Transformative Learning and the African Female Immigrant Experience: Lessons to empower and inspire

Daphne W. Ntiri
Department of African American Studies, Wayne State University, Michigan, USA

[Abstract] This article is an application of transformative learning (TL) theory to my experiences as an adult literacy scholar and West African female immigrant in the United States. According to Tennant, TL is an effective instrument for self-development and change. I employ the insights of TL to my educational experiences, from taking my first overseas study trip as a college student, to transitioning to the US as a graduate student, to teaching adult students in an urban research university. Essentially, my story is a case study in TL. It is about how self and society intertwine and how such interrelationships can play out in our lives and shape the ways in which we come to understand ourselves and others. I have employed autoethnography as the methodology as it documents autobiographical details that expose the self as central to the reflexive process, which results in greater understanding of human experience.

[Keywords] adult literacy, African female, autoethnography, immigrant, transformative learning

Introduction

Transformative learning (TL) fosters self-development and can improve self-esteem by helping the learner discover her "authentic" self (Tennant, 2000). TL results from "a continuing process of examining experiences" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 85). As adult educators, we are presented with ample opportunities to advance this examination. Johnson-Bailey and Alfred remind us that “knowledge of self is a precursor to teaching transformation” (2006, p.55). This is an application of TL theory to my experiences as a West African woman who immigrated to the United States and became an adult education scholar. My central purpose is to model an approach other educators and scholars can use to further their own transformations. In so doing, I demonstrate that TL can, and must, occur at both the personal and community levels; self and society intertwine not only in my life but also in the lives of my adult students and in society. My story is evidence of this interrelationship; it illustrates how TL unfolds in our lives, how it shapes the ways in which we come to understand others and ourselves.

My methodology is autoethnography, a qualitative research method that aims to establish trustworthiness and authenticity of the researcher-practitioner as she embeds herself in theory and practice via autobiographical details that may be instructive (Foster, McAllister and O’Brien, 2006). My story moves back and forth between the personal (auto) and the socio-relational (ethnographical). In the process, the narrative interconnects some deeply personal aspects of my life's journey with the more impersonal, structural aspects of society and culture, especially as they relate to populations that are politically under-represented, poor and illiterate. Autoethnography provides a vehicle for reflexive thinking of my lived experience, while offering the opportunity to link my cultural background and personal experiences as a way of conveying meaning and contributing to knowledge.

Background

This article is loosely based on an earlier one with Merry Stewart, which evaluated an education intervention utilizing TL principles on functional health literacy and diabetes knowledge among African American seniors with diabetes (2006cite). We demonstrated that using TL principles in health education may improve those living with chronic illnesses enough to search for knowledge and improve self-efficacy and self-management of their illnesses. Clearly, the TL paradigm is critical to understanding—and positively transforming—individual circumstances.

Thanks to that study, I was able to reflect on transformative personal experiences such as my focus on literacy studies and the pursuit of literacy as a human right. Particularly the exposition of their journeys and the transformative steps to their life and career paths by Johnson-Bailey and Alfred (2006) made me stop and think about the steps of my own transformation as an African female immigrant. I have reflected on my past as a young twenty-one-year-old immigrant who moved unaccompanied to the US to pursue higher education and embarked on a cause to transform adult lives through higher education and literacy.

Methodology

Autoethnography, also known as narrative ethnography, reflexive ethnography, or reflexive or subjective autobiography is a qualitative social science method with several strengths (Arnold, 2010; Boyd, 2008; Foster, McAllister and O'Brien, 2006; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). First, it uses the study of *self* as a starting point for exploring broader socio-cultural issues. Second, it makes the scholar's lived experiences accessible to others, who are now accorded a chance at profound self-reflection. Third, it positions the scholar as a subject within this discourse and the wider cultural, political, and historical contexts in which she functions. Ultimately, it offers perspective transformation for both teacher and student, in that the teacher learns while teaching and gets engaged even as she engages.

A growing body of research, as summarized by Ulmer (1994), asserts that narrative non-fiction (which includes autoethnography) is the basis for all published research. Arnold (2010) echoes this sentiment, pointing to the advantage of this subjective process of academic inquiry as "an integral aspect of knowledge itself" (p.1). It has become a popular form of scholarly inquiry in the fields of anthropology, educational research, and feminist discourse (Foster, McAllister and O'Brien, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

The adult education literature offers some notable examples of autoethnography. Boyd (2008) uses autoethnography to share his personal experiences about his participation in an interracial dialogue group that produced significant transformative lessons about the dynamics of white privilege, race, and class distinctions. In Hansman's study (2007) on women learning leadership roles in higher education, she shares her personal story along with an ethnographic inquiry of other women as leaders in higher education. Outcomes of her study show possible benefits to the academy in the tailoring of mentoring and leadership training for women and minorities. Other studies document the reflexive self and ways to explore the possibilities that lie in the indigenous knowledge framework (Quicke, 2010). Finally, Attard and Armour (2005) show that with exposure of personal thoughts, feelings and learning provide unique insights into ways in which a teacher learns and develops both as a person and as a professional in the field.

This article relied on several sources of data. Memory played an essential part in the reconstruction process. I also profited from conversations with my American friends and families who had welcomed me during the early years, the 1970s. By pure serendipity, I have reunited with one of my graduate school peers who is also pursuing a career in Adult Education in the academy. Her reading of my drafts has validated the timelines and common threads of my story, including recollection of my early years as a volunteer tutor in post-high school settings, and reminiscences of student activities like weekend seminars and literacy campaign endeavors—the training ground for our adult education careers. I also accessed historical records, country data, emails, journal entries and past letters from the friends I left behind in my hometown of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Transformative Learning and Macro-level Forces

I grew up in a small, bustling urban community of Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone, West Africa with an area of 102 square km and a population of over 200,000 in 1965 (Fyle 1962; Kanneh, 1993). The city is ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse and has steadily increased to over 1,055,964 according to the 2015 census and presently stands at 1,309,000 (Charleston Sister Cities International 2025)

Sierra Leone, an ex-British colony with a current population projected at over 8.5 million in 2023 (population.com) is known for its gems such as diamonds, iron ore, rutile, and other natural resources. For Sierra Leoneans and many other Africans, the 1950s and 1960s were a period of serial emergence of nations freshly independent from their European colonial masters (Shillington, 2019; Palmer, 2022). It was a period of unprecedented optimism, of new alliances between African countries and of uplifting promises by African leaders for improved social, economic, and educational opportunity. In many of these nations, however, illiteracy, i.e., lack of knowledge of the written word, was a way of life. Though Western education was taking root, education here was the privilege of a small elite group that labored as a social class to preserve their privileged position, often to the detriment of their nations (Ntiri, 1983; Banya, 1993; Palmer 2022). Many families could not afford schooling fees for their children, particularly during those decades when families were considerably large (Steady 2023).

Despite the financial hardships, families struggled to educate their children (Ntiri, 1993; Palmer, 2022; Steady 2023). At the time, education was seen as the ultimate escape from poverty. My father worked as a civil servant and my mother was a seamstress whose revenues accorded us security and enabled the educational success of my five siblings and me. Though I did not know it, I lived in educational privilege and social insulation during the first two decades of my life. In 1962 in Sierra Leone, among a population of about three million, student enrolments at all levels were far from satisfactory: 80,000 were enrolled in elementary school, 1,000 in secondary school, and just 200 at the university (Kanneh, 1993).

It was from this context that I migrated at the invitation of an American Professor of Linguistics from Michigan State University, East Lansing to come and serve as a Teaching Assistant at the African Studies Center in the fall of 1970. It was a world where transformative learning was not only necessary but also inevitable. Up to that point, my life had been culturally shaped by traditional, sexist mores and roles. The African perspective I realized was a truly traditional one. My early life parallels certain aspects of Johnson-Bailey's and Alfred's experiences. Johnson-Bailey noted her coming of age in the US at the height of the Civil Rights

movement and how this played a role in her route to self-development, "As a young 'colored' child growing up in the segregated South in the 1950s, transformational learning saved my life" (Johnson-Bailey & Alfred, 2006, p.49). The lessons she learned in race relations have formed the basis of her cultural consciousness and remained a significant part of her worldview.

Coming from St. Lucia in the Caribbean, Alfred on her part had somewhat advantageous roots. For one, she was not subjected to the hegemonic exploitation and oppressive political and social crises of blacks in America and nor was I. She notes,

> I enjoyed a high degree of social capital and saw few boundaries to my personal and professional development. I lived in a world where black people were lords and masters of their universe and where students who showed academic promise were nurtured by the family, the school and the community, thus contributing to their development into successful adults (Bailey & Alfred, 2006, p.51).

However, on arrival in the US, transformative learning was inevitable in her search for meaning of race and understanding of the marginalization of blacks in the US (Bailey & Alfred, 2006, p. 52).

Transformative Learning, Literacy and Educational Opportunity

Learning "can consist of a change in one of our beliefs and or attitudes" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 320), but actual transformation occurs when we are able to change our frames of reference, our entire perspective on something through critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991). Catalysts for this transformation may be episodic or gradual. In my journey toward a career in adult literacy education, the first transformative episode occurred when I was nineteen years old. Realization of the pervasiveness of adult illiteracy only came to me during a university-sponsored study-abroad program to Senegal, a neighboring francophone (French-speaking) country. Through this program, we, as anglophone speakers would acquaint ourselves with the metropolitan language promotion needs of African people and learn to improve our spoken knowledge of French and become bilingual. During our tour around Dakar, the capital city, a fellow student's refusal to send home postcards prompted me to inquire. "No one in his family knows how to read," he retorted.

The experience—a veritable *trigger event*—provoked me to critically evaluate my assumptions about what it meant to be literate. Since I was unaware of the prevalence of illiteracy in my home environment, this encounter was transformative. I now became more perceptive. Back home, we did not carry identification cards or driver's licenses, nor did we spend time filling out forms at the doctor's office or at the store. There were also no price tags or labels to be decoded during grocery shopping. The more I observed, the more troubled I became by the fact that Sierra Leoneans on a large scale could not read and could not afford formal education.

My ethnic group, the Krios, have historically enjoyed a comparatively higher literacy rate because of their exposure to Western education and lifestyles. The Krios are descendants of a mix of settlers, ex-slaves from the New World, and re-captives (slaves who never reached the New World and were recaptured at sea and taken back to Sierra Leone). Many served as missionaries and teachers in and out of the country as far east as the Congo (Dixon, Fyle, and Gibril, 2006; Palmer 2022; Steady 2023).

Through critical self-reflection, I was gaining knowledge of myself and my environment. I found myself progressively drawn toward ideas about the potential in others. I was especially charmed by the scope of the literacy condition, its causes and characteristics. Over time a new obsession unfolded, and an erstwhile under-prioritized issue—adult illiteracy—rose to become central to my discourse. Upon my return home, I tried to infuse activism into college students' activities, a tall order indeed. At the university, I began urging faculty to revisit their frames of reference in the Extra Mural Department (the British equivalent of an Adult Education Department in the US) and to reflect on their assumptions. It was critical that they re-think their pedagogy and pursue literacy transformation. To my pleasant surprise, the Extra Mural Department did add a voice to its activities. However, the gain was short-lived: the department was eliminated not long thereafter.

Disorientation and Coming of Age across the Atlantic

During the 1960s & 1970s, Third World countries glorified the United States of America as the golden land of opportunity. As such, gaining a scholarship for graduate study was a great honor. Before my arrival, I had critically prioritized my goals beyond schooling. My three extracurricular goals were learning to drive, swim, and type. Within a year and overcoming much anxiety, I learned how to drive with the help of friends. The snide remarks of one of the American helpers who said *even the most stupid person can drive* was all I needed to overcome my darkest fears about the wheel. Off-campus mobility was impossible without a car. Before coming to the US, I had not seen snow. Soon, I had adjusted to the drastic weather conditions, and I was comfortable in my weighty overcoat and snow boots. Driving on treacherous roads was an especially terrifying experience. I enrolled in a swimming class for adults and I would regularly during lunch or midafternoon after classes to go to the campus recreation center to acquaint myself with the water until I could do laps. That took some years. Learning to type was a one semester instructional TV course and one is left to practice and get perfect. I also worked hard at perfecting my new American accent to be better understood in my role as a graduate teaching assistant. I also had to come up with ways to supplement my teaching assistant's pay. (Foreign student visa status F1 does not allow off-campus employment.) Without the additional income, it would be impossible to maintain a student household and send remittances to my family back home, something I did not have to do previously. Back home, a government scholarship covered every college expense.

Adult responsibilities were now inescapable. I was already taking control of my learning and setting my own learning goals. In short, I was now my own father and mother. Soon, I began searching for a voice. Every bit of discussion in the classroom, on campus, and in my new context demanded my critical perception. Without stop, I assessed social justice issues both on the African continent and here in the US. I became interested both in the ways I came to understand my new world and the possibilities open to me in the transformation of self. While having a unique voice might seem desirable, it brought new anxieties with it. One cannot critically analyze social phenomena and not feel helpless about real-world problems that do not readily lend themselves to easy resolution.

My cultural and socio-political perspective was constantly being put to the test. I had to assert my place in society and reorganize my self-identification and ideological stance. Among other issues, I was confronted with one of the most pervasive topics in America—race. Campus discourse focused on the civil rights movement, legal prohibition on education, de jure segregation,

the aftermath of the 1960s race riots in US cities alongside the Vietnam War, divestment against apartheid in South Africa and the sexual revolution. As an African student, some of the new challenges I faced included the constant battle against discrimination and the cry for social justice and equality coupled with my language limitations. Learning to internalize these critical discourses on campus from my limited worldview required adult learning capabilities that were not yet part of my repertoire.

This new beginning gave me a chance to build new social networks for educational guidance and personal advancement. My first campus job was as a teaching assistant in an undergraduate interdisciplinary class on Africa that had over 300 students; in contrast, the college I left behind had a total student population of 824. This was quite a challenge, indeed. I had to overcome the fear of public speaking, a practice that was not encouraged for girls back in my home country. I was growing and maturing, a process that was emancipatory. Increased motivation to learn undergirded my immigrant's dream to succeed.

Adult Illiteracy Encounter in the United States

In my home country, a largely oral society, it was common to assume that illiteracy was non-existent in Western countries such as the United States. It was thus disorienting to learn that adult illiteracy was not solely a Third World problem. The truth of this situation was evident on a flight when a fellow female young passenger, elegantly dressed and well-spoken, expressed an ardent desire to attend college like me. I asked for a brief written statement about her interests. In her five-line note, the word English was spelled *anglise*. Equally atrocious were her grammar and punctuation. There was no question that her literacy skills were at the lowest levels of proficiency. I was surprised when she reported that she was a high school graduate. It was my first exposure to functional illiteracy in the US, an incontestably transformative incident. I was forced to re-evaluate my initial assumptions in favor of a more accurate assessment of the human condition.

This became the start of renewed commitment to the advancement of literacy wherever I found myself. Through volunteer tutoring opportunities in post-high school settings, I learned that some high school graduates in the US were poor readers. The more involved I became with adult literacy efforts, the more aware I became of the socio-political implications that accompany adult literacy agendas. I concluded that "adult literacy is a social construct that responds to the political and economic demands of a given government or nation. It is not culture-specific but is the result of a set of policies adopted by governments in the name of progress" (Ntiri, 1993).

Interdisciplinary Transformative Pedagogy in the Academy

My passion for adult literacy advancement has intensified. I went on to obtain a doctorate degree in Adult and Continuing Education but before I did, I was offered a unique opportunity to serve as a Research Fellow with the United Nations in 1974. The assignment was with the International Institute for Labor Studies, which is affiliated with the International Labor Office (ILO). The Institute was dissolved and became a part of the ILO before my departure in the mid-1970s. While academics often go directly from completion of their doctorates to college/university teaching and research, immigration-status issues compounded by family matters pushed me in various non-university employment directions, with UNESCO in Paris and subsequently with field assignments

in Dakar, Senegal and Kismayo, and Somalia, all in pursuit of adult literacy promotion, advancement, and eradication.

Seventeen years after I landed in America, I became an assistant professor trying to find my voice in an interdisciplinary studies department in an urban research university with optimal opportunities for transformation of non-traditional or adult learners. Functional illiteracy is a major hindrance to the local job market and is a catalyst for violence and crime. Recent surveys put illiteracy in Detroit, where 82 percent of the residents are African Americans, at almost 47% (National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003). Many of my adult students from the Detroit metropolitan area had well-defined reasons for coming to school as they were self-directed and goal oriented. As an adult educator, what was important for me was addressing the assumptions about the cultural and human context of adult learning with new inspiration—transforming students from passive classroom learners to active listeners and doers.

Routinely, the evidence has corroborated findings of earlier studies that showed nontraditional college students serve as a rich resource for needed community service (Ntiri, 1999; Hayes, 1996; Freer, 1995). The nontraditional students I taught over a span of two decades have included an executive at the YMCA, a journalist at a major newspaper in the city, an FBI agent, a naval officer, a homeless person, a bank vice president, an academic adviser, a mother-daughter pair, and even a grandmother-granddaughter pair. Although they are diverse in socio-economic status, age, race, and gender, the demographic profile was largely female (60%) and African American (62%).

As a black female academic, negotiating my position has been inescapable. I have continued to integrate meaning and engage in transformative learning in my adopted country. In this context, the hallmarks of adult learning theory and practice, i.e., practical, integrative, and collaborative learning, have been emphasized.

Discussion

The focus of transformative learning is *"*on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings[…]to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers" (Mezirow, 2000, p.8). Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory fulfills adult learning principles and validates the lived experiences of my journey, which I have explored via autoethnography. Through autoethnography I have, upon self-reflection, borrowed from meaningful personal anecdotes and ultimately generalized my experiences to the wider context of adult learning.

In the educational system of my youth, the conveyance of knowledge was uni-directional. The pedagogy was not dialogic or problem-posing; it did not enable teachers and students to critically reflect on their lived experiences to effect transformation. Instruction in my home college was steeped in colonial pedagogical practices where the mostly male professorate was seen as the embodiment of all knowledge and students were, as Freire (1970) noted, *bankers of education*. That was a serious limitation to Transformative Learning. Students could not tap into the vast repositories of knowledge that could have been made accessible had more bi-directional approaches to adult learning been employed.

In the initial days of my inquiry, I was confronted by a never-ending string of personal dilemmas. The more troubled I felt, the harder I questioned my surroundings. Over time, my inquiry gave rise to profound personal shifts and generated a new frame of reference. I now not only had a new understanding of self, but I also discerned linkages between myself and others in society. Suddenly, the cultural differences between my students and I became a strength rather than a handicap. Johnson-Bailey and Alfred posit that "the negotiation between and across cultures is an integral part of learning, critical reflection and ultimately transformational learning and teaching for black women educators" (2006, p. 54). As my cultural orientation becomes less of a problem, thanks to my acculturation in the US, I have undergone significant attitudinal shifts. For example, I have come to embrace the diverse learning styles and practices, which I realize offer key advantages for the learner.

Looking back at everything that has transpired in my personal transformation, I wonder: What direction would my life have taken had I not encountered the young man who could not send a postcard home? And how have my transformative experiences engaged students and led them to interact with diverse cultures? These questions are at the heart of this paper. By pursuing the themes that the questions suggest, I have gathered that social transformation does occur with the right intervention. Sensitivity to issues of tolerance, social justice and equality has become central to my discourse to affect both personal change and broader social transformation.

Conclusion

Transformative learning via the autoethnographic approach provides both a window into the past and a sense of connection with the future. It holds wide appeal for scholarly inquiry aimed at greater understanding of the human experience in a pluralistic society. I set out in this paper to show that transformative learning can serve as an effective instrument for self-development and change. Once personal change has been achieved, how could the lessons learned be generalized to the wider society? How could these be expanded to enrich the lives of students and other populations?

Through my journey, I have constructed new meaning structures that have helped support a lifelong commitment to adult literacy. Whether in a poor, developing country or in an industrialized society like the US, illiteracy is typified by poverty, lack of access, and low motivation. Wherever illiteracy is pervasive, the primary role of an adult educator remains one of adapting to the needs of those affected.

Over the years, I have fashioned the self to become "an individual reflexive enterprise" (Beck, 1992, p.135), one that continuously incorporates new experiences into the authentic self that pursues self-development and change. By using the autoethnographic method, I was able to conduct a study of *self* as a researcher-practitioner. I drew from resources such as memory, conversations with friends, historical archives, and ongoing experience to reconstruct a picture, first of myself and then of the larger context. Ultimately, as an adult literacy scholar I developed a model of self-and-society wherein education is at once transformative and enlightening.

References

Arnold, J. (2010). What do university teachers do all day (and often into the night)? *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 7(1), 1-18.

Attard, K., & Armour, K. M. (2005). Learning to become a learning professional: Reflections on one year teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 28*(2), 195–207.

Banya, K. (1993). Illiteracy, colonial legacy and education: The case of modern Sierra Leone. *Comparative Education*, (1360-0486), *29*(2), 159-170.

Beck, U. (1992). *Risk Society: Towards a new modernity*. Sage.

Boyd, D. (2008). Autoethnography as a tool for transformative learning about white privilege. *Journal of Transformative Education*, *6*(3), 212-225.

Brookfield, S. (1995). Adult Learning: An overview. In A. Yuinjman (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Pergamon Press.

Brown, A.H., Cervero, R. M. & Johnson-Bailey, J. (2000). Making the invisible visible: Race, gender and teaching in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *50*(4), 273-88.

Charleston Sister Cities International. *Freetown, Sierra Leone.* [Blog] https://www.charlestonsistercities.org/newpage8531ffa2

Clarke, M. C., & Dirkx, J. (2000). Moving beyond a unitary self: A reflective dialogue. In A. Wilson, & E.R. Land Hayes,. (Eds.). *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (pp. 101-116). Jossey-Bass..

Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.733-768). Sage.

Foster, K. McAllister, M., & O'Brien, L. (2006). Extending the boundaries: Autoethnography as an emergent method in mental health nursing research. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, *15*, 44-53.

Freer, K. (1995). College student involvement in adult learning. *Adult Basic Education*, *5*(2), 82-97.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Seabury Press.

Fyfe, C. (1962). *A history of Sierra Leone*. Oxford University Press.

Hansman, C. A. (2007). *Leading or following? Women learning leadership roles in higher education*.

Hayes, E. (1996). Learning about adult literacy: A case study of college tutors. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 39*(5), 386-395.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2010). The intersection of gender and race in adult education research. 51st Adult Education Research Conference & Western Region Research Conference on the Education of Adults. [Joint Conference Proceedings]. Sacramento State University, (pp. 219 – 222).

Johnson-Bailey, J. & Alfred, M. (2006). Transformational teaching and the practices of black women adult educators. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *2006*(109), 49-58. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.207

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2001). *Sistahs in college: Making a way out of no way*. Krieger.

Kanneh, S. J. (1993). *Sierra Leone: Handbook of facts and figures*. Sierra Leone, Institute for Policy Studies.

Merriam S. & Caffarella, R. (1999). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (2nd edition). Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1996). Transformation theory of adult learning. *Michigan Association for Adult and Continuing Education, OPTIONS, 10*(1). *Special Issue,* (pp.19-28).

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation learning. In J. Mezirow and Associates (Eds.), *Learning transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. Jossey-Bass, (pp.3-24).

National Center for Education Statistics (2003). *The 2003 national assessment of adult literacy* (NAAL). US Department of Education. ED PUBS 8242-B Sandy Court, Jessup, MD. http://nces.ed.gov/NAAL

Ntiri, D. W., with Stewart, M. (2009). Transformative Learning Intervention: Effect on Functional Health Literacy and Diabetes Knowledge in Older African Americans. *Journal of Geriatrics and Geriatric Education, 30*(2),*100-113.*

Ntiri, D. W. (1999). Older college students as tutors for adult learners in urban literacy program. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *43*(1), 48-57.

Ntiri, D. W. (1993). Africa's educational dilemma: Towards an integrated model of roadblocks to universal literacy for social integration and change. *International Review of Education, 39*(5), 357-372.

Ntiri, D. W. (1983). *One is not a woman one becomes: The African Woman in a transitional society.* Bedford Publishers.

Palmer, E. (2022). *Africa: An introduction.* Routledge.

Quicke, J. (2010). Narrative strategies in educational research: Reflections on a critical autoethnography. *Educational Action Research*, *18*(2), 239-254.

Shillington, K. (2019). *History of Africa.* (4th ed.). Red Globe Press.

Steady, F. (2023). *Woman in action: Autobiography of a global African feminist.* Mereo Books.

Tennant, M. (2000). Adult learning for self-development and change. In A. Wilson, & E.R. Land Hayes, E. R. *Handbook of adult and continuing education* (pp. 87-100). Jossey Bass.

Ulmer, G. (1994). *Heuretics: The logic of invention*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

UNESCO. (2006). EFA Global monitoring report 2006. UNESCO. http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/reports/2006-literacy/