

RenewED



**EDUCATION AND
LEADERSHIP
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FROM THE EDITORS

RenewED: A Vision for Transforming Education in the Present and for the Future

What must our education systems look and sound like to meet the urgency of the present while preparing learners for an unpredictable future? This is the guiding question that frames this special issue of RenewED, a collaborative collection of voices, practices, and possibilities from across Ghana, the African diaspora, and beyond. We bring together educators, researchers, school leaders, and thought partners who are not only reimagining education but actively renewing it, rooted in context, guided by justice, and led by community.

At the heart of this issue is the conviction that renewal is not about tweaking around the edges of old systems, but about transforming them to center wellness, relevance, and liberation. In “Supporting Adults to Achieve School Wellness,” Dr. Angela Ward reminds us that we cannot build thriving schools without first tending to the well-being of the adults who serve students. Her work in culturally responsive restorative practices shows how centering humanity in professional development creates the conditions for belonging and transformation.

This issue also honors the essential role of cultural identity in educational leadership. In “Ethnocultural Leadership: Memory as Liberatory Praxis,” the authors argue powerfully for reclaiming ancestral wisdom and community knowledge as vital tools for resisting colonial legacies in education. Their work offers a framework of relationship, responsibility, and resistance, one that redefines what leadership can look like when it is culturally rooted and radically inclusive.

Representation and equity in curriculum are explored in “Representation Matters,” a rich dialogue among three Black educational leaders who speak candidly about the impact of Eurocentric content and the urgent need for culturally sustaining education. Their collective call to action is clear: build systems that allow all students, particularly those from the African continent and across the diaspora, to see themselves reflected in the materials they study and the people who teach them.

Leadership, too, must be renewed. In “Re-Learning to Lead,” the authors share lessons from Ghana’s National Educational Leadership Institute (NELI), a groundbreaking initiative that equips leaders with tools to build transformative, equity-driven school cultures. Through self-reflection, strategic planning, and distributed leadership, the program models how school transformation begins from within.

In “Empowering Girls Through INTED’s Conscious Support of Teachers,” we see how targeted professional development impacts girls’ learning, confidence, and aspirations. Stories of students like Christabel and Alberta reveal how renewed teacher practices can help break cycles of marginalization and elevate girls as future leaders, scientists, and storytellers.

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Across these articles, the importance of culturally aware, context-specific professional learning rings clear. “Reimagining Professional Learning Across Continents” documents the co-creation of a decolonized educator summit in Ghana, one that refused to replicate Western models and instead honored the wisdom, leadership, and voice of local educators.

Kwaku Anim’s insights in “Leading Learning with Strategy, Care, and Community” offer a grounded reminder that leading with empathy and strategy is not only possible but necessary. His work shows how leadership in rural Ghanaian schools can strengthen academic outcomes and social cohesion.

In “Reimagining Education: Designing Equitable and Future-Ready Learning Systems,” Sierrah Chavis challenges us to build education systems that are inclusive, tech-integrated, emotionally responsive, and prepared for tomorrow. Her call for learner-centered, globally conscious, and emotionally supportive education underscores what it means to renew education.

Finally, Kwadwo Yeboah Konadu shares his insights as principal in “Learning and Leading at International Community School.” He highlights the need to reflect, adapt, and revise the work in service of learners and the community.

Together, these contributions illuminate a bold and multifaceted vision: education that affirms identity, cultivates agency, and prepares learners—not just to survive the future, but to shape it.

Welcome to RenewED. Let us imagine. Let us build. Let us renew.

Dr. Lauren Adams
Dr. Mary B. Rice-Boothe
Co-Editors, RenewED



EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH INTED'S CONSCIOUS SUPPORT OF TEACHERS

By: Kwabena Amporful, Julius Agbeko, Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, Louisa Koomson, and Israel Titi Ofei

As the number of students receiving grade A in English Language steadily increased from 8 in 2013 to over 200 in 2017 at Aburi Girls' Senior High School (SHS), an all-girls high school in Ghana, it was important to understand the experiences of the learners that led to such success, so they can be shared with others. While arguably many factors contributed to the success, during the 2013-2017 period, teachers at Aburi Girls' SHS received multiple professional development training and support programmes from Institute of Teacher Education and Development (INTED), LBG.

Established in Ghana in 2011 with a vision of a good educational foundation for West African youth, INTED advocates for inclusive and supportive educational environments that empower all youth, especially the marginalized. Since its founding, INTED has supported more than 5,000 teachers and leaders in over 200 schools, meaningfully improving educational outcomes through targeted teacher development programmes.

Teachers from Aburi Girls, as an example, partook in INTED's Master Fellows Programme to be peer-trainers, the School Specific Programme that trained teachers to work collaboratively within a department, and the Leading Girls' Learning Programme that supports teachers to improve the classroom experiences and learning outcomes for students, while addressing biases against females.

As we celebrate the International Day of the Girl, we look at the experiences of girl students at Oda Senior High School and Answaru-Deen Islamic Basic School, as we acknowledging the critical role of teachers in supporting learners, particularly girls.

One of INTED's initiatives, the Leading Girls' Learning Programme (LGLP) addresses challenges faced by female students and teachers at the Senior High School level in Ghana.

In Ghana and in most parts of Africa, girls have historically underperformed in subjects like Mathematics and Science at the secondary level of education compared to boys, limiting their opportunities for Higher Education and careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The LGLP works at changing this narrative by equipping teachers, majority females, with effective strategies to serve as role models, improve teaching practices, boost student engagement and academic performance, and empower females to take on leadership roles within their schools.

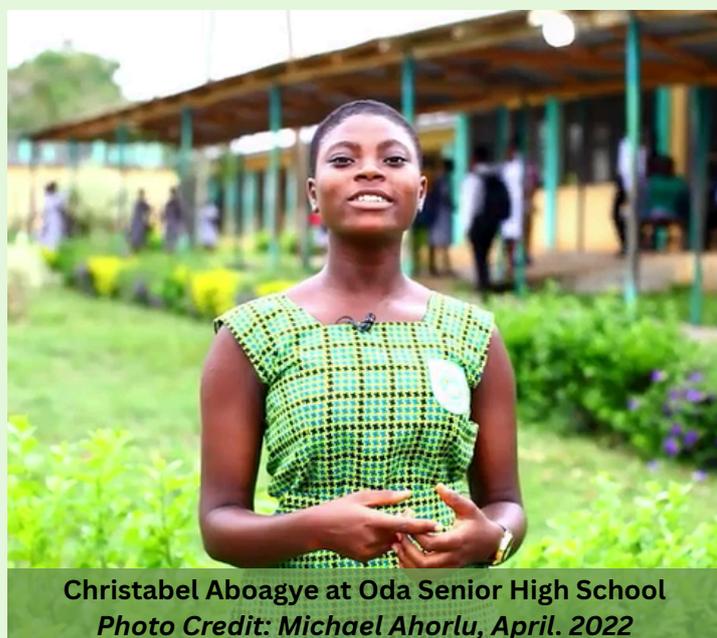
The LGLP was piloted during the 2020/2021 academic year with twelve schools including Oda Senior High School, where similar to the other schools, twenty (20) teachers, mostly female, were trained.

This pilot evaluation (*as shown in this report*) showed growing interest and significant academic performance of students in Science, Mathematics, and other subjects they previously found challenging due to previous limited support from their teachers.

The stories of students of LGLP beneficiary teachers, including Christabel Aboagye and Alberta Danso from Oda Senior High School (SHS) palpably show the impact of appropriate instructional strategies in the classroom.

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It is noteworthy that these students are only two of over 18,750 underperforming learners targeted under the LGLP. Christabel, who struggled with the Science subject before the introduction of INTED’s LGLP intervention to Oda SHS in 2020/21, saw her performance significantly improve after her teacher’s participation. As stated by Christabel, “Previously in my first year, I was having D7 and C6 in science, but I had B2 in last semester’s [second year] exams.” She continued “My science teacher has been using new strategies and methodologies in his teaching which has helped us a lot.



Christabel Aboagye at Oda Senior High School
Photo Credit: Michael Ahorlu, April. 2022

He now pauses during teaching for us to ask questions, he also asks us questions for us to think, discuss, and give out answers,” Christabel highlighted in her story the difference she saw in the practices of her teacher before and after the LGLP. After her third year, Christabel shared her performance in the WASSCE exam, which showed continued improvement.

Alberta Danso and her classmates faced similar challenges in Social Studies, one of the four core subjects that senior high school students like Alberta need to pass to progress to the tertiary level.



Alberta Danso at Oda Senior High School
Photo Credit: Michael Ahorlu, April. 2022

Before INTED’s intervention, Alberta’s teacher, Mr. Dennis Kwapong predominantly used the lecture approach that did not engage students, making the subject less interesting and alienating to Alberta and her peers. After participating in INTED’s LGLP that promoted student-centered teaching techniques such as role playing, group presentations, and effective questioning, the story took a different turn.

Alberta noted that her teacher adopted new teaching methods that significantly improved her interest in and understanding of the subject, leading to enhanced problem-solving skills and academic performance. Alberta shared her experience and her academic performance. As a testament to one of the LGLP objectives to attract more female teachers, both Christabel and Alberta are inspired by the difference their teacher made and are looking for financial support to train to be teachers to transform underperforming learners.

Kumi Christie Kyerewaa, also an Oda SHS student, highlighted how the "exit card" strategy used by her teacher after the LGLP allowed her and her peers to provide quick and timely feedback after lessons, ensuring that their learning gaps were identified and met.

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Kumi Christie Kyerewah at Oda Senior High School
Photo Credit: Michael Ahorlu, April, 2022

Kumi shares this and other experiences [in this video](#) that led to her [strong academic improvement](#). Christie gained [admission](#) and is currently at the University of Ghana (Legon) pursuing a four-year degree programme in Linguistics where she specializes in Spanish and French. She dreams of giving back to her country by serving at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an Administrator, once she completes university. Importantly, girls at Oda SHS started to share their dreams and aspirations, based on their new confidence and improving performances.

The pedagogical approaches from their teachers following INTED’s LGLP not only improved academic outcomes in a more inclusive learning environment for female students that were historically and culturally marginalized, but also improved the creative confidence of the girls at the pivotal adolescent

The notion of building creative confidence is equally important at earlier education levels. During the 2022/23 academic year, INTED piloted the School Specific Programme (SSP) on Strategic Observation And Reflection (SOAR)[®] Framework, a new pedagogical framework to support teachers to use a learner-centered approach to improve disciplinary discussions and reading skills.

Ms. Barikisu Suleiman, a primary school teacher at Answaru-Deen Islamic Basic School, one of the 49 basic schools in the pilot, trained to be a trainer of her peers. She thoroughly immersed herself in the Master Fellows Programme, a professional learning community of over 65 teacher trainers, improving her own classroom practices as well as training and supporting over fifty teachers to do the same (Amporful et al., 2024). Her impact on students was unmistakable - Ruwaida Iddrisu, one of her female students, had such an impactful experience to share.



Ruwaida Iddrisu in her classroom
Photo Credit: Barikisu Suleiman, September 13, 2024

Prior to the training programme, Ms. Suleiman confirmed that her students generally found subjects such as Mathematics, Science, English, and History challenging, a similar situation to that in Senior High Schools. Ruwaida was described as an average student and in previous interactions, she wished Mathematics could be scrapped off the Basic School curriculum, but after Ms. Barikisu introduces new teaching approaches from INTED in class over the course of the first three school terms after her programme, Ruwaida has come to love mathematics, as she has adopted simple ways of relating to everyday life.

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Today, Ruwaida is helping her classmates with mathematics and enjoys working in small groups where she can share ideas with her friends, something she learnt from her teacher.



Zainab Habibu in her classroom

Photo Credit: Barikisu Suleiman, September 13, 2024

Zainab Habibu is one of Ms. Suleiman’s female students who had a poor record in Science before her teacher participated in INTED’s SSP. Her performance in Science after Ms. Suleiman’s intervention improved significantly. During a monitoring visit from INTED, Zainab shared that “My teacher uses local items to represent what I see in my textbooks,” and has since shared other classroom experiences that have changed her approach to learning.

Zainab now enjoys doing science activities with her colleagues such as planting seeds and observing their growth. English Language, the official language in Ghana and a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, poses a challenge to a number of students at the foundational level.

Fatimatu Abdul Wahab is one of the female students in Ms. Suleiman’s class. She could speak English a little, but struggled more with reading and writing.



Zainab Habibu in her classroom

Photo Credit: Barikisu Suleiman, September 13, 2024

Today, she boldly describes English as her best subject after experiencing diverse peer-to-peer reading and writing strategies. With INTED’s Teacher Professional Development Training Programme, Ms. Suleiman has made Fatimatu one of the happiest students in the school. Fatimatu’s newly found hobby is writing and telling short stories to her friends during break time. The National Teaching Council, the Government agency that regulates teachers, took notice, recognizing Ms. Suleiman as 2023 Ghana Teacher Prize winner in the primary category.

Through programmes such as the LGLP and SSP, the capacity of teachers is being built to equip their learners with the interest, skills, and confidence to improve in the classroom and pursue opportunities in higher learning. The experiences shared by students of teachers from Aburi Girls SHS, Oda SHS, and Answaru-Deen Islamic Basic School are similar to those from over 5,000 teachers in over 200 schools with multiple intervention programmes such as the Master Fellows Programme, the Leading Girls’ Learning Programme, and the School Specific Programmes being implemented by INTED with the kind support of Ministry of Education and donor partners.

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About the Authors:

Kwabena Amporful is the Founder, Executive Director, and a Board Member of Institute of Teacher Education and Development (INTED), LBG. He is also a Co-founder of Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) Africa and Director of KEA & Associates, a global investment consulting firm. He has served as an Independent Consultant to the Stanford University's Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies (Stanford Seed), as well as to many Seed-trained entrepreneurs. Kwabena received an MBA from Stanford University and a BA in Social Science from Hampshire College.

Louisa Koomson is the Programmes Director at the Institute of Teacher Education and Development (INTED). She has spent ten (10) years of her career in the education space, spanning administration, operations management, and business development, resulting in supporting over 4,000 teachers and heads to deliver 21st Century teaching practices. Louisa holds a Bachelor of Education degree in Economics and Geography from the University of Cape Coast, and a Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration Programme at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Mr. Agbeko is the Impact Director at Institute of Teacher Education and Development (INTED). An Experienced Educationist, he is a quality assurance and evaluation expert with a track record of quality publications. Julius has over 15 years of Project Management and Leadership Experience. Holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, an MSc in Science Education, an MPhil in Environmental Science, BSc. in Chemistry and a Diploma in Education.

Mr. Israel Titi Ofei has been the Principal of International Community School, Accra since September 2021 and has a Bsc in Biochemistry with Chemistry and attended the MA in Education programme at Oxford Brookes University, UK. He has been a teacher of long standing and for 12 years, was Principal of the Hermann Gmeiner International College in Tema Ghana. He also served as the Director of Institute at the Design and Technical Institute (DTI). He is the Chair of Institute of Teacher Education and Development (INTED).

Prof. Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, Executive Chair of Teacher Education in Sub Saharan Africa (TESSA), brings over 45 years of experience as a science education expert and tertiary education consultant. With over 70 publications and contributions to 60+ national and international conferences, he's held various leadership roles in academia, including Dean of Faculty of Education, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast, and Principal and foundation Vice Chancellor of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), and Director of Institute of Educational Research and Innovative Studies, and was chair of President's Educational Review Committee in 2002. Currently, he's Chair of Transforming Teaching Education and Learning (T-TEL) in secondary education, Learning Generation Initiative (LGI) Champion, and Vice Chair of Institute of Teacher Education and Development (INTED).

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REPRESENTATION MATTERS: PRIORITIZING CURRICULUM THAT MEETS THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN STUDENTS.

This interview style article, shares the insights and perspectives on why racial and cultural representation matters in curriculum from the viewpoint of three educational leaders working in public education, nonprofit, and post-secondary education.

Interviewer: *Why does representation matter in the education landscape?*

Dr. Ngwa: I'm going to approach the issue of representation through a global and historical lens with a focus on the global south and communities of color in the United States.

It's important for us to start by acknowledging that the legacy of slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism all continue to exacerbate disparities and inequities in educational outcomes for our children of color. Make no mistake that white supremacy and perceived non-white inferiority in society has been normalized, especially in a continent that suffered the most atrocities of slavery and where economic exploitation, brain drain, and post-colonial dependency are the norm.

For so long, people of African descent have been subjected to educational content that glorifies Eurocentric views and is disconnected from students' day-to-day realities. When I look back at my own educational experience growing up as a young boy in Cameroon, my exposure to predominantly Western content conditioned me to romanticize realities that I did not relate with. Memorizing lines from Shakespeare and Chaucer in English literature was a sign of pride, and I reveled in the exploits of European historical figures such as Napoleon Bonaparte, Charles de Gaulle, Charles the Great, and others.

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In retrospect, my friends and I had no business learning about Western geographic landscapes in Sweden and the United Kingdom and building cars in Detroit, while no proportionate attention was given to our immediate surroundings. Generations of post-colonial Africans have depended on the dictates of the Western educational system, one that perpetuates racial power hierarchies and exerts overwhelming influence on countries in the Global South.

The need for representation thus validates and uplifts students' histories, cultures, and their lived experiences. It is important that we all dedicate our efforts toward growing a cadre of school leaders who represent the demographics of their students and who possess the dispositions to disrupt colonial and racist tendencies in education. Doing so will empower them to help their students build self-esteem, boost their confidence and desire to learn, and set them up for positive outcomes in the long term.

Ms. Edwards: Having served as a teacher, school and district leader, and now a leadership consultant, the reality remains that most policy decisions are made by systems-level leaders and require compliance from schools. Because people in power often represent or subscribe to white supremacist culture, they are often making decisions for others with whom they do not share the same cultural ethnicity nor share the same lived experiences. Even in the posture of the educational system in Africa, it's important to always remember that even when decision makers reflect the ethnicities of those they represent, that Africans are not a monolith. There is multifaceted diversity across the continent of Africa.

Educational systems need policy and systems-level leaders who include the voices and experiences of those who are most impacted by the decisions being made.

Prioritizing representation in the Diaspora means establishing a standard of recruiting, developing, and retaining people who are often marginalized in order for them to gain access to positions of power.

I was raised by Ghanaian parents who immigrated to a predominantly white area in upstate New York. We were the only African family in my neighborhood. And likewise, I learned alongside peers with skin paler than the palms of my hands with much more slender noses than mine and straight hair that my coils envied. I did not see myself in the faces around me. Nor did I see myself amongst the people in power, amongst the pages of the books that we read, or in the historical events that we were forced to memorize. As a child, I did not realize that the lack of representation around me threaded into the fabric of what I believed to be possible for me.

When I think of the stories my siblings shared about attending schools in Ghana throughout their childhood, I recall them encapsulating their experiences as a buttressed melding of rigor and compulsory memorization laced with unyielding punishment if they could not recite key terms or formulas from the British curriculum upon demand. The juxtaposition of anti-blackness is the foundation of the educational system in cities, townships, suburbs, and villages across the globe, which reinforces the pervasive reach of colonialism.

Representation has powered advancement throughout history to help abolish laws that kept people who look like me from accessing a high quality education. It was the representation from the likes of the Thurgood Marshalls and Mary McCleod Bethunes in America, girded with the progressive Nkrumaists of Ghana along with the advocates of Mandela, to power the change we needed across the Diaspora.

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Dr. Elliott: I am an African-American who grew up poor on a small farm in the US south in the 1960s. This was during a time when books and stories about Black people were rare and positive complex Black characters were almost nonexistent. My own personal experiences have helped me to understand firsthand how important representation is. It is difficult for children to dream about opportunities that they don't know about. Thus, it is critically important that students see themselves represented positively in the curriculum. This is specifically important for African-American children due to the United States' legacy of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and its continued disenfranchisement of Black people.

I was a bright student and developed a love of reading and learning very early in my life. Unfortunately, I was often accused by my peers, and some teachers, of "talking white" or "acting white." Because of this, I often struggled with my identity as a scholar.

I have had the honor of being a public school educator for the past 30 years, serving in various capacities from teacher, principal, principal supervisor, to central office leader and superintendent. At every level, I've worked to dismantle educational inequities that contribute to the underperformance of Black children. As a principal, I was able to turn around a failing inner-city school and as a principal supervisor, work with 26 principals to significantly improve outcomes for our English Language Learners. In 2017, I was hired as the first Chief of Equity in the public school district for Washington, D.C., our nation's capital. In this role, I learned firsthand the importance and challenges of ensuring that all students, but especially those who have been historically marginalized, see themselves reflected positively in the curriculum and in their entire educational experience.

The curriculum, what we teach, is a signal sender of who and what we value. It plays an essential role in combatting racist educational practices that negatively impact student outcomes

Interviewer: *What role does the curriculum of today play in promoting whole child and whole adult learning?*

Ms. Edwards: The Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, speaks so eloquently about her experience being schooled with a British-centered curriculum, which many African nations subscribe to. She recalls that throughout her childhood having to read stories about blue-eyed children who played in the snow. This illustration of Adichie is just one example of the limitations we often place on students and educators by selling them a "single story" of what good teaching and learning looks like.

If we want children to be global citizens and educators to disrupt educational inequities, then the curriculum should serve as the vehicle that promotes students' and adults' lived experiences, emphasizes culturally responsive practices, uplifts systems and structures for sustaining wellness, and aligns with anti-racist theory. It is our job as leaders and policymakers to leverage strategic staffing and continuous talent development in order to ensure that diverse, equity-centered, and highly skilled stakeholders are involved in the design of curriculum, moving away from mainly endorsing curricular materials that are solely British-centered and or aligned solely to Western influence.

We cannot forget that racism and educational inequities are products of design. As liberated people, we can take our power back and *redesign* those structures through the curriculum.

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Dr. Elliott: When I envision an equitable whole-child curriculum, I think about learning experiences that are transformative, culturally affirming, empowering, and personalized. A vision for whole-child learning looks beyond the academics to also address a student's social-emotional wellbeing and considers the student's connections to family and the broader community. A curriculum which supports equitable whole-child design includes experiences that support the development of skills, habits and minds, as well as rich learning content that supports deeper knowledge acquisition. A whole-child curriculum pushes students to grapple with the complex societal issues in ways that strengthen their critical thinking skills and creates a greater appreciation of diverse perspectives. All of this magic cannot happen without diverse people from all levels of leadership mobilizing to establish the enabling conditions for a curriculum that aligns with that shared vision.

Because we know that whole adults promote whole children, adults must be supported with developing the skills to also care for their own mental wellness. Educational systems must also be put in place to help them sustain that wellbeing. We have to go beyond reinforcing resilience and compliance in Africa, namely across the Diaspora, and institute an educational system that is designed for both students and adults to thrive.

Dr. Ngwa: There's no doubt that today's curriculum plays an incredible role in the formation of students to graduate with the desired outcomes and life skills to serve the immediate communities. Effective leadership is fundamental to the development and teaching of a curriculum that is inclusive and centers the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students.

At the core is developing a pipeline of equity-minded leaders to develop a vision that not only prioritizes the needs of the whole child but one that values self-critique and interrogation of systemic practices that affect their school communities.

I have had the pleasure of serving as the Director of the Anti-Racist Administration Supervision and Leadership Certificate Program at a predominantly white school of education and university for three years. And in this role, I have intentionally curated diverse content and continue to provide appropriate tools to aspiring leaders to change minds and focus on a curriculum that prioritizes student and adult wellness in classrooms, schools, and school districts.

Interviewer: What strategies and resources can educational leaders utilize to ensure that all students feel seen and heard through that curriculum?

Dr. Elliott: When I think of high-impact strategies and resources that disrupt educational inequities, what comes top of mind for me is to ensure that teachers are trained in culturally responsive practices. That they know how to engage students in meaningful ways and they're able to build their students' understanding of this complex world in ways that value the student's culture and its contributions. Conducting curriculum audits is essential. For instance, examining classroom materials to see how people of African descent are depicted in literacy creates opportunities for curriculum redesign. Most of the curricula in United States Schools and perhaps those throughout the Diaspora are written from a Eurocentric perspective. And that lack of a global inclusive perspective has a never impact for all of us.

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Finally, you cannot just tackle curricular materials without addressing the mindsets of those who design and facilitate the learning. That is especially important to ensure high expectations and high-quality daily instruction is the standard of every classroom in Africa, and across the Diaspora.

Ms. Edwards: I tell all of the school and systems-level leaders with whom I partner with that their first strategy is to always start with the most important resource every school system has at its disposal: the people in the school and the community. Mobilizing human capital is a lever for equity.

Like the African adage of ‘Ubuntu’: *We only exist because of those around us*. WE are the answers that we seek for transforming education. Students feel seen and heard through the curriculum when WE customize content that reflects their lives and communities and that they can apply to their real world experiences. Students and adults thrive in schools, when WE work together to institute a “For Us, By Us” approach to reimagining teaching and learning. I launched Ed Leadership for Liberation to empower schools with establishing instructional models that meet the needs of their students and teachers, such as training them on strategic staffing using team-based models or project-based learning for students. Transformative schooling is moving away from traditional models and transitioning to more innovative and responsive practices that put the rich cultures, strengths, and needs of the students and adults at the forefront of solutions to education’s challenges.

Because dismantling educational inequities has complex underpinnings, I work hand in hand with my partners to go beyond feeling like we are mainly addressing marginalized populations simply by focusing on Special Education.

It goes deeper than that. I work with my partners to actualize their vision for representation through their recruitment pipelines, development programming, and sustainability plans. This requires all levels of leadership to be willing to engage in ongoing, deeper conversations about the impact of race and equity in the school system.

Dr. Ngwa: Well said - And I just want to say that I started this conversation by underscoring the role of history in education and I'm going to continue making the point that exposing aspiring school leaders to historical facts that counter current narratives combats public misinformation regarding education.

I would be remiss if I didn't highlight the role that partnerships play in standing up against racist educational practices. I have a strong conviction that only when we build meaningful partnerships between schools of education, local education agencies, community partners, and create mentorship opportunities, would we be able to move the needle on doing what is right for students.

With partners, educational systems can craft a shared language of what representation can look like in action with the needs of their system at the center. Shared language powers communication, which drives reform and innovation. Unfortunately, the language used in educating our children is exclusively European. In the words of Cheikh Anta Diop, “European languages must not be considered diamonds displayed under a glass bar dazzling us with their brilliance”. Thus, the need to elevate the development of indigenous languages as a literacy initiative becomes a matter of urgency.

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Interviewer: *What do we hope to be true 10 years from now to ensure that we remove barriers for historically marginalized children and what are the implications for aspiring and current school leaders in the African continent as they navigate the dynamic complexities in education?*

Ms. Edwards: As educators, we collectively want to honor the contributions our African colleagues have made to reimagine the impact equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging can have on the future of our Diaspora. While we are currently educators who serve in the United States, we still struggle with many of the same challenges as our colleagues in the Diaspora because we also live in a country that often disproportionately elevates white supremacist views, values, and contributions. So to our brothers and sisters in the African continent, our call to action is to dismantle, mobilize, empower and renew.

- Dismantle the parts of the system that lead to inequalities and that promote anti-Blackness within the mindsets, curricular materials, professional learning content, and policies that impact stakeholders across difference.
- Mobilize human capital by building a coalition of equity-centered stakeholders and sustainable resources around the globe.
- Empower system and school leaders and policymakers to cultivate ownership in their continuous improvement.
- Renew an African-inspired curriculum that brings to the forefront the experiences, narratives, and contributions of African people, exposing scholars to diverse cultures and perspectives that decenter the influence of white supremacy in the education system.

We would like to close our interview with this African proverb and one closing thought.

“Until the lion tells the story, the hunter will always be the hero.”

It's time for educators across the Diaspora to work in solidarity to create an educational curriculum that centers the culture's rich heroism.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with educators across the Diaspora.

About the Authors:

Leslie Ayorkor Edwards, a Ghanaian and first generation American, has worked in public schools as a teacher, school leader, and Director of Leadership Development in Washington, D.C. for the past 21 years and now leads her own educational consulting firm, [Ed Leadership 4 Liberation](#), to support both public and charters schools with strategic staffing and talent development initiatives. Leslie champions her belief in 'liberation' as the North Star to educational reform, which she unpacks in her leadership memoir [Untethered: Living and Leading Liberation](#).

Dr. Bren Elliott, has 30 years of experience in public education as a teacher, principal, central office leader, and superintendent. She grew up in southern United States and served as the first Chief of Equity for the District of Columbia Public Schools in Washington, D.C. Dr. Elliott is the co-author of The Antiracist Roadmap to Educational Equity: A Systemic Approach for All Stakeholders, ASCD's member book of the month for December 2023.

Dr. Terence Ngwa, grew up in Cameroon and is a graduate of University of Yaounde' I. He has 20 years of service in public education and is the former executive director for the Washington D.C. Teachers' Union. Dr. Ngwa currently serves as the Director of the Antiracist Administration, Supervision, and Leadership (ARASL), Director of the International Training and Education Program (ITEP), and Senior Professorial Lecturer at American University in Washington, DC. Terence's book Beyond Compensation: Empowering Teachers' Unions to Think Beyond Bread and Butter Issues is due for release in spring 2025..

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ETHNOCULTURAL LEADERSHIP: MEMORY AS LIBERATORY PRAXIS

By Dr Courtney Wilkerson

***"The important thing was not to forget."
(Armah, 2006, p. 202)"***

Education is a potent vessel for preserving cultural identity and fostering self-determination, particularly for the Africana Global Majority. However, the dominance of Western ideologies in global educational systems has marginalized non-Western epistemologies, perpetuating deficit narratives and suppressing ancestral wisdom. This essay explores the transformative potential of ethnocultural leadership as a liberatory framework. Rooted in the principles of relationship, responsibility, and resistance, ethnocultural leadership disrupts oppressive structures by reclaiming education as a practice grounded in cultural memory and communal values.

Through storytelling, sociolinguistics, and culturally responsive pedagogies, ethnocultural leadership emphasizes ancestral memory as a guide for leadership and education. Drawing on Africana frameworks and global connections, it seeks to empower the Global Majority by fostering inclusivity, equity, and cultural continuity. This essay examines the implications of decentering Western ideologies, the critical role of inclusive governance, and strategies to promote culturally informed assessments and practices. Embracing these principles allows educators and leaders to honor the past, strengthen the present, and envision a diverse and equitable educational future for the Africana Global Majority.

Memory as Liberatory Praxis

Memory serves as a bridge between past, present, and future experiences.

Addressing disparities in education, particularly in Ghana and other Africana contexts, requires reclaiming ancestral wisdom often overshadowed by Western frameworks. The English language, while essential for global discourse, constrains cultural expression. Writing in Africana languages offers a closer connection to ancestral truth but poses challenges for publication in mainstream academic forums. This paradox highlights the broader struggle: envisioning liberatory practices that honor ancestral memory while navigating postcolonial realities.

Memory underpins a shared humanity and commitment to self-determination. It reflects the wisdom of ancestors and serves as a foundation for educating future generations. Africana leadership uses this collective memory as a compass, guiding efforts to dismantle colonial legacies and reclaim cultural identity.

Ethnocultural Leadership and Ancestral Memory

Ethnocultural leadership is grounded in ancestral memory, connecting leadership practices to cultural heritage and communal values. Wilkerson (2023) frames it as a tool for resisting oppressive systems through remembrance, responsibility, and connection. This framework critiques the caste-like structures embedded in education, which often perpetuate anti-Black biases.

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Carr's (2024) Africana conceptual framework outlines six categories essential to ethnocultural leadership:

1. Social structure: Who are we to other people?
2. Governance: Who are we to each other?
3. Ways of knowing: How do we use systems of thought to communicate?
4. Science and technology: How do we innovate to support communities?
5. Movement and memory: How do we preserve and transmit experiences?
6. Cultural meaning-making: How do we express artistry and cultural narratives?

These categories emphasize the interconnectedness of identity, governance, and cultural preservation. Leadership, through this lens, becomes an act of resistance and reclamation.

Oral memory, a cornerstone of Africana traditions, materializes as a pedagogical tool. Armah (2018) describes ancestral memory as the life force of self-determination and liberation. Symbols, stories, and mnemonics connect individuals to both spiritual and physical worlds. This practice combats narratives of illiteracy and reaffirms cultural identity across generations.

Education as a Vessel for Liberation

Education, as Armah (2006) argues, is central to preserving cultural identity and fostering self-determination. Yet, colonial legacies have long marginalized Africana ways of knowing. Ethnocultural leadership reclaims education as a liberatory practice by incorporating storytelling, sociolinguistics, and culturally responsive pedagogies.

By fostering collaboration and moral reflection, education under ethnocultural leadership resists individualistic tendencies that undermine community.

Teaching becomes an act of cultural exchange, rooted in the values of the Africana Global Majority. This approach challenges the dominance of Western-centric frameworks, offering a pathway for equitable and inclusive learning environments.

Core Tenets of Ethnocultural Leadership

Ethnocultural leadership operates through three central tenets:

1. **Relationship:** Education strengthens ties to ancestral heritage and fosters collaboration. Stories and rituals transmit cultural values, reinforcing the importance of community and shared identity.
2. **Responsibility:** Leaders uphold the legacy of ancestral wisdom. This involves fostering moral and spiritual growth among students, ensuring cultural continuity, and promoting justice.
3. **Resistance:** Leadership resists Eurocentric structures that prioritize materialism and hierarchy. By emphasizing communal values and cultural memory, it reclaims education as a space for liberation.

These principles guide efforts to reimagine governance, pedagogy, and assessment practices in ways that honor Africana traditions and challenge systemic inequities.

Practical Applications of Ethnocultural Leadership

Storytelling as Pedagogy

Storytelling serves as a transformative tool in education, preserving cultural narratives while fostering critical thinking. Ethnocultural leaders use storytelling to challenge deficit-based narratives and affirm the lived experiences of the Global Majority. This method humanizes data, shifting the focus from deficits to strengths.

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Toliver (2022) describes storytelling as a means to explore what is lost or erased in dominant narratives. This practice aligns with Tuck and Yang's (2012) call for decolonization as a tangible, systemic change. By centering Africana stories, leaders inspire resilience and self knowledge among students.

Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism

African American English, often dismissed as a deficit, is recognized within ethnocultural leadership as a legitimate linguistic tradition. Leadership programs emphasize the value of multilingualism, encouraging educators to celebrate linguistic diversity as a cultural asset.

Key scholars, including Lisa Green and Geneva Smitherman, provide frameworks for integrating sociolinguistic knowledge into educational practice. These efforts ensure that linguistic traditions are preserved and respected within educational settings.

Humanizing Data Practices

Ethnocultural leaders adopt humanized approaches to data, focusing on equity and cultural representation. Culturally responsive psychometrics, as outlined by Randall (2023), shift assessments from deficit-based to strength-based narratives. Equity audits further align data practices with community values, ensuring fair and accurate evaluations.

Global Teams and Policy Advocacy

Building global teams fosters cross-cultural exchange and strengthens solidarity among the Global Majority. Leaders advocate for policies that resist privatization and neoliberal influences, emphasizing education as a collective good rooted in cultural authenticity and equity.

Transforming Governance and Pedagogy

Ethnocultural leadership redefines governance and pedagogy to prioritize communal well-being over individual competition. This model emphasizes collective decision-making, trust, and shared responsibility, rejecting Eurocentric, hierarchical systems.

Culturally rooted pedagogy integrates movement, memory, and storytelling to honor ancestral knowledge and foster cultural continuity. By challenging Western-biased methods, ethnocultural leadership dismantles racialized deficit beliefs and implements inclusive practices that redefine success in education.

Recommendations for Implementation

- 1. Adopt Ethnocultural Leadership and Inclusive Governance:** Leadership preparation programs should train leaders in culturally inclusive governance, emphasizing collective decision-making and community-centered goals.
- 2. Transform Pedagogy and Assessments** Educators must integrate storytelling, mnemonics, and culturally relevant examples into teaching. Assessment practices should reflect the strengths of the Global Majority, replacing deficit-based metrics with equity-focused approaches.
- 3. Foster Professional Development** Leadership programs should emphasize Africana genealogies and alternative frameworks that challenge Eurocentric narratives. Professional development must center on humanizing data stories and affirming the resilience of the Global Majority.

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4. Promote Coaching and Mentorship

The jegna model, rooted in Africana traditions, provides a framework for coaching that emphasizes holistic development, self-determination, and communal responsibility.

5. Advocate for Policy Reforms

Leaders must champion policies that preserve public education as a collective good, resist privatization, and ensure equity and cultural representation.

Conclusion

Ethnocultural leadership is a transformative practice that centers memory, relationships, and resistance. By integrating storytelling, sociolinguistics, professional development, and policy advocacy, it builds inclusive educational systems that celebrate diversity and equity. This framework reclaims education as a liberatory practice, grounded in the cultural ethos of the Africana Global Majority. By honoring ancestral memory and fostering inclusive governance, ethnocultural leadership creates environments where all students and educators can thrive. Ultimately, ethnocultural leadership bridges the past and present, using ancestral knowledge to build a more inclusive and equitable educational future. Through this transformative vision, education becomes a collective endeavor that reflects the shared humanity and aspirations of the Global Majority.

About the Author:

Courtney Wilkerson, Ed.D. is a distinguished school leader in The District of Columbia Public Schools and the founder of Before 1954 Inc., which provides executive leadership coaching and educational research consulting. They earned a dissertation with distinction from Howard University on their proposed ethnocultural leadership framework for school and system leaders who strive to protect Black principals and serve Black children. Their unyielding commitment to high-quality education is done by creating multidimensional metrics that affirm the whole child, empowering leaders to employ an ethnocultural leadership framework, and liberate Global Majority children from cultural bias.

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REIMAGINING EDUCATION: DESIGNING EQUITABLE AND FUTURE-READY LEARNING SYSTEMS

An In-Depth Exploration of How Innovation, Inclusion, and Holistic Development Can Transform Education for the 21st Century and Beyond

By: Sierrah Chavis | 2025

Reimagining Education: Designing Systems for Today's and Tomorrow's Learners

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, evolving societal needs, and an increasingly interconnected global landscape, traditional education systems are facing unprecedented challenges. To remain relevant and effective, education must undergo a transformative redesign that emphasizes adaptability, inclusivity, and holistic development (World Economic Forum, 2020). By integrating emerging technologies, fostering critical skills, and prioritizing well-being, we can create dynamic learning environments that prepare students for the complexities of the future.

Embracing Technological Integration

The digital revolution has fundamentally altered how information is accessed, processed, and utilized. Classrooms equipped with advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and data analytics offer personalized learning experiences tailored to individual student needs.

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Research indicates that AI-driven platforms can adapt lessons in real time, ensuring students grasp foundational concepts before progressing (Luckin, 2017). This personalized approach enhances comprehension, fosters engagement, and nurtures a passion for lifelong learning. Moreover, technology-enabled learning encourages self-directed exploration, allowing students to become active participants in their education journey (Pane et al., 2015).

Cultivating Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

The workforce of the future will demand higher-order thinking skills that extend beyond rote memorization and passive learning. Educational institutions must shift their focus to nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Project-based learning (PBL), which immerses students in real-world challenges and collaborative inquiry, has been shown to improve problem-solving capabilities and deepen understanding (Bell, 2010). By engaging with authentic tasks, students develop resilience, analytical skills, and the ability to innovate—qualities essential for success in a rapidly evolving global economy.

Fostering Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence

In today's interconnected world, cultural competence and global awareness are crucial for fostering inclusive and cooperative societies. Education systems should incorporate curricula that promote **cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and international collaboration** (Banks, 2019). Programs that encourage global partnerships and virtual exchanges can expand students' horizons, helping them develop a deeper appreciation for diversity and interconnectedness.

As students gain exposure to different cultures and viewpoints, they become better prepared to thrive in a multicultural workforce and contribute to solving global challenges.

Prioritizing Emotional and Social Well-Being

Academic success is inextricably linked to students' emotional and social well-being. Research highlights the importance of fostering supportive learning environments that prioritize mental health, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills (Durlak et al., 2011). Schools must implement comprehensive support systems, including counseling services, mentorship programs, and social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives, to equip students with the skills to navigate personal and academic challenges. When students feel emotionally supported, they are more likely to engage in their education and achieve their full potential.

Promoting Lifelong Learning and Adaptability

As industries evolve and new challenges arise, the ability to **learn, unlearn, and relearn** is critical for career success. Education systems should instill a growth mindset and encourage students to embrace lifelong learning as an ongoing process (Dweck, 2006). By fostering adaptability and a passion for acquiring new knowledge, students are better prepared to respond to the changing demands of the labor market and society at large. This shift necessitates a curriculum that promotes curiosity, problem-solving, and continuous self-improvement.

Implementing Inclusive and Equitable Practices

Ensuring **equitable access to education** is fundamental to creating a fair and just society.

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An inclusive education system empowers all students—regardless of socioeconomic background, ability, or identity—to succeed and contribute meaningfully to society.

Conclusion

To meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's learners, education systems must embrace innovation, inclusivity, and holistic development. By integrating technology, fostering critical skills, promoting well-being, and ensuring equitable opportunities, we can create educational environments that empower students to navigate an ever-changing world with confidence and competence. Education must evolve to not only keep pace with societal changes but to drive progress and empower the next generation of leaders and innovators.

About the Author:

Sierrah Chavis is a dynamic educator, nonprofit leader, and advocate with over a decade of experience empowering youth and underserved communities. As Director of Youth Opportunities and Project Inclusion at United Way of South Hampton Roads, she leads initiatives focused on leadership, workforce readiness, and civic engagement, while also serving on multiple boards that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. A two-time best-selling author and founder of Bossy Girl Inc., Sierrah uses her voice to inspire the next generation of leaders. Her work has earned her numerous accolades and continues to reflect her deep commitment to equity, advocacy, and community impact.

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SUPPORTING ADULTS TO ACHIEVE SCHOOL WELLNESS

By: Angela M. Ward, PhD

Adult wellness and well-being in schools are often overlooked and replaced with rigid structures, deliverables, disconnected processes and protocols designed for compliance. The people make up the school. Teachers, students, headmaster, assistant headmaster, plus all unnamed adults that help the school run are important to each school's success.

As an educational leader, my goal is to keep the needs of young people at the forefront of adult decision-making. In a large urban school district in Central Texas, we received US Department of Education funding in 2018 when our state and federal governments were shifting focus, doubling down on compliance and changing direction on the future of schools, not particularly focused on individual student needs.

The 5-year grant was awarded to pilot Culturally Responsive Restorative Practices implementation in 10 schools. I set out to partner with people focused on wellness and who held the innate desire to connect young people to their school community. We intentionally designed for young people, and prioritized them in adult learning and growth.

The grant tasked me with hiring eight staff responsible for building community, teaching adults, students and families an indigenous practice that is 1000s of years old and practiced throughout the world. Used today in indigenous communities, restorative practices maintain harmony, connection and allow people to repair harm when conflict occurs.

In schools restorative practices enable staff, students and families to strengthen student relationships with the school and build community in a caring school climate. So why not use the teaching of restorative practices to develop the relationship building skills of the adults?

A partnership with the local museum was forged, our newly assembled staff attended a non-traditional 5-day orientation. As a former school leader my job was to ensure the safety, efficient functioning, and academic rigor of the classrooms. As a district administrator I approached this staff orientation responsibility from a person-centered stance keeping in mind the needs of campus leaders. It was important that staff left orientation feeling empowered to implement person-centered practices resisting the typical ways of work of a school in our city.

We took a deep dive with social justice related art pieces at The Blanton Museum of Art. The museum staff curated an experience designed to engage the staff in critically self-reflective dialogue focused on society and the impacts of who we are in the communities we serve. We cofacilitated circles, introduced restorative processes, invited guest speakers connected to our local community, and used art as a catalyst for difficult conversation.

We engaged with a group of young people from the community who use restorative practices to impact their daily lives on campus and to heal from a tragedy, the loss of one of their own in the [Austin Bombings](#). They facilitated a circle for our staff teaching them to be in the moment, create space for everyone to listen, share and be heard. They held space for the questions, thoughts, fears and concerns of adults learning this new process.

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The students modeled care, concern, patience and empathy, and many more of the qualities adults need to build community and cultivate the trust of the young people in their school community.

Through art we expanded dialogue, established community agreements and aligned our ways of work to the purpose and intended outcomes of the grant. We personalized our task planning for ways of work to support us when the work gets hard, partnering and preparing to catch each other when one might fall or falter.

Key to becoming a part of a developed community is meeting the members of the community we serve. Our final day of orientation invited future collaborators from each campus community to establish early connections for the 5-year grant. Additionally, to expand our partnership with The Blanton, each staff member planned a day at the museum with a group of young people from their school.

I encouraged my staff daily to go slow so they can go fast. I required them to build relationships with the most important people in the school, often those who are overlooked, ie., janitors, bus drivers, cafeteria staff. I learned as a first-year teacher that the person who cleans the school building knows everything about the school and often knows most of the parents and students. Befriending them was always beneficial to my success with students and families in the community.

Developing person-centered school spaces to support adult identity-safety and wellbeing

The scenario is shared to provide a window into how I provide time and space for adult professional learning aligned to job roles and centered on student needs.

In roles where I did not have that spaciousness of a multi-million-dollar grant, I used what I had at my disposal. Staff development days, early release days, lunch meetings (food donations from local vendors) were available and I was creative to use these days to practice person-centered leadership, always taking a learner stance. Below I offer a few ideas to help you think about ways you might support the teachers in your school.

1. Model caring for the adults to invite them to care for the young people in their care. I remember being a teacher and walking by the school leader in the empty hallway, she was too busy to look at me and say good morning. Good morning goes a long way!
 - How do you show the adults you value their contributions to the school?
 - Do you greet students, families, teachers each day?
 - Do teachers greet students, families, each other?
 - Do you arrive to work extra early and leave very late? Does this practice improve your productivity?

2 – Take inventory of how you and staff spend time together

- How many professional learning days do you have? How often do you learn together?
- How much time do you spend each day?
- How many hours are spent discussing pedagogy and curriculum to support teacher growth?
- How many hours do you take to appreciate each other? (breaks, lunch gatherings, celebrations, team building)

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3 – Take the time to get to know the goals of the teachers. An adult who has interests outside of school often will bring that interest into the learning environment and enrich the learning of their students. An adult who feels their school leader values them personally will often work well with the school team and partner with other adults for student success.

- What are the professional goals of the teachers?
 - Are they interested in growing their knowledge to lead a school?
 - Are they entrepreneurial? Do they have skills that might benefit student learning beyond their teaching role? Do you have funds or funders who might pay them a stipend to share their passions?
- What are the teaching goals of the teachers?
 - Do they want to improve pedagogy?
 - Are they interested in improving the curriculum they teach to make it more relevant to the lives of their students?

4 – What practices do you use in your school to help the adults and students feel connected?

- Are adults happy to come to school daily? Why or Why not?
- Are students excited about school? Why? Or Why not?

If the people who run the school/district are not well, the school is not well, therefore the students are not entering a welcoming, identity-safe space of belonging. A school space that does not nurture individual and collective safety and belonging will not welcome practices like those established in indigenous communities.

About the Author:

Angela M. Ward, PhD is a veteran antiracist educator and organizational consultant with 13 years of leadership experience in senior-level administration and a Public Voice Fellow at UT Austin with The OpEd Project. Follow her @2WardEquity on Instagram, Threads & BlueSky

RE-LEARNING TO LEAD

LESSONS FROM GHANA ON GROWING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By Basheera Agyeman and Dr. Jill Harrison Berg

In 2020, education policymakers in Ghana began imagining what a total transformation of the instructional culture would require. They knew that the move away from teacher-directed lessons would be challenging and even scary for educators who learned in this way themselves. Mindsets, practices, and systems would have to shift.

Educators would have to do some unlearning, and schools would have to become learning organizations. They recognized educational leadership development as the key, as leadership is second only to instructional quality as the most important school-based influence on student learning, and it controls the conditions that enable or restrain quality instruction.

Therefore, the Ministry of Education in Ghana asked Ghana ASCD to devise and implement a transformational leadership development program-- a National Educational Leadership Institute (NELI)-- that could become a template for a new national qualification system for Ghana’s public school education leaders. It is a program that offers lessons for leaders elsewhere.

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Strengthening Instructional Culture through Strategic Leadership

The NELI Program’s core course, Strategic Leadership, moves educators through three units in which they use self-reflection to help them convene a team with complimentary perspectives, they cultivate a shared vision of instruction and collective ownership of a problem of practice, and they engage them in developing the routines and relationships necessary to achieve a powerful instructional culture.

Unit 1: Knowing Oneself as a Leader

In the first performance task of Unit 1, participants develop and demonstrate a deep understanding and critical awareness of themselves in the context of educational leadership literature and practice. This task fosters the development of self-reflection as an essential skill leaders employ continuously to further their personal leadership goals and to orchestrate distributed leadership that maximizes the leadership influence of all educators in the organization.

In the second task of this unit, participants use data to identify a focus for improvement and to reflect on how their skills can be leveraged as assets. They then identify skill assets in others to develop an effective problem-solving team-- a “Planning and Implementation Team” or “PIT Crew.” This task deepens collaboration by enhancing the participant’s ability to effectively see others as leaders and to empower them to see themselves this way as well.

The final task of Unit 1 involves the formation of a personal leadership development plan. It charges participants with identifying targets and action steps that are “specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.”

In the course, participants learn to set measurable objectives and viable actions that will help them improve with the support of leadership literature.

Small steps you can take toward transformation

- Take the time to reflect on your own journey as a leader: Create an illustrated map of the pathway of experiences and people that contributed to the leader you are today. Improvement of instructional culture should begin with self-reflection because it allows you to gain a deep understanding of what you have to work with-- your strengths, weaknesses, values, and biases, and what you might need to unlearn. The “Continuum of Self-Reflection” from *The Principal Influence* (Hall et al, 2016) can be a useful diagnostic tool to help leaders set the course for becoming more reflective and identifying specific areas of growth.
- Take time, too, to consider yourself in context. After reflecting on yourself, begin to think about colleagues who have complementary perspectives and expertise. Effective teaching and leadership require such a vast array of knowledge and skills that no individual can master all of them. An effective leader, however, can strategically cultivate a team with a comprehensive collection of knowledge and skills needed for improvement.

Unit 2: Unity of Vision

In the first task of Unit 2, participants talk with stakeholders to learn about their core values. They compare how these values align with the current outcomes and with the existing mission and vision of the school.

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In task two, participants share these reflections with their PIT crews and lead them in collecting and analyzing various forms of data to identify a problem of practice they can focus on to improve outcomes and better achieve the mission of the institution.

In the final task of this unit, NELI participants begin to develop a strategic action plan to address the problem of practice. The goals, objectives, action steps, timelines, specific team responsibilities and evidences of goal progress are extensively documented in the strategic plan.

Small steps you can take toward transformation

- As a first step towards unifying all efforts and expertise within the organization toward a shared goal, spend time assessing the current alignment among the unique values of stakeholders, your own values as the leader, and the established values of the institution. Facilitate conversation to collaboratively interrogate the espoused values, to adapt or adopt a set of shared values, and to strengthen relational trust in the process.
- Too often, school leaders write their strategic plans alone. Collaborating with others of varying roles and perspectives helps ensure that decisions about how to address problems of practice are grounded in rich and varied evidence, not myopic assumptions. Try conducting a few interviews with educators about your plan, or engage them in writing it with you. In the process, you may discover underlying root causes that provide a more holistic view of the problem.

Consider engaging with collaborators in discussion about a text-based protocol, such as Linking Continuous Improvement and Adaptive Leadership to learn what may be required of you to develop a culture of continuous improvement in your school.

Unit 3: Strategizing to Manage Change

In the first task, leaders assess the “essential elements of complex change” (the vision, skills, incentives, resources, and action steps) in their strategic plan and draw similarities between current and new initiatives to anticipate possibly unnecessary commonalities. Additionally, they assess the extent of stakeholder engagement in the plan thus far. The task also pushes leaders to reflect on the processes and protocols that are in place for regular review of the strategic plan to ensure its sustainability.

In task two, leaders take a deeper dive into the concerns of stakeholders as they relate to organizational changes and mitigating those concerns by strategically communicating the change initiatives and identifying the change preferences of impacted staff. Leaders are given the option to assess stakeholders through one of two approaches presented in the literature: the “Stages of Concern” and the “Fears and Hopes” approach. Both activities compel participants to evaluate patterns in change preferences among stakeholders and then strategically modify the implementation plans in ways that successfully support change management.

In the final task of Unit 3, leaders continue to demonstrate their ability to sustain improvement by committing to the continuous evaluation of the strategic plan’s progress as well as the intended impacts of each new initiative.

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In the process of plan monitoring, leaders are also able to predict some of the obstacles they may encounter during implementation and reflect on how the goals of their personal development plan are important to the overarching plan.

Small steps you can take toward transformation

- You may benefit from evaluating the priority of initiatives to more effectively allocate the institution's resources—time, staff, and finances—ensuring that efforts are directed towards initiatives that will make the greatest impact. After drawing up the proposed initiatives, ensure that staff avoid “initiative fatigue” by maximizing connections with existing practices.
- Ensure that your strategic plan allows for responsiveness to educators' change preferences and an empathetic approach to assessing the concerns of staff and stakeholders regarding all new initiatives. The “Stages of Concern Tool” described in The Principal Influence helps leaders to think about the specific actions they will employ to support staff members through changes, depending on the levels and types of concerns that they have. As you conduct a midpoint check-in on the strategic plan's progress, be sure to reflect on the ways your own role is contributing to the success of the overall strategic plan or may be limiting its progress.

Strategic Leadership in Action

NELI leaders were strategically prepared to avoid the pitfalls of simply reproducing the system that brought them to where they are today.

Instead, they worked to develop the skills and dispositions for engaging their communities in constructing a system that can learn, and thereby transform the culture of their schools.

They began with knowing themselves-- both strengths and areas of growth. This helped NELI leaders to recognize their colleagues as assets and to compose distributed leadership teams that were smarter than any one leader could ever be. One participant reflected, “The iterative nature of the Pit Crew's work encourages a culture of continuous reflection and improvement, essential for professional growth.” He further explained, “A successful Pit Crew can embed an innovation mindset within the professional culture, so that experimentation and creative problem-solving are valued and supported.” In fact, 98% of respondents indicated that they are likely or very likely to continue to convene their PIT Crew beyond the NELI Strategic Leadership course.

Together with their PIT Crews, NELI leaders took time to learn about the vision stakeholders have for the school and used their learning to analyze the current reality of their schools' results. The analysis not only influenced the direction of next steps for improvement, but also changed relationships. One NELI leader described the change this way: “There is now a much more positive relationship amongst team members. The team members now understand how to align their values with those of the school, parents, and learners. Parents are now much more involved in the learning of their children than ever.”

Schools are complex systems, and changes in one area are bound to cause changes in other areas.

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While many NELI leaders had experience with mandating change, the NELI program taught them how to manage change and built their skills to do so. They learned to recognize stakeholders' change preferences, to assess their levels of concern about change, and to design communication approaches that could support successful change. One leader shared, "I don't even mind if the plan changes because I know I am doing what all stakeholders consider important as well as what aligns with the purpose and direction of the school."

When we observe a gap between the results we desire and our current reality, we need to remember that if we knew what to do, we would already be doing it. We need to learn our way toward more successful schools. Through transformational leadership, effective leaders turn their schools into learning organizations. A NELI participant describes what this looks like in her school: "There is energy and commitment to achieve the organization's success because everyone knows when we succeed, we succeed together, and when we fail, we learn together."

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About the Authors:

Basheera Agyeman is an experienced educator who serves as a consultant on curriculum implementation and professional development for elementary education. She was also a facilitator for the NELI program.

Jill Harrison Berg is a leadership coach and systems improvement consultant. She serves as a senior advisor for Ghana ASCD and was responsible for coordinating the instructional design of the NELI program.

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INTERVIEW WITH KWAKU ANIM: LEADING LEARNING WITH STRATEGY, CARE, AND COMMUNITY IN GHANA

Kwaku Anim is the headmaster of a private all-girls senior high school in Ghana's Eastern Region. With nearly seven years in this leadership role, Anim brings a unique perspective to instructional leadership, community engagement, and the politics of education in a private school context. In this conversation, he reflects on how he supports teaching and learning, manages staff and community relationships, and works to ensure equity and excellence for his students.

Mary: How do you use your role as headmaster to support instruction?

Kwaku Anim: “One way is through the timetable and class assignments. Sometimes teachers prefer certain levels or subjects, but as head, I have to make decisions based on what’s best for the school. I may push some teachers into classes they’re hesitant about—but it’s to balance the workload and improve results. These choices may seem small, but they have a big impact on how well our students are taught.”

Mary: How would you describe your students’ academic path?

Kwaku Anim: “Our students are preparing for the same national exams as other senior high schools in Ghana, and most are on track to enter university. The academic standard is the same, but the way we support our girls must be different.

Many are adolescents, and that stage comes with emotional challenges.”

“I remember during exams, one girl broke down in tears just before her math paper. We had to call in the principal to calm her down. These moments are part of what it means to lead in a girls' school. You need to have a big heart and really understand young women.”

Mary: You’ve spoken about integrating the community into your students’ learning—can you share more about that?

Kwaku Anim: “We’ve created something called the Community Project. Every final-year class fundraises and then identifies a need in the local area. It might be a donation to a prison or helping a nearby facility. It teaches them civic responsibility, and at the same time, it strengthens our relationship with the community. We’re in a rural area, and these partnerships even help with things like security—local police and prison officers now feel connected to us.”

Kwaku Anim’s leadership blends strategy, empathy, and an unwavering focus on student success. Whether navigating staff dynamics, community relationships, or systemic gender disparities, he leads with the conviction that strong schools are built on thoughtful, inclusive leadership—where teaching and learning always come first.

About Interviewer

*Mary Rice-Boothe, EdD, has more than 25 years of experience in education as a teacher, principal, principal coach, and curriculum designer. She owns Leading-Within, LLC, a consulting organization that supports and advocates for leaders in K12 education through advocacy, coaching, research, and writing. She is the author of *Leading Within Systems of Inequity in Education: A Liberation Guide for Leaders of Color* and is writing a second book focused on building contextual intelligence.*

REIMAGINING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACROSS CONTINENTS: A CONVERSATION ON DECOLONIZING EDUCATION IN GHANA AT SXSW EDU 2025

Abstract:

In March 2025, Dr. Laureen Adams, Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall, and Dr. Mary Rice-Boothe had the opportunity to reflect on their work with Ghana ASCD 's inaugural international educator summit and leadership masterclass on the SXSW EDU stage. The below is an excerpt from the conversation aimed at redefining professional development through a decolonial lens. They share insights into the planning process, the cultural nuances they encountered, and the lessons they learned while fostering cross-continental educational partnerships.

Moderator: *Can you introduce yourselves and share how you became involved in this project in Ghana?*

Dr. Laureen Adams: I'm the Senior Director of Professional Learning with Ghana ASCD, an affiliate of the International Society for Development and ASCD based in the U.S. I've been working in Ghana for the past four years, focusing on supporting educators at all levels.

Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall: I'm the CEO and Principal Consultant at Liaison Educational Partners. I help educational institutions align their practices with their stated values, especially in curriculum, instruction, and culture. I collaborated with Mary and Laury on programming and planning for the summit in Ghana.

Dr. Mary Rice-Boothe: I'm the founder of Leading Within, LLC, supporting educators of color and diversity officers. A mutual friend introduced me to this project, and when I heard there was a conference being developed in Ghana, I immediately wanted to be involved. It's been a tremendous experience.

Moderator: *Can you introduce yourselves and share how you became involved in this project in Ghana?*

Dr. Laureen Adams: The system is still modeled after the British structure—free, compulsory education through junior high, with recent efforts to expand access to senior high school. There's also a strong emphasis on technical and vocational training due to economic challenges. While there's a national curriculum in place, it was recently revised to focus more on learner-centered practices, the four Cs (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication), SEL, and practical skills. However, issues like internet access, resource limitations, and lack of leadership credentialing persist.

Moderator: *What inspired the idea of a decolonized approach to professional development?*

Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall: We wanted to ensure that our work wasn't a replication of Western models imposed on another context. Decolonized professional development, to us, means dismantling hierarchical structures and centering the voices and needs of the educators themselves. It's about mutual learning, co-construction, and empowering local leaders to own their professional growth.

Moderator: *How did this vision come to life in the summit and leadership masterclass?*

Dr. Lauren Adams: We hosted a three-day International Educators Summit with over 1,000 attendees from 15 countries. The former Minister of Education then asked us to host a one-day masterclass specifically for Ghanaian school leaders. We designed the sessions with direct input from those leaders and emphasized practical, context-relevant strategies. It was critical to us that facilitators, both Ghanaian and diaspora, shared leadership experience and modeled inclusive, interactive practices.

Dr. Mary Rice-Boothe: We also learned to adjust the structure. Initially, we planned for broad offerings, but our Ghanaian partners advised depth over breadth. That led to deeper engagement and better reflection among participants.

Moderator: *What cultural considerations influenced your planning and facilitation?*

Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall: There were many! From adjusting language—like using "headmaster" instead of "principal"—to understanding that race isn't the central cultural lens, as it often is in the U.S. In Ghana, identity often centers around tribe, region, or religion. We also had to account for different ideas around gender, equity, and professional learning.

Dr. Lauren Adams: Equity in Ghana is often about gender parity, not necessarily racial or economic equity. Also, there's a cultural emphasis on hierarchy—titles matter, and leadership tends to be more top-down. That made our focus on shared power and transformational leadership even more critical.

Moderator: *Were there any surprising lessons or moments that stood out?*

Dr. Mary Rice-Boothe: Yes—many educators initially approached the sessions expecting to simply take notes. But when we started with questions instead of presentations, we began to see a shift. They opened up, shared context, and became active participants in designing their own learning.

Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall: We also observed the gender dynamics—women were often quieter in discussions. So we made intentional space for their voices. In one case, a U.S.-based facilitator struggled to connect until she partnered with a Ghanaian colleague. That pairing created a beautiful synergy that exemplified what this kind of collaboration should look like.

Moderator: *What are some takeaways for others interested in creating cross-cultural professional learning experiences?*

Dr. Lauren Adams: Start by centering local voices. Provide context to facilitators and focus on strengthening capacity—not imposing. Also, create safe spaces for leaders to be vulnerable and reflective. That's where real growth happens.

Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall: Be intentional. Dialogue, purpose, and humility are essential. If you don't attend to the culture, even the best strategies will fall flat. "Culture eats strategy for lunch," as they say—and it's true.

Dr. Mary Rice-Boothe: Give it time. Planning something across cultures means being patient and learning different ways of working. It's not just about logistics—it's about relationships and respect.

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This collaboration is a testament to the power of co-creation, cultural humility, and the belief that professional learning must be grounded in context and community. As global educational challenges continue to evolve, so must the ways in which we learn from and with each other.

About Panelists

Dr. Laureen Adams has over 20 years of experience spanning both international and U.S. contexts as a classroom teacher, school leader, coach, designer, and professor. Laureen possesses a unique skill set. This includes shaping innovative curricula, effectively supporting learning communities of all sizes, and coaching leaders to drive impactful change. Her design background informs her expertise in project-based learning approaches, performance assessment, and liberatory praxis. These approaches cultivate academic, social-emotional, and 21st-century skills while fostering equity and justice. She collaborates with schools and education organizations to design critical, responsive, and loving curricula, assessments, and professional learning opportunities. Laureen is the founder and Executive Director of the Tutu Institute of Education for Liberation.

Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall, CEO of Liaison Educational Partners (LEP), has nearly three decades of expertise in educational equity. She collaborates with states, districts, and schools to enhance leadership, teacher development, and curriculum equity. Partnering with curriculum publishers, Dr. Marshall ensures students access balanced instructional materials. A nationally recognized consultant, her work spans the US and abroad, focusing on systemic equity, curriculum redesign, instructional practice, and student outcomes. Formerly with The Education Trust, she led educational equity audits and curriculum analysis. Dr. Marshall holds a PhD from Virginia Tech, an MA from UNC Charlotte, and a BA from Boston College.

*Dr. Mary Rice-Boothe has more than 25 years of experience in education as a teacher, principal, principal coach, and curriculum designer. She owns Leading-Within, LLC, a consulting organization that supports and advocates for leaders in K12 education through advocacy, coaching, research, and writing. She is the author of *Leading Within Systems of Inequity in Education: A Liberation Guide for Leaders of Color* and is writing a second book focused on building contextual intelligence.*

INTERVIEW WITH KWADWO YEBOAH KONADU: LEARNING AND LEADING AT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Kwadwo Yeboah Konadu is the Principal at International Community School, Accra. Kwadwo Yeboah Konadu is a passionate educator with over a decade of experience in classroom practice, instructional leadership, and school management. As the Principal of International Community School (ICS) in Accra, he is dedicated to developing the expertise of teachers through comprehensive professional development initiatives. Kwadwo has a proven track record of leading innovative strategies that drive student success and foster a positive learning environment. His commitment to educational excellence and continuous improvement inspires both staff and students, making him a respected leader in the academic community.

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Laureen: Can you first share about yourself and what you do at ICS?

Kwadwo: My name is Kwadwo Yeboah Konadu. I am currently the principal of International Community School. My role involves managing the staff, managing the teaching and learning programs, and offering professional development training and leading that in the school. It also involves parental engagements, implementation of strategies for improved learner outcomes and also reporting progress to all the stakeholders. But I've been involved in this journey of training and developing teachers and educators in this country and in some other programs that I've run for Cambridge and also for my school.

Laureen: Share the vision and mission behind starting the school.

Kwadwo: Our mission is to provide quality, inclusive, holistic international education that meets the aspirations of our learners in a fast-changing world.....This particular mission has gone through some changes. Initially, we said we wanted to provide quality, inclusive, holistic education in West Africa. But then we realized that if you localize your mission within a particular area, you will be short-changing yourself. If you situate it on values, on what you want children or learners to acquire, it's much better. That's why we've now shifted the focus to “the aspirations of our learners in the fast-changing world” and to ensure that you are making sure that you have a community of learners that is guided by values. And so we've been on this vision of leading in the global educational landscape to ensure that we are modeling the quality, inclusive, holistic education.

Laureen: Let's go back to the curriculum that the school uses and why it was chosen. You said you used Cambridge. Can you tell us why?

Kwadwo: When ICS started I think we used to run an American system somehow, but then we needed to now decide on what will allow us to deepen the experiences for the students and how are we going to do it such that we have the flexibility of focusing on skills we realise that Cambridge curriculum offered us the flexibility of deepening concepts and skills while enhancing the experiences of our learners. Again, the program has a support system built into it to help with implementation and guidance for teachers on appropriate ways of implementing the curriculum. And then we realized that the Cambridge program gave you flexibility in how you went about implementing the program. They have support and resources to guide us in running the program, not to mention the assessment opportunities at various stages to track the progress and readiness of learners to move to the next stage.

Laureen: How do you ensure that students receive a holistic education beyond academics?

Kwadwo: One of the things we do is also to ensure that our faculty is very much aware of the need to create opportunities to experience learning beyond the classroom. We do this by ensuring all students have opportunities to express themselves through sports, performances, public speaking, and other school-wide celebrations. Field trips and other hands-on activities, including clubs, are key avenues we use to provide holistic education for all our learners. Students with diverse needs are supported through the special needs department by identifying what their needs are, providing accommodations to support those students

Laureen: How does ICS integrate Ghanaian culture and values into education?

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Kwadwo: So, first and foremost, we try to do this by looking at our core values. We realize that value systems do not necessarily reside in a country, but they are universal. We therefore use our core values as the key drivers to develop values (be it Ghanaian or a universal value system). For example, in our attempt to ensure all our students exhibit Excellence (which is one of our core values), we teach our students to do their best in everything they do—"I can't is not an option, but a constant reflection by the learner on whether that is the best he/she can do is always encouraged in every situation. This cuts across a particular country. It is a universal mindset or value to have, and that is the approach here in ICS. What is universally helpful for this generation is what we are trying to inculcate, and that's why our motto is "training tomorrow's leaders today."

Again, we do Heritage Week, where you learn about the various heritage and cultural norms of our home country. Within the lessons, the students also get to use role plays and other experiential learning opportunities to learn about indigenous traditions.

Laureen: How does your school engage with parents and the local community?

Kwadwo: We have routine programs that allow you to engage with parents and other stakeholders at key times within the academic year, such as open house (during the start of a new term for parents to walk in and get to know their kids' teachers at the start of each school day). We also have student-led conferences that we do every halftime for parents to come in and also check the academic progress of their wards and discuss concerns, if any. We hold a number of school events, and almost all our school events are open to parents, and some are also open to the public.

There's a lot of engagement on social media, but in terms of the communities around us, we use the opportunities created in the service learning and career class sessions to find ways to provide some support to these communities.

An example of such initiatives is the donation drive by our students to donate educational resources to the Madina cluster of schools to support the learning of the children in those schools.

Laureen: What do you think are some of the biggest challenges schools in Ghana face today?

Kwadwo: I think the major challenge for schools in Ghana is a constantly evolving landscape in the educational space. There are lots of changes that are going on in the area of technology and artificial intelligence, and the infrastructural gap, coupled with the absence of resources in most Ghanaian schools, tends to stifle creativity in the teaching and learning process. There's a need to have a lot of opportunities to utilize technology in teaching, but sometimes, in most African schools and countries, there's always that gap. Again, we need to have a flexible mindset about trends in education, have very strong pedagogy, and take advantage of networking opportunities to enhance our skills and develop expertise.

Laureen: What are your future goals for ICS?

Kwadwo: To build a school that has a strong value system, a school that has a strong emphasis on skill development and problem solving. A school whose graduates constantly seek out ways to find solutions to problems, but do not sit and complain about problems. That's what we seek to do here in ICS, and those are my goals.

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Laureen: Last July, ICS hosted Ghana ASCD's International Educator Summit (IES), and you will be hosting it again this July. Can you share your experience with IES at the summit?

Kwadwo: IES has been a very, very fantastic opportunity. This is one program that brought into the same space in ICS an opportunity to have a galaxy of educators from around the world, all in one space, and the networking opportunities were so great. The rich store of information that was shared at this conference was very great. One of the greatest highlights was the opportunity for my staff to be part of it. We hosted it, and it was a pleasure to do this. And I think it's something that ICS was proud to be part of. We are even more excited that this opportunity is also extended to us to host the next IES conference.

There are people that now I've gotten to know that I didn't know. People that I reach out to when I have some challenges and sometimes I realize that the challenges are similar. So it's such a great opportunity once again for us to host the next IES conference.

And we can't wait to have it here in ICS. Thank you.

About Interviewer

Laureen Adams, PhD, a seasoned educator with over 20 years of experience, champions liberatory education for leaders, teachers, and students. Her diverse background includes roles as a teacher (grades 6-12), lead teacher, coach, curriculum designer, instructional coach, teacher educator, administrator, and professor across public, charter, private, district, and university settings. An author and international consultant, Dr. Adams specializes in teacher education, learner-centered communities, leadership, and love-centered liberatory education.

THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS SUMMIT 2025 IS HERE!

With the jaw of every participant opened wide and echoes of applause across the ICS Accra Campus hall one can say last year, the inaugural International Educators Summit, hosted by Ghana ASCD, left an indelible mark on the global education landscape.

The event, held at the International Community School in Accra, brought together over 1,000 educators from 14 countries, creating a vibrant tapestry of ideas and innovation. This year, the excitement is building up again as the International Educators Summit 2025 is set to take place from July 18th to 20th in Accra, Ghana.

Building on Success

The 2024 summit was a resounding success, with attendees praising the insightful sessions, networking opportunities, and cultural experiences such as group trips to Assin Manso and Cape Coast Castle. The event was graced by esteemed figures such as the Minister for Education, Dr. Yaw Osei Aduwum, and Senior Minister Yaw Osafo-Mafo, who emphasized the importance of reimagining education for the future. This year promises to be just as impactful, with a focus on transforming challenges into opportunities through interactive sessions and real-world case studies.

This year's summit boasts an impressive lineup of speakers, including Dr. Mary Ashun, CEO of Ghana International School, known for her transformative leadership in education.

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As well as Prof. Pedro Noguera, Dean of the Rossier School of Education at USC, a leading scholar on issues of race, inequality, and education and is highly recognized for his advocacy efforts in fighting poverty.

In addition to these keynote speakers, the summit will feature six thought leaders and over 100 educational presenters sharing their expertise and strategies for educational transformation. We are offering a hybrid option as well, so even more educators can join the movement!

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity! Ghana ASCD is offering a 20% OFF for groups of 10 or more, 50% OFF for presenters and 20% for Ghana ASCD Members. Learn more about and sign up for membership at <https://ghascd.org/membership/>.

IES 2025 is gearing up to be more than just a conference but a global platform to connect with dynamic thought leaders, learn innovative strategies, and transform your impact in education. Whether you are a teacher, school leader, or education enthusiast, this summit is your opportunity to be part of a movement that is shaping the future of education.

So, mark your calendars for July 18th to 20th and get ready to experience the most engaging and impactful education event of the year. Register now and be part of the journey to reimagine education for a brighter future!

Visit the Ghana ASCD website for more details and to secure your spot today!

FALL ISSUE CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Ghana ASCD RenewED is a platform dedicated to fostering insightful discussions and sharing practical knowledge among educators. Our publication features a diverse range of articles written by educators for educators, covering the latest trends, challenges, and best practices in K-12 education in Ghana and across the Diaspora.

We seek thought-provoking pieces that offer evidence-based solutions, engaging analysis, and practical guidance for school leaders and educators. Your submissions should be insightful, informative, and written in a conversational style that resonates with our audience.

Journal Theme for Fall Issue

We are asking for submissions to continue our 2025 International Educators Conference theme: *Innovating for Impact: Leading & Learning Together for Sustainable Educational Transformation.*

We are particularly interested in submissions that align with the conference strands:

Transforming Learning Through Leadership: Professional Development and Collaboration in Action: The critical role of leadership involves reshaping educational landscapes through intentional collaboration and ongoing professional growth. This strand explores how leadership teams can effectively drive curriculum reform and implementation, ensuring that teaching practices align with evolving educational standards.

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Youth Empowerment and Leadership: From Ideas to Impact: Empowering youth through education means equipping them with skills, knowledge, and confidence to shape their futures and drive change. This strand focuses on leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving while fostering self-awareness, resilience, and collaboration. By creating conditions for empowerment in education, we prepare learners to excel academically and lead impactful change in their communities.

Creating Safe Environments: Fostering Trust, Wellness, and Collective Growth: Explore the vital role of creating safe and supportive environments in educational settings, where physical, mental, and social-emotional wellness are prioritized. Sessions under this theme will highlight practical strategies for building resilience, promoting inclusivity, and addressing disparities that affect well-being.

Teaching & Assessing with Students at the Center: Rooted in student-centered education, this strand examines what it means to design classrooms where students are engaged in decisions about what and how they learn. It explores the role of pedagogy in fostering both academic and cognitive growth, emphasizing teaching strategies that enable students to share ownership of their learning and assessment approaches that are tools for empowerment so that students thrive in and beyond the classroom.

Lifelong Learning & Skills for the Future: The role of AI and STEM: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is reshaping how we learn, work, and innovate.

This strand explores the transformative power of emerging technologies in equipping individuals with the skills needed for the future, emphasizing the pivotal role of AI and ICT in education and workforce development.

Every Learner Counts: Tackling Disparities and Supporting Diverse Learners Everywhere: This strand addresses disparities between rural and urban education systems and highlights the need for inclusive strategies and differentiated instruction to support learners of all genders and special needs. It emphasizes bridging gaps in resources, infrastructure, and teacher training to create an equitable and inclusive educational landscape. The goal is to ensure every learner can thrive and reach their full potential.

Submission Guidelines:

- **Word count:** Aim for 1,500-2,500 words. Longer submissions may be considered, but shorter pieces are generally preferred.
- **Originality:** Ensure your work is original and has not been published elsewhere.
- **Clarity and conciseness:** Write in a clear, engaging, and easy-to-understand style.
- **Avoid jargon:** Use plain language that is accessible to a wide audience.
- **Provide citations:** If you reference external sources, please include proper citations.

Please note:

- We request a complete manuscript. No drafts or query letters.
- While we welcome various writing forms, we rarely publish conventional research reports or literature reviews.
- If your article is accepted elsewhere while under review with us, please notify us promptly.

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- We welcome submissions across the Diaspora but are focused on centering the voices and experiences of Ghanaian educators. We encourage other educators to connect with a Ghanaian educator to submit a collaboratively written article.

Submission Process:

- **Direct submission:** Please submit your manuscript directly to ghascdsmissions@gmail.com.
- **Due Date:** August 29, 2025
- **Questions:** Please reach out to ghascdsmissions@gmail.com
- **An informational Webinar for Interested Contributors will be held soon!**
- We look forward to receiving your insightful contributions!

Dr. Mary Rice-Boothe and Dr. Lauren Adams, Co-Editors



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