

PREFACE

This special issue was conceptualized as an outlet for the sharing of research work by postgraduate students and early academics on key topical areas of interest in education for educators and other education stakeholders in the Caribbean and its wider diaspora. Each year, several post graduate students majoring in the field of education across the Schools of Education conduct education research which is rarely shared with the wider public. This issue seeks to provide a platform for supporting the publication and sharing of such work with those who can best make use of it in their work as educators, or with educators.

In every educational era we tend to find that several issues dominate as relevant areas of interest. Educational issues such as school leadership, sustainable financing for education, facilitating effective online learning, literacy development, gender and the classroom, and new approaches in conducting education research are some of the areas which have remained relevant over the last three decades. Each research article presented in this special journal issue provides insight into one of these contemporary areas of interest in education and allows for reflection on how these affect Caribbean education systems. A brief description of each of these articles is presented below.

Gendering the Literacy Classroom: Teachers' Practices and Beliefs

The study of gender roles and expectations and how these are enacted in Caribbean classrooms continues to be of growing interest for educators today. In this article, Dr. Tennisha Morris provides a dual focus on gender and literacy development as she examines teachers' beliefs about gender and how it affects literacy development in Caribbean classrooms.

She engages in a robust and nuanced discussion of gender and literacy development in the Caribbean and moves beyond traditional views/rhetorics of gender and literacy development to embrace cultural and social factors as influences on how gender is perceived and understood. Given the focus on preschool years, this article also offers insight into gender identity development at the early childhood level. This work presents an alternative lens for investigating gender and literacy by the use of gender as an analytical category within a socio-cultural framework. It contributes to the broader work on moving the existing rhetoric beyond broad generalizations of what it is to be a boy or a girl.

The Enhanced Deliverology Model and the Implications for Donor-Funded Education in the Caribbean

Sustainable financing of education, while not a new topic of interest, is certainly an issue which remains relevant as a persistent challenge especially for developing countries across the world. In this article, Dr. Paul Murphy examines the predominant use of Official

Development Assistance (ODA) and the accompanying role of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) in the development of the education sector in Caribbean countries over the last twenty years.

The article emphasizes the role of education in promoting sustainable socio-economic development and economic growth in the Caribbean, and specifically the contribution of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) in financing education expansion and enhancement. Based on case studies of Jamaica and Guyana, the article highlights several key issues affecting the capacity of Caribbean governments to make effective use of development assistance to meet policy goals. An Enhanced Project Implementation Model is proposed for improving the effectiveness of education aid and the overall interaction between MDBs and Borrowing Countries.

This work contributes to the emerging literature on development assistance in education by assessing the effective implementation of recently completed donor-funded education projects in Jamaica and Guyana and engages readers in a discussion of how national education leaders and policymakers can more effectively navigate the processes and relationships between themselves and providers of ODA.

Why do some stay while others leave? A Case Study of Online BSc Management Studies at The UWI

The educational landscape continues to evolve; learning is no longer restricted to four walls. Virtual learning spaces are fast becoming a ubiquitous element of all levels of education. Furthermore, COVID-19 has magnified the importance of facilitating online learning when in-person learning is not possible. As such, the publication of this study is both timely and vital.

The author, Dr. Pamela Dottin, examines the impact of the unique features of online learning on student persistence and academic success. Guided by the transactional distance framework of Moore (1993), Dr. Dottin's work provides readers with important insights into the influence of past learning, transactional distance, and technological and pedagogical readiness on course success and student retention among online learners. The implications of the findings for online pedagogy and student achievement are critical to understanding how to create high-quality online learning environments.

Effective Principal Leadership Practices within Public Schools in Grenada

Contemporary education necessitates decisive and adaptive leadership practices. These leadership practices are critical to creating learning environments where students have greater opportunities to flourish. How principals lead influences school culture, teacher and student satisfaction, and other essential elements of educational practice. Equally crucial to leadership practice is how the leader is viewed by those that they lead.

Throughout this work, Dr. Andre Martin examines the importance of educational leadership practices in public schools. As such, this study examines teachers' perceptions about principals' leadership styles based on their sex, school level, and teaching position. It adds to the extant literature on the impact of demographic variables on perceptions of educational leadership. The study has implications for the training of principals, educational leadership programme development, and leadership practices.

Doing Research Differently: Bringing Art and Science Together

Research is always considered an academic practice, strongly intertwined, and guided by the scientific method and its associated standards for conducting rigorous and high-quality work. This unique paper offers the reader a reflective insight into the academic journey of a PhD. student juxtaposed with her experience as an Arts educator. The author, Dr. Yvonne Weekes, takes us on a research journey that highlights how researchers can use the Arts and Science in complementary and qualitatively valid ways. The paper is thought-provoking, and it compels research practitioners to broaden the horizons of research by reconceptualizing and expanding the various methods that researchers use to gather and analyse data.

Invitation to Readers

We invite our readers to join us in this dialogue about these contemporary educational issues in the Caribbean. It is our hope that the articles will stimulate further discussion and provide insights for strengthening the work we do as educators.

Dr. Verna Knight, PhD
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Guest Editor

Dr. Jason Marshall
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Guest Editor