



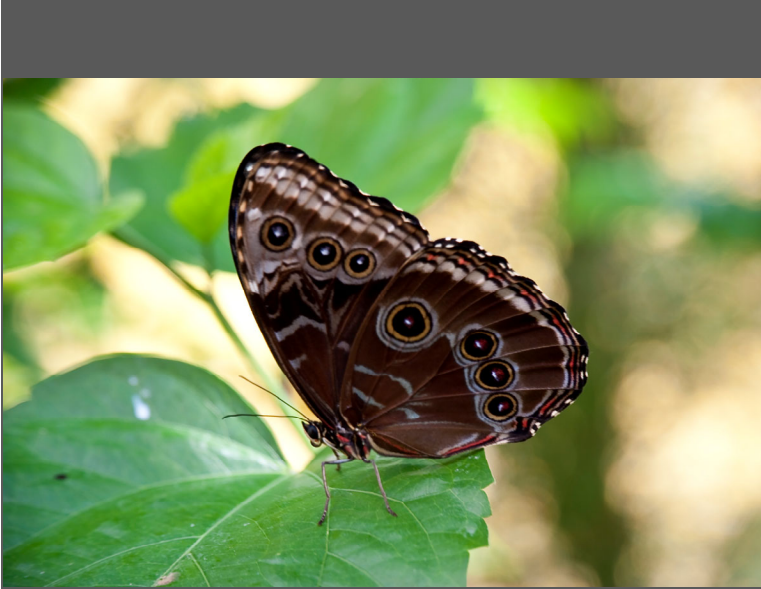
Beyond Literacy: Transformative Learning



Learning is an experience.

Everything else is just information.

~Albert Einstein



What are we going to discuss today?

- *What is “Transformative Learning?”*
- *What are the stages of Transformative Learning?*
- *How do we create learning experiences for adults so they have the opportunity for transformative learning?*

How have you changed over the past few years?



What can you do today that you couldn't do a year or two ago?
(If you are stuck, think about technology...)

Childhood Learning versus Adulthood Learning

Transformative learning



Formative learning



What is “Transformative Learning”?



Jack Mezirow



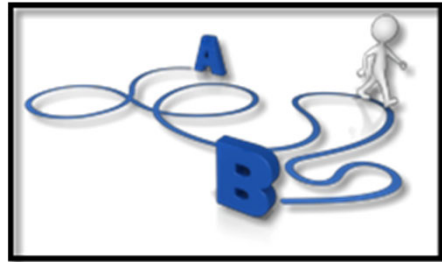
*Transformative learning is a theory of **deep learning** that goes beyond just content knowledge acquisition, or learning equations, memorizing tax codes or historical facts and data. It is a desirable process for adults to learn to **think for themselves**, through true emancipation from sometimes mindless or unquestioning acceptance of what we have to come to know through our life experience, especially those things that our culture, religions, and personalities may predispose us towards, without our active engagement and questioning of how we know what we know.*

Jack Mezirow

Do You Really Know What You Know?

“Approved ways of seeing and understanding, shaped by our language, culture, and personal experience, collaborate to set limits to our future learning.”
(Mezirow, 1991)





Checking Our Assumptions: What Does Learning Look Like in Adulthood?





Do you KNOW what you believe?

Before we can help students see different perspective, we have to critically reflect on our own belief systems.

Let's try a scenario.

Isabel is a 26-year-old black Jamaican woman with 4 children. She has been on public assistance for a number of years and has never completed any educational program. She has come into your adult education program believing that she has a learning disability and that obtaining her HSE certificate is impossible. She works full-time and lacks self-efficacy and personal achievement. Her work often interferes with her ability to come to class. She wants to enter your IET for an Office Administration certificate, but that requires an 8th-grade level in both reading in math. She comes in at a 5th-grade level.



Meaning Making

What assumptions might teachers make about Isabel?

- Isabel may be learning disabled.
- Her job may get in the way of her studies.
- Her family responsibilities may make it difficult for her to be successful.
- Her reading skills are too low for her to participate in the training course.



The story continues...



Isabel participates in classes and develops her skills. She collects community information and completes weekly assignments focusing on reading, writing, and math skills. Her confidence increases as she becomes increasingly proficient in academic studies. Her teacher asks her to be an unofficial TA and this responsibility bolsters her self-confidence even more. Isabel experiences tangible outcomes of this self-confidence beyond the classroom as she becomes increasingly capable of resolving problems in other parts of her life. Her description of herself becomes that of an active, self-directed, and independent learner. She joins the IET class, finds a job, and no longer needs public assistance. She captures a new future for herself, creating a new pathway in her life journey.

Adapted from *Bringing Transformative Learning to Life*, page 5

What Were the Keys to Her Success?

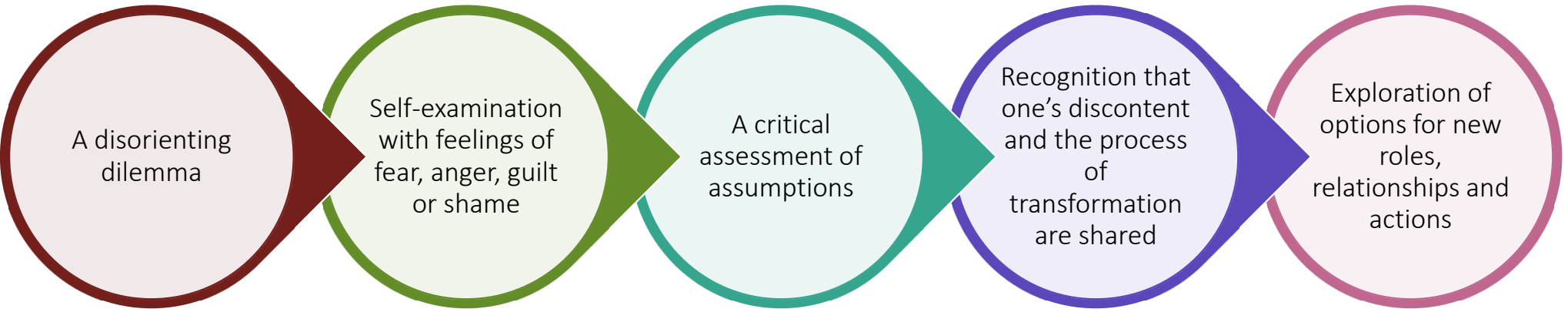
- Isabel identified resources in the community to help her.
- Her confidence grew as she experienced successes.
- Her teacher reinforced Isabel's changing view of herself by trusting her with new responsibilities.
- Isabel ultimately accepted a new role and vision of herself as a competent student and skilled worker.



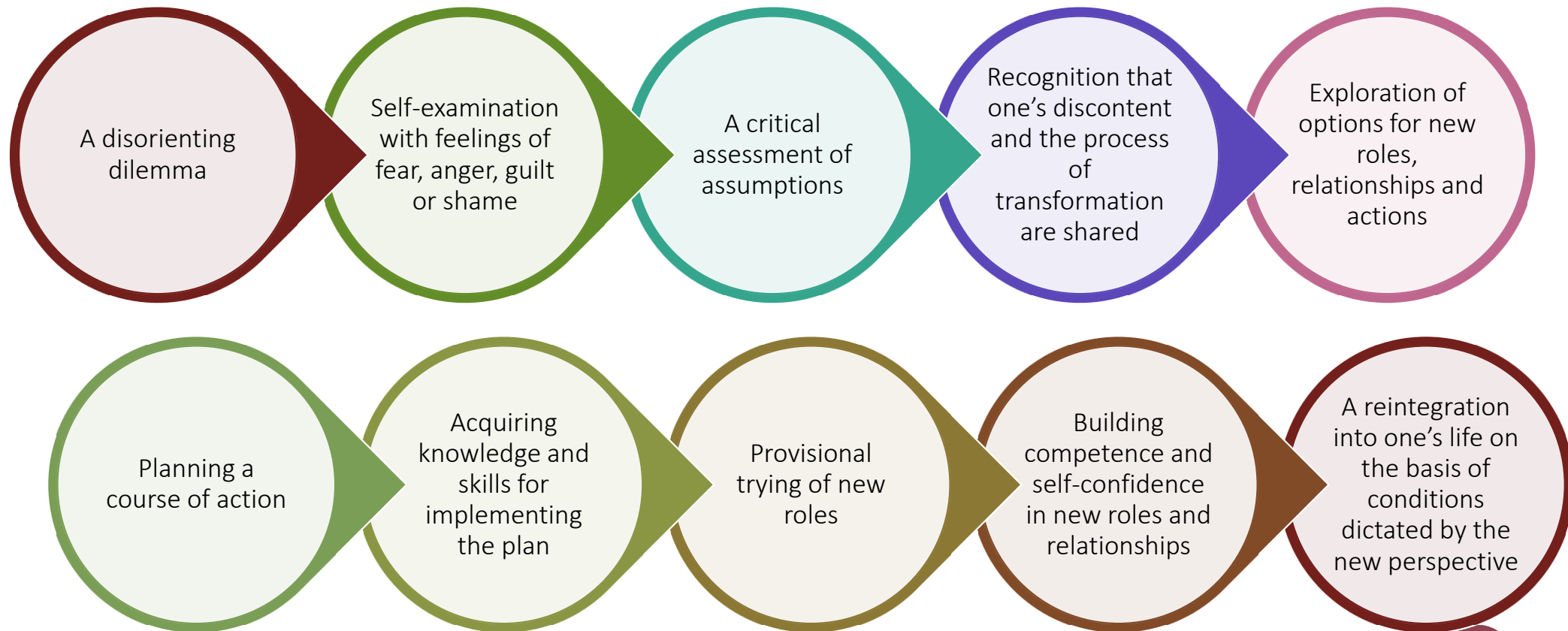
Transformation Comes in Stages



Mezirow's Stages of Transformational Learning



Mezirow's Stages of Transformational Learning



From Mezirow's *Transformational Dimensions of Adult Learning*, pages 168-169



How can we use it?

- What experience do they have? Are they ready?
- What needs do they have as they move through the program?
- How can their goals serve as a basis for self-directed learning, using problem solving, critical reflection, and analysis?
- How can I maintain a critically reflective instructional practice?

The Transformative Learning Opportunities Model



What does the learner experience?

- Increasing safety and trust
- Determining needs and expectations
- Creating learning experiences
- Revisiting needs, teaching and learning



How does the educator prepare?

- Self-Assessment
- Preplanning research
- Practice

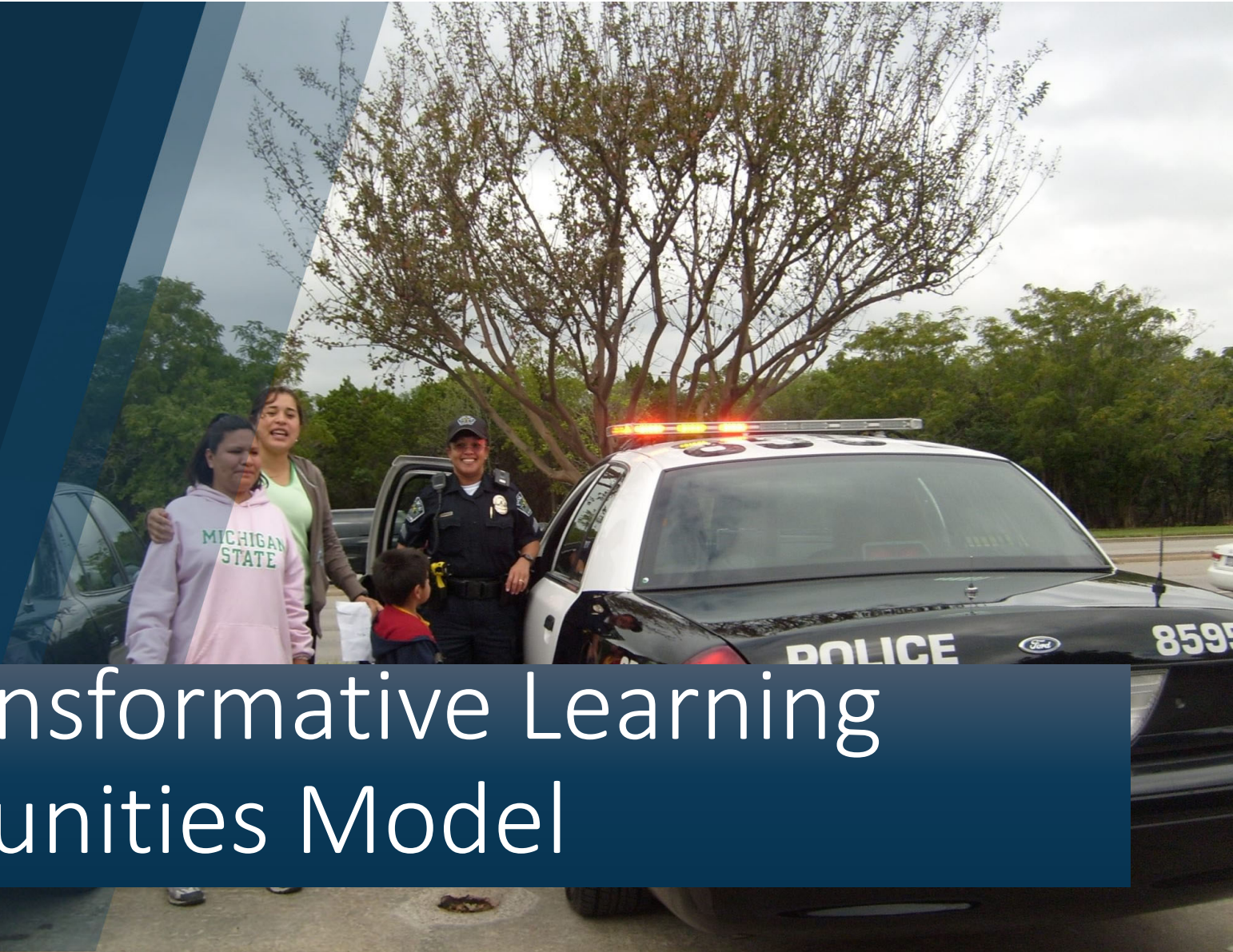


How do
you put
it into
practice?





Dr. Kathleen King



The Transformative Learning Opportunities Model



New students
this way 

How do you go about determining needs and expectations?

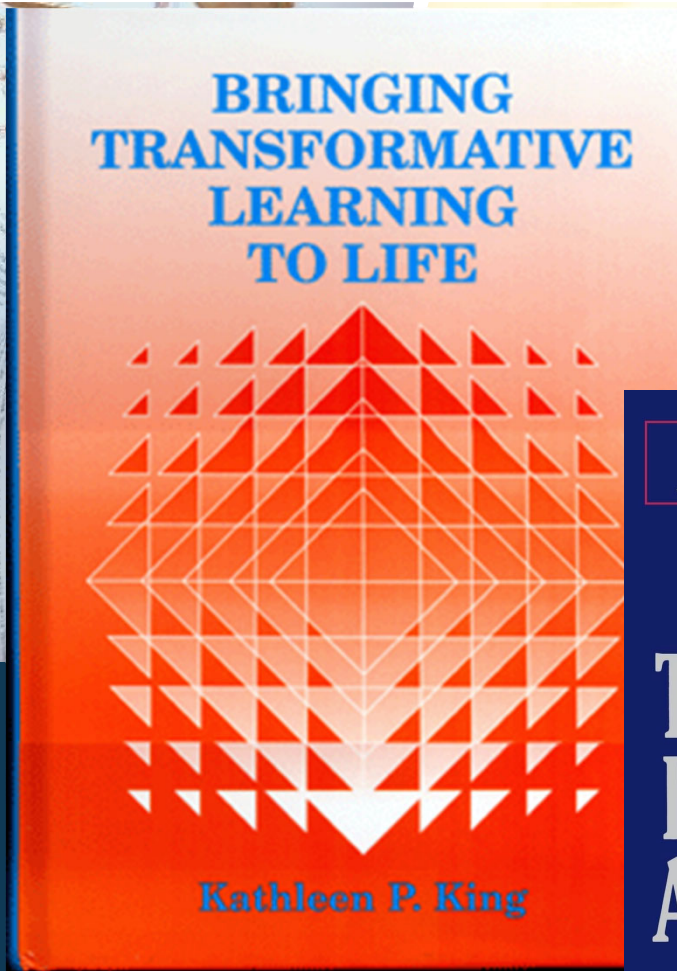


How do you create learning experiences that allow for a possible disorienting dilemma?

PBLworks.org

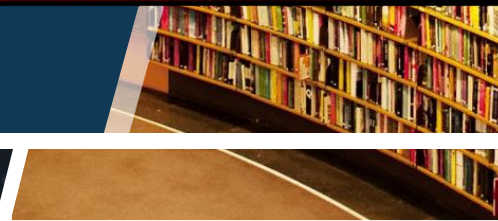
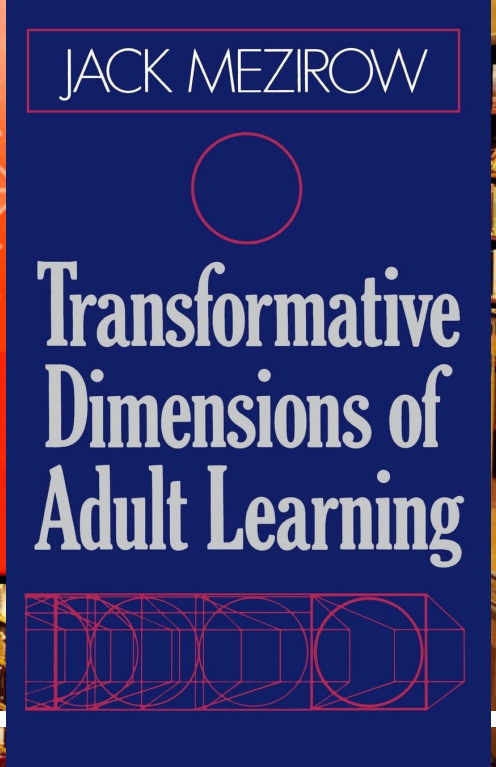


Creating Learning Experiences with Project-/Problem-based Learning



Recommended Reading

- More examples of how to implement this.
- Appendices with guides for ESOL, ABE, and Workplace Instructors.
- Available from the TCALL library





Thank you!

Dr. Glenda Rose
Adult Education Director
Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas