EDITOR'S NOTES

Transformative learning theory changed my practice as an educator. I came into adult education midway through my career, after ten years as a faculty developer. At that time, I moved to another university and worked in an adult education graduate program half-time and continued as a faculty developer half-time. The two fields complemented each other well in practice, although they rarely mix in the literature. I read Jack Mezirow's *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* in 1991, the year it came out. My graduate students and I spent many hours discussing the concepts in this book—the coffee pot and the tea kettle were usually on in my office or in the graduate student room, and there we would debate questions that make me smile with embarrassment in retrospect. "What *exactly* is the difference between a meaning scheme and a meaning perspective?" we asked, and "How many meaning perspectives can a person have?" We read paragraphs from Mezirow's book aloud, analyzing and pondering the meaning. I am very pleased that two people from that discussion group are now contributors to this volume: Janice E. Clark and Valerie Grabove.

We were able to invite Jack Mezirow to come to our university, through my work in faculty development, to give two workshops. We had our lists of questions prepared. Anticipation ran high. On the big day, Jack Mezirow explained in simple, clear, informal language the concepts, phrases, and terms we had struggled with for months. We felt both relieved and slightly foolish, but our interest was now truly ignited. Most members of that group went on to doctoral studies in adult or higher education. My interest was such that I went on to write two books on transformative learning, examining how educators could use the theory in their practice. But, more important, I changed the way I worked with learners. This is not the place to tell that story, but my journey is, I believe, similar to those described in this volume.

As Valerie Grabove points out in the concluding chapter, two complementary transformative learning processes are represented in this volume—the rational, analytical procedure by which learners critically reflect on their basic assumptions and beliefs, and the holistic, intuitive way of delving into change through the imagination and the soul. In part, the chapters are ordered so as to highlight this diversity.

Jack Mezirow introduces the volume by summarizing transformative learning theory and focusing on how becoming a critical, autonomous thinker is a product of transformation. He sees autonomous thinking as a central goal in adult education. In Chapter Two, Janice E. Clark tells how her imagination and therefore her writing were blocked through fragmentation and restored through transformation. Her approach is rational in one sense—she deliberately sets out to do something about her writing block—but completely intuitive and inexplicable at the core of the process. Susan Wilcox's story is similar

in that way. In Chapter Three, she describes how she became a faculty developer. It is an independent, self-directed learning project. She tackles it head-on, goes about it in a very pragmatic and sensible manner. The transformation, though, takes place in a rather unexpected, collaborative, and perhaps emotional way.

Ellen Foster describes transformative learning in her classroom in Chapter Four. She teaches French as a second language. Imagine that you cannot express yourself: What happens to your sense of self, to your identity? You lose a part of yourself. In Chapter Five, Sue M. Scott brings grieving into the transformative process. When we change our Self, we indeed lose a part of our Self, and we grieve for that loss. I see Ellen Foster's students as experiencing what Sue M. Scott describes.

In her practice, Christine van Halen-Faber works with individuals who are becoming teachers (Chapter Six). As Susan Wilcox changed her perspective on her role as an educator when she learned to be a faculty developer, so do Christine van Halen-Faber's students engage in critical reflection on their chosen profession. Much of adult education is about taking on new roles, both personal and professional. Laurence Robert Cohen works with students who are preparing themselves for the workforce. Unlike Ellen Foster's or Christine van Halen-Faber's students who experience a temporary loss of identity as they experience new roles, Laurence Robert Cohen's students come into his classroom with, at best, a faltering self-image. In Chapter Seven, he tells the moving story of his and his students' creation of their own perspective on intelligence.

For many years, Jane Pilling-Cormick has been interested in self-directed learning, especially in how adult educators can better see the process from the learner's perspective. Recently, this concern has led her to realize that becoming self-directed is, in itself, a potentially transformative journey. In Chapter Eight, she describes her work with the Self-Directed Learning Perception Scale, emphasizing how critical reflection on learning can lead to changes in basic assumptions and values.

In Chapter Nine, John M. Dirkx challenges our view of transformative learning as ego-based and rational. This is only part of the story, he says, and several of the authors in this volume would obviously agree. Transformative learning is also personal, imaginative, intuitive, poetic, symbolic, and emotional. It is learning through the soul.

Valerie Grabove accepted the challenging task of looking for themes in the chapters of this volume and writing a conclusion. She had to squeeze this assignment in between the time when I received the chapters from the authors and the time when the manuscript needed to go out again. By sending e-mail messages and faxes to me while she was attending a conference, and later, on "holiday," Valerie Grabove was able to summarize the volume (Chapter Ten). She outlines the perspectives represented in the volume, concluding not only that they are diverse but that they do, indeed, share common elements.

A fundamental concept of transformative learning theory, one that is reflected in all chapters, is that we need to be open to alternative perspectives

in order to transform our own. Whether this is a rational, practical, intuitive, or emotional process matters little. Indeed, I propose that individuals with different personality preferences transform in different ways. There can be no *one* way, in personal, professional, or social empowerment. This volume provides us with as many perspectives as there are authors, opens us up to alternatives views, and perhaps has the potential to change our understanding of the theory and practice of transformative learning. One hopes that the volume demonstrates, in more ways than one, transformative learning in action.

Patricia Cranton
Editor

PATRICIA CRANTON was formerly director of instructional development and professor of adult education at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, and is now an independent educator and writer.