

A COLLABORATIVE EXPERIENCE: AN AMERICAN SOCIAL WORK PROFESSOR AND AFRICAN BSW STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA¹

Brenda F. McGadney-Douglass, Ph.D., The University of Toledo

This narrative describes the experiences of an American and visiting scholar living in Ghana, West Africa, and teaching an undergraduate social work course at the University of Ghana. The narrative will explain how the author, as a foreigner in an emerging country, helped indigenous social work students find their voice and develop best-practice effective assessment and problem-solving strategies based on their own cultural norms, practices, and beliefs. The narrative also explores the greater depth of understanding of Ghana's social problems from the insights, effort, and observations of students who were involved in their first college-level, participatory learning experience.

Introduction

In July 2005, I made my third trip to Ghana, five in all to West Africa beginning in 1979. As I prepared to teach *Social Issues in Ghana* to seven students, mostly American², for the University Study Abroad Consortium³, I remembered my previous trip to Ghana in 2001 teaching at the University of Ghana's Department of Social Work and the preparations that I made to teach *Philosophy of Social Work* to 134 undergraduate students, who were mostly Ghanaian⁴. This narrative is my attempt to share experiences and what I learned as an African American female visiting scholar and the methods that I used to develop a participatory social work course that was culturally and ethnically relevant and authentic for Ghanaian students. I hope that this narrative will be meaningful to any Western academic who is teaching or preparing to teach in an emerging country and who recognizes the need to authenticate their instruction in the context of the host population. I believe that this challenge can be met by combining the instructor's pedagogical skills, knowledge, and values with the students in active discovery and field research. I have observed that giving voice and recognition to their own local practices, beliefs, values,

indigenous knowledge, skills, and resources increases the depth of learning and the relevance of that learning for future social workers in an emerging nation.

Background

On September 6, 2001, my 13-year-old son, Jelani, and I accompanied my husband, Richard, to his Fulbright appointment at the University of Ghana, Graduate School of Public Health⁵. Our trip and arrival to Ghana was not uneventful. First, as we departed the plane in Amsterdam, reaching for a carry-on bag stored in the bin above us, we discovered that the bag we packed weeks earlier with most of our technical equipment was missing, or should I say stolen. My son has an excellent memory and comically demonstrates my distress at how I left the plane yelling for help to one of the Dutch KLM attendants, who seemed unconcerned responding: "And what would you like me to do about it!" We spent our three-hour layover completing a police report that we later sent to our insurance agent, in Michigan, written in Dutch.

When we arrived in Accra late on a Friday night, we discovered that we lacked basic amenities. The American Embassy staff took us to our residence, a five-room apartment smelling of fresh paint and left us

after it was determined the lights worked. All seemed well until we realized, after 24 hours of travel and a need for a bath, that there was no running water. There was no telephone, either, and no one to call for help. So, with our flashlights on, we ventured out across a dark campus to an open-air market that was visible only by the lights of small kerosene lanterns. The market woman was happy because we purchased our bottled water with U.S. dollars. We fell asleep, having taken care of essentials with the bottled water, despite the heat, the loss of technical equipment, questionable electrical power, and no running water, and yet filled with high hopes for the year ahead of us.

Just four days later, on September 11, 2001, we witnessed the events in New York in real time while shopping in Accra at an electronics store in the business district of Osu. Like friends and family in the U.S., this event forever changed our lives. However, we had additional security assigned to our home on campus and at the American school that our son attended. And, most importantly, we witnessed the people of Ghana participate in three days of mourning for losses in America. We felt safe and welcome in our African home.

Although I was prepared to volunteer to teach at The University of Ghana, Professor Nana Araba Apt, Director of the Centre for Social Policy and founder of the Social Work Department, encouraged me to apply for a lecturer position. I was appointed as a Visiting Scholar. I joined three MSW trained faculty members: two Ghanaians and a British citizen. My primary responsibilities consisted of teaching, advising, conducting research studies, and designing prospective courses to be offered in the University's MSW program that was to be launched in 2004⁶.

Ghana and University Life

Ghana was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to receive its independence

(from Britain) in 1957. In addition to English as a formal language and the language of instruction, 44 ethnic languages are spoken in Ghana's 10 regions. Ghana has a population of almost 22 million, with nearly half aged 15 or younger. Approximately 6 million people live in Greater Accra. The country has a thriving tourist industry with reportedly more than 44,000 African American visitors to the motherland yearly⁷. Although Ghana is reputed to be one of the most economically stable and conflict-free countries in Africa, over half of the country's population is impoverished. Ghana, nevertheless, is the United Nations-designated home to more than 60,000 refugees from conflicts and wars throughout Africa.

Ghana has one of the lowest HIV/AIDS infection rates in Africa (4-6%); however, traditional tropical diseases, such as malaria, and public health challenges, such as malnutrition, are endemic. Ghana has a declining illiteracy rate with more than 60% of the children, especially girls, attending school through the elementary level. Although the percentages are unclear, there are more practicing Christians (60-70% of the population) followed by Muslims (30-40%) and a smaller percentage of the population who are animists. Many people in Ghana, however, combine Christianity or Islam with durable beliefs in animist traditions. Most of the Christian population lives in the southern districts of Ghana where the principal cities are located and where there are better economic opportunities and community development. Ghana's President, a Christian, and Vice President, a Muslim, were democratically elected and serving their second four-year terms when we were there.

The University of Ghana was originally affiliated with the University of London and founded in 1957. The campus is located on a sprawling campus that overlooks Accra from its site that is named Legon, meaning "Hill of Knowledge." In addition to many colleges,

departments, and schools there are also indigenous programs that address Ghana's culture and social problems, such as the indigenous language classes and programs in ethnic dance, theatre, music, and drumming. There are specialized departments and institutes that reflect the needs of West Africa, such as nutrition, wetland preservation, malaria research and mosquito control, and economic development. The Legon campus was originally built to house only a few thousand elite students; however, over the years extraordinary increases in student enrollment have nearly overwhelmed the housing, food service, sanitation, and other infrastructures⁸. Teaching resources are overextended with inadequate library, computing or teaching technologies. Large class sizes are normal, and the faculty rarely enjoy the help of teaching assistants. For example, one of my colleagues who taught in the Department of Psychology had 800 students in one class.

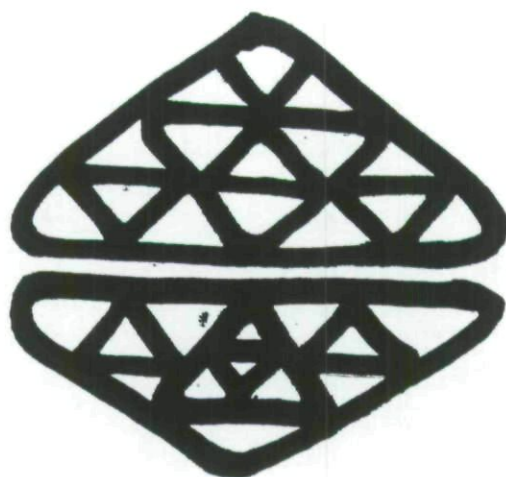
Although tuition is free, many students cannot afford to pay school fees or to use the commercial telephone services or cyber cafe Internet rates. General nutrition is poor on campus because few students can pay for adequate food. Off-campus transportation is frequently prohibitively expensive for students. The library lacked current periodicals or other collections necessary for a university with about 15,000 students⁹. There were no widely available Internet resources for students, who were usually limited to using commercial cyber cafes on campus if they could afford the user costs. It is not unusual for students to be challenged to study with obsolete or culturally alien textbooks, a lack of, or sporadic running water, and power outages. Although my students often huddled together reading a single copy of a textbook, in many ways they were more motivated and personally equipped to face the world globally than many of my American students. Most Ghanaian students are aware that their

success could be determined by their ability to work in a different country, or even a different part of the world. Their cultural sensitivity, language skills, and international awareness was always impressive.

At the University of Ghana many faculty and staff live in government housing on campus and, in addition to salaries that are low, must endure many of the same challenges that students face. Some faculty colleagues had small businesses that they conducted from their homes. Others relied on international consulting and giving lectures to supplement their incomes. Ghanaian faculty and visiting lecturers from around the world shared space with the students at Legon and, although the challenges were often acute, it was really a learning community. I reminded myself that I was in Ghana by choice, and so I had to rise to the occasion.

Philosophy of Social Work 202

The most challenging assignment that I had as a lecturer was to teach a 200 level "Philosophy of Social Work" course to Ghanaian undergraduates. From the start, I knew that I would have to design the course within a brief time period, after only being given a course description with no textbook or other scholarly resources. The purpose of the course was to teach students problem-solving strategies for Ghanaian individuals and families with a comparative awareness of Western, indigenous, and international best-practice models. From the beginning, I wanted to present course content that was really relevant to the students. I did not want to teach this class from my American perspective, which included Western-based education and experiences. I believed that in order to be successful and effective given the limited resources, I needed to engage the students in the process of mutually shared teaching and learning. I needed to directly involve the students in the process of defining their own course. The challenge was complicated



further by an international, West African enrollment of 134 students.

Developing and teaching a culturally sensitive course to non-American students within the context of Ghana presented numerous challenges. I suspect any American or Western visiting scholar would recognize these challenges, beginning with the basic logistics. First, I had to walk about a quarter of a mile across a campus that is not designed to be pedestrian friendly in very hot weather. I taught the two-hour, 15-week course in an open lecture facility in the heat of the day (11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) with an old chalkboard. There was no air conditioning because there were only partial side walls to the structure. Ineffective ceiling fans moved the hot air around when the power was on, but I did have a microphone. My students sat in antique wooden desks in regimented rows; often other students, taking notes or just listening, would crowd the space on either side of the formal lecture room.

The second challenge was to make my teaching style¹⁰, course content, and assignments relevant and authentic to Ghanaian social work students. I needed to find a way to integrate their culture, indigenous personal experiences and knowledge, values, and ethics with those prescribed for best practice by international humanitarian organizations and Western social work accreditation bodies. Of particular importance

was the extent to which the course could reflect the professional ethical codes and standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and Discrimination Against Women, and the Ghanaian Constitution, including laws protecting the rights of women and children. In addition I needed to weave customary or traditional practices into the course because these would be the indigenous standards for the students.

During the weeks before the course began, I decided to be very collaborative with the students. Once the semester began, I had to quickly gain the trust of the students and encourage them to buy into the plan, which would be a radically different way for these students to learn and a learning partnership that would be unlike any of their previous classroom experiences.

On the first day of class, I told them that as a female African-American professor, I recognized and acknowledged my limitations and inability to teach them about their own culture. I told them that although I was from the West, that I did not have the answers to solving the social problems of their country. I told them that they, themselves, had the wherewithall to define and to solve social problems effectively and to investigate the ethical complications of such problem solving. I assured them that I was a good facilitator and educator and would invest my experience, values, knowledge, and skills in their learning. I encouraged the students to come to the table with me: that is, to bring their skills, values, experiences, and their indigenous knowledge. I made it very clear that I valued their input and full participation, and that during the weeks ahead of us, we would find ourselves on a journey of educating and learning together.

In order to accomplish course objectives and to keep some control over the process, I

collected names, ethnic groups, gender, age, and student numbers of all students. In the second class meeting, I brought a printed student roster and called the roll to identify all enrolled students, which was an uncommon experience for most of the students. Of the 134 students 55% were male representing 15 ethnic groups from all regions in Ghana. Doing this documentation was important because a roster from the University of Ghana was not likely to be forthcoming. The student roster allowed me to communicate with a large class, with correct spelling of names and gender identification. The roster also helped to prevent students from just sitting for the 'long essay' examination during final week without having consistent participation in a course that demanded attendance and team effort.

Then, during the second class meeting, I had all the students submit a paragraph in response to the following question: "When you graduate, what do you think will be the most pressing social problem facing Ghanaians that you will have to address as a practicing social worker?" Answers to this question were very important. Throughout the course, their responses would allow me to engage them in an interactive and dynamic partnership by addressing authentic issues identified by them. Following a content analysis of the student-identified social problems, 14 discrete categories and social problems emerged (as the students expressed them) and were identified (with parenthetical secondary categories) as:

1. Trokosi System (indentured servitude/slavery system of young girls);
2. Female Genital Mutilation;
3. Kayayoo Girls (head porters - child labor);
4. "Streetism" or "Hawkers" (selling wares on the street - child labor);
5. Widows' Rites (abuse of elderly women);
6. Crime (frequent false accusations and imprisonment of non-Ghanaian African foreigners);

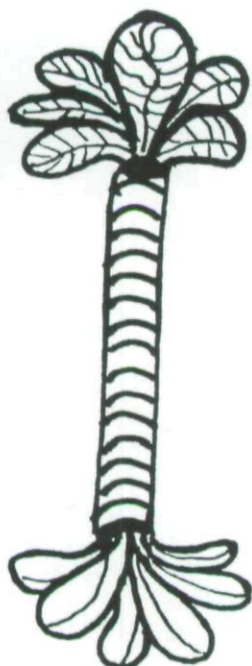
7. Self-Abuse (drugs, alcohol, and prostitution);
8. HIV/AIDS (especially family-to-family member transmission);
9. Poverty (the "Cash-n-Carry" system of purchasing medical care);
10. Rape (incest);
11. Municipal Sanitation and Leprosy;
12. Teenage Pregnancy;
13. Polygamy (including wife battery/domestic violence); and
14. Refugees, mostly Liberians, within Ghana (Vernacular illiteracy in local ethnic languages).

Assignment: Case Assessment

Given this initial organization, I assigned students to one of the fourteen groups, in teams, to learn about their assigned social problem, including the issue of assessment, understanding ethnical dilemmas, and defining proposed interventions. Each team was to produce a paper and make a formal presentation. Few of these students had ever been given such a set of expectations in a university course before.

Student team composition was based on personal interest in the social problem, and I made an intentional effort to balance the distribution of assignments by gender and age. More than half of the class was male, which would be highly unusual in an undergraduate social work class in the U.S. The students' ages ranged from 21 to 46. They were mostly sophomores and represented multiple ethnic groups. Within the class were public school teachers, government ministry administrators, future tribal chiefs and queen mothers, and the wife of a former Ghanaian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

The broad objective of the assignment was for each group to respond to a hypothetical client's presenting problem (or case) based on one of categories of social problems and to solve a specific ethical dilemma, namely, "What should the social worker do?" Students were given instructions



that their primary assignment was to develop a problem resolution strategy that would do no harm to the client (physical and mental abuse, death, abandonment) by assessing the client's presenting problem from three alternative perspectives available to practicing Ghanaian social workers: Western social work ethical codes; governing laws including the Constitution of Ghana and customary or traditional practices (Chiefs, Queen mothers, village authorities, and other community-based stakeholders); and codes representing international human rights. Specifically, each student group was required to complete the following:

1. Write a paper based on the rubric including a comprehensive assessment and proposed resolution including indigenous knowledge;
2. Provide evidence of interviews and field visit(s) (photos, brochures, audiotapes, letters);
3. Provide evidence of documenting and validating the severity of the social problem with submission of brochures and journal, newspaper, and magazine articles;
4. Take a group photo;
5. Give a class presentation on the indigenous social problem and proposed resolution; and,
6. Give a Power Point presentation documenting the problem to be made with the professor, including illustrative photographs.

Each of the 14 groups was given a problem-specific case with a structured rubric that I wrote and authenticated based on class discussions and consultation with faculty colleagues. For example, a typical case that I wrote for students assigned to the widows' rites group required the implementation of a comprehensive assessment and systematic problem-solving strategy such as the following example of an ethical dilemma:

A fisherman drowns and his wife and four children make preparations to have his funeral in three months. Relatives and friends have given the wife funds to keep the husband's body in the freezer at the morgue in Korle-Bu. The wife seeks counseling from a social worker because she is depressed about undergoing the traditional "widow's rites." She is also concerned about potential conflicts over the distribution of her husband's wealth and property. She is the first wife. A second wife with two children left him two years ago and moved to the United States. However, the second wife is expected to attend the funeral with her children.

Your spouse (you are the social worker) died last year and you were subjected to such rites. What advice and counseling would you give to the first wife and her family?

To help the groups begin their work, I gave a printed copy of the assignment's instructions to each group and met with each group as their "personal consultant." In this role, I critiqued the team's progress and made referrals to University faculty, librarians, community representatives, published and media sources of information, and governmental Ministries, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), or International NGOs. This role required me to find and evaluate such sources for my students while they were beginning their assignments; it required me to do my homework, too. During the semester, more than half of the groups invited me to accompany them in the field when they interviewed potential client/victims, government officials, or other sources. Because the teaching environment was severely limited in terms of technical resources that American students would take for granted, I often supported the completion of the student projects by providing access to my own laptop computer, tape recorder, and

digital camera, and I often provided funds for travel, food, and compensation to some respondents for field interviews.

Because secondary, published sources for their research were often very limited, I requested that students authenticate and assess the assigned social problem by conducting interviews with individuals and groups in their own communities. I asked that they document their efforts with photographs and popular print media, and that they provide references to specific international and Ghanaian laws. In order to assure the acceptance in communities of my students, and to certify the legitimacy of their work, I gave all groups letters of introduction on University of Ghana letterhead that explained the purposes of the project and how respondents could contact me directly.

This was a classroom and field experience that was based in reality, and student participation in two field trips put the students, including my husband and me, at personal risk. There were also acts of student courage and maturity to be recognized. One student and his friend took a 34-hour, round trip to Northern Ghana (near the border of Burkina Faso) to collect data on the practice of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation). On the return trip the student and his friend, who was also a University student, were physically beaten when he discovered the bus driver's criminal behavior in girl trafficking. When the student, his friend, and other passengers on the State Transport Bus witnessed the driver picking up five young girls (14 or 15 years of age), they audio taped the conversations and then informed the driver that he had been recorded and was breaking the law. After being discovered, the driver stopped at a bus station many miles from Greater Accra and then he and a fellow bus driver destroyed the tape recorder and attacked the students¹¹. Although the tape was destroyed, including their interviews with practitioners of FGM, the students were able to save high quality

photos of two elderly women, including their home and surgical sites, one still conducting such surgeries and another who has ceased doing so.

In another incident that took us in harm's way, a student group attempted to complete their assignment on Self Abuse by interviewing drug abusers and prostitutes in an obscure and very depressed "drug market" adjacent to a squatters' area of Accra called "Sodom and Gomorrah." This was a place with overwhelming filth, trash, and open drug making activity. Just as we completed the interviews with drug sellers and users and one of the young prostitutes, the local drug kingpin, who was clearly armed, approached the group gesturing to his mouth with his hands, stating that he wanted "chop-chop," which meant money for food. This is a password for bribe. I introduced myself and looked at him face-to-face, and without flinching I told him that I would not be giving him "chop, chop." He was not happy. Sensing the potential danger, we made a hasty exit. There was only one way out in this maze of stone and tin shacks, open sewers, and rough board walkways, so we walked away with deliberation! Later that week, in class, we talked about the perils of getting assignments completed in the field and the need for advanced preparation, anticipation of threats to personal safety, and complete disclosure to legitimize our roles in communities that might be hostile. Although the students collected remarkable interviews and photos, I informed them that our experiences demonstrated that we were all a little bit naive and that we probably should have developed methods of completing assignments without exposing anyone to personal risk. I made a note to myself that I would never again expose students to risk because of my own naivete or the reckless enthusiasm of students.

Discussions in class about each social problem cluster were very lively, informative, and interesting, particularly when the social

issues stimulated issues related to ethical dilemmas and religion. In emerging countries like Ghana, social work practice emphasis is often restricted by the presence of cultural dimensions and traditions that are designed to sustain the community's ability, perhaps at the level of the village, to maintain autonomy, self-determination, and hierarchical roles. This means that a member of a family, or village, is obligated to adhere to traditional values and mores or could face dire consequences. Such implications would include the social worker in the field. Issues of gender roles, kinship, status within the family, tribal or ethnic identity, and primary vernacular language have direct bearing on the definition of social problems and the menu of interventions that might be available. This community orientation is in contrast to the individual orientation and the value of personal autonomy and responsibility of social work as practiced in the United States and most Western cultures.

Another ever present issue was that Ghanaians have a culture of religious zeal; however, there is no widespread appreciation of religious diversity. For example, as noted in my own documentation of the class:

When Hajia Meri Abukari Kadri¹², a stately and beautiful Islamic student, presented the Moslem practice of Sharia to the class, which was comprised of 75% Christian, there was an uproar. She discussed the relationship of Sharia Islamic laws to the case of a Nigerian woman, a mother, who was convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning¹³. Although not necessarily convinced that the practice did not violate humanitarian laws, I (we) walked away with a greater understanding of the practice. We understood that not all Moslems practice it and that it has a long history and aspects of the law are unique.

She explained that there is a lack of involvement of women in decision-making and implementation of Sharia Law and that empowerment efforts that include women are being attempted to help them. At the end of the presentation, the dominantly Christian class looked up to Hajie as a leader in her group and community.

The Final Presentations, Empowered Learners, and A Thoroughly Educated Professor

Fourteen papers and presentations were given during the last day of class. All groups submitted an authentic, but fictionalized, case example such as the following from the "Widow's Rites" team:

At Abonkosu, a village near Mampong in Ashanti Region, Adwoa Mansa, a 52 year-old woman loses her 70 year-old husband and the corpse is to be buried the following day. As custom demands, Adwoa has been informed by the man's maternal family to observe the *kuna*¹⁴. Not only does she think of the agony that goes with an observance of such rites but also considers her Christian values and principles that are at stake. She thus runs to my office to seek counseling. Many feel sympathy for an Ashanti widow during the celebration of such rites. Her lot, apart from the loss of her late husband, appears, as customary law would seem to demand, to treat her somewhat harshly. The widow's place is beside the dead body of the husband day and night until he is buried. This is risky venture, for it is thought that should the *sunsum*¹⁵ return and have intercourse with her, she will ever after be barren. The matrimonial contract into which the couple has entered on marriage is not entirely dissolved until the rites are over. During this period, the widow cannot marry and she is restricted to dress in black. On the day of the husband's

death the widow smears her face, arms and legs with *Odame*¹⁶ and binds her forehead with *botire*¹⁷. Beads known as *gyabom*¹⁸ are fastened on her right wrist and ankles. She puts on a girdle with a key suspended on to remind her that her vagina is locked for a year from the date of the death. Various sacrifices, which are financially demanding, are performed to protect the widow from the husband's *sasa*¹⁹. On the eighth day, she is taken to the stream by the women-folk of deceased's family where she is made to pay a fee for the privilege of having her hair shaved. During the funeral rites she may not use even a chewing stick without paying a fee to women of the clan of the deceased. After the rites, however, she is ordered to leave her man's house with her children where the heir of the man's estate may give them some gifts. She is thus at liberty to marry again.

An Asanti woman confronted with such a problem has come to your office for counseling. As a Social Worker, what type of advice do you give her and her family?

In addition to the papers, Power Point presentations, and experience of making a formal, team presentation by each group, a website²⁰ was developed for the course that profiled the students, each of the social problems, and the students' papers, the course syllabus and assignment rubric, and photographs of all student teams and field sites. This website is a place that these new social workers can reference, use for professional documentation of their university experience, and remember the class in the future. The website has become a point of pride for many of these students who are now members of the international Internet community.

Teaching this class was a very rewarding experience. The students and I learned a lot about Ghanaian culture and lifestyle. During

"up close and personal" field visits and interviews, the students learned about the impact of social problems about which they were often unfamiliar. Students became exposed, in their own country, to social problems, individuals, and communities that most had never personally experienced. The learning reflected exposures that extended far beyond the classroom. Visits to such places as the leprosarium, a refugee camp with over 20,000 Liberian refugees, a desperately impoverished settlement community of internally-displaced Ghanaians, markets with child laborers, and other group field sites provided startling new knowledge, raw emotions, fervent despair and resilient hope.

As an African American, I found the most challenging visit was the students' interview with animist priests who adhered to the rites of the Trokosi System where young girls are held in bondage to atone for offenses or crimes (real or unreal) committed by a family member against the animist deity. Although this form of slavery has been outlawed in Ghana, it is still practiced in several districts. One INGO, Needs International in Ghana, has been instrumental in liberating and retraining some of the girls and women who were Trokosi. The things that we saw and heard touched us all, especially the way people triumph over adversity.

Most importantly, from the frequent interaction with students within and outside the classroom, written papers, print resources that I would not have been able to discover myself, oral team presentations, and field trips, I learned about the complexity of attempting to define and resolve ethical dilemmas or to make professional decisions about serious social problems in an emerging country, based on non-African social work standards, policies, and practices.

I also learned valuable lessons about teaching within an alien culture. For example, because the chalkboard in my classroom was of poor quality, I wrote the outlines of my

lectures on newsprint and each week I asked one of the male students (because of my 4'11" height) to hang the print high enough for the entire class to see. It never failed that the student would always hand the newsprint off to another male student. Then, when the group presentations were held, I needed to rent a room that could facilitate the use of the Power Point equipment. Unfortunately, the carpeted room was too small for 134 students. Faced with these dilemmas, I learned a little more about the influence of culture in such situations. Unlike most Americans, quite a few of my students refused to sit on the floor. A Ghanaian later informed me that it is prohibitive and disrespectful for some students, especially males, to do such labor or sit beneath another person because they are in line to become a Chief (or Queen mother for women). These students represented the elite of Ghana, and as such they were not obliged to perform "menial tasks" such as hanging newsprint in the classroom. And so I learned that the realities of problem solving based on culture and tradition can supersede the best laid plans of professors, governments, or supporters of social justice and individual human rights in a society where class, culture, ethnicity, traditional and religious beliefs are paramount. It was, in the final analysis, a lesson in humility.

On a different level, I learned that Western academics can tap into the lives, experiences and highly motivated desires of students in an emerging nation to learn along with students, even—or especially—when the students had never before been enlisted as co-learners with a professor. My students and I learned about mutual respect and the realization that in order to fully understand social problems, it is necessary to see the world through the eyes of those who live those problems.

End Notes

¹ This article is dedicated to Hadji Marie Abukari; a courageous, Islamic, 2004 BSW

graduate, mother of five, and wife, in memorial of her premature death at age 42 in May 2005. Hadji Marie Abukari provided leadership to the student group project "Crime: False accusation of non-Ghanaian but African foreigners".

² 6 American undergraduate; 1 graduate Japanese student

³ Competitive Award, Visiting Scholar, University of Nevada-Reno

⁴ 9/2001-6/2002. Undergraduates: 133 Ghanaians; 1 Sierra Leone now granted asylum in Australia

⁵ Fulbright field notes of Dr. Richard Douglass, Ph.D., MPH. www.cies.org/stories/_douglass.htm

⁶ Challenged by frequent power outages.

⁷ Ghana is home to many American expatriates, and faith-based and humanitarian organizations.

⁸ Five or more students may be sleeping in two-bedroom dorm room; Foreign students stay in appropriate accommodations at the International Hostel

⁹ Library resources are limited, often out of date, and it is difficult to find indigenous materials for students. The main campus library, Balme, is not open on weekends and closes at 5 PM. Students were able to use a small social work library, named in memory of African American professor, Dr. Kenneth Ontwon Christmon (1953-1994). University of Michigan social work faculty donated many of the library's books and course packs.

¹⁰ The students were not used to my narrative, story-telling, interactive, and inquisitive style of teaching. Often, I left the

podium and walked amongst them, in and between the rows of desks. Because the British colonized Ghana, many of the Ghanaian daily practices and resources still reflect the influences of English domination. In the academic areas, students are used to being lectured to, taking notes, and memorizing subject material.

¹¹ Following documentation of injuries at a hospital, the incident was reported to the police. The incident was reported to the Minister for Women and Children who filed a police report and sought my support to prosecute the drivers. Unfortunately, since the date was set for me to return to the United States, I was unable to testify and the case was dropped.

¹² Many of the students and I attended a family wedding at Hajia's invitation in May 2002; then, sadly, in June 2005, we also attended the customary celebration of her life 40 days after her untimely death at age 42.

¹³ In 2004: The case was overturned by Islamic clerics due to a technicality.

¹⁴ A Twi word for widowhood rite.

¹⁵ The spirit of the dead.

¹⁶ Red clay powder.

¹⁷ A scarf.

¹⁸ A special bead exclusively used for the widowhood rite.

¹⁹ A Twi word for ghost.

²⁰ http://www.hhs.utoledo.edu/socialwork/FACULTYPAGES/brenda_homepage.htm

Brenda F. McGadney-Douglass, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Social Work Department at the University of Toledo. Comments regarding this article can be sent to: mcgadney_douglass@yahoo.com.



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