

mentor's introduction

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Robert Ayiku came to Concordia University as a Commonwealth Scholar from Ghana, entering the MA Art Education program and then continuing in the PhD program. His broad interests led him to course work in art education, several areas of education, and museum education (including a study visit to the Museum of African Art in New York City). Through these experiences Robert has encountered theory, research and professional practices that are current in North America. All along he has enthusiastically explored these new areas of knowledge while remaining true to his vision of arts education that values and sustains Ghanaian cultural identity. That vision emanates from his extensive understanding of traditional Ghanaian symbology and art forms, as well as Western-influenced 'fine art' as practiced by contemporary Ghanaian artists.

The goals of Robert's dissertation reflect his deep commitment to developing the role of arts education in the school curriculum. From the many approaches to research and arts education which he has encountered during his graduate studies, Robert has selected those that he deems most appropriate and relevant to his goals: ethnography and phenomenology for methods of documenting cultural symbols and their uses, and the discipline-based art education (DBAE) model for develop education strategies. Besides the obvious value of the study for developing arts education in Ghana, the research should also be interesting to North American readers in that it will provide a rare opportunity to see how familiar research methods and arts education models are translated--or even reconstructed--when they are applied in a different cultural and social context.

With the support of a Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, Robert is preparing to pass the next several months doing field research in Ghana. After five long years away from his family and community, the coming months will be filled with homecoming as well as research.