

Transformative learning processes

Definition

What is transformative learning?

Transformative learning is a learning process that has as an outcome a deep personal shift in meaning making that goes beyond acquiring new information or skills (Mezirow, 1990). It is a way of understanding the world that involves critically questioning one's assumptions, beliefs, and values, and exploring new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. At its core, transformative learning is about challenging existing structures and systems, and examining the underlying power dynamics and inequalities that shape our lives (Brookfield & Holst, 2011). It is about moving beyond simple solutions to complex problems and engaging in meaningful rational dialogue and reflection with others. Transformative learning is a process that takes place over time and involves multiple stages. The first stage is often referred to as a “disorienting experience” in which individuals are confronted with experiences or information that challenge their existing beliefs and assumptions (Mezirow, 1991). Starting from such an experience and through a process of critical reflection, which takes place in a safe educational setting, individuals may start to develop new ways of understanding the world (Koulaouzides, 2017). This learning process often involves engaging in rational dialogue with others who have different perspectives and experiences and collaborating on shared goals and projects. Moreover, the process of transformative learning has as an outcome a greater sense of agency and empowerment, as individuals recognize their ability to make a difference in the world (Shor, 1992).

References

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Criteria

- A learning process may be considered as transformative if it includes activities that:
- Encourage people to ask critical questions and challenge hegemonic assumptions.
 - Provide a learning space where people may express their ideas without fear of judgement or criticism.
 - Foster a learning culture of respect by valuing all opinions.
 - Facilitate rational dialogical discussions that encourage different points of view.
 - Present the underlying causes of complex problems and allow people to work together to solve them.

- Promote teamwork and collective action to bring about social change.
- Encourage people to think about the implications and consequences of their decisions.
- Provide opportunities for people to act.

Green initiatives

Definition

What is a green initiative?

A green initiative is a program, a project, or a collective action initiated by individuals, organisations, or even governments (local, regional, or central) to promote sustainability and reduce environmental impact. The term "green" refers to environmentally friendly practices and technologies that aim to protect the natural environment and conserve natural resources for future generations. Green initiatives encompass a diverse range of practices and programs. These initiatives may include energy conservation measures (Chenari, Carrilho & da Silva, 2016) such as the use of energy-efficient appliances, insulation, and promotion and use of renewable energy sources like solar and wind power (Rahman, Farrok & Haque, 2022). Waste reduction programs, recycling, composting, and waste-to-energy technologies are also important examples of green initiatives (Pandey, Surjan & Kapshe, 2018). Moreover, community clean-up events are a form of green initiatives since they provide an opportunity for people to act and learn about the impact of waste and pollution on the environment and to become more environmentally conscious (Battisti et al., 2020), while encouraging the use of eco-friendly transportation options such as biking, the use of personal mobility devices, or walking, which constitute a green initiative that promotes sustainable living within a community (Chen, 2019). Green initiatives also include environmental education and awareness campaigns, focusing on promoting public understanding and engagement in environmental issues. These campaigns aim to foster a greater sense of environmental stewardship and responsibility among individuals, businesses, and communities.

References

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Criteria for identifying an initiative as "green"

A collective initiative may be considered as "green" if one or more of these criteria are met:

- The initiative encourages investment in renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind power.
- The initiative encourages the use of alternative or public transportation.

- The initiative supports projects that focus on waste reduction, recycling, and composting.
- The initiative promotes policies that support measures towards energy efficient constructions.
- The initiative encourages the use of recycled materials in industry and manufacturing.
- The initiative supports the growth of environmentally friendly businesses and sustainable agricultural practices.
- The initiative educates people about climate change, environmental issues, and the importance of sustainable development.
- The initiative supports collective actions that foster environmental awareness.

Grassroots movements/community-based groups

Definition

What is a grassroots movement/community-based group?

A grassroots movement is an organised effort by ordinary citizens to promote social or political change at a local level. The term "grassroots" refers to the fact that these movements typically arise from the bottom up, rather than being initiated by established organisations or institutions. Grassroots movements include a broad diversity of social actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social movements and cooperatives (Smith et al, 2017). Regardless of their focus (e.g., social justice, sustainability, etc.) grassroots movements are based on participatory action. Grassroots movements share common identity elements with community-based groups. Community-based groups are self-organised and voluntary associations of people who reside or work within a specific geographic location, sharing common interests, needs, or concerns (Elsen, 2017). Comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds, these groups are self-organised around common interests, needs, or concerns and can range in size from small local collectives to extensive coalitions that encompass the entire community (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). Community-based groups can address diverse issues, such as social, economic, environmental, and political concerns (Foo, McCarthy & Bebbington, 2018). Examples of these groups include tenant organisations, environmental groups, civic groups, and neighborhood associations. Typically, these groups use collective action, such as advocacy, lobbying, and grassroots mobilisation, to influence policy and decision-making processes at the local, regional, or national level. These groups are formed and led by members of the community, rather than by external organisations or institutions, and are rooted in the shared culture, history, and values of the community (Forno & Graziano, 2014).

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Criteria

A movement or a community-based effort may be characterised as grassroots initiative if:

- It has been generated by the people and not from an established organisation.
- It is led by members of the community where the movement or the initiative has been generated.
- It is promoting to its participants a sense of community and collaboration.

- It includes actions that foster teamwork towards a common goal by engaging individuals in meaningful dialogue and reflection.
- It promotes participatory action towards the unique challenges and opportunities of the community and develops programs and initiatives that are relevant and engaging.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.