

TEACHER TRANSFORMATION AND CRITICAL COLLEGIALLY IN
ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (236 pp.)

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The purpose of the study was to understand transformative learning in teachers' critical colleague relationships while participating in online, collaborative action research. This included generation of theory by teacher action-researchers relevant to their own practice, with a view to teacher transformation over time. The study addressed the primary research question, "What is the potential of critical colleague relationships to transform teacher action-researchers in a shared online learning environment?"

The participants in the study were 11 in-service teachers in school districts in northeast Ohio, working in four critical colleague groups in online action research situations. Two of these groups were involved in a grant project through eTech Ohio, a professional development arm of the Ohio Department of Education, with the goal of integrating emerging technologies into their respective teaching practice. The other two groups were students in a master's degree program in cultural foundations of education at a mid-sized, research-based, Midwestern university; the online action research course for this group was a capstone project for their program. Earlier studies of the two courses were conducted prior to the dissertation research.

Data collection consisted of transcripts of the online participation in both action research courses, followed by focus group and individual interviews. Data analysis used a grounded theory approach, based on Strauss and Corbin (1998) and situational analysis and mapping as developed by Clarke (2005). Findings included "inclusional flow" as the

central category of interest, along with its subcategories of inclusional survival, vision, and liberation. This state of inclusional flow empowered the participants to engage in the process of interchanging perspectives and “sparking” new conversations, which led to positive, long-term effects on teacher practice, along with transformative learning in teacher professional development in both categories of change in meaning scheme and meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1994).