

From Life-o-Grams to Transformagrams: Storying Transformational Processes and Pedagogies

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Abstract

Seeding an ecology of life involves cultivating a culture of care and a culture of encounter. This vision englobes integral ecology, social justice, and holistic approaches to healing as well as conflict resolution. Wholeness can be engendered through narrative methods. We need a new story and new flyways to future form. In a space of creative flexibility, we can co-design transformagrams in the context of higher education. An ecology of life and learning is connected to healing practices and traditions that contribute to human flourishing. Complementary and alternative medicine offer medical practices that are holistic and require innovative pedagogies that engage the whole person within the learning process. This philosophical posture that values wholeness is interconnected with integral ecology and social justice, as well as mediation. Living learning lives can be approached as a societal endeavor that engages individuals, learning communities, and academia in transformational narrative processes, using auto/duoethnography. Mediating pedagogies are needed to teach future practitioners about complementary and alternative medicine, naturopathy, and mediation as patients increasingly seek out integrative medicine and holistic ways of relating in/on Earthship.

Keywords

Transformative Learning Pedagogies, Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Auto/Duoethnography, Transformagram Portfolios

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Introduction

Integrative medicine allows patients to benefit from practices that embrace medical pluralism. Fostering patient-centered approaches requires pedagogies that are designed to prepare future healthcare workers by providing curricula that include traditional world medicines, including their cultural foundations and efficacy. It also requires practitioners to understand patients' care-seeking strategies in the context of medical pluralism. In order to teach students about integrative medicine as part of the medical anthropology program at Creighton University, a transformagram pedagogy was developed for the "An Anthropological and Transformative Approach to Alternative and Complementary Medicine" course held there. This same pedagogy was then incorporated within the Naturopathic Practitioners training at the Valais College of Alternative Medicine in Switzerland. Both courses require students to co-write a transformagram portfolio with duoethnographic partners.

Transformagram portfolios replace a traditional final paper. They consist of students answering eight questions inspired from Dr. Arthur Kleinman's work on illness narratives (Kleinman, 1988). The questions create reflexivity about the illness or conflict narrative the student has chosen to develop for their portfolio. This exercise is combined with a video that describes their illness or conflict narrative. After writing an illness/conflict narrative that emerges from the questionnaire, students are then asked to share their illness/conflict narrative with a partner in the class. This duoethnographic method (Sawyer & Norris, 2013) is used to increase the reflexivity about the illness and conflict narratives through sharing and mutual engagement. Duoethnographic partners read each other's narratives and provide written feedback. Not only do students engage in writing, but they make a cartography of resources that can be incorporated into their healing strategy. Students are also asked to include metaphors and symbols that help illustrate their illness/conflict narratives with aesthetic representations. They are also required to integrate references from class readings to further develop important course themes within their transformagram portfolio. In this way, an interdisciplinary, social science approach dovetails with an experiential learning pedagogy. By including aesthetic representations of their conflict/illness, the Jungian transcendent function is elicited.

The transformagram portfolio is designed to increase both flexibility and reflexivity, by asking students to imagine and identify complementary and alternative therapies to incorporate into their care strategy. An integrative medicine approach allows them to co-construct a holistic healing strategy through action



Fig. 1. Student's Transformagram Portfolio artwork. Transition, Timothée Passeraub, 2020.

learning. This problem-solving approach mediates the different practices within biomedicine and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Giving value to medical pluralism generates constructive social change by sensitizing future practitioners through experiential learning that invites them to explore holistic resolution processes.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of this approach is part of the ongoing pedagogical development process. This narrative recollection proposes a theoretical reflection based on narrative methods incorporated within innovative course design. The Creighton University course is in English, whereas the naturopathic curriculum is offered in French. This requires different course references that build upon cultural and historical knowledge and practices. However, the courses dovetail, using the transformational pedagogy as a central component. The transformagram portfolios generated a reflexive learning space by inviting students to participate in experiential learning process using auto/duoethnography. The transformagram portfolios successfully fostered students' heightened narrative coherence. This coherency stemmed from engaging in auto/duoethnographic methods that effectively engendered holistic relational

approaches and an increased sense of well-being in relation to their conflict/illness narrative.

Designing Transformational Learning Pedagogies

Narrative processes gave rise to course curriculums, incorporating transformational learning pedagogies. Transformagram pedagogy was inspired by the work “The Flexibility Hypothesis of Healing” (Hinton & Kirmayer, 2017), which developed the concept of *transformagrams*. Transformagrams are understood as pathways to transformative practices that include psychoanalysis, rituals, and meditation. This concept is explained using psychiatric terminology:

The schema that represents the transformation could be termed a “transformagram.” The transformational schemas often operate by first introducing an analogical state or image, and then bringing about a transformation in the analogue, which influences the afflicted person’s original mirrored state, what might be called the therapeutic technique of “mirror-and-shift.” The notion of transformagram is broader than that of metaphor because it may include other forms of trope, imagery, and embodied or enacted transformation. (Hinton & Kirmayer, 2017, p. 12)

This conceptual framework introduces practices that allow people to enter into transformational processes that promote resilience and well-being. In the context of my courses, transformational processes are engendered through transformational learning pedagogies that I refer to as *transformagrams*: learning pathways that act on brain plasticity and foster adaptability. The transformagram portfolio is a way to engage students in transformative learning processes. Narrative methods like autoethnography can be used to generate self-transformation as *Homing in: An Adopted Child’s Story of Connecting, Reunion and Belonging* bespeaks and bears witness to (Rivia, 2020).

The courses at Creighton University are online courses that require two textbooks and have numerous articles and documentaries embedded within the course Canvas. *Fundamentals of Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Medicine* (Micozzi, 2019) provides students with a complete overview of integrative medicine. It is complemented with an ethnographic account using the lens of medical anthropology in Romania, *The Anthropology of Alternative Medicine* (Ross, 2012). To enrich the online learning experience, learning methods that involve students in the learning process need to be designed and incorporated (Velez-Solic, 2015; Yarbrough, 2018). Holism is a guiding concept that is found in complementary and alternative medicine (Di Stefano, 2006). Pedagogical methods

that foster holism and interconnected approaches to wellness invite students to explore emerging paradigms that are inspired by traditional medicines that can be better understood through medical concepts like psychoneuroimmunology (Micozzi, 2019). Creighton University is a Jesuit university aligned with Ignatian principles and pedagogy that underscore the importance of transformational learning and require courses to meet Magis Core Curriculum objectives² that develop communication and life skills as well as ethics. Pope Francis' encyclicals reinforce these principles that call for transformational pedagogies espousing a vision of a culture of care (Francis, 2015) and a culture of encounter (Francis, 2020).

Giving value to narrative forms of conflict resolution, *An Introduction to Conflict Resolution* explains, explains

looking at conflict and its resolution as a history of changing discourses enables readers to understand the relationship between world events, meaning systems, and the analytic tools we have for both conflict analysis and resolution. (Cobb et al. 2019, p. 17).

By using this textbook in my conflict resolution courses, students engage with course literature that supports their auto/duoethnographic work, aligned with this narrative conflict resolution orientation.

The Creighton University courses prepare students for future careers as well as school with studies. The courses offer credits for undergraduates to be applied to their Bachelor's degrees. Some students live on campus while others are part of the program for professional students. Professional students are often older students that are in continuing education programs. The courses offered through the Department of Cultural and Social Studies do not qualify students for professional certification.

Naturopathic Curriculum Design

In contrast, the Naturopathic Certification in Valais was officially recognized in the new health law in 2021. The law recognizes naturopathic practitioners as health professionals alongside medical doctors, nurses, and osteopaths. Successfully completing the course work and federal exams allows students to practice naturopathy. The students are professionals that are continuing their education

² <https://www.creighton.edu/academics/magis-core-curriculum>. Magis Core Curriculum Accessed May 15, 2021.

to become naturopathic practitioners. This official recognition reinforces the healthcare network by providing patients with more therapeutic choices. Care-seeking pathways now include naturopathic therapies. Integrative medicine has been bolstered by giving value to naturopathy, while encouraging interprofessional platforms where practitioners are trained to work collaboratively.

Using the federal requirements as a reference for curriculum development, I was asked to create and teach modules within the Valais College of Alternative Medicine beginning in 2019. Having already created similar courses for Creighton University, I had the necessary background to conceptualize the naturopathic courses. I developed courses using references from medical anthropology, social psychology, mediation, and narrative therapy. Social constructionist approaches were presented in the context of integrative medicine. Creating dialogical space and giving value to generative practices dovetails with the holistic approach in naturopathic medicine:

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct system of health-oriented medicine that stresses promotion of health, prevention of disease, patient education, and self-responsibility. However, naturopathic medicine symbolizes more than simply a health care system; it is a way of life and being in the world. (Micozzi, 2019, p. 302)

Case analysis and management uses a detailed questionnaire that orients the naturopathic practitioner, treating the whole person. Naturopathy's professional posture of doctor as teacher focuses on prevention, wellness, and health promotion. Naturopaths use methods that recognize the healing power of nature, seeking first to do no harm. They ask questions that look for the causes of imbalance, seeking to restore the patient's balance. Nature cure is used to promote healing by immersing patients in rejuvenating natural environments. As Micozzi stated, "the profession moves forward as an integrative, vitalist, broad-scope discipline built on the foundations of nature cure, in harmony with natural medicines around the world" (2015, p. 319).

Designing pedagogies that incorporated experiential learning, I created modules that consisted of PowerPoint presentations with course literature for each corresponding theme, as well as exercises that were later incorporated within the Transformagram Portfolio. Each module presented themes that required students to read and familiarize themselves with chosen articles, participate in class activities, and then integrate the themes and activities within the transformagram portfolio. For instance, students used the lens of medical anthropology to explore

the social and cultural determinants of health. They explored social constructionist theories that provide a relational framework that gives value to patient-centered care, using narrative inquiry to co-construct healing strategies. And they engaged in duoethnography to increase their reflexivity. They also learned about narrative conflict resolution, gaining the knowledgeability to be able to effectively collaborate in interdisciplinary approaches within healthcare networks.

The transformagram portfolios proved to be a powerful pedagogical tool, bearing witness to their transformational process. Reviewing and evaluating the students' portfolios allowed me to formally authenticate each student's transformative process. The "e-valuation" considered the quality of their engaged personal evolution, giving value to their individual processes. There was a formative interview with feedback for each student that was part of the learning process, modelling narrative therapy.

After completing their transformagram portfolios in the first module, students progressed to the second module and participated in another course that required them to keep a journal. To complement their transformational process, Ira Progoff's methods were used to guide the journaling process. This method offered yet another experiential learning opportunity, designed to develop the capacity to become a reflexive practitioner. Progoff describes progressive deepening as a psychological procedure, drawing personal lives into focus. But the process has demonstrated a potential that is seen to have more than psychological significance. "When our attention is focused inwardly at the depth of our being in the context of the wholeness of our life, resources for a profound knowledge of life become accessible to us" (Progoff, 1992 p. 9). Progoff's method makes it possible to work within dimensions of spiritual meaning in relation to life history. For many, it is a spiritual discipline that fulfills the creative role of awakening, giving new life to our diverse heritages that can be traced in our individual experiences.

By incorporating transformagram pedagogy and Ira Progoff's methods, teaching approaches dovetail with therapy. In this coming together, transformational learning provides steppingstones to self-transformation. This linkedness can be understood within the context of mediatorship, an understanding revealed through my autoethnographic process. Mediatorship is a vessel of transformative practices that connect, transform, and guide lifelong learners. Self-knowledge is gained through experiential processes that can in turn be shared and modelled with future patients. Lifelong learning, healing, and wholeness are intertwined within the naturopathic pedagogy. The chosen methods work to activate self-healing, just as natural remedies enhance the body's own healing capacity and immune system.

Even more, Progoff's method invites students to connect with spiritual dimensions. As many people no longer practice a traditional religion, entering into one's inner sanctuary to explore spirituality becomes a lifegiving, *emergent* practice. As naturopathy also recognizes the importance of spirituality, a pillar in Traditional European Medicine, journaling becomes a way to interconnect and make sense of the dimensions of Self while self-balancing. As Progoff explains,

Beyond the factor of self-balancing, the principle of life integration is then able to operate on the scale of the full movement of our life history and reconstellate our life for us in a perspective that neither our conscious mind nor our imagination could conceive or create. (Progoff, 1992, p. 368)

In this way, mind-body approaches to wholeness effectively seed an ecology of life where people can creatively shape their well-being and lifework.

The naturopathic course work builds upon literature that supports narrative methods. Narrative therapy (White & Epston, 2003), Appreciative Inquiry capitalize this method (Whitney et al., 2019), and relational approaches to mediation (Charbonneau & Rossi, 2020), as well as Fiutak et al.'s arena of mediation (Fiutak et al., 2019) are fundamental references orienting the Naturopathic training and professional positionality that focuses on process. Accompanying patients, walking with them and co-constructing healing strategies, is equally important (Watkins, 2015).

Performative examinations include role-playing, where students develop a holistic questionnaire in reference to a designated vignette. In an initial presentation, students play the role of a naturopath questioning a patient to demonstrate their ability to conduct a holistic interview. Classmates observe and ask questions following presentations. In a second performance, groups are given a vignette and are asked to work together to develop an interdisciplinary approach to complex cases that require mediation and interprofessional collaboration. The performative examinations offer a teaching space for the entire class to benefit from as they witness the holistic interviews.

At the end of the module, students are invited to the mountains to celebrate their transformative process in a natural environment that resonates with the philosophy of nature cure. In a final presentation, they present their process that arose from their journaling and also bear witness to their classmates' becomingness. This appreciative approach to each student's personal evolution contributes to their transformational process, placing importance on accompaniment. Hiking, walking in cold mountain streams (a form of hydrotherapy), and picnicking make up the day's activities.

Cultivating a Holistic Paradigm

Holistic healing approaches recognize how well-being is interconnected to a person's natural environment. Insights related to environmental issues are integrated into this systemic approach to well-being. Traditional European Medicine can be traced back to the writings of Saint Hildegard von Bingen, a Benedictine nun who lived in the 1200s in the Rhine River Valley region. The pillars of her premodern medicine provide important foundations for naturopathic medicine. Her vision was holistic, as encapsulated by the title of Sweet's (2006) anthropological analysis of her life work, *Rooted in the Earth, Rooted in the Sky*. She used the term *viriditas* to describe the greening power of God, an understanding of generative processes that she observed in nature. Her book *Causes and Cures* presented the root causes of diseases as well as beneficial remedies using a premodern lens of understanding. Her visions, writings, and teachings recognized the importance of the natural environment and balance.

For Hildegard, the life of the body was related to *viriditas* and was described in her writings as a vital generative force. The word had its origins in growing vegetation or verdure. *Viriditas* meant the acting of God in nature (Sweet, 2010, p. 135). She also referred to *viriditas* as "a quality or substance in plants that amplified their medicinal and pharmacological effects" (Sweet, 2010, p. 136). This life-force or power is a fundamental concept in Traditional European Medicine.

The transformagram portfolio is a generative pedagogy that is aligned with the teachings and practices of Saint Hildegard von Bingen, as it enkindles a holistic and coherent vision of well-being, using both autoethnographic and duoethnographic methods to amplify the life-force. Traditional medicines provide a cosmological framework incorporating historical, cultural, and religious references, in an integral approach.

Conflict resolution practices are also an integral component of a culture of care and a culture of encounter, interconnecting transformational processes that incorporate an understanding of mediation as linkedness (Riva, 2019a). Moreover, the resolution process traverses narrative accounts of illness and conflict, guiding narrative coherence.

In an archetypal search for my origins, the importance of intergenerational relationships and transgenerational patterns comes to the forefront in a vision of interconnectedness and belonging on Earth. New words like *Earthship* and *mediatorship* are vessels or word containers that can transport and transform. Living in/on *Earthship* suggests not only stewardship and sustainability, but a new relational approach to belonging on Earth.

Engaging in narratives of belonging in/on Earthship transforms perceptions, allowing us to behold our life-o-grams that become transformagrams. Narrative and relational approaches allow us to explore more life-giving ways of living in/on Earthship. “As we behold, we actively transform the image” (Riva, 2020a, p. 435).

Mediatorship, in this context, is a vessel of exploration designed to transport students as they engage in reflexive and transformative practices that are mediated through experiential learning pedagogies. Mediatorship is multidimensional, linking concepts and practices through story strands that enkindle interconnectivity by engaging in narrative practice. Mediatorship seems to activate the homing in mechanism that can be understood as an inner compass capable of taking us to more desirable life-worlds through the resolution process.

Concepts including the mind-body connection, the social and cultural determinants of health, as well as the new epigenetic paradigm are integrated into the literature that allows students to develop themes in relation to their conflict/illness narratives. Sustainability and stewardship are fostered by building upon meaningful dialogues about individual well-being and how this is related to planetary wellness. Hopeful, healthy futures are enkindled by using future-forming approaches that allow for the mediation of biomedicine and more traditional medical paradigms. Integrative medicine arises from this mediation process, which doesn't seek to oppose world views but invites each student to contemplate and map their healing and resolution strategies.

Homing In on Narrative Methods

Courses teaching integrative medicine, naturopathy, and conflict resolution were conceptualized, emerging from the knowledgeability gained through the autoethnographic process. Concepts emerged providing an interconnected vision and framework that links illness and conflict narratives to holistic approaches to healing, englobing conflict resolution. Integrative medicine is a holistic approach that brings together health, well-being, and lifestyle approaches to self-care, and concepts including the importance of balance and harmonious relationships.

Important relational insights arose from narrative analysis, first in my research on mediation case studies (Riva-Mossman, 2009), and later in my autoethnographic work and teaching (Riva, 2019b) (Riva, 2020a). Narrative coherency was also enhanced by creating a website³ with blog entries for each chapter, as well as participating in the Curare Corona Diaries Project, following

³ <http://www.susanmossmanrivawrites.com>

my book's publication.⁴ Narrative integration is about making sense of our lives by developing autoethnographic consciousness. "This mapping process may be at the heart of autobiographical narrative and the way the mind attempts to achieve a sense of coherence among its various states: trying to make sense of the self in the past, the present, and the anticipated future" (Siegel, 2020, p. 455). In this way, narrative and neural integration are fostered leading to a heightened sense of belonging.

The homing in mechanism, which adopted children who reunite with their birth parents tap into, can be enkindled in all pathfinders. Autoethnographers connect to forms of living wisdom that provide insights, guiding writers through landscapes of meaning. Narratives are stitched into cultural ways of seeing, knowing, and being (O'Grady et al., 2018). Through my own autoethnographic process, I developed concepts that allowed me to formulate a template for a teaching story, placing *Gnothi Seuthon*, or the Greek tradition of self-knowledge, at the center of my endeavor.

Kinning (Howell, 2007), or making family, is a skill that links us together, connecting us to our kin as well as our bioregions. The Earth is holding us together in a planetary embrace. My storyline transported me from storying kinship to belonging on Earthship. Stories that can move humanity towards a sustainable cultural shift can be developed by adopting new ways of teaching. Lifelong learning can incorporate experiential pedagogies to enhance social transformation processes, recognizing the potential of both narrative inquiry and pilgrimage that connect the inner and outer journey.

Connecting to our inner compass allows us to set a course, using authorship and scholarship. As aforementioned, the Greek tradition, *Gnothi Seauton* ("know thyself") is based on the cultivation of self-knowledge. Storying becomes a guiding as well as emancipatory process as reflexive space is engendered. Our conflict and illness narratives, when analyzed, give us insight into our becomingness when our life stories are understood as unfinished works of art (Biehl & Locke, 2017). Writing to change the world is yet another dimension of activism, when the pen is used to narrate more viable life-worlds (Pipher, 2006).

"Narrative inquirers attend both to personal conditions and, simultaneously, to social conditions" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 40). Autoethnography is an experiential process, enkindling insights that can blossom into theoretical concepts and frameworks. Indeed,

⁴ <https://boasblogs.org/curarecoronadiaries/living-in-a-chalet-in-the-alps-makes-hunke-ring-down-liveable/>. Curare Corona Diary. Accessed May 15, 2020.

The goal of autoethnographic projects is to embrace the vulnerability of asking and answering questions about experience so that we as researchers, as well as our participants and readers, might understand these experiences and emotions they generate. (Adams et al., 2015 p. 39)

Exploring Generativity

In the case of Carl G. Jung, writing and illustrating *The Red Book* (Jung, 2009) gave rise to his psychoanalytical teachings. While writing my story mandala, concepts emerged through revelations, giving form to a teaching story. Not only did a referential backdrop emerge from the writing process, but so did an assuredness that autoethnography is a powerful teaching tool. Re-membering, or connecting memories with stories, captured events that held kernels of wisdom. Authorship allowed the unfolding storyline to reveal the quintessence of each story kernel.

Relationships are understood to be created, questioned, and transformed in the telling and performance of stories, making autoethnography a powerful tool. “Believing in the power of storytelling as a way to describe and critique culture is a central part of the argument of ‘Lost and Found’” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 109). Having lost my birth family at birth, and found them as an adult, my story resonates with this interpretation of autoethnography. I engaged in autoethnography not only to transform my relationships, but to critique society. Perceptions were transformed through the ongoing meaning-making process that allowed for new pathways or *flyways* to come into sight (Cobb, 2013). The invention of words created new possibilities, adding to the generative process. In this way, language fostered more integrated ways of being in the world. (Siegel, 2020 p. 500).

Exploring narrative methods and sharing my autoethnographic *oeuvre* led me to find Ira Progoff’s methods. He was a student of Jung that developed the *intensive journal* process after spending time at The Bolligen Tower, Jung’s castle on Lake Zurich. Progoff’s approach to self-transformation is based on mini-processes or cycles of unfolding generated through journaling:

This is the elan vital of our inner self. It is being reawakened and reenergized and given a personal frame of reference that will enable it to do its work and find its unique meaning for each of us in the context of our life history as we live it in the midst of the world. (Progoff 1992, p. 32)

Progressive deepening, connecting one to the sources of life, was taught within Progoff’s intensive journal workshops decades before Jung’s Red Book was published. When Jung’s Red Book was finally allowed to be published by his family,

it revealed the process that took Jung to his own inner wells of wisdom. Progoff's pilgrimage to Switzerland allowed him to tap into Jung's life work, explicating the reflexive process with his own words and methods.

While developing the transformagram portfolio pedagogy, these connections became apparent. Understanding the relationships that existed between Jung's individuation process and Progoff's journaling method furthered my conviction that autoethnography can be used to generate individual and social transformation. Progoff's journaling method was integrated, providing a pedagogical cornerstone for preparing students to become naturopathic practitioners. The journaling method offers a dialogical space to explore dreams, dialogues, events, and important steppingstones. Making sense of these different aspects is part of a guiding process that activates the students' ability to home *in* to their inner compass. "Creative persons who reach out for the deeper mystery of reality in the midst of materialism are also expressing their seed nature" (Progoff, 1992, p. 59). Individual interviews bore witness to students' developmental process during the journaling period, reinforcing their meaning-making process and clarifying their insights.

In this creative dialogical space, writing like researching becomes a future-forming endeavor, "a more pronounced step toward developing future-altering research is represented by a disparate range of researchers trying to build or create 'new forms of life'" (Gergen, 2015, p. 10). A relational approach within a social constructionist referential framework provides a backdrop for understanding transformative social processes as well as the methods that can enact change (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). In this meaning-making space, life-o-grams or aesthetic life histories become transformagrams or transfigured life trajectories.

The hero's journey that Joseph Campbell (Campbell, 1986) illustrated in his writings is a metaphor for the transformational process. As we quest, researching and seeking new more viable ways of going on together, we look for pathways using a stepwise approach, walking together on the road towards "the good life." Conflict and illness narratives (Kleinman, 1988) (Riva, 2020a) can be understood as the "Holy G-rail Way," with "rail-way" incorporated within the word "G-rail," guiding social transformation as we walk through our narratives, exploring the meaning that each segment of the journey presents.

The "Holy Grail Way" or "G-rail-Way" is yet another concept that emerged from my autoethnographic process as a vehicle for transformation. I describe the Holy Grail as the sacred container of our conflict and illness narratives. When we enter into the writing process, an opening is created that allows us to *walk*

through our stories, towards liberation. The walkthrough leads us through the “door of mercy” transformed, an insight gleaned from my book and personal experience. In this way, autoethnographic practice gave rise to concepts and teaching methods, providing a teaching template.

Journeymanship becomes a pilgrimage from brokenness to linkedness when lifelong learning pedagogies incorporate transformational learning.

One premise is necessary: The hero is obliged to leave his/her familiar world and needs to cross a different world, and once transformed, the hero goes back enriched to give back to the world his/her new self. The hero’s outer journey reflects the inner and psychological journey. The transformation is about consciousness, which requires being, thinking and acting in a different way. Campbell (1988) defined the journey’s steps as a “wake up call.” (Inglese, 2018, p. 347)

Oftentimes, the pilgrim returns from the journey with a strong desire to share the boon.

Engaging in Learning Communities

Reading and writing our lives unites us in a *communiverse*¹ engendering the relational mind within experiential learning spaces that develop reflexivity as we awaken to the call. Designing pedagogy that fosters relational being contributes to individual and societal transformation (Gergen, 2009). Learning communities are places where teachers and learners encounter each other within innovative learning landscapes. “Communities of practice create value by stewarding highly prized knowledge resources,” opined Wenger et al. (2002, p. 166).

Lifelong learning is also a form of lifescaping (Rolla et al. 2017). Higher education allows learners to participate in the greening of their innate potential by tapping into *viriditas*. This greening power of learning is a generative force. New landscapes of meaning open lifelong learners to the possibility of socially constructing the real and the good. “Contemporary constructionism has multiple roots. They grow from a variety of different dialogues that span the humanities and the sciences” (Gergen & Gergen, 2003 p. 2). As we engage in this emancipatory process, manumitting, or writing to set ourselves free, we redesign our life trajectories. Social constructionist approaches give value not only to generative practices but to relational practices. “The important aspects of women’s

¹ Dr. Kenneth Gergen introduced this term during a Taos Institute Zoom conference in Spring 2020.

autobiographies depend heavily on their affiliative relationships with others” (Gergen & Gergen, 2003, p. 75). Exploring relational connections has been an enriching part of my own process. I have sought to transmit these insights through teaching and curriculum development, continually making affiliative relations between my personal experience and dialogues with students, scholar practitioners, and scholarly works. This transformative perspective has been applied in lifelong learning, giving value to life history (Formenti & West, 2018).

Shaping a New Story Through Activism

Activism is often necessary to generate social change. Narrative research offers insights that can be used to better understand how women sustain their lifetime activism, eliciting social change. “In each of the narratives we observed how the women became increasingly involved in specific movements to create social change in their communities” (Dutt & Grabe 2014, p. 118). Agency can be showcased through narrative inquiry that investigates activism, and how it is maintained throughout the life course.

Students need teachers to embody and bear witness to practices that embody activism. Action teaching methods both reflect and uphold new practices. Learning can be enhanced by using Vygotsky’s instructional scaffolding as well as the zone of proximal development as teaching methods (Vygotsky, 1981). Knowledgeability links knowledge with skills. Experience gleaned from scholar practitioners is mediated and incorporated in learning environments by exemplifying ‘linkedness’ (Riva, 2019a).

When the ability to make connections is modelled, burgeoning narrative concrescence engenders a form of narrative consciousness (Rankin, 2002). Through the processual nature of narrative, we bring unity to life, connecting the past and deciphering meaning, so that we can find promising practice pathways and lifeways. The writing process connects theory with practice, allowing autoethnographers to attain a more coherent way of being in the world.

Thomas Berry calls for a new story, a cosmology that incorporates scientific knowledge as well as stories inspired from world religions. “Our story not only interprets the past, it guides and inspires the future” (Berry, 2015, p. xi). He believes it is all a question of story. Pointing to the current planetary situation and the reality of anthropocene, or the sixth phase of extinction, he evokes the power of dreaming: “The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human—at the species level, with critical reflection, within the community of life-systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience” (Berry, 1999, p. 159).

To initiate a transnational “ecological conversation,” humanity is called to participate in a cultural shift for the sake of future generations. Auto/duoethnography can engender connections by activating the remembering process that fosters mindsight, strengthening our connections with people and the planet while widening our circles of care and concern (Siegel, 2020, p. 487).

Autoethnography comprises an activist undertaking performance writing to change history in the face of anthropocene, “These documents will become testimonies to the ability of the human being to endure, to prevail, and to triumph over the structural forces that threaten at any moment to annihilate all of us” (Denzin 2014, p. 68). An ecology of life and learning calls us to engage in new forms of activism to transform discourses and storylines. Action teaching methods like auto/duoethnography are methods of resistance, inviting us to imagine and story hopeful, healthy futures.

Seeding an Ecology of Life

In conclusion, transformational learning pedagogies provide a promising opportunity for seeding an ecology of life. I have presented a story mandala that weaves together my autoethnographic experience with curriculum development. Homing *in* allowed me to conceptualize transformative learning pedagogies, tracing a pathway to transfiguration. Students were invited to enter into landscapes of potentiality, engaging in auto/duoethnographic practices that fostered their becomingness. Narrative coherency was expressed in their written conclusions, as well as in interviews that were part of the evaluative process.

Within the course design, course literature supports learners’ processes by providing a referential framework in relation to the subject matter. This theoretical mandala incorporates medical anthropology, social psychology, and narrative practices with a social constructionist lens. Illness and conflict narratives provide a blueprint for narrative inquiry. Narrative conflict resolution and therapy are interwoven into the different curriculums to increase connectivity and linkedness. This alignment allowed for increased coherency.

Mediatorship provides a vessel of transformational learning for complementary and alternative medicine, naturopathy, and conflict resolution studies. This vessel contains, connects, guides, and transforms through narrative practice pathways. Writing to transform relations, life-o-grams become *transformagrams*, building upon transformational pedagogies. A holistic paradigm emerges from journeymanship, a voyage towards narrative coherence and interconnectivity. Beatified story mandalas weave together story strands in an aesthetic form of narrative conrescence.

Wholeness and balance are fundamental concepts in traditional medicine practices. This perception of wellness is rooted in Traditional European Medicine that is currently practiced as naturopathy. Complementary and alternative medicine provide healthcare practices that are increasingly sought after by patients. Patients' care-seeking strategies represent a shift towards medical pluralism, as more and more people give value to integrative medicine that incorporates a holistic vision.

To effectively teach these holistic practices, pedagogies that amplify the life-giving and transformative components that foster well-being are essential. Interdisciplinary approaches incorporating experiential learning have been shown to support students' transformative processes. Transformagram portfolios and journaling can be used to generate a constructive social transformation and a cultural shift through a renewed vision of lifelong learning. It has been illustrated that narrative concrescence and heightened narrative coherency were experienced and witnessed by engaging in narrative methods and processes incorporated into transformational learning pedagogies.

I have storied the conceptual process that arose from autoethnographic practice, supported by a methodological template, as well as a theoretical framework. My experience suggests that narrative methods can contribute to human flourishing and new human-earth relations by engendering and shaping generative stories that seed planetary liveability in the context of higher education. This story mandala explores a pedagogical process based on reflexivity through storytelling, opening dialogical space to further theoretical conversations.

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