

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING IN A PERSPECTIVE OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

Aušra Kolbergytė, Valdonė Indrašienė and Raminta Bardauskienė

Mykolas Romeris University, Faculty of Social Technologies, Institute of Educational Sciences and Social Work, Ateities St. 20, LT-08303 Vilnius, Lithuania
E-mails: auskol@mruni.eu; v.indrasiene@mruni.eu; raminta@mruni.eu

The article analyzes transformative learning as a purposeful and voluntary effort made by the person to educate himself in order to achieve essential changes that transform his personality without the influence of andragogues. It examines features of self-directed learning in the context of transformative learning. The goal of the research is to reveal the phenomenon of self-directed learning in the context of transformative learning. The article presents a diversity of theoretical approaches and researches on transformative learning in foreign countries and Lithuania. The research established that transformative learning the purpose of which is to stimulate man's self-realization in his personal and social life is linked to the awareness or development of critical consciousness, cognitive change oriented to the development of autonomous and responsible thinking that is achieved through the construction of new meanings and the creation of other inner senses about the changing world. Self-directed learning as a conscious process is an essential method of personality improvement, conscious, purposeful and organized activity of the individual in order to achieve goals set by himself, selected acceptable modes of self-directed learning the purpose of which the aspiration for harmony of all inner powers of the man. The essence of self-directed learning in the context of transformative learning is revealed through the development and perfection of the consciousness of personality, aspiration for inward liberty at individual and social levels.

Keywords: *self-directed learning, transformative learning, andragogy.*

INTRODUCTION

Transformative learning is adult learning (andragogy) theory that analyzes learning methods in order to achieve essential individual or/and social changes of development, i.e. remarkable maturity of the adult or/and the transformation of society. P. Freire (1984), J. Mezirow (1991, 1995, 1997 et al.), L. Daloz (1986), J. M. Dirkx (1997, 1998), E. W. Taylor (1997, 2008) et al. are considered to be the main representatives of this theory. The following researchers working in Lithuania have written on transformative learning: A. Poškiienė (2004), T. Bulajeva (2007), J. Sučylaitė (2011) et al.

When analyzing theoretical approaches of transformative learning the most often mentioned matter how the adult should be educated in a formal or informal mode, by involving other structures (e.g., an organization, university, school and the like) in which learners would be influenced by

“mediators”, i.e. andragogues. Transformational learning is defined as the learning that induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, especially learning experiences which shape the learner and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner's subsequent experiences (Clark, 1993). Scientists (Bulajeva, 2007) consider adult self-directed learning as the result of transformative learning. According to the author, adult self-directed learning is the education that transforms the man. Only after occurrence of the transformation of meaningful perspectives the need to take a transformative action emerges for the learner – to change social environment and improve his practice. However, there are no clear emphasis how the man can educate himself autonomously, i.e. apply a purposeful, targeted, motivated self-directed learning, or, in other words, how it would

be possible to define the concept of self-directed learning in the perspective of transformative learning?

Due to the fact that self-directed learning is oriented towards autonomous education of himself, this article will discuss not only adult transformative *learning*, but also learning in formal or informal mode: i.e. connections will be looked for how the man purposefully and voluntarily makes effort to educate himself in order to achieve essential changes that transform his personality without the influence of andragogues.

Problematic questions of the research: how can the phenomenon of self-directed learning be perceived and analyzed in the context of transformative learning, what are the connections between self-directed learning and transformative learning?

Research object – self-directed learning in the context of transformative learning.

Research goal – to reveal the phenomenon of self-directed learning in the context of transformative learning theory.

Research Tasks

1. To analyze theoretical approaches of transformative learning.
2. To discuss the definition of self-directed learning in the context of transformative learning.

Research methods: theoretical (analysis, comparison, generalization, synthesis).

1. The concept of transformative learning and the diversity of theoretical approaches.

The word “transformation” means the change of form, shape and quality, reformation, reframing, radical changes, alterations. Transformative learning is the theory of adult learning (andragogy) that analyzes the methods of essential changes in personality and society towards positive direction.

Further the article will present the diversity of theoretical approaches and research on transformative learning in foreign countries and Lithuania.

1. The expression of theoretical ideas of transformative learning.

P. Freire (1984, 2000), J. Mezirow (1991, 1995, 1997 *et al.*), L. Daloz (1986), J. M. Dirkx (1997, 1998), E. W. Taylor (1997, 2008) *et al.* are considered to be the main representatives of this theory. Further the article will analyze their main

ideas on transformative learning (Table 1).

The rudiments of transformative learning are detected in the works of Brazilian pedagogue and philosopher **Paolo Freire** (1984, 2000) on critical pedagogy. The scientist links transformative learning to the development of awareness or critical consciousness which is the tool to, firstly, political liberation from oppression. Learning, according to P. Freire (1984), is based on aspiration for liberation at individual and social levels, i.e. by satisfying the needs for inward liberty and outward independence. P. Freire (2000) maintains that critical consciousness is developed through analyzing, raising questions and accepting responsibility for actions in social, political, cultural and economic contexts. All of that is achieved through social dialogue and expressing problems, disclosing them. During the learning process it is important to deepen the person’s understanding about the modes through which certain social structures form and influence people’s thinking about themselves and the world. Thus, according to P. Freire (2000), learning has to foster social changes, i.e., to seek the transformation of society.

Although P. Freire (1984, 2000) provided the first ideas of transformative learning, however, American sociologist and andragogue **Jack Mezirow** (1991, 1995, 1997 *et al.*) who has thoroughly analyzed and presented theoretical approach systematically is regarded as the main founder of this theory. J. Mezirow (1997) understands learning as a rational process, links transformations of personality to cognitive change, that is to say, to the transformation in meaning schemes. The scientist maintains that the essential purpose of adult learning is to develop the realization of personal experience, i.e. to be able to understand the meaning of life experience and critically interpret it accordingly on the basis of personal understanding, and not to act according to the purposes, convictions, assessments and feelings of other persons (Mezirow, 1995). Therefore, transformative learning, according to J. Mezirow (1997) is oriented towards the development of autonomous/independent and responsible thinking. Transformative learning, according to J. Mezirow (1997), is the process when the man’s *frame of reference* effectively changes: associations, concepts, values, convictions, presumptions, feelings, conditional reactions through which the world is defined. Standard characteristics, according to author, consists of

Table 1
Main Ideas of Theoretical Approaches of Transformative Learning

| <i>Author</i> | <i>Essential ideas, concepts, accents</i> | <i>Orientation of changes</i> | <i>Context</i> |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Paolo Freire (1984, 2000) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation through awareness development • Action and critical reflection • Emancipation, liberty | Social changes | Politic, social context |
| Larry Daloz (1986) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation as growth and development • The change of meanings of life, the creation of new senses • Psychosocial context | Individual changes | Psychosocial context |
| Jack Mezirow (1991, 1995, 1997) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation as critical reflection • Realization of the significance of experience • Critical, autonomous thinking • To live not according to the understanding of others, but according to your own • Critical reflection regarding basic convictions | Personal and/or social changes | Psychocultural context |
| John M. Dirkx (1997, 1998, 2006) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activeness and creativity • Conscious search for education • Search for deeper semantic meanings in the learning process • Raising questions of meaning • Transformative learning connected to existence | Individual changes | Holistic context (individual, sociocultural, spiritual) |
| Edward W. Taylor (1997, 2008) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 transformative learning dimensions (holistic approach): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. racional, 2. emotional 3. spiritual. • Significance of individual experience | Individual and/or social changes | Holistic context |
| Edmund O'Sullivan (2001) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmic-world-ecological perspectives. • Rising over the context of daily life problems, orientation towards fundamental education-development, the change of education system • to develop natural and integral worldview <p>Inter-union of the universe, planet, natural environment, human community and individual persons is important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is important how action takes place in the physical world. | Holistic changes | Planetary-fundamental-naturalistic-ecological context |
| Daniel S. Janick (2005) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain structure changes during the learning process when using the techniques of medical imaging and other techniques of sensor presentation. • Learning process based on desire and the effort of will, inquisitiveness, curiosity • Mentor's supervision is important. • Initial discomfort is necessary. | Personal changes | Individual physiological context |

Sources: Freire (1984, 2000); Daloz (1986); Mezirow (1991, 1995, 1997); Dirkx (1997, 1998, 2006); Taylor (1997, 2008); O'Sullivan (2001); Janick (2005).

three components: *cognitive*, *conative* and *emotional*. The researcher also distinguishes two dimensions of standard characteristics: *habits of mind* and a *point of view*. According to J. Mezirow (2006), transformative learning can be oriented towards objective (execution of the task) and/or subjective (inner reflection or self-reflection) changes.

According to educologist **John M. Dirkx** (1997, 1998, 2006), the purpose of adult learning is to assist in adapting to sociocultural context, therefore, transformative learning has to foster man's self-realization in personal and social life. J. M. Dirkx (1998) maintains that personal experience and sociocultural environment limit and form ways through which we realize what we are as people, society and what our interests are. Transformative learning helps recognize these powers through reflection, dialogue, critique, insights, imagination and action (Dirkx, 1998). The scientist maintains that the adult are active, creative participants of the learning process, therefore, they consciously look for opportunities to develop new skills, taking into consideration an individual context.

The author notes that transformative learning does not have neither clear beginning nor end – it is the process that is more connected with being, and not the achievement of concrete results. The scientist is perhaps one of the first who spoke most about the fact that transformative learning is virtually *soul work* (Dirkx, 1997), i.e. the need to know human nature, expand ways to understand himself, his own identity, feelings, develop a more integrated, holistic perception of subjectivity manifesting in intellectual, emotional, moral dimensions and the dimension of spiritual existence (Dirkx et al., 2006). Therefore, transformative education in formal and informal adult learning inevitably opens soul to global education at the present moment: daily discoveries deepen the meaningfulness of experiences, improve relationships with surrounding people, enhance the understanding of the world, others and himself (Dirkx et al., 2006).

According to J. M. Dirkx (1998), questions related to meaning, values, quality or purposes naturally foster to consider *sense-making process*: what we are and what our relationship with this world is, how words and what we hear, see, read and experience form our personality and become a meaningful part of our world (Dirkx, 1998; Dirkx et al., 2006).

Larry Daloz (1986), another scientist, realizes transformative learning as a growth-development

of the personality which is achieved through the construction of new meanings and the creation of other inner meanings about the changing world. The author maintains that transformative learning reflects a particular vision for adult education and a conceptual framework for understanding how adults learn. In this way, according to L. Daloz (1986), our new "I" of the personality is formed. In this learning process, according to the scientist, holistic and intuitive processes are more important than rational and reflective actions. In the opinion of the author, transformative learning is more oriented towards personal than social change, therefore, psychosocial context is important.

From the point of view of **Edward W. Taylor** (1997, 2008) who has been researching transformative learning, it is important for the adult to look for the meaning in his daily activity, develop critical thinking in order to understand life better. Complimenting J. Mezirow ideas, E. W. Taylor (2008) distinguished three dimensions of transformative learning: rational, emotional and spiritual. Transformative learning, according to the researcher, can be connected with both the person and social change. The author maintains that critical reflection is inseparable from the process of development through individual experience. According to W. Taylor (2008), in the process of transformative learning, the readiness of man to change is important and also his life experience, and skills of critical reflection. Thus, the scientist emphasizes holistic point of view towards the process of transformative learning.

Edmund O'Sullivan (2001) presents transformative learning rather holistically - from *planetary* perspective. That means that the transformative learning of such manner absolutely rises over the context of daily life problems and orients itself towards fundamental education-development, the change of learning system through reorganizing the system at political, social and educational levels. It seems as if the scientist suggests changing non-working, dysfunctional history the sources of which lie in the prosperity of cultural values of industrial-technological Western world, and creating instead of it a new history which would develop a natural and integral worldview (O'Sullivan, 2001). The author especially emphasizes interconnectedness and union of the universe, the planet, natural environment, human community and the world of individual persons, therefore, transformation depends not only on what our attitude towards environment and people

is, but also how we, being people, act in this physical world.

Daniel S. Janick *et al.* (2005) have explored the neurobiological aspect of the application of transformative learning. The research results that raised many scientific discussions showed that the brain structure of persons, that have experienced traumas, changes during the learning process when using *medical imaging* and other techniques of sensor presentation. According to D. S. Janick *et al.* (2005), learning process is based on desire and the effort of will, inquisitiveness-curiosity, new discoveries and is fostered through mentor's supervision. Scientists also emphasize that, before experiencing discoveries, initial discomfort is necessary for the process of transformative learning; this learning is rooted in the the experience, needs and interests of the learners; it has to be strengthened through emotional, sensorial and kinesthetic experiences; the andragogue should get the learners acquainted with basic theoretical foundations of neurobiological systems (Janick *et al.*, 2005).

In Lithuania the phenomenon of transformative learning is analyzed by A. Poškienė (2004), T. Bulajeva (2007), I. Zubrickienė ir J. Adomaitienė (2011), J. Sučylaitė (2011) *et al.*

T. Bulajeva (2007) explored the transformation of perspective which is linked by her to developing awareness of the adult or, in other words, the development of awareness, mostly emphasizing theoretical reflectiveness assisting us in realizing and understanding those reasons due to which our habits to make hasty or rash decisions, or use conceptually improper concepts are formed. It is connected with cultural and psychological prerequisites which we accept as being self-evident and do not critically question them. According to T. Bulajeva (2007), theoretical reflectiveness depends on personal experience and psychological maturity of the man, therefore, a social action is not only the purpose of adult education and self-directed learning, but also the tool to learn to think critically and critically question prerequisites on which convictions of the learner are based, when their origin and consequences are found out and opportunities are created for meaningful transformations to take place. The scientist also notes that when making decisions the self-learning man would be free from the epistemic, sociocultural and mental distortions of his meaningful perspectives (Bulajeva, 2007, p. 171).

A. Poškienė (2004) maintains that transformative learning in the organization is like

higher part of the development of all the organization system. The research has established that such learning can take place in different ways: e.g., through organized training courses for employees, stimulation to learn foreign languages, chosen distance learning programs etc. The author distinguishes factors creating prerequisites for successful transition to the level of transformative learning: effectiveness and efficiency, organizational culture, planning and control, the purposefulness of a mission and vision, the style of leadership, dissemination of experience and knowledge, the qualification of staff, new technologies, adaptation to change. A. Poškienė (2004) emphasizes that transformative learning often discusses the importance of environmental education, i.e. the assessment of the relationship between the man and environment in the broad sense and the development of healthy attitude towards ecological problems.

Other scientists explored how transformative learning helps the adult become more critically conscious in the andragogic (an adult-learner, andragogue, the group of learners) interaction, i.e. relationship (Zubrickienė, Adomaitienė, 2011), and can be adapted in the education of communities, i.e. how through projects of poetic therapy not only learning objectives, but also those of harmonisation therapy of the mental state of a personality can be implemented (Sučylaitė, 2011).

I. Zubrickienė and J. Adomaitienė (2012) who have analyzed the phenomenon of optimal andragogic interaction note that transformative learning is the interaction empowering interpersonal dependence of autonomous participants of an interaction. The authors maintain that a personality that is sought to improve through outward influence firstly assimilates this influence and begins to change only when inner powers form. It has been established that man's readiness to change and also his life experience, and skills of critical reflection are important in the process of transformative learning, therefore, before experiencing discoveries, initial discomfort is necessary and essential attention for critical reflection, holistic methods and relationships.

The analysis of scientific sources shows that transformative learning is the tool helping realize deep changes at individual level, that, in turn, gradually fosters social alteration, i.e. social changes leading towards the evolution of society. To conclude, it can be said that transformative learning is adult learning (andragogy) theory

oriented towards the development of autonomous/independent and responsible thinking, assisting in adapting to sociocultural context, stimulating to look for meaning in daily activity, develop critical thinking and based on a desire and the effort of will, and curiosity, and news discoveries and fostered through the supervision of the mentor. A characteristic feature of all the theories of transformative learning is that essential attention is devoted to critical reflection, holistic methods and relationships.

2. The definition self-directed learning as transformative learning.

The formation of mature personality is closely linked to self-directed learning as a cognitive process purposefully controlled by the individual himself and directed towards comprehensive improvement of the personality. It is noteworthy that self-directed learning encompasses conscious process connected with the knowledge of himself, the realization of meanings of life, the change of his behaviour, formation of values and learning to continually improve himself while creating harmonious relationships with the environment (Kolbergytė, Indrašienė, 2013).

The formation of consciousness is the main educational task in the process of self-directed learning (Bitinas, 2004), and critical awareness and especially theoretical reflectiveness are regarded as the tools and goals of self-directed learning (Bulajeva, 2007).

Thus, both self-directed learning and transformative learning as an educological object are firstly oriented towards change, transmutation or *personality* improvement, growth, development what is the main goal of learning (Freire, 1984, 2000; Daloz, 1986; Mezirow, 1997; Dirkx, 1997, 1998; Przybysz-Zaremba, 2006, Baublienė, 2003 *et al.*). Although modern education system is oriented towards the implementation of final results, however, self-directed learning in the same way as transformative learning is a long-term, a lifelong learning (Spurga, 1999), a lifelong development process of the man (Vaivada, 2012) having neither a clear beginning nor end, therefore, the thing that is emphasized mostly is the process itself which is more connected with being, and not with becoming someone (achievement of concrete results [Dirkx 1998]).

Scientists (Baublienė, 2003; Bitinas, 2004; Bulajeva, 2007, Ruškus, Sujeta, 2011, Sučylaitė, 2011 *et al.*) link self-directed learning to awareness-raising, the

development of critical consciousness which, according to scientists (Freire, 1984, 2000; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2008), are also the foundation for transformative learning. The freedom of man is emphasized here, i.e. liberation at individual and social levels (Freire, 1984, 2000; Dirkx, 1997, 1998).

In the process self-directed learning, inward liberty is achieved by developing emotional intelligence, solving everyday problems and harmonizing relationships with himself and surrounding people in order to achieve professional self-realization, setting life goals related to the improvement of other areas of life (e.g., health, personal life, spiritual improvement and the like (Spurga, 1999; Baublienė, 2003). In other words, adult learning has to assist in adapting to sociocultural context (Dirkx, 1997, 1998), therefore, according to transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1995), it is important to change thinking processes by reflecting on personal experience and being able to critically evaluate it and interpret on the basis on your own understanding, and not to act according to the purposes, convictions, assessments and feelings of other persons. According to T. Bulajeva (2007), a characteristic feature of the mature personality is to be fully aware of and understand those reasons due to which our habits to make hasty or rash decisions, or use conceptually improper concepts are formed. On the basis of all that, according to J. Mezirow (1997), the whole worldview system and models of future behaviour of the adult person change: certain associations, concepts, values, convictions, presumptions, feelings, conditional reactions. The representatives of both critical pedagogy and transformative learning (e.g., Mezirow, 1997; Foucault, 1998; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2001; Margolis, 2001; Adorno, 2006; Bauman, 2011; Mažeikis, 2010; Duoblienė, 2011) identify the outward liberty of self-learning man with the need to be autonomous, not to be oppressed by outward systems through propaganda medias, political decisions and the like, be responsible while improving the society, but having a right to do that. Such liberation is achieved while analyzing social phenomena (during the learning process, according to P. Freire (1984), it is important to deepen the person's understanding about the modes through which certain social structures form and influence people's thinking about themselves and the world), raising questions, disclosing problems, accepting responsibility for actions in the social, political, cultural and economical contexts through social dialogue (Freire, 2000). To conclude, the

phenomenon of awareness is a very broad concept encompassing the knowledge of reality, characterizing the man's abilities to observe, know, understand himself and environment, responsibly analyze and perceive the meanings and soundness of his convictions, values and behaviour, think critically, i. e. distance himself from possessed knowledge and perception, and be able to distinguish facts and opinions, analyze and interpret problems and ambiguities of reality, critically question the prerequisites of social phenomena, and through the possessed experience to foster not only meaningful transformations of perception, but also to take an active part in order to achieve alterations that change reality and liberate (Kolbergytė, Indrašienė, 2012).

Conditions for critical awareness to form are created by initial intention of man, firm thought or, in other words, desire to educate himself and readiness to change (Mezirow, 1997; Janick et al., 2005; Taylor, 2008), and that is one of the conditions of effective self-directed learning (Kolbergytė, Indrašienė, 2013). As T. Stulpinas (2005) ir D. Dvarionas (2002) maintain, the motivation of the personality and inner attitude are one of the most important factors of successful self-directed learning. The intention to pursue self-directed learning is strengthened by dissatisfaction with the existing situation (Dattner, Hogan, 2011). Janick *et al.* (2005) also emphasize that initial discomfort is necessary for transformative learning process.

In order that the effective process of self-directed learning would take place, not only desire, but also will, determination or responsibility are needed (Lukošienė, 2007; Vaivada, 2012): the man is the one who forms his life, therefore, everything he had yesterday, has got today and will have tomorrow is the result of the present harmony of thoughts, feelings and actions. Therefore, it is important not only to change the attitude that it is impossible to change anything (especially what is connected to himself), but also to take concrete actions, make the effort of will to apply methods of self-directed learning (Spurga, 1999; Baublienė, 2003; Grabauskienė, 2003; Uzdila ir Palujansienė, 2005). Accordingly, if there is a desire for essential changes at social level, as it was mentioned by transformative learning, responsibility and social action are one of essential conditions for the transformation of society (Freire, 2000; Mezirow, 1997; Bulajeva, 2007).

The aspect of autonomy is important for transformative learning, because the learning

process is oriented towards the development of autonomous and responsible thinking, active and creative learning process (Mezirow, 1997; Dirkx, 1998). Self-directed learning is also based on autonomous education work (Jovaiša ir Vaitkevičius, 1989; Baublienė, 2003; Pukevičiūtė, 2007), man's determination to educate himself autonomously taking into consideration individual needs and aiming at individual, purposeful personal changes (Spurga, 1999). Self-directed learning, according to R. Baublienė (2003), is the harmony of self-education and informal learning, purposeful improvement during which the man himself determines the direction of improvement, sets goals, chooses acceptable ways of self-directed learning and education and, while actively pursuing the set goal, improves his own personality.

D. S. Janick *et al.* (2005) has distinguished inquisitiveness and curiosity as one of effective factors of the process of transformative learning. Self-directed learning as any other learning process is successful when it is interesting to the learners (Kolbergytė, Indrašienė, 2013).

A search for existential meaningfulness is characteristic to adult self-directed learning (Lukošienė, 2007; Kolbergytė ir Indrašienė, 2013) connected with the raising deep questions on the meaning of life, values, quality and goals (what I am, what my goal is, what the goal of society is, what our relationship with this world is etc.), ability to understand the meaning of daily life experience, reconsideration of the perception of meanings of life phenomena and construction of new meanings about which the representatives of transformative learning also speak (Daloz, 1986; Mezirow, 1997; Dirkx, 1997, 1998; Dirkx et al., 2006; Taylor, 2008; Nowakowski, 2005). To this end the following ways of self-directed learning and the transformation of personality's thinking are employed: reflection, dialogue, critique, insights, imagination and action (Dirkx, 1998).

Accordingly, both quality self-directed learning (Stulpinas, 2005; Kolbergytė, Indrašienė, 2003) and effective transformative learning and development process are influenced by individual life experience (Mezirow, 1997; Dirkx, 1997, 1998; Janick et al., 2005; Bulajeva, 2007; Taylor, 2008), experiences, maturity of the personality and surrounding environment forming different perceptions, inspiring essential changes of thinking, the transformation of worldview, further choices of the road of life.

Due to the fact that one of the goals of self-directed is to create a balanced harmonious life

(Spurga, 1999; Baublienė, 2003; Lukošienė, 2007; Vaivada, 2012; Nowakowski, 2007), therefore, the adult apply problem solving, development of emotional intelligence, opening the potential of creativity and other methods of self-directed learning, encompassing physical (e.g., balanced nutrition, physical breathing exercises), mental (e.g., goal setting, visualization, the change of character, development of competencies), spiritual (e.g., meditation) and social (communication with people) levels. However, when analyzing the ideas of transformative learning theory, the greatest educational attention is devoted to the fostering of personal transformations at mental and social levels: e.g., the development of awareness, the alteration of meaningful senses, emancipated action and the like (Freire, 1984; Mezirow, 1997; Dirkx, 1998; Bulajeva, 2007; Taylor, 2008 et al.), there are few exhaustive scientific works on the changes at physical (Janick, 2005; Dirkx et al., 2006) and spiritual or spiritualistic (e.g., Daloz, 1986; Dirkx, 1997) levels. Scientists of transformative learning, while emphasizing physiological aspect, maintain that the techniques of such manner directly change physiological structures of human body and brain: the research of neurobiological perspective (Janick, 2005), the influence of feelings (hearing, vision, imagination, emotions and the like) on human development (Dirkx, 1998; Dirkx et al., 2006). Scientists of self-directed learning T. C. Campbell et al. (2013), B. H. Lipton (2011), B. Thomson (2009), J. T. Shah (2008) et al. also wrote about and explored the positive influence of practices of self-directed learning (nutrition, breathing, faith, imagination, yoga, meditation etc.) on human physiology. When it comes to the transforming development of spiritual level, scientist J. M. Dirkx wrote on it maintaining that transformative learning is essentially “work with soul” or “inner work”, the need to know the human nature, develop the ways to perceive himself, his own identity, feelings, develop a more integrated, holistic perception of subjectivity manifesting itself on intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual dimensions of existence (Dirkx, 1997; Dirkx et al., 2006). That essentially coincides with the nature and content of self-directed learning. L. Daloz (1986) and W. Taylor (2008) also partially oriented themselves towards spiritual level emphasizing that holistic and intuitive processes are significant in the process of education.

It would be appropriate to emphasize the relationship with nature and the aspect of

environmental awareness education in the process of self-directed learning together with responsibility: A. Maceina (2002) emphasizes the responsibility of man for environment; according to R. Subotkevičienė and S. Stanaitis (2011), it is a spiritual value assisting the man in understanding that his activity has the influence on the whole environment: it is necessary to realize that further activity of the whole humanity depends on its clever solutions and restrictions of its activity. Environmental awareness is connected not only with conservation of natural resources and the formation of the relationship with the surrounding world (himself, people, nature), but it also fosters concern over healthy lifestyle. Identically, according to scientists of transformative learning (Sullivan, 2001; Poškienė, 2004), there is a significant development of holistic attitude towards the world, evaluation of the relationship between the man and environment in the broad sense and the fostering of healthy attitude towards environmental problems.

To conclude, it should be emphasized that self-directed learning firstly creates individual changes or, in other words, transformations that later on can correspondingly influence structural alterations of systems: the change and improvement of the family, group, community, organization and society. That means that self-directed learning as transformative learning fosters both individual and social changes.

CONCLUSIONS

Transformative learning the purpose of which is to foster the self-realization of man in personal and social life is linked to the development of awareness or critical consciousness, cognitive change oriented towards the development of autonomous and responsible thinking which is achieved through the construction of new meanings and the creation of other inner meanings about the changing world.

Self-directed learning is a conscious process, the method of essential improvement of the personality the purpose of which is the pursuit of the harmony of all the inner powers of the man through conscious, targeted and organized activity of the individual in order to achieve goals set by himself and chosen acceptable ways of self-directed learning. The essence of self-directed learning in the context of transformative learning is revealed through the development and improvement of the awareness of the personality, the pursuit of inward and outward liberty at individual and social levels,

and also through essential/deep changes of the personality in physical and spiritual dimensions.

Self-directed learning as the process of transformative learning is fostered through dissatisfaction with the present condition and pursuing harmonious life. That is an independent and creative learning process that has necessity for inner intention, motivation and determination of the person to educate himself and change which is based on curiosity, personal responsibility and the effort of will to act, that is also dependent on individual life experience and environment.

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