

Resources

Selected Bibliographic Resources for African American Adult Education

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Abstract

The authors use three disciplinary categories—history, philosophy, and adult learning and development—to categorize materials related to African American adult education. The sources provide an examination of adult education from a culturally grounded African American experiential perspective. The authors suggest that these sources can be used in a separate course on African American adult education or may be infused into an existing course to provide a different perspective on adult education for students in the field.

Introduction

This short bibliography provides a source for the study of African American adult education. Listed are references that provide historical, philosophical, sociological, and psychological perspectives on adult education and learning. These are written primarily by African American authors whose particular perspective reflects an interpretive framework centered in the African American cultural experience. It is important to include references from various disciplines to achieve an interdisciplinary perspective. Such an approach contributes to a more holistic view of the African American experience in adult education.

Our view is that an interdisciplinary approach to education is necessarily moral, ideological, and political. However, while the sources incorporate sociological and political analyses, they are situated in the disciplines of history, philosophy, and psychology. The criteria we employed for selecting these sources are as follows: 1) They represent an

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Africentric perspective, which is to say that they approach their subject from the cultural reference point of the African American experience, 2) they are written by persons who have direct cultural knowledge as African Americans, and 3) they represent classic or seminal statements or analyses of adult education from an African American perspective.

History

The historical sources provide data and interpretive material on the African American experience in adult education. Actual experiences of ex-slaves are documented in *The Survey of Federal Writers' Project* (Banks & Carter, 1985). This resource provides, among other things, rich narratives of ex-slaves in their efforts at self-education following the Civil War. Contrary to the view portrayed in many adult education historical sources, freedmen viewed education as a means to self- and community-improvement and so were heavily involved in establishing day and evening schools for children and adults in the South (Anderson, 1988).

Specific historical examples of the efforts of African Americans engaged in adult education are provided by other accounts. Colin (1989) and Easter (1995) provide historical perspectives on the educational work of Marcus Garvey and Nannie Helen Burroughs. Garvey's nationalist philosophy based on selfethnic reliance and Burroughs' educational efforts aimed at community improvement and religious development provide important evidence of the role of adult education in achieving communal ends.

Other sources provide more generalized accounts of adult education among African Americans. African American women's involvement in adult education from the end of the 19th century through the early 20th century is documented by Neverdon-Morton (1990). Colin (1994) provides an overview of selected African American adult education activities, focusing on the idea of self determination and community empowerment in the context of racism and segregation.

Several histories form a backdrop for the emergence of African American education following the civil war. Woodson (1919) provides evidence of the attempts of African Americans to achieve a higher education during the antebellum period. Bond (1934) offers clear evidence of the impact of racism and segregation on the development of educational efforts for African Americans. Spivey (1978) analyzes the way in which the Tuskegee-Hampton model of education was actually a means to undermine African American efforts for self-education and self-deter-

mination. Taken together these works clearly document the socio-historical forces working against African American efforts at adult education in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Finally, several histories focus on documenting and summarizing various African American adult education activities. Neufeldt and McGee (1990), Reid (1936), and a special issue of the *Journal of Negro Education* (*Adult Education and the Negro*, 1945) provide substantial evidence of the many ways in which adult education has served the African American community. Neufeldt and McGee (1990) is an edited volume with contributions by scholars from the field of adult education as well as from other disciplines. Reid's volume is one of the Bronze Booklet series published by the Associates in Negro Folk Education in 1936. It provides a comparatively early view of adult education in the African American community. The special issue of the *Journal of Negro Education* addresses adult education in the African American community from the perspective of a number of issues relevant to African Americans.

Historical Sources

Adult education and the Negro [Special issue]. (1945). *Journal of Negro Education*. 14(3).

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South, 1860 - 1935*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Banks, A., & Carter, R. (1985). *Survey of Federal Writers' Project manuscript holdings in state depositories*. Washington, DC: American Historical Association.

Bond, H. M. (1934). *The education of the Negro in the American social order*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Colin, S. A. J., III. (1989). *Voices from beyond the veil: Marcus Garvey, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and the education of African Ameripean adults*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb.

Colin, S. A. J., III. (1994) African Ameripean adult education: An historical overview of selected activities. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 3, 50-61.

Easter, O. (1995). *Nannie Helen Burroughs and her contributions to the adult education of African Americans*. New York: Garland Publishing Company.

Neufeldt, H., & McGee, L. (Eds.). (1990). *Education and the African American adult: An historical overview*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Neverdon-Morton, C. (1990). African American women and adult education in the south, 1895-1925. In H. Neufeldt & L. McGee (Eds.), *Education and the African American adult: An historical overview* (pp. 163-178). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Reid, I. (1936). *Adult education for Negroes* (Bronze Booklet Number 1). Washington, DC: Associates in Negro Folk Education.

Spivey, D. (1978.) *Schooling for the new slavery: Black industrial education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Woodson, C. G. (1919). *Education of the Negro prior to 1861: A history of the education of the colored people in the United States from the beginning of slavery to the Civil War* (2d ed.). Washington, DC: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.

Philosophy

Ideas that animate educators and that provide a coherent rationale for teaching, curriculum, and program development are the special province of the philosophy of education. No adult education textbooks in this field treat the philosophical basis for education in the African American community. The sources identified here are a partial but comprehensive list that reflects the range of philosophical thinking about education from a uniquely African American perspective.

It is virtually impossible to begin any discussion of African American philosophical thinking about education without first mentioning Carter Woodson's *The Mis-education of the Negro* (1938). This classic statement lays out clearly an analysis and rationale for education that serves the specific interests of African Americans in a racist society. The issue of self-determination is a dominant theme throughout much of the philosophical literature. Reflecting a multicultural approach to this theme is

Locke (1989) who argues for cultural adult education to foster self reliant, cohesive African American communities that must co-exist and interact with white ethnic communities in a diverse American society. An in-depth examination of Locke's philosophy, its intellectual sources, and its practical application is provided in Guy (1993). Locke's philosophy of cultural pluralism undergirds his views about cultural adult education in a diverse society. Marcus Garvey's philosophy of selfethnic reliance is examined by Colin (1994) as an early example of an Africentric philosophy of adult education espousing many of the principles contained in the Ki-swahili *Nguzo Saba*, an indigenous African moral code reflecting the values of traditional African culture and religion.

A perspective on education that draws on critical theory but centers on the African American experience is contained in Outlaw (1983) and Williams (1983). While employing neo-Marxist and critical theoretical perspectives, Outlaw and Williams each provide a rationale for African American adult education from an Africentric perspective.

Philosophical Sources

Colin, S. A. J., III. (1994). Marcus Garvey: Africentric adult education, education for selfethnic reliance. In E. Peterson (Ed.), *Freedom Road* (pp. 41-65). Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Guy, T. C. (1993). *Prophecy from the periphery: Alain Locke's philosophy of cultural pluralism and adult education*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb.

Locke, A. (1989). Negro needs as adult education opportunities. In L. Harris (Ed.), *The Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem renaissance and beyond* (pp. 253-262). Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (Original work published 1938)

Outlaw, L. (1983). Philosophy, hermeneutics, social-political theory: Critical thought in the interest of African Americans. In L. Harris (Ed.), *Philosophy born of struggle: Anthology of Afro American Philosophy from 1917* (pp. 60-87). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Williams, R. C. (1983). W. E. B Du Bois: Afro American philosopher of social reality. In L. Harris (Ed.), *Philosophy born of struggle: Anthology of Afro American philosophy from 1917* (pp. 10-19) Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Woodson, C. G. (1938). *Mis-education of the Negro*. Washington, DC: Associated Publishers.

Adult Learning and Development

Adult learning and development form the core of interest to most professional adult educators. However, few references in the literature on adult education employ an African American perspective. Contributions to this domain of inquiry from an African American perspective include the following sources. Seminal investigations in the area of social identity development of Blacks include the works of Cross (1991), and Cross, Parham, and Helms (1991).

A unique treatment is that of Herbert (1989) who examines successful African American men and the role of race and racial identity development in their overall development. A compendium of chapters on the psychology of African Americans is provided by Jones (1989) in a classic work, *Black Adult Development and Aging*. A later work by Jones (1991) provides an examination of issues in the psychology of African Americans. In particular, the adverse impact of white racism is shown to have a subtle but profoundly negative impact on the development of the African American psyche. Some chapters address the educational implications of these impacts.

Focusing more on learning and the implications for instruction, Sheared (19) employs a black feminist theoretical framework to identify and illuminate issues related to cultural inclusion and learning in diverse educational settings. Colin (1989) discusses the particular importance of having examples from a variety of cultural perspectives in order to form a more inclusive curriculum that reflects that experience of African Americans and other marginalized groups. Bell (1994) outlines the impact of ignoring culturally-based learning styles on the academic success of African Americans. The perspectives introduced by these sources provide insights into the way in which African Americans learn and mature in American society.

Adult Learning and Development Sources

Bell, Y. (1994). Culturally sensitive analysis of Black learning style. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 20 (1), 47-61.

Colin, S. A. J., III. (1989). Cultural literacy: Ethnocentrism versus selfethnic reflectors. *Thresholds in Education*, 15(4), 16-19.

Cross, W. (1991). *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cross, W., Parham T., & Helms, J. (1991). The stages of Black identity development: Nigrescence models. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 15-28). Berkeley, CA: Cobb and Henry.

Herbert, J. (1989). *Black male entrepreneurs and adult development*. New York: Praeger.

Jones, R. (Ed.). (1989). *Black adult development and aging*. Berkeley, CA: Cobb and Henry.

Jones, R. (Ed.). (1991). *Black psychology* (3rd ed.). Berkeley, CA : Cobb and Henry.

Sheared, V. (1994). Giving voice: An inclusive model of instruction—A womanist perspective. In E. Hayes & S. A. J. Colin, III (Eds.), *Confronting racism and sexism in adult education* (pp. 27-37). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 61)

Conclusion

As suggested in the companion article in this issue of the *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, our approach can be employed whether developing a new course in African American adult education or revising an existing course to include new perspectives. The sources identified here do not provide a single or coherent ideological or theoretical perspective. We propose them as sources because they share one thing in common: They assert the importance of cultural knowledge and the grounding of any discussion of education in the context of a culturally grounded perspective by and for African Americans. In this sense they represent a unique contribution to the literature in adult education.