



### Introduction:

This lesson plan introduces you to Transformative Learning Theory, exploring history and applications. You will be encouraged and challenged to analyze the theory with a critical eye in addition to considering new applications of the theory.

### Participant Instructions:

1. Prior to the activity facilitation, you will need to read the following articles:

- Acheson, K., Dirkx, J. M., & Shealy, C. N. (2022). High impact learning in higher education. In E. Kostara, A. Gavrielatos, & D. Loads (Eds.), *Transformative learning theory and praxis: New perspectives and possibilities* (1st ed., pp. 172–196). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429450600>
- Washburn, A. (2021). Whither transformative education? Taking stock well into the twenty-first century. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 19(4), 306-338.
- Willard, J. (2022, December 3). *Transformative learning 101*. Big Think. <https://bigthink.com/plus/transformative-learning/>

2. During the facilitation, your instructor will lead you through a discussion based on each of the articles/blogs.

- Willard (2022)
  - Let's co-construct a shared understanding of what TL entails...how would you describe it to people who have never heard of it before (or educators who apply the term transformative to learning experiences without knowledge of TL theory)?
  - Where did TL theory come from? Is this the only context in which it is applicable? Where else do you think it does a good job of explaining human experience?
  - What language or terminology do you think is most important in TL theory? (Disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, self-efficacy, others?)
  - What causes disorienting dilemmas (external vs. internal events)? What is it like to experience a disorienting dilemma (sudden vs. gradual, cognitive dissonance vs. embodied discomfort)?
  - A big TL debate: Are changes to the deep structures of the self necessarily visible to others?
  - TL is most often applied at the individual level – to one learner, or to a cohort of learners. What did you think about the application of TL in the blog at the organizational level? Does this work? What would it take to make it happen? What would be the challenges?
- Washburn (2021)
  - Is TL theory too ambitious? How can we distinguish between change and TL? Is any change transformative, and if not, what makes a change transformative? Is transformative learning just good learning? What advantages does the TL theoretical framework provide educators? Learners? HEI administrators? Informal mentors?

- How does the characterization of TL as a move from the socialized mind to a self-authoring mind (Kegan, 2008) strike you? Does that fully capture the pro-social aspects of TL theory?
- What are your thoughts about the challenges of assessing TL, including determining WHAT transforms? Identifying HOW the transformation occurs? Documenting to WHAT EXTENT it transforms? Which of these do you see as the most problematic?
- Acheson et al. (2022)
  - How does Hoggan's typology help us understand what we are trying to measure?
  - What is your evaluation of how well the BEVI aligns with TL? What about the AAC&U VALUE rubrics? What about other assessments you are familiar with – how would they line up with TL theory?
  - If you were tasked with measuring TL in learners or mentees, how would you choose to go about it? Would you prefer quantitative or qualitative methods, for instance? Why? One point of data collection or more than one (and at what intervals)?