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# Transformative Learning Approach for Educational Gerontology: Creating an Appropriate Teaching-Learning Framework for Older Adults

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## Abstract

Educational gerontology provides for changes that occur in later life through transformational learning. From observation, older women tend to have issues with transformational learning from educational gerontology programs, maybe because of the regular facilitation approaches in use. Hence, adopting sequential explanatory mixed method research, this study examined the use of the Transformative Learning Approach (TLA) for educational gerontology to create an appropriate teaching-learning framework for older adults. Guided by two research questions and one null hypothesis, a sample of 154 older women who were 55 years and above were selected for the study using a multistage sampling procedure. Findings revealed that TLA is an effective and efficient teaching-learning procedure that should be used by adult educators involved in assisting older adults to learn. Furthermore, ideas emanating from the perceived best adaptation of TLA had sub-themes revolving around the procedure to include recounting of experiences, dialogue, and acting; and structure there are sub-themes such as continuous learning, types of activities, timing and sitting positions were generated from the theme of structure. This led to the suggestion of a framework titled dialogical transformative learning approach as a teaching-learning procedure.

## Keywords

Transformative learning, educational gerontology, older women, Teaching-learning approach for older people

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# Enfoque de Aprendizaje Transformador para la Gerontología Educativa: Creación de un Marco de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje Apropriado para Adultos Mayores

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## Resumen

La gerontología educativa aborda los cambios en la vejez mediante el aprendizaje transformacional. Se ha observado que las mujeres mayores enfrentan dificultades con este tipo de aprendizaje, posiblemente debido a los métodos de facilitación convencionales. Por ello, este estudio adoptó un método mixto explicativo secuencial para examinar el uso del Enfoque de Aprendizaje Transformativo (TLA) en la gerontología educativa, con el objetivo de crear un marco de enseñanza-aprendizaje adecuado para adultos mayores. Se seleccionó una muestra de 154 mujeres mayores de 55 años mediante un muestreo por etapas. Los hallazgos mostraron que el TLA es un procedimiento efectivo y eficiente que deberían emplear los educadores de adultos. Las ideas sobre su mejor adaptación se organizaron en subtemas: en el procedimiento, se incluyeron el recuento de experiencias, el diálogo y la actuación; en la estructura, se destacaron el aprendizaje continuo, los tipos de actividades, los tiempos y las posiciones de ubicación. Como resultado, se propuso un marco titulado enfoque dialógico de aprendizaje transformador como procedimiento de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

## Palabras clave

Aprendizaje transformativo, gerontología educativa, mujeres mayores, enfoque de enseñanza-aprendizaje para personas mayores

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Advancement in age comes with different demands and needs ranging from health to finance to socialisation patterns and others. For health, ageing comes with natural deterioration in strength, metabolic changes, weakening of cells, and sometimes allergies. This is more prominent for women above 55 years in Africa because their health had been compromised from childhood and they suffer different health issues and morbidity than men even though they live longer because they deal with chronic health problems and levels of disability (Apt, 2010; United Nations Population Fund & HelpAge International, 2012). Aside from this, old age sometimes comes with reduced income as well as income insecurity for women in developing countries because they often do not have access to formal labour or corporate employment during their working age, so they do not have access to a pension. Ajayi (2021) explained that some women are more likely to live in poverty in old age because, aside from the lack of social intervention schemes in most developing countries, they are less likely to have land or assets or credit facilities which they can use to attract loans.

In addition, older women frequently take on roles like those of surrogate mothers, caregivers, and teachers of customs and culture to the younger generation. Also, it is entirely the responsibility of these women to impart to younger girls the values of creating happy homes (Ajayi, 2021). This social pattern earns them respect and continual support from the young. All these health, finance, and socialisation patterns have implications for each older woman and society, throwing up the need for devising means to cope with emerging issues. These issues are catered to traditionally through the Indigenous system, which provides communal living through an effective age grade system, moonlight activities, a community contributory scheme, and traditional medicine. They are meant to encourage education and adaptation for all indigenous people. This allowed each citizen to manage personal growth tasks and age-appropriate society development.

Nevertheless, the instillation of indigenous education and capacity to meet the needs of old age are rapidly being undermined by modernisation and civilisational practices, including monogamy, emphasis on the nuclear family, technological prowess, and urban migration. This change also resulted in older women's duties being reduced to the help they got, which limited their ability to contribute to the advancement of society. These societal dynamics reveal that older women cannot depend solely on the government and family members. Especially when they have not come to terms with the physiological and social challenges of their present age, some older women's attitudes regarding values and quality of life, purposeful accomplishments, and the country's future are indicative of this (Ajayi, 2021). These dispositions can be enhanced through learning and education, providing an individualistic dimension suitable for older adults. This is reflected in the Transformative learning theory propounded by Jack Mezirow in 1978. Mezirow (2000) noted that adult learning and education are individualistic, and they are the first step towards meaningful and constructive learning. It entails activities that can ensure deep, constructive, and meaningful learning. This is expected to be achieved by educational gerontology.

Educational gerontology is an arm of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) that aims to expand on the regular or formalised way of instilling education by offering continuous organised or non-organized education plans for skill and knowledge to meet relevant life situations according to the Nigerian national policy on education (Federal Government of

Nigeria, 2013). Although no formalised programmes are tagged for educational gerontology in Nigeria, they are embedded in all ALE programmes available within the country. Ajayi (2018) noted that Adult Learning and Education include activities ranging from literacy (basic and post literacy) to vocational and technical education (modes of learning that an individual acquires to work professionally), to recurrent education (systematic education provision beyond initial or compulsory education to meet needs and development), and to civic-oriented education (education for adults become more effective members of a society). All these are to provide the tenets of lifelong learning and education for all adults. Older adults are meant to provide skills centred on learning to know, do, be, and live together regarding changes due to old age, facilitated through appropriate approaches.

The approach for facilitating learning is vital to the participation of older women in Adult Learning and Education programmes and the transformational results that learning content will achieve. The regular methods often used in Nigeria to facilitate these activities include role play, demonstration, synthetic, analytic, each-one-teach-one, seminars, and lectures, among others. To enhance transformational learning, these approaches are expected to take cognisance of learners' experiences to help them mentally construct and motivate desired changes through lesson contents. However, using these methods has been criticised as being pedagogical and not employing the experiences of the adult learners efficiently to ensure mental construct for desired changes (Simeon-Fayomi et al., 2017; Ajayi, 2019). This may disturb the positive changes expected from Adult Learning and Education for older women towards self-improvement and contribution to society. An ideal method for older women should take cognisance that they are versatile in wisdom but face the challenges of ageing in the modern world. Whichever method is adopted should also allow for critical evaluation of what has transpired, how they may use information to handle their circumstances, and how they might restructure their circumstances to provide the most outstanding results. It should not take away from their capacity to talk about problems with people facing comparable difficulties to develop coping mechanisms. It is believed that the Transformative Learning Approach (TLA) can help achieve this.

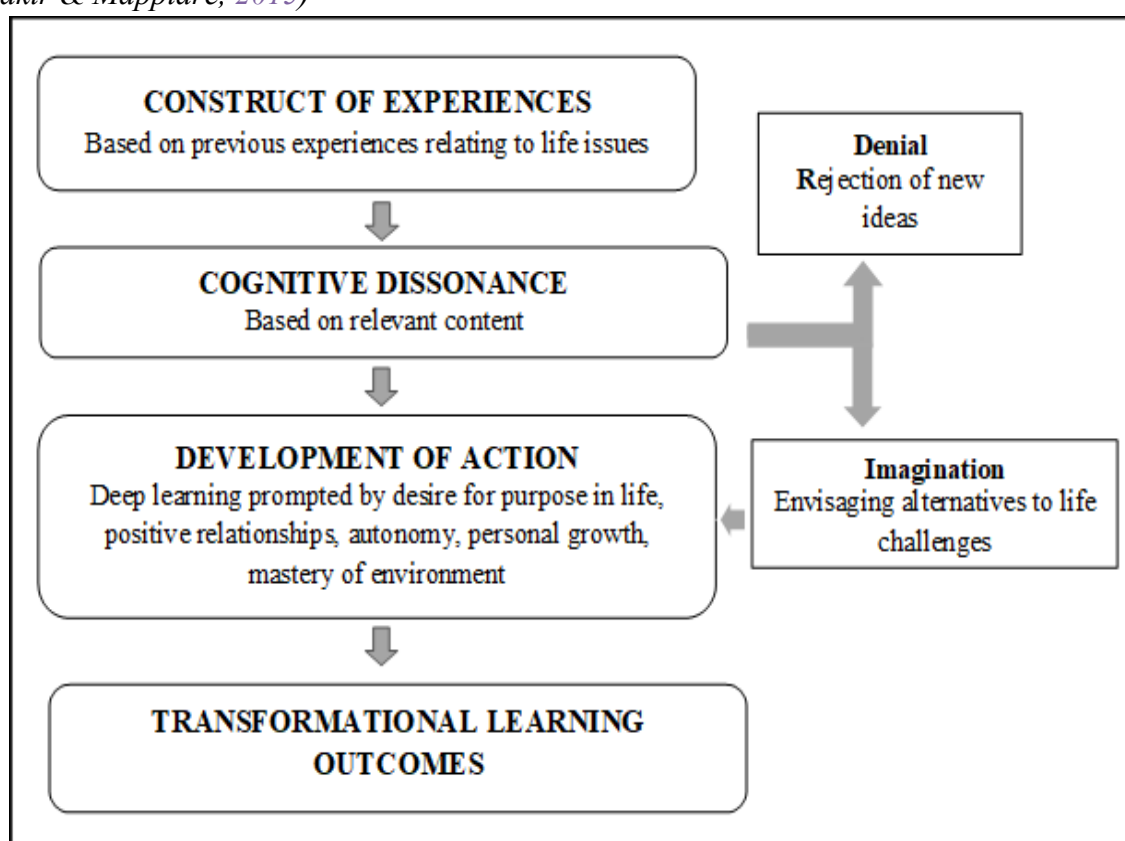
Although learning can help extend some social networks and ensure individualistic learning, if not carefully managed, it can also disrupt the existing ones when it occurs in monotony or strains mental ability through a rigid approach that does not use the learner's experiences. This makes approaches to learning, especially for older women, important. Numerous scholars have utilised the elements and tenets of Transformative Learning Theory to form the Approach. Berner, *et al.* (2013) regarded transformative learning as an umbrella term for teaching-learning methods: lifelong learning, active and experiential learning, problem-based learning, collaborative and social learning, and empowerment and dialogue education. Khabanyene, *et al.* (2014) stated that learning is a dynamic process that fosters inclusivity and self-direction. It is an articulation of the past that enhances current knowledge, skills, and capacities, according to Ajayi and Olatumile (2018). Applying this approach, learners are encouraged to be resourceful in crafting a learning journey that will create potent learning experiences for which they will be personally responsible. Buttressing this, Berner *et al.* (2013) stated that the Transformative Learning Approach transforms learners' values and perceptions to accept social wellbeing as a new paradigm or a lens to make changes or view the world. Furthermore, this

approach to learning is a process of constructing and taking new and revised interpretations of the meaning and experiences in the world.

The Transformative Learning Approach is described as a linear, four-stage process consisting of constructs of experiences, critical reflection/cognitive dissonance, development of action/deep learning, and implementation of action in a review of Scoffham and Barnes (2009), Merten (2014), and Moedzakir and Mappiare (2015). This is depicted in Figure 1 as a process that involves the construct of experiences based on personal and societal changes that older women identify as hindering their development. The next stage will be the disturbance of their cognitive institution based on contents identified as being relevant for improved personal and social development. The stage is to occur in a favourable environment, allowing for critical reflection. Learners may agree with the new idea and imagine alternatives. However, they may decline the new knowledge received, as such transformation may not occur. The development of action will be based on the new idea received, coupled with the imagination for alternatives. This stage occurs with deep learning and critiquing of their prior beliefs about themselves.

**Figure 1**

*Adapted Transformative Learning Approach (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009; Merten, 2014; Moedzakir & Mappiare, 2015)*



This process is believed to yield an ultimate end of self-improvement and contribution to society through educational gerontology since the learning process is important and relates closely to social interaction or network. This means learning should be more than memorisation; instead, it should be characterised by using the learner's experiences to have a

meaningful, real-life application of learning, addressing societal issues. According to Berner *et al.* (2013), this is transformational learning, which requires learners to accept and question themselves because reflection begins a transformational learning journey. Brock and Abel (2012) noted that the factors contributing to transformative learning can be divided into personal support, learning activities, and life changes. This means that learning is an individual thing wherein one supports oneself through the support of other learners and facilitators, resulting in activities relevant to life changes.

Vitman *et al.* (2013) assert that the unfavourable perception of elderly individuals hinders their ability to integrate and contribute to society. On the other hand, according to Thekkedath and Joseph (2009), one of the reasons behind older women's lack of coping mechanisms and poverty is the feminine aspect of ageing. Nonetheless, the World Health Organisation (WHO), referenced in Boulton-Lewis, *et al.* (2017), said that lifelong learning provides older adults with the information and abilities to manage their health, preserve their identity and sense of purpose in life, stay current with societal changes, and cope with ageing. For these reasons, transformational learning entails a fundamental structural change in the underlying assumptions of feeling, thinking, and behaviour. According to Rivero's (2013) testimony, transformational learning enables senior women to embrace their current circumstances while rejecting the ones that led them there. Therefore, transformational learning is essential for ageing well and promoting growth.

Therefore, this study examined using the Transformative Learning Approach (TLA) for educational gerontology to create an appropriate teaching-learning framework for older adults. Specifically, the following research questions were raised:

1. What impact does the transformative learning approach have on the transformational learning of older women?
2. How best can a transformative learning approach be adapted for educational gerontology?

A null hypothesis was also generated: There is no significant difference in the mean score of older women exposed to the transformative learning approach and those not exposed to the transformative learning approach.

## Methodology

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design, where the quantitative phase was designed using a quasi-experimental design and the qualitative phase was designed using a case study design. Women living in Ondo state, Nigeria, who are 55 or older, make up the population. Using a random sample technique via balloting, two Local Government Areas (LGAs) in each of Ondo State's three senatorial districts were chosen for the study's quantitative phase.

Within the identified LGAs, the same sample technique was applied to designate one region as the control and another as the experimental. One government-owned adult learning facility was chosen in each of the twelve designated areas, making a total of 12 learning centres. One hundred fifty-four participants who agreed to participate in the study and had a mean score of



less than 2.5 on the transformational learning pre-test were then chosen for the study based on inclusion criteria. The transformational learning pre-test and post-test were adapted from the Transformative Learning Quantitative Survey (Stuckey, Taylor & Cranton, 2013) and the Transformative Outcomes and Processes Scale (Cox, 2017).

Simple random sampling by balloting was utilised to choose four centres from the experimental group for the qualitative phase. A purposive sample technique was then employed to choose 36 participants who transformed (as determined by the difference in their pre- and post-test scores) and were open to participating in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The sample selection is summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1**

*Sample Distribution for Quantitative Phase by Centre*

Experimental group centres					Control group centres		Total
Deeper Life Bible Church, Sholagbade District, Akure	14				Ibunkunoluwa Literacy Center, Akure	13	27
Muslim Pry. Sch., Ilepa, Akoko	14				St. Paul Ang. Pry. Sch., Ugbe-Akoko	13	27
St. Paul Ang. Pry. sch., Erekiti-Luoye	13				L.A. Pry. Sch. Ajewole Igbotako	12	25
Ago Ireti, Oba-Ile, Akure	13				The Apostolic Pry. Sch., Iju.	12	25
Salvation Army Pry. Sch., Igbobini	12				L.A. Pry. Sch. Arogbo	13	25
St. James Ang. Pry. Sch., Idogun	13				Social Pry. Sch., Idoani	12	25
	79					75	154

**Table 2**

*Sample Distribution for the Qualitative Phase*

Center	No.
Deeper Life Bible Church, Sholagbade District, Akure	10
St. Paul Ang. Pry. Sch. Erekiti-Lawuoye	9
Ago Ireti, Oba-Ile, Akure	7
Salvation Army Pry. Sch., Igbobini	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

The Transformational Learning Questionnaire and follow-up Focus Group Discussion were used as instruments for the study. The transformational Learning Questionnaire consisted of 16 adapted items assessed using scales of Definitely Agree (DA), Slightly Agree (SA), Slightly Disagree (SD), and Definitely Disagree (DD). The Focus Group Discussion consisted of 4 groups sharing opinions after the treatment using 5-point Likert scale questions. Transformational Learning Questionnaire attained face and content validity, and Cronbach-alpha statistics yielded a reliability rating 0.703. Replication logic established the reliability of the data from the focus group discussions, while reflectivity established its credibility.

The treatment procedure consisted of a baseline survey through a structured interview for 10 population members to assess their opinion on learning activities. Participants noted that the learning strategy, content, and timing should not be like the conventional adult learning

activity. Based on this background information and the idea from the adapted transformative learning approach (Figure 1), the treatment used in terms of teaching-learning method was developed for the experimental group. All the participants for the study (control and experimental) had a pre-test using the Transformational Learning Questionnaire in the week preceding the commencement of treatment; the treatment (learning sessions) were held between 45 to 60 minutes per week for eight (8) consecutive weeks; while the post-test was conducted after the treatment. A Focus Group Discussion took place with a sample from the experimental group after the post-test.

For the experimental group, lessons adapted from NMEC (2008) Life Skills: A Handbook for Non-Formal Education Learners were facilitated using the adapted transformative learning process.

1. The facilitator gives a topic for a lesson,
2. Participants share previous experiences from beliefs and values concerning the introduced topic,
3. Participants bring out important points to note collectively from their experiences while the facilitator sheds light on them in line with the key message of the lesson.
4. Participants develop improvement plans or discard lesson content based on learning activities, and
5. Participants apply the knowledge gained in their daily endeavours.

For the control group, the lessons were facilitated through the steps outlined in the document for each lesson. Some lessons required that the learners and or facilitators read the lesson contents and perform the exercises, some required that learners role-play the case studies outlined in the lesson, and some facilitators wrote the lessons on the board to identify and spell difficult words.

Ethical approval with number 211023ERC4 was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee, Centre for Research and Development, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. Permission was obtained from the Board for Adult, Vocational and Technical Education (BAVTE) in Ondo State, Nigeria. Informed consent was obtained from participants before they participated in the study.

Descriptive statistics of mean was used for the quantitative data for the research questions, themes and narratives were used to buttress the quantitative data using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was used for data analysis using the six steps developed by Braun & Clarke (Byrne, 2022); while the hypothesis was tested with inferential statistics using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a significance level of 0.05.

## **Result and Discussion of Findings**



## Impact of Transformative Learning Approach on the Transformational Learning of Older Women

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Analyses of Transformational Learning Mean Score of Participants*

Group		Post-test	Mean difference
Experiment	Mean	48.54	
	Frequency	79	
	Std. Deviation	7.992	2.87
Control	Mean	45.67	
	Frequency	75	
	Std. Deviation	4.766	

Data in Table 3 reveal a positive difference of 2.87 in the transformative mean score of those exposed to the adapted transformative learning approach and those exposed to regular facilitation approaches. This difference was in favour of those who were exposed to the transformative learning approach. This reveals that it is affirmative that this approach positively impacts educational gerontology among women. This supports Wright's (2016) findings that adult learning and education facilitation methods that foster curiosity, enjoyment, knowledge seeking, and a desire for communication may preserve individual autonomy and provide beneficial, developmentally appropriate results. Additionally, it supports the findings of Simeon-Fayomi et al. (2017) that most conventional methods employed in adult education and learning do not adhere to the principles of a successful and efficient strategy for transformational learning.

To establish the impact of TLA, the follow-up Focus Group Discussion (FGD) data obtained are summarised and analysed in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Themes and Summary of Narratives for the Impact of the Transformative Learning Approach on Transformational Learning*

Theme	Narratives	
	Self-improvement	Societal development
Clarify the disoriented dilemma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The learning activities clarified that nothing can be learnt or achieved in old age. Since the learning programme started, there has been a realisation that the issue of being unable to achieve anything at an old age is a myth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feelings of being left out of societal activities are common, unlike when one was younger. However, this is how we are taught, which reveals that we can still be relevant.</li> <li>Loss of hope in the future of Nigeria is an idea that looks clearer in old age than when one is younger, but</li> </ul>

Theme	Narratives	
	Self-improvement	Societal development
Enhance critical reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance, health, and social interaction, among other things, cannot be progressive in old age, which is an idea that was brought into the programme, but this idea is wrong.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this learning activity has helped to restore hope.</li> <li>• Old age has not been relatively valued in Nigeria because there is no policy or financial support for older people.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning is dynamic, and coping with and controlling challenges at every stage of life is important. So, it is essential to think of strategies to cope with the negative ideas and situations linked to old age.</li> <li>• It is essential to continue learning in old age for personal growth, aside from basic literacy.</li> <li>• Based on the lessons learnt, it can be realised that goals and aspirations can still be achieved regardless of old age</li> <li>• From personal reflections, it is obvious that life is full of opportunities if experiences are reviewed continuously.</li> <li>• Personal situations that are displeasing should be challenged to achieve improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in the development of Nigeria politically and economically is important for older people based on lessons learnt.</li> <li>• The observations of older women indicate that morality instillation in the younger generation is contingent upon intergenerational socialisation.</li> <li>• There is always room for improvement in one's contributions to society.</li> <li>• Since each citizen makes up the nation, it is realised that everyone has a vital role to play. Therefore, all age group must contribute their quota</li> </ul>
Encourage rational Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning period is an opportunity to discuss one's thoughts on disturbing issues and find solutions along with others.</li> <li>• Socialising and having activities together with people of like minds and challenges improves understanding of the challenges as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The educational activities offered a way to unwind and converse with others about topics of national relevance.</li> <li>• Through this programme, socialisation was achieved and new friends were made.</li> </ul>

Theme	Narratives	
	Self-improvement	Societal development
	well as propels the finding of a lasting solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal perspectives have changed, and participation is now successful in groups that appear to be dominated by males.</li> </ul>

Data from Table 4 demonstrates that individuals who underwent transformational learning had confusing dilemmas about their contributions to society and self-improvement, which were explained during the learning program. They also considered taking advantage of these problems during the treatment. Furthermore, the approach ensures they can voice their idea as women to other participants and the community.

This result is consistent with Fleming's (2000) findings that program participants who underwent the Transformative Learning Approach spoke persuasively about how the program improved their health and kept them engaged in the community. The study also shows that although decision-making as a group was initially complex for the participants, they overcame this in weeks. This is consistent with the findings of Heur and King (2008), which showed that individuals who first experienced difficulties with trust and communication later came to love group projects and participated in their communities when TLA is used. It also confirms the findings of Lindsay-Smith, O'Sullivan, Elime, Harvey, and Van Ufflen (2019), who found that older persons can confront their later years positively if they increase their capacities and take advantage of the chance provided by learning activities.

### How Best a Transformative Learning Approach can be Adapted for Educational Gerontology

**Table 5**

*The Theme and Summary of Narratives on best was to adopt a Transformative Learning Approach for Educational Gerontology.*

Theme	Sub Theme	Summary of Narrative
Procedure	Recount of experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing personal stories related to the material covered at the start of each session helped students realise how damaging and unpleasant some situations can be.</li> <li>Talking about bad experiences stimulates curiosity about how to prevent them in the future.</li> </ul>
	Dialogue about lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talking about everyday experiences fosters a sense of belonging because there is a collective effort to find a solution and because others may have experienced similar things in the past.</li> </ul>

Theme	Sub Theme	Summary of Narrative
	Taking action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone discusses and shares pertinent ideas; this ensures that even the ideas intended to be rejected are reinterpreted to suit each person's circumstances.</li> <li>New ideas, values, and perspectives are defined through dialogue based on lesson material and experiences shared.</li> <li>After discussion, knowledge is gained, some people jump at the new knowledge and start implementing it immediately, while others keep the idea for later use.</li> <li>Some people will clearly state their plans for their self-improvement, while others will not state them. However, when there is a review in the next class, you will be surprised that they will state the related practice they had during the week.</li> <li>Practising tasks is essential and should be done to self-evaluate.</li> </ul>
	Continuous learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since life is circular, reviewing lessons and discussion forums where past learning activities were covered will guarantee that information that needs to be revised to fit the present circumstance is identified.</li> </ul>
	Type of Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the programme is more of a discussion and not reading or writing as educational activities in adulthood are assumed to be (literacy), it is encouraging.</li> </ul>
	Sitting position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is appealing and relaxing to learn something new in comfort, with the ordering of the sitting positions available in the locations for learning (circle). It does not look like school.</li> </ul>
Structure		

Theme	Sub Theme	Summary of Narrative
	Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning at will is a good idea. The idea of not having a rigid time of day makes it appealing also because we all determine when we want to learn.</li> </ul>

Table 5 data demonstrates that sharing experiences, having a conversation about the material being taught, and acting first lead to the practice of actions that promote growth and progress. These procedural findings are comparable to those of Scoffham and Barnes (2009), who discussed deep learning, profound experiences, cognitive disruption, and long-term effects. This outcome supports the research of Berner, Lobo, and Silva (2013), which found that a transformative learning journey starts with learning that calls for students to embrace and challenge who they are. Additionally, it has similarities with the conclusions of Moedzakir and Mappiare (2015), which address dilemmatic issues, contemplate fundamental issues and their resolutions, take transformative activities, and have transformative effects.

It also links with Merten's (2014) results, which demonstrate how experiences are conceptualised, and critically reflected upon, actions are developed, and actions are carried out. It differs from all of these, though, particularly in the second stage, when participants suggested that discussing their group experiences and reflecting on the disruptive stage helped them evolve. Furthermore, it did not disclose that TLA permits students to reject a novel concept before proceeding to the next phase; instead, it proposes incorporating continuous learning into the TLA process.

Findings also revealed that learning should be continuous, affirming the findings of Goss (2011) and Friebe and Schmidt-Hertha (2013) that continuous participation in lifelong learning based on individual health, positive images of ageing, critical thinking, and social relationships would enable older women to maintain independent lifestyles. In addition, it resonates with Boulton-Lewis et al. (2017)'s finding that continuous learning in old age gives knowledge and skills to keep abreast with changes in society, manage health, adjust to ageing, and maintain identity and interest in life. Therefore, older women would continuously improve their well-being through unlearning, learning and evaluating what has been learnt and is relevant.

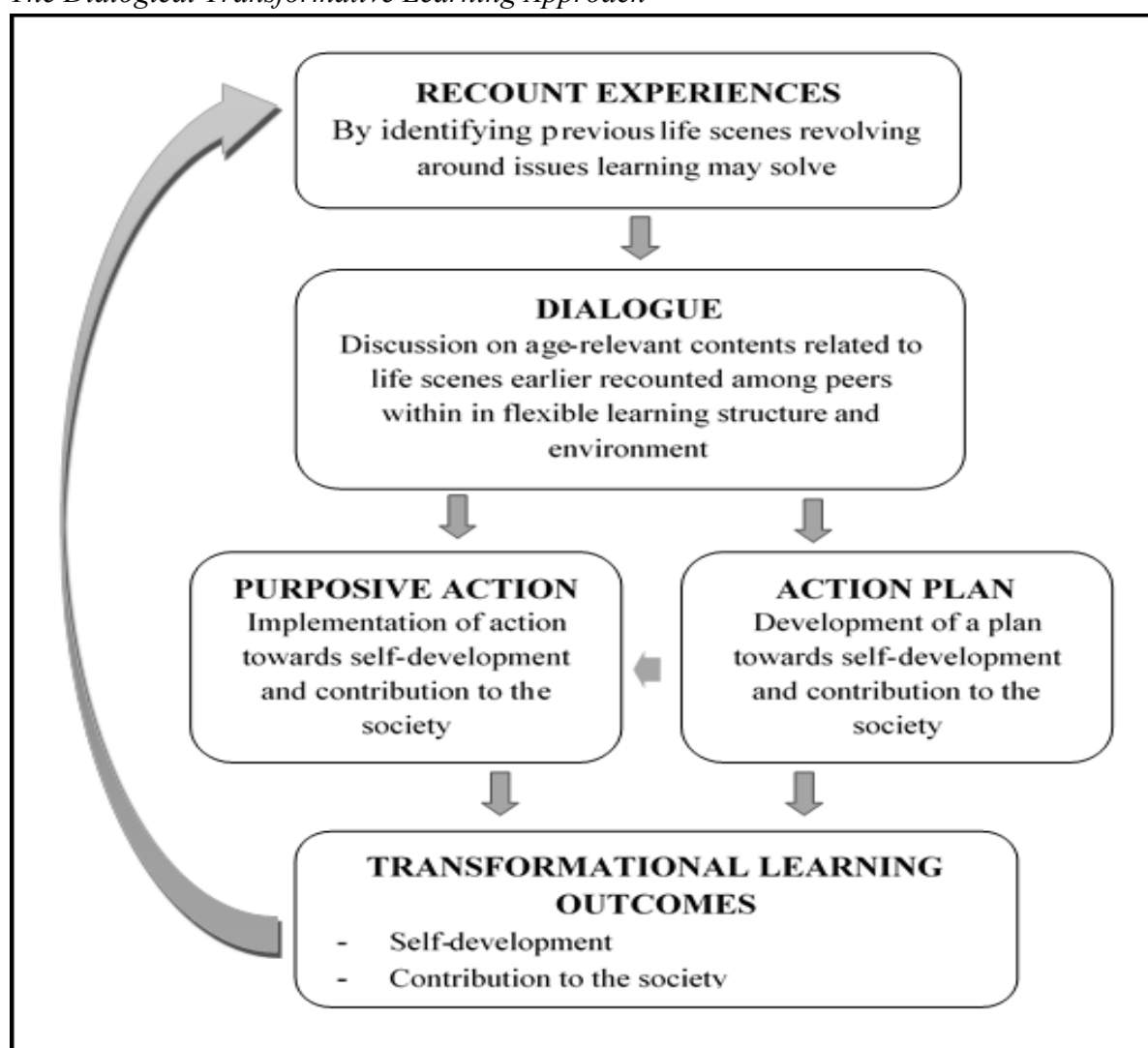
The findings suggested a drift from the regular transformative learning approach depicted in Figure 1 to a more dialogical approach. The researchers developed the dialogical transformative learning approach (Figure 2) based on the findings of this study to serve as a guide for adult educationists working towards improved learning that is transformational for older adults. The modified approach (Figure 2) developed by the researchers depicts that achieving transformational learning requires a process that uses the full participation of learners through their conscious, concerted effort as a group involved in active dialogue. This modified approach may incorporate and validate aspects of the dialogic teaching-learning approach, as it is vital for children and older Nigerian adults. The reason for this may not be far-fetched from the ideal of the Yoruba adage *Agbajowọ la fí n sọyà, ajíjì ọwọ kan kò gbé èrù dé orí* (Unity is strength, one hand cannot lift a load onto the head), emphasising the importance of collaboration and collective effort in achieving learning goals and transformation. Hence, although the dialogic approach may be considered a pedagogical approach rooted in

Vygotskian sociocultural and Bakhtin theories (Cui & Teo, 2021), it can also be adapted as a key to older adult learning.

Since it is based on communication, comprehension, and group meaning-making, this study emphasises how communication can promote critical thinking and a better understanding relying on reciprocal interactions, which encourage participants to actively engage, challenge actively, and co-construct knowledge, in contrast to monologic learning, which is unidirectional in its knowledge transfer. According to Resnick et al. (2018), the effect of dialogic teaching-learning includes better initial learning, retention of learning gains, transfer of knowledge to other spheres of life, and test of reasoning skills, these are related to the benefits of this new approach as seen in figure 2 that is self-development and contribution to the society. Therefore, based on the new approach, the following stages and activities are expected for transformational learning to take place in educational gerontology.

Firstly, participants recount their previous experiences on the wellbeing challenge, which is solvable through new knowledge or learning. The next step is to start a conversation based on the experiences that have been shared and age-appropriate material related to the issues brought up. The discussion is anticipated to result in learners taking deliberate, immediate action or preparing activities that will ultimately be put into practice and have a positive effect. The dialogical transformational learning method views learning as a cyclical process in which issues arise from the learning process assessment and are addressed as new ones, potentially rendering earlier approaches to addressing those issues outdated.



**Figure 2***The Dialogical Transformative Learning Approach*

Juxtaposing the new model with previously adapted ideas and models of TLA, the following shifts are observed:

- While the new method begins with recounting past experiences that they feel new information and learning may alter, the first stage of the old model begins with a construct of experiences based on prior experiences around life issues.
- The previous model deals with cognitive dissonance, which can lead to cognitive disturbance, leading to learners alternatively accepting or rejecting new knowledge based on their perceptions. The new approach deals with dialogue between facilitators and learners and amongst learners, based on relevant content. In the new model, rejection tends not to occur because learners have periods to discuss, with a clear view of new knowledge based on opinions shared by others with the same disorienting dilemma.
- The new approach is cyclical, whereas the old model was linear and ended as a result. With learning, unlearning, and relearning, adult learners are required under the new paradigm to assess and improve society and themselves continually.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Although they face challenging issues, older women are vital contributors to national development through their self-improvement and active social participation. However, enrolment in any form of adult learning and education programme related to educational gerontology should ensure transformation in individual older adults. This transformation reflects that older persons can be empowered to take control and ownership of their lives and use opportunities within society to have favourable relationships. This demonstrates that, when used as a dialogistic approach, TLA is a successful and efficient teaching-learning method essential for resolving life's problems, achieving self-improvement, and contributing to society.

Therefore, learning is crucial for older individuals in Nigeria to promote development. This learning should take place through a method that guarantees complete involvement in experience, with the final choice being made to improve through personal plans.

It was therefore recommended that:

1. With knowledge and education, there should be a concerted effort to enhance older women's and others' lives.
2. Facilitating educational gerontology via transformational learning should involve follow-up tasks to continuously evaluate and analyse information for situational relevance in a flexible setting.
3. Facilitators of educational gerontology-related programmes should be trained and encouraged to utilise a dialogical transformative learning approach to benefit older adults.

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