



5th UNESCO Forum on Transformative Education

for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship,

Health and Well-being

The implementation of transformative education
– where do we stand?

Transformative Education: Key points and concluding comments

Plenary session 4

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Growing but uneven scholarly interest in transformative education and learning

Increase in use of terms 'transformative education' or 'transformative learning' in peer-reviewed journal articles:

- In ERIC: 3.6K articles since 1988; 1.9K since 2015
- In Education Source: 2.3K articles since 1989; 1.2K since 2015

Three journals specifically devoted to these themes:

- [Journal of Transformative Education](#) (since 2003)
- [Journal of Transformative Learning](#) (since 2011)
- [Global Journal of Transformative Education](#) (since 2019)

Google Scholar lists more than 87K items (i.e., books, reports, articles, chapters) since 2017 that include 'transformative' and 'education' or 'learning' in title or abstract

However, scholarly work disproportionately focuses on the Global North

Shifting discourse in key global policy documents

In the UN 2030 Agenda document, *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), the terms ‘transformative education’ and ‘transformative learning’ were not used. (The word ‘transforming’ is used 4 times, mainly in the title and not in the text)

In UNESCO’s *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action* (2015), the words, ‘transforming’, ‘transformative’ and ‘transformational’ occur a total of 10 times.

In the new UNESCO report (2021), *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*, the word ‘transformative’ appears 30 times, the word ‘transformation/s’ 77 times and the word ‘transforming’ 22 times.

The discourse around transformation has clearly shifted in the past 6 years!

Why do we need transformative education?

According to UNESCO, Transformative Education is needed:

- to build a more just, inclusive, sustainable, and healthy world
- to foster collaboration, empathy, complex problem solving, connection to other human beings and nature so that learners will collectively transform the communities, environments and societies in which they live
- to create happy and healthy learners who are equipped with the knowledge, values, skills and abilities to make informed decisions and to act for the betterment of people and planet, as responsible global citizens
- to secure the commitment and motivation of teachers to transform their teaching, and ensure that the curriculum, teaching methods, and learning materials they employ are meaningful and relevant in the specific contexts in which they work.

Transformative Education is viewed as fully aligned with SDG Target 4.7 and thus is a driver for all SDGs in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

From vision to reality: What specific content is typically included in the notion of transformative education?

- Peace education; Education for non-violence/violence prevention; Education for conflict resolution/mediation
- Human rights education
- Education for international understanding, international mindedness
- Multicultural education; Education for cultural diversity/interculturalism
- Education for sustainable development (ESD); Climate change education, Biodiversity education
- Global citizenship education (GCED); citizenship education; civics
- Education for health, nutrition and well-being; Comprehensive sexuality education
- Life skills education
- Education for gender equality
- Ethical, moral or values-oriented education

How is transformative education incorporated in the official intended curriculum?

- As part of a conventional school subject such as Social Sciences, Civics/Citizenship Education, Environmental Education, Social Studies
- As a cross-cutting theme integrated in several required and/or optional school subjects
- As a specific interdisciplinary subject such as ESD, or Ecology
- As a theme in a special subject (e.g., Integrated Studies, Creative Experimental Activities), or as an extracurricular topic.

Transformative education: An umbrella term or a public banner?

An umbrella to protect us from global challenges



Transformative Education

Peace education; education for non-violence Education for health, nutrition and well-being ESD; climate change education GCED Multicultural education

Education for gender equality Education for human rights

Ethical, moral or value-oriented education

A banner over an arch or entrance to invite people to learn about and celebrate our shared humanity



Transformative Education

Education for peace & non-violence ESD; climate change education GCED Multicultural education Education for health, nutrition and well-being Education for gender equality Education for human rights

Ethical, moral or value-oriented education



Challenges

1. Moving from vision to reality: many implementation obstacles are not unique to transformative education and are common to major reforms
2. Shifting from whole school to whole community to even whole sector orientations poses significant challenges due to different ministries, laws and policies as well as multiple and uneven data streams
3. Incorporating transformative education in upper secondary education, when adolescents' interest in active citizenship is often most pronounced, clashes with pressures to prepare for high stakes examinations
4. Weak research base of key assertions about the impacts of transformative education on learners and communities; few longitudinal studies to assess the sustainability of transformations into adulthood

Looking backward, Looking forward

International discussions of transformative education are decades in the making. For example,

“While the emphasis on learning acquisition was welcomed, some interventions cautioned against too utilitarian an approach to defining ‘an acceptable level of level’ The point about learning is that it is a process of growth, and not a product to be acquired: learning is a journey, not a destination....”

“The development of the creative potential of the individual, of imagination, of spiritual and aesthetic values, of community spirit, are justifiable in their own right, and not easily measurable in the short term.”

Quotes from the final document of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien Thailand)

Innovative measurement strategies are needed

And yet if transformative education is not measured, does it count? Will the interest of policy makers, educators, parents and students subside if there is no concerted effort to capture transformative education in quantitative and/or qualitative measures?

We need to build new repositories of country documents – from high level laws and policies, to specific visions of transformative education in the curriculum; from subject syllabi to textbooks and even student workbooks -- to explore the many ways in which transformative education is incorporated in teaching and learning.

We need innovative strategies to reflect the multiplicity of formal and non-formal transformative activities in which children, youth and adults are actively engaged. We need to capture the diverse journeys that learners (and groups of learners) embark upon both individually and collectively. We need to explore how learners make meaning in and through their education to engage with the world.

A social contract involving transformative education needs to hear from the learners themselves

A new social contract in education, which the recent UNESCO report calls on us to reimagine, is not only between government and key social actors, but should also involve individual learners and address their needs and interests.

Young students, as they develop awareness of their identity and their community, must actively participate in the construction of a new social contract.



Ministry of Education



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Thank you

