TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN NURSING

GUIDE FOR Nurse Educators
Transformative Learning in Nursing
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Transformative Learning in Nursing

A Guide for Nurse Educators

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Editors
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Foreword

Occasionally, a book comes along as a trailblazer. You are viewing such a book. Drs. Morris and Faulk, through over a decade of exploration, application, and refinement, have created a succinct comprehensive review of transformative learning theory (TLT) that is both contemporary and timeless for nursing education. It is pivotal for the changing times and the future. Situated within adult learning, this work contains ideas and areas for individuals, small groups, and total faculty nurse educators to reflect upon and use to change their educational practices.

The book brings TLT alive for nursing education. It is a thoughtful, unique work that challenges teachers to rethink approaches to courses, content, teaching methodologies, the learning environment, student learning, and expectations of learner achievement. Articulate and clearly written, chapters are laced with practical examples from classroom, clinical, and online areas, as well as nursing practice.

TLT, as presented by the authors, is interwoven with the challenges facing teachers who grapple with issues of learner motivation, authentic teaching and learning, preparation of graduates as lifelong learners, thinking processes and outcomes, and maturing as an educator. From evidence-based findings and personal use, the authors created a transformative thinking model to guide the educator and learner through meaningful interactions.

These authors considered rarely discussed approaches for an educator’s use of new material. They believe that learners benefit most from an orientation to TLT and what may be experienced as a participant. In addition, they discuss ethical considerations related to transformative learning. Above all, the rich content is built upon valuing quality nursing practice while committing to valuing others and continually seeking self-improvement as an educator.
I believe that you will find this book a treasure for your library, a gift to yourself and students, and a reference to which you will repeatedly return.

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We would like to initially acknowledge each of our students throughout our years of teaching. We have learned from the various interactions, and you have helped us to grow individually and to become better educators. We also thank those who have been our teachers; we cannot describe the many ways that your influences have shaped our lives throughout the years. Our colleagues have endured many of our discussions, and provided insights and support that are tremendously appreciated. We particularly want to thank our colleagues who have contributed to this text, as we have witnessed your embracing of transformative learning. We very much appreciate Allan Graubard, executive editor at Springer Publishing, for his vision to support our endeavor and for his guidance and encouragement. Finally, we would like to individually acknowledge and thank our families for their constant love, support, and patience: Kelly, Jared, and Lorie Morris; Gordon Faulk; Cary, Amy, Hana, and Mary Parker Priest; Colbi, Lee, Ford, and Aubrey Carter; and Matthew, Candie, Erin, Lane, and Cameron Faulk.
Preface

BACKGROUND

A number of years ago, during informal discourse, a lifelong collegial relationship began. Through ongoing discussions and a search for approaches to improve our teaching in the discipline of nursing, we discovered transformative learning theory. We began to consider various aspects of this adult learning theory, gradually applying selected premises to individual courses or specific teaching/learning activities. We became very excited as we reviewed, separately and then together, learner responses and outcomes. Our excitement continued to grow when we received comments from other faculty at our school of nursing and from across the country when we presented at nursing education conferences. Our belief in the effectiveness of this pedagogy for education of nurses and belief that it can be used at all levels of educational preparation and professional development created a passion to pursue research and to share our thoughts and findings with other nurse educators.

NEED

We believe this text is important to nurse educators at this particular time for a number of reasons. Demographic and political influences on health care delivery, a focus on quality and safety in light of cost containment and efforts to decrease errors, and an anticipated increased demand for nurses have resulted in a call for nursing education reform. One significant suggestion from this call for reform is to include innovative pedagogies that promote commitment to lifelong learning and ethical comportment.

Another reason this text is critical at this time is that the need for more nurses depends on an increase in nursing faculty. Expert nurse clinicians may enter nursing education with little or no prior background in adult education and find themselves in a sudden disorienting dilemma of being a novice nurse.
educator. Expert nurse educators can experience disorienting dilemmas in response to the call for radical reform in nursing education. Additionally, there are a limited number of texts with practical teaching strategies that can be used across nursing courses or curricula, and many of these texts are historically overly theoretical or academic and may be overwhelming for the novice nurse educator.

This text is unique in that it provides a foundation for further development of transformative learning as a pedagogy in nursing education with direct application for classroom, online, or hybrid learning environments. Educators who have used transformative principles and approaches share lessons learned, which can be applied in other nursing programs at various levels of education. The text also addresses common learning issues from both learner and teacher perspectives and allows nurse educators to evaluate their own authentic transformation throughout their careers.

In a nutshell, Transformative Learning in Nursing: A Guide for Nurse Educators will help readers understand how transformative learning principles and approaches can apply to nursing education and professional staff development, learn effective practices for fostering transformative learning in nursing students and nurses, identify ways to create environments for transformative learning, and determine successful applications of transformative learning across nursing courses.

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Although this text is written primarily for the novice or experienced nurse educator and for graduate students in nursing education programs, it can also be used by professional staff development educators. Transformative learning principles are being used in health care settings to meet adult learning needs for nurses and encouraging positive client behaviors (Phillipi, 2010).

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

In Part I, Chapters 1 and 2, transformative learning is brought to life as an innovative pedagogy in nursing education. Chapter 1 provides an overview of transformative learning theory and provides an evidence-based background on why this adult learning theory is applicable for nursing education. Chapter 2 presents the transformative learning environment through the lens of the educator and learner and the relationship of transformative learning to educator roles and learner attributes. In Part II, Chapters 3 through 8 provide practical learning strategies using transformative principles and approaches that can be used within various nursing courses and curricula. Suggestions for how these strategies can be used in professional staff development are also offered. Part III, Chapters 9 through 12, situates transformative learning within simulation, service learning, clinical experiences and online learning. Part IV, Chapters 13 through 15, presents transformative learning as it relates to specific educational issues such as student retention, self-regulated learning, and teacher authenticity. Chapter 16 presents a discussion of ethical considerations.
related to transformative learning, and some concluding thoughts are provided. Finally, in Appendices A, B, and C we provide additional faculty resources. Appendix A includes numerous examples of learning activities for use by our nurse educator colleagues, known and unknown, novice or expert. Appendix B contains examples of case studies that can also be used, revised, or adapted across all levels of nursing education and in staff development to promote critical reflection, self-reflection, and dialogue with the overarching goal of developing a commitment to transformative thinking. Appendix C offers several formatting examples of learning modules for online or face-to-face courses, illustrating use of some of the learning activities and case studies found in Appendices A and B.

REFERENCE

Transformative Learning in Nursing Education
Transformative Learning as an Innovative Pedagogy for Nursing Education

Arlene H. Morris and Debbie R. Faulk

Transformative learning focuses on the relationship between personal change and learning.
—Dr. Teal McAteer

We embrace the need for change in nursing education to meet current and future complex challenges, and believe that the transformative learning theory (TLT) offers a practical, innovative approach for nursing education. Each level of preparation in nursing education provides opportunities for learners to develop personal and professional values that are foundational for providing excellence in health care. Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, and Day (2010) express the need for nurse educators to develop and use strategies that promote motivation and lifelong learning—a formation or reformation of ways of teaching and learning instead of using teaching methods that focus mainly on presentation of content. Benner et al. further suggest that teaching strategies must empower nursing students to develop habits of thinking based on evidence for making person-centered clinical judgments. Transformative learning is situated within adult learning and can serve as a guide for developing nursing curricula and learning activities to effectively motivate and empower nursing students to examine and develop new habits of mind, resulting in behaviors congruent with quality person-centered nursing care.

As nurse educators, who were initially nurses and maintain the identity of a nurse, we struggle with how to reach and impact students throughout the nursing curriculum, to set the stage for students to not only gain the unique knowledge of nursing but to become engaged, empowered, and transformed by that knowledge. Use of technical health care–based knowledge is essential to both the roles of nurse and educator and will continue as a basis for knowledge throughout the transition to nurse educator, not only in academic but also in practice settings. Educators in practice and academe must also focus on evidence-based health care knowledge and how nurses use evidence-based educational principles and methods in teaching.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the TLT including a synopsis of major research in both adult education and nursing disciplines. The chapter
concludes with a discussion of transformative learning within the context of nursing education.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

A brief overview of the TLT as it applies to the education of adult learners and a short synopsis of research findings from education and nursing begins the discussion for how transformative learning approaches provide an innovative strategy for teaching and learning in nursing education. Mezirow (2000) defines transformative learning as:

the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (pp. 7–8)

Mezirow (2000) suggests that adults develop frames of reference as paradigms for viewing the world through prior learning, life experiences, and instinctual responses. He further suggests that habits of mind form from experiences that are recalled from individual backgrounds or personal history and have an associated emotion. From habits of mind, individuals develop and express points of view. These habits of mind and points of view form an individual’s interpretation of the world, thus creating a frame of reference. These familiar and mostly comfortable past frames of reference may transform into new thinking when an adult is exposed to critical reflection such as occurs in educational situations. Mezirow believes that adult learning results from transformation of perspective in response to unexpected events, which he defines as disorienting dilemmas.

Disorienting dilemmas may be sudden or episodic. Reflection regarding disorienting dilemmas can result in sudden or dramatic changes/transformations in points of view or may be latent and occur over time. For example, a nursing student may have developed a habit of mind related to the dying process that was formed from a personal history of a family member’s death. From this, the student may have developed a fearful connotation of death, which may lead to fear of caring for a dying person. The student may express the point of view that dying people should be avoided. Using a learning activity that incorporates transformative learning approaches, the student may reconsider previous assumptions leading to a reformation toward a different point of view. The transformation process would involve assimilating new learning from nursing theory and clinical experiences in which caring for a dying person was not actually a fearful experience.

Another example of a disorienting dilemma may be a nursing student whose grandmother was a nurse. This student expresses the point of view during a class discussion that the nurse’s role as caregiver is “only to carry out physician orders.” A disorienting dilemma occurs when faculty and other students discuss autonomy involved in nursing roles and making clinical judgments. Yet another example is the student who believes he or she is an incompetent learner based on past comments from teachers, classmates, and/
or family members. Experience in nursing school with case studies or with critiquing evidence for nursing interventions could lead to a disorienting dilemma from which the student realizes that critical thinking abilities have actually developed. This realization could change the student’s point of view to now consider himself or herself a competent learner, resulting in increased confidence for contributing to class discussions and subsequent nursing care.

**Phases of Perspective Transformation**

In 1975, Mezirow identified 10 phases in which adult learners achieve new attitudes and worldviews. Mezirow believes that adults develop new points of view from experiencing an initial disorientation (disorienting dilemmas) leading to a final reintegration of a new perspective until the process repeats (see Table 1.1). In 1991, Mezirow added an additional phase of adult perspective transformation, which he called, “renegotiating relationships and negotiating new relationships.” In this phase, existing relationships are changed due to an individual’s change in perspective and new relationships are developed. An example of this new phase of perspective transformation is the Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) student who expressed that in a work environment she was not treated as an equal on a health care team until she began to act with more confidence following completion of specific course assignments, which then led to development of different working relationships with physicians and other health care team members.

The example of a nursing student who experienced empowerment and professional transformation during and after a leadership project demonstrates progression through the phases of perspective transformation. Sally, an RN to BSN student, experienced a disorienting dilemma when she believed she could learn nothing new about nursing, but needed to complete her baccalaureate degree to progress in her nursing career. In a final class project, which interestingly was not an instructor-developed learning assignment, she assumed the role of leader, which led to comprehensive self-reflection. From this reflection, Sally identified assumptions and habits of mind that she had previously used in similar situations. When all members of the cohort did not...

**TABLE 1.1 Phases of the Perspective Transformation Cycle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>A disorienting dilemma occurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame, sometimes turning to religion for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Critically assessing personal, professional, or cultural assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>Recognizing that the process of discontentment and transformation can be shared, acknowledging that others have negotiated similar changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5</td>
<td>Searching for and committing to new roles, relationships, and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 6</td>
<td>Planning a strategy to act on commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 7</td>
<td>Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing strategies for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 8</td>
<td>Trying and evaluating new roles and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 9</td>
<td>Developing personal skill and confidence in new roles and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 10</td>
<td>Incorporating behavioral change into one’s life based on the new perspectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

follow her lead, or respond to her requests in order to complete the project, Sally expressed anger and actually contemplated “just giving up.” However, she moved forward by exploring alternate ways of getting the followers to take action that would result in a finished project. To her surprise, her revised actions worked. Her self-confidence as a leader was born. She developed relationships with difficult classmates and strengthened relationships with peers whom she most trusted. Thus, a disorienting dilemma set in motion a change in perspective related to her leadership role and ultimately led to a change in her career path. The outcome of this transformation process was Sally’s belief and confidence that she could become a leader, specifically in the role of nurse educator.

Building upon Mezirow’s (1978) work, Cranton (2006) suggests that transformative learning involves a process of exploring and questioning prior perspectives to validate or reform thinking. Cranton further purports that relearning occurs as the learner examines prior or alternative points of view. Like Mezirow, Cranton believes this relearning or transformation may result over time or with a sudden and dramatic change in points of view. In the example of empowerment and professional growth presented earlier in this chapter, Sally’s sudden, dramatic change occurred due to a situation that required skill development for a leadership role, but over time, her career choice changed. Cranton’s belief that transformation may occur suddenly or over time is mirrored in the work of Horton-Deutsch and Sherwood (2008), who indicate that the learner is continually assessing actions at a deeper level of reflection in order for knowledge to make sense in practice. For example, a deeper level of reflection involving awareness of human dignity can lead to changes in behaviors in clinical settings.

Cranton (2006) proposes that not all learning is transformative or occurs separately from other types of learning. Learning involves multiple processes depending on the motivation and outcomes of what is learned.

Proponents of transformative learning agree that critical discourse is a core approach to determine different perspectives based on others’ thinking, valuing, and rationales for behaviors. In this way, personal meaning perspectives can be reconstructed by reviewing one’s dominant stories (past experiences) and resultant beliefs and values. This is a reconsideration of an individual’s habitual way of thinking that has led to their assumptions and point of view (Brookfield, 1991; Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991). This key transformative approach of critical discourse and other approaches will be discussed in upcoming chapters.

**Types of Knowledge Foundational for Transformative Learning**

Mezirow (1991) and Cranton (2006) elaborate on Habermas’s (1971) three types of knowledge—technical, practical, and emancipatory—that set the foundation for transformative learning:

- Technical (or instrumental) is knowledge that allows manipulation and control of one’s environment.
- Practical (or communicative) is knowledge required to understand another person through language.
Emancipatory knowledge comes from questioning instrumental and communicative knowledge and depends on adult learners’ self-knowledge, self-determination, and self-reflective skills.

Nurse educators can use the three types of knowledge in a similar manner as Bloom’s (1956) domains of learning (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective), to develop individual learning outcomes and related teaching strategies. A learning activity for the areas of instrumental and communicative knowledge can stimulate learners to question prior habits of mind and points of view, leading to the assumptions that may be driving their view of the self and the world. From questioning and reviewing assumptions, there is a potential for transformative learning to occur that could result in reconsideration of personal assumptions (habits of mind) and the decision to adhere to these.

Technical (instrumental) knowledge is similar to identification of the psychomotor domain in that understanding and actual manipulation of one’s self or instruments provide a method to change the environment. For example, a nursing student must have psychomotor skill (technical knowledge) to competently insert a urinary catheter following an accurate assessment of client need. The nursing student must be able to relate the client’s complaint of inability to void or complaint of suprapubic pain to a distended bladder and the need for catheter insertion. The client assessment is considered a cognitive domain outcome, which is similar to practical (or communicative) knowledge that necessitates sharing of common meaning through client interaction. Emancipatory knowledge relates to affective learning outcomes in that the learner progresses through responding to reflecting, to valuing, and ultimately to determining if the content will become a part of his or her character (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). The nursing student must use cognitive and psychomotor skills to insert the urinary catheter. However, the astute valuing of appropriate assessment and early intervention to prevent further complications, together with increased confidence, leads to development of a personal identity of becoming (or being) a nurse.

**TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING RESEARCH IN ADULT EDUCATION**

Transformative learning has become the primary paradigm discussed within the adult education discipline (Mezirow, 2009), and as a result, research is prolific in this area. In 2000, Taylor provided an analysis of studies related to the TLT from which he identified eight overriding themes:

- Perspective transformation is unique to adult learners.
- Perspective transformation is a process of change that is not always linear.
- Frame of reference is an elusive concept.
- Triggering events for transformative learning may be sudden, profound, subtle, or trivial events that may arise from an internal or external origin. Uncertainty continues related to why some triggering events result in perspective transformation, and others do not.
- Critical reflection with resultant expression of emotions (affective learning) is at the core of transformative learning.
- The importance of relationships with others involved in rational discourse (based on trust or support) is essential for transformative learning.
- Personal factors provide a context of readiness for change.
- Transformative learning can be promoted in different settings and disciplines.

Snyder (2008) concluded that Mezirow’s theory can be operationalized and used as a guiding framework for other research to promote understanding of adult learning in various settings.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING RESEARCH IN NURSING EDUCATION

The use of TLT as a framework for thinking about nursing curricula and development of teaching and learning strategies that foster perspective transformation is underresearched. Research has focused on either the process of perspective transformation or on teaching and learning strategies that promote perspective transformation. A study by McAllister et al. (2006) relates to how TLT was used in the development of a “solution-focused curriculum . . . with the goal of cultivating critical thinkers and knowledge workers . . . nurses who are not only able to work skillfully, strategically, and respectfully with clients, but who also demonstrate discernment, optimism, and vision about nursing and healthcare” (Abstract).

Research in RN to BSN programs describes perspective transformation as effective in the resocialization process (Callin, 1996; Maltby & Andrusyszyn, 1990; Morris & Faulk, 2007; Periard, Bell, Knech, & Woodman, 1991) and learners described experiences parallel to Mezirow’s phases of transformation (Lytle, 1989) or involve studies that compare perspective transformations between online and traditional programs (Cragg, Plotnikoff, Hugo, & Casey 2001). Heightened awareness of self-concept and nursing role fulfillment were the most identified changes in perspectives in graduate nursing students, and some participants believed that Mezirow’s phases adequately described their experiences in the graduate education process (Cragg & Andrusyszen, 2004, 2005; Faulk, Parker, & Morris, 2010).

Research specifically related to using TLT in development of teaching and learning strategies has mainly come from writers in the field of education. Findings have demonstrated that applying theoretical foundations in planning for teaching and learning strategies can promote cognitive dissonance (conflict in values), critical reflection, and critical dialogue that can then allow individual learners to consider alternative ways of thinking (relearning). Research in nursing related to use of transformative learning strategies primarily focuses on traditional BSN students, returning second-degree students, and returning RN students (for either BSN or MSN programs). Mezirow’s Adult Learning Theory (2000) was used as a framework for a study by Morris and Faulk (2007) in which findings demonstrated transformation in perspectives of RN to BSN students based on development of professional nursing values. The changes, which led to increased professional behaviors, can occur through planned learning activities that stimulate identification and analysis of assumptions through reflective dialogue. Ruland and Ahern (2007) found
that teaching strategies, such as a reflective writing activity, promoted changes in perspectives in traditional nursing students.

Although research related to transformative learning in nursing is limited, the theory has upheld through critique, evaluation, reevaluation, numerous revisions, and continues to provide an excellent framework to best illustrate how adults relearn. We propose that transformative learning can be used by nursing educators at all levels, and in staff development, while acknowledging that further research would provide supporting evidence for application of the theory in nursing education.

USING TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN NURSING EDUCATION

Nurse educators design curricula and develop learning activities from a perspective that nursing students are adult learners, although some students may continue to transition to adult learner characteristics while in nursing school. The goal of nursing education is to produce graduates who can make sound, rational clinical judgments based on evidence, make strategic decisions, problem solve, and initiate and embrace change. Integrating TLT in nursing curricula can promote nursing students’ exposure to the model of respectful discourse, reflection on assumptions, and emancipatory learning to result in choice and conviction for nursing behaviors and professionalism. Nursing and health care organizations, as well as leading health care research entities, have identified the need for an overhaul in nursing education as a result of changes in health care delivery, demographics, and technological and scientific progress (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2007; Carnegie Foundation, 2010; Institute of Medicine, 2011; National League of Nursing [NLN], 2009). These long-unheeded calls for changes to nursing education have culminated in a challenge for nurse educators to consider radical and innovative pedagogies to address the gaps in quality nursing education as more nurses need to prepare to critically plan and provide care for quality person-centered outcomes in ever increasingly complex health care delivery systems (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010). “Because practice will only become more complex over time, nurses must leave their formal programs prepared to be lifelong students, with a disposition and skills to be reflective practitioners and expert learners” (p. 4).

Transformative learning provides a model for solving problems, whereby a problem may be defined or redefined, thus allowing reconsideration of previous ways of thinking (Mezirow, 2000), which is applicable to the learning needed in nursing education. Transformative learning approaches can foster a process of formation or reformation of habits of mind in order to evaluate prior perceptions, motivations, and behaviors in both the teacher and learner. Nursing faculty must reconsider content and methods of teaching. Learners must develop astuteness in methods of learning and organizing content that incorporates personal responsibility and accountability to oneself for learning. Transition from a reliance on passive learning methods to active engagement and self-regulated learning must be developed. Nursing graduates can then use a more astute awareness of unique nursing knowledge and skills and exhibit behaviors that reflect personal and professional values within diverse nursing roles, which will continue throughout professional careers and various practice experiences.
Examples of Learner Transformation

The following student comments illustrate empowerment through personal and professional transformation:

During a learning activity where students were asked to identify assumptions related to the value of social justice, John wrote:

*There was a patient that no one wanted to care for because she was over 400 pounds and incontinent. My co-workers would take her lunch tray in late stating, “It won’t hurt her to miss a meal or two.” This was a type of discrimination to me. As I reflected on why others treated this patient like this, I began to explore my thoughts and assumptions related to people who are overweight. I started asking to take care of this patient every time I worked on the unit. I found that she was one of the nicest ladies I had ever met. I began to see her as a human being, who just happened to be overweight. I put myself in her place and asked how I would feel. As a result, I now treat all patients with dignity. When I hear co-workers making fun or not treating all patients equally, I feel empowered in reminding them that they are there for the patient regardless of condition or whether the patient has insurance or not.*

In a clinical journal, Susan expressed her shock and sadness that many of the nurses on her unit often made disparaging remarks about clients from a certain cultural background. Before beginning a nursing program, Susan never thought about saying anything to the staff nurses. She recognized this as a disorienting dilemma because she valued social justice and believed that everyone should be treated equally, but she also wanted to be liked by her coworkers. After a learning activity in which she had to reflect on how she applied the value of social justice in her work setting, she became empowered to speak up against this behavior. She stated, “Had I not had my sense of social justice enriched through the . . . program, I may very well have allowed them to continue to make crude remarks. I actually fear I may have even joined in.”

In a capstone project Patsy wrote:

*As a novice nurse I was naïve and at times still feel that way because I do not always have a clear understanding of hospital policies and procedures, especially more so since I am working in a new facility. In the past, I have never liked to complain or fill out hospital surveys that wanted to know their employee’s opinion because I felt that in some way administration was trying to figure out who was the potential bad egg that needed to be kicked out of the nest. Also, I felt that I would not have anyone to back me up if I ever spoke up. As ashamed as I am to admit it, as of this past year, I now know who has had my back the entire time, ANA and my state nursing association. This has truly been a transformative experience.*

These actual examples illustrate the power of one’s point of view in influencing behaviors and reveal how changes in points of view occurred through using the transformative approaches of critical reflection, critical self-reflection, and critical dialogue. From the reconsideration of personal points of view, the learners experienced a change in their perspectives that can lead to lifelong changes in behaviors.

TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING MODEL

In 2007, following completion of a qualitative study using TLT, the editors of this book developed a professional role transformation model to conceptualize
how planned transformative learning approaches could be used in nursing curricula to promote learner lifelong transformation for professional role identity. This model evolved through several years' use of TLT to plan learning activities in a baccalaureate nursing program and is informed by ongoing research. The model was revised in 2010 (see Figure 1.1) to include the premise that triggering events for transformative learning may be happenstance and that the process can apply to concepts broader than professional role development. The transformative thinking model (2010) now provides a framework for understanding how transformative learning can be used to plan learning activities and to promote learner reflection on happenstance events.

The transformative thinking model illustrates the process of change involved in transformative learning. Adult learners come to any planned learning experience with prior habits of mind and frames of reference, which have formed their points of view. Learner behaviors and choices are based on current points

Figure 1.1 Transformative thinking model.
of view. Individuals experience perspective transformation when they critically reflect to identify current assumptions, values, and beliefs (components of their points of view), then critically self-reflect to understand how and why personal points of view may constrain current world views or paradigms or not provide information needed for new situations.

Nurse educators can plan learning activities or seize situations that cause critical reflection and/or dialogue. Learning activities can trigger critical reflection, self-reflection, and/or dialogue to allow examination of thinking, values, beliefs, or behaviors. Further learner reflection, dialogue with self, others, or the educator prompt changes in thinking. Other events can also trigger examination of points of view and habits of mind, possibly impacting changes in behaviors. Openness in thinking allows individuals to make choices to integrate new thoughts or release or revise prior points of view, leading to emancipatory learning, which may result in change(s) in decision making (perhaps not observable) and/or behavior(s). The learner freely chooses new or revised values and roles. From emancipatory learning, commitment to the new ways of thinking is reflected in behaviors. From the commitment and the changed approach to thinking, the cycle continues, and transformative thinking is possible throughout life.

CONCLUSIONS

The TLT can provide a foundation for nurse educators’ creation of learning activities that promote lifelong consideration, evaluation, and development of new perspectives throughout the personal and professional life of nurses. Teaching/learning strategies that flow from key transformative learning approaches of critical reflection, critical self-reflection, and critical dialogue can enable learners to become engaged to imagine alternatives to prior held assumptions and their own role in nursing and health care delivery systems during these momentous times. Transformative learning, as an innovative pedagogy in nursing education, can set in motion development of attitudes and behaviors that promote health care system and public awareness of nurses’ impact on health care delivery and ultimately in meeting nurses’ obligations to society. New perspectives or a renewed commitment can empower nurses, leading to a holistic understanding of the client, the nurse, the profession, and the health care delivery system.

As Kitchenham (2008) so aptly stated “Transformative Learning Theory has changed the way we teach adults . . . and continues to influence adult learning praxis across many disciplines” (pp. 119–120). Transformative learning can promote development of a personal and professional identity and motivation for continual reflection and lifelong learning. Relationship development in educational endeavors can assist learners to consider new ways of thinking and can also support transition to different roles that may result from education. Nursing practice and education are at the precipice for change. No doubt, the call for radical transformation in nursing education will provide the impetus for educators to consider innovative methods of designing and implementing curricula. We believe that transformative principles and approaches can be used at all levels of nursing educational preparation to meet the challenge for
nurse educators in the 21st century. The transformative learning environment through the lens of the educator and learner and the relationship of transformative learning to educator roles and learner attributes are examined in Chapter 2.

REFERENCES


