

# Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



Mezirow's Theory of Perspective Transformation Mezirow's Theory of Perspective Transformation Adults today are the products of their individual histories and experiences, which influence their attitudes, thinking processes, and conceptualization of their worlds. John Mezirow believed that adults can be transformed from these experiences; however, the transformative learning involves critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1990). Mezirow understood that adults can be transformed through a process of intertwining a disorientating dilemma followed by critical reflection and new interpretations of the experience. Mezirow's process of perspective transformation is often illustrated as linear, additionally; Mezirow characterized ten phases starting with disorienting dilemma and ending with perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1990). Understanding the transformative learning and the disorientating dilemma helps adults appreciate and understand Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation. The start of my transformation begins with an experience. For example, an experience that I encountered was this past May after graduating from Immaculata University under-graduate program. My disorienting dilemmas begins with choosing the continuation of my education to pursue a Master's Degree or begin the long and tedious process of job seeking and interviewing in a bleak economy. I believe that my decision is life altering and will only help me pursue a flourishing life. Evidence from Mezirow's theory and the phases of transformative learning suggests that my dilemma falls under the first process of a disorienting dilemma (Anonymous, n. d.). After graduation I had a few months to figure out a strategy and implement my plan. While exploring my options and figuring out a plan I became struck with fear, this

fear came from the " unknown" of my future. To overcome my fear of the " unknown" I first self-examine who I am. I needed to get a better idea of who I am today and who I want to be tomorrow. After I made my decision to go back to school I began to talk more and more about graduate school with my family and close friends. Once the discussion of me going back to school began, I started to hear about other's pursuing a graduate degree all around me. For example I play basketball locally in two different leagues. Most of the teams are composed of collage or recently graduated students. After I told my friends in the basketball leagues about my plans of going back to school a few of them also stated that they were applying or already enrolled for graduate school. Hearing other's committing to furthering their education and the process of enrolling helped calm the fear I had deep inside. Further reassurance was added that others also shared in common the same transformation that I was tackling. This shared transformation between friends falls under Mezirow fourth phase (Anonymous, n. d.) Once I overcame my fear of the " unknown" I started to initiate my plan of action which falls under the sixth stage of Mezirow's theory (Anonymous, n. d.). My plan started with looking at local schools in the area with either an MBA or MA program in Marketing or Leadership studies. I looked at a few specific schools such as West Chester, Widener, and Immaculata University's. After researching these schools I applied to them and waited to hear back for good news. Unfortunately I did not get into my first choice of Widener because I was 70 points short of the requirement for my g-mat score. However, I did get accepted into West Chester and Immaculata. After I had gotten accepted into graduate school I felt a sigh of relief that I had accomplished my goal of

starting the new path to further my education. When I entered into graduate school this was a completely new experience as well as a new role for myself. I wanted to build up my self-confidence in my new roles and environment to reach my utmost potential. Building up my self-confidence was tough at first but I began to slowly overcome this from the support of my family, classmates, and professors. Progress was slow at first because of the "unknown" that I was dealing with in a new program and environment. Once I got over my first road bump I really started to take off with self-confidence which falls under Mezirow's ninth phase (Anonymous, n. d.). The last phase of Mezirow's theory is the action of the final component of the transformative learning process (Merriam, Caffarella, Baumgartner, 2007). When I was dealt with my disorientating dilemma I took a delayed action to retort my options and plan. After reality set in that now is the time to make my transformation this was the end of a new beginning. My action to follow through with my choice to further my education is based off of my new found perspective from my disorientating dilemma and Mezirow's ten phases of transformational learning. Reference: Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3. ed.). San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. Mezirow, J. (1990). A guide to transformational and emancipatory practice. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 7, 1-14. Retrieved February 14, 2011, from <http://www.iup.edu/assets/0/347/349/4951/4977/10251/AF0EAB12-C2CE-4D2C-B1A0-59B795415437.pdf> Anonymous. (n. d.) Transformational theory.