

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THROUGH DISORIENTING DILEMMAS AND CRITICAL REFLECTION IN A MOVIE *THE RON CLARK STORY*

Safnidar Siahaan^{1,2}, Ribut Wahyu Eriyanti³, Ria Arista Asih⁴

^{1,3,4} Postgraduate Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

² English Language Education Program, Universitas Riau Kepulauan, Indonesia

E-mail: safnidar@fkip.unrika.ac.id

Received: 2024-06-17

Accepted: 2024-06-25

Published: 2024-06-29

Abstract

This research investigates transformative learning theory using the biographical film *The Ron Clark Story*, which depicts an innovative teacher's experiences in an inner-city school. Jack Mezirow defines transformative learning theory as using jarring situations and critical reflection to catalyze dramatic perspective shifts. The study seeks to bridge the gap between academic concepts and their practical applications in educational contexts. The film was analyzed using a qualitative content analysis method, which included systematic data collecting and triangulation of primary and secondary sources. The findings highlight important unsettling challenges confronting Ron Clark, such as culture differences and student resistance, prompting critical reflection and transformative learning. Clark changes his teaching skills through reflective practices, incorporating culturally relevant methods such as rap in the classroom and making personal sacrifices to help his kids. This strategy creates a transformed classroom atmosphere, improving both teaching methods and student outcomes. The study indicates that *The Ron Clark Story* exemplifies the transforming impact of critical reflection in education. It emphasizes the value of resilience and adaptability in teaching and offers practical advice for educators looking to apply transformative learning practices. This study adds to the discussion about transformative learning by providing a tangible example of theoretical principles put into practice, with the goal of informing professional development programs and improving educational results.

Keywords: *critical reflection; transformative learning; disorienting dilemmas*

1. Introduction

Transformative learning theory, as stated by Jack Mezirow, highlights the role of disorienting dilemmas and critical reflection in facilitating substantial alteration in an individual's perspective (Fleming, 2023). It means that these perplexing situations act as catalysts, challenging current beliefs and motivating people to engage in critical inquiry. Individuals who engage in this introspective process review their beliefs and perspectives, resulting in revolutionary adjustments in their understanding and approach to the world. However, while the theoretical foundations of transformational learning are well known, there is a considerable dearth in empirical research that rigorously investigates how these

theoretical principles emerge in practical educational contexts using the film. Furthermore, movies in educational contexts are effective tools for displaying transformative processes through rich narratives (Gómez, 2022). It means that films vividly represent how people develop and transform, making complicated subjects more accessible and relatable to pupils by focusing on characters that go through substantial changes. Although existing literature acknowledges the general effectiveness of movies in fostering understanding and reflection among students, but there is a gap in empirical research that systematically analyzes specific biographical films such as *The Ron Clark Story* to investigate how they exemplify transformative learning theory.

This topic was chosen because there is the gap between theoretical concepts of transformative learning and their practical applications in real-world educational scenarios, specifically the facilitation of deep learning, critical reflection, and identity shifts by field supervisors in social work education, as stated by Archer-Kuhn et. al. (2021). Furthermore, transformative learning focuses on self-development, critical comprehension of knowledge, and the presentation of individuals to the world, encouraging self-awareness and self-construction within socio-cultural contexts (Hanaba & Voitiuk, 2022). In essence, Archer-Kuhn et al. (2021) and Hanaba & Voitiuk (2022) establish the theoretical foundation for transformative learning, whereas the research entitled *Transformative Learning through Disorienting Dilemmas and Critical Reflection in A Movie The Ron Clark Story*, advances the field by demonstrating how these concepts manifest in the film. This research intends to fill this gap by doing a thorough analysis of *The Ron Clark Story*, so providing a new perspective on how transformative learning is depicted and understood in film. By investigating the unique difficulties and reflective processes presented in the film, the researchers hope to provide significant insights on how transformative learning might be effectively promoted in educational settings.

Based on the preceding explanation of the research gap, the researchers attempt to analyze the film *The Ron Clark Story* as an ideal opportunity to bridge this gap by providing a detailed analysis of Ron Clark's disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection processes, and the resulting transformations in his teaching techniques and student outcomes. In summary, this research fills a gap in empirical research by using a popular film to demonstrate and test transformative learning principles in action in educational situations. Furthermore, the researchers chose this topic for numerous reasons. First, this topic emphasizes the significance of resilience and adaptation in teaching, both of which are becoming increasingly important in the dynamic educational world depicted in the film. Second, it contributes to the continuing discussion about transformative learning by demonstrating how theoretical principles might be used in reality. Finally, this topic provides practical advice for educators looking to use transformative learning practices in their own classrooms and improve educational outcomes.

Then, the research questions that will guide this study, those are: (1) What are the primary disorienting dilemmas encountered by Ron Clark in the film? (2) How can critical reflection help Ron Clark achieve transformative learning? (3) What observable outcomes may Ron Clark and his students expect from this transformative learning process?

This research stands out for bridging the gap between transformational learning theory and its depiction in popular culture specifically, films that vividly demonstrate complex theoretical issues through compelling and relevant storylines. By focusing on *The Ron Clark Story*, the study not only presents a unique examination of a widely accessible film, but it also gives practical suggestions for educators. The researchers also aim to use the

findings of this study to inform professional development programs by emphasizing the necessity of educating instructors to deal with unsettling situations and engage in critical thinking.

2. Literature Review

This study falls under transformative learning theory and will focus on disorienting dilemmas and reflective practices in educational settings. Educators in varied educational environments acknowledge unsettling difficulties as key catalysts for transformative learning experiences, which frequently lead to a questioning of assumptions and beliefs (Young et.al., 2022). These dilemmas can arise from various sources such as exposure to multicultural environments, challenging assumptions, and questioning deeply held beliefs (Laros, 2017). Disorienting issues produced by educators can have tremendous consequences on learners, provoking feelings such as wrath, shame, and resentment, ultimately hurting performance and leading to reluctance in future education (Birkeland & Demotland, 2018). It can be concluded that educators acknowledge that disorienting dilemmas are essential for sparking transformative learning, as they compel individuals to reassess and challenge their deeply held beliefs. These quandaries can occur from a variety of circumstances, including encountering diverse cultural surroundings, challenging existing conventions, or confronting preconceived assumptions. These problems can have a substantial influence, eliciting powerful emotions such as anger, embarrassment, and resentment, which can impair the performance and make the hesitant to do action. Understanding the importance of these challenges in educational settings is vital for developing environments conducive to meaningful thought and personal growth.

Furthermore, educators participate in reflective practice by adopting diverse models and frameworks that promote criticality, problem-solving, action orientation, and outcome evaluation (Machost & Stains, 2023). Reflective techniques enable educators to identify and correct deeply rooted biases, resulting in major improvements in their teaching methods (Mohamed, et.al. 2022). The level of criticality used by educators, their capacity to integrate prior experiences with current conditions, and their vision for the future are all factors that influence the depth and effectiveness of their reflection (Aryal, 2022). Furthermore, participating in systematic reflection with proper training and mentorship can raise the quality of reflective practices, resulting in enhanced teaching strategies and student outcomes (Gitsaki & Zoghbor, 2023). It can be concluded that educators engage in reflective practices by employing a number of models and frameworks that emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, action-oriented approaches, and outcome evaluations. These strategies allow educators to discover and challenge deeply rooted prejudices, resulting in significant improvements to their teaching methods. The level of criticality used, the ability to connect prior experiences with current events, and a forward-thinking viewpoint all have an impact on the depth and usefulness of the reflection. Furthermore, systematic reflection, along by appropriate training and mentorship, can dramatically increase the quality of these activities, resulting in superior teaching strategies and student outcomes.

Then, disorienting dilemmas also have an important role in producing transformative learning experiences for educators, resulting in modifications in teaching practices and educational philosophy. According to Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, when people experience disorienting problems, their assumptions are challenged, causing them to reflect and adopt alternate viewpoints (Young et al., 2022). Furthermore, engaging in reflective practices following unsettling dilemmas can dramatically impact educator-student

relationships and classroom dynamics by building a deeper awareness of teaching processes and increasing pedagogical skills (Gitsaki & Zoghbor, 2023; Silva et. al., 2018). Reflective techniques enable educators to discover new insights, improve teaching characteristics, and identify training gaps, resulting in more effective teaching tactics and a friendlier learning environment (Yadav & Bhatia, 2022). The impacts of reflective practices on educator-student relationships and classroom dynamics can be measured through student feedback surveys, which assess teaching effectiveness and pedagogical skills, highlighting the correlation between reflective practices and positive relationships with students (Çimen & Kömür, 2019). It suggests that confusing challenges act as catalysts for transformative learning experiences for educators, causing alterations in teaching approaches and educational ideologies. As educators face these challenges, their long-held views are called into question, promoting introspection and the acceptance of opposing viewpoints. Following a problem, engaging in reflective techniques not only creates deeper educator-student connections, but also enhances classroom dynamics by refining educational approaches and increasing teaching efficacy. Educators use reflection to gain new insights, improve their instructional skills, and identify opportunities for professional development, all of which help them perfect their teaching practices and foster a positive learning environment. The impact of reflective practices on educator-student rapport and classroom atmosphere is frequently assessed using student feedback methods, confirming the symbiotic relationship between reflective pedagogy and the creation of pleasant, supportive learning environments.

3. Research Method

In this study, a qualitative research approach with a content analysis design is used to analyze the complex dynamics of disorienting dilemmas and critical Reflection as the transformative learning point. Qualitative research, as noted by Lahiri, (2023) and Ponce et. al. (2022), provides a complete way for investigating the multiple aspects of phenomena by diving into people's expressions, attitudes, beliefs, and intentions. Through this technique, the researchers hope to delve deeper into the complexity of disorienting dilemmas and critical Reflection as the transformative learning point as shown in the narratives of *The Ron Clark Story*.

Furthermore, the data collecting technique used in this study is a systematic process aiming at obtaining useful and accurate information from the selected film. The researchers assure a thorough examination of disorienting dilemmas and critical Reflection as the transformative learning point inside the film narratives by taking measures such as film selection, creating inclusion criteria, data gathering, transcription, and analysis. To improve the reliability and validity of the findings, the researchers employ a triangulation strategy that includes both primary data sources (the selected films) and secondary data sources (academic literature, papers, websites, and international journals). This triangulation technique, as defined by Zhu & Park (2022), enables a more balanced and nuanced view of the topic under inquiry by incorporating numerous perspectives and sources of evidence. Overall, combining qualitative research with content analysis design and triangulation approaches allows for a comprehensive evaluation of disorienting dilemmas and critical Reflection as the transformative learning point in the film, yielding useful insights for educational theory and practice.

4. Results and Discussion

This research will highlight the disorienting dilemmas and critical Reflection as the transformative learning point in the film, entitled *The Ron Clark Story*. Through a detailed examination, the study sheds light on the key disorienting dilemmas faced by Ron Clark in the film, how does critical reflection facilitate transformative learning for Ron Clark, and what are the observable outcomes of this transformative learning process for Ron Clark and his students. These findings highlight the powerful role of cinematic narratives in forming perceptions and promoting holistic development in educational settings. Here are the findings and discussion points, which will be explained below:

4.1 Results

In this research focuses on three points namely the key disorienting dilemmas faced by Ron Clark in the film, critical reflection facilitate transformative learning for Ron Clark, and what are the observable outcomes of this transformative learning process for Ron Clark and his students. Here the three points explanation below:

4.1.1 The main disorienting dilemmas encountered by Ron Clark in the film

In *The Ron Clark Story*, Ron Clark tackles a number of perplexing situations that test his teaching skills and personal resilience, ultimately triggering transformative learning experiences. One significant dilemma is the stark cultural and socioeconomic differences he encounters when moving from a rural school to an inner-city Harlem school, where he witnesses chaos and realizes he must adapt his approach, stating, "These kids need something different, something I haven't tried before." He is dealing with student opposition and behavior concerns, as indicated by a student's challenge, "Why should we listen to you?" and the general classroom disorder, which inspires Clark to clean the classroom himself to set an example and earn their respect. Furthermore, Clark challenges institutional apathy and a lack of support, as evidenced by a colleague's sarcastic remark, "You'll never get through to them," and the principal's early reservations about his innovative tactics. Clark makes personal sacrifices and risks burnout by working late into the night preparing lessons, and his health suffers as a result of his great dedication. Despite these obstacles, he maintains high expectations and a strong sense of responsibility for his pupils' performance, reminding the principal, "These kids can achieve if someone believes in them." Clark's unwavering trust in his students' potential, as well as his ongoing adaptation of teaching tactics, demonstrate the significant impact of critical reflection on both his professional development and his students' academic progress. Here is a table describing the key disorienting dilemmas faced by Ron Clark in *The Ron Clark Story*:

Disorienting Dilemma	Description	Supporting Evidence (Dialogue and scene illustration)
Cultural Differences and Classroom Environment	Clark moves from a rural school to an inner-city Harlem school, encountering substantial cultural and socioeconomic contrasts..	When Clark first enters his new classroom, he sees mayhem and understands he needs to adapt, remarking, "These kids need something different, something I haven't tried before."
Student Resistance and Behavior Issues	He deals with disengaged, unruly students who resist authority and lack motivation.	Clark's students openly defy him, as seen by a scenario in which a student questions him, "Why

		should we listen to you?" and another in which they reject his directions until he begins cleaning the classroom to show respect and set an example.
Institutional Apathy and Lack of Support	He faces skepticism and a lack of support from his colleagues and the administration.	A colleague cynically observes, "You'll never get through to them," reflecting the school's overall pessimism and low expectations. Furthermore, the principal first doubts Clark's unusual techniques, increasing the strain.
Personal Sacrifices and Burnout	The intense concentration required to reform his classroom has an impact on his personal life and health.	Clark is shown working late into the night preparing lessons, and there are situations in which he is visibly exhausted and stressed. His dedication to his students has a direct influence on his own health and personal life, such as when he becomes ill as a result of overwork.
High Expectations and Accountability	Clark has great expectations for his students and feels enormous pressure and responsibility for their success.	Clark strongly informs the principal, "These kids can achieve if someone believes in them." He also motivates his students with words such, "You are capable of so much more," and celebrates their accomplishments, demonstrating his high expectations and personal involvement in their development.

Table 1. The main disorienting dilemmas in *The Ron Clark Story* film

4.1.2 Critical reflection facilitates transformative learning for Ron Clark in the film

In *The Ron Clark Story*, critical reflection is crucial in promoting transformative learning for Ron Clark, allowing him to continuously adapt his teaching practices to effectively address his pupils' different needs. When Clark arrives in Harlem, he is confronted with a challenging and chaotic classroom setting, prompting him to reflect deeply on his teaching method. He demonstrates his commitment to earning his students' respect by cleaning the classroom himself and saying, "I respect you, and I expect you to respect me," so providing a great example of reciprocal respect. Recognizing his students' cultural origins, Clark incorporates rap music into his teachings, stating, "If you can remember these words to songs, you can remember your lessons," increasing engagement and relevance. As he muses on the shortcomings of his original disciplinary measures, Clark decides, "I have to find a way to get through to them," prompting him to implement new strategies such as educational games and competitions to improve learning outcomes. Furthermore, Clark demonstrates a deep commitment to meeting individual student needs by providing personalized encouragement, as seen in his interaction with Shameika, where he says, "I see

you have potential, but you need to believe in yourself," and extends his support beyond class hours, visiting students' homes and assuring them, "I'm here for you, no matter what." These reflective practices not only transform Clark's teaching methods, but they also greatly improve his pupils' academic performance and personal growth, demonstrating the power of critical reflection in educational environments. Here is a table describing the critical reflection facilitates transformative learning for Ron Clark in *The Ron Clark Story*, film:

Aspect of Critical Reflection	Description	Supporting Evidence (Dialogue and scene illustration)
Adapting to Student Behavior	Clark considers his strategy to handling student behavior and resolves to earn their respect through actions.	He chooses to clean the classroom himself, reminding his kids, "I respect you, and I expect you to respect me."
Innovative Teaching Methods	He considers what may resonate culturally with his students and incorporates rap into his teaching to engage them.	Clark raps multiplication tables to his students, saying, "If you can remember these words to songs, you can remember your lessons."
Personal Commitment and Example	Clark recognizes that in order to acquire the trust of his students, he must demonstrate his commitment and respect.	He stays after school to assist children and visits their homes, demonstrating his dedication by stating, "I'm here for you, no matter what."
Continuous Adaptation and Improvement	Clark continuously evaluates and adapts his teaching tactics based on student input and classroom dynamics.	When he realizes his early approaches aren't working, he tells himself, "I have to find a way to get through to them." He then modifies his disciplinary approach and incorporates creative tactics like as games and competitions to make learning more enjoyable.
Belief in Students' Potential	Reflecting on his students' talents, he sets high expectations and inspires them to do better.	He motivates his kids with remarks such, "You are capable of so much more," and has a firm conviction in their abilities.
Addressing Individual Student Needs	Clark understands and addresses each student's individual requirements via introspection, tailoring his support approach to them.	In a moment with a difficult student, Shameika, Clark says, "I see you have potential, but you need to believe in yourself." He spends extra time helping her after class, indicating his dedication to her personal success.

Table 2. Critical reflection in *The Ron Clark Story* film

4.1.3 The observable outcomes of the transformative learning process for Ron Clark and his students in the film

In *The Ron Clark Story*, Ron Clark's transformative learning experience results in major observable consequences for both him and his students. Clark's proactive approach to addressing perplexing challenges, such as cultural differences and student resistance, via critical reflection yields a transformed classroom atmosphere. His commitment to garnering students' respect and interest, as demonstrated by activities such as personally cleaning the classroom and incorporating rap into lessons, creates a positive learning environment. This commitment is shown in the personal sacrifices he makes, such as staying late and visiting students' families, which have a significant impact on their motivation and academic achievement. Clark's transformative teaching approaches, as proven by higher standardized test scores and individual student advancement, not only increase academic achievements but also foster students' self-confidence and personal growth. His ongoing adaption of teaching tactics based on reflective practices highlights the significant power of transformative learning, illustrating how intentional reflection can result in practical advances in educational environments. Here is the observable outcomes of the transformative learning process for Ron Clark and his students can be presented in a table format:

Observable Outcomes	Description
Improved Classroom Environment	Clark's proactive approach to tackling cultural differences and student resistance through critical reflection makes the classroom a more respected and engaging learning environment. His activities, such as personally cleaning the classroom, promote a positive attitude and increase student respect.
Enhanced Student Engagement	The use of culturally relevant teaching approaches, such as rap music in class, boosts student participation and excitement for learning.
Academic Progress and Achievement	Observable changes in standardized test scores and academic performance illustrate the efficacy of Clark's revolutionary teaching strategies.
Personal Growth and Self-Belief	Clark's particular assistance and dedication, which included visiting students' homes and encouraging them outside of the classroom, had resulted in enhanced self-confidence and belief in their potential.
Professional Development	Ron Clark's own development as an educator, as indicated by his use of reflective practice-based teaching methodologies, demonstrates the transforming power of purposeful reflection on academic outcomes.

Table 3. The observable outcomes of the transformative learning process for Ron Clark and his students in the film.

4.2 Discussion

In *The Ron Clark Story*, Ron Clark's key unsettling challenges reflect various theoretical principles of transformative learning as stated by researchers such as Archer-Kuhn et. al. (2021), Hanaba and Voitiuk (2022), Young et. al. (2022), and Birkeland and Demotland (2018). One significant parallel is the importance of critical reflection in enabling transformative learning. Archer-Kuhn et. al. (2021) underline the importance of deep learning, critical reflection, and identity transformations, as seen by Clark's ongoing reassessment and adaptation of his teaching methods in response to the demanding classroom setting. For example, Clark's understanding that his students require "something different" is consistent with the critical reflection described by Archer-Kuhn et. al. (2021) as necessary for transformative learning. Another parallel is drawn by Hanaba and Voitiuk (2022), who describe how transformative learning promotes self-awareness and self-construction in socio-cultural settings. Clark's efforts to learn and incorporate his students' cultural backgrounds, such as incorporating rap music into classrooms, are consistent with this approach. This technique not only engages students, but also helps them develop self-awareness and self-belief, mirroring Hanaba and Voitiuk's (2022) emphasis on socio-cultural awareness in transformational learning. Young et. al. (2022) observed that instructors frequently meet uncomfortable obstacles that stimulate transformative learning experiences, which are directly analogous to Clark's interactions with student opposition and institutional apathy. The film shows these problems through scenes in which Clark's students openly oppose him and colleagues cast doubt on his techniques. These situations demonstrate how addressing deeply held beliefs and assumptions, as stated by Young et. al. (2022), is critical to Clark's transformative process. However, there are disparities in how these transformative events are described and examined. Archer-Kuhn et. al. (2021) address the function of field supervisors in encouraging critical reflection, whereas Clark's path is mostly self-directed and lacks such mentorship. This demonstrates a disparity in the source of support and guidance during the transformative process. Similarly, Hanaba and Voitiuk's (2022) greater focus on self-development and information comprehension goes beyond the urgent practical difficulties that Clark tackles in the film, implying a more comprehensive vision of transformative learning. Birkeland and Demotland (2018) emphasize the emotional effects of confusing problems, pointing out that such obstacles can elicit unpleasant feelings such as wrath and humiliation, which can impair performance. Clark's personal sacrifices and health concerns, as presented in the film, support this viewpoint, revealing the devastating mental and physical toll these dilemmas may exact. Clark's experience, however, differs from the more generalized emotional implications mentioned by Birkeland and Demotland (2018) in that it gives a unique, narrative-driven example of how transformative learning may both challenge and ultimately empower educators.

In *The Ron Clark Story*, Ron Clark experiences transformative learning through critical reflection, which is consistent with various theoretical findings from previous researchers such as Machost and Stains (2023), Mohamed et. al. (2022), Aryal (2022), and Gitsaki and Zoghbor (2023). Both the film and the sources emphasize the significance of several models and frameworks in reflective practice. Machost and Stains (2023) describe how educators use a variety of reflective strategies to foster critical thinking and problem solving, as seen in Clark's adaptation of his teaching methods. For example, Clark's usage of rap music to engage his students exemplifies his creative approach to addressing their cultural backgrounds and enhancing learning outcomes. This reflects the dynamic and action-oriented aspect of reflective practice, as described by Machost and Stains (2023). Mohamed

et. al. (2022) underline the importance of reflective strategies in helping educators detect and overcome deeply ingrained biases, resulting in major changes in teaching methods. This is shown in the film by Clark's recognition of the flaws in his initial disciplinary methods. By thinking on these flaws and concluding, "I have to find a way to get through to them," Clark offers new strategies such as educational games and competitions, ultimately increasing student engagement and learning outcomes. This process of constant reflection and modification is consistent with Mohamed et. al.'s (2022) results about the transformative effect of critical reflection in addressing biases and enhancing teaching techniques. According to Aryal (2022), the depth and efficiency of reflection are determined by an educator's ability to combine earlier experiences with present conditions as well as their future vision. Clark's reflective methods in the film are strongly founded in his previous teaching experiences as well as his goals for his students. His belief in his pupils' potential and high expectations, as indicated by words such as "You are capable of so much more," demonstrate how his vision for the future influences his reflective practices and teaching tactics. This highlights the importance of reflective depth, as articulated by Aryal (2022), in the effectiveness of transformative learning. However, inconsistencies arise between the film's portrayal and the theoretical findings. Gitsaki and Zoghbor (2023) emphasize the importance of systematic reflection along with appropriate training and mentorship in improving the quality of reflective practices and teaching outcomes. In contrast, Ron Clark's journey in the film is primarily self-directed and lacks formal guidance. While Clark's personal commitment and reflective practices result in considerable changes in his teaching methods and student outcomes, the lack of formal support and mentorship sets his experience apart from Gitsaki and Zoghbor's (2023) more systematic approach. This implies that, while self-directed introspection might be useful, structured support may have a greater influence.

In *The Ron Clark Story*, the observable outcomes of Ron Clark's transformative learning process mirror key aspects of transformative learning theory as described by researchers such as Young et. al. (2022), Gitsaki and Zoghbor (2023), Silva et. al. (2018), Yadav and Bhatia (2022), and Çimen & Kömür (2019). First, Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory states that facing confusing problems challenges people's preconceptions, leading them to rethink and adopt alternate perspectives (Young et al., 2022). Clark is confronted with substantial cultural differences and student resistance in the film, which creates unsettling choices. His critical thought on these problems led him to implement new teaching tactics, such as introducing rap music into his sessions to improve student engagement. This is consistent with the theoretical paradigm that implies transformative learning entails reevaluating and changing one's perspectives in the face of substantial challenges. Furthermore, engaging in reflective practices in response to uncomfortable situations can have a significant impact on educator-student interactions and classroom dynamics by raising awareness of teaching processes and improving pedagogical skills (Gitsaki & Zoghbor, 2023; Silva et al. 2018). Clark's efforts, such as cleaning the classroom and visiting kids' homes, demonstrate his commitment to building trust and respect with his students. These efforts enhance the classroom environment by exhibiting a greater awareness of the students' needs and improving his teaching skills, similar to the influence of reflective practices emphasized by Gitsaki and Zoghbor (2023) and Silva et al. (2018). Reflective techniques allow educators to gain new insights, improve teaching characteristics, and uncover training deficiencies, resulting in more effective teaching strategies and a more welcoming learning environment (Yadav & Bhatia, 2022). Clark displays this by continuously adapting his teaching methods based on reflective practices, such as motivating students

with educational games and competitions. His proactive approach results in a more engaging and supportive classroom environment, which is closely related to the theoretical benefits of reflective strategies for improving teaching practices and classroom dynamics, as outlined by Yadav and Bhatia (2022). Reflective practices can positively impact educator-student relationships and classroom dynamics, as evidenced by student feedback surveys that evaluate teaching effectiveness and pedagogical skills (Çimen & Kömür, 2019). Although the film does not include formal student feedback questionnaires, visible benefits such as higher standardized test scores and increased student involvement suggest good feedback and effective teaching approaches. Clark's efforts to build personal connections with his students through home visits and tailored encouragement further illustrate the positive impact of reflective practices on relationships and classroom dynamics, aligning with Çimen and Kömür's (2019) findings. However, inconsistencies arise between the film's portrayal and the theoretical findings. While Gitsaki and Zoghbor (2023) and Silva et. al. (2018) advocate for systematic reflection accompanied by suitable training and mentorship to improve reflective skills, Clark's path in the film is primarily self-directed and lacks formal mentorship. Despite this, Clark's personal devotion and reflective processes resulted in considerable changes to his teaching methods and student outcomes. This implies that, while systematic help can improve reflecting practices, self-directed reflection can still provide significant positive results, as seen by Clark's experience.

5. Conclusion

This research concentrated on three key aspects of transformative learning as depicted in *The Ron Clark Story*: the key disorienting dilemmas confronting Ron Clark, the role of critical reflection in facilitating transformative learning, and the observable outcomes of this process for both Ron Clark and his students. The findings demonstrated that Ron Clark's interactions with considerable cultural differences, student opposition, and institutional apathy were pivotal confusing challenges that tested his existing teaching strategies and encouraged him to try new approaches. Clark was able to alter his approaches through ongoing critical reflection, resulting in a transformative learning experience that significantly improved his pupils' academic achievement and personal growth.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that educators actively engage in critical reflection in order to solve the unique issues they confront in the classroom. Reflective practices can assist educators in discovering new teaching strategies, improving their pedagogical skills, and developing stronger relationships with their students. Schools and educational institutions should consider offering structured assistance and mentorship programs to help instructors improve the quality of their reflective practices, since formal mentorship could accentuate the beneficial effects seen in Ron Clark's self-guided trip. Encouraging a culture of reflection and adaptability can result in more effective instruction and a more supportive learning environment for students.

Looking ahead, the prospects for the advancement of these study findings are encouraging. Future research might look into the use of structured reflection practices and mentorship programs in a variety of educational contexts to see how they affect teaching effectiveness and student results. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could look at the long-term consequences of transformative learning for both educators and students, offering more information about the long-term benefits of critical reflection in education. By broadening the scope of research and application, educators may continue to improve their

practices, ultimately creating an atmosphere in which transformative learning thrives and students are encouraged to reach their greatest potential.

References

- Archer-Kuhn, et al. (2021). Transformative learning in field education: Students bridging the theory/practice gap. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 51(7), 2419–2438. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa082>
- Aryal. (2022). Critical self-reflective engagement to improve professional development for a teacher educator. *Mathematics Education Forum, Chitwan*, 7(7), 66–81. <https://doi.org/10.3126/mefc.v7i7.54787>
- Birkeland, Å., & Demotland, S. (2018). Disorienting dilemmas—The significance of resistance and disturbance in an intercultural program within kindergarten teacher education. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 52(3), 377–387. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S12124-018-9433-Y>
- Çimen, Ş. S., & Kömür, Ş. (2019). Dilemma situations in teaching practice: What do student teachers reflect? *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences*, 18(IDEA Special Issue), 168–177. <https://doi.org/10.21547/JSS.599356>
- Fleming, T. (2023). Transformative learning and experience: Forging new learning links between the personal and political. *International Journal of Adult Education and Technology*, 14(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJAET.324930>
- Gitsaki, C., & Zoghbor, W. S. (2023). *English as a medium of instruction on the arabian peninsula* (1st ed., pp. 219–232). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003183594-17>
- Gómez, M. T. R. (2022). Emerging and transformative narratives on inclusive education through documentary cinema. *Proceedings of the 2022 AERA Annual Meeting*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/1891659>
- Youtube.com. (14 January 2024). The ron clark story (movie starring matthew perry, biography, drama, movies in english. Accessed on 25 May 2024. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cn9zxlFDPDQ>
- Hanaba, S., & Voitiuk, O. (2022). Heuristic potential of transformative learning ideas. *Pedagogika-Pedagogy*, 94(1), 19–30. <https://doi.org/10.53656/ped2022-1.02>
- Lahiri, S. (2023). A qualitative research approach is an inevitable part of research methodology: An overview. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*, 5(3).
- Laros, A. (2017). Disorienting dilemmas as a catalyst for transformative learning. In Laros, A., Fuhr, T., & Taylor, E. W. (Eds.), *Transformative learning meets Bildung: An international exchange* (pp. 145–155). Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-797-9_7
- Machost, H. R., & Stains, M. (2023). Reflective practices in education: A primer for practitioners. *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.22-07-0148>
- Mohamed, M., et al. (2022). Conceptualizing the complexity of reflective practice in education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1008234>
- Ponce, O. A., et.al. (2022). Qualitative research in education: Revisiting its theories, practices and developments in a scientific-political era. *IJERI: International Journal of Educational Research and Innovation*, (18), 278–295. <https://doi.org/10.46661/ijeri.5917>

- Silva, N. J., et al. (2018). Reflective teaching: Interpreting the results of pedagogical surveys at higher education. *Proceedings of ICERI Conference*, 5936–5943. <https://doi.org/10.21125/ICERI.2018.2398>
- Yadav, D., & Bhatia, D. (2022). Effect of reflective practices on student learning in higher education—A real-life approach. *International Journal of Educational Reform*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10567879221094298>
- Young, A. M., et al. (2022). Disorienting dilemmas and transformative learning for school placement teacher educators during covid-19: Challenges and possibilities. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 48(4), 459–474. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2022.2082274>
- Zhu, Y. P., & Park, H. W. (2022). Use of triangulation in comparing the blockchain knowledge structure between china and south korea: Scientometric network, topic modeling, and prediction technique. *Sustainability*, 14(4), 2326. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14042326>