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ABSTRACT

This article describes a process of generating and facilitating a cocreated learning space that supports transformational change for the participants through a process of transformational learning. It tells the story of the formulation of the process and identifies and explores some of the main models and theories involved in its generation and operation. This story has a beginning but not an ending because the exploration and analysis is ongoing. It provides a methodology for generating and experiencing the process and the transformational outcomes. The author raises questions for readers to reflect on in relation to their own practice.

The purpose of this article is to share my thoughts, analysis, and reflections on my use of cocreative transactional analysis (TA) in learning environments aimed at supporting personal development and change. It represents a position statement, acknowledging that there is unfinished analysis and further work to be done to refine and clarify the process. It will be of particular interest to transactional analysis practitioners who support learning and/or are interested in the application of cocreative transactional analysis (Tudor & Summers, 2014) in practice.

The process described here uses a constructivist approach to support the transformational learning and change. Constructivism (von Glasersfeld, 1990) is also used to support the analysis and to tell the story as I now see it.

I have been working as a manager and change agent in organizations for many years. I have been privileged to experience people change and do things that they never dreamed possible. The key to success has always been supporting people to learn and develop new skills or to enhance their existing ones. More recently, I have focused on supporting people to change transformationally (Mezirow & Associates, 2000) so that they can achieve their potential. This process has been based in constructivism and cocreated learning, and the outcomes have been stunning.

This article is an attempt to make sense of the process that has emerged during the last 8 years, one that has proven to be repeatable with people from different backgrounds, academic achievements, cultures, jobs, and careers. The understanding

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and synthesis of the process has been assisted by those involved in the programs and by, and through, their participation, reflection, and feedback.

This article is organized into two parts. The first considers some of the models and concepts that support the process and then invites reflection on our own learning journeys before moving into a more detailed consideration of the models and processes that support cocreated transformational learning and change. The second part tells the story of the development of this process, with some analysis and description of outcomes and tools developed along the way.

Underpinning Models and Concepts

In 1997, Allen and Allen wrote about constructivism in transactional analysis and how individuals can review and then retell their stories in order to make more appropriate meaning of them in the present by using additional knowledge, experience, and reflection and with hindsight. Constructivism is founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our understanding of the world in which we live. Construction of meaning may initially bear little resemblance to reality, but it will become increasingly complex, differentiated, and realistic as time goes on (see, for example, von Glasersfeld, 1990). Key to cocreative transformational learning and change is learning to review and reconstruct our stories in the present so that we can retell them with new, and significantly different, nondefensive meaning.

Barrow (2009) wrote about schooling and script, suggesting that schooling in the Western world is pretty standard and a significant factor in the development of our frame of reference (Schiff, Schiff, & Schiff, 1975) and our script (Steiner, 1974/1990). As Allen and Allen (1997, p. 94) pointed out, from a constructionist view of transactional analysis, script is a story that is cocreated in an ongoing process instead of being decided on the basis of past experiences. So, if we can learn how to reconstruct and retell our story from a different perspective, we can change our script. Allen and Allen described one process by which this might be done with support from a therapist. It is a complex process because we have been telling ourselves our script story for so long that it comes to pervade all that we think, feel, and do at a nonconscious (and defensive) level. So, we need to find a way to uncover our script beliefs (Erskine & Zalcman, 1979) and then find a way to change them.

Mezirow (Mezirow & Associates, 2000) wrote extensively about transformational learning and change and linked them to the ability to make new meaning from examining reality and choosing different courses of action from those to which we are accustomed and by telling ourselves a different story to the one that we have told ourselves in the past (p. 19). Changing the narrative changes our frame of reference and impacts our script beliefs.

Summers and Tudor (2000) described cocreative script formation as a dynamic, continuing process. It is based on how our interactions with others enabled us to formulate our script and how those continuing interactions enable and facilitate the ongoing adjustments and changes to our script as well as the scripts of those with whom we interact.

These models and concepts come together, and are intertwined, within the process of cocreative learning aimed at supporting personal development and transformational change through transformational learning. They intertwine because they are not used in a specific sequence. These models and concepts support the change processes, both individual processes and combined models and processes, in different proportions and at different stages to support different parts of the process.

Our Own Learning Journey (Story)

In line with Barrow's contention that schooling plays an important role in script formation, a significant amount of our own script likely developed in or was influenced by our schooling environment. School takes up a considerable amount of time during childhood; it is a significant, consistent, constant influence on us over many years. Proportionally to our time spent outside of school, we might argue that around a third of our script was formed and reinforced by our schooling. If we account for our time in a schooling environment, including preparing for and traveling to and from school, as well as time to do homework, then, from ages 5 to 16, we probably spend over a third of our waking life in this environment. We rarely, if ever, account for the significance of the influence that this amount of exposure to an environment where we were invited (or required) to conform must have had on our frame of reference and our script.

We each have our own story about our schooling, one that is unique yet shares many similarities to those of others. What follows is a generic schooling story, with some personal reflections, observations, and analysis to provide opportunities for you as readers to notice, and reflect on, what story you tell about your own schooling. How was yours different or not?

Once upon a time, we were all children and went to school. We learned what we needed to learn: to read, write, add up and take away, write stories and (later) essays, recite poetry (or Shakespeare), do our homework, pass exams, and do projects. Or did we learn to adapt and do what we were told in order to get recognition or not get into trouble or avoid detention or some other humiliation or to avoid feeling shamed?

Reflecting back on my own experience, I recall noticing some students who rebelled by not doing their homework and/or not learning what we were supposed to be learning. Instead, they chose not to conform and to plough their own path in the world. It seems that we each formulated our own version of our schooling reality in a way that satisfied our own frame of reference, our own injunctions, permissions, attributions, and script beliefs, and in a way that helped us to develop our own drivers (Kahler, 1974) and working styles (Hay, 1993) so that we felt OK. What story do you tell about your own schooling (or learning journey)?

When we reflect on our story using the knowledge and experience of transactional analysis models, theories, and application, what sense do we make of it? We developed our own patterns to keep ourselves safe, to obtain strokes and recognition, and to reinforce our script beliefs about ourselves, others, and the world: I'm clever, stupid, no good at math (or physics) or drawing, not academic, and so on. What were the

significant parts of the stories that you told yourself about yourself and the world so that you could feel safe and predict what was going to happen when you were at school?

Script beliefs, and patterns to reinforce them, are well established by age 6 (Woollams & Brown, 1978). Among them must have been our learning patterns, established and then embedded at a defensive, nonconscious level. As we established our rackets (Berne, 1964), some of those were likely about learning and, as with all rackets, we probably found appropriate teachers with whom to racketeer (English, 1976) around learning. We established a symbiosis (Schiff, 1975) with our teachers: They knew what we needed to learn, they taught it to us, and we learned it. Or was our symbiosis different? We knew we were stupid (or clever, or no good at math or drawing, or whatever our script beliefs were), so maybe we established a different symbiosis with different teachers (slightly, or significantly, different with each one), and maybe we found ways to racketeer with them all. And maybe we were fortunate enough to have encountered some teachers who were different: They engaged with us in a different way; they challenged our script beliefs, and we enjoyed those bits of learning.

Sometime between the ages of 15 and 23, most of us left school, college, university and met the outside world, where our schooling-established patterns of learning rolled onward. Or did they get challenged?

Knowles (1990) suggested that adult learning differs from learning as a child (andragogy instead of pedagogy). The former involves making a choice, at some level: what to learn, when to learn, how to learn, how much to learn, who to learn from, how competent to become, what method of learning to engage in (reading, researching, watching videos, interacting with a computer program, attending lectures/seminars/workshops/conferences, practical experience, role play), how much to pay for it—and what to give up in order to do the learning.

As we moved through our teenage years and into adulthood, much of our learning became experiential, for example, playing sports or driving a car. But when we wanted, or needed, to learn in a training room (e.g., we were sent on a course), maybe we defaulted to our childhood patterns of schooling along with the beliefs that we had then about ourselves and our ability to learn. We did this because the setting was similar to our academic learning experience, and we discounted the other ways that we had learned to learn.

Transforming Our Learning Process Using Mezirow's Ten-Stage Process

How do we go about changing the way that we learn? How do we change our frame of reference to account for our ability to make choices about our learning? How can we move from the passive learning process that we experienced during our schooling to one by which we enable ourselves to learn what we want to learn in a way that supports us to learn effectively?

Transformation involves changing our understanding of our (learning) experience, that is, making new meaning and/or understanding through both internal reflection and external application. We learned to learn at school, and we learned to be passive

as part of that process. As adults we need to learn what we want, or need, to learn, but our nonconscious defensive patterns get in the way, and we often revert to long-established patterns of learning. Deciding what we want to learn and asking for it will inevitably challenge some of our script beliefs about learning as well as about ourselves and the world, not least that we can learn what we want to learn rather than being passive.

Transformational learning is challenging. It requires that we become critically aware of our own assumptions and expectations of the learning process as well as those of others. The transformational learning process requires that we assess these assumptions and expectations and examine their relevance to the current learning environment/process. It means that we need to engage in those parts of the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) that we, historically, have not fully engaged in, and that means that we will need to learn new skills (or enhance existing ones) in order to learn what we really want to learn. To do this, we must learn to be present centered and nondefensive and to notice the patterns of behavior that we exhibited when we were younger to maintain our frame of reference and reinforce our script beliefs, which, in turn, enabled us to be in our driver in order to feel OK, reinforced our frame of reference, and allowed us to obtain familiar strokes.

Mezirow (in Mezirow & Associates, 2000) developed and described a learning process to support transformational learning. It involves ten sequential stages, all of which need to be completed in order to best enable and facilitate transformational learning and change to take place. He described transformation as "a movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives" (p. 19). He described his 10-stage process (p. 22) as follows:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspectives

Mezirow's process begins with a disorienting dilemma—a noticing (or acknowledging) that something is not right. This may involve being aware that we are behaving in an archaic way or a familiar pattern. For example, perhaps we do not understand a model, and our normal pattern is to accept that we do not understand models anyway, and so we move on (quickly) and hope that we do not actually need that understanding (or we will find a way around it if/when we meet it again). If we want to change, we need to not accept our script belief that has led to this pattern and, instead, face the challenge it presents to us (i.e., to face the disorienting dilemma).

Engaging our integrating Adult (Tudor, 2003) provides the means to explore what we are thinking, feeling, and doing. In stage 2 of Mezirow's process, we need to be able to move away from our defensive position and be OK with ourselves and those around us so that we can open to accessing and assessing our assumptions in an OK way (stage 3). We move through stage 4 by being open to the challenge that change presents to us and by deciding that we want to change and be open to continuing through the process of change by exploring other possibilities and options. This (stage 5) is where cocreativity comes to the fore:

- We-ness supports us in being OK in relationship with others with the potential to access resources from beyond ourselves.
- Shared (not equal) responsibility enables us not to have to take the full responsibility for working through the process of change on our own and instead to seek support and help from others. We can move into the winner's triangle (Choy, 1990) and access our potency, express our vulnerability, and access other resources (both our own and others') that can support us through the process.
- Present centeredness helps us to notice, access, and separate out the archaic thoughts, feelings, and impulses (patterns) that are getting in the way of our being spontaneous and able to choose more appropriate options that are relevant for the here and now.

The cocreated script matrix (Summers & Tudor, 2000) enables us to acknowledge and account for the fact that we can, and do, continue to change and adjust our script and that this will have an effect on, and challenge, others. In so doing, it also provides them with an opportunity to adjust their script, if they choose to do so.

We need to work through our options and access some support in order to be able to complete this part of Mezirow's process. Once completed, we have the experience to draw on so that we can apply it again in the future. We may even need to find a way to break through our script belief that it is not OK to ask for help.

Mezirow's process is a methodology for supporting transformational change, not merely changing behavior at the social level. It invites transformation, or, from a constructivist perspective, the rewriting of our story with new meaning and understanding, having challenged and reexamined appropriate parts of our frame of reference that were not accounting for more recent experiences. It invites rewriting parts of our frame of reference so that we can be more open to new opportunities and possibilities.

Stages 6–9 are full of opportunities to self-sabotage in order to reinforce our original script belief (e.g., that we don't understand models) or another one (I am stupid after all). There are opportunities here for us to access a different payoff (e.g., I'm stupid; at least I tried hard; I haven't got time for this; I don't know where to go next; if I ask for help, they'll just think I'm stupid). Therefore, we need to constantly return to our integrating Adult processing: checking out the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors coming from our archaic ego states and the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that they are generating; accounting for them in the present; noting and being curious about them; continuing through the remaining stages of the process until the end,

where we can break free from the original script belief. This begins the real process of transformational change: repeating the process to embed the change (stage 10 in Mezirow's process described earlier).

We can thereby begin to understand Mezirow's model through having experienced it and reflecting on the process. Then we can do it again with another archaic pattern that we notice. Mezirow's process inherently involves accessing help and support and being in relationship with others who are prepared to support us and to change alongside us. Such relationships are essential to keeping us on track with the process (items 2 through 9) and reducing the risks of taking the (easier and) available opportunities to self-sabotage and return to our archaic patterns and script beliefs.

Newton (2012) described the learning relationship in terms of a teacher/learner relationship based on the model originally described by Sills and Mazzetti (2009). When this is a cocreated relational field, with integrating Adult–integrating Adult transactions, it provides access to archaic thoughts and feelings that can be shared and explored in the present in relationship with others. This can provide access to support for staying on track with the process of transformational learning and change.

Napper and Newton (2000, 10.16) described liberal education as emphasizing the teacher's role and the importance of the material while giving relatively little attention to the learner's experience. The objective of this kind of education is imparting knowledge. In my view, this aptly describes what generally occurs in most schools, with transactions mostly Parent to Child and inviting adaption to social and cultural norms and learning what the teacher (or a higher, perhaps governmental, authority) determines should be learned. This becomes so embedded that when a teacher is a supporter of real learning, that becomes challenging to learners because they do not expect having to explore what learning they actually want. Rogers (1969) wrote extensively about the benefits of teachers being supporters of learning and, in particular, supporting students (learners) to decide both what and how to learn. In his view, the teacher needs to take on the role of supporting students in learning rather than the role of teaching them. This is not to say that teaching does not have an essential part in learning. However, it is important that what is taught by the teacher is what the student wants, or needs, to learn rather than what the teacher wants to teach. Clearly, as young children, we do not know what we want to learn, and liberal education has its strengths and benefits. But, just like script beliefs, it limits our choices as we become adults and access the power to become autonomous.

Newton's (2006, p. 189) model of the experiential learning cycle describes a cyclical process through which we can make new meaning from our learning by reflecting on our learning experience. It also models (by showing the process as a spiral) how we can take that learning forward in order to apply it to other situations. This illustrates how we can take the learning from successfully applying the transformational change process to one pattern forward as a transferable skill to other patterns we notice. Thus we can adjust our frame of reference, rewrite our stories, and open up new and different possibilities for ourselves. As described in the cocreative script matrix (Summers & Tudor, 2000), this change impacts on the scripts of all those who are involved in the relational field.

When we get "stuck" in our learning process, we are so used to running our rackets around learning that we (nonconsciously) move into our archaic pattern of behavior and work through (nonconsciously) a route that enables us to reaffirm our script belief (e.g., I don't understand models) and never get past the first stage of Mezirow's process. Having someone to share our dilemma with helps us to not fail at the first hurdle. This person (e.g., someone who notices that, actually, we do understand some models) needs to be prepared to spend some time with us to confront our belief and help us to acknowledge and account for what we have been discounting.

I did this recently with someone who "knew" that he did not understand models. In a group of transactional analysis trainees, we began analyzing some transactions using second-order structural ego states (Cox, 1999). This particular person said that he had seen the model many times but had never understood it and never would because he did not understand models. When I and others in the group pointed out some models that we knew he understood, he acknowledged that and asked for support to explore his dilemma. He and I contracted to begin working through his stuckness together outside of the group. We explored some models that he was familiar with (both TA and not TA), and I supported him in explaining them to me. We started with simple models and moved on to more complex ones, including the one that he "knew" he did not understand and that had generated the process in the beginning. With some support but no further information, he fully explained the model to me. In doing so he realized that he was running a racket, which we then explored together. Now he understands second-order structural ego states and can come to grips with new models when he encounters them—albeit sometimes with a little help, which he is now able to ask for.

Mezirow wrote, "In fostering transformative learning efforts, what counts is what the individual wants to learn" (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 31) When we link this with Knowles's (1990) view of adult learning, which is powered by being present centered, autonomous, and proactive in deciding what we want to learn, the key seems to be consciously knowing what we want to learn. However, this, in itself, often requires transformational learning, that is, establishing a revised frame of reference by which the learner, not the teacher, has primary responsibility for influencing the learning that is going to take place. If, as supporters of learning, we can enable and facilitate learners in making this shift in their frame of reference and taking conscious responsibility for what they are going to learn, it is more likely that they will leave their nonconscious defensive patterns about learning behind. In this new learning space, they can be present centered and not afraid to identify what they want to learn and to verbalize it.

When we go to a lecture, workshop, conference, or training session, what is it that we go to learn? When asked this question, most people become confused and find it difficult to say what they want to take away with them. Asking the question differently can help. For example, "What do you want to be able to do after the session that you can't do now?" reframes the question and helps the person to identify what he or she wants to learn. Doing this also sometimes reveals an unrealistic fantasy about how long it will take to learn something. This uncovers the learning contract at the psychological level (namely, that teachers are all powerful) based on an outdated (schooling

related) frame of reference. Supporting participants to articulate what they want to learn establishes a foundation for a transformative learning experience. As Mezirow said, "This constitutes a starting point for a discourse leading to a critical examination of normative assumptions underpinning the learner's … value judgments or normative expectations" (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 31).

Deciding what we want to learn and taking charge of the process invites us into our Adult ego state and supports us in accounting for the fact that, as adults, we can learn what we want to learn (because we have been doing it) and that we can find ways of doing so (again, because we have been doing it). This can generate a transformation in our learning process if we choose to account for our more recent learning experiences and to challenge, and break from, our old, scripty learning patterns.

Back Story

At this point I want to describe part of my own story that is particularly relevant to this article. It starts with a personal development program I ran based on transactional analysis theory and application, rather like an extended TA 101 consisting of eight monthly sessions. Within this program, the learning was supported by experience, reflection, and sharing of the changes participants experienced as they put their new knowledge to practical use at home and work. At the end of the program, they had gotten so much out of it that they wanted to continue their journey, and I wanted to provide them with that chance.

I offered them the opportunity to participate in a radical learning group imago, as described by Newton (2003) based on work done by Elias and Merriam (1995). One of the features of this kind of group is that the leadership of it moves around depending on the learning that is taking place; that is, responsibility for the learning is shared among group members. Each participant researched an aspect of transactional analysis theory and then led the learning on that model, with my input as a guide and to support the learning. At subsequent sessions, they brought back to the group their experiences of putting the theories and models into practice. The group would analyze and make sense of the application of the model together and take further learning from it. In reality, the learning imago was a mixture of radical, progressive, and humanistic models (Newton, 2003), particularly because the overall objective was personal development.

The contract that the group generated included items that explicitly invited cocreativity, including we-ness and a shared responsibility for both safety and the learning environment. It also implicitly invited present centeredness, including asking for what we wanted, meeting our own needs, and noticing and bringing into awareness defensive, nonconscious behaviors. As additional 8-day programs finished, those participants were also offered the opportunity to join the advanced group, which thus grew in number. The learning expanded as the more experienced participants began to support the newer recruits' learning.

In transitioning from the initial program to the more advanced group, all participants completed a Temple Index of Functional Fluency (TIFF) profile. This psychometric tool is based on the functional fluency model developed by Temple (1999). I spent

time with each individual supporting the learning he or she could gain from exploring his or her profile. This proved to be an invaluable part of the process by providing opportunities to track some driver behaviors back to their origins and to uncover script beliefs and injunctions. The functional fluency model also offered a mechanism by which participants could identify new possibilities for present-centered responses to nonconscious defensive patterns by considering options from the four positive modes developed by Temple (1999). Without exception, all of the participants found ways to face their disorienting dilemmas and work them through with support and encouragement from other group members. They amazed themselves and others at the things they found themselves able to do, some of which they had never thought possible.

Two examples come to mind. The first is someone who, at the start of the 8-day program, was unemployed, depressed, and could not always bring herself to leave home and arrive for the start of sessions. She subsequently qualified as an internationally recognized coach and became among the first to arrive at a session. The second is someone who doubted his abilities and was stuck in a job he did not enjoy. Five years and two jobs later, he is leading a multidisciplinary team and working toward certification as a transactional analyst.

It is relevant to note that the participants have come from a wide variety of occupations and levels of education. Some have been managers, others team leaders or supervisors, and still others employees with no management or supervisory responsibilities. The level of transformation does not appear to be related to academic level, occupation, level of responsibility, or gender.

After some years, I became curious about what had enabled participants to change their frames of reference and do things that had challenged their script beliefs and injunctions. I invited the group to reflect on and identify, if they could, what it was about the program and the learning space that had enabled them to do such amazing things. They generated two lists: one of positive things (attributes) that had existed in the space and the other of things absent. This is what they came up with:

- A cocreated learning space has and/or provides protection, confidentiality, permissions, respect, rules, contracts, boundaries, energy/vitality, OKness (++), safety, strokes, structure, intimacy, IA-IA transactions (integrating Adult), permission to make mistakes, and positive games.
- Such a learning environment has an absence of distraction, judgment, discounting, negative games, rackets, unconditional negative strokes, criticism, one-upmanship, competition, and drama triangle behavior.

The group acknowledged that many of the items on the list of positives would normally be expected in other learning environments, but their experience was that, even if they were there, it was generally at the administrative or professional level, not experienced at the psychological level. They emphasized the feeling of safety in the learning environment as a major influencing factor along with the level of intimacy in the group and the OKness and respect they had felt. In relation to what was absent, they had come to expect numerous distractions, being judged by the trainer and

other participants, and the playing of numerous games during training sessions, all of which had gotten in the way of their learning in the past. The absence of these and other things that were on the list of absences had contributed as much to their transformational learning and change process as had the presence of the positive attributes on the list.

I have explored the aspects that they identified and now and then shared with group members my analysis. They, in turn, have added to and supported the development of my thinking and processing. This article represents where I have gotten to with invaluable support from the group both individually and collectively. I have concluded that their experience is congruent with the theoretical expectations of applying cocreativity to relationships, including within a learning-focused group process. In particular, the positive attributes are what a cocreative process is designed to provide: a safe, supportive environment within which relationships are positive, people are OK, they account instead of discount and are able to be intimate and nondefensive. This is reinforced by the absence of the nonconscious defensive processes often present within group processes and exhibited by competition, games (Berne, 1964), negative strokes (Steiner, 1974/1990), criticism, judgment, and discounting (Mellor & Schiff, 1975).

Cocreative Learning Contract and Associated Permissions

It became clear that the contract played a major part in enabling the participants in the groups just described to learn and change at a transformational level. They said that they had felt able to explore their feelings and share their vulnerabilities in a safe way, citing permissions as being key to that. I therefore developed a basic cocreative learning contract and associated permissions and have used, reflected on, and adjusted these over the past few years.

I started with the definition of cocreativity set out by Summers and Tudor (2000) and considered how that could be worded to apply to (or to support the invitation into) a cocreative learning space. The cocreative learning contract is specifically aimed at the psychological level of the contract in order to invite participants to access their integrating Adult and to generate integrating Adult–integrating Adult transactions. It consists of the following:

- We will work and learn together.
- We will share responsibility for the learning to take place. We will willingly bring our own knowledge and experiences into the room and share them in order to enable and support learning.
- We will learn in the present, noticing and accounting for past experiences (of learning) that might get in the way of our learning.
- We will treat ourselves and others with respect and unconditional (mutual) positive regard.

The fourth item is intended to bring into awareness the implied positivity and OKness that always seemed to me implicit in Summers and Tudor's (2000) work.

I made it explicit by adding the fourth tenet of cocreativity: unconditional (mutual) positive regard as espoused by Rogers (1969).

The following associated permissions are designed to support and underpin the cocreative learning contract:

- It's OK for us (and you and me) to be ourselves (and yourself and myself).
- It's OK to be aware of, to account for, and (if we want) to share our past, including our thoughts and feelings, whether past or present centered.
- It's OK to learn what we want to learn and to ask for it.
- It's OK to challenge if we don't agree or to share a different learning or perspective, even if it means challenging the teacher (after all, he or she doesn't know everything, only what he or she has already learned).
- It's OK to change and to be different from how we have been (or who we have been) in the past and to rewrite our future and/or our past.

I have been using these contracts and permissions for several years now to support adult learning and transformational change in many places and cultures, and they have supported learning and change well. Colleagues have also used them and have reported how much they have supported a new and different level of learning. What we have noticed is significantly more engagement by learners, less passive (and passive-aggressive) behaviors in the learning space, and more learning occurring. Learners who have experienced the process in transactional analysis training workshops and programs (both inside and outside of the United Kingdom) have reported increased feelings of safety and OKness, which has enabled them to be and remain more present and to access the learning that has been most relevant to them.

So, although this story began with personal development programs, it appears that the process and methodology is readily transferable to other learning environments in which the emphasis is on something other than personal development and change. Of course, this process is not appropriate for all learning environments (e.g., learning a trade or profession, which requires developing specific competencies), and even where it is appropriate, not everyone, including the teacher, is able to embrace and/or meet the challenge presented by it.

Ending

Generating a cocreative learning space is not easy. Its very nature challenges our script beliefs about learning, and the initial response from participants is usually to move into driver behavior (Kahler, 1974) and to invite the teacher and participants to join in games and run rackets to maintain their frame of reference and script beliefs about learning. Because of our schooling experience and the cultural conventions about learning that we grew up with, it is difficult for us as adults to challenge our script beliefs about our place in the learning environment: that the teacher will teach us what we need to know and that we should adapt, be passive, and soak up the learning (even if it is not what we want to learn and/or we do not see its

relevance). Accepting that as adults we should have at least as much input as the teacher in deciding what we learn challenges our frame of reference. But, if we can change this so we view the teacher as someone who supports our learning, we can be more present in the learning space and learn more effectively. This can be difficult to do unless the teacher also changes his or her frame of reference so that he or she as the educator will only "teach" if it supports the learning that the learner wants! And therein lies a fundamental difference between the traditional teacher/learner (symbiotic) relationship and a cocreative (healthy) educator/learner relationship.

If we as learners can change our frame of reference and approach learning from this new perspective, perhaps the teacher's frame of reference will be challenged enough so that he or she will think about supporting learning instead of teaching. Together we can approach learning from a new perspective that provides us with an opportunity to learn in a different way, to transform our learning (and teaching) processes, and that, inevitably, will lead to new options and possibilities for transformational change to emerge—and, of course, for script change. Rising to this challenge leads to significant rewards for both teachers/educators and learners, but as described by Newton (2007) in her resilience cycle, there is no one way of generating this cocreated learning space. It is essential, however, not to do it alone. We need to be in relationship with someone (or, preferably, a group of people) who is (are) prepared to support us and to learn and change alongside us.

This is not the end of this story. It is a waypoint that warrants celebrating and sharing. I continue to work with and develop this process, as are colleagues who are using it in their own learning environments. I am still curious about why it has been so successful, and there are many aspects still to be explored. You are invited to join us on our journey of exploration of cocreated learning and contribute to the continuation of this story.

Disclosure statement

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Notes on Contributor

Paul Robinson has been managing change and supporting adult learning for over 25 years. He now supports individuals to develop and achieve their potential through personal development programs and workshops. He is a licensed TIFF (Temple Index of Functional Fluency) provider and a PTSTA (education). He has a BA in physical sciences and postgraduate diplomas in management and acoustics. He lives in Suffolk, England and can be contacted at Fairfield, Ferry Road, Bawdsey, Woodbridge, IP12 3AW, United Kingdom; email: bawdseypaul@gmail.com.

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