



*Newsletter: May 2014* **Error! Reference source not found.**

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Year one of graduate school is nearly over. It is hard to believe, and yet not. I am not the man I was nine months ago. I certainly know a great deal more about the history and current state of the US educational system, the policies and economics around it, as well as the conflicting perspectives on school choice, vouchers, value-added, charter schools, economic indicators, data sets, student achievement test measures, and much more. I also discovered literature reviews, critical reviews, and book reviews; the value of abstracts, the difference between dependent and independent variables in statistical models, standard deviation and what it means when something is statistically relevant. I also learned that data is plural. But of greatest interest to me are the emerging efforts to understand culture as it relates to instruction and curriculum, ideas of indigenous knowledge, “inclusive math” and Culturally Based Education. There is power even in a math problem (now called by some a “math task”) to be used to globalize education. I’ve included a piece from Mathew Felton’s article – “Is Math Politically Neutral?” [Sept 2010 – Teaching Children Math - News and Views]

### **What stories do you tell?**

Beyond considering *how* we engage with mathematics, now consider *what* our mathematical stories are about. The following two problems teach double-digit multiplication by using local references:

*A group of youths aged 14, 15, and 16 go to the store. Candy bars are on sale for 43¢ each. The group members buy a total of 12 candy bars. How much do they spend, not including tax?*

*Factory workers aged 14, 15, and 16 in Honduras make McKids children’s clothing for Wal-Mart. Each worker earns 43¢ per hour and works a 14-hour shift each day. How much does each worker make in one day, excluding any fees deducted by employers?*

Now that I’ve covered many of my pre-requisite courses, I must plan the upcoming years. I am leaning toward issues related to indigenous education, Culture Based Education, and my interests in informal (museum and event-based) education, and anthropology.

This May and June I will spend in Tanzania not only addressing ADEA activities, but also conducting my first qualitative semi-structured interview research that I will conduct with groups I’ve worked with through our MaKuYa festival. The title of the research is: “Spirit of Inquiry: To what extent do youth in rural communities try to make sense of and understand the natural environment around them.” I’ll let you know what I find!



## A proposal to Tom's Shoes.

Through the determined investigative work of Natalie Everett, who has designed several beautiful beaded products for the ADEA work with the Maasai, she discovered that Tom's Shoes has a philanthropic dimension. Currently they offer whimsically hand-painted shoes by artists from Haiti in a variety of designs. Capitalizing on this idea, Natalie contacted Tom's to propose the idea of beaded shoes produced by the women of Rombo, Kenya. Tom's invited us to submit a proposal of our idea. We did so two weeks ago. Now we are waiting for a reply. We don't know whether or not to be hopeful. I will choose to remain so until

proven otherwise. *Please pray for this! And call them if you have an in with "Tom."*

## Summer plans!

### ADEA goes to Washington



*"Some of it is trial and error but it can't be trial and error until I get ideas from people."*



*"At least part of the potency of the knowledge and skill she acquired through her teacher preparation was that it enabled her to identify, access, and use a variety of resources to support her learning about mathematics practice: it enabled her to construct an enactment zone that extended beyond her classroom and local school district."*

*"Lacking opportunities that enable them to consider alternative understanding of the reform ideas, it is difficult to see how these teachers might be motivated to reform the core of their practice"*

These quotes come from Dr. James P. Spillane's article "*Local Theories of Teacher Change*" (a required reading for my TE 902 Teacher training and curriculum course). So what has teacher training to do with ADEA? Spillane argues that experiences that one can draw upon can make someone a more successful teacher. I believe the same argument applies to strengthening the ADEA/MaKuYa team members. Together the team and I have seen great success in our cultural work with the launching of a museum and the MaKuYa cultural festival, and with the conducting of research. But as for my team, none have seen a cultural festival or museum other than ours, so naturally the lion's share of the ideas come from me and my good fortune to have traveled the world.

**But imagine what they could dream if they were exposed to the museums and festivals of Washington DC!**

Here's the vision: I must return from Tanzania to attend a family wedding in D.C., and I'd like to bring some of the MaKuYa Festival team members with me. What better city than D.C. to see a great diversity of museums such as the Smithsonian with collections dedicated to Native Americans, African culture, Fine Art, Science, U.S. history and more (and the entrance is free!). Of great interest will also be the famed two-week International Smithsonian Folklife festival which features Kenya this year. Additionally there is the Holocaust museum, Mt. Vernon and Williamsburg. The greater D.C. area also offers back-to-back festivals of all sorts all summer long.

**Girded with such exposure, they-themselves- could expand upon ADEA’s cultural work and reach their own people. Estimated cost per person - \$2500 - \$2750.**

The tentative date of the trip is June 27 – July 20. The number of participants will depend on funds raised. First in line to come will be Kiluku Henerico, the young man who has managed the cultural exhibition at our MaKuYa Festival each year and who ADEA supports in his studies of culture and tourism at the University of Dar es Salaam. After that could be Tembo Selemani, Saidi Chilumba, Dominic Chonde and Filbert Emanuli. Each is also involved with cultural education and the MaKuYa museum.

Education is a wonderful thing to support, and field trips are some of the most powerful teachers. If you’d like to contribute to this trip, please see the details below. If you are in the DC area, please join us for an outing!!

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**A spiritual note: When the love for a friend means you will stick around.**

On March 30, during my weekly volleyball game with internationals, a stray ball found its way under my foot when I came down from a block. I rolled to the side, spraining and chipping my ankle. I was



taken to the hospital by these five men – Idris from Nigeria, Ehsan from Iran, Dion from Indonesia, Iso from Turkey and Kwame from Ghana. When I was admitted I was told that I would be at the hospital several hours. I sent Ehsan, my faithful caregiver, to tell the others I’d be a while, and they were free to go. They said “No, we’ll wait until you’re released and safe at home.” Now you need to remember, these are all graduate students; we always have work to do. It was Sunday night. (There is always work to be done.) Needless to say, I was touched. I was also convicted. Had it been me, I’d have said, “OK, I see you are in good hands. If you need ANYTHING call me.” And I would have been off

to take care of what I needed to get done. But these men put relationships above productivity. I was the blessed beneficiary. They were allowed to come to my room, and we spend three hours together there, and there is no question my spirits remained high because of their presence.

And here ends my latest newsletter. Many thanks to (many of) you for your support and friendship.

Sincerely, *Douglas, Kupikita, Oloikurrukurr*

**IF YOU’D LIKE TO SUPPORT THE DC TRIP – BELOW ARE THE DETAILS HOW.**

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**THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL TELL ABOUT THE ARTISANS WHO ARE NOW ON THEIR OWN!**