

Transformative Education: From Theory to Practice

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According to the Transformative Learning Theory developed by Jack Mezirow (1991), connecting theory with practice is vital because transformative learning occurs during the connection process. A theory can be defined as a set of assumptions or hypotheses about a reality. In other words, it is a mental map representing the world (Granick, 2005; Knapper, 2000). Meanwhile practice can be defined as something that one does. Theory can inform practice because it provides a rationale for a decision or action to be taken. It is often modified based on the outcome of practice. Theory, therefore, should inform practice and vice versa. It is within this theory to practice framework that articles for this issue were framed.

For this volume, out of several manuscripts submitted, three were found to meet the standards and rigors of transformative education ideals as enunciated on our website, www.gjte.education and were closely aligned with the current theme. The articles focus on diverse topics ranging from creative storytelling as a transformative education strategy, transformative syllabus development approaches to translanguaging in the K-12 classroom. The contributions are relevant to scholars, educators, practitioners, educational policymakers, graduate students, and grassroots organizations interested in transformative education across the globe. The first article, titled *The Little Red Hen and a Corona Giant: Creative Story-telling as a transformative Strategy in an Early Childhood Classroom*, is authored by Zhulamanova & Raisor. These authors find storytelling to be instrumental not just in communication, but also as a way for kindergarteners to display a great depth of comprehension. The study details the use of a creative storytelling strategy implemented in an early childhood classroom which was interrupted by the COVID-19

pandemic. The end result is a two-phase study which concluded with pre-kindergarten aged children using storytelling to discuss and display their perceptions of Coronavirus in an academic setting. In the article on translanguaging, Gentry, the author, shares the findings of a research on translanguaging, translating, and interpreting in K-12 classrooms.

The second article is *Literary Review of Translanguaging, Translating, and Interpreting in Education*, by Gentry. The author defines translanguaging as the act of using the two languages strategically to maximize communication during the learning process. It is used as an interactive tool among those who are not yet proficient in the dominant language. Translanguaging is fast becoming a universal practice in K-12 school districts with high immigrant population in spite of the perennially lingering English-only policies. The need for translated documents and the importance of hiring interpreters to sustain translanguaging practice is emphasized in this article.

In the third article, *Transformative syllabus design: Maximizing learning outcomes in higher education*, Ndemanu discusses the contours of developing a 21st century course syllabus that empowers students in the learning process to become critical thinkers, problem-solvers, innovators, and collaborators. The author draws from transformative learning theory to provide detailed information on the characteristics of a syllabus, its universal components, interpreting course code, uses of a syllabus, accessibility, and backward design. He also draws from Bloom's taxonomy to offer a pragmatic guide to syllabus creation with concrete examples on how instructors can employ a backward design approach for syllabus development to effectively create a syllabus of a course they have never taught before. The author concludes by reiterating that the overarching emphasis of teaching with a syllabus is to promote

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higher-order thinking and deeper learning in higher education because a syllabus that promotes such practices and knowledge transfer maximizes learning outcomes.

This issue encompasses two book reviews of recent high-impact texts on transformative education. The first text is: Caralyn Zehnder, Cynthia Alby, Karynne Kleine, Julia Metzker. (2021). *Learning that Matters: A Field Guide to Course Design for Transformative Education*. In this text reviewed by Zhaoyi Zhang, the authors argue that in today's 21st century, the traditional way of teaching has mostly given way to transformative education in which teachers should not only impart knowledge, but also facilitate the acquisition of skills by students (David, 2016). Educators in transformative education play the role of helping students to understand and acknowledge "the dynamics between their inner and outer worlds" (Boyd & Myers, 1988, p.261). This book provides guidance to teachers in the higher education system to help them design courses that can create meaningful learning experiences for students and actively engage them in social issues.

The second book is: Osei-Kofi, N., Boovy, B., & Furman, K. (Eds.). (2022). *Transformative approaches to social justice education: Equity and access in the college classroom*. It was reviewed by Michelle A. Medved. The book documents the Difference, Power, and Discrimination program at Oregon State University which has been enlightening undergraduate students on social justice education for 30 years. Born out of student advocacy and the faculty that supports them, the program is an established collection of diversity education courses and faculty training seminars. The program has survived budget cuts, critics, and other challenges throughout its 30 years. *Transformative Approaches to Social Justice Education* describes the methods of the program pragmatically and unflinchingly so readers of the book can apply them to their classrooms.

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