

## Proposal Information of Contribution 793

**ID: 793 / 99 ERC SES 07 L: 2**

**99. Emerging Researchers' Group (for presentation at Emerging Researchers' Conference)**

**Paper**

*Alternative EERA Network: 02. Vocational Education and Training (VETNET)*

*Keywords: perspective transformation, transformative learning, transformative education, adult learning*

*Keywords on Research Methods: literature review*

### **WITHDRAWN - Perspective Transformation, Transformative Learning and Transformative Education: a literature review and comparison**

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Learning is, at heart, focused on change. These changes can be assimilative, accommodative, or adaptive. However, change can also be so fundamental as to be transformative at an epistemological, ontological and/or axiological level. These changes can be transformations at personal, collective, and social or organisational levels. The power and the scope of Transformative Learning have been the subject of Transformative Learning literature over the last forty years (Mezirow, 2000; Taylor, 2008; Taylor and Snyder, 2012; Fleming, Kokkos and Finnegan, 2019).

In the literature the theory has been described as a North American one developed by Mezirow (Hoggan, 2016) and has become the subject of much interdisciplinary research (Hoggan, 2016). Mezirow's description of Transformative Learning was as a process that observed and described individual changes experienced by women as they entered colleges as mature students (Mezirow, 1991). Their experiences caused disorientating dilemmas that required them to challenge their preconceived ideas and beliefs and in so doing change their perspectives, their frames of reference and their way of being in the world. Although this was observed at an individual level, the multitude of shared experiences created a collective transformation that reached beyond the individual to a societal level. The popularity of Mezirow's Transformative Learning has meant that it has been used, expounded on, and expanded in many directions and in many contexts to the extent that it is almost unrecognisable (Hoggan, 2016). This has led to critiques of the theory, its purposes and how it is being studied (Taylor, 2000; Newman, 2012; Taylor and Cranton, 2013) with subsequent responses.

However, despite the view to the contrary, the transformation theory literature is not a North American phenomenon. It has been studied by scholars in Europe and beyond and also shares elements with other work across the world (Freire, 2005; Illeris, 2017; Fleming, Kokkos and Finnegan, 2019), many of which share a radical approach that emerges from humanistic foundations and becomes a force for empowerment and agency. Nor has it been developed in isolation in any geographical area. This has expanded the scope, influence, and application of the theory. However, this has also led to different conceptualisations, definitions, and applications under the banner of the theory of transformative learning.

There are (at least) three terms that are, if not contested, then interpreted differently: perspective transformation, transformative learning, and transformative education. These interpretations have resulted in multiple views of the phenomenon: as a process, as a means to achieving particular outcomes, even its viability as a theory.

**Aim:** The aim of this literature review is twofold. Firstly, to explore the extant Transformative Learning literature for the terms "perspective transformation", "transformative learning", and "transformative education" and to map the relationships between the terms and how they have evolved/developed in the forty years of TL literature. Secondly, to determine how the concepts are being used in recent empirical research.

#### **Questions that guided the literature review**

In the review of the literature the following questions were used as a guide:

1) What are the relationships between "perspective transformation", "transformative learning", and "transformative education" as used in the scholarly literature?

How are these concepts being applied in recent empirical research (2018-2023)?

#### *Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used*

Transformative learning, and its elements and applications, is a widely researched educational topic with a respective volume of literature produced. Therefore it was decided to develop specific questions for the literature review. To answer the research questions two approaches to the literature were used.

Initially the works considered to be seminal and influential in the development of the concepts were used to source the evolving definitions of transformation, transformative learning, and transformative education. This involved a general literature search to establish the seminal and influential works. These works were found through recommendations, citation searches and other snowballing methods. The relationships between these definitions were then mapped. At the time of submission this process is almost complete.

Secondly a systematic literature review of the empirical articles in scholarly journals will be conducted based on the PRISMA statement (The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Page et al., 2021). In selecting the relevant articles, the following criteria will be applied: i) published in 'Adult Education Quarterly', 'Journal of Transformative Education' and 'Reflective Practice', ii) have Transformative Learning as a theoretical framework and iii) articles will have a specific, explicitly defined methodology/methods section and report findings and conclusions. This review will analyse the aims and objectives of the research, the methodologies and methods used, as well as the contexts in which the research is carried out. This comparison of the application of the concepts in recent empirical research will determine if/how the scope of the research has expanded in response to criticisms of the area.

**Limitations:** Each type of literature review has associated limitations. Common to both are the issues of access. Access to

the relevant literature had to be established. For the systematic element the journals were chosen based on their ranking, relevance, and accessibility. In addition, an element of researcher bias can influence the process. This is addressed in the PhD process through quality supervision and robust discussion of decisions made and conclusions reached.

#### *Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings*

This submission is based on work that is intended to form the basis of the theoretical framework of research for my PhD. It aims to present the findings from the general literature review and report on the evolution of the concepts and the trends in the most recent empirical research conducted.

It is expected that it will demonstrate shifts in the conceptualisation of the three particular terms associated with the concept of transformative learning ("perspective transformation", "transformative learning", and "transformative education") in the literature. It will consider what factors may have influenced these shifts (geographical, societal and/or disciplinary factors) and how this may have influenced the development of the theory and its application.

In the review of the recent empirical studies on transformative learning it is expected that review of the peer-reviewed articles and the subsequent analysis of the data will identify how the concept is being currently being studied and reported in the literature as well as the contexts in which it is being studied and applied. It is expected that it will also consider how these trends in the research relate to the seminal conceptions of the theory and if the criticisms and critiques of the theory have been addressed/influenced the direction and nature of the research.

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