

What can we learn from innovators and creators about transformative learning ?



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Introduction

- This contribution explores the training potentials in situations of crisis in two exceptional situations:
 - when the training integrates survival techniques (material, physical or both)
 - when it involves creative activity.
- On this occasion, the notion of “perspective transformation” is associated to other approaches.

Plan

- Formative potentialities of crisis:
 - guide lines for survival apprenticeship.
- Theoretical implications of transformative learning.
- Creative moment and transformative learning.
- What perspectives ?

Formative potentialities of crisis :

guide lines for survival apprenticeship

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Formative potentialities of crisis : guide lines for survival apprenticeship

- Our work on training commitment amongst individuals going through a transitional period affecting their lifestyles and their social affiliations (joblessness, going into retirement, prison, participation in addiction cure programs...)

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Formative potentialities of crisis : guide lines for survival apprenticeship

- We were particularly interested in the two following models :
 - “Classical” models stipulated by a given institution and which, more often than not, give way to reserved commitment.
 - Experimental models based on voluntary participation of both users and professionals.

**Formative potentialities of crisis :
guide lines for survival
apprenticeship**

- the effects of an organisational context which is itself in crisis
- In certain conditions such as the experimental models the model could have a mediation function in the elaboration of and the “emergence” from the crisis.

Theoretical implications of transformative learning

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Theoretical implications of transformative learning

Three theoretical domains:

- the role of informal learning within the dynamics of transformative learning
- the role of social representations in learning
- The self-training concept (*autoformation*)

The role of informal learning within the dynamics of transformative learning

- What kind of knowledge ?
 - knowledge produced in every day relations
 - action knowledge
 - knowledge produced by significant experience
 - existential knowledge.
- The informal learning: as *the dark matter* of learning
 - a resource that is both dispersed and difficult to identify
 - that we mobilise as soon as we have to invent original solutions to a specific problem, especially in matters of survival.
- Present in this domain is the “situated learning” (Schön, 1996) which is equally attentive to the social dimension of learning that is culturally organised and participative (Billett, 2004 ; Dasen, 2004 ; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

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the role of social representations in transformative learning

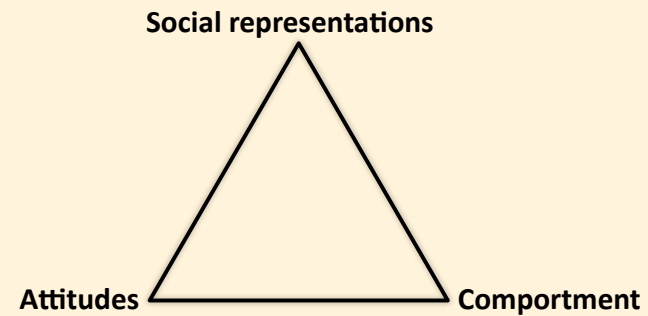
The theory

- The theory of social representations and their transformation (Moscovici, 1994).
- representations are the principal vector within the social influence process.
- All transformation necessarily implies the transformation of representations.

How we can transfer this theory in transformative learning approach ?

- The emergence of possible transformative learning dynamics when we are faced with an unusual experience is situated within this moment of destabilisation of representations.
 - For example : ...

How we can transfer this theory in transformative learning approach ?



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How we can transfer this theory in transformative learning approach ?

destabilisation of representation of what?

- representations on what it means to learn
- representations on the value of learning
- Representations on the objects of knowledge
- Representation of self as an individual capable of learning, of the other as a reference person.

How we can transfer this theory in transformative learning approach ?

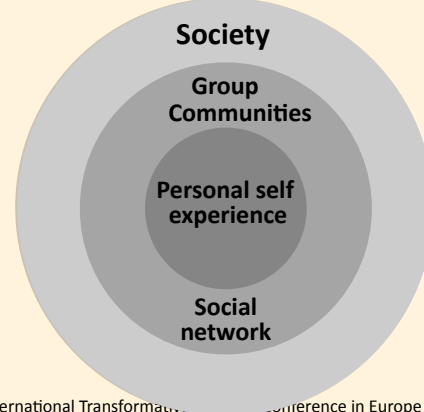
New experience and transformative of attitudes

This “reassessment” of representations that have been stabilised over time affect at the same time :

- our “relationship to learning”
- our attitudes concerning knowledge, self, the other
- our tendency to commit or not to a voluntary action of learning.

How we can transfer this theory in transformative learning approach ?

Level representations in life stories and dilemma



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Transformative learning and self-training (*autoformation*)

- The paradigm of self-training has since the 1980s undergone important developments in France, Quebec and elsewhere (Tremblay, 2003 ; Pineau, 1983)
- This concept sees training as a process of individual or collective transformation.
 - training by others (formal learning)
 - training with others and in relation to the environment (“eco-training”),
 - “self-training whereby the individual reflects on the influence of the other two forms of learning.

Transformative learning and self-training (*autoformation*)

The deinstitutionalisation of the relationship to learning (in which we are particularly interested) contributes to the development of a learning dynamic centred on the eco-training pole.

Creative moment and transformative learning

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Creative moment and transformative learning

- Recent research (Bezille, 2009) have explored learning that occurs unintentionally (“on the occasion of”) or voluntarily (“self-taught”) by individuals passionately engaged in a project, an activity or work (art, research, hobby).
- Analysing learning biographies or autobiographies, or diverse written records (such as correspondence) produced by innovators, creators, researchers, shows how informal learning accompanies the work production process.

Creative moment and transformative learning

- These studies highlight how creative activity, the overcoming of an existential crisis and transformative learning complement each other.
- They also contribute towards renewing our perceptions on the importance of learning in the most ordinary situations in which both individuals and groups find themselves.

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Creative moment and transformative learning: Freud

- Freud's approach provides an exemplary demonstration of these "ways of doing" that are characteristic of the creative process which associates work production, self production and self-learning.
- This example elucidates the key role of existential learning (the experience of solitude, the loss of reference points, of "being on the threshold", on the creative resolution of the crisis.

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Creative moment and transformative learning: Freud

- While analysing the links between personal life, the hardships experienced and the theoretical developments of Freud, Anzieu describes the creative process as a succession of hardships which lead the individual to the most intimate part of self.
- The moment of internal crisis is also that of creative “take-off” and one of intensive production.

Creative moment and transformative learning: Freud

- Freud demonstrates a basic desire for self knowledge and for truth which has a philosophical dimension.
- Seen in this light, the training is in step with the *Bildung* tradition which implies *working on self, cultivating one's talents by one's self perfection* (Fabre, 1994).
- This model is the “novel of apprenticeship” (example: Wilhelm Meister by Goethe), the story on training which features an individual's training through life experiences.
- Goethe would have a decisive influence on the Freudian orientation

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Creative moment and transformative learning: Freud

Using anything and everything at one's disposal

Freud shows the same characteristics as those found amongst creators and “expert self-learners” which consist in “using anything and everything at one's disposal”:

- artistic resources (especially during his travels to Italy)
- Sciences
- literature
- informal exchanges
- self analysis
- observation of diverse every day trivial events
- the therapy of his patients.

Creative moment and transformative learning: Freud

**the relation that one holds to the environment
and its resources.**

- risk taking
- tolerance of incertitude
- attraction for experimentation
- great liberty with epistemological conventions and conformities.
- Great liberty with usage of relations to accompany the production of his work

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What perspectives ?

- The approach proposed takes on a critical perspective.
 - the limits of a highly standardised approach to training
 - reflexivity is not necessarily at the centre of learning
 - brings into light the unintentional and un-programmable models (the playing around with activity - “DIY”, improvisation, experimentation, intuition ...)

What perspectives ?

- This exploration enables us to rekindle our perceptions
 - on what learning in the most ordinary circumstances means
 - on our representations of the learner and of his mobilisation capability while learning.
 - These questions are particularly relevant for societies in mutation.

Thank you

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