

# LESLLA Symposium Proceedings



## Recommended citation of this article

Gonzalves, L. (2012). "We Want to Depend On Us": Yemeni Women Name Success. LESLLA Symposium Proceedings, 7(1), 92–109.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8019537>

## Citation for LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

This article is part of a collection of articles based on presentations from the 2011 Symposium held at University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Please note that the year of publication is often different than the year the symposium was held. We recommend the following citation when referencing the edited collection.

Vinogradov, P., & Bigelow, M. (Eds.) (2012). Low-educated adult second language and literacy acquisition (LESLLA): Proceedings of the 7th symposium. University of Minnesota Printing Services.

<https://lesllasp.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/index.php/lesllasp/issue/view/472>

## About the Organization

LESLLA aims to support adults who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives in a new language. We promote, on a worldwide, multidisciplinary basis, the sharing of research findings, effective pedagogical practices, and information on policy.

## LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

<https://lesllasp.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org>

## Website

<https://www.leslla.org/>

## "WE WANT TO DEPEND ON US." YEMENI WOMEN NAME SUCCESS

Lisa M. Gonzalves  
Saint Mary's College of California

### *Introduction*

#### **Yemeni women and ESL**

Of the small amount of research on non- and low-literate ESL students, very little is focused on women in particular. Women as a whole generally have less schooling than men, and many women have never been to school at all (UNESCO, 2004; United Nations, 2005). Research has shown that women often have different learning needs than men, including preferences for gender-specific classes, a communal learning atmosphere, and a safe and validating classroom, as well as logistical issues such as transportation, childcare, and having daytime classes (Murphy Kilbride, Tyyskä, Ali, & Berman, 2008; Prins, Toso & Schaff, 2009; Filipek Collignon, 1994). Additionally, there are other obstacles they face which include gender oppression, low self-esteem, emotional distress, poverty, age, and trauma, all which can affect their learning (Horsman, 1997; Horsman 2000; Moorish, 2002).

In the area where this researcher worked, Yemeni women comprised a significant portion of non- and low-literate female students. As a whole, Yemeni immigrants have only settled in a few distinct regions in the U.S.: Detroit, Buffalo, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Central California (Taylor & Holtrop, 2007). According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) only

30% of all Yemeni women are considered literate, as compared to Yemeni men who boast a 70% literacy rate (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). Given the high illiteracy rate amongst Yemeni women, the acculturation process for the Yemeni community is often skewed by gender. A health study done on Yemeni families in Detroit (Taylor & Holtrop, 2007) stated:

Because of the cultural and language barrier, many Yemeni women in the United States depend on their husbands or other male family members to make family decisions that otherwise might have been controlled by the wife and mother (p. 65).

In addition to gender issues and power, literacy can also directly challenge or be in contradiction to a women's own cultural identity and the cultural preservation of her family (Norton Pierce, 1995; Kouritzin, 2000; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). Muslim immigrant women face specific complexities in their struggle to adapt to a new culture, a new language, and in becoming literate. Rida & Milton's study (2001) confirmed that Muslim immigrant women's needs, "by virtue of their religious and cultural belief system," (p. 35) differ than other immigrant women. They uncovered a variety of barriers to attending class, including transport and distance to and from class, childcare, and most often, judgment by others in their community (males or females). Furthermore, most women in the study testified that they were not comfortable going to class with either non-Muslims or men, preferring classes specifically for Muslim women.

In a similar ethnographic study, Sarroub (2002) interviewed Yemeni-American high school girls who identified aspects of their identity as "in-between-ness" as they were juggling a religious context, an American context, a cultural context and a family context. The girls were playing such a significant role in the family, fulfilling their roles as daughter in addition to being one of the only print-literate females in the house which granted them power of making many family

decisions. Furthermore, the girls performed various important domestic duties which they had to perform on top of their educational duties. Often the balance was impossible. Moreover, many males in their lives, including Muslim boys at school, condemned them for pursuing their education, stating that they should be at home where they belong.

For Yemeni women living in the U.S., there is very little public space that they can claim as their own. In Yemen, society is culturally constructed around gendered space, giving women more opportunities to freely move about and conduct business (Kotnik, 2005), which is not reflected in the architecture of the U.S. In the study “Kull wahad la hallu” (Volk, 2009) offered much insight into the complexity of the lives of the Yemeni women in San Francisco. In Yemen, there is a large social network of support that does not exist for them in San Francisco, largely because their present living conditions do not facilitate the culture of hosting, or opening one’s home and providing food and conversation to guests, which is necessary to maintain social bonds. The women in Volk’s (2009) study felt isolated from their communities, and faced the complexity of conducting their life under new and challenging circumstances.

#### **Students’ own perspectives**

Research has shown that there is often a mismatch between what the teacher wants the students to learn, and what the student’s perspective actually is (Milligan, 1997). Paulo Freire (1970a, 1970b, 1985, 1998) alleged it was critical that the students’ experience be the crux of the classroom content, as it not only promoted higher retention and application of subject matter, but also honors the students’ existence. Given that there is minimal research on non- and low- literate ESL students that is taken from the perspective of the students themselves, this study was meant to support these students by bringing their voice to the table where the conversation has been dominated by researchers.

#### **Research questions**

In order to ensure their persistence and feelings of success in the ESL classroom, we must understand non-literate, Yemeni women’s cultural perspectives on what a comfortable and fruitful learning environment is in terms of atmosphere, social elements, and learning expectations, given all the variables in their lives.

This study addressed three important questions:

1. What do non- and low-literate adult Yemeni females in the ESL classroom perceive as their successes in learning English?
2. What do they view as the main challenges to their success in learning English?
3. What do they feel they need in order to be successful?

#### *Method*

##### **Setting and participants**

This study was conducted in two classrooms in the San Francisco East Bay Area between April and June, 2010. For purposes of confidentiality, the names of the schools and the students have been changed.

For the individual interviews and focus groups this study used a convenience sample – both the researcher’s own students as well as other female Yemeni students with whom the researcher had previously instructed or who otherwise had daily interaction with the researcher. Only women who were from Yemen and who had commendable persistence and attendance in class were asked to participate. The researcher determined that their particular perspective, given that they already had shown their motivation and endurance, would be insightful.

As the classroom was already familiar and comfortable, it appeared to be the ideal interview location to help facilitate honest and thoughtful answers. As seen in other studies where non- or low-literate women were interviewed (Warhol,

2004; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004) the sense of empowerment and voice the women had (which was carefully facilitated over time) was a major factor in the transparency of their answers.

This researcher was in her third year of teaching at both sites. Significant rapport existed between the students and this researcher, who often attended festivities in the homes of these students. In many cases, the researcher knew the participants prior to being their ESL instructor and was therefore seen as a friend and confidant.

Recognizing that there is often an inherent power dynamic between students and their instructor, this researcher had spent years operating a student-centered classroom, where the students made their needs known, declined teacher's requests on multiple occasions, and often determined the content of the class. Therefore, there was little doubt that the women felt empowered to accept or refuse requests or questions because they had already demonstrated their power to do so prior to conducting this study.

Nonetheless, it was necessary to remain conscious of any power dynamic throughout this study. Therefore, it was stated to the students that they could pass on answering any question or stop at any time. Furthermore, if at any point a student's hesitancy was sensed, the student was reminded of such. The researcher also volunteered to leave the room at any time per the student's wishes. Finally, it was stated that the student's decision to skip or terminate any part of the interview would not affect their relationship with their instructor.

#### **Measurements/data collection**

After piloting and re-crafting the interview questions, six interviews were conducted with students enrolled in ESL class at either ABC Adult School or XYZ Adult School. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to one hour each. All students were interviewed at different times.

Due to the low English levels of the students, most of these interviews were completed with the help of a trusted

upper-level female student or family member with whom the students had a positive rapport. It was a conscious decision to choose another student as opposed to hiring a professional translator because 1) most of the professional Arabic translators in the area were men, and due to religious reasons the women often would not or could not speak to another Muslim man, and 2) the amount of community and rapport between the students was already deemed to be at such a high level that it was thought the interviewees would be more comfortable (and therefore offer more detail) when speaking with a woman they knew.

After the individual interviews were completed, the researcher conducted two focus groups involving 18 adult Yemeni female ESL students of a variety of literacy levels. The questions focused specifically on what particular challenges Yemeni women face in pursuing their education. Again, upper level Yemeni students with whom the other students had a positive rapport acted as translators for the focus groups, in addition to responding to the questions themselves.

The interviews and focus groups were all audio taped and later transcribed for analysis. During the analysis, the data was carefully coded to determine the following elements in the transcript: 1) common themes and/or methodologies that were thought to be effective to student learning, 2) other factors deemed as critical to feelings of success, 3) non-pedagogical obstacles which interfered with learning (gender roles, trauma), and 4) any other emerging themes that arose. Additional themes were added as the analysis continued. Select quotations have been included in this study to support findings.

#### *Results*

##### **Indicators of success**

The focus here was to discover the specific tasks or moments in which a non-literate Yemeni woman felt success in English acquisition.

### Empowering, concrete tasks

The women defined success in being able to perform concrete actions that held a significant amount of importance to them. For example, the women often mentioned the ability to make phone calls. Leena recounted her experience with phones: “She said she was looking for an ‘on’ button, she didn’t know how to use it. . . . In Yemen, she tried. But in here she didn’t try, because she scared that she’s gonna call the police.” The women talked about how they could only receive calls but not make them, thereby putting them at the mercy of the caller.

Some women had extremely vivid memories of being able to read for the first time, even articulating the content of what they read. Kamilah said that her favorite class was the day she started to read, recollecting a story about a boy in school. Similarly, Rihana joyously recalled about successfully reading pages from an adult beginning reader, namely *Sam and Pat*.<sup>1</sup>

Many women talked about their experience in healthcare facilities. They noted that healthcare translators often spoke a different dialect of Arabic, and furthermore were not always accurate. Feeling frustrated, the women had a desire to speak for themselves. Bahiya spoke of her husband who did not always translate for her: “...he said wait, wait and I get so mad. I want to understand . . .” She mentioned her husband resisted asking her the questions the doctor was asking because they were ‘private’, and how uncomfortable she felt.

Others mentioned that they felt successful when they were able to talk to their children in English, mastering the ability to write their name, and being able to ask for things in public spaces.

### Move to self-sufficiency

From a social perspective, the tangible tasks that were mentioned throughout the interviews – making the phone

<sup>1</sup> Hartel, J., Lowry, B., & Hendon, W. (2006). *Sam and Pat*. Boston: Thompson/Heinle.

call, talking to the doctor, interpreting the road signs –are all things that hold a significant purpose or social weight. The women were delighted that they now could perform tasks that others around them could do but that they themselves were never able to beforehand. Rihana and Inas both mentioned the enjoyment in their ability to read stories, and Farah talked about her ability to ask people for things in public places. Both Inas and Maysun made mention of reading signs in public places when they are out with their families. Inas recognized the strong role that English plays in her life, stating, “I need that English for me strong.”

Interestingly, all the tasks mentioned were tasks previously taken care of for them by a literate member of the family, but that the participants could now do on their own. Their testimony seemed to represent almost a shift from being the “other” to being a part of the in-group, or “belonging.” Thurayya talked of her journey toward an independent life: “...I don’t drive. I don’t have a lot of family... There’s nobody help me...So just sometime when I go anywhere, so just sometime believe me I’m crying. Because sometime I don’t understand. What happened. What’s going on...Now never I care. I take the address and I know where I go.”

Their comments suggest that success is actually reflective of the desire to advocate for one’s own self in a variety of circumstances. The longing to have control over one’s own actions and dialogue seemed to be the core motivator for the women attending the classes. As Yaminha stated, “When I learn something new, I need to know more and more.” And Dahab said so simply, “We want to depend on us.”

### Confidence and self-efficacy

When discussing why some women did not attend class, participants explained that those particular women were content with depending on their family. Bahiya stated, “Just a lot of women they say, well why am I going to go to school...I have my husband and all my kids to translate it for me if I go somewhere.”

So where and how do these particular women get the confidence to know that they have the power to learn English, and the resolve to want such autonomy in their life, especially when it is not seen as a necessity? Sometimes, the simple observation of other women in the classroom who have gained such autonomy is enough to convince a woman to not only want the same for herself, but to know that she is absolutely capable of obtaining such skills. Salma often made reference to the success of Kamilah, who started classes two years before her. Similar in age and in family setting, Salma held Kamilah in high regard and wanted to be just like her. Seeing Kamilah reading gave Salma the inspiration that she, a non-literate rural woman in her 50's, could do the same. Salma said that up until the moment she stepped in the classroom, she thought she was not able to learn anything, and it was that first day in class that she realized, for the first time in her life, that she was indeed capable of becoming literate.

#### **Challenges to success**

The focus here was on the particular obstacles that Yemeni immigrant women face when pursuing an education. In addition to logistical issues such as school proximity and/or transportation and a class providing childcare, there were a number of other themes that arose.

#### **Domestic demands**

In Yemeni families, a woman's domestic and social duties take utmost priority. The women in the present study stated that oftentimes they felt overwhelmed with providing meals and keeping the home presentable. The need for her to become educated or literate is often not given much priority because it competes with other tasks she must perform (Al-Mekhlafy, 2008). Some families were supportive of both the domestic goals and the academic goals, as Dahab explained: "My dad told us... go to school in the morning and do your work in the afternoon." But, oftentimes the family was not

so lenient, and permitted her to go to school only if time allowed. Zahra explained, "...some husbands they're really, you know, strict...If the house is dirty he's gonna say, okay, why you gonna go to school when the house is messy like that. Like my husband... he's like...you want to go to school, go to school. You want to go shopping do anything that you needed. But these three things have to be ready: My kids have to be cleaned and feeded, the house is clean, the food is cooked." Frequently the women were simply too tired to come to class after performing their domestic work, therefore creating another hurdle.

Skilton-Sylvester (2002) spoke about the varying identities of an immigrant woman, such as her identity as spouse, mother, daughter, sister, and her working identity. As educators, it is fundamental that we understand how important these societal roles are in the women's lives and how these shifting identities relate to and determine her participation in the classroom.

#### **Role of education**

When asked why it is hard for Yemeni women to learn English the women expressed that traditional gender roles often get in the way. Some women stated that oftentimes a woman's education was considered pointless as the woman was not going to use her education towards a job: "...the woman in Yemen, they didn't get some education. Because they say, what are you going to do? You gonna married and you going to stay in the house and take care of the kids and the husband and your husband family - you not going to do nothing."

These women have a faced a significant challenge: Wanting an education on its own merit. While they spoke ecstatically about being able to function independently with their new skills, this excitement was always shared amongst their family and community. This sentiment was mandated not only by male family members but also other female family members who did not value academic achievement.

### **Discomfort as a non literate woman/ peer encouragement**

The women mentioned that oftentimes it was emotionally difficult for an uneducated woman to go to school as they lacked the self-confidence required to make the first step into the classroom. She may feel uncomfortable in the school environment simply because she has never experienced it. Leena stated she, "...didn't even know anything...doesn't even know how to count, or how to say ABC's ...[I] felt embarrassed." Furthermore, some women stated that they thought it might be impossible for non-literate women to really learn. Rihana explained that she didn't know that she could be taught, and thought school was just for children or for people who had previously gone to school. This shows an uncertainty as to whether, as illiterate women, they felt there was a place for them in the classroom.

Some women testified to the discomfort of sharing the classroom with literate women, highlighting feeling "different" next to such women. They suggested that the apparent difference between the uneducated and the educated woman was often strong enough to make the uneducated woman leave the classroom, or to never register in the first place. This discomfort reinforces her dependence on other people in her family and community for assistance.

As such, the non-literate subjects had a clear memory of their first day of school, and talked of the nervousness and fear they felt. However, they noted that they also felt acceptance and comfort on that very first day and, had they not felt that way, they might not have returned to the class. It seemed that some major emotional barrier was broken on that first day, in which the women saw the success of their peers and also felt the warmth and encouragement in the room. The first impressions in the classroom can have a long lasting impact. Therefore, it seems critical that on a new student's first day the teacher use the other students as success stories and role models, so that the new student feels encouraged and knows that her success in English

and literacy truly is a possibility. Perhaps a 'buddy system' or simply having students who have gained literacy skills give the new student a 'pep talk' can in itself bolster the new student's self-confidence and resolve to study.

### *Factors determining success*

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, a number of themes came up which reflected what the women deemed as essential factors to their success in their education.

### **Teacher and classroom**

When talking about success in the classroom, most of the women talked about the characteristics of the teacher and her teaching methodology. First and foremost, they stated that the teacher needs to be a female, and that her most redeeming qualities should be happiness and patience. They talked about the need for the teacher to be warm and friendly, and to do whatever she can to make the students feel comfortable in the classroom, convincing them that they can and will learn. As Kamilah said, "Some of the students get shy. You need to let them feel comfortable with you," and to explain to the students that they will learn "step by step."

The students affirmed the need to feel understood and acknowledged, and be given individual attention. Thurayya, who is a teacher herself, says, "Tell the teacher...you have to be good heart when you with new student. Please don't be mad. Don't be, you know, angry all the time. She have to be like a sister." The teacher should maintain her cheerfulness and tolerance and should never get angry or frustrated with their learning, and certainly should make a student feel bad for her lack of knowledge or retention. Leena said, "If you ask them anything, you don't make fun of them or anything. You just answer everything. Even if they pronounce like wrong or funny stuff, you help them, you correct them." It is the sense of feeling inferior that is to be avoided. The women's comfort level comes first, which goes well beyond the teacher simply

being knowledgeable or covering the appropriate content, and instead signifies a human-to-human relationship of concern, encouragement, and understanding.

The women also pointed out the techniques used by the teacher. They stated that starting off slow and focusing on the basics is helpful. The teacher should also speak slowly and clearly, taking time to explain things, and to repeat content often. They complained about teachers speaking too fast and glossing over things, assuming that the students were following. Nibal echoed her: "...some teachers, they don't explain the right things or give us the levels they needed. So that's why they [students] drop early."

Similarly, the women mentioned that the teacher should not take any prior knowledge for granted, to rather assume that the women either have not been previously exposed to material or may need it presented once again. The women stressed the need for the teacher to always start from the beginning and to repeat content often, and not to be discouraged if they could not remember. They asked her to understand that when teaching non-literate students the process can be very long, but not to give up on them.

### Support and resolve

Participant responses revealed the ways in which these women obtain or need support, and they indicated how they obtain confidence and resolve to continue with their studies. Three students made mention of pictures in particular, whether they were flashcards with pictures, picture dictionaries, or easy stories with pictures to help convey meaning. Kamilah additionally mentioned that DVDs, books, and homework help her with her learning at home. Others made reference to areas of organizational support – having a quieter house, someone to help at home, and not having younger children. Farah talked about the 'exchange' of English that happened between her and her children every evening: "Sometimes she learn here some words and

she go there to give it to the kids. They learn from her, and some words they, they teach her."

Additionally, the women made mention of inner strength to reach their goals. A scenario, using a fictitious non-literate woman Yasmeen, was given during the interviews to allow the participant to give opinions without referring to her own personal situation. Kamilah offered advice to study from home, "Don't stay home, go to school...Try with the CDs, or type or that stuff that could help her..." Inas connected Yasmeen's situation to her own life, "...she have to work hard, so she can learn...nobody help me before. No kids, no husband, no nobody." Salma advised her to recognize the small victories: "She have to go to school. She have to learn. She have to go every day. She can learn something. She can learn. Even, like...her address or her phone number or, you know, anything." It seems that they all deeply understood that learning to become literate in English was an arduous process, but one that was definitely possible. The participants advised finding a way to persist even when it was hard, and to never give up. She must know within herself that, despite her lack of formal education, she is capable of achieving great things.

### *Future research*

As LESLLA<sup>2</sup> educators and researchers, we must weave the opinions of the students themselves into our practice. Without their perspective, their definitions and their reality, our research is not complete. This research study lends itself to the discussion of non-literate LESLLA learners in 3 areas – what they view as success, what they feel impedes their success, and what facilitates their success.

However, this research study was limited by culture and gender in that all of the students were women from Yemen. Since culture and language are such pivotal factors, the

---

<sup>2</sup> Low Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition, [www.leslla.org](http://www.leslla.org)



findings from this study cannot be applied to all non- and low-literate students as these voices reflect the Yemeni experience. Similarly, a comparative study on gender, surveying both men and women, is recommended to focus on elements that specifically vary by gender. Additionally, this study did not discriminate by age, which is critical as a 20 year old non-literate student may have a different experience than a non-literate student who is 60. Therefore, it is essential that more research be conducted to help make our classrooms more successful and suited to a variety of LESLLA learners.

We must hone in on all aspects of student needs if we are to reach out and retain these same students. Within a year of completion of this study, both sites involved were both closed due to a lack of funding. Since then, only a handful of these women enrolled in another ESL class – the majority terminated their studies as they were not able to attend due to factors of 1) mix-gendered class, 2) the distance to school 3) lack of childcare, or 4) their trying a new class but did not feel comfortable. As educators of such a specific niche of learners, it seems imperative that we continue to consider the variety of needs of students that are not only present in our classrooms, but more importantly the needs of the students who feel unable to attend. If we educators continue to bridge that divide by responding to their voices, we can more successfully welcome them into a positive place of learning.

The women in the present study showed a resolution to learn that was very uplifting, and which was testimony to their own persistence, struggle, and determination to learn and to reach their goals. I thank them for sharing their experience, and hope that this is just one of many studies to come which brings their voices to ESL research.

## References

- Al-Mekhlafy, T. (2008). Strategies for gender equality in basic and secondary education: A comprehensive and integrated approach in the Republic of Yemen. In Tembon, M. & Fort, L. *Girls' Education in the 21st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment and Economic Growth*. World Bank, Washington DC.
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2010). The world factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>
- Filipek Collignon, F. (1994). From “Paj Ntaub” to paragraphs: Perspectives on Hmong processes of composing. In John-Steiner, V., Panofsky, C. and Smith, L. (Eds) *Sociocultural Approaches to Language and Literacy*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, UK.
- Freire, P. (1970a). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. (1970b). The adult literacy process as cultural action to freedom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 40 (2), 205- 25.
- Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, power, and liberation*. Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey.
- Freire, P. (1998) *Pedagogy of freedom*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Horsman, J. (1997). *But I'm not a therapist.: Furthering discussion about literacy work with survivors of trauma*. Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women.
- Horsman, J. (2000). *Too scared to learn: Women, violence and education*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kotnik, T. (2005) .The mirrored public: Architecture and gender relationship in Yemen. *Space and Culture* 8 (4); 472-483
- Kouritzin, S. (2000). Immigrant mothers redefine access to ESL classes: Contradiction and ambivalence. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 21(1), pp.14-32.

- Milligan, J. (1997). *Second language learning needs of illiterate Italian adults, students of English as a second language*. M.A. Dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada.
- Moorish, E. (2002) Reflections on the women, violence, and adult education project. *Focus on Basics*, 5 (issue C), pp.15-20.
- Murphy Kilbride, K., Tyyskä, V., Ali, M. & Berman, R. (2008). Reclaiming voice: Challenges and opportunities for immigrant women learning English. CERIS Working Paper No. 72, Toronto, ON.
- Norton, B., & Pavlenko, A. (2004). Addressing gender in the ESL/EFL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38, 504-14.
- Norton Pierce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly* 29, 9-32.
- Prins, E., Toso, B., & Schafft, K. (2009). "It feels like a little family to me." Social interaction and support among women in adult education and family literacy. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 59 (4), 335-352.
- Rida, A. & Milton, M. (2001). The non-joiners: Why migrant muslim women aren't accessing English language classes. *Prospect*, 16 (1) p 35-48.
- Sarroub, L. (2002). In-betweenness: Religion and conflicting visions of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 37 (2), 130-148.
- Skilton-Sylvester, E. (2002). Should I stay or should I go? Investigating Cambodian women's participation and investment in adult ESL programs. *Adult Education Quarterly* 53 (9), pp. 9 - 26.
- Taylor, J. & Holtrop, T. (2007). Yemeni families and child lead screening in Detroit. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 18 (1), 63-69
- UNESCO. (2004). *EFA global monitoring report 2005: Education for all, the quality imperative*. Statistical Annex, Table 2. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from [http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts\\_gender.htm](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts_gender.htm)

- United Nations. (2005). *The Millennium development goals report*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from [http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts\\_gender.htm](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts_gender.htm)
- Volk, L. (2009). "Kull wahad la haalu" Feelings of isolation and distress among Yemeni immigrant women in San Francisco's tenderloin. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 23 (4) pp. 397-416
- Warhol, T. (2004). Reassessing assessment practices in an adult ESL program: Liberian women's evaluation of their academic achievement. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 20 (1), 31-45.