

THE LITERACY BELIEFS, LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND TEACHING PRACTICES OF A SELECT GROUP OF JAMAICAN GRADE ONE TEACHERS

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Abstract: *This small-scale, multi-method research examined grade one teachers' literacy beliefs about students' transitioning at grade one. The research allowed for a clearer understanding of teachers' expectations about students entering and leaving grade one, teachers' attitudes towards Jamaican Creole, and their literacy practices. Data were collected using an online questionnaire and in-depth one-on-one interviews. Fifty-two grade one teachers who were recruited from across the six education regions in Jamaica completed the questionnaire. Five grade one teachers who were also recruited through convenience sampling, separately, participated in the in-depth interviews. Based on the questionnaire, the teachers believed the following: students entering grade one should know the alphabet, the letter sounds, how to spell their names and how to read a short simple sentence; and, on completing grade one should know how to read and write. Most teachers believed that Jamaican Creole is a language, while some translated their students' oral responses from Jamaican Creole to Jamaican English, and some used Jamaican Creole to improve their students' conceptual understanding in the classroom. For their literacy practices, the teachers indicated that they usually do activities that focus largely on constrained skills, such as teaching alphabet letter names. The interview data supported the findings from the questionnaire. The findings are discussed, and recommendations suggested.*

Keywords: *bilingual, early childhood teacher, grade one, literacy, primary teachers*

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