



Sam Jonah Library *DIGEST*

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Assorted Books Donated to The University of Cape Coast Library System - January-March 2022

MY STORY...

an interview with

Prof. Dora Francisca Edu-Buandoh

Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Coast (January 2019-December 2021)

EXTERNAL EDITORS: Prof. Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantanka and Mr Theophilus Nartey

FOREWORD BY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

Mac-Anthony Cobblah (PhD)

Libraries worldwide are going through major changes as a result of technological advancement, information explosion, and changes in clients' needs as well as transformation in teaching, learning and research. The Sam Jonah Library is committed to its vision and mission to build a university library system comparable to any world class university library. It is the mandate of the University Library to provide scholarly information resources, learning space and services to support the university's business of teaching, learning and research. The Library shall play a highly supportive role in the university's research, community outreach and global visibility agenda. The emphasis is on giving people more access to information and helping them to use information effectively by providing tools, spaces and expertise. Libraries are also playing increasing role in the research lifecycle including open publishing and using metrics to measure the impact of published research works. The University at this stage needs a well-built and well-equipped library system.



The University of Cape Coast Library System (UCCLS) is positioned not only to deploy new strategies for effective service delivery, but to roll out innovations to serve the diverse segments of clients (faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students and outside communities) using the appropriate measures and platforms. Sam Jonah Library will expand its efforts to reduce to the barest minimum the spate of fake news, improve information literacy and the branding of competitive choice. Sam Jonah library's resources, facilities and services are underutilised; The Sam Jonah Library Digest will bridge the gap between the Library and its users as far as information is concerned. We need to double our efforts in order that we can compete at the global stage. The Sam Jonah Library will keep library clients abreast with developments in the University Library System as well as other partner libraries.

The Sam Jonah Library Digest was established to ensure a timely communication of our resources, facilities and services to the university community for user access. The Digest is our humble addition to the university's quest to improve its visibility, branding and internationalisation. The Library Digest is a must read for the library staff and users as it offers an outlook into the innovations and upcoming events, trending issues and scholarly outputs of the University of Cape Coast Library System (UCCLS). The Digest again aims to engender a concerted approach to service delivery and hone the writing, publishing and communication skills of key constituents of the UCCLS.

Our doors are widely opened to you and our staff stand ready to assist you break down ethically, all barriers to information access.

AN INTERVIEW WITH Prof. Dora Francisca Edu-Buandoh

Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Coast (January 2019–December 2021)



E **EDITORIAL TEAM:** *Good Morning Prof. The Editorial Team of the Sam Jonah Library Digest is convinced that our readers will be very much interested to know more about your rich and enviable career achievements. Especially, from your childhood days, teenage, academic achievements to your current position. First of all, let's start from your childhood days.*

PROF: Thank you very much. My name is Dora Francisca Edu-Buandoh. I was born into a family of seven. I have four siblings, two brothers and two sisters, I am in the middle. My parents are Reverend K. B. M. Edu-Buandoh and Mrs. Dina Edu-Buandoh, both of blessed memory. My father was a Reverend Minister in the Methodist Church, and because of that, we travelled around a lot..

I started school quite early at Essikado Methodist Nursery in the Western Region, and then we were transferred to Saltpond. So I started Class One at Saltpond Methodist B (very close to the sea; near what is now Methodist Senior High School). We were there for four years and we were later transferred to Tema. I continued from class five to class six at Tema Padmore Street Primary School.

From there, my father had to leave Tema for further studies, and as it was the practice of the Methodist Church, we had to go to our hometown, Agona Abodom, in the Central Region. For some reason, an Auntie who lived in

Koforidua decided that I should go and stay with her so, my mother and siblings went to Agona Abodom and I went to Koforidua.

I attended middle school at Koforidua Methodist Girls' School. And from there I sat for the Common Entrance Examination. I wanted to go to Wesley Girls, but I didn't get it the first time and my mother said I should wait a bit and get it the second time. I took the examination again and missed the mark, but I got Ghana National College. However, my sister who was then at Wesley Girls discouraged me from going to Ghana National and I ended up at Asanteman Secondary School in Kumasi. My father had come back and was the Director for the Methodist Youth Department, which was at Kumasi Freeman College, so they decided that I should come to Kumasi and be a day student since Asanteman was close to our house. I didn't want to stay at Koforidua again, anyway, so I attended Asanteman for a year. My parents were transferred to Akim Oda, in the Eastern Region. So I changed school again.

EDITORIAL TEAM AND PROF: *Laughter from both:*

PROF: I went to Oda Secondary School and that's where I had my secondary school education. We were at Akim Oda for four years, so it tied in nicely with my 'O' Level. Those days, you had to go to Sixth Form after 'O' Levels before you go to the university, but I didn't pass my Mathematics very

well to go to Sixth Form. I am not very good at Mathematics. I like reading so I was doing well in English.

My parents were then transferred to Anomabo, and I went with them to Anomabo. After a year, my father asked me to go to Komenda Training College. I didn't want to go because I didn't want to be a teacher. It wasn't something I was interested in, but my father said, you can't be at home and be writing one subject every time. So I went to Komenda.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof, can you please tell us the year you went to Komenda?*

PROF: I went to Komenda Training College in 1983 and completed in 1986. The year I got there was the year the National Teachers' Council of Ghana said that, if you do not have credit in Mathematics you cannot do Post-Secondary, which is for three years; but you have to do Post-Middle for four years. Post-Middle was for those who had not gone to secondary school, but I had attended Secondary School. I had sat for the 'O'Levels and passed all subjects with credit, except Mathematics, so I was angry. But my father insisted and in those days if your parents asked you to do something, you do it; you can't do what you want. So, I went to Komenda under protest.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *So can you tell us more about life at Komenda College?*

PROF: I must say that, for the first two years, I was just walking about in the school, because there was nothing challenging there for me, and I knew I wasn't going to teach. In the third year, when I had to do my on-campus teaching practice, I was posted to GHASEL.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof, please where is GHASEL?*

PROF: GHASEL was at Komenda. There used to be a sugar factory there, and they had an estate with a school for the children of the staff. The first time I went to teach, I saw that, it was interesting and I enjoyed it so much. So after the teaching practice, I told myself that maybe I should put myself into it because teaching is fun. I got a distinction from the on-campus teaching practice so, I was motivated to continue what I was doing there.

I completed Komenda College in 1986 and got a distinction in off-campus teaching practice too. Those days you get both teachers from the College and Circuit Supervisors from the District Ghana Education Service office coming to supervise you as you teach, and I got a Distinction.

In College, I was the Women Prefect (Ofie Payinwa) for one year. The men's prefect was called Ofie Payin and

the female was Ofie Payinwa (OPwa). That put me into leadership. Because of my family background, our lives were 80% church. Growing up, my parents made sure everybody was a member of at least two organisations in the church. As for Brigade, everybody was a member; so Brigade and others. When you get to a certain age, you go to Methodist Youth Fellowship. That also helped us to develop leadership skills.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *OK, Prof can you tell us about your life after Teachers' Training College?*

PROF: I was posted to Shama after College. Like I said I didn't want to be a teacher. I wanted to be a Bilingual Secretary, because of how they dress. Teachers don't dress up and I wanted a job that would let me dress up, so I did French.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PROF: *Laughter from all:*

PROF: When I couldn't become a bilingual secretary, and I became a teacher, I told myself that I would be a teacher at the highest level of education. So at Shama, in the third year, I applied to Winneba to do a Diploma in English programme. At that time it wasn't a University, It was Advanced Teacher Training College (ATTC). I went there for the entrance exams and I came up at the top and everybody was looking for that Dora Edu-Buandoh. I went for the interview after the examination but they didn't actually ask me any content question; I guess it was just to let them see that person who did so well. I got admission and got to Winneba, but I spent



only one month there.

I had applied to the University of Cape Coast, through Mature Entrance Exams the same time I applied to ATTC and UCC invited me for an interview when I was at Winneba. I came and got admitted at University of Cape Coast too. So I packed my things from ATTC to UCC because it was a degree programme and a short circuit to my dream.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Please, your student life at UCC?*

PROF: I read B.A Arts (English, Classics and Religion) and in the third year I dropped Classics and Religion and majored in English. I am not very keen in Literature, but I love languages and I love to read. Even as a little girl, I would be reading while fanning the coal pot.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PROF: *Laughter from all.*

PROF: English was my best subject and I enjoyed it and put my best into it and majored in it. I missed the First Class, but I got Second Upper and then I was taken as a teaching assistant.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Please can you tell us about life after first degree?*

PROF: I did National Service for two years because I didn't do that after Teacher Training College. The second year into my service, my then Head of Department (Late Professor Kofi Edu Yankson) asked that I enroll on the MPhil programme and I did. So the second year into my National Service, I was assisting lecturers but was also doing my MPhil.

Prof Yankson who was my mentor actually helped me a lot. When I became a teaching assistant, the first thing he asked me to do was to develop a course for a Preliminary English Programme. And I asked myself "how can I develop a course? I just came out with my first degree". But I did and he was happy with it. So, he supported me from there to do other things including marking of scripts. Later on I discovered that, it wasn't because he couldn't

mark his scripts, but he wanted to help me to develop those ethical and professional skills every academic needs. I was socialised into the position of a lecturer. After the course work of my master's programme, there was a call for the Fulbright Scholarship and he nominated me. I went through the process and was awarded to do a one-year non-degree programme in the US. I obtained a Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA, as a Fulbright Scholar. That step tied in nicely with what I wanted to do. I came back and completed my MPhil and was appointed first as a Senior Research Assistant in 1999 and then as an Assistant Lecturer in 2000. After three years, I got Ghana Government Scholarship to go and do PHD. I went to the University of Iowa in the US for a PHD programme in Language, Literacy and Culture. This interesting programme allows you to work with languages, literacy and English education and also opens your mind to different cultures and how they affect people who teach and learn languages. I really enjoyed the programme and completed in 2006 and came back to work till now.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *So Prof, with all these, do you regret not being the Bilingual secretary you wanted to be?*

PROF: No, I don't regret one bit. I realised I was in a good profession and I enjoy teaching. I enjoyed my Level 100 classes, better than the other classes, I taught because it was fun. You have students who don't know and they think they know so much because they got good grades at senior Secondary School; then they come to the University and realise that they don't know much so they are ready to listen. When you give them your best, they appreciate it. As for the bilingual secretaryship, it was a childhood dream. My father was an interesting man. He kept a file for each of us. As soon as you enter secondary school, he will open a file for you to save your results and your bills. When you get to Form 3 where you are supposed to choose your subjects, he will ask you what you want to do in the future and check



with your grades on file to see where your strengths are for him to advise you or you advise yourself).

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Would you mind telling us some of the challenges you faced as a child and teenager?*

PROF: Yes. I've sold everything before. My mother, as "Osofomaame", was a baker. So, I sold bread most of the time. I have also sold "bufflot", "Ga Kenkey", fabric, etc. Even at secondary school, I would carry wares to sell after school. I was a Day Student. I thought it was normal. I also had to study hard and go to church too, which was a normal routine. I wouldn't say these were challenges except that a big chunk of your day was always occupied. I will say the subjects I didn't do well in were my challenges.

Every teenager has challenges, and in my family, among the children of five, I will say I was the non-conformist. Yes, I was the one who didn't follow all the rules, but now I do. I was the outgoing person, I had a lot of friends and so some of the things that they say "Asofomba" shouldn't do, I would do. My parents were worried about me. They thought that I wouldn't turn out well, but thank God, I turned out well.

I had my child early, married early and divorced early; and I think it was one of the reasons my father said I should go to a teacher training college so I could have a profession and also have time for my child. And that's the only child I have.

They thought I was a problem child, but I thank God and my parents for what I have become. Especially, my mum. My mum never went to school, but she was so supportive making sure that everybody gets higher education. My father was also supportive, but he was busy thinking about the church and he rose to become what we now call Bishop in Cape Coast. In my young adult life, I think the biggest challenge was caring for a child as a single mother and going to school.

I got married but for a short time. It didn't work for me and I chose to go to school than to be a housewife and I'm happy I chose that path. With the support of my parents I took care of my child and he is now someone I am very proud of. He has a PhD now, he is a researcher. So although I didn't marry again, somehow God turned it around and what seemed to be a challenge has turned out to be my greatest joy. I thank God; he turned out well, a perfect gentleman.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *That's refreshing to hear, and we are sure your son is equally proud of you.*

PROF: Oh, yes. I know that.



EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof can you share with us any significant experience that has shaped you and prepared you for where you are now?*

PROF: I think that would be my experiences in the church and in the family, because I have a closely knit family and that has been a great support to me. In addition, in challenging moments of my life, I look to God. I can say that everything I have been able to do is by the grace of God. I try to be nice to people. People think I don't get angry, I do but I try to be nice to people because I have been socialised that way. I try to respect everyone, and when you do that people respect you too and you see that people even fight your battles for you, because they think that you have invested in them in terms of goodwill.

I think that's what has kept me. I also work very hard in whatever position you put me; that is another thing that was instilled in me by my parents. And because of that people notice me and give me more work. When I was an Assistant Lecturer it wasn't in my plans to be a Head of Department, Dean or Provost. My plan was just to teach; but I guess people saw how I worked, how seriously I took my responsibilities and how I made time for work I did not get money from, and recommended me for higher positions. Money is not my focus in life, because I believe that when you get food to eat, decent cloth to wear and a place to sleep you don't have to be ostentatious. You can live a modest life.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof., earlier on you mentioned that you got a Fulbright Scholarship. Can you briefly tell us about it, as to when and how you felt about it?*

PROF: Fulbright is the highest US Government Scholarship you can get. It was named after James William Fulbright, a prominent and distinguished American statesman who contributed greatly to international affairs during his tenure as the longest serving chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the United States Congress. It is very prestigious and highly competitive, and it is for specific areas; mainly, international education, community development and issues that will help the society to grow. So they wouldn't give you Fulbright just because you wanted a scholarship to do Masters. It is usually channeled through institutions and they will conduct interviews to be sure of the person(s) they award them to. And when you finish, you must come back to help develop your country.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof, there is something that my colleagues and our readers would like to know. We know you were once a student of UCC. We are aware you also attended other prestigious universities outside the country? What motivated you to come back to UCC to work as an academician?*

PROF: I love UCC. I tell people that when you hit UCC, I feel it in my stomach.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PROF: *Laughter from all*

PROF: I enjoyed my undergraduate life at UCC. I was at ATL Hall, and it was fun so I developed the love for UCC.



My transformation from student through to a lecturer also gives me some good feeling; and from the Fulbright too. I felt that morally, I was obliged to come back. And also, my life is here.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof, we love you for loving UCC. Obviously there has been vast changes from your time as a student, as compare to the present, can you comment briefly on these changes?*

PROF: It is normal that there should be a change, because it means that the University is growing. So there have been many changes; both positive and negative. Like moving from old site to new site. We used to walk because there were no taxis anywhere, but now students will wait for the shuttle bus and be late for lectures. Now attitude of students to academic work is not as good as it used to be and you can't blame them much. They are much younger than we were and the maturity level is different. So if you are a lecturer now, you have to have a lot of patience. The exposure they have now with technology is also higher than before, because of ICT; so Lecturers can't take them for granted.

The University has also grown in terms of number and facilities. The increase in student numbers has put a lot of stress on lecturers. In terms of socialisation too there has been changes. Those days at ATL Hall, you could walk and dance to a brass band through to Casford Hall. Today you cannot; there will be a fight. For us who are alumni of the two Halls and went through a healthy rivalry, we feel very sad when we hear of the violence.

Facilities: we didn't have a lot of lecture rooms as we have now, but then we didn't have as many students too as we have now so it was enough for us. Now we have a lot of young lecturers who don't have much experience and need mentoring. It is the duty of the University to mentor them into seasoned lecturers quickly, so as to enable them to work effectively and efficiently. Because we are growing, we are also developing a lot of new innovative programmes. It is good for the University, but it also means we should get corresponding facilities. That is a huge challenge. When I was a student, we had a language lab, we don't have it now. There were some specialised facilities we had, they don't have them now. But of course, we didn't have Knowledge and Research Commons in the Library. Our library was not as equipped as it is now. There was nothing like an E-library that you can sit in your room and access. You had to go and check out books with your library cards. So the change is in both ways and if you are a student now, you can't complain much; you have to make the best use of what you have.



EDITORIAL TEAM: *Can you please share with us some of your rich academic and research achievements, including the books that you have written or published, thus, your scholarly works?*

PROF: My publications are in the areas of languages and literacy. But my main interest is in language and ideology (how people use languages to mean other things than what they say) so I have published a lot in Language and Ideology. I also have interest in Fante (our local language) and Language and Identity. So if you ask for my area of interest, I will say Discourse.

I have also published on how people in authority use language to control people and I am currently working on publishing a book on discourse with some colleagues. As for papers, they are in the journals, and you know the University likes the papers more than the books because of peer review.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof, are the weights different?*

PROF: Well in terms of promotion, they weigh books more than papers, but in terms of scholarly works, papers are weighed more than books.

Career Development- After my PhD, I was made the Coordinator for Communicative Skills (CS) Unit and I had a lot of support from a gentleman called Mr. Fred Peniana. He was the Administrator for the Unit and he was the one who taught me what to do with all the administrative work. I owe him a lot. I am forever grateful to him. I was his Head of Unit, but perhaps I gave him the confidence to teach me, and he taught me well. Before I left there, we had done the necessary preparations and gone through the processes to make the Unit a Department.

From Communicative Skills Unit, I was made the HOD for the Department of English for two years, and there too I built on what my predecessors had started. We were able to get accreditation quickly and had policies in place to start a PhD programme in English. From there

I was voted to become the Dean of Faculty of Arts and I strengthened the Study Abroad and Exchange programmes. I introduced many Faculty activities like the Faculty Durbar and the Faculty Colloquium. I also targeted getting more female senior members into the faculty and now I can say that there are a lot more women that it used to be. After four years as a Dean, there was an advert for a Provost for the College of Humanities and Legal Studies (CHLS) and I applied, interviewed for the position and was appointed. As a Provost, I was able to get some money for the University and established the first College-Industry Week activities. I showcased the College to the corporate world of Oil and Gas. I also initiated efforts to establish an Institute for Law and Governance at the University. Then there was an advert for Pro-Vice Chancellor. The first time was by election, and I didn't win.

Thereafter, the University changed its statutes and it was not going to use election to pick the Pro-VC again. The global higher education landscape did not recognize higher position by elections anymore; it preferred interview and appointment. In 2018, I applied for the position, was interviewed and appointed. I am the first Pro VC appointed this way, and the first female Pro-VC of UCC. In the next few days, my term will end and another woman is coming. We were actually mates in the undergraduate level in 1993. She is very hardworking and I don't see anything changing for the worst; rather, I see innovations coming so, I'm very happy. You see, wherever you have a woman, it is good. When you put a woman at the policy level, it makes a difference. The system is male dominated and there are things they take for granted, so, you need someone who will prompt them that they are missing something and most of the times, it is women.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *What are some of your significant achievements as a Pro-Vice Chancellor?*

PROF: The Pro-VC is an assistant to the Vice Chancellor, so, whatever you do is part of what the VC does. There are a lot of things we have achieved and I have contributed greatly to these achievements. So I'm happy and thankful. I will also say that I brought a different style of relating to people at the top here, and others have learnt it. Every office I go to, I make sure I work well with my administrators. Most of the time, I confer with my Senior or Junior Assistant Registrars on best ways to deal with administrative issues and challenges and at the end I send the right letters. They prompt me on what needs to be done and teach me some few tricks when necessary. I think it is because I have good interpersonal relationships with them.

I've also been able to revive all the committees I Chair into working committees. The Pro-VC chairs seventeen committees and is a member of seventeen others, so thirty four. Some of them have drawn their policies and the Academic Board is looking at them. For the Institute for Law and Governance, we sent a proposal and signed a memorandum of understanding with GNPC when I was a Provost asking them to support us to put up a building for the Institute. With their approval and support, we've been able to cut the sod for the building. If the University will not remember me for anything, for the Law and Governance programme and the building, they will.

EDITORIAL BOARD: *Prof I think you will be remembered for a lot of things, because you've done well. Prof. so what is next after you exit office in two weeks' time?*

PROF: I have one more semester before I retire, so come January, 2022, I will be at the Department of English. I will be teaching and I look forward to that because I miss it. There are many other options for me after retirement too; I can choose to do post-retirement contract, and I am thinking about it.

EDITORIAL TEAM: *Prof, any advice for your admirers?*

PROF: I feel that there are many people who are looking up to me as a role model that I don't know, though occasionally

some get the courage to come to my office, and I thank God for that. So I feel that I want them to live a certain kind of life so that they will be motivated to also do well. I will say that, how we relate with people is very important. You have to respect everybody, especially, people that we work with. Because we spend a lot of our time at the workplace than at home, build a relationship with people you work with, and when you do that, wherever you go, you will have a family. We also need to respect people for people to respect us. But if you lord over people because, you are their boss, they will do what you want them to do, but in their hearts, they are not working for you, they are just working for their salaries. People should learn to work to build the institutions they work with and not only work for what they will get, and it is the head's responsibility to influence that. I will also encourage them to work hard and not to look at the money because if you work hard, you will get the reward and other many opportunities.

EDITORIAL BOARD: *Finally, on behalf of the Sam Jonah Library Digest Editorial team, we want to acknowledge and commend you for your enviable career success and leadership achievements. We wish you exceedingly well in your future endeavours.*

Thank You.



RESOURCE DESCRIPTION AND ACCESS (RDA): ON THE HORIZON OR A FADING TAIL LIGHT?

by Eugene Baah Yeboah & Gloria Bosomtwi Amoah

The year 2020, which eventually attained infamy for being the 'year of the pandemic', marked a decade since the promulgation of Resource Description and Access (RDA), the successor to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition (AACR2). Fast forward some months to March 2023 and we will be celebrating another decade since the completion of the US RDA Test and the full implementation of RDA as the cataloguing standard in national, academic, public and for that matter any type of library that found cataloguing standards useful. RDA was envisaged to supplant AACR2 and provide guidance on the resource description and organization practices of libraries in this contemporary era of increased digital information and their myriad by-products. AACR2, it appears, is fading and exiting the scene but not before a sterling and impactful 35 years as the universal cataloguing standard for all types of libraries globally. To put this in perspective, the closest any cataloguing standard came to universality was the 6-year tenure of the Paris Principles which had 53 countries and 12 international organizations as participants.

From the year 2014, cataloguing records, particularly those originating from advanced jurisdictions where RDA is being implemented fully, were created on the basis of the RDA standards. Consequently, the MARC records in the Library of Congress catalogue and those of other bibliographic utilities such as Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC) are being created in RDA or being converted from AACR2 to RDA. At the very same time, libraries in Ghana are actively importing these RDA records into their AACR2 compliant Integrated Library Systems (ILS) and catalogues through their predominant copy cataloguing practice. It is instructive to note that the similarity in the foundation and structure of RDA and AACR2 is what has made the concurrent storage of both RDA and AACR2 records in a single ILS possible. This respite is however momentary and is not expected to be a long-term alternative especially as emerging and existing ILS including KOHA become fully RDA compliant. This implies that the practice of continually importing RDA based records from Library of Congress Classification Scheme and OCLC into the AACR2 compliant KOHA

ILS of the Sam Jonah Library is untenable and downright unsustainable for the long haul.

Thinking back to the opening salvo of this discourse regarding the tenure and milestones of RDA logically leads one to inquire into the state of play of RDA in Ghana. Quite apart from the University of Education, Winneba which is actively engaged in RDA based original and copy cataloguing, the entire country and its library and information space is occupied by libraries still describing and organizing their collections on the basis of AACR2. The level of awareness of RDA beyond it being AACR2's successor is quite low among most librarians in Ghana.

A plethora of factors have contributed to the current flawed state of affairs of RDA adoption and implementation in Ghana. The lack of leadership on the part of the National Library or in Ghana's case, the Acting National Library, unlike the case in some countries like the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Latvia and South Africa surely contributes to the slow-paced nature of RDA adoption. Again, the apparent lack of interest in RDA on the part of influential outfits in Ghana's library and information space such as the Ghana Library Authority, Ghana Library Association, Association of Higher Education Librarians and their Deputies (AHELD) and the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH) as evidenced by the absence of RDA publicity and training activities in the programme line-ups or agenda of meetings of these bodies for the past decade cannot be discounted. Also culpable in this apparent



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failure is the lack of funds to commission an expatriate to facilitate such education and training.

RDA is expected to provide better guidance to the description of information resources in all formats, afford libraries and their collections enhanced visibility and discoverability especially in the semantic web of the foreseeable future. RDA is also envisaged to positively influence library users and other clients by significantly enhancing the findability, identifiability, selectability and obtainability of information resources.

With the foregoing and other emerging benefits in mind coupled with the fact that the standard has clearly come to stay, the RDA standard ought to be blazing in Ghana by now. After close to a decade of little activity, at the very minimum, Ghanaian libraries ought to be readying themselves towards implementing RDA in the foreseeable future. Collection of training materials on RDA, search for potential RDA experts and trainers, verification of the compatibility of existing ILS to RDA and the setting up of governance bodies, committees and task forces to explore the prospects of RDA are all indicators of readiness and

are some of the initiatives libraries can undertake to ready themselves for RDA adoption and implementation.

The blatant lack of activity regarding RDA ought to concern stakeholders in Ghana. RDA in Ghana exhibits signs of a standard in its twilight years with its impact fast diminishing like a fading vehicular tail light. The absence of RDA preparatory activities in Ghanaian libraries and the apparent 'loud silence' regarding RDA in the Ghanaian library and information space certainly does not give anyone neither the feeling nor the impression that RDA in Ghana is on the horizon.

In a recommending voice to leadership of Ghanaian libraries, it would be cost efficient and more convenient to migrate to RDA on our own terms than being coerced by circumstances to migrate. The latter option would be expensive, disruptive to library operations and place libraries under severe time pressures and ultimately place them in dire straits. Unfortunately, it is not a matter of if, but when that time comes, and that time is drawing nigh by the day, it is going to be RDA or bust!

Auntie Esi's *Corner*

Dear Auntie Esi,

I am a second year student who is trying hard to do my best academically, but recently something weird has been happening to me and it really has a toll on my academic and social life.

Auntie, there is this programme mate I've been studying with, but lately, I seem to think about him constantly, always conversing with him in my head and even getting nervous when I am around him. The truth is, I think about him more than anything else, dream about him, and even follow him online without his notice; but I am afraid to tell him.

Please is it wrong to feel this way? How do I manage this feelings so he does not notice? I don't want to lose his friendship but am afraid he will notice one day and stop coming close and this is gradually affecting my studies. I think I need help

Thank you for sending your challenge. As a second year student, you are an adult and therefore would naturally feel this way towards the opposite sex. What you have to bear in mind is he may not be feeling the same way you do and so may or may not be happy with you when you tell him. Since you do not want to lose him as a "friend" or a study mate, you need to tread cautiously and try to get him off your mind anytime it happens. Instead of wasting time thinking about him and following him online, try and look for other activities to replace this, for example, dancing, listening to music.

You have stated that you do not want him to know how you feel towards him, otherwise you could have spoken to him about your feelings and asked that he become your friend with no ulterior motives. That I believe will make your mind settle or you can try and let him know you like him as a brother.

Remember, your ultimate goal in school is to study and pass your exams well. The worse therefore, would be changing your study group which may not also help you.

Good luck and All the best.



RESOURCE CENTER FOR ALTERNATE MEDIA AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (R-CAMAT)



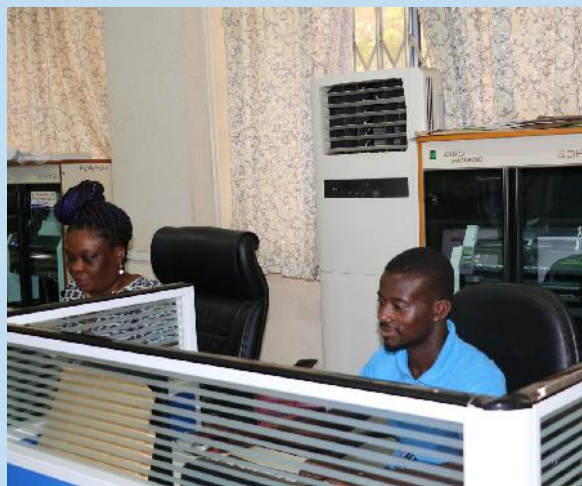
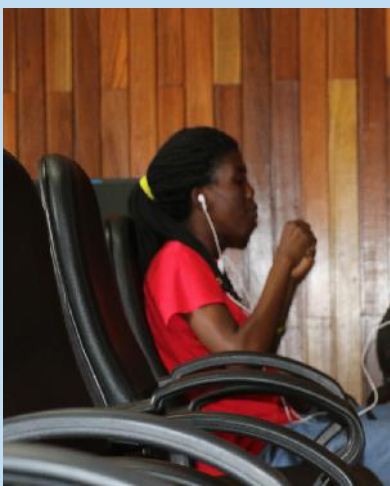
Guided by the value of inclusiveness, this Resource Centre for Althernate Media and Assistive Technology (R-CAMAT) of the Library System seeks to address barriers faced by persons with special needs in their participation as equal members of society to promote equality.

Mandates of the section

Services rendered to persons with special needs are based on the unique needs of the individual which extend to a wide range of alternative and assistive technologies.

The services provided by R-CAMAT are:

- scan print materials and record texts for persons with visual impairment
- submit transcribed scripts to lecturers at the departments
- braille lessons: Technical staff (resource persons) teach students who are sighted and interested in learning Braille the basic skills in the writing and reading of Braille.
- braille quizzes and examination papers: Resource Persons use Perkins Brailier (a device in writing braille) to braille questions (quizzes and examinations) when there is no electricity.
- transcribe assignments, quizzes, and xamination scripts: Resource Persons write out (interpret) students' responses to questions which is in braille before submission
- maintain Perkins Braille and embossers
- invigilate quizzes and exams
- assist in research work and assignments.
- provide orientation and mobility: Fresh students, after the general orientation by academic section.
- convert instructional materials to accessible formats, including but not limited to, digitised, large print, electronic screen-readable text, CCTV and Braille.
- assist with academic registration
- collaborate with lecturers in assisting students with special needs
- coordinate and administer specialised services based on an individual's special needs.
- collaborate with Management of ATL FM for airtime to talk about issues concerning PSNs.
- embark on outreach and enrolment drive trips to senior high schools.



REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS OF THE MAIDEN UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION STAKEHOLDERS MEETING HELD ON 15TH JULY 2021 AT THE KNOWLEDGE COMMONS, SAM JONAH LIBRARY - UCC.

The purpose for the meeting was to bring together major stakeholders in the Scholarly Communication initiative of the University of Cape Coast and to report, assess, strategize and chart a path towards a credible and internationally acclaimed scholarly communication practice. The consultative and collaborative meeting, brought together researchers, editors and associate editors of journals, administrators, librarians and representatives of the UCC Printing Press, the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) and the Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA). It was organized under the auspices of the Scholarly Communication Unit of the Sam Jonah Library, University of Cape Coast and facilitated by Prof. Frederick Ato Armah, Director of the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy (DRIC) and Dr. Mac-Anthony Cobblah, the University Librarian.

PRESENTATION ON TRENDS OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION BY PROF. FREDERICK ATO ARMAH, DIRECTOR OF DRIC

A presentation was made by Prof. Frederick Ato Armah, Director of the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy (DRIC) on the latest trends of scholarly communication. Prof. Armah touched on broad issues such as indicators of responsible research practices, life cycle of scholarly communication, trends in scholarly communication, vision of scholarly communication, bibliodiversity in scholarly communication, open science (Plan S) and some novel scholarly communication initiatives. He defined scholarly communication as “the system through which research and scholarship is created, evaluated, distributed and preserved”. He identified faculty, researchers, students, librarians, archivists, administrators, data managers and funders as key stakeholders in scholarly communication. Prof. Ato Armah added that all the interest groups have priorities. He concluded by providing participants with an array of emerging scholarly communication initiatives such as FORCE 11, Journal of Brief Ideas, Research Identification Initiative, I-Python, Jupiter Notebooks, Welcome Open Research and Open Science Frameworks.

PRESENTATION ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES AT THE SAM JONAH LIBRARY BY DR. MAC-ANTHONY COBBLAH

Dr. Mac-Anthony Cobblah gave a presentation about the Scholarly Communication Unit of the Sam Jonah Library touching on objectives, services and resources offered by the Unit. He stated that the Scholarly Communication Unit exists to provide support not only to UCC journals, but also all stakeholders involved in the University’s scientific publishing as a result of the Unit’s user-driven centredness. Dr. Cobblah identified the objectives of the Scholarly Communication Unit to include the development and implementation of sustainable policies and services, the provision of support for the sustenance and publicization of UCC journals, the deployment of appropriate technology in the management of UCC journals as well as the enhancement of their visibility online and the assessment of training needs and provision of training for constituents of UCC scholarly communication.

The Scholarly Communication Unit, according to the University Librarian, has been providing assistance to some UCC journals in the acquisition of Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) and International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN) and is in the position to do same for all others. The digital archiving of UCC journals and their back issues were also identified by Dr. Cobblah as a key service to be provided by the Scholarly Communication Unit. The Unit will as well continue to provide research support, research data management and literature searches. Dr. Cobblah noted that since its commissioning in March, the Scholarly Communication Unit in conjunction with the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy (DRIC) had created a database of 20 UCC journals and their editors together with the two outfits have provided coordination in the activities and practice of these journals. Dr. Cobblah again revealed that of the 20 UCC journals identified, 13 have been populated in the UCC online journal portal with seven (7) outstanding. Again, the Scholarly Communication Unit has generated DOIs for 19 of the UCC journals and these have been indexed in CrossRef which has increased the web visibility and credibility of

these journals. Dr. Cobblah, assured participants that plans have been put in place to help as many journals of UCC to go online, register with the DOAJ and move on to getting enlisted with reputable citation indexes such as SCOPUS and Web of Science. Touching on the roles of DRIC and the SCU, Dr. Cobblah noted that issues concerning policy, regulation, and funding of research fall within the purview of DRIC while the SCU provides technical support and promotion of research outputs. Dr. Cobblah concluded his presentation by profiling a range of challenges confronting the SCU at its fledgling stage.

WAY FORWARD FOR SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION AT UCC

The participants provided some recommendations that could help improve UCC'S scholarly communication. Some of the recommendations were that

- UCC journals should ensure sustainability by having a clear succession plan in place. The Scholarly Communication Unit should identify potential journal editors and encourage them to understudy the aging editors-in-chief and editors;
- Continuous training will provide an avenue for learning about scholarly communication, stakeholder roles and solutions to scholarly communication problems at the University;
- UCC should strive to attract credible and known editors from other institutions and countries to internationalize the journals;
- Quality assurance efforts be intensified with particular attention paid to formatting and layout impressions;
- There should be continuous reliance on Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) to provide training to UCC scholarly communication stakeholders especially on issues such as open access, discounts and waivers of APCs;
- There should be the establishment of a secretariat to offer editorial services such as copyediting, typesetting, layout editing, graphic designing and proof reading;
- There should be the expansion of the scope of materials of interest to the Scholarly Communication Unit to include monographs, conference proceedings and ebooks;
- UCC OJS should be explored to ascertain its

potential to host a general editorial system for the acceptance of manuscripts and allocation of same to reviewers;

- There should be the integration of Publons onto the OJS to enable journal editors harvest and select reviewers from the platform. The arbitrary selection of reviewers without the requisite background checks should be avoided;
- There should be a common template for all journals originating from UCC;
- The OJS interface should be made user-friendly as well as providing training for stakeholders on its usage; and
- The OJS be upgraded by integrating important plugins such as metadata, cross reference and plagiarism (Turnitin).

PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ABOUT UCC PUBLISHING OPEN ACCESS

Stakeholders expressed their views regarding the call for UCC to go open access. Participants expressed divergent views. There was generally support for the University publishing Open Access. Others were of the view the SCU should concentrate on building their capacities, citation statistics, bibliometrics and discoverability in international citation indexes before going open access.

- It was revealed that UCC journals are relatively unknown in international space and as such operating a subscribed model might place the journals in difficulties. It was opined that for UCC journals to become credible and listed in the internationally acclaimed citation indexes, publishing open access is the way to go;
- Some participants were of the view that if the University wants to go open access, it should be explicitly stated on its website and in all copyright write-ups;
- A cross section of the participants indicated that more information about the merits and demerits of publishing open access should be known before making the decision;
- A suggestion was also made to allocate a portion of UCC's research fund to support UCC journals to publish open access.

ASSORTED BOOKS DONATED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST LIBRARY SYSTEM



On Thursday, 6th January, 2022, the African Diaspora Development Institute (ADDI) led by H. E. Ambassador Dr Arikana Chihombori Quao donated 3750 assorted books worth GHC 356,250.00 to the University of Cape Coast Library System. This donation became possible through the frantic efforts and the leadership of Professor Anokye Mohammed Adam of the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast.

The presentation was done by Nana Kwamina Kra and Nana Obokese Ampah of ADDI. Majority of the books presented were in the following subject areas; Pediatric Nursing, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English Language, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Information and Communication Technology.

Receiving the books, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Prof Mrs. Rosemond Boohene, expressed her gratitude to the donors for the gesture and said it would go a long way to help deepen the University's world-wide Ranking. She promised that the books would be processed and made available to users of the Library. Also present at the ceremony were the Registrar of UCC Mr. Jeff Teye Onyame and Mrs. Mary Ama Bawa.

OTHER DONATIONS

DONOR: Dr Godwin Kwakye Nuako

QUANTITY: 1

COST: GH¢ 2,400.00

DONOR: UCC Alumni in USA (70% Law Books)

QUANTITY: 785

COST: GH¢ 82,425.00

DONOR: SEDCO

QUANTITY: 2

COST: GH¢ 200.00

IS BLACK TOO BAD?

Paul Atta Amponsah Appiagyei & Prince Charles Lawson

Is black too bad? This is the question that always reflects in my mind anytime I realized that all words associated with black have evil and negative meaning. Could this happen coincidentally or may be the Queen had a bad impression about the colour black colour?

Could it also be the fact that the originators of the language were bias and unfair to Africans, since they are white in colour and Africans are dominantly associated with the colour black. Due to this, some Africans no longer have regard for the colour black. Could this account for the high increase in the rate at which Africans bleach their skin?

Is black too bad?, when an act where someone prevents a piece of writing from being read or denying someone an access to an information is referred to as blackout. Also when people prevent someone from joining a club or group by voting against him or her is called Black ball couldn't it be red ball, white ball or any other hue? A list of the names of people, companies, products or countries that an organization or Government considers unacceptable and must be avoided is known as Black list. A rejected and unwanted list to be precise. Why must it always be black?

Is black too bad?, When the name used for the very serious infection disease which killed millions of people in Europe and Asia in the 14th Century is known as Black Death. A bruise formed around somebody's eye when they receive a blow is called black eye. A small dark green animal or insect that causes damages to plant is called black – fly. This is truly unfair when a poisonous American spider is referred to as Black widow. So till when will black be associated with friendly things but not these dangerous, poisonous and deadly creatures.

Until that time comes, I still continue to ask, is black too bad? Is black too bad?, when a place or a situation or an event that causes a lot of problems is called black spot. A black sheep is a person who is indifferent from the rest of their family or another group and is considered bad or embarrassing. A person is said to have experience blackout when there is a temporary loss of consciousness, sight or memory. A period where there is no light as a result of an electrical power failure is also called blackout.

In the world of business, illegal forms of trade in which foreign money or goods that are difficult to obtain are bought and sold is referred to as black market. A business activity that is done without the knowledge of the government or other officials so that people avoid paying taxes on the money they earn is called black business. So tax evasion is also associated with black?

Is black too bad?, when the act of saying unpleasant thing that gives people a bad opinion of somebody is called blacken. An offensive word for a person is called black amour.

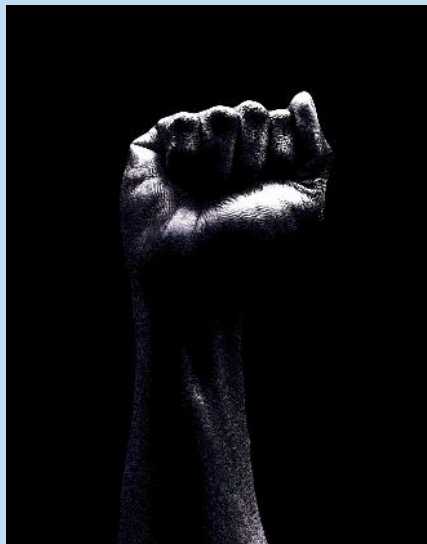
Black diamond is a slop that is difficult to ski down. A flag used in motor racing to stop a driver who has done something wrong is called black flag. Why is this flag not called white flag? Is it because it is associated with a wrong deed? A machine that is complicated and produces results that are not easily and completely understood is called black box.. So till when will colour black be free from being associated with difficult, wrong and complicated things?

Is black too bad?, when a man who is dishonest and has no sense of what is right or wrong is known as black guard. Dealing with unpleasant and terrible things or issues such as murder in a humorous way

is known as blackly . The crime of demanding money from a person by threatening to tell somebody else a secret about them is called black mail. Even the police van used in the past to transport prisoners is called black maria. Couldn't it be any other group of people rather than prisoners?

Religiously, a ceremony in which people worship the devil is called black mass. The type of magic which is believed to use the power of the devil in other to do evil is called black magic. Is black too bad?, that everything black is associated with Satan and evil whiles everything white is related with God and good deeds. Why is it that the substance in the blood that fights against diseases is called white blood cell, but not black blood cells? This bad impression about black has been adopted by Africans to the extend that, we wear black cloths when we are sad and white when we are happy. Is it because bad deeds are easily carried out in dark place that is why black is regarded as evil? But I am still asking , is black too bad?

appiagyeipaula@gmail.com



COPING WITH STRESS AMONG UCC STUDENTS

by Seth Kobina Parbie



Stress is a global phenomenon that permeates every sphere of human endeavour. In recent times, the demand for higher education among students in Ghana is on the increase. In the midst of COVID-19 and post-strike actions among public Universities in Ghana, students face stress related challenges. Students' stress levels have affected them in diverse ways. Pursuing a university programme is a pleasant and fulfilling experience for most students. However, for many students, pursuing academic career may prove far more stressful than exciting. This paper discusses some of the coping strategies to manage stress among University of Cape Coast (UCC) students.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a normal biological reaction to a potentially dangerous situation. It causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is the body's response to anything that requires attention or action. It is the result of our reaction to outside events, not necessarily the events themselves. Stress is a normal human reaction that happens to everyone. In fact, the human body is designed to experience stress and react to it. When one experiences changes or challenges (stressors), the body produces physical and mental responses. That is stress. Stress responses help the body adjust to new situations. Stress can be positive,

keeping you alert, motivated and ready to avoid danger. For example, if you have an important test coming up, a stress response might help the body work harder and stay awake for a given period of time. However, stress becomes a problem when stressors continue without relief or periods of relaxation. As students, we need to understand these dynamisms. When we are able to cope and manage stress very well, success will be achieved in academic, socio-economic, religious and political activities on campus and off campus.

STRESS AND ANXIETY

Stress and anxiety are often used interchangeably, and there is an overlap between stress and anxiety. Stress is related to the same 'fight, flight, or freeze' response as anxiety, and the physical sensations of anxiety and stress may be very similar. The cause of stress and anxiety are usually different. But, stress focuses on mainly external pressures on students that they are finding it hard to cope with. When students are stressed, they usually know what stress is about, and the symptoms of stress typically disappear after the stressful situation is over. Anxiety, on the other hand, is not always easy to figure out. Anxiety focuses on worries or fears about things that could threaten students. Stress and anxiety are both part of human life, but

both can be problems if they last for a long time or have an impact on our well-being or daily life.

CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG STUDENTS

Very often, stress results from an accumulation of many different pressures, which build up gradually without noticing. Different things cause stress in different people. Some of the causes of stress include: writing of examinations, quizzes, doing presentations, group work, assignments, lab work, meeting deadlines, returning to study, pressure of combining paid work and study, difficulty in organizing work, poor time management. Others are leaving assignments to the last minute, out of control debts, overcrowding, noise, adjusting to life in a new environment, difficulties with personal relationships (e.g. splitting up), balancing the demands of a family with studying, ill health of parents or loved ones, living through a natural or manmade disaster, losing loved ones (death), living with chronic illness, surviving a life-threatening accident, being a victim of a crime, etc.

TYPES OF STRESS

There are several types of stress, including: acute stress, episodic acute stress and chronic stress

ACUTE STRESS

Acute stress happens to everyone. It is the body's immediate reaction to a new and challenging situation. This is the kind of stress one might feel when he/she narrowly escapes a car accident for example acute stress can also come out of something that is actually enjoyed. These incidents of acute stress do not normally cause any harm. They might even be good for students. Stressful situations give the body and brain practice in developing the best response to future stressful situations. Once the danger passes, the body systems should return to normal. Severe acute stress is a different story. This kind of stress, such as when you have faced a life-threatening situation, can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other mental health problems.

EPISODIC ACUTE STRESS

Episodic acute stress is when there are frequent episodes of acute stress. This might happen if the person is often anxious and worried about things he/she suspects may happen. They might feel that their life is chaotic and seemingly go from one crisis to the next. Certain professions, such as law enforcement or firefighters, might also lead to frequent high-stress situations. As with severe acute stress, episodic acute stress can affect one's physical health and mental well-being.



CHRONIC STRESS

This happens when there is high-stress levels for an extended period. Long-term stress like this can have a negative impact on the health of a student. It may contribute to anxiety, cardiovascular diseases, depression, high blood pressure and a weakened immune system. Chronic stress can also lead to frequent ailments such as headaches, an upset stomach, and sleep difficulties. Gaining insights into the different types of stress and how to recognize them may help.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Just as we have different things that stress us out, our symptoms can also be different. Although you're unlikely to have them all, here are some things you may experience if you're under stress.

Physical symptoms of stress

- Aches and pains
- Chest pain or a feeling like your heart is racing
- Exhaustion or trouble sleeping
- Headaches, dizziness or shaking
- High blood pressure
- Muscle tension or jaw clenching
- Stomach or digestive problems
- Low sex drive
- Weak immune system.
- Eating too much or little
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions

Emotional and mental symptoms

- Anxiety or irritability
- Depression
- Panic attacks
- Sadness

Other behavioral symptoms

- Drinking too much or too often
- Gambling
- Overeating or developing an eating disorder
- Participating compulsively in sex, shopping or internet browsing.
- Smoking
- Using drugs

HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE BODY

Physically: The heart pumps faster, making the heart pound and blood pressure rises. Some people experience palpitations. Muscle tensions increases leading to headaches, dizziness, jaw ache and even insomnia. Changes in the flow of blood to the skin can cause sweating, blushing or clammy hands and feet.

Mentally: A certain amount of stress can be mentally stimulating but too much can affect our thinking ability. Thoughts may become jumbled and confused. Thinking becomes focused on worrying. We may become preoccupied with problems. It becomes much harder to make decisions or find solutions to problems. Thinking negatively and fearing the worst increases worry and stress.

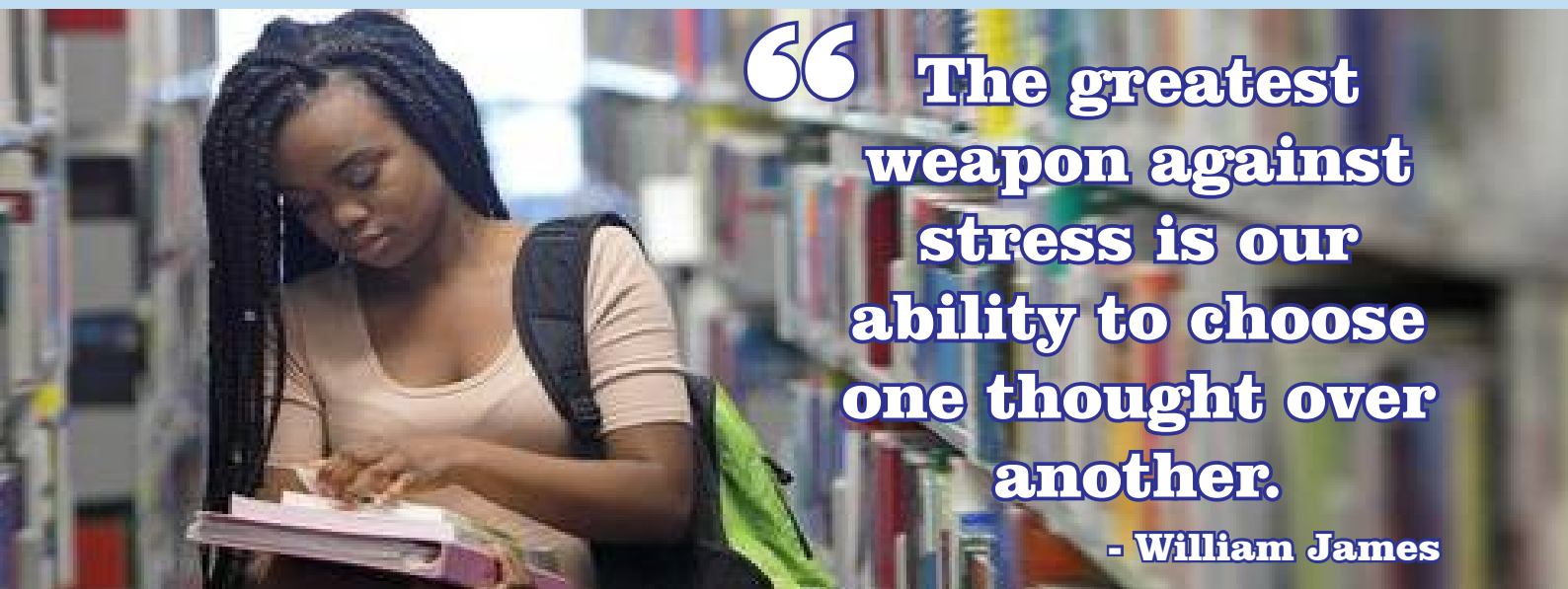
Emotionally: Students respond to stress in many different ways. Common emotional effects are irritability, impatience, anger, frustration, fear, anxiety, self-doubt, panic, despondency, feelings of inadequacy, insecurity,

hopelessness, unhappiness, emotional withdrawal and depression.

MANAGING STRESS

The goal of stress management is not to get rid of it completely. It is not only impossible, but as we mentioned, stress can be healthy in some situations. In order to manage your stress, first you have to identify the things that cause you stress — or your triggers. Figure out which of these things can be avoided. Then, find best ways to cope with those negative stressors that cannot be avoided. Over time, managing your stress levels may help lower your risk of stress-related diseases. And it will help you feel better on a daily basis, too. Here are some basic ways to start managing stress:

- Get organized
- Manage your time very well
- Listen to music
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Practice progressive muscle relaxation (pmr)
- Minimize your use of caffeine and alcohol
- Stay socially connected so you can get and give support
- Make time for rest and relaxation, or self-care
- Take calming breaths
- Practice visualization
- Use positive thinking and affirmations
- Change your mindset and adopt a positive attitude
- Talk to someone
- Laugh
- Take a break from social media. Comparing yourself and your productivity to others is a recipe for disaster.



“ The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.

- William James

Story Time: LAST STRAW

by Lyna



I stared keenly into the glass of Hennessy whisky before me as if it somehow held the answers to all the questions that had been clouding my mind for the past four days. Indeed, the unknown can sometimes make us pathetic. I haven't ever drank alcohol, because as a Muslim, my faith prohibits drinking alcohol, but I was so deep in my cup to the point of disgust. Sometimes the unfairness of life has a way of sending the most composed person into a spiral of emotional wreckage. I kept asking myself the same question I'd been asking myself for the past four days since the death of Farida.

What at all could have pushed the easy-going, beautiful, bold, focused and highly spirited sister of mine to take her own life? Not only was it strange of someone who understood the principles and values that guided our faith and religion, but also the fact that she did this only two weeks to her wedding to one of the most amazing men any marriageable maiden could ever wish for!

Ibrahim was a great guy, successful, loving, kind, thoughtful and good-looking. He had also been my best friend and a family friend for as long as I could remember, and as far as anyone was aware and concerned, he and Farida had a good thing going. Farida too wasn't doing bad career wise. She was a newly posted nurse at the district hospital and was set to begin work in two months' time. As an only girl between two, she didn't lack the love and attention from my parents and I.

I took a gulp of the burning liquor as if it could numb the dull ache I was certain was permanent in my chest since I was informed she couldn't be saved from an overdose of sedatives. A suicide note neatly folded and retrieved from her nightstand during investigations, simply read: "This is the

last straw I can take. I'm sorry... signed: Farida" Not for a single second have I forgotten about that note. But like everyone else, none of our questions have been answered.

What couldn't she take anymore? Nothing made sense to me, and that was something I wasn't okay with. I needed answers and I promised myself to find them if it was the last thing I did. Which was why I went back to Farida's room last night and turned her place upside down. I almost felt guilty for having to trash the room of the dead, but I was convinced there was something we all were missing. A vital piece of this horrific and distasteful puzzle Farida had thrown on us. I searched for hours and came up with nothing. Fully exhausted but refusing to accept defeat, I sat down by her bed and supported my back with the bed stud. My eyes scanned the room for the millionth time that night and settled on an old backpack lying on her wooden wardrobe. I retrieved it and realised it was the backpack I got her for her 13th birthday in high school. I was surprised and somehow proud that she kept something I got her for that long. I opened the only zip working and its contents scattered around me on the floor. There was some old pencils, a broken handset, some girly stuff I couldn't recognise and a book. It looked like a diary, but I never knew Farida to be the kind to keep a diary. I guess there are some things you'll never know about a person until they actually want you to know. The diary looked newer than all the other stuff in the bag, and my gut told me I was finally going to get some, if not all the answers I was seeking.

December 26th, 2003

Dear diary, Ibrahim has been acting strange lately, he looks at me differently. He has become very sweet. And yeah, I know he has



always been sweet but this time it feels different. Last night when my brother Aadam left us to make a call outside, he took my hands and drew circles in them. Immediately Aadam returned, he quickly moved away. I'm confused....

signed Farida

January 13th 2004

Dear diary, I'm leaving for uni for my 2nd semester! Who would've thought right? I'm finally in the university and even starting my 2nd semester. Hmmm, I'm going to miss home ha! And the best part? I'll be away from Ibrahim. He's been touching me too much lately but I'm afraid to tell mum or Aadam. Will they even believe me? Maybe I'm getting it all wrong :) This bus is taking too long to take off arrhgh!

.....signed Farida

January 13th 2004 (11pm)

Dear diary, I'm here for the 2nd time today and guess what? I just got off the phone with Ibrahim. He said he called to make sure I wasn't talking to any useless boy, and that if I should even think about it, I should also consider how he would punish me. Honestly, I think I should tell someone about his strange behaviour lately, but he's just looking out for me right?

Signed.....Farida

April 7, 2005

Dear diary, it's Eid, I'm supposed to be happy but I'm not. I'm more confused than ever. Ibrahim has been part of my family for a long time now. I even see him as an older brother. Earlier today, mum called me to tell me that I am to be married to Ibrahim after my education. That's just two years away! Why would my parents want me to marry someone who's been my brother since childhood? How do I tell them I don't want to marry him because his recent behaviors towards me has proven he isn't who we thought he was? rahim Allah!.....

signed Farida

August 12th 2006

Dear diary, they say when someone throws you stones, gather them and build a castle. But this stones hit me so bad. I came back from the final year school dinner party and guess who I met in front of the door to my room? yeah, you guessed right, Ibrahim. I pretended to believe the story he tried to feed me with, that he was in the "neighbourhood" and decided to stop by. I invited him in out of courtesy and took the drink he brought for me. Taking few sips, we got to talking but I felt tired. I was tired and sleepy and it was too strong to deny. I should've known something was up. I don't know for how long I was out, but I woke up disoriented and sore. He took advantage of me! The evidence of my innocence all over my sheets and clothes. And when I confronted him, he said I was going to be his wife anyway and that he couldn't wait anymore. I couldn't believe my ears and what I was witnessing. I feel so broken, humiliated, used and stupid. Believe me, I want to tell Mum, but I just can't. I am scared of what will happen if it gets out. The shame, I can't bear it. That's why I'm keeping it a secret.....

signed Farida

August 19th 2006

Dear diary, I still haven't told anyone about what happened. My period is two weeks delayed. could it be.....

signed Farida

September 16

Dear diary, I'm finished! I'm 5 weeks pregnant! And when I told Ibrahim, he asked me to get rid of it. What do I do? My parents, Aadam and everyone else is expecting me to marry the con and rapist in two weeks. I can't do this. Maybe if I am gone, everything will end right?

October 3 2006

Dear diary. I really can't continue like this. I tried to tell mum I don't want to marry Ibrahim. She said they'll rather not see me with anyone else and that I shouldn't disappoint them because they've made all the arrangements already. I tried, and I pray Allah forgives me for what I'm about to do, because I'll rather be dead than be married to that animal. Goodbye diary, I hope I'm making the best decision for everyone.....

Signed Farida

I reimagined the whole incident over and over as I sat at my dining table drinking. Ibrahim had been the missing piece of this clueless puzzle we've been dealing with all these while. I still couldn't believe it. Now here I am, drinking my senses away after I filed for the arrest of my longtime friend, and a brother I never knew was the devil in disguise who murdered my younger sister with his twisted games. Gulping down the last drink from the bottle, I swore Ibrahim wouldn't be seeing the light of day for a very long time. My greatest regret was that it took the price of Farida's life, act right. And I couldn't stop asking myself....how come I never saw the signs that she was losing herself every single day?

RECENT ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS BY LIBRARY STAFF



Afful-Arthur, P., Kwafoa, P. N. Y., Ampah-Johnston, M., & Mensah, V. (2021). Managing and accessing indigenous knowledge for national development: The role of academic libraries in Ghana. *Information Development*, 02666669211009916.

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Sam Jonah Library
Northern Campus opposite the
Shuttle bus station
PMB, University of Cape Coast
302 21 30952/3
library@ucc.edu.gh
CC-167-5810
library.ucc.edu.gh
editor.library@ucc.edu.gh

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