

## Do Shifts Happen? - Will Transformative Teaching Techniques help in teaching ICT soft skills

Susan Bennett

School of Information Technology  
Waikato Institute of Technology  
[susan.bennett@wintec.ac.nz](mailto:susan.bennett@wintec.ac.nz)

### Abstract

The author has experienced some challenges while teaching 'soft skills' topics such as Ethics and Professionalism and Problem Solving for IT. Tutor enthusiasm and belief in the importance of the learning for students, while being valuable assets that provide motivation for developing learning experiences, fall short in the search to find teaching tools that encourage the self reflection that will benefit students in their understanding of these topics. Transformative concepts have been incorporated into many disciplines. Transformative learning techniques encourage the student to question their perceptions and reflect on the content of the information provided to them, inspiring the student to construct their own understanding of the concepts taught. This poster will outline a prospective study on using these kinds of teaching techniques in soft skills courses.

### 1. Background

Transformative learning theory is a constructivist theory that suggests that learning is the product of people attempting to make meaning of their experiences. Our students bring with them a lifetime of experiences, constructed values and perspectives. The examination of these pre-developed perspectives as the result of a "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow, 1991) is the basis of the process. Learners are provided with opportunities to discuss and reflect on these perceptions in order to promote growth and from that learning.

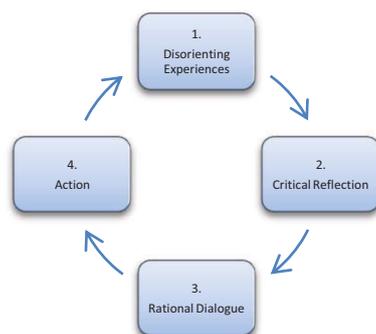


Figure 1 - Transformative Learning Quadrants (Glisczinski, 2007)

### 2. Method

An initial literature review will be conducted to provide the author with further information on the development of the "disorienting dilemma" situations. Careful preparation will ensure the development of scenarios that provide the

impetus of an 'incident' while paying due consideration to the provision of a safe and supportive environment. Early reading has suggested that the reconsideration of perceptions may be the result of an incident or as the result of a gradual process of information provision.

### 3. Preliminary outline

The proposed study will be conducted in semester 2 at Wintec. The subjects will be volunteers from the students enrolled in Ethics and Professionalism, a compulsory course in the Diploma of ICT, L5. The study will incorporate 6 phases.

1. An initial pre-course test of the students will identify current areas of understanding and initial perceptions.
2. The course content will then be covered in a traditional delivery style. This will ensure that the students in this group will not be disadvantaged by the study process.
3. Another test will be conducted at this point in order to further gather data of the students' perceptions and to identify any gaps in the information presented. Any perception changes identified at this point will be considered as part of the study.
4. Student participation in an empowering, disorienting incident. This incident should initiate a change in perspective and allow the student to articulate that disorientation.
5. Opportunities for discussion and reflection by the students.
6. End of course evaluation of student perceptions.

### 4. References

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