TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

Evolutionary and Revolutionary Transformative Learning

Kroth and Boverie (2009) developed a 4-cell grid to conceptualize the mix between the speed of Transformative Learning (TL, which they characterize as "Discovering") and whether the TL occurred because the prompt to change was imposed from outside or because the learner intentionally put herself into the transformative scenario:
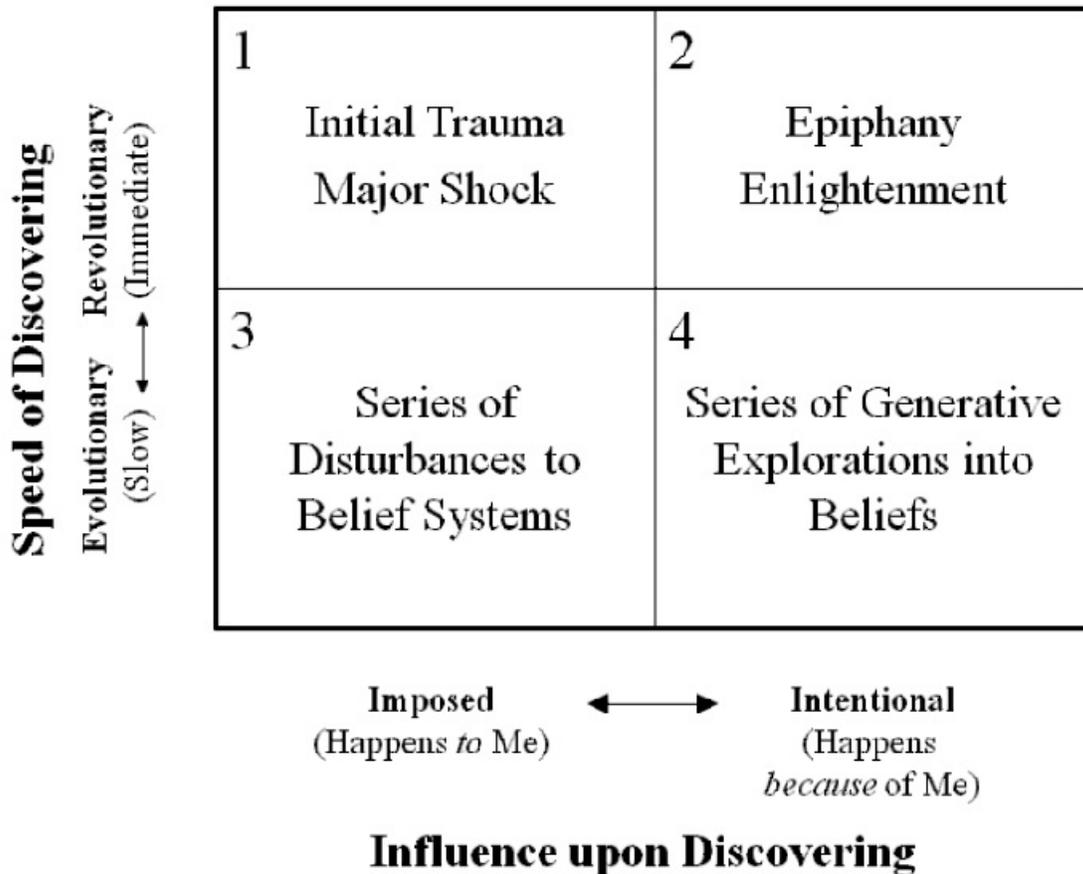

Figure 1. (From Kroth & Boverie, 2009, p. 46.)

View entire Transformative Learning article

Quadrant 1 represents a transformative event that is imposed on a student. In other words, she has no control over whether she is exposed to, or part of, the event or not. Experiencing the event, though, causes a lasting change in her sense of self or how she relates to others, community, and/or environment.

The same imposed approach can happen incrementally and over time (Quadrant 3) when she experiences events that become cumulative to the point that the progression and/or the repetition of these experiences forces a change. Again, this happens not because she actively sought out the engagements, but they nonetheless create a transformative effect in her life.

Our college student at an institution with a mission based around TL such as UCO will certainly be working on the right side of the matrix. She will have Student Transformative Learning Record (STLR)-associated assignments in her classes, she will attend STLR-associated Student Affairs events and potentially participate in STLR-associated student organization work, and she may participate in a student TL project. All those activities are intentionally designed by UCO faculty and staff to help prompt TL. This is shown as Quadrant 4.

What we faculty love to have happen is what's shown in Quadrant 2: epiphany and enlightenment. This is "the big a-ha" that Kroth & Boverie (2009) describe as an "epochal" change. Stephen Brookfield described it as "tectonic" (Brookfield, 2016) to get at the same description of impact. It is a transformative change that is fixed permanently in the student.

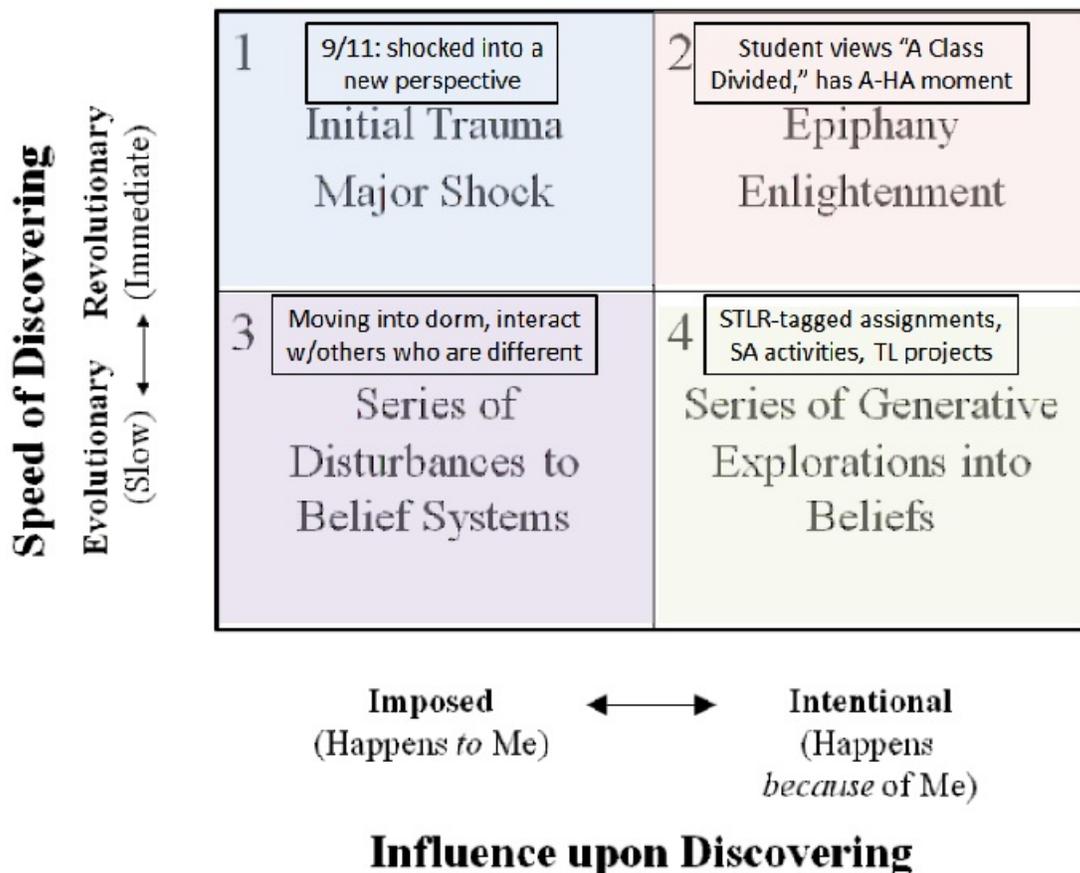Below is the same matrix, but with examples added in each quadrant:

Figure 2. (Adapted from Kroth & Boverie, 2009, p. 46.)

We work to help students reach important understandings about themselves and the world; about how they can function most successfully as employees, citizens, and

family members; and many other realizations worthy of educated and ethical contributors to society. Kroth & Boverie's heuristic (2009) is a helpful tool to conceptualize that process.

(A note: The Quadrant 2 example is evocative. If you have not viewed this documentary, please click on the link below to do so. You may have your own a-ha moments as a viewer and/or discover powerful prompts for Global & Cultural Competency-associated Transformative Learning.)

References

A class divided. (1985, March 26). *Frontline*. Arlington, VA: Public Broadcasting Service. Available: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/class-divided/

Brookfield, S. (2016, April 1). Making transformation visible. Keynote address, 2016 Transformative Learning Conference, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Kroth, M, & Boverie, P. (2009). Using the discovering model to facilitate transformational learning and career development. *Journal of Adult Education, 18*(1), 43-47. Available: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ891076.pdf