

COMMENTARY: PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION

**NAVIGATING THE PATH BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE IN
MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE EASTERN
CARIBBEAN¹**

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Abstract: *In the Eastern Caribbean as elsewhere, there is concern about students' unsatisfactory performance in mathematics. At both primary and secondary levels, students continue to struggle. In this paper, I discuss factors that act as barriers between the theoretical knowledge that teachers of mathematics seem to possess and their classroom practice. I suggest that, despite the theoretical knowledge and their acknowledgement of the need for changes to their practice to meet the learning needs of their students, teachers of mathematics seem to be clinging to their "existing and long-standing schemas" (Skemp, 2006) which appear to be less effective in today's classrooms. I argue that for change to their pedagogy to be realized, teachers of mathematics in the region need extra guidance and support outside of initial teacher training, and continuous professional development opportunities if they are to see improvement in student achievement in the subject.*

Keywords: *Eastern Caribbean; mathematics education, teacher education, educational change*

¹ In this paper, 'Eastern Caribbean' refers to the geographical region which includes the nine countries that constitute the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) and Barbados.

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