From Molière to global justice: Reflections on a pedagogical journey

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ABSTRACT

This chapter traces the transformative exploration of new horizons in the author's pedagogical journey that opened pathways to students for independent critical thinking, engaged learning, and ethical engagement for the common good. From dispenser of knowledge to undergraduate students as a new French professor at McMaster University to subsequently teaching at the graduate level in his specialization with smaller classes and more student engagement, the author developed a more interactive pedagogical perspective. A rekindled prior interest in francophone African and Caribbean literature led to the pioneering launch of courses in this new field, with the graduate course later becoming a pillar of the department's doctoral program. A series of international experiences seeded a further pivot to international development and new courses using problem- and inquiry-based approaches. Persistent themes in the evolution of the author's pedagogical practice are the interplay of academic and community-based experience, critical student engagement, and a moral vision of global citizenship.

KEYWORDS

active learning, critical thinking, problem- and inquiry-based, international development, global citizenship

As Søren Kierkegaard famously said, "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards." In this chapter, with the benefit of hindsight, I trace the evolution of my pedagogical practice at McMaster University over 5 decades as it integrated elements learned from significant mentors, influential writers encountered in person and in their writings, local and international community engagement experience, and opportunities for new intellectual exploration and teaching initiatives. My starting point on arrival at McMaster was based on my previous teaching experience. Although I had no previous formal pedagogical training, I was no stranger to standing in front of a class charged with interacting with the students, communicating course material, and, in some cases, also assessing their mastery of this material. For a year after my graduation from high school at St. Mary's College in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, and before my departure on a French government scholarship to further my education at the Université de Caen in France, I was hired to teach junior forms at my alma mater. Later, for 3 years as an assistant d'anglais at the Lycée Malherbe in Caen, I taught classes in English conversation, engaging the students in the choice of subject matter to better

maintain their interest. In my final year in France, hired by the Département d'anglais at the Université de Caen as a lecteur, I taught French-to-English translation classes and also assisted with modeling English phonetics in the language laboratory.

EARLY TEACHING EXPERIENCE AT MCMASTER

I was hired by McMaster University about a year after completion of my doctoral thesis at the Université de Caen, in Normandie, France, on the 17th century playwright, Molière, entitled "Le Monologue chez Molière: Étude de Stylistique et de Dramaturgie" (Warner, 1966). My pedagogical start at McMaster began in 1967 with teaching French language and literature courses focused on writers of the 17th and 18th century, as well as sharing in the teaching of our first-year prerequisite course for admission to upper-level French. Most undergraduate instruction in those days was structured around the professor as the fount of knowledge, imparting segmented doses of that knowledge to students who would subsequently be tested to ascertain the degree to which they had assimilated the lessons provided to them. My own undergraduate teaching style followed this conventional model, using a lecture-based approach in regular classes and a more interactive mode in the smaller tutorials.

Teaching a graduate course in 17th century French literature offered me a different pedagogical experience that played a significant role in shaping and solidifying my approach to teaching. With smaller graduate classes of more advanced students, there was greater emphasis on having them analyze, explicate, and contextualize texts as well as room for interactive discussion with the instructor and their peers. The seven Master of Arts theses that I supervised between 1969 and 1972 created further space for a deeper level of student independence and self-driven learning. In retrospect I can trace how this led to a gradual and growing interest in active student engagement which began to emerge in my undergraduate teaching as well, beginning with a number of new courses that I initiated in francophone African and Caribbean literature in 1972.

EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN LITERATURE AS A NEW AREA OF LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP AND TEACHING

Although my doctoral thesis was on the 17th century French playwright, Molière, I had also developed an interest in francophone Caribbean and African writers during my days as a student in France and had become aware of some of the pioneers of the Négritude movement[1], including its three leading proponents, Martiniquais poet and dramatist Aimé Césaire, Senegalese poet (and future president) Léopold Sedar Senghor, and French Guyanese poet Léon-Gontran Damas. This set the stage for a chance airport encounter in the summer of 1968 with Dr. Frederick Case,[2] whom I had not previously met, that sparked the beginning of my pivot to francophone African and Caribbean literature as the dominant focus of my intellectual exploration and teaching. Over a period of 3 years, Fred directed me to extensive reading of francophone Caribbean and African literary texts in all genres, as well as critical studies.

I also began to broaden my approach by reading other studies from the dominant historical and social science perspective, mentored in particular by Dr. Richard Slobodin, founder of the Department of Anthropology at McMaster University, an ethnologist with broad

scholarly interests.[3] I could not have found a better mentor to broaden my knowledge, given the breadth of his scholarship and generosity of character. Thus I was introduced to writers such as Franz Boas, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Melville Herskovits and delved more into readings in fields such as religion and politics that threw light on the broader culture and context out of which the literary texts arose.

This schedule of extensive reading, outside of my regular 17th and 18th century French literature teaching duties and undertaken independently on my own time, provided the basis for the launch of three new courses in francophone African and Caribbean literature beginning in the 1972–1973 academic year. These McMaster courses were, to the best of my knowledge, the first to be offered in this field of study at any Ontario university, apart from the University of Toronto. The first of the courses, at the undergraduate level, all taught in French, was an introductory one entitled African and Caribbean French Writers: An Introduction to French African and Caribbean Literature from the Origins of the Negritude Movement to the Present. In anticipation of these courses being offered, I had ordered a broad range of French Caribbean and African literary works and journals for the library. This enabled me, in addition to my lectures, to assign a wide variety of essay topics for the students to develop based on the now available texts. My goal was to engage the students in a personal exploration beyond the lecture material that was covered in class.

The second undergraduate course, offered as a follow-up to the first, was a fourth-year seminar course, Topics in French African and Caribbean Literature: An In-Depth Exploration of a Major Theme or Period in French African or Caribbean Literature. This course, which also occasionally served as a 600-level graduate course, focused on a range of topics in different years such as contemporary Caribbean writers, the literature of Senegal, the novels of Sembène Ousmane, and women writers of francophone Africa and the French Caribbean.

These courses presented ideas and worlds that were unfamiliar to most of the students. The following testimony by former undergraduate student Anya Wassenberg (personal communication, September 21, 2021),[4] who took both undergraduate courses, illustrates vividly the impact the introduction of these course had on some lives:

> As a child, there was a Bugs Bunny cartoon that seemed to encapsulate my relationship with anything to do with African culture. In it, Bugs was travelling through Africa from north to south on his way to Antarctica. In the cartoon, the continent was depicted on a map—its entirety shaded black, and labelled: "Darkest Africa" as a joke. In the scenes where Bugs encountered any actual Africans, the few human figures shown were either cut off at mid-chest, with no faces, or appeared as grotesque caricatures.
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> As a white child growing up in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s, I had no means of framing it as racism. All the same, as young as I was, I knew there was something wrong with that picture. Why, I would wonder, are Africans so unknowable? Why did I never see them or hear them speak? What was this shroud of mystery surrounding African people? That impression was, of course, reinforced throughout my culture, where I could watch TV shows about lions and elephants every week, but never saw people from the African continent, nor heard their stories. Throughout elementary and high

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school, Africa was never part of the curriculum of any subject.

At McMaster University, the course option of La littérature francophone africaine et antillaise, taught by Professor Warner, was the first that offered me the opportunity to study anything to do with African cultures, or anything, for that matter, outside North American or European traditions. As an introduction, however, it was ideal. Finally, here were the voices I'd been waiting to hear—although at times, what they had to say was uncomfortable to hear, like the line from Ousmane Sembène's (1960) *Les Bouts de bois de Dieu*: "le malheur, ce n'est pas seulement d'avoir faim et soif, le malheur, c'est de savoir qu'il y a des gens qui veulent que tu meures de faim" (p. 94).[5]

I began to understand points of view that were very far from my own and learn about realities that I had never been taught before. In a larger sense, it even opened my eyes to the possibilities of literature itself to reveal truths by seeing them through the eyes of another, truths that could not be understood in any other way. I experienced the true value of storytelling in a visceral sense, and it's not an overstatement to say that it changed me for good.

As a writer, I talk about arts and culture, and have made it a principle to incorporate artists and works from African nations as much as I am able to in my own work, as well as from other parts of the world that are under-represented in the media. Those two courses shaped my work as a writer to try and augment those voices that are still very seldom heard from here in North America.

Remarkably, the new MA level graduate course that I created in 1974, listed in the calendar at the time as French 719: Francophone Caribbean and African Writers, but taught in French, has remained permanently on the graduate calendar and was still among the offerings for 2021–2022 and was being co-taught by Drs. Suzanne Crosta and Eugène Nshimiyimana under the label FRENCH 719 / Écritures de l'Afrique et de la Caraïbe. Suzanne Crosta[6] was a student in a number of my courses and in 1982 wrote her MA thesis under my direction (see Crosta, 1982), before going on to write her PhD dissertation under the direction of Fred Case. The very first MA thesis in this new field that I directed was a 190-page document successfully defended by Tim Douglas in September 1972, entitled *The Black Political Theatre of Aimé Césaire*. Tim reflected on his experience (personal communication September 27, 2021) in these words:

I arrived at McMaster in September 1971, to begin an MA in French, fresh from a graduate summer course in French-language Caribbean and African literatures, at the Guadeloupe campus of L'Université de Bordeaux-Antilles-Guyane. This intensive academic experience, immediately prior to McMaster, informed my strong interest in focusing my MA thesis research on the place and role of theatre in the then resurgent French-language Caribbean and African literatures of decolonization, of re-affirmation of cultural identity and, more broadly, of social justice.

As I look back, fifty years after I successfully defended my MA thesis under the

direction of Dr. Gary Warner in September 1972, two interrelated forces at play on campus at the time stand out for me now: First, a remarkable growing discourse of critical engagement with emerging global issues, surfacing through several series of public lectures and seminars open to the campus community at large. While not constituting a formal unified institutional internationalization or cultural studies initiative, these dialogues were instrumental in broadening and sharpening my research focus, including providing pivotal leads for my literature review.

[The second force at play on campus was] the willingness and commitment of the French Department, articulated by the then department chair during my induction interview with him, as the department's responsibility "to seize this opportunity" to engage critically with the French-language literatures of Africa and the Caribbean, and to enhance its related teaching and research capacity in that field, spearheaded by Dr. Warner.

Tim Douglas' (1972) thesis set out to "study Césaire's theatre in terms of the interaction of race and politics and in the context of the colonial and independence struggles of black peoples" (p. ii). Tim credits the influence of the writings of Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor and their central concept of "la civilisation de l'universel" with inspiring the long career he has had in international intergovernmental relations in education and training.[7] Other students under my direction would subsequently go on to write equally compelling MA theses or projects on Aimé Césaire, René Maran, Mouloud Mammeri, Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, Cheikh Ndao, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Ousmane Sembène, Mariama Ba, and Aminata Sow Fall. This course also laid the groundwork and served as one of the pillars of the PhD program in "Francophonie et diversité" that was later developed by the French Department.

I became eligible for my first sabbatical leave in 1973–74 and spent the year in Sénégal. Sénégal was home to one of the three key founders of the Négritude movement, Léopold Sédar Senghor, then president of Sénégal, and many notable writers resided there. Living in Sénégal allowed me to delve more deeply into the origins of French-language African theatre and meet francophone African literature professors at the Université de Dakar. I also interviewed several writers, including novelist and film-maker Sembène Ousmane; Guinean novelist Camara Laye, author of *L'Enfant Noir/The African Child*; veterinarian and short story writer Birago Diop, novelist Cheikh Hamidou Kane; and playwright Cheik Ndao—all of whose work I taught at some point.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPACT OF A LIVED INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Three years later, I accepted a posting as Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) field staff officer (country program director) in Sierra Leone.[8] I arranged for a 2-year unpaid leave of absence from the university to take up this position from July 1977 to June 1979. I was responsible for the planning, management, and supervision of the Canadian volunteer placement dimension of the program as well as for in-country project planning and budget management in the community development, rural health, food production, and formal education sectors. This direct experience in the field was to lay the groundwork for future

expansion of my teaching and research beyond literary studies. This interplay between my academic and community-based work has remained a consistent factor reflected in my pedagogical practice.

During my pre-departure orientation in Ottawa, I was introduced to the writings of Robert Chambers, later developed more fully in *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (1983). This book has anchored my understanding of development, and I have used it consistently in teaching. I found particularly helpful Chambers' articulation of the many forms of outsider bias,[9] his insistence on bringing a multidisciplinary perspective to understanding and addressing rural development issues, and his probing of assumptions about whose knowledge counts. His analysis is equally applicable to local Canadian contexts as I indicated in the foreword I wrote for a 2020 book aimed at social development planners and students (Warner, 2020).

My previous reading of Paulo Freire's work, in particular *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)*,* was a source of inspiration as, soon after my arrival in Sierra Leone, I started work on what was to become the Freire-inspired Sierra Leone Functional Adult Literacy Programme (FALP). FALP began as a pilot launched in three villages in December 1977 and expanded 8 months later to 42 villages in the Northern and Southern Provinces. The literacy component (generally in the vernacular languages, Mende and Temne) was viewed, not as a primary objective in itself, but as a means to a more important end, namely inspiring participants to organize themselves and take initiative for the development of their own communities. It was work-oriented in that an important focus of class discussions was the dominant occupational activity in each particular locality (e.g., rice or vegetable farming, fishing). Similarly, the class was also functional in that it was directly related to the villagers' preoccupations (e.g., basic health, nutritional and sanitation concerns, increasing income, improving storage facilities, etc.). The common factor was a focus on empowering the learner to be an active agent in developing their knowledge and improving their capacity to enhance their living environment for the common good. Insights gained from this experience helped shape and enhance the educational lens I came to favour in my teaching at McMaster of enabling students to formulate their own questions and unleash their imagination, creativity, and moral sense of responsibility for the common good.

On my return to Canada, I continued expanding my knowledge and experience in international development through a combination of research and community work and started being invited over the next 2 decades by my McMaster peers to offer guest lectures to their courses. For example, I gave a 2-hour lecture annually beginning in 1985 to the Arts & Science 1C06 inquiry course on development issues in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, before being invited to be a co-instructor for this course in 1998. I also gave guest lectures on ethics and investment in South Africa to Philosophy 2N3 (which became the source of an article I later authored; see Warner, 1991), on global issues to Civil Engineering 2I03 and Engineering 4A3, and on concepts of development to Nursing N4H03/HTH SCI 4H0 (which was then recorded and used as a class resource for several years). At the graduate level, I was a resource person in 1992 for the seminar "Popular Participation and Development" in Health and Development MS 722 and gave a lecture on "Issues in International Health—Class, Culture and Community" for

the graduate course Population Health MS 771. In 1981 I served as examiner for two MSc theses in epidemiology, both on rural health in Africa. This trend would continue as between 1984 and 2000, I served as an examiner for several PhD theses at McMaster in sociology, anthropology, geography, and religious studies on rural development in Africa; water demand in Northern Nigeria; management of marine protected areas in Belize; religious ritual in Swaziland; the sugar industry in Jamaica; carnival in Trinidad; and at OISE, University of Toronto, on the Indigenous development model as an alternative to the Western development model. As illustrated in the above, international development was slowly developing into a dominant focus for me by the 1990s.

ENGAGEMENT IN THE NEW THEME-SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

The next significant teaching initiative in which I played a leadership role was the creation of one of the first theme schools, a pedagogical approach championed by Dr. Geraldine Kenney-Wallace during her tenure as McMaster's president and vice-chancellor (1990–1995). Theme schools were conceived as:

> centre[s] of interdisciplinary learning where a group of faculty members identifies a set of intellectual problems arising out of their research, establishes a programme of study, focused on these problems, and gathers a group of students interested in learning about these problems. Students and faculty will form an intellectual community that will explore these problems through self-directed learning and independent study. (McMaster University, 1993, p. 115)

It was projected that each of these schools, offered as a minor in conjunction with an honours degree program, would enrol approximately 60 students annually, would generally last a total of 5 years, and that different subject areas would emerge over time.

In response to this curricular initiative, the two pilot schools,[10] which enrolled their first cohort of students for the 1994–95 academic year, were the Theme School on International Justice and Human Rights, co-directed at the time by Dr. Rhoda Howard (sociology) and myself, and the Theme School on New Materials and Their Impact on Society, directed by Dr. John Berlinsky (Physics & Astronomy). I chaired the working group for the initial consideration and planning for what was to become the Theme School on International Justice and Human Rights at a retreat held under the auspices of McMaster International (MI),[11] which served as the school's administrative home during its early development phase. Key contributors to the development of the school included Dr. Rhoda Howard, who brought academic specialization in international human rights; Dr. Basanti (Basu) Majumdar, who brought expertise in international health; and myself (I brought international development knowledge). Rhoda Howard went on to become the pillar in the role of director and chief architect of the program's curriculum as it evolved. Its initial design required students, on entry to the program in Level II, to take five courses over 3 years, including an introductory seminar, a case study, two research practicums, and a theme school project. Students would end up completing three projects in three different faculties (Unknown, 1993).

My personal contribution as an instructor was the creation of a new course, The Right to Development (TSIJHR 2D03). The calendar description for this course, which I taught for 4 years, indicated that it would explore different topics in development, such as gender, cultural and human rights issues, foreign aid, popular participation, and sustainable development, using a problem-based approach (McMaster University, 1995). Though aware, through its reputation, of the problem-based methodology pioneered at the McMaster University Medical School, I had no formal training in this pedagogical practice. As part of the preparation for the theme school in general, and my course in particular, I enlisted the help of Dr. Alan Blizzard, then director of the Instructional Development Centre, later renamed Centre for Leadership in Learning (and presently named the MacPherson Institute), for several one-on-one sessions on the application of problem-based learning. I also benefited greatly from his assistance in designing the course.

The objectives I laid out for students in this course were building knowledge and sensitivity to the ethical and practical implications of the right to development, research skills, group process skills, empathy, and motivation to take personal responsibility for their learning and how they might apply it in the context of their lives. To achieve this, the students, who were divided into four focus groups of about five students, studied four scenarios on a development theme (e.g., human rights, gender, foreign aid, sustainable development) over a period of 2 weeks for each scenario, and were tasked with identifying research questions, submitting individually written assignments, sharing their findings in their home groups, and presenting highlights from each group to the full class. The scenarios were designed to generate questions for reflection, debate, and investigation. For each scenario an extensive list of accessible reference articles was provided, and I invited a colleague with specialized knowledge in the subject to offer a guest lecture. This scenario-based structure, preceded by two introductory sessions, constituted a core component of the 13-week course.

The final segment of the course was devoted to the instruction and performance of a simulation. The simulation, *Karimlan*, developed by Yap (1989), was intended to serve as a broad overview of the course and to provide the students with an experiential mode of getting insights into complex issues of sustainable development. The game, which is based on a real situation in southern Africa, simulates a 3-day meeting (amounting to up to 4 ½ hours of playing time) at which the government tries to convince the local tribal population to adopt a contentious development plan. Issues raised include competition over the same shared land and resource base, unequal political voice of different communities, differing attitudes to environmental protection, and the role of aid agencies. The simulation was followed by a debriefing in which students reflected upon the experience and its implications.

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CO-TEACHING EXPERIENCE

In the late nineties, after finishing my term as McMaster International director and returning to full-time teaching, I was involved in launching Economics 2L03: Peace, Human Security, and Economic Development, which I co-developed and co-taught annually from 1999 to 2002 and again in the 2005–2006 academic year, with economics professor Dr. Atif Kubursi.[12] The course, which was open to students in Level II or above from any faculty and could be used

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as an elective by economics students, attracted an average of approximately 80 participants each year. It was designed to present a human development-inspired perspective on economics. Its focus included introducing students to the methods and concepts of analysis in economic development, with an emphasis on development as a socio-political, economic, and moral process rather than as only an applied field within economics. It was also framed within the broader context of human security.[13] A course pack provided students with 27 selected readings as essential material for the course. The articles addressed issues such as development models, globalization, sustainable development, third-world debt, foreign aid and investments, human security, human rights, women in development, and the interplay of culture, spirituality, and economic development. The delivery of the course was more traditional, relying on lectures and Q&A in-class discussions, with midterm and final exams serving as the main evaluation tools. The major goal of the course was to provide access for students to an alternative perspective on economics.

THE ARTS & SCIENCE PROGRAM—A CROWNING EXPERIENCE

While the Economics 2L03 course was being developed, I was invited by then director of the Arts & Science Program, Dr. Barbara Ferrier, to join her and another colleague, Dr. John Browning, in co-teaching the Arts & Science 1C06 inquiry course on development issues in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. By the time I was recruited as a co-instructor, the course's core structure was firmly established and continued in this form with only minor adjustments for another decade or so.[14] It was not too difficult for me, mentored by Barbara Ferrier, to make the transition from problem-based learning, with which I had become familiar, to the inquiry-based approach[15] employed in this course and more generally in the Arts & Science Program.

The class of 60 to 65 students was divided into three sections based on the three geographical regions indicated in the course title. I was assigned the Africa group. Students wrote their first research paper on a question related to their geographical area; this restriction did not apply to their second paper. I guided the students in my section on an individual basis as they worked through the different stages of their research paper—formulating their research question accompanied by a brief explanation; presenting an outline identifying deeper questions and the kind of evidence needed; providing a two-page summary indicating the structure, main arguments, and supporting evidence as well as a full bibliography; and finally submitting the final paper (3000–4000 words for the first one and 4000–5000 words for the second). In addition to grading and providing detailed comments on their own section's papers, instructors carefully read and graded a sample of the papers from the other two sections and also compared similarly graded papers in order to maintain a high level of consistency in grading across sections. This process proved effective in enabling students to develop skills in framing researchable questions, identifying and assessing appropriate sources, analyzing the information gathered, and composing well-structured evidence-based papers.

The instructors, supplemented by guest speakers, provided background on development issues by delivering lectures from a variety of perspectives. A number of other activities were designed to develop analytical, quantitative reasoning, and writing skills. These included précis-writing exercises, library tours and research seminars carried out by library staff, a special class

period devoted to the technical skills of writing research papers, and a class and exercise on quantitative reasoning aimed at developing the students' skills in assessing statistical information encountered while researching their questions. Other exercises were designed to highlight a combination of group and individual communication skills. The grant project was one such example. Students in groups of about eight were assigned the task of creating a development-related project which they were to submit in writing, using a grant submission protocol supplied to them. This required them to work collaboratively to research their selected country and the particular situation and issues their proposal was addressing; agree on how the proposed activity was to be implemented and with what resources, including the budget; and develop the written proposal. Once the written proposals were submitted, each group made a presentation of their grant proposal to the whole class and answered questions. Other simulations, such as a Model U.N. Security Council assignment where students play the roles of sitting Security Council members and follow the council's procedures and protocols in debating resolutions on the agenda of the current session, and *Karimlan* (discussed above) used an experiential mode of learning to build the same sets of skills in the thematic context of international development.

Two years after starting as an instructor for this course I was appointed director of the Arts & Science Program, an experience that proved to be a notable highlight of my career, so much so that for 12 years after my formal retirement in 2006 I maintained an ongoing connection with the program as an occasional instructor and twice as acting director. I was particularly attracted by the academic quality of this program and its culture, reflected in a shared community of learning, an interdisciplinary perspective, a readiness to explore questions beyond the bounds of disciplinary borders, a commitment to community service, and an openness to being self-critical and to engaging in discovery of self and the human experience. My last contribution as an instructor was the creation of an entirely new interdisciplinary global justice course that I first taught in 2013–2014 and repeated the following year. This course was conceived as a first step towards creating a larger "global justice hub" at McMaster, with the goal of bringing together students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners interested in working towards global justice.[16] It was understood that the special areas of focus for the course would change from time to time. I chose the topic of water, recognizing from my international development background that the lack of access to clean water and adequate sanitation experienced by billions around the world, including in Indigenous communities in Canada, is a significant global justice issue. I was motivated too by recognition of the academic strengths at McMaster in the area of water research[17] across several disciplines. I was also encouraged by McMaster's institutional commitment to internationalization as one of the pillars of President Patrick Deane's (2011) *Forward With Integrity* letter published in September 2011, a commitment that finds expression in McMaster's current institutional embrace of the U.N. Social Development Goals (SDGs), a commitment framed as being "about real-world impact, and advancing the greater social good in our communities and in our world" (McMaster University, Our Approach section, 2022).

The course on global justice was designed to be interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, and student-centred in its approach. It aimed to engage students in exploring the intersections of

water and justice from a variety of perspectives, and by focusing on concrete examples to develop their abilities to contribute to the pursuit of global justice. Presentations by guest speakers explored a wide range of disciplinary areas—the global water crisis as a governance crisis, water quality and security, Indigenous peoples' water access, women and water, medical geology,[18] water and health, and representation of water in film. Students recorded and periodically submitted their critical reflections and key learnings from the presentations and their readings. A debate, with teams of students presenting opposing sides of a number of contested water policy issues, scheduled toward the end of the course, provided them with an opportunity to apply their learning to complex, practical, real-life situations; demonstrate their ability to critically unpack and assess arguments; and hone their public speaking skills.

A capstone paper or project was designed as a major assignment that allowed students to research a real-life water justice issue of interest to them, using the same phased process developed for research papers in the Arts & Science inquiry course on development issues. Although students submitted their unique paper or project individually, they were encouraged to collaborate on their research with peers where their focus overlapped. In the final segment of the course, students designed a poster aimed at communicating succinctly in a visual form the essential themes of their paper or project. Each student in turn presented their poster to the full class in a format inspired by the Three Minute Thesis presentation (see Canadian Association for Graduate Studies, 2022). This overall capstone exercise sought to engage them personally in a global justice issue while sharpening generic skills of analysis, collaboration, synthesis, and creative communication.

CONCLUDING REFLECTION

What emerges overall is that my pedagogical practice was framed and developed over time, influenced less by the abundant mainstream literature on the philosophy of education than by learnings drawn mainly from my own experience of teaching, from mentors like Fred Case and Alan Blizzard, and from my community engagement and international development-related work. The core competencies listed in the 2016 *Report of the Task Force on Future Directions for the Faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences and Science* (also known as the "Warner Report"), for which I served as chair of the Task Force, represent compelling learning objectives for students that I see as broadly applicable across all faculties and programs. They include:

- vibrant intellectual engagement
- the ability to reflect critically on human values, principles, and ethics from a framework committed to justice, human welfare, and a more equitable view of the world and its future
- strong interpersonal working skills rooted in empathy and the ability to listen to others
- strong communication and leadership skills
- the ability to be self-directed
- the ability to approach and critically evaluate problems from a variety of viewpoints

- the ability to grasp and assemble information and arguments from a variety of sources, combined with the capacity to engage this material in a critical, yet creative manner
- awareness of local and global communities, the global human condition, and the multiple pressures placed on the planet by nature and human practices
- firm grounding in a student's chosen discipline or focus of study (Warner et al., 2016)

Reaching maturity in an era of emancipation from colonial rule, with the years immediately prior to and after my departure in 1960 for my studies in France marked by many Caribbean and African countries becoming independent, equipped me with a sharpened instinct for emancipatory impulses. These impulses were further developed by my reading of Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and its practical application in the Sierra Leone Functional Adult Literacy Programme. This found expression both in my approach to teaching and in the areas of intellectual enquiry and practical community-engaged action that I chose to explore. My pedagogical practice of promoting principles of active learning (including associated soft skills such as collaboration and communication) to inspire an educated, engaged citizenship flowed from this emancipatory conviction. I derived immense satisfaction over the years from seeing students from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines respond to the challenge of personal engagement with issues of societal wellbeing and environmental sustainability arising from my courses. In addition, heightened consciousness of the dominant Eurocentric nature of the curriculum led me to expand the range of the curriculum available to students by introducing courses in African and Caribbean studies and in international development studies from a justice and human-security perspective. I am also encouraged to see equity and inclusion principles being increasingly mainstreamed as a core pedagogical value at McMaster. The broader overarching worldview within which my pedagogical practice is framed is captured in the Bantu concept of Ubuntu[19], which reminds us of our interconnectedness, of how our humanity as individuals is expressed in relationship with others and the cosmos.

NOTES

1. Négritude is an anticolonial literary and cultural movement first developed in Paris in the 1930s as an affirmation of Black identity, history, and culture.
2. Dr. Case was at the time teaching at New College, University of Toronto, specializing in francophone African and Caribbean literature. He later became principal of New College, served as primary supervisor of 33 doctoral students and co-supervisor and examiner of countless more, and played a pivotal role in anchoring the study of francophone African and Caribbean literature and culture at the University of Toronto, among his many achievements.
3. As his colleague Harvey Feit noted in an obituary published in the McMaster's *Daily News* on February 22, 2005, "He exemplified a graceful scholarly collegiality. . . . His academic interests extended to aspects of the history of anthropology and related disciplines in addition to his more than 50 years of research and publications on the ethnography and ethnohistory of

subarctic First Nations. . . . His scholarship was characterized throughout by an erudite knowledge of the literature from the classics to the most recent debates" (Feit, 2005, para. 13).

4. Anya is a freelance writer and singer-songwriter. Subsequent to her graduation from university, I had been aware of her ongoing connection with Black culture, including through her work with an arts organization that was staging a variety of cultural performances from across the Black world for the 2013 Black History Month celebration in Hamilton.

5. English translation: "What is unfortunate is not just going hungry and thirsty, it is knowing that there are people who want you to starve to death."

6. Dr. Crosta served as dean of Humanities at McMaster University, 2007–2013.

7. Tim's career included leadership roles first with the Canadian Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Secretariat of the interprovincial Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, and later with the Ontario Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, developing student exchange programs with European universities, working in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on capacity-building services in Estonia and Latvia, and was seconded to South Africa to co-create with local colleagues an e-learning system for leaders in the further education and training sector.

8. Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) was founded in 1961 by a group of Canadian university graduates. Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) it sent volunteers to fill gaps in such fields as education, health, and agriculture in many countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Known today simply as Cuso International and focused on the reduction of poverty and inequality, it has evolved to meet contemporary challenges.

9. Outsider bias refers to the power relationship which leads to the assumptions, knowledge, and solutions of outside experts being automatically privileged, discounting local knowledge and multigenerational experience. I explored this theme of validating local knowledge in Warner (1997).

10. These two pilot theme schools admitted their last intake of students in 1996 and 1995 respectively. Two new theme schools were later created, the Theme School on Science, Technology, and Public Policy and the Theme School on Globalization and the Human Experience, both of which admitted their last intake of students in September 1999.

11. The 1988 founding mission of McMaster International was to be "an agency promoting and coordinating institutional international activities for the constituent Faculties of McMaster University. Its mission is to contribute to the international development effort and to enhance global cooperation and awareness within the McMaster community. Our efforts will be guided by the principles of partnership, social equity, human rights and environmental protection" (McMaster International, 1988; also see Warner, 1988). It worked in collaboration with its sister agency, the Centre for International Health. I served as the founding MI director from 1988 to 1997. MI was later reframed as the Office of International Affairs.

12. Dr. Kubursi's extensive scholarly and professional experience has included being a consultant to many governments and working on several UN missions, including serving as executive secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

(UN-ESCWA). Dr. Kubursi also served as one of the Arts & Science 1C06 inquiry course co-instructors for many years.

13. The concept of human security, first highlighted in the United Nations Development Programme's (1994) *Human Development Report*, marked a departure from the traditional emphasis on the security of the state, shifting the focus to include the security of individual human beings in their complex interactions. The report outlined seven areas of threats to human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political. For a contemporary vision of human security, see United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (n.d.).

14. The course has since been redesigned as ARTSSCI 1C06 Inquiry: Global Challenges.

15. Posing incisive questions is common to both problem-based and inquiry-based learning. Both are designed to help students develop strong skills of independent thinking, analysis, research and of drawing and presenting evidence-based learnings and, where appropriate, conclusions. In my experience, problem-based learning starts with developing questions from a given scenario whereas inquiry-based learning starts with the student developing the initial question that will be the focus of examination. Both the scenario and the question are grounded in real life. There may be differences in the ensuing process but there are also many common themes (e.g., verification of the appropriateness of the questions, sifting and developing ever deeper questions, identifying valid sources of information, weighing the evidence, constructing an evidence-based and well-structured conclusion). In both cases the instructor as a well-informed guide plays an invaluable role by providing information or probing as needed at key points to ensure the students have a solid knowledge base, remain focused on the issue they are studying, and think creatively.

16. The initiative launched in 2013 to develop a Global Justice Hub, housed in the Arts & Science Program, led to the creation of the Global Justice inquiry course and the hosting of a lecture and two full-day workshops. The hub is now dormant except for the inquiry course that maintains its legacy. See Marquis and Tam (2015).

17. A decade earlier the United Nations University Institute on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), focused entirely on water issues, was launched, taking over the office space occupied by McMaster International (MI) during my term as MI director.

18. Medical geology is an interdisciplinary field that studies the impact of geologic materials and processes on human and animal health.

19. See Okoro (2015). For one of many recent books on Ubuntu, see Ngomane (2019).

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