



Interrogating transformative processes in learning and education: An International Dialogue: A New European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) Network

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Contents

Theme: On Dialogue	6
Philosophies of dialogue and recognition: shedding light on some aspects of Transformative Learning- Pierre Hébrard.....	6
Se former par le récit de soi : narration et mise en dialogue de l'expérience- Herve Breton	6
Challenging de-contextualised understanding of TL: a dialogue on psychosocial and ecological perspectives- Laura Formenti & Linden West	6
From Theory to practices. Different readings of different generations. A Dialogue through Transformative Learning- Francesco Cappa, Gaia DelNegro, Linden West, Laura Formenti, Andrea Galimberti.....	6
The European Qualifications Framework as an obstacle to “dialogue” in adult education contexts- Eleni Prokou	7
Towards Transformative Learning by Enhancing the Group Dialogue and Introducing Action Learning in a Bulgarian University- Alexander POJARLIEV	8
The issue of linguistic capital within the dialogical process or how achievable is to facilitate a genuine dialogue in transformational learning environments- George A. Koulaouzides & Zacharias Palios	8
The Dialogue as a Constructive Way to Tackle Inequalities in Adult Education- Paraskevi - Viviane Galata.....	9
Theorizing the Relationships between Time, Dialogue and Transformative Learning: A Rhythmanalytical Framework- Michel Alhadef-Jones	9
The dynamics of a safe and accepting learning environment: Theorizing the conditions for dialogue in facilitating reflection and transformative learning- Kaisu Mälkki & Larry Green.....	9
Rethinking the Critical Theory influences on Transformative Learning:In Dialogue with Honneth-Ted Fleming.....	9
Dialogue in Freire’s Educational Method, in Era of Crisis- Anagnou Evaggelos & Vaikousi Danae & Vergidis Dimitris.....	9
Theme: On Transformative Learning Theory	10
Dialogue and Communication in Transformation Theory: New Ideas from the Perspective of Systems Thinking-Saskia Eschenbacher.....	10
A ‘dialogue’ on teaching, learning, and transforming; does ‘sustainability’ change everything?- Ian Jasper & Liz Pichon.....	10

The Reflective Teacher- Maria-Chiara Michelini	11
The inner dialogue and the transformation process- Pinelopi Boznou.....	12
Xenophobia - Xenophilia: Pictures from a transformative journey with the vehicle of dialogue- Eleni Giannakopoulou	12
Promoting dialogue for transformative learning in local communities: the case of a Learning City in Greece- Manos Pavlakis & Dimitris Deligiannis	13
Modern Reflection of Platonic Dialogues- Magda Apostolidou.....	14
Theme: On Arts and Transformative Learning	14
Re-imagining education through the medium of body and Ety-mythology: Opening a dialogue between Learning and the Creative Arts- George Theodoropoulos	14
Plato’s Dialogues: An Early Form of Transformative Learning?-Effie Kostara.....	15
Dialogue in Plato’s Symposium and in Transformative Learning Theory. Convergence, Divergence and Propositions- Vasileia (Liana) Kalokyri	16
Transformative Learning and the Use, Role and Potential of the Arts- Maria Papadopoulou.....	16
Implementing Poetry, Music & ICT in unearthing Critical Thinking in KETHEA EXODOS Alternative Adult School- Efstathia A. Georgopoulou & Remos Armaos	17
Discussing with “theoretical friends” on art-based learning-Alexis Kokkos	17
Theatre as a form of intercultural understanding and dialogue- Eleni Tsefala.....	17
Dialogue with the Artworks: A Transformative Learning Process- Georgia Mega.....	17
Transforming stereotype perceptions through the emotional dimension of learning: A case study of the film “Entre les murs”-Maria Christou.....	17
The Theatre of The Oppressed to promote Transformative Learning in a social-situated dialogue- Alessandra Romano & Maura Striano & Maria Rosaria Strollo	18
Theme: Transformative Learning and Educational Praxis	18
Mindfulness Practices as discover of Inner Transformative Dialogue-Alessandra Romano & Maura Striano & Maria Rosaria Strollo.....	18
“Classroom incident”. A stimulus to Dialogue for promoting Transformative Learning through Art- Panagiota Tsentourou & Dimitris Patronas.....	18
Launching a process of self-reflection through educational biography- Aikaterini Pazoni- Kalli & George A. Koulaouzides.....	18
Dialogue and Transformation in ELF-Aware Teacher Education:A Case Study- Nicos C. Sifakis & Stefania Kordia.....	18
Modern approach to lifelong learning German as a foreign language- Maria (Melina) Laina & Maria Lambiri.....	19

No Distractions!The Possibility of Transformative Learning When We Engage Nature in Dialogue- Janet E Groen & Matthew Cohen.....	19
In-between the Educator/Learner Role within the Context of Lifelong Learning: A qualitative study- Efthymiou Georgia & Panitsides A. Eugenia	19
Promoting transformative learning at the intersections between formal and informal learning: the case of the virtual Communities of Practices-Alessandra Romano & Maura Striano & Maria Rosaria Strollo.....	19
Critical reflection and dialogue on student teachers’ practicum- Natassa Raikou & Niki Liodaki & Thanassis Karalis	19
Investigating Group Dynamics in adult education: A qualitative study- Styliani Skorda & Evgenia Panitsides & Sofia Kalogridi	20
A Museum Exhibition on Migration as a Framework for Developing Intercultural Dialogue and Transformative Learning- Maria Vlachaki Maria & Kostas Magos.....	20
Transformative Learning Processes in Practical Trainings?A reconstructive study on Swiss students’ way to becoming primary teachers- Anna Laros & Julia Košinár.....	20
Communicative skills of managers: exercising a "transformative authority" through dialogue?- Eric Bertrand & Jerome Eneau	20
Educational Relationship And Dialogue Through Autobiographical Methods- Gabriella Aleandri.....	21
Action research as a dialogical context for critical reflection and continuous professional development- Labrina Gioti & Mairi Ftika	22
Stress and Attitude Change in Adult Education: Perceptions of post graduate students completing a course in Adult Education- Niki Philips & Katerina Kedraka & Anna Tsimpoukli.....	22
Is dialogue enough to promote transformative learning?- An example of “Electra” by Sophocles- Maria Kotsolakou & Kalliopi Nikolaraki.....	23
Reflections on the impact of transformative learning: the need of designing a coherent and holistic evaluating approach- Manos Pavlakis & Dimitra Andritsakou.....	23
Transformative Learning through Dialogue and Collective Reflection with Peers. The case of Teachers’ In-Service Training-Athanasia Dakopoulou.....	24
Theme: Transformative Learning and Social Life	24
A Site of Transformation: Community Sound-Off- Clint-Michael Reneau & Skyller Walkes	24
Intercultural Competency- An Examination of the Experiences of Three Adult Educators Teaching in Turkey- Naomi Garcia	25

From Ancient Greece to the Present Day; How the Development of the Modern Mind Distanced Us from Genuine Dialogue- Louise Livingstone	26
Intercultural Dialogue as a means of Reflective Discourse and Collective Action- Evgenia Arvanitis	26
Adult Education as a Means of Empowerment for Drug Offenders in Prison/ Post Prison Treatment - Olympia Chaidemenaki & Remos Armaos	27
Democracy matters: dialogue, the Islamist and the good TL group- Linden West.....	27
Theme: Emotional- Psychic.....	28
Place-Based Dialogue:Relational Ontology in Transformative Learning-Elizabeth Lange	28
Dealing with conflicts in order to trigger transformative learning. A learning space inside the university- Andrea Galimberti.....	29
A Dialogue with Chronic Illness- Jay Livingstone.....	29
Figurations of the OTHER - Self-other-world-relation- Thomas Neubauer & Annika Lehmann.....	30
Dancing with Pain: Overcoming the Damaging Effects of Corporal Punishment through differing dialogues with oneself- Khum Raj Pathak.....	30
'Mind-to-mind meeting': The potential of the online context as a space capable of fostering transformative learning- Alice Mongiello.....	30
Transformative Learning Process:The Key to Patient - Rehabilitation Therapists Dialogue- Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz & Judy King.....	30

Theme: On Dialogue

Philosophies of dialogue and recognition: shedding light on some aspects of Transformative Learning- Pierre Hébrard

My purpose is to review the ideas of some authors that tackled the issue of dialogue, in the fields of political philosophy and philosophy of language. What kind of links one can establish between these views and some issues like transformation of perspectives and frames of reference, or self-construction? In other words, the question that will serve me as a guideline is to wonder how these thoughts can help us deepen our understanding and our practice of TL (Transformative Learning).

(French Title: Philosophies du dialogue et de la reconnaissance : quels éclairages pour penser le "Transformative Learning" ?)

Se former par le récit de soi : narration et mise en dialogue de l'expérience- Herve Breton

The goal of our article is to study the various kinds of dialogues one can observe through the act of narrating one's experience, in order to think the self-training process over. We do so by basing ourselves upon the theories of the experience found in the works of the hermeneutical phenomenology, bringing the dialectical and dialogical processes that are elaborating the « telling of the self » into question.

The study of those processes during the course of the act of narrating is based on the different modes of gathering the data, coming under the willing observation in the course of training sessions of tutors in college. Analyzed here are some notes taken in a log book, during workshops aiming at the narrating of one's experience, put into the shape of a telling of memorable moments, phases, or the process of one's life.

Challenging de-contextualised understanding of TL: a dialogue on psychosocial and ecological perspectives- Laura Formenti & Linden West

Transformative learning has been defined by Jack Mezirow as the specific adult capacity to challenge and change one's own meaning perspectives or mind sets. This notion has provoked debate in Europe about its potential limitations, not least the risk of trivialization, reification, and narrowing of adult learning to an individual and cognitive event, lacking a biographical and contextual sensitivity. In Europe, as well as North America, there are different traditions that imagine learning and educational processes as ways to build critical perspectives and favour social justice (as in Paulo Freire's 'conscientisation' principle) , in creating a democratic citizenry, giving emphasis to the social rather than individual transformation.

From Theory to practices. Different readings of different generations. A Dialogue through Transformative Learning- Francesco Cappa, Gaia DelNegro, Linden West, Laura Formenti, Andrea Galimberti

The occasion for the proposed dialogue comes from the publication, in Italy (expected in June 2016), of the writings by Jack Mezirow in which from 1991 to 2013 he developed the relationship between theory and practices in adult education from the perspective of Transformative Learning. This publication also intends to observe the adjustments and “corrections” that Mezirow promoted by way of relating directly to the debate that TL generated among researchers, professionals, and scholars both academic and not.

Starting from the introductory work to the Italian publication, i.e. from the preface by Prof. Linden West and afterword by Prof. Laura Formenti, we propose a conversation in the form of a Symposium in which we will construct a dialogue on three different levels, propitiated by the study, both theoretical and practical, of TL.

The first level is the one that constructs the hypothesis of the book and the frame of the conversation that we would like to invite at the conference in Athens: through the texts by Mezirow and by some of his most interesting commentators in the field of research in adult education, to show the potentialities of a dialogue between theory and formative practices.

On a second level we would like to explore further how West and Formenti, with a 20 years engagement with the theory of TL, and the two of us today, are engaging with the question of how theory and practices relate when doing adult education and research, from the particular position of each individual subject, in relation to an object of academic interest and educational work. The interplay between different interpretations (recognition in West, and ecologies of learning in Formenti) may show how TL has been used and how it ‘keeps its ground’ within the debate on methodologies of research and of education with adults, and it could be said that it plays as antidote to tendencies towards an asocial, disembodied cognitivism.

A third level may indicate similarities and/or differences in the Italian and English academic contexts of yesterday and today, thanks to a dialogue between four generations of researchers. By telling stories about our experiences in the local creation of educational practices drawing on the ideas of TL as we understand them, we would like to reflect together on what changes have happened in the relationships between university and society, and between educational sciences and professional uses in teaching and care.

The European Qualifications Framework as an obstacle to “dialogue” in adult education contexts- Eleni Prokou

Since the early 1990s, the learning society, an open society responding to the needs of the knowledge economy and the market, has been stressed. In the conditions of economic globalisation, there has been a shift from adult education to lifelong learning, the latter being promoted for the flexible adaptability of the workforce. For the European Union (EU), in particular, the main principle of lifelong learning has been one of employment policies. In this context, as from the early 2000s, emphasis has been placed on the validation of nonformal competences and the formation of a ‘reliable accreditation system’ of skills. The emphasis of the Copenhagen Process in a credit transfer system for vocational education and training gradually led to the development of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which sought to improve the ‘transparency, comparability and portability’ of qualifications in the EU, as part of a discourse of promoting workers’ mobility among the member states.

Accreditation policies (expressed through the promotion of the EQF) mark a shift in responsibility from institutions (considered to be service providers) to the individuals.

The economic function of lifelong learning is dominant (as emphasis is placed in the aim of employability), while there is also a shift in responsibility away from the state towards the private sector. As social welfare states decline, individuals are encouraged to utilise their skills to improve their standards of living, while minimising their cost to the state. Lifelong learning has thus become part of a government strategy to privatise the welfare system. Issues of equality and social inclusion may still be stressed in the discourse about lifelong learning, but the role of the state to secure them is diminished precisely because of the crisis of the welfare state. The further the retreat from public education policy towards lifelong learning or the learning society, the less likely equality can be achieved. Welfare state regimes can affect a person's capability to participate, while structural inequalities may persist in the labour market despite individuals possessing highly developed skills.

What is important to stress, with reference to adult education and its traditional role in promoting dialogue, is that through the efforts for the construction of a highly individualistic neo-liberal subject, notions of collective learning and wider social justice get lost. The emphasis in the aim of employability - as this can be identified (among other issues) in accreditation policies through the promotion of the EQF - means that the aims of social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development (aims more closely associated with general adult education) are not attached that much importance. Traditions of popular education in Europe, with their notions of social transformation by critically interrogating established assumptions and injustices (in the way that Freire has described while explaining the pedagogical processes of the development of critical conscientisation) are marginalised. They are marginalised also because of the emphasis being placed in learning outcomes and pre-determined objectives (as the EQF suggests), because such a policy underestimates the importance of the educational process towards the goal of participants' emancipation. Educational aims cannot be easily (re)negotiated with the participants, in respect to their special needs, which means that there is little space left for the reconstruction of an adult education programme after certain forms of dialogue have taken place. Overall, globalisation and neo-liberalism have brought individualism and competition, and critical educators find it difficult to introduce notions of solidarity and group action by encouraging the development of dialogue and transformative learning processes.

Towards Transformative Learning by Enhancing the Group Dialogue and Introducing Action Learning in a Bulgarian University- Alexander POJARLIEV

The paper presents an empirical study on the attempt of applying an action learning approach in formal graduate and professional programs in management at the New Bulgarian University (NBU). The benefits, feedback and main outcomes of the pilot application of the approach are summarized. Some examples of work issues and reflections of the participants are presented together with difficulties related to the process and its traditional academic environment.

The issue of linguistic capital within the dialogical process or how achievable is to facilitate a genuine dialogue in transformational learning environments- George A. Koulaouzides & Zacharias Palios

This paper discusses the issue of linguistic capital in relation to dialogue which is considered to greatly contribute to the learning process that fosters perspective transformation. The authors examine the notion of dialogue as well as its relationship to language and society and they inquire the realization of a transformative dialogical learning process.

The Dialogue as a Constructive Way to Tackle Inequalities in Adult Education- Paraskevi - Viviane Galata

Taking into consideration the dynamic of the dialogue in addressing major social problems, this article aims to explore the different dimensions and potential contributions of the dialogue to stimulate awareness and social action for tackling inequalities in adult education, one of the critical weaknesses of current EU learning policies.

Theorizing the Relationships between Time, Dialogue and Transformative Learning: A Rhythmanalytical Framework- Michel Alhadef-Jones

Based on current research focusing on the rhythmic dimensions of education, this paper explores the temporality of dialogue through three lenses: the rhythms of dialogical activity (discursive, embodied, social); the duality of the moment of dialogue (between continuity and discontinuity); and the kairos of dialogue (between flow and opportune action).

The dynamics of a safe and accepting learning environment: Theorizing the conditions for dialogue in facilitating reflection and transformative learning- Kaisu Mälkki & Larry Green

In this paper we look into the conditions in which dialogue could be utilized to facilitate transformative learning and reflection. We explore the notion of a safe and accepting learning environment from the relational and phenomenological viewpoint, and analyze what it actually means and how it may be developed.

Rethinking the Critical Theory influences on Transformative Learning: In Dialogue with Honneth- Ted Fleming

This paper discusses Honneth's critical theory in order to develop the theory of transformative learning as emancipatory learning. This dialogue includes: rethinking the relationship between personal and social learning; a reinterpretation of disorienting dilemmas as a struggle for recognition; a reconfiguring the relationship between personal problems and social issues.

Dialogue in Freire's Educational Method, in Era of Crisis- Anagnou Evaggelos & Vaikousi Danae & Vergidis Dimitris

In this paper we focus on dialogue in Freire's theory and method for literacy and adults' basic education. Then, we refer to the implementation of Freire's method in

Greece in 1980's. Finally, we formulate suggestions for the implementation of elements of Freire's method in Second Chance Schools.

Theme: On Transformative Learning Theory

Dialogue and Communication in Transformation Theory: New Ideas from the Perspective of Systems Thinking-Saskia Eschenbacher

Four verbal application dimensions are going to be presented in order to explore new ways of teaching for change. The aforementioned dimensions are embedded in a theoretical framework that provides practical dimensions on how the adult educator is able to challenge the learner's intrapersonal communication through interpersonal communication.

A 'dialogue' on teaching, learning, and transforming; does 'sustainability' change everything?- Ian Jasper & Liz Pichon

This paper examines the experience of a group of mature adult students who followed a module entitled 'Lifelong Learning and Sustainability' on a degree programme. The students were adult educators working in a wide variety of settings including prisons, military training establishments, colleges, the health services and social care. All of these students and their teachers considered the 'Sustainability' module to be 'transformative' but we were trying to develop a deeper understanding of what this meant. The dialogue mentioned in the title was centred on trying to elaborate this meaning and especially on the implications 'transformations' have on the students' lives beyond the degree course.

The module is unusual in that it posits the problem of 'sustainability' as an existential threat to humankind. When the module was first introduced onto the programme its inclusion was challenged. A common question we were asked and not always in a collegial manner, was 'What has sustainability got to do with Lifelong Learning?' Even today we are sometimes asked this question though never by students who have followed the module.

The idea of existential threat has a transcendent importance and in our opinion qualifies the module as 'transformative' if we apply the criteria suggested by Stephen Brookfield. Brookfield argues that truly transformative learning and teaching can be said to have occurred only when: *the learner came to a new understanding of something that caused a fundamental re-ordering of the paradigmatic assumptions she held about the idea or action concerned.*

Brookfield also argues that this interpretation of 'transformative learning' is close to that suggested by Mezirow (1991) and subsequently employed by others.

A few learners begin the module with an understanding of sustainability similar to that of the teachers; almost all complete the module with a 'fundamental re-ordering' of their understanding of the problem. Transformational learning of this type can be disconcerting even when, as is usually the case, learners are eager to 'get at the truth' and satisfied when they feel they have made progress towards it. As teachers we do not

'transform' learners, but we do make available knowledge which might precipitate the students' reordering of their world view. Given this it seems that as teachers we have very important responsibilities towards learners when working with them to examine serious problems.

A series of structured conversations were opened in which the learners and their teachers examined the impact of the sustainability module. This paper will present what we believe emerged from this dialogue.

The following are some of the more salient themes which emerged:

- Knowledge might be simultaneously empowering and lead to feelings of estrangement.
- The unforeseen, and unforeseeable consequences of 'learning'
- The responsibility of teachers when engendering processes with unforeseeable consequences.
- The ways in which transformational learning deepens feelings of fellowship.
- The ways in which changes in 'paradigmatic assumptions' in one area entail ripple effects in other aspects of life.
- The indifference of institutions of learning towards transformational learning.

Learner involvement in this project has been encouraged at every stage. We believe that this collaborative dimension to the presentation has led us and the learners to elaborate a real living understanding of 'transformative' learning from their perspectives and from our own; such is the essence of dialogue.

The Reflective Teacher- Maria-Chiara Michelini

This proposal aims to illustrate the forms of dialogue intentionally used in research "the reflective teacher ", which has seen involved Italian teachers of infant and primary school. Subject of the investigation is the thought of the participating teachers in the exercise of their educational-didactic activity. It is based on a theoretical system deliberately challenging, from Dewey, from which assumes the ponderous elaboration in the reflective thinking, resumed and articulated again by Schön, referring to reflexivity professional, leading to the conception of transformative thought developed by Mezirow. Even in a purely pedagogical perspective, it makes use of psychological reflection from Piaget, to Bruner, up to more recent lines of research such as mindfulness (Siegel) as the science of personal transformation, from the processes by which people acquire full awareness of events. It assumes then, in the frame of reference for arriving to the key construct of Community of Thought, which summarizes the dialogic matrix of the professional thinking, the studies that explore the organizational area and the peculiar learning that in this latter is achieved, with particular emphasis on communities of practice.

This system flows into a dialogical conception of the reflective thinking of the professional and consequently of the forms which promote the transformation. Specifically, you can identify ways of reflective thinking, defined in terms of awareness and change, and conditions of the same, called Reflective Conversation with the materials of the situation, Emancipatory Reflection and Community of Thought. The result is a complex investigative architecture that it intended to explore and trace some profiles of emerging thought (first phase), moving later to check whether the establishment of a number of conditions have produced changes (second phase). For the

purpose they have been developed and tested devices and appropriate reflective instruments.

In line with the theoretical frame and the purposes of the survey the methodological apparatus used has promoted forms of professional dialogue of various types. The main ones are represented by:

- Dialogue intra-individual, from the materials of didactic situations chosen spontaneously by each participant and brought to the attention of the research group.
- Dialogue between teachers.
- Dialogue theory / praxis, also through the dialogued reading in small groups of theoretical texts, specially chosen for situations addressed and depth.

Each form of dialogue was activated through different and articulated devices, aimed to engaging the best form of individual and communitarian thought. Dialogues as a form of personal stories, of their professional history, or individual lived episodes; dialogues as professional exchanges peer-to-peer, of couple or groups of teachers, on circumstances brought to the collective attention by individual; dialogues with written pages by ascertained authors, «to attach to the theory the practice, because if it does not the practice of everyday life dies and you lose your sense of what you do», as stated by one of the participating teachers..

At the same time, research has shown that dialogic contexts poorly detected in factual situations such as those aimed at closing within the school premises, create obstacles and resistance to the awareness and to the professional change, giving place to confirmatory or introversive drifts. In that sense the Community of Thought, icon and metaphor of dialogical thought, is taken as a condition that sums up all the conditions of reflective thinking. The research, in fact, intended to test the creation of a Community of Thought that questions itself, dialogues, processes, assumes commitments to change, evolves, through devices and thoughtful instruments used in a targeted and repeated way.

The intervention will explain in more detail how and with what results the research “the reflective teacher” created functional contexts to the activation of dialogues, of relational dynamics that can transport the exercise of thinking as an art.

The inner dialogue and the transformation process- Pinelopi Boznou

This paper attempts to examine the role of the emotions and the inner dialogue in the transformation process, emphasizing on the personal impact of the transformation in terms of self and emotional awareness.

Xenophobia - Xenophilia: Pictures from a transformative journey with the vehicle of dialogue- Eleni Giannakopoulou

Over the recent years, with a peak in the past summer (2015) a great number of people, most of Syrian origin, arrived on the shores of Greece, seeking a secure life in Europe. As the exodus of these people from areas of conflict and warfare continued endlessly we noticed a visible transformation of Greek people’s reactions. A real wave of sympathy accompanied by spontaneous acts of support and volunteering replaced racist and hostile activities which were seen in previous years in the country. This transformation of perspective has many characteristics that may be defined and analysed by transformative learning theory. Those days I worked for the Governmental

Committee coordinating public agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in the establishment of settlement infrastructures for refugees and migrants. On this occasion, wishing to trace the primary cause of this transformation I carried out an informal survey interviewing persons who showed off a positive attitude and a supportive behavior to the refugees and migrants. My finding was that various forms of conversational transactions between Greeks and between Greeks and refugees seem to have modified the meaning of «xenos» and could be detected in the underpinnings of a perspective transformation. On this ground I carried out a further study aiming to trace the fundamental aspects of those conversational transactions that seem to be fueling a perspective transformation of their interlocutors on crucial issues concerning identities of immigrants and refugees. Data of this later study were collected utilizing an oral history approach and its main conclusions are briefly presented and commented in this paper adopting the concept of transformative dialogue as introduced by Gergen. Transformative dialogue essentially aims at facilitating the collaborative construction of new realities and it may in a sense be considered as a social constructionist alternative to the individualistic conceptions of transformative learning related in particular to the transformation of a point of view.

Promoting dialogue for transformative learning in local communities: the case of a Learning City in Greece- Manos Pavlakis & Dimitris Deligiannis

According to Mezirow, the culture of the developed western world often blocks dialogue, as it focuses on competitiveness and the promotion of the self, downgrading the importance of collective thinking. In a period of crisis, in which a political philosophy of tolerance, equality, education and democratic participation is required more than ever, additional socio-cultural barriers emerge making citizens' participation in a meaningful dialogue even more difficult.

The theoretical framework of Learning Cities provides a great opportunity for research in the field of dialogue, examining aspects such as the relation of dialogue to transformative learning and citizens' participation at a local level. Thus, the basic objective is to create what Mezirow refers to as a condition under which dialogue can help establish a sense of solidarity among the participating citizens. Under the idea of Learning Cities one can find UNESCO's initiative which defines a Learning City as 'one which effectively mobilizes its resources to reinforce individual empowerment and social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.'

The case of Larissa, a Greek city in the heart of the financial crisis of the last years, provides some unique characteristics of a community in action. The Municipality of Larissa recognized the needs of socially vulnerable groups and developed educational interventions for their support. In order to achieve this goal, the City of Larissa cooperated with the Hellenic Adult Education Association, a scientific organization specialized in adult education in Greece. A long term project was born, "Larissa, A learning city", in which lifelong learning is expected to act as a liaison. The goal is to create networks of different institutions and organizations with a "common language", where new communication channels and collective actions are expected to take place with a focus on tracing the local needs.

Meanwhile, the City of Larissa was accepted as a member of UNESCO's Learning Cities Network. The vision, the strategy, the methodology and specific actions of the project mentioned above were presented during the 2nd International Conference on Learning Cities in Mexico in September 2015. A few months earlier the project had already begun

with the organization of an international Conference on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning.

The second step of the project was the designing of a workshop titled 'Networking and Developing Transferable Skills'. The main aim of this workshop was to gather representatives of all organizations dealing with educational issues and activities in the broader region of the City of Larissa and to create an environment for open dialogue and sharing views, and presenting best practices, in which further opportunities for networking would be developed. Dialogue was considered as an essential tool in the methodology and educational approach of the workshop. After the workshop, participants evaluated the level at which their knowledge, skills and attitudes had changed in a positive way as 'very high', they worked on common project ideas and agreed to create common action plans during their next year's agenda preparation. Furthermore, a special Committee with the participation of all organizations involved in the project was created under the auspices of the Municipality of Larissa in order to coordinate the projects ideas, all of which will be presented in a conference on June 2016.

Concluding, it seems that dialogue for praxis and social change, as Freire has suggested, may take various forms and affect local communities. Taken the case of Larissa, a city which decided to invest on extroversion, looking for opportunities in the global arena, pursuing collaborations with the environment, it seems that dialogue could have an impact at least at a local level.

Modern Reflection of Platonic Dialogues- Magda Apostolidou

The present paper explores the connection between the concept of critical reflection in transforming learning in Adult Education, as framed by the contemporary scholars Dewey, Freire, Mezirow and Brookfield, and Plato's theory and ideas. The interest focuses on pinpointing similarities and differences between the concepts of contemporary scholars and Plato's ideas placing the concept of dialogue in the center as the most representative and essential element in critical thinking.

Theme: On Arts and Transformative Learning

Re-imagining education through the medium of body and Ety-mythology: Opening a dialogue between Learning and the Creative Arts- George Theodoropoulos

This is a group experiential workshop and explores how we can re-vision the ways that we learn and teach through the medium of the Creative Arts. The group will explore the themes of learning and teaching utilizing movement, myth enactment and etymology. Drawing on material and methods from my practice as a Creative Arts Therapist, I welcome the participants to use play, imagination, stories, and their body in order to enrich their understanding of Transformative Learning. The workshop is based on the theory of Jungian psychology and various Dramatherapeutic techniques. The

main aim of this session is to introduce an enjoyable and playful way to explore the importance of dialogue within education.

Dialogue etymologically comes from the Greek 'διάλογος' and is referring to what comes through the logos. My intention with this workshop is to open a conversation regarding education between inner and outer world or to rephrase between conscious and the unconscious. For Swiss psychiatrist C.G. Jung, mythology is one of the primordial paths to explore the 'other', the unknown aspects of ourselves. Personally, I believe that myth has always been the natural language to represent inner processes and our engagement in these stories may open the door to an authentic learning of human patterns.

Influenced by the work of the renowned mentor and mythologist Michael Meade, I intend to introduce the Dramatherapeutic concept of Somatic Ety-mythology as a method to explore the ways we learn and teach each other. Ways that are holding in a central position both the body and the psychological world of teacher and learner. Meade in his short essay on education weaves etymology and mythology in what he calls Ety-mythology, and offers a new perspective of education; a view enriched by the language and wisdom of old civilizations. This workshop suggests to go beyond the spoken word and explore what can be found when body, myth and etymology meet all together (Somatic Ety-mythology). Are there any new educational possibilities when we open a dialogue between Creative Arts and Learning?

I invite the participants to explore this question together using stories from Greek mythology and particularly the archetypal images of mythological teachers such as Mentor, Chiron and Daedalus. Those mythic images represent deep archetypal psychological patterns that may bring different values in our understanding and need to educate.

Participants may engage in the workshop as much or as little as they wish. This is not a therapy session and there is no requirement for previous experience in Drama or the Creative Arts. The first part of the workshop will be practical and then we will allow time to reflect and explore the outcome of our engagement with the medium.

Plato's Dialogues: An Early Form of Transformative Learning?-Effie Kostara

Using dialogue within the framework of any educational process has been and still is a basic educational technique whose aim is, on the one hand, the trainees' active participation in learning and, on the other, the cultivation and reinforcement of their critical thinking. More specifically, within the framework of a learning process, dialogue enables the participants to exchange opinions, present arguments, describe, assess, be mentally activated, and end up in an agreement by being concerned about an issue or a concept or, if they should disagree, they will do so creatively. Within the framework of dialogue particular emphasis is given on making use of questions-and-responses which lead to an even more productive dialogue if the questions are clear, short, accurate, appropriate and thought-provoking.

The dialectic teaching method has proven to be effective, according to bibliography, in any educational framework used, whether it is school education or adult education. Especially in the case of adult education, the concept of dialogue has been a point of reference for theories that have been developed around the concepts of critical thinking, critical realization and more.

Thus, in the theory of Transformative Learning, as developed by Jack Mezirow, dialogue has been treated as an essential aspect of the learning of adults and a basic tool

for the trainees' negotiation of concepts and values which proved to be dysfunctional and therefore required critical doubt, re-assessment, consideration and negotiation. The rational dialogue, as later characterized by Mezirow, was the means of realization but also restoration of stereotypical ideas and concepts owned by the trainees and hence one of the means of transforming them. Naturally, the way that the dialogue is used by the adult educator itself has been a point of concern for those who study transformative learning, since dialogue, being the essence of the theory, has also defined indirectly both the role that the adult educator has been required to take on, and the requirements under which the dialogue should be conducted so as to be effective and non-manipulative.

On the other hand, the educational making use of dialogue towards a better and fuller understanding and acceptance of ideas and concepts could already be placed much earlier. More specifically, in Plato's philosophical work the first elements could perhaps be found. There, in his dialogues, Plato, through the philosopher Socrates, could perhaps be presenting the first attempt of "transformative learning", certainly without this being explicitly identified within his work. More specifically, the philosopher Socrates teaches the young people of his era concepts such as justice, virtue, what is good and what is bad through the dialectic method. The method that he uses is known as 'elenchus'. Pretending to be ignorant, he asks his interlocutors questions, trying to elicit thoughts and ideas regarding the moral issues above by them, in this way building with them a truth that could have been hidden within them without realizing it. So, he poses questions, discusses with them, clarifies and finally ends up teaching his students through their own responses. And while he presents himself as being ignorant of the answer, in fact he manages to lead his students to (his own) truth.

So, at this point we observe attempts to "transform" ideas to adults by the philosopher Socrates, through the use of rational dialogue and aiming at finding the real truth regarding issues at the centre of human interest, such as those of justice and virtue. In the present announcement the goal is for us to concern ourselves with whether Socrates's teaching has indeed been an early form of "transformative learning", which considers the rational dialogue as one of its essential components. In addition, we could draw elements regarding the relationship between the adult educator and his trainees through the philosophical-educational work of one of the first adult educators.

Dialogue in Plato's Symposium and in Transformative Learning Theory. Convergence, Divergence and Propositions- Vasileia (Liana) Kalokyri

This paper traces the characteristics and the role of Socratic dialogue in Plato's Symposium and highlights convergence to and divergence from the dialogue and theory of Transformative Learning. The approach is proposed as a "mirror" of "self-reflection" of Transformative Learning, and as an "exercise" of critical reflection in learners.

Transformative Learning and the Use, Role and Potential of the Arts- Maria Papadopoulou

The author is inspired by both the theory and the process of Perkins, by its visible and tangible results through the application of the arts in education, and even more by the Professor A. Kokko's method. A. Kokkos complements and completes the aforementioned method, applying the theory of transformative learning. The writer discusses on the above method, presents and collects the results from various studies,

showing the importance of the use of the arts in education, and the amazing results obtained by combining the above two methods.

Implementing Poetry, Music & ICT in unearthing Critical Thinking in KETHEA EXODOS Alternative Adult School- Efstathia A. Georgopoulou & Remos Armaos

This paper aims to highlight the importance of art (poetry & music) and ICT in unearthing critical thinking in learning of former drug addicts currently in drug free treatment. It underlines how music, tapped with technology provide pathways for them to optimize and generate new perspectives in their learning. Art appears to be a key parameter in engaging this socially vulnerable group in promoting their mental abilities and in developing their initiation and opportunities for critical thinking. Art becomes conducive for them to regain control of their formally shattered lives and to re-enter back into the society and prevent relapse.

Discussing with “theoretical friends” on art-based learning-Alexis Kokkos

The workshop examines ways through which encountering works of art within the framework of transformative learning may contribute to the development of learners’ critical capability. First, we will review the literature regarding the concept of critical reflection. Then, we will discuss the views of Freire, Greene and Frankfurt School concerning how the contact with art may encourage the growth of our critical understanding. Finally, through the experiential exploration of a number of films and paintings, we will discuss whether they have inherent characteristics that might activate in our mind a holistic, meaningful and feelingful process of critical reflection.

Theatre as a form of intercultural understanding and dialogue- Eleni Tsefala

The article explores theatre as a planned activity that can affect people in both the personal and social development, balancing the "particular" and "universal" truth. The creative artistic processes of a "production" and "products" can bring social change through personal empowerment and emancipation.

Dialogue with the Artworks: A Transformative Learning Process- Georgia Mega

The presentation deals with educational processes that enhance transformative learning in the field of adult education. A technique of observing artwork, based on transformational phases as specified by Mezirow, will be presented. The aim of the technique, called notice-accept- reconsider my truths (NART), is the realization by the observer that there is not only one (personal) truth to interpret the world. Indeed, the more interpretations there are the richer in meanings and messages life becomes.

Transforming stereotype perceptions through the emotional dimension of learning: A case study of the film “Entre les murs”-Maria Christou

This experiential workshop aims to indicate the role of the emotional dimension of learning and the creation of a suitable emotional ambience in class in order to transform dysfunctional attitudes of the pupils, through the analysis of specific extracts of Laurent Cantet's film "Entre les murs" (2008), which are used as a case study.

The Theatre of The Oppressed to promote Transformative Learning in a social-situated dialogue- Alessandra Romano & Maura Striano & Maria Rosaria Strollo

We would like to present an experiential workshop based on the methodologies of the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) for promoting a transformation of meaning perspectives and create the conditions for the establishment of an authentic dialogue between people. This will be achieved through an action, which is a practice of transformation and change because it requires the audience to get personally involved.

Theme: Transformative Learning and Educational Praxis

Mindfulness Practices as discover of Inner Transformative Dialogue- Alessandra Romano & Maura Striano & Maria Rosaria Strollo

The experiential workshop we would like to carry out is based on the ACT Protocol, which aims to promote change and to increase the ability of listening to our inner world and consciousness flow. The workshops will incorporate the central elements of Transformative Learning Theory, including: (1) Guided mindfulness practice as disorienting dilemma; (2) Critical reflection; and (3) Dialogue with the others in a non-judgemental openness.

"Classroom incident". A stimulus to Dialogue for promoting Transformative Learning through Art- Panagiota Tsentourou & Dimitris Patronas

The workshop, inspired by recent research, uses different Dialogue forms (art, brainstorming, exercises, interviews, discussion) aiming to reveal different views of a classroom incident and generate questioning stereotypes and trainers/teachers behaviours. Overall aim is to present a good educational practice leading to a possible start of a Transformative Learning procedure.

Launching a process of self-reflection through educational biography- Aikaterini Pazoni- Kalli & George A. Koulaouzides

This paper describes the theoretical framework and the structure of a workshop (experiential session) that aims to introduce the educational biography as a method that may facilitate a internal dialogical process of critical self-reflection to adult educators.

Dialogue and Transformation in ELF-Aware Teacher Education:A Case Study- Nicos C. Sifakis & Stefania Kordia

This paper aims to discuss the significance of transformative learning in teacher education. It presents a case study from a professional development programme that aims at helping teachers of English as a foreign language raise their awareness of issues related to English as an international lingua franca.

Modern approach to lifelong learning German as a foreign language- Maria (Melina) Laina & Maria Lambiri

This paper discusses the integration of the experiential theory of knowledge, the theories of transformative learning and Andragogy and their implementation into lifelong learning and particularly in learning German as a foreign language.

No Distractions!The Possibility of Transformative Learning When We Engage Nature in Dialogue- Janet E Groen & Matthew Cohen

This paper offers preliminary findings of retreatant experiences of dialoguing with nature whilst attending spiritual retreats primarily at the Ignatian Jesuit Retreat Centre, Guelph, Canada Analysis of their experiences reveal that the transformative potential their experiences is based upon the intertwining of a retreatant's previous connection with nature, as well as the centre's level of engagement in offering programming in eco-spirituality.

In-between the Educator/Learner Role within the Context of Lifelong Learning: A qualitative study- Efthymiou Georgia & Panitsides A. Eugenia

The present article investigates the experience of the alternating educator/learner role within the lifelong learning context, though a qualitative study. Results have depicted that the specific experience triggered critical reflection, largely transforming many of the participants' perceptions regarding the roles of educator and trainee, as well as their professional practice.

Promoting transformative learning at the intersections between formal and informal learning: the case of the virtual Communities of Practices- Alessandra Romano & Maura Striano & Maria Rosaria Strollo

This paper describes the pilot and descriptive study on the processes of learning and of knowledge construction occurring within the virtual community of practices. The aim of the research is to discuss the idea of the potential transformative impact of virtual community of practices on university programs.

Critical reflection and dialogue on student teachers' practicum- Natassa Raikou & Niki Liodaki & Thanassis Karalis

According to the findings of our research, one of the basic factors that empower transformation in student teachers' education is the interaction between the student teacher and others (colleagues, professor, and children) on practicum. In this paper we attempt to study this interaction, focusing on dialogue.

Investigating Group Dynamics in adult education: A qualitative study- Styliani Skorda & Evgenia Panitsides & Sofia Kalogridi

The purpose of the present study was to highlight the factors that influence group dynamics in adult education, as these were shaped through the perceived views of educators and trainees in Parent's Schools in Greece. It followed a qualitative approach, whilst the data underwent content analysis.

A Museum Exhibition on Migration as a Framework for Developing Intercultural Dialogue and Transformative Learning- Maria Vlachaki Maria & Kostas Magos

In the present research, adults, parents and relatives of school age children, native and of different ethno-cultural descent created a museum exhibition on the migration history of their homeland. The dialogue during the conceptual and the development phase of the museum exhibition contributed to the critical reflection and transformative learning of the participants, concerning their initial prejudices against immigrants.

Transformative Learning Processes in Practical Trainings? A reconstructive study on Swiss students' way to becoming primary teachers- Anna Laros & Julia Košinár

Teacher trainees at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland complete three years of study, which include four phases of practical training during 16 weeks. During each of these practical trainings two teacher trainees work with one experienced teacher's classes. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree, most of the graduates start teaching at primary schools (only some of the graduates continue with master's studies). Therefore, field experience plays a major role in the professional development of future teachers.

Communicative skills of managers: exercising a "transformative authority" through dialogue?- Eric Bertrand & Jerome Eneau

Authority and power outline management practices, with certain characteristics, in France especially, for health and social sector. Coming from private sector, the models inspired by New Public Management policies, in this domain, value participation, voluntary engagement of employees, virtues of personal and professional commitment and development. However, the work of critical sociology point out, for many years, the illusions of this type of management and its alienating excesses, supporting science and technology as devices serving an ideology of reification.

In this professional environment, characterized by opposite or even conflicting logics, how to think and develop transformative learning in organizations? Moreover, in health and social sector, bearer of traditions, values, ethics of care and accompaniment, what influence really have these logics? Depending on which design and for which use of authority and power, in the managerial relationships? And according to which practices and relational or communicational skills? In other words, how to think the exercise of authority and power in relationships whose purpose would be both collective success (in terms of efficiency and outcomes) and development of the subjects involved (in terms of individual learning)?

Answering to these questions is the aim of our contribution. It starts from the results of an action research conducted among 200 business executives in health and social sector. This research is based, for its theoretical framework, on the theories of experiential learning and transformative learning. It also assumes that work has anthropologically a transformative power about physical things, as well as nature and culture: it transforms the subjects and social groups, since it is built and lived, according to the triptych of H. Arendt, between (1) need (2) labour (3) relations and dialogue. But it may instead be the result of radical and alienating processes, since it is experienced only by the subjects as answering only to primary needs (or “first necessity”).

In this presentation, we will synthetically revisit the concepts of authority and power by repositioning them within relationships at work and the process of adult education, regarding the notions of authority, mutual dependence in autonomy and the change of the meaning schemes of involved people. We will then study how management practices can be potentially transformative. We will see finally, from the methodological point of view of action research, under what conditions the issue can be addressed empirically.

If dialogue is at the heart of transformative and emancipatory training practices, the results show that in professional context, the meaning is developed in and through different forms of dialogue. Thus, the results of this research are used to identify and to debate the ways to develop, within the work organizations, transformative practices. They include the ability to understand each other through “mediation”, intervention of “translators” and the presence of “third actors”. Dialogue then becomes a co-developmental process, at once a sociocognitive and a disruptive process for subjects and groups, that can legitimize for the managers, at the same time, the exercise of authority.

Educational Relationship And Dialogue Through Autobiographical Methods- Gabriella Aleandri

Within new pedagogical horizons, in current societies increasingly connected and interconnected, the importance of relationships and dialogue even for transformative learning is growing exponentially.

Transformative learning theory developed by Freire is rooted in the concept of conscientization. He points out that authentic relational-dialogical identity of human beings could lead them to overcome the culture of silence and of illiteracy, and to live as “social, historical thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons; dreams of possible utopias, capable of being angry because of a capacity of love”. Kuhn’s paradigm , Freire’s conscientization concept and Habermas’s studies about domains of learning as well as his theory of communicative action were fundamental for Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (revised in 1985, he distinguished three types of learning: instrumental, dialogic and self-reflective). Mezirow recognized critical self-reflecting as crucial element to achieve transformation.

In current times, characterized by acceleration and fragmentariness, taking some time to think about own life paths through types of communication that let person relating and dialoguing with her/him-self and with others, allowing sharing views and experiences, that is central. Autobiographical approach increasingly spread in educational research (i.e. by pedagogists such as Alberici, Alheit, Bergamini, Cambi, Demetrio, Dominicé, Formenti, Josso, Merrill, Pineau, West), as it is multi-functional, efficient, effective and sustainable. At the same time, it is highly educational and self-educational.

Moving from those frameworks, we designed a research project, "Education, rehabilitation and care through autobiographical storytelling and writings" in prison, of which we wish to present some significant results. The survey has based on the following tools: original autobiographical writings format, semi-structured storytelling interview and a conclusive questionnaire. The importance of communicative and relational aspects, that is dialogue, becomes even greater in difficult contexts such as the prison. Using different tools allows facilitating communicational and educational processes as much as possible.

In this context, the chosen communication strategy stimulates educational processes, during which the storyteller remember her/his past experiences, from childhood up to desire and imagine his/her future in a constructive and purposeful way. The different approaches through different tools lead to reflect on own life path from several points of view, in order to understand deeper meanings of own experiences, sometimes new, to know better not only him/her-self but also the others and the different contexts and environments in which s/he lived. By virtue of dialogue stimulated through the autobiographical tools, the inmate could come out from isolation and depersonalization often felt in prison.

Data analysis had carried out through quantitative and qualitative methods: second one had based on an original revision of Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Merrill and West's (2009) statements.

The first results of the research clearly show that detainees feel a great need and desire to think, to communicate and to tell. In connection with realizing autobiographical writing, indeed, almost all of inmates sample said that they had felt different emotions and feelings such as interest, pleasure, curiosity and relief too. Interpersonal relationships, therefore, help giving meanings to life. Relating to others becomes an essential need, especially in places where that is difficult. Each relationship can turn out to be a creative moment, during which relationships among people do not consist only in a "me-you" relationship, but it is embodied by emotions and feelings shared everywhere.

Being able to listen to each other is an important skill in order to establish an authentic relationship and dialogue, and educational relationship needs to be mutual. Listening skills and empathy offer a dimension of respect and acceptance thus promoting dialogue, transformative learning and lifelong growth.

Action research as a dialogical context for critical reflection and continuous professional development- Labrina Gioti & Mairi Ftika

This paper presents the findings of an action research project which aimed to promote the dialogue between personal theory and professional practice of a Maths teacher, as well as to explore the contribution of the critical reflection at the transformation of her practice and her professional development.

Stress and Attitude Change in Adult Education: Perceptions of post graduate students completing a course in Adult Education- Niki Philips & Katerina Kedraka & Anna Tsimpoukli

The present study focuses on adult trainees' reflection upon their personal course of action and development on completing a five-year long PG programme in Adult Education at the HOU. Reflecting back, students where asked to evaluate their experience.

It seems that learning within the research context (Open University) is positively experienced. The positive aspects are relevant to how participants in this study managed to communicate with others when they were asked to express their own assumptions and reflect feelings and thoughts in a context of critical thinking and open dialogue.

Is dialogue enough to promote transformative learning?- An example of "Electra" by Sophocles- Maria Kotsolakou & Kalliopi Nikolaraki

The purpose of this paper is to identify those elements of the dialogue, which prevent transformative learning both from the side of people involved and the audience watching them. We could meditate these views, based on an ancient tragedy "Electra" by Sophocles. First, could the dialogue lead to critical reflection and transformative learning? Could review one of two intellectual framework and to take the action? What are the elements that could make the dialogue of two brothers rational in order to activate the critical reflection and lead to transformative learning?

Reflections on the impact of transformative learning: the need of designing a coherent and holistic evaluating approach- Manos Pavlakis & Dimitra Andritsakou

Transformative learning (TL) has been a key aspect within the theoretical framework of adult education and, as a theory, has been expanded to various horizons after Mezirow's first contribution back in 90s'. The world of emotions, spirituality, organizational setting etc., are some of the fields in which TL implementations have been presented in the conferences and journals. However, one of the issues that have not been dealt with the same caution by the majority of TL scholars is this of the assessment of a TL process. Although, many researchers have pointed out the importance of evaluating the impact of TL, research does not seem to have made significant progress on the issue within the last two decades.

Among the first attempts on the field are the works of Kreber and Kember and his colleagues, who tried to measure the level of reflective thinking, a key element within TL theory. Furthermore, within the TL context, Cranton and Wright (2008) used what they called learning companions to evaluate possible transformation in illiterate people in North America, while interviews and likert scaled questionnaires were used in agricultural population in Tanzania. Other researchers used tools which facilitated reflection on previous actions, storytelling techniques and action plan.

Taylor has also discussed the issue of TL evaluation in his recent texts and papers (2009, 2014) and together with Cranton and Stuckey created a model, which can be accessed online through a certain questionnaire. The questionnaire provides a set of 112 questions that assess the outcomes and processes of engaging in TL. At this point some questions arise:

- How accessible is such a questionnaire? How easy is to be used in various educational settings?
- When is the evaluation of the results supposed to take place? How long after the educational intervention?
- How qualitative data could contribute towards the depiction of change and transformation?

- How could other stakeholders (e.g. the educator, co-trainees etc.) of the seminar contribute to the evaluation of possible transformations?

The discussion above demonstrates the need to explore the issue more. For example, our experiences as adult educators reveal that transformation can occur during a moment, which may be not quite apparent for both the trainer and the trainee. Hence, in order to get a valid result, we could begin the evaluation process even before the educational intervention and keep track of the process, monitor it during the training and conclude with a final evaluation. This way we can manage to see the changes that might occur to the participants individually, to the whole group or some sub-groups and of course to ourselves as educators and members of the group.

Evidence from other sciences, for instance Management or Psychology, shows that the issue of evaluation has been dealt with a more holistic approach, taking into account various dimensions. Methods and tools suggested, such as the 360° feedback or the JOHARI Window might be useful during a process of designing a coherent evaluation tool on TL. Both 360° feedback and the JOHARI Window, emphasize the need to focus during the evaluation process, not only on trainees' perspectives, but also include data from many other factors that could influence the process of transformation, e.g. the educator herself, co-trainees, self-evaluation, persons of the external environment etc. Behind this idea, the role of learning companion, which has already mentioned above, could be helpful, acting as a co-evaluator and objective observer.

The paper will discuss the above arguments and emphasize the need for a dialogue to commence regarding the design and construction of an evaluation tool which will take into account the work, which has been already presented in the field, but also successful evaluation models from other sciences.

Transformative Learning through Dialogue and Collective Reflection with Peers. The case of Teachers' In-Service Training-Athanasia Dakopoulou

The paper presents the results of a survey conducted in three educational regions of Primary Education in Athens. It argues that the model of collective reflection through dialogue in in-service training for teachers would be an effective tool for the remedy of distortions concerning teaching practices as well as teachers' professional role.

Theme: Transformative Learning and Social Life

A Site of Transformation: Community Sound-Off- Clint-Michael Reneau & Skyller Walkes

Across the world, and as personally witnessed in the U.S., human connections have become confounded, even fractured around the highly sensitive issue of navigating communal spaces that involve power and privilege dynamics. Though this has been a historical point of contention for individuals living in the margins everywhere, it has

now gained devastating traction in the wake of the series of traumatic events involving many young people of color and marginalized communities. The idea of hope for many is suspended in a dichotomized state- both burgeoning and paralyzed. Yet, this experiential session will facilitate dialogue around inclusivity or conversely, the threat of fear, and how that can affect individuals committed to social action within their communities in an effort to return hope to its rightful place among us- in our hearts and on our lips- through transformative dialogue. “Dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object. It is a humanizing speech, one that challenges and resists domination”. Among the major assumptions underlying humanistic thought is that individuals have an urge toward self-actualization and that individuals have responsibility to both themselves and others. Humanist views support the essence of the learning fostered through dialogue, which may be essential to the formation of our humanity, and to its transformation. For learning to occur, individuals must courageously take responsibility as they confront the necessary work in order to understand self and others. Transformative learning, according to Mezirow, is learning that produces change, which upon reflection, has a significant impact on the learner's subsequent experiences. Within the context of transformative learning, action learning, experiential learning, and critical reflection can be applied to the development of the adult learner. “A critical approach to understanding adult learning is learning how to perceive and challenge dominant ideology”.

This highly interactive experiential session will provide a space for participants to engage in authentic connections with the perceived other – people who may not be like them, through dialogue and its potential for success and transformative change which hinge on our creativity, willingness to self-reflect, critically reflect on the dialogue and experience, and adapt, as well as our ability to communicate and truly engage others. In order to respond to critical incidents within our communities, we must engage in meaning-making. Mezirow posits that meaning-making itself, is a learning process and as such, there are no fixed truths or “totally definitive knowledge, and because circumstances change, the human condition may be best understood as a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings”.

One approach is utilizing arts in the meaning-making process. Current research documents the ways in which art can enhance dialogue to create deeper connections and enhance social action within communities in a variety of ways. Creating spaces for dialogue, vulnerability, creativity and authenticity help encourage these connections among those who are seeking to rebuild the human connections. Presenters will share four spoken word pieces that highlight their lived realities and personal narratives through the connectivity of identity. These pieces will help guide the conversation, introspection and self-reflection activities the presenters use in the session. The first activity centers around four critical questions to help participants build authenticity through dialogue with one another while supporting a commitment to one's own wellness and growth. The second activity provides each participant the opportunity to create communities that foster mercy, grace and justice for all through the creation of their own spoken word pieces. From this critical engagement, social action springs forth.

Intercultural Competency- An Examination of the Experiences of Three Adult Educators Teaching in Turkey- Naomi Garcia

I examined the intercultural experiences of three adult educators living and teaching in Istanbul, Turkey. I used Taylor's learning model of becoming intercultural competent

to help make sense of the learning processes of the intercultural experiences of the participants involved in this study. Three composite themes were identified, they are: Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad; Negotiating Intercultural Experiences; and Identity Issues and Transformation. These three themes will be discussed in the presentation.

In order to identify, understand, and describe the subjective nature of the participants' experiences of living and working abroad, I conducted three themed interviews with each participant. The first session was themed "initial perceptions and the new milieu." The next interview session was themed "framing the intercultural experience," and the last interview session was themed "the personal transformation through the intercultural experience." In this session, the sequential manner used to interview the participants, will be presented so as to travel, by way of the participant's reflections, from the beginning of his/her time spent in the new setting. We will begin by getting a sense of his/her initial feelings, outlook, and understanding of the new environment. We then moved on to the core part of his/her time spent in Istanbul, Turkey in order to understand what types of challenges, daily experiences, new-found perspectives he/she was experiencing. Then, we moved on to the time that he/she left and returned to his/her hometown. Any new understandings or transformations that came from the intercultural experiences will be discussed.

I thought it best to look at the participants' meaningful experiences and try to compare what their stories had to tell against the Taylor's learning model. While my intention was to try to understand the participants' personal transformation, what my analysis revealed were the characteristics that are indicative of intercultural competence such as: empathy, respect, overseas experience, listening skills, tolerance for ambiguity, etc. Taylor proposed that these attributes were indicative of a successful sojourner, and a successful sojourner "are those who are successful at working and living in cultures other than their own". Taylor recommended the use of his model to better understand the learning process that takes place because it was "essential to developing more effective education programs and identifying factors that would aid the sojourner during his or her intercultural experience", which should be of use to researchers in this realm.

From Ancient Greece to the Present Day; How the Development of the Modern Mind Distanced Us from Genuine Dialogue- Louise Livingstone

This paper explores the development of the modern mind from ancient Greece to the present day, aiming to show how a shift to rationally-devised ways of knowing has contributed to an inability for people in the modern West to see themselves in dynamic relation to, and in genuine dialogue with, each other.

Intercultural Dialogue as a means of Reflective Discourse and Collective Action- Evgenia Arvanitis

This paper describes how an intimate and intentionally designed reflective discourse among 25 interculturalists projected reflective and generative dimensions of dialogue using the world cafe approach during the Forum of Intercultural Dialogue and Learning that took place in Delphi, Greece. Participants discussed systemic interventions to promote interculturality and social inclusiveness.

Adult Education as a Means of Empowerment for Drug Offenders in Prison/ Post Prison Treatment - Olympia Chaidemenaki & Remos Armaos

This mixed method study investigates participants' perceptions about the role of empowerment adult education for incarcerated as well as prison released drug addicts. It also attempts to identify the ways in which education reinforces their personal development and treatment progress. The study aims at emphasizing the training interventions of a treatment facility as means of dealing with the exclusion of this group on a social and professional level. Research findings disclosed a high correlation between the training provided to drug offenders while in treatment and levels of empowerment for these individuals in their personal and social improvement. A high correlation was shown between training and the reinforcement of self-confidence and self-efficacy of this group. Moreover, findings are discussed in relation to educational and occupational background and experiences, the adult education importance in motivating their detoxification and rehabilitation process and their personal transformation process and social activation through education and therapy interventions.

Democracy matters: dialogue, the Islamist and the good TL group- Linden West

This paper focuses on the emotional interplay of the psychological world with the relationships and groups in which we are embedded; and it considers how deeper forms of dialogue and democratic relationship with others are facilitated or frustrated. It draws on auto/biographical narrative research in one distressed post-industrial city struggling with racism and pockets of Islamism, but also with a once proud history of workers' education. I seek to understand the dynamics of racism, fundamentalism and of hate towards the other, but also of dialogue, love and recognition and their role in building social solidarities both in the past and present. I illuminate where resources of hope lie for creating space where dialogue and inclusive social solidarities can flourish. This at a time of rampant individualism and growing antagonism between ethnic and religious groups at national as well as international levels. I use an interdisciplinary psychosocial theoretical frame, drawing on psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, critical theorist Axel Honneth and educator John Dewey, to illuminate particular dynamics, including pedagogic, within Islamism, for instance, in contexts of growing Islamophobia. These forces can draw alienated individuals into Islamism, which provides powerful forms of self recognition. Such processes operate at a primitive emotional as well as a cognitive, narrative and group level. Recognition gives meaning and purpose to fractured lives but may also be impregnated with misrecognition of the other. There can be processes of collective psychic splitting in which unwanted parts of a self and culture are projected into the other, evoking alienation, ironically, from self as well as the other, in the name of purity.

Theme: Emotional- Psychic

Place-Based Dialogue: Relational Ontology in Transformative Learning- Elizabeth Lange

Building on the conference theme of dialogue in transformative learning, this paper will compare a Mezirowean understanding of dialogue predicated on a Newtonian-Cartesian ontology and modernist view of the self with an understanding of dialogue within a relational ontology and the post-humanist view of the self. Data from two empirical studies will be drawn upon: the first study was an examination of intercultural learning as it evolved through dialogue between natural park educators and immigrant newcomers; the second study was an examination of the impact of a university extension sustainability education course on adult learners. Both studies involved extensive group dialogue as well as outdoor activities.

The data will, first, be examined by showing the powerful applicability of Mezirow's conceptualization of transformative learning and the role of dialogue within a modernist ontology, including autonomous individualism. In the first study, the park educators clearly experienced a disorienting dilemma when they realized that their assumptions about immigrant newcomers did not bear out and their didactic teaching approaches proved unworkable. Abandoning their plans and suspending their expectations, they moved into the liminal space of deep cultural questioning and experimentation that led to open-endedness, rapport building and shifting assumptions regarding leadership as direction, ownership of process, teaching as transmission, class in terms of social and spatial access, othered cultures as lack and difference, and the natural world both as a commodity of exchange and as protected, regulated space. In the second study, participants experienced a form of disorienting dilemma that brought them into and adult education space. In the dialogical space provided, they renarrated their stories, explored disillusionment, re-evaluated their ethics, and transformed cultural messages around time, money, work, consumption, and civic involvement. They faced the fear and anxiety of change, clarified life purpose and shifted to a different way of being in the world. Mezirow's framework certainly explains the overall trajectory of change.

However, the data will, second, be re-examined by rejecting a Cartesian meaning scheme and positing the deeply relational nature of reality. From this post-humanist approach, relations pre-exist individual entities and constitute the self not the other way around. Rather than being container-bound selves, the self is emergent within these relations rather than a product of social interaction and symbols. The self is not unitary but multiple, porous, constantly undergoing change. Relationality precedes knowing. Thus, in the first study, only when the two groups were present to each other through dialogue, did the relations become visible and thus changeable. Beyond rationality, dialogue from within a relational ontology arises out of concern for the other, situational responsiveness, and recognitive justice, rather than just a cognitive exploration of cultural differences toward more inclusive perspectives. Further, in the second study, selves are embodied and embedded and thus dialogue is not only social and emotional but place-based and body-based. The situatedness in a particular geography, which speaks in its own right, captured in this data, was enacting specific social and material practices. In particular, natural places evoked a levelling and embodiment of the dialogue and fostered exploratory, cooperative relations.

As Karen Barad suggests, “Existence is not an individual affair...To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Individuals do not pre-exist their interaction; rather individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating. Knowing then, through dialogue, is part of being, or rather a constellation of being-in-relations, which is in constant flow. The theory and practice implications of a relational ontology for transformative pedagogies will be elaborated.

Dealing with conflicts in order to trigger transformative learning. A learning space inside the university- Andrea Galimberti

My contribution presents some conceptual reflections about thematic workshops addressed to university students. These workshops are part of the Master Degree in Educational Sciences curriculum and structured on the basic idea that a professional educator is often (always?) asked to deal with conflictual dimensions during his/her working activity. Sometimes this dimension lies in the background, other times is part of an explicit request of managing and solving conflicts.

I organize the workshop every year since 2012, engaging student as co-researchers following the lines traced by the co-operative inquiry paradigm. The common exploration aim is to interrogate a plurality of issues related to the concept of conflict, and, in particular, the relationship between conflict and learning.

Following Formenti's spiraling of knowledge the exploration encourages to contact experiences, transform them into aesthetical representations, reflect and consider new kind of potential actions.

Metaphors, disorienting dilemmas and personal theories represent the materials at the centre of the collective dialogue, a participatory hermeneutic circle. These elements allow the possibility to “open” the concept of conflict, tracing the meanings, effects and different contexts that structure it along the variety of the different participants' experiences.

The main purpose is to gain reflection about the frames of references that structure participants' point of view about conflicts and about the idea of “managing conflicts”. Besides, in my intention, there is the idea of structuring a context in which “deutero-learning” will enhance the learning potential involved in conflicts. According with the anthropologist Marianella Scavi, the “crash” related to the etymology of the word (conflictus) could be considered as a crash of different frames of reference. So the conflict valuable heuristic potential consists in the possibility to gain insights about those elusive frames of reference that structure our point of view and that become “visible” in the very conflictual moment. According to Mezirow, this is a fundamental and necessary step toward Transformative Learning.

In my contribution I will present the structure of the workshops and an analysis of the materials collected. I will also interrogate the conditions that allowed a generative dialogue between participants maintaining the tension between the different points of view involved.

A Dialogue with Chronic Illness- Jay Livingstone

This paper suggests that illness can be engaged with through deep reflective dialogue and practice, and as such can become an initiatory event, leading to transformative learning; fundamentally changing an individual's epistemology and ontology.

Figurations of the OTHER - Self-other-world-relation- Thomas Neubauer & Annika Lehmann

Transformative learning can occur as an adaptive reaction to critical life events. But as pedagogical professionals we prefer to give rise to situations wherein processes of transformation are initiated. We argue transformation is an intersubjective phenomenon. We have to take into account its triadic structure when analyzing transformation.

Dancing with Pain: Overcoming the Damaging Effects of Corporal Punishment through differing dialogues with oneself- Khum Raj Pathak

This paper examines strategies of resistance and renewal used by three Nepalese survivors of corporal punishment in both their early and adult lives. Through their narratives, the concept of 'dialogues with oneself' is extended beyond words, using the metaphor of dance. It explores how the damage of corporal punishment and the punitive vocabularies of performativity ideologies could be overcome by movements resistant to identification, yet demanding recognition by the self and others.

'Mind-to-mind meeting': The potential of the online context as a space capable of fostering transformative learning- Alice Mongiello

This paper explores the potential of the online context as a space capable of fostering transformative learning. Attention is drawn to the relational, intersubjective nature of transformative learning and a suggestion that the online context may act to facilitate the development of reciprocal relations of recognition that meet the needs of non-traditional learners better.

Transformative Learning Process: The Key to Patient - Rehabilitation Therapists Dialogue- Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz & Judy King

This paper will present The Model of Meaning Perspective Transformation in Adult Physical Rehabilitation. The model is the first in the world that illustrates the process of transformation that occurs for people within a health context. Beginning with the model's scientific foundation and further research this presentation will illustrate the different instances of intra-dialogue and inter-dialogue that patients and rehabilitation therapists engage in during a process of transformation. It is our intention to show how self-reflection on each side of the dialogue, and also the inter-dialogue between the two parties, is challenging and sometimes can be life changing.