

# Book Review

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Carter, T. J., Boden, C. J., & Peno, K. (2019). *Transformative learning in healthcare and helping professions education: Building resilient professional identities*. Information Age Publishing. 396 pp. \$39.09 (paperback). ISBN 10: 1641136790.

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“See one, do one, teach one” is a common phrase healthcare professionals hear during their training or instructional experiences. While some people would advocate this simplified developmental experience of a healthcare professional, it is not difficult to admit that something is missing: *reflect and transform*. Healthcare is a complex social practice with no black and white answers related to human well-being and health. Given this complexity, health professions education should be transformative. Education entails who students are becoming as well as what they need to be able to know and perform. While the pedagogy of transformative learning has been recognized in health professional education (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2019), the central focus of healthcare education has excessively been on medical knowledge and skills acquisition. Transformative learning and identity formation regarding how healthcare professionals are becoming who they are holds a secondary place over knowledge learning often treated only in narrow situations such as global health or service learning. Consequently, this book is valuable as it provides a very extensive collection of healthcare professionals’ reflections and transformational experiences that deserve more attention in advancing healthcare education.

Various readers, including researchers, educators, healthcare learners, and practitioners, can benefit from this book. Each chapter weaves healthcare professionals’, educators’, and learners’ direct experiences and critical reflections on learning and patient care into discussing transformative learning theories and concepts. The intimate narratives of the patient care experiences and critical reflections on heartfelt dilemmas experienced by healthcare professionals are helpful to understand the healthcare profession; the struggles, such as secondary traumatic stress; and how transformative learning theories can be applied. Healthcare professionals or learners who are not familiar with transformative learning theories would appreciate this

book as each chapter introduced the concepts of transformative learning in the context of a specific story or experience. Readers would be nicely surprised how ordinary professional experiences in the healthcare profession can be explained and better understood by transformative learning perspectives. Besides, the editors provided a very nice introduction where readers can have a minimum orientation about the concept of transformative learning.

The book is structured to interconnect several subconcepts to elaborate on the meaning-making process of transformative learning of healthcare professionals: situated learning (Part I), transformative learning (Part II), appreciative inquiry (Part III), and informal learning (Part IV). The editors provided a comprehensive summary of each section in the Preface, which readers would find helpful to picture the overall content of the book. Each section has a chapter at the end that provides a brief explanation of each theory (Chapters 4, 9, 13, and 16). The editors took an inductive approach where stories with detailed experiences and reflections come before the general explanation of each theory. However, the theory chapters did not sufficiently synthesize the previous chapters, but rather they exist independently as some theory chapters are reprinted with permission from previous publications. However, those who are not familiar with these learning theories would find the last chapters of each section useful.

This book provides a collective reflection point for the field of health professions education to revisit the current status of learning and performance. The book highlighted healthcare professionals' burnout, vulnerability, and resiliency to discuss how transformative learning becomes a lens to better understand and address the issues. Profoundly the first chapter written by Charity Johansson opens the issues by revisiting the fundamental assumptions around the practice of "*helping* others" regarding "who helps who" and "who are others." These are fundamental questions for those who are trained to do the very act of *helping* and become *helping professionals*. I did not fully appreciate why the editors chose "helping" professionals for the subtitle of the book rather than healthcare professionals until reading this chapter. Loosening the traditional assumption that helping is unidirectional, the book discussed how healthcare professionals could transform themselves to be resilient from burnout through nontraditional developmental processes such as self-care (Chapter 15), self-reflective storytelling (Chapter 14), and the use of the outdoor adventure-based program (Chapter 10).

Transformational learning is neither easy to be observed nor guaranteed. This might be why transformative learning has never been the main topic nor a designed instructional process in healthcare education. However, this book refreshingly sheds light on the undeniable power of transformative learning for professional identity formation and threw a question of how it could happen. The book provides some insights that healthcare educators and researchers can delve deeper into, including space of dissimilar others, firsthand experience of dilemma followed critical reflection and informality. Medical learners' transformative experiences of being on the Texas–Mexico border (Chapter 2), global health electives (Chapter 3), and the

shelter-free clinic (Chapter 7) tell the power of place and space for meaningful learning experiences. It implies how the space of a classroom and formal education is too sterile to provide an environment for critical reflections for transformative learning in medical education. On the contrary, too much dissonance in experiencing a dissimilar situation would not necessarily lead medical learners to critical reflection (Chapter 3). This challenges educational researchers to further investigate the pedagogy of place and the power of diverse healthcare space for transformational learning.

While focusing on well-being and resiliency, this book represents the ubiquitous nature of transformative learning in health professions education. It is found in every corner of healthcare education, and professional development such as medical students' specialty choice (Chapter 5), a remediation process (Chapter 9), a teacher's transformation to an expert science teacher (Chapter 8), a physician's identity formation to a physician-educator through role modeling and mentoring (Chapter 6), and a situation of patients' adverse outcome. This book asks a fundamental question of what is the critical knowledge and skills for healthcare professionals who are becoming reflective professionals. Should they be vulnerable enough to continuously revisit their assumptions and ready to transform to align their belief with their becoming professional identity? This book nudges healthcare educators and their field to revisit assumptions of what to learn and how to learn regarding instructional environments.

I enjoyed reading this book as it provides different healthcare professionals' rich firsthand experiences and reflections that are essential for their becoming process as a healthcare professional, which is not easily accommodated in a short medical journal article. Junior professionals or learners can model the reflective cognitions of this book to realize their resiliency and transformative learning experience that is essential for their professional identity formation. Given the complexity of the healthcare practice, the field must continue to transform in order to serve the need of society. This book, therefore, provides an opportunity for the healthcare education field to revisit the taken-for-granted assumptions on what should be taught to become a healthcare professional.

## Reference

- Van Schalkwyk, S. C., Hafler, J., Brewer, T. F., Maley, M. A., Margolis, C., McNamee, L., Meyer, I., Peluso, M. J., Schmutz, A. M., Spak, J. M., Davies, D., & On behalf of the Bellagio Global Health Education Initiative. (2019). Transformative learning as pedagogy for the health professions: A scoping review. *Medical Education*, 53(6), 547–558.