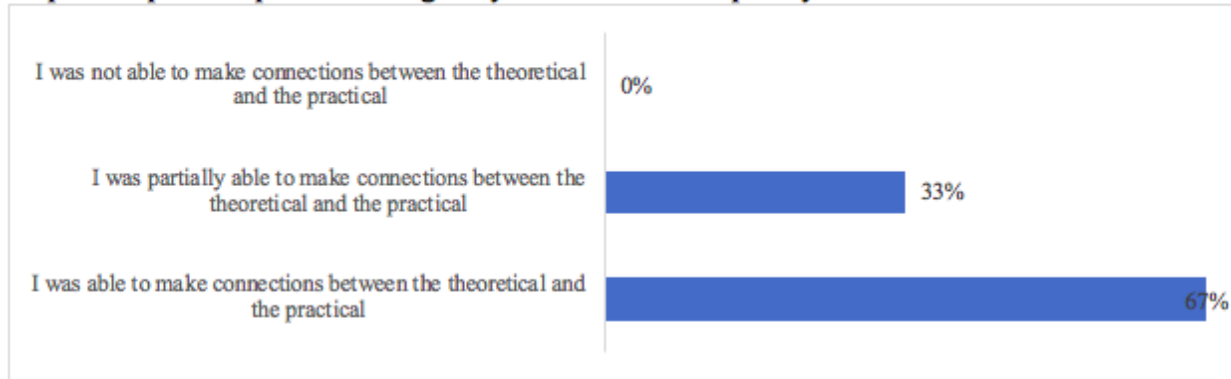
Transformative Learning Experience following participation in the course, including; self-awareness and autonomous thinking.

Table 4

Survey Results Regarding the Application of the Course Leadership Concepts to Implement Positive Personal Change

Q.3 Concepts

Were you able to take the theoretical leadership concepts from the course and develop practical steps to implement positive change in yourself? Please explain your answer.

I was not able to make connections between the theoretical and the practical	0%
I was partially able to make connections between the theoretical and the practical	33%
I was able to make connections between the theoretical and the practical	67%

Growth. (Appendix C)

The third section of the questionnaire explored the leadership growth journey, and its impact on how the participants developed as leaders. The course was described as an opportunity to increase self-awareness and self-improvement. Those surveyed reported that they left feeling empowered, challenged, and having a better sense of different leadership styles, with the ability to identify the one they aspired to. One student wrote:

> The TLE was one of my favorite projects to do at McMaster! It was super interesting to dig deeper into myself and it allowed me to figure out why I was the way I was. [...] It opened my eyes to who I am and who I want to be, while giving me a path to get there.

This suggests the graduates were better equipped to uncover the many layers and complexities of their thinking styles and behaviors.

The participants also shared that the TLE helped them navigate professional relationships and the organizational landscape, which cultivated a sense of accountability as they were able to develop action plans. One wrote "I feel I have grown as a leader through the experience, since it encouraged me to be more aware of how behaviors support or hinder my goals." The comments demonstrated that the course encouraged students to self-reflect, and to understand that every choice and decision either brought them closer, or steered them away, from their goals. They additionally appreciated the need to prepare growth plans, all realizations that are key success factors in leadership development.

The responses showed that the students developed emotional intelligence, and a deeper understanding of empathy, humility, and willpower. They described how they were better able to relate to others while driving their own self-improvement: "the TLE has given me the confidence to lead and be led. It taught me to take advantage of my strengths and gave me a positive outlook on my weaknesses, with the proper tools to improve them." Respondents subsequently voiced how their leadership growth journey had revealed the positive and negative impact of the power of perception. One said "to be a better leader I believe that you have to be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses and have high emotional

intelligence." The student went on to express how they were able to better understand their audience, and the feelings of people around them. They concluded by writing "these are just a few areas that contribute to growing in your leadership. The Transformative Learning Experience helped me through all of these areas, and I could see small progress almost right away."

The need to develop productive self-reflection habits, understand links, tensions, and roots are imperative for personal and professional success. The data in this section revealed that the students were eagerly seeking opportunities to better understand and apply themselves in the real world through their TLE learnings. This suggests that the TLE was a key success factor in helping the students grow as leaders.

Table 5

Results of Survey Responses to Whether the TLE Helped Leadership Growth

Preparation and Timing (Appendix D)

The fourth section of the questionnaire was designed to gain insights on the overall preparation, academic readiness and requirements, as well as the timing of the course. The program was only offered as an elective to upper-level students, and the majority were in their final year of university. The participants were asked whether they would choose to take it in an earlier year if given the opportunity. The majority described key success factors they viewed as necessary to maximize value from the curriculum. These included a certain level of maturity, being mentally prepared to work hard, having a willingness to ask hard questions, to possess strong self-discipline, and be open to change. The final and often-mentioned prerequisite was some relevant professional work experience. Some expressed concern that without these basic requirements, they would have not fully benefited from the course. These common themes were reflected in this comment:

> The timing was perfect for me [in my final year] as I was already open to change and improving myself. I was not ready and prepared to open up about myself in earlier years. I was not ready to accept my weaknesses and mistakes.

Another wrote "I don't know if I would have the maturity or self-realization to appreciate the journey [if the course were taken earlier]." The same respondent later went on to say that "I wish it was a required course for every single student." The results demonstrated some wrestling with the idea of having the course available to younger students, however the major concern was that the younger or less experienced would not be fully prepared to reap its benefits. Some appreciated taking a program that was specifically designed for upper-year students: "having this in my final year allowed the learnings to be top-of-mind as I graduated and headed into the 'real world.'" The findings highlighted that the course was beneficial in preparing students for entry into the workforce, and enabled them to thrive in their new corporate roles.

The next set of questions examined student readiness on the completion of their first-, second- and third-year courses. Almost half (48%) said that prior year courses somewhat equipped them to succeed in the leadership course, whereas just under a quarter (24%) stated that preparation fell short. The common remarks were that the earlier curriculum was repetitive and not overly applicable, rather than providing a progression in learning. One student stated, "I feel that the preparation fell short. First/second/third-year commerce courses were heavily focused on textbook content and theories; it was very repetitive."

Table 6

Results of Survey Responses to Whether Earlier Courses Provided Adequate Preparation

Q.2 Preparation

Did the first, second and third year Commerce courses (e.g., COMMERCE 1BA3/2BA3, 2BC3, 3S03) prepare you to succeed in the Leadership course or did you feel the preparation fell short? Please explain why you did or did not feel prepared for the leadership course:

|	
Not really	24%
Somewhat	48%
Yes	29%
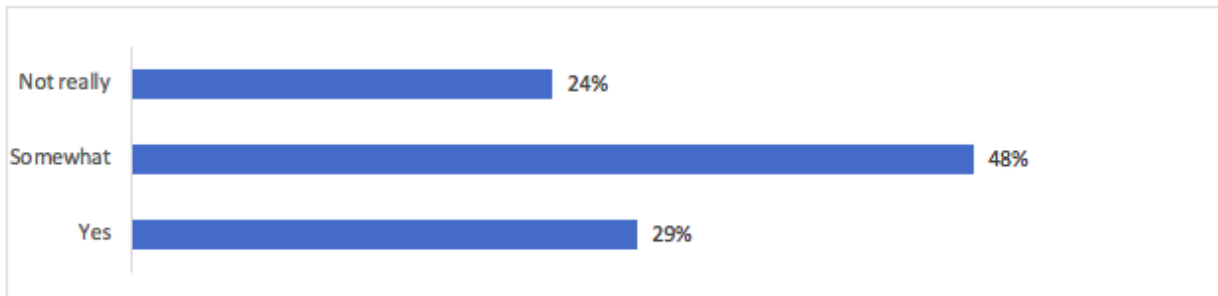
Participants expressed that most courses were theory-focused, lacking practical application. This affected their learning experience, reducing learning retainment, as well as lowering impact and influence. One person said "the leadership course was so very unique; I don't feel as if it connected much at all to my other courses. Also, it was extremely hands-on, which the other courses were not." This gap underlines the opportunity to increase the impact on student learning and experience, especially if half of their education is considered lacking in preparing them for the outside world. Many passionately expressed that "[they] wish the professor taught every course!!! Other courses felt very 'textbook' but it didn't prepare you for real life, whereas the leadership course most certainly did!" Additional comments were, that "this course stands alone" and provides a "unique experience." Although almost 75% of students said they felt they were not adequately prepared to face the realities and demands of the professional working world, the leadership course was considered to be influential, impactful and integral to their development, and a key success factor in helping to better equip them.

Table 7

Results of Survey Responses to Whether the 4BN3 Course Should Be Mandatory

Q.3 Requirement

In your opinion, should this course be mandatory? Please explain your answer.

- No strong opinion either way — 14%
- No — 29%
- Yes — 62%
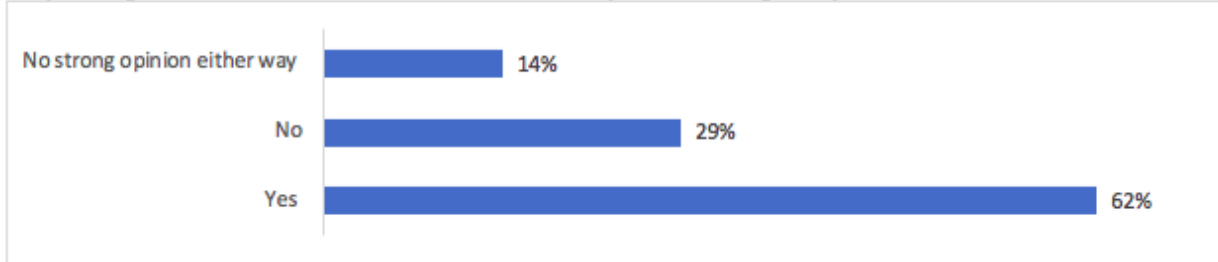
The subsequent section in the survey explored whether the course should be mandatory. The results indicated that 62% of students strongly believed it should, however, there were mixed emotions and reviews. Most students agreed that the hands-on application of leadership theories, the strong sense of self-discovery, self-awareness and reflection were major factors in supporting personal and professional leadership development. One respondent shared:

> Absolutely [this course should be mandatory]! This course actually prepared me for real life! It was by far the most rewarding class I took, and one that brought forth the teachings into my everyday life. I feel that all commerce students would strongly benefit from this course!

Another wrote "this course is super helpful in so many ways beyond school that I think any student would benefit from [it]!!" Students praised the professor for the experience and value. "The way [the professor] instructs the course goes hand-in-hand as to why I liked the course so much and why it is so beneficial."

On the other hand, some expressed concern that not everyone would be mentally prepared, or willing to undergo deep self-reflection, be able to drive meaningful change, or to put in the effort required to experience growth. A compelling issue was that the overall dynamic atmosphere of the class would change if the course became mandatory:

> Some students may not have enough past experiences to look back on, or may not want to dig deep and open up. I believe the course could be mandatory however, [it] may not impact every student in the course as it should.

The small handful who had signed up all chose to be there; if the course were mandatory, the concern was that there would be a significant change in the class size beyond the current fewer than 20 who attend. It was felt that the intimacy and experience would be at risk, particularly if reluctant students were present, running the risk of affecting the experience and overall class morale—features that made the course so impactful and memorable to begin with.

Additional comments suggested that increasing experiential aspects to lower-level curriculum could push students to start thinking differently earlier on, and allow them to develop some of the skills before starting the course.

Final Thoughts (Appendix C)

The final section of the survey invited insight into the areas of opportunity, personal and professional impact, and key success factors. The comments suggested that the course provided value. "It changed my life for the better. I love [the professor]. She is an excellent instructor, teacher, coach,

listener, and friend!" Certain opportunities arose that would strengthen the longitudinal impact. Respondents shared that although the TLE was seemingly tedious, and that they eventually benefited from it, greater guidance would have enabled them to get on board faster. One suggested tactic was to provide support around the use of a more relaxed goal-setting framework that could be additionally practical for everyday use. It would be helpful to clarify to the students that failing to meet their goals was not a course requirement, but were there for them to understand the process and reflect on it.

Students shared that they needed more time, and that they would have benefited from an extended program beyond the six weeks, even potentially making it a year-long course. This particular shift might allow for a longer and more impactful transformational journey. This was suggested because it would provide them with an increased capacity to incorporate informal and formal leadership growth experience into their everyday action plan: "In hindsight, I wish I had more formal opportunities to practice key leadership skills (e.g., communicating a vision, navigating difficult situations with integrity and compassion, balancing openness and decisiveness, encouraging and developing others, removing roadblocks)."

Others expressed that inviting more guest presenters, with the possibility to "implement more speakers from leaders in different industries," using virtual or in-person experiences, would help bring the theory to life. Participants shared that studying and applying real-case studies/assignments increased retention and learning exponentially. Ideas included adding extra real-world case studies to help the students apply their theoretical learnings to the business world. Bringing in previous course graduates to connect with the students and discuss their experiences might be motivating and informative. More engagements with hands-on non-traditional learning experiences were proposed, such as "[incorporating] practice projects or real-life cases where we can use our leadership characteristics and styles and apply it to a case or scenario" to enable engagement.

One final recommendation was to consider implementing a mentorship program between recent graduates and current students to create a "lifeline" for when they graduated, and in turn, for those taking the course to put their leadership skills into action by mentoring younger commerce students. Participants also provided feedback on aspects of the Transformative Learning Experience they believed the course should continue to offer, together with recollections of their most memorable student moments.

The top most impactful features included the assessments, the instructor, the presentation and books, along with the TLEs. The assessment component was described by 77% of students to be their favorite part of the course, which illustrated the desire to further understand and discover themselves. "All the self-assessments [were] super important to do and very informative for self-reflection." More than half of the respondents said that the presentations, books and TLEs drove meaningful change in their professional and personal lives. "The TLE, assessments, and presentations [were] an effective and efficient method to get through content, teach it to other students, increasing retention and application of theory." Another wrote "my most memorable part of this course was receiving feedback on hundreds of pages of personal thoughts, assessments, and other documentation that allowed me to develop as a person." Lastly, 63% highlighted that the professor's competency and teaching style were instrumental to the overall experience of the course: "[The professor] is amazing. Thank you for being a phenomenal teacher, a mentor, a coach, a counselor and therapist all at the same time" and "the professor should always teach this course! She is such an inspiration and has such an ability to make people shine and grow." On a personal level, they were able to improve self-awareness, increase their sense of empowerment, and their ability to tackle conflict in their lives:

> It has given me so many answers as to why I behave the way that I do, and helped me identify ways to improve. The assessments were so helpful in understanding myself and empowered me to dig deeper and challenge myself into a strong independent leader.

The opportunity to develop a personal vision and mission statement helped to anchor them in life, providing direction and purpose. One respondent wrote how self-reflection had led to making career changes that better aligned with their values: "I started a mood journal to be more self-reflective and

haven't missed a day in two years. I left my job for an opportunity that better aligned with my values and the kind of people I wanted to be around." Being an overall better friend, person and partner were attributed to this course. One participant shared how the program prompted them to make a significant decision in their life:

> [...] within a few months after graduating, my almost five-year relationship was coming to a mutual end. I distinctly remember this time being a wake-up call for me to figure out what I wanted in my personal life, and take actionable steps toward achieving my goals.

From a professional perspective, survey respondents said that they better understood the type of leader they wanted to become, and recognized the characteristics of healthy and toxic working cultures. They revealed a deeper desire to collaborate, to know their coworkers, and now felt able to set empowering to achieve aspirations and grow:

> I created a tangible list of things I wanted to start doing in order to become the person I wanted to be. In the following months I improved my physical fitness, my eating habits, and my mindfulness [...] These improvements have all been sustained.

Students were grateful for the invaluable impact the course had on them both personally and professionally through the TLE approach. Students consistently described how it helped them to make a difference in the world: "Thank you again. This course is truly transformative and life-changing. It's exactly the type of education we need to see more of."

Future Research and Direction

Implications for Theory, Research and Practice

This study addressed a number of interesting and necessary concerns currently plaguing undergraduate business programs. Undergraduates were disclosing more mental-health concerns than ever before, and that the expectations of careers after graduation were not being met by the current curricula. They felt unprepared to enter the "real world." The troublesome reports of low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and frustration expressed in the TLE 1 point to a serious area of concern.

The course tools gave students an outlet to explore many of the current struggles and hurdles they were likely to face in the future. We would like to explore more closely the impact these methods could have made in a wider variety of settings. The importance of resiliency, navigating through ambiguity and crisis management are proving to be more important than ever. For instance, research would be timely on whether the non-traditional skills and transformative learning, acquired as a result of the course, built resiliency and proved beneficial for graduates through the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be interesting to discover how the tools developed through the Transformative Learning Experience contributed to the lives of the students, whether in terms of continued academia or when in the workforce.

Studies into the experience of stress and other psychological struggles need to be a priority at universities, together with a focus on the improvement of availability and accessibility of support services. Those who took part in this study told their stories, and the TLEs are proof of the struggles they faced during their undergraduate degrees. While it focused on those enrolled in a North American business school, this study presents an opportunity to expand on the research material gathered, and to continue to further develop curricula elsewhere to support future students.

Two important considerations have arisen with regard to developing the current methodology. First, what can be added to our post-graduate data questions to ensure they check in on these increasingly important competencies? Were these competencies developed through the TLE process? Second, with academic coursework, lectures and examinations largely moving online, can these competencies provide the same impact when taught virtually? We believe it is more important for students everywhere to be resilient, to be able to deal with change, and to continue developing these skills during a time of isolation

and limited in-person socialization. Pedagogical methods need to evolve in order to keep up with important and changing non- traditional skills.

Implications for the Practitioner

Up until now the focus has been on the students, while the role of the facilitator has largely stayed behind the scenes. In order to conduct a course of this structure, the facilitator must possess the required skill set, and needs a support team to make a significant impact on the students' learning. Best (2010) pointed to the importance of a coach in this type of process, stating that they must successfully integrate the knowledge and competencies of the coaching profession, and also be adept at applying them in unique and innovative ways to help clients reach their goals.

The professor facilitated the use of the assessments, conducted the coaching, oversaw the self-driven discovery as well as the completion of both the TLE 1 and TLE 2. Her involvement has been referenced several times in this paper, and her impact on this course cannot go unnoticed. Replicating this teaching and learning might be challenging for institutions that may not have professors who are trained to guide this transformative process. To address this, an arrangement has been made where interested parties may contact the professor for information and guidance about creating their own version of the leadership course.

With or without the connection to the professor, it is imperative that anyone interested in replicating this approach has a deep understanding of the selected assessments and the transformative learning approach embedded within the course. In addition, facilitators would need to be trained and certified, as required by most industry-based diagnostics. A willing coach must also be familiar with goal-setting strategy, and be able to support students in finding and committing to action steps that match their objectives. This requires a great deal of empathy, interpersonal communication and knowledge of leadership theory.

Course Design Limitations

A number of common and significant themes arose with regards to how the course was designed. One student referenced the lack of social support during the process. Many emphasized the need for more help from their peers when trying to implement big changes. Another wrote "I recognize that in my action plan over the last six weeks, I poorly integrated involving other people … And so it is a goal to implement this in my future action plan." Those who did not incorporate support into their initial plan later expressed an understanding of why it was recommended. Students who failed to secure support systems found a lack of shared understanding and overall accountability in their goals and action steps. However, when implementing social support networks or accountability partners, another issue raised was that scheduling issues became an obstacle when students attempted to incorporate their friends or family—all the more reason for these key roles and the nature of accountability to be clarified at the beginning stages of the goal-setting process.

The second overarching problem revolved around implementation. Students explained that their schedules were too tight, and they lacked time to implement their action plans. Issues around vagueness in the plans also made change difficult. One wrote "this action plan was a disaster and lacked the narrow focus required for successful goal achievement." Those who did not set up accurate tracking of their progress found it hard to implement change.

The last problem area raised related to personal meaningfulness. This was not connected to action plan design or implementation, but a deeper set of issues that stood in the way. One student explained how their action plan targeted behaviors rather than thinking styles, meaning that on the surface, things might seem to have changed, but the root issues were not resolved. Another stated "I was not always attuned to my goals from moment to moment. This taught me that I have to breathe my intent, otherwise change will be incomplete and inconsistent." Students described the difficulty they felt in determining the meaningfulness of their actions, and that going through the steps of the action plan felt forced and unnatural. One reflected that they were not honest enough in the planning phase, and should have included "passion projects" in their goals.

Limitations of the Research

  The small sample size, particularly with the TLE portion of the research, was one of our study's limitations. The research team analyzed data from 22 students in two cohorts using their TLE reports written in the middle and at the end of the academic term. It is important to note that more students agreed to participate in the survey than were willing to allow the use of their TLEs. Twenty-two of the 42 students consented to have their TLE used for research, 28 students agreed to participate in the survey. This speaks to the private and confidential nature of these reports. The increased number of surveys allowed for more quantitative data, and placed the focus on descriptive statistics and basic tests of significance to support qualitative findings. An additional and potential concern involved the generalizability of the findings. There is potential for variation and differing results in the implementation of a leadership course at institutions other than the commerce students at McMaster University who participated in this study.

  Finally, this research provides some insight into the effect of the course beyond the early career roles of those studied. The post-graduation findings give some indication of the benefits gained two years after leaving university, however, it is unlikely these new graduates would hold significant leadership roles in that short time. Future research would benefit from following them throughout their career as they gained senior positions in the workforce, and conducting this work would provide deeper insights into how the course impacted leadership identity in the long term.

Conclusion and Future Research

  This research demonstrated that the Transformative Learning Experience component of the university business school leadership course was beneficial to two cohorts of students, both in the classroom and once they embarked on their careers. Those who took the classes gained quantifiable and sustained benefits from the strategies taught. The implications suggest that self-awareness, the ability to push oneself, and goal-setting influenced all the students to some extent, while highlighting the need for increased opportunities to develop realistic action plans as undergraduates. Overall, it is important to note that leadership development is a beneficial, maybe even necessary process, best undertaken before gaining corporate management titles. These students proved that this journey starts as soon as a person decides to make changes in their lives.

  Coaching, assessment-based training and non-traditional success measures that initiate personal growth are critical—but missing pieces—in current leadership teaching. The results of this initial study provide an opportunity for future research into the importance of a shift towards supporting personal growth and a transformed perspective in the pedagogy to develop leadership, resiliency and other non-traditional measures of success in young adults. Incorporating Transformative Learning Experiences into the business school curriculum may become an essential key to creating a stronger, more open-minded and self-aware generation of leaders.

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The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program and Higher Order Thinking: A Propensity Score Matching Approach

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Abstract

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program (hereafter Inside-Out) is an international program where both currently incarcerated individuals (inside students) and college/university students (outside students) participate in a college course taught within a correctional facility. Generally meeting once a week over a single semester, the Inside-Out pedagogical approach is designed to be collaborative, with an instructor trained to facilitate dialogue attempts to foster an exchange of ideas among the students (Inside-Out Center, 2020; Link, 2016). Instead of relying on direct instruction or lectures by professors commonly used in university classrooms, Inside-Out employs indirect instruction and intergroup dialogue (Allred, Harrison, & O'Connell, 2013). According to the founder and director of Inside-Out, Lori Pompa, "The unique educational experience provides learning dimensions that are difficult to achieve in a traditional classroom" (2002, p. 68). In this context, participants create a space of freedom to share their thoughts which ultimately leads to participants seeing themselves as change agents who are able to be solutions to the problems analyzed. Inside-Out has expanded significantly since the inaugural course in 1997. Currently, there are more than 150 correctional and university partnerships and over 35,000 students have completed an Inside-Out course in the United States and abroad (Inside-Out Center, 2020).

Despite numerous studies related to the Inside-Out program, little research has examined if Inside-Out contributes to the development of the thinking skills necessary for critical thought and problem solving. Utilizing a propensity score matching approach, this study examined if Inside-Out courses provide additional opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills compared to courses held in more traditional settings. Specifically, we address if students in Inside-Out courses indicate their course promotes and emphasizes higher order thinking skills to a higher degree compared to students in non-Inside-Out courses.

Keywords: Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, education, higher order thinking, propensity-score matching

Literature Review

Research on Inside-Out has primarily focused on the experiences implementing Inside-Out courses and the potential transformational nature of such a course. There have been a small number of studies about how the course might affect learning and comprehension of material. For example, two Inside-Out instructors relying on post hoc observations noted the distinctive environment of Inside-Out poses unique challenges related to liability, recognizing the diversity of the participants, and maintaining an enriching class setting while adhering to both institutional and program rules (Van Gundy, Bryant, & Starks, 2013). Others have documented how teaching an Inside-Out course requires more general planning than traditional courses and presents a number of logistical challenges such as recruiting and retaining students to securing funding (Link, 2016; Mayes, Owens, Falvai, & Du Temple, 2017)

Allred, et al. (2013), in their study of approximately 90 inside and outside students across three institutions, found involvement in Inside-Out lead to positive shifts in self-efficacy for some. Specifically, only inside students experienced statistically significant increases in self-efficacy from the start of their 15-week semester to its end. Others have found that participation in Inside-Out can alter how outside students view individuals who are incarcerated and how inside students broaden their perceptions of themselves and others (Mishne, Warner, Willis, & Shomaker, 2012). Likewise, Hilinski-Rosick and Blackmer's (2014) examination of weekly reflection papers written by outside students suggested a reevaluation of a number of prior held beliefs about those incarcerated and the criminal justice system. Additional analysis of writing assignments supports the transformative nature of Inside-Out (Maclaren, 2015; Pompa, 2002). Lastly, Wyant and Lockwood (2018) utilizing a pretest-posttest design found outside students who participated in Inside-Out were more likely to feel those incarcerated can achieve positive change compared to a nonequivalent control group of university students in traditional courses.

Of the few studies to examine how the experiential nature Inside-Out impacted student learning, Allred (2009) found participation in Inside-Out aided student comprehension of material. Analyzing both short reflection papers throughout the semester and a short survey at the conclusion of the semester from a single Inside-Out course, Allred found students acquired a deep understanding of course content. Allred reasoned the unique class structure with an emphasis on interaction likely contributed to critical reflection of the material by students.

More recently, an evaluation of both inside and outside students, Kubiak and Milanovic (2017) reported that students found the class transformative and increased their knowledge on a variety of issues related to prison policies and the broader criminal justice system. An analysis of reflection papers and responses to a series of questions about course assignments and experiences, the authors described generally positive outcomes related to explicit and tacit knowledge. Also relying on reflection papers, Steil and Mehta (2020) argued participation in the Inside-Out course better heightened student's awareness about individuals' social position and identities and improved students' analysis of theoretical concepts versus courses taught outside of correctional settings.

Rationale for Current Study

Despite widespread implementation of Inside-Out nationally and internationally and an increasing number of studies on its impact, there are still questions regarding the effects of the course has on learning. One of the primary goals of Inside-Out is to create opportunities for participants to take "the educational process to a deeper level" (Pompa, 2002, p. 68) and develop "critical thinking" skills (Pompa, 2013, p. 131). In part to accomplish this, inside and outside students collaborate and analyze issues over the semester as peers. Yet, the majority of studies focus on how views might by altered due to participation in the course (Kubiak & Milanovic, 2017; Mishne, Warner, Willis, & Shomaker, 2012; Werts, 2013; Wyant & Lockwood, 2018). Although, whether or how one's views might be altered is an interesting and potentially important outcome, research has largely ignored the potential effects Inside-Out has on learning. Studies that have attempted to gauge learning outcomes produced via Inside-Out have primarily relied on post hoc examinations of writing assignments and student comments at the completion of the course (Hilinski-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014; Lanterman, 2018; Maclaren, 2015; Pompa, 2002; Steil & Mehta, 2020). Again, there is a great deal value in these types of assessments but work in general has not compared outcomes from Inside-Out to traditional courses held in classroom settings and more specifically how taking Inside-Out aid in learning beyond content covered in the particular course.

Ideally, participation in an Inside-Out course not only contributes to a better grasp of concepts and theories taught in the course but also compels students to better assess and incorporate new information they encounter. A goal of education is to develop students who will be able to apply newly learned information to enhance their understanding of complex situations, broadly referred to as higher order thinking (Bartlett, 1958; Lewis & Smith, 1993; Newmann, 1990).

A stated goal of the Inside-Out program is to create an environment where students can reinterpret information and use new information to broaden their perspective. Part of their mission statement articulates that participation in Inside-Out courses aim for students to approach problems "in

new and different ways" (Inside-Out, 2020, para1). Inside-Out's use of a facilitator and intergroup dialogue structure aligns with the environment that Mezirow (1997) describes as conducive to developing higher order thinking skills as "learners become increasingly adept at learning from each other and at helping each other learn in problem-solving groups" (p. 11). Furthermore, Inside-Out's use of a circle among participants emphasizes this environment that Mezirow (1997) details because it sets the tone of equality and that everyone's voice matters and is equally important in the learning process.

The present study sought to extend current research on Inside-Out by measuring higher order thinking skills utilizing a propensity score matching approach, the first to do so. Prior empirical designs do not recognize that there may be confounding factors that influence both inclusion in the Inside-Out course and perceptions to what degree higher order thinking skills are emphasized in a course. Students participating in Inside-Out courses likely vary in some important ways from students who choose not to participate. For example, unlike courses held in traditional classroom settings, in order to participate in an Inside-Out course, in many instances students receive approval by an instructor thereby possibly selecting a unique subset of students. The current work's approach of matching subjects on observable baseline characteristics should aid in reducing potential confounders to better gauge how students perceive Inside-Out may affect their learning.

Sample and Methods

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) from the first author's academic institution approved the survey. Further, student participation was voluntary and no names or other unique identifiers were collected. Toward the conclusion of the fall 2017 semester, paper-and-pencil surveys were distributed at the end of class to students in two separate Inside-Out courses and three different upper-level cross-listed sociology and criminal justice courses.[1] Students had approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey and when finished were instructed to place completed surveys into an envelope that was collected by a university administrative assistant. A total of 94 students completed the survey with 22 Inside-Out student participants and 72 non-Inside-Out students.

Dependent Variable

Four survey questions from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) were used to evaluate the degree to which a specific course emphasized higher order thinking skills. During the last week of the semester, students were asked to indicate if "This course emphasized analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory; This course emphasized organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships; This course emphasized making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods; This course emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations." While students were initially presented with a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6, where 1 signified strongly disagree and 6 signified strongly agree, these responses were combined to three options (1 = disagree; 2 = neutral; 3 = agree). The decision to create and analyze fewer categories was made as some of the initial response categories were infrequently selected (Agresti, 2013). The NSSE has been used by others (e.g. Zhao & Kuh, 2004) and the reliability and validity of the survey has been recognized (Kuh et al., 2001). Further, the Cronbach's α coefficient for the higher order thinking index was .85, which is considered an acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnally, 1967).

Independent Variables

Other survey questions consisted of basic demographic information including: gender, race, and political ideology (see Appendix A for survey instrument). A similar proportion of Inside-Out participants were white compared to non-Inside-Out participants. However, a greater proportion of Inside-Out

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[1] Each of the five classes surveyed for this study, had a separate or unique instructor who was also a fulltime tenured or tenure tracked faculty member.

participants were female and tended to identify as more politically liberal compared to non-Inside-Out participants. See table 1 for a description of the sample.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	Inside-Out Participants			Non-Participants		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Race/Ethnicity (white = 1; nonwhite = 0)	22	0.41	0.50	72	0.44	0.50
Gender (female = 1; male = 0)	22	1.68	0.48	72	1.53	0.50
Political Ideology [a]	22	4.80	1.29	71	4.20	1.46

[a] Political Ideology: 1 = Very Conservative; 2 = Conservative; 3 = Somewhat Conservative; 4 = Very Liberal; 5 = Liberal; 6 = Somewhat Liberal

Analysis

Propensity Score Matching (PSM) is often utilized by researchers attempting to detect treatment effects in non-randomized samples (Eisner, Nagin, Ribeaud, & Malti, 2012). In general, the use of PSM attempts to identify cases in a group not receiving treatment that are on average not discernibly different from those who did receive the treatment. For our purpose, participating in Inside-Out is the treatment and being in traditional courses is the control group.

By matching individuals who did not receive treatment based on similar characteristics and to those who did, these data somewhat mimic a randomized experiment and thus reduce extraneous variables in estimating the effects of treatment (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983). For this study, the independent variables gender, race and political ideology were used to predict the propensity for being in inside-out class. Then that propensity score was used to find matches and compare those matched pairs on the variable of higher order thinking.

Results

Descriptive Results

To reiterate, the current work sought to examine whether participation in an Inside-Out course effects our outcome of interest, higher-order thinking skills. A baseline comparison of those who participated in an Inside-Out and non-Inside-Out courses revealed that Inside-Out students reported their course emphasized higher order thinking skills to a higher degree than students reporting on non-Inside-Out courses. See Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Results

	Inside-Out Participants			Non-Participants		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Higher order thinking skills index	22	2.73	0.30	72	2.54	0.55

Note: Higher values indicates student reported course emphasized more higher order thinking skills.

While the majority of non-Inside-Out students reported they agreed their course emphasized higher order thinking skills, a small number of respondents to the survey questions reported they disagreed. None of 22 participants from the Inside-Out course disagreed with the notion that their course emphasized higher order thinking skills. In sum, Inside-Out participants universally reported their course highlighted skills that would aid in analyzing, evaluating, and connecting new concepts together in original ways.

Propensity Score Matching Model Results

        Utilizing STATA version 16.0, we formed 22 match pairs of treatment versus control based on these matches: gender, race and political affiliation. The estimated treatment effects from the propensity score matting model are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Propensity Score Matching ATE Estimates

	Coef.	Std. Error	Z	p	95% Conf. Interval	
Inside-Out (yes v no)	0.91	0.51	1.70	0.07	-0.09	1.93

Based on 44 observations. ATE = Average treatment effect

        Results suggest that students from Inside-Out courses indicated their course was likely to emphasize higher order thinking skills compared to students from more traditional courses. On average, the treatment group or students who were in Inside-Out have a .9 score greater on the higher order thinking scale (p = .07) than the control group or students who did not take an Inside-Out course. Although the findings approached statistical significance at the conventional .05 level, they did not attain statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$. In the discussion section below, we consider reasons why and what that could mean for our interpretation of the results.

Diagnostic Test and Sensitivity Analysis

        Logit diagnostic models were not significant at the .05 level. These diagnostic results of non-significance suggest the treatment and control were similar. This is the desired outcome for PSM analysis, since the aim is to identify subjects who are on average similar in nature minus exposure to the treatment. In sum, in terms of matching Inside-Out students and students in traditional class settings they were not significantly different on the variable of interest, thereby suggesting comparisons on the outcome between the treatment and control were suitable.[2]

Discussion

        The current work sought to evaluate the degree to which an Inside-Out course emphasizes higher order thinking skills relative to non-Inside-Out courses. While the number of Inside-Out courses offered has considerably expanded since the first course taught in 2002, questions remain about whether such courses facilitate students' ability to connect information and concepts. By using a propensity score matching approach, the current work should continue to build the knowledgebase about the possible treatment effects of Inside-Out on student learning.

        The results suggested students who participated in an Inside-Out course felt their course emphasized greater levels of higher order thinking relative to those who took only traditional courses at universities. Students in Inside-Out should be better prepared than students in traditional courses to link information and concepts in novel situations. Further, students should be more equipped to move beyond simple memorization to synthesis and critical evaluation.

        Although students from Inside-Out reported higher order thinking scores than students who from non-Inside-Out courses, they were not quite statistically significant (*p* = .07) at the conventional less than .05 standard. However, considering the effect was in the expected direction, calculating significance based on a one-tailed test and the additional statistical power afforded could be warranted. At the same time, caution should be used as there is still the potential to make type I error and one-tailed tests should

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[2] Results and matching were based on nearest neighbor matching. Additional analyses were performed via caliber matching (not presented here) but results were not significantly altered.

not be used in an effort to simply provide more power to detect a significant effect. Further, beyond assessing the appropriateness of a one-tailed or two-tailed test for data analysis, researchers have broadly questioned the use or at least an overreliance on statistical power as primary means to gauge the strength of findings (Gelman, Skardhamar, & Aaltonen, 2020; Wooditch, Fisher, Wu, & Johnson, 2020). This is especially true when examining statistically significant effect sizes with small samples like the one used here. The sample size may have resulted insufficient statistical power.

Next, although students in Inside-Out reported their course stressed the development and greater use of higher order thinking skills, it was beyond the scope of the current research to determine what specific aspects of Inside-Out courses lead to this result. However, prior work on Inside-out might shed light on the tendency of Inside-Out students to report greater higher order thinking scores. Allred (2009) noted the structure of the course helps facilitate critical reflection. Whereas many courses utilize direct or lecture based instructional approach, Inside-Out instructors are trained to adopt the role of a facilitator. In this role, beyond sharing knowledge and expertise, an instructor guides students via questions and presenting options where students can use various criteria to make independent and informed choices (Grasha, 1994). The dynamic created by a facilitator where participation is encouraged has been found to promote analysis and evaluation of material (Mayer, 1986). Critical reflection and the development of higher order think skills may be important complimentary components and key aspects for transformational learning (Sahin & Dogantay, 2018; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012).

In addition to the possible essential role of course dialogue in general, work has also highlighted that dialogue with people who possess a diverse range of views aids in developing higher order thinking skills (Barnes & Todd, 1977). Although it is not clear if Inside-Out courses bring together people with diverse viewpoints, it is certainly plausible the mixing of inside and outside students who likely have had different lived experiences results in a less homogenous class than ones held on college campuses. Further, typically, Inside-Out class settings are organized with students sitting in a circle and alternating seats of inside and outside students. This arrangement and other interactional templates such as small group discussion likely ensures engagement with multiple viewpoints. Research on Inside-Out has found that participation has resulted in the shifting of one's views and to reconsider previously held positions (Wyant & Lockwood, 2018). The mixing and interface among students in prison-based courses might be a key mechanism for student learning (Hilinski-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014). When student's frames of reference are challenged, they might reflect on their beliefs (Rogers, 2019). This aligns with how Pompa (2002) described Inside-Out's unique structure's ability to foster students' assessment of information from multiple points of view.

As well as the course structure, the course content might also contribute to students being able to better identify complex relationships, a key aspect of higher order thinkers. According to the Inside-Out Center, courses are designed to examine social problems systemically, and consider if and how phenomena may be influenced by broader situational factors (2020).

Limitations and Conclusions

Important limitations of this study should be acknowledged. It is well known that the estimate treatment effects from applications of propensity scores are sensitive to the inclusion of covariates (Loughran, et al., 2015). Although propensity score matching attempts to take into account baseline differences in the groups being compared, we were only able to incorporate a limited number of covariates into the creation of the propensity score. Due to the limited number of covariates, differences in higher order thinking scores between Inside-Out and non-Inside-Out students might be due to unobserved predictors. Additionally, related to the prior point, difference between Inside-Out and non-Inside-Out could be due to differences in the individual pedagogy of each instructor. While, all five of the courses surveyed had either explicitly stated critical thinking as one of the learning objectives of the course or indicted students would weigh evidence from multiple perspectives, reflect and evaluate new information. The courses did differ in important ways, as the Inside-Out course uses exclusively collaborative and indirect instruction whereas the three non-Inside-Out courses employed some direct or traditional lectures. Lastly, perceptions from inside students were not collected for the current research.

Future research should also measure the effects of Inside-Out courses from the perspective of individuals who are incarcerated to provide voices of those who are incarcerated, as they unfortunately are often excluded (Telep, Wright, Haverkate, & Meyers, 2020).

Despite these concerns, the present study adds to the growing literature on Inside-Out. To reiterate, unlike most college courses, outside student participation in an Inside-Out course generally requires approval from the course instructor and might even require an interview with potential students as part of the process. The course content and setting coupled with these screening practices might result in participants that differ in important ways from students who have not taken an Inside-Out course. The use of propensity score matching should control for some of the differences between students and generally reduce potential bias between the samples.

Results of the current study are supportive of the possible valuable impacts, specifically encouraging students to use or develop higher order thinking skills of an Inside-Out course. This is especially important as research has touted the benefits of active learning over traditional methods (Kay, MacDonald, & DiGiuseppe, 2019). As the value of postsecondary education has come under increased scrutiny, colleges must seek to new and innovative ways to fulfill their mission (Alexander et al., 2019); therefore, courses like Inside-Out that have shown to emphasize skills employers find desirable (Tapper, 2004). Other courses might emulate aspects of Inside-Out (e.g. collaborative learning, dialogic teaching) to better prepare and meet the academic needs of students.

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Appendix A: Survey instrument

Q. 1 What is your gender?
      (a) Male
      (b) Female
      (c) Gender variant (do not conform to socially defined male or female gender)

Q. 2 What is your major?
      (a) Criminal Justice Only
      (b) Criminal Justice and second major
      (c) Other/Undecided

Q. 3 Ethnicity origin (or Race): Please specify your ethnicity.
      (a) Asian/Pacific Islander
      (b) Black or African American
      (c) Hispanic or Latino
      (d) Native American or American Indian
      (e) White
      (f) Other

Q 4. Academic Standing
      (a) Freshman
      (b) Sophomore
      (c) Junior
      (d) Senior

Q. 5. Age: _____ years old.

Q. 6. Ideology- Which one of the following best describe your political ideology
      (a) Very conservative
      (b) Conservative
      (c) Somewhat conservative
      (d) Somewhat liberal
      (e) Liberal
      (f) Very liberal
      (g) Other

Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the statements below

Place an "X" in the appropriate box – **ONLY focusing on THIS course**	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Agree Strongly
Q. 7 THIS course emphasized analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory						
Q. 8 THIS course emphasized organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships						
Q. 9 THIS course emphasized making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods.						
Q. 10 THIS course emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations						