

mentor's introduction

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Samuel Adu-Poku came to Canada from Ghana to complete an MA in art education at the University of New Brunswick. He later joined us at the University of British Columbia where he is currently completing his PhD in art education. Multicultural and gender related policies and practices within Canada have long been a source of interest and concern for Samuel. It is from this position that he comes to his dissertation topic where he explores an African-Centered multicultural art education.

Canadian multicultural policy favors a mosaic approach, honoring the cultures and traditions of all peoples. However, hegemonic approaches still exist and minority cultures receive little or no attention in school curricula. In this study, Samuel studies the Black/African Canadian students' cultural awareness and self-image by examining the cultural and educational barriers to their participation and attainment in art and education at two educational sites in Vancouver. He goes on to employ an Africentric paradigm to his methodology which places Africa at the center rather than the periphery. Africentricity has a distinct set of attributes that interconnect all of life. In using this as a basis for his research design, Samuel chooses to interconnect aspects of participatory research, feminist research and critical ethnography. Although his research is still unfolding, it is readily apparent that his work is highly significant. Teachers need to rely more on their professional autonomy as they design curricula if it is to be personally and socially meaningful to children of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.