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King, K.P. (2009). *Handbook of the Evolving Research of Transformative Learning Based on the Learning Activities Survey (10th Anniversary Edition)*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

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King's (2009) handbook marks the 10th anniversary of the initial publication of her Learning Activities Survey (LAS), provides the now out of print original LAS, and documents the developing research the LAS has spurred in the last decade. King's purpose is twofold: to review transformative learning research since 1997 and to provide a manual for current researchers using the LAS. Researchers, practitioners, students, and trainers in varied disciplines and contexts will find the text useful in both gaining better understanding of transformative learning in general and in conducting studies of their own in this area. The book is divided into 4 sections: (1) the LAS and description of the research model; (2) primary sources documenting King's research; (3) lists of other researchers' use of the LAS and

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digital formats; and (4) scoring, diagnostic, and interpretive forms.

The first chapter addresses the theoretical foundations of transformative learning; includes a copy of the LAS, instructions and technical information for its use; and provides applications of transformative learning for adult learners. Over twenty years of transformative learning theory is covered succinctly and recognizes Mezirow (1978) as the originator of the adult learning theory of perspective transformation through his work with women re-entering higher education. King presents his theory of perspective transformation based on “reflection, change and action” (p.6), and names Cranton, Taylor and herself as other seminal researchers in the field. This chapter ends with an important and often over-looked cautionary note: not all transformative learning experiences are positive, and while educators/researchers may provide the tools to support transformative learning, the ethical issue remains: it is learners themselves who “have to survive going forward” (p.9).

Chapters 2 and 3 are essentially a detailed operations manual that familiarizes the user with the LAS’s design and provides suggestions for modifications that can tailor the instrument’s use in multiple contexts (individual, classroom, and program). An overview of the survey identifies its use in assessing whether adult students have had a transformative experience as a result of an educational occurrence, and if so, what learning incidents contributed to that transformation. King explains the validity and value of combining mixed method data gathering (self-score report followed by interview for qualitative analysis). The first section of the LAS targets the actual specific transformative experience. Items are correlated with Mezirow’s ten stages of perspective transformation in order to facilitate diagnosis and interpretation. Scoring reveals whether a learner (1) had a transformative experience related to education (2) had a transformative experience not related to education or (3) did not have a transformative experience. Other scores indicate possible relationships with Mezirow’s 10 stages of perspective transformation. Finally, open-ended questions

elicit narrative responses that can provide rich data and reveal recurring themes. The second section examines specific learning situations and life changes that take place through classroom assignments (activities like critical thinking, discussion, self-assessments) and support (emotional, psychological, physical or educational by students or faculty). Requisite follow up interviews are conducted either on a specific or random set of learners whose prior scores indicate achievement of a transformative learning experience. A clear description of the procedure, recommendations to increase volunteer participation, and all required forms are included, so potential users will appreciate the availability of the instrument as well as the clear instructions on its use. King completes Part I with a thorough description of the development, reliability and validity of the instrument.

Primary source research articles, detailing King's research from 1997-2005 including over 700 higher education participants, are presented in Part II. The author provides a framework of questions, particularly useful for students, to guide the reading of and reflection on the original research published in this section. Chapters focus on different populations, thus highlighting the adaptability of the LAS to multiple contexts. Chapter 5 will particularly interest those practitioners in the field of Adult ESL literacy. It focuses on 208 advanced and/or intermediate English language learners enrolled in ESL programs in three different colleges. As in her prior research, King identifies a "typical profile" of a learner involved in the research study. This personification helps the reader to understand the nature of the participants and also to distinguish characteristics that may differ in their own potential research studies. Results of this inquiry indicate strong participant transformational learning (66.8%) and significant reference to adult ESL learning experiences as the root of the transformation. Participants' responses note interesting changes in attitudes toward both English language learning and cultural awareness/assimilation; not unexpectedly, a large percentage (33.1%) rate immigration as a life change that resulted in perspective transformation. ESL teachers, researchers and program designers will benefit from the use of this text as both a reference and a

springboard for both research and curricular/program development.

Another chapter in Part II presents transformational learning research based on professional development of educators as they learn new technologies. Analysis of interviews and personal journals led to King's use of the label "journey of transformation" (Miles & Huberman as cited in King, 2010, p. 90). Users' experience of technology was characterized on a continuum of inexperience to independence, corresponding to both Mezirow's and adult learning stages. The journey of transformation, King suggests, helps educators to grapple with the realities of rapidly changing and newly emerging technologies and how they impact teaching, learning and curricular design. Also on this theme, another chapter is devoted to a research study that examines how professors learn and use technology. Important results of this research include a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered design. Additional articles include an examination of feminine research and pedagogy after the 9/11 tragedy and a look at how on-line learning can benefit faculty development and potential transformation. The research studies show the adaptability of the LAS as each study involves a different population and a number of data collection formats are employed: regular and on-line surveys, focus groups, and interviews. These primary sources will inspire researchers and practitioners alike in experimenting with the LAS and in designing learning activities that inspire transformative change.

The third section of the book relates research to practical, real world applications of the results. In facing the fear that teachers often associate with learning new technologies, King believes these teacher/learners turn out to be empowered and "may become more reflective and learner-centered teachers" (p.163). One result of the journey of transformation is new models of curricular design. King recognizes that while higher educational faculty are experts in their field, many have not taken courses in pedagogy and/or curricular design. Her Faculty Formative Curriculum Model is posited to assist professors in designing their courses in a non-linear manner that may, in fact, encourage

transformation in these faculty as they use the model to support course planning. “When educators reflect on learning and experience transformation in their perspectives of learning, they are more genuinely prepared to facilitate such change among their students” (p. 164).

Another model that King explains is her Transformative Learning Opportunities Model (TLOM) which is detailed in her book *Bringing Transformative Learning to Life* (2005). The model provides a dynamic and interactive way for educators to include learners as partners in curriculum planning and learning design. Practitioners will enjoy the opportunity to share transformative experience with their respective learners through the use of the TLOM. Experience in professional development sessions led by King and others for GED teachers in New York City provided the foundations for another model, the Contextualized Model of Adult Learning (CMAL) developed by King and Heuer (2005). This model takes into account “fundamental differences in settings, learner characteristics, content and learners’ needs” (p.168) requisite to curriculum planning that is designed to meet individual and adult students’ need. This model is presented graphically and its benefit as a means to contextualize learning experiences for specific learners is well explained. The linking of research to models for teaching is valuable as it not only provides usable prototypes, but also inspires researchers to use their own studies in practical ways.

Chapter 11, “LAS-Related Research Conducted by Others” contains an invaluable listing of both master’s theses and doctoral dissertations, selected abstracts of research articles and a catalog of classroom instructors/settings where the LAS has been used. For any researchers who expect to use the LAS, many of the resources needed for a literature review are provided here. King recommends further searches of academic databases and/or Google Scholar to find additional literature which can provide a solid foundation on which further research can be grounded to expand and advance the field of transformational learning.

King's experimental use of digital audio and podcasts to discuss transformative learning with colleagues and other interested parties is recorded in chapter 12. Her first podcast on professional learning content was conducted over a 3 year time period and reached 4.3 million listeners, attesting to the wide appeal of this format. Building on this success, King's second series was devoted to her main research focus: transformative learning. This series generated a great deal of interest as there was very little availability of adult learning information to a world-wide audience and subscribers reacted by emailing King and her fellow researcher, Dr. Barbara Heuer. Included are the script formats of episodes 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 which range from introductory information to "disorienting dilemmas" to change-coping mechanisms to facilitating transformative learning to student stories. A variety of primary source material is available in these transcripts and King directs the reader to the complete podcasts accessible on the web for further resources. For students who hear the actual words of prime researchers like King and Heuer, they can modify, change, or indeed, transform their own decisions regarding their individual research.

For those readers who have been convinced to use the LAS in conducting their own research projects, chapter 13 will solidify this decision by providing all the tools needed to begin the research. While the complete LAS is included earlier in the text, modified versions including higher education, ESL, and GED adaptations among others are also provided here. The correlated, follow-up interview forms are given, as well as consents, instructions, statistical data entry and analysis forms. If the rest of the text is considered the overview and demonstrated use of the LAS, this chapter provides the actual instruments so that the reader can continue and expand the research started by the author in 1997.

Finally, King looks forward to the future in her last chapter as she outlines her own research and provides ideas for other researchers in linking transformative learning with new technologies, diverse groups and lifelong learning. Possible new topics include elder learning, learners with disabilities,

and 21st century lifelong learning, all timely themes. King considers her text a success if it has helped readers connect ideas for future research and if it has provided a lens through which to use the LAS in that research. Certainly, for this reviewer, King has succeeded in meeting her goals. She has, indeed, stirred the “research planning wheels of [my] mind” (p 309), and her book and the LAS will provide the basis for a future research project that is currently in the planning stage.

The Handbook of the Evolving Research of Transformative Learning Based on the Learning Activities Survey is a welcome addition to the adult education/transformational learning fields. It is both a comprehensive overview of perspective transformation as well as an accessible manual that will support turning theory into practice. As such, King’s text is an excellent reference for the practitioner’s library and a useful manual for the researcher’s use.

About the Reviewer

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