

Promoting Young Children's Social and Emotional Competence and Preventing Aggression in Basic Schools



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Crime and violence create enormous problems in the Jamaican society, and this makes violence prevention a national priority. It is well established that aggressive behaviour begins in early childhood. Young children who have social, emotional and behavioural problems are not only more likely to have antisocial behaviour in later childhood and adolescence but are also more likely to experience academic failure and become school drop-outs. Intervening in the early years is therefore the most cost-effective way of reducing problems of low academic achievement and juvenile delinquency in adolescence.

This research project seeks to implement a programme promoting young children's social and emotional competence to reduce the level of aggression in basic schools, and to identify how the programme can be integrated into early childhood institutions in a sustainable way. It involves tailoring, implementing and evaluating a theoretically-based, empirically validated intervention into basic schools in urban areas of Kingston and St Andrew. Five basic schools have been randomly assigned to an intervention or a no-intervention group. Intervention will take place from November, 2006 to May, 2007 and comprises two main components:



A teacher and three year old children at Regent Street SDA Basic School.

- 1) teacher training in appropriate methods for preventing and remediating child disruptive behaviour and teaching social skills and emotional awareness; and,
- 2) child training in social and emotional skills and strategies for school success.

The most proximal causes of antisocial behaviour are ineffective parenting, poor teacher-child relationships, poor home school bonding and peer rejection at school. The proposed intervention addresses each of these root causes at a strategic developmental period. Early childhood institutions reach over 97% of 4-6 year old Jamaican children and hence this intervention has the potential for near universal coverage and ongoing sustainability.



A child with Dina Dinosaur (a puppet used to teach concepts to the children).

The project will be evaluated for its impact on child behaviour, teacher knowledge and practices and parent involvement in school. Process evaluation is ongoing throughout the intervention and will be used to tailor the training curricula to ensure they are

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Materials use in the teacher training workshops

appropriate for the Jamaican basic school setting. Parental involvement is promoted through both the child and teacher training curricula and in addition monthly parent workshops will be held.

In addition to support received under the Mona Research Fellowship Programme, this project is being funded by the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica and UNICEF, Jamaica. It is a collaborative effort with the Child Development



Four year old children at Regent Street SDA Basic School.

Research Group, the Epidemiology Research Unit, UWI and the Caribbean Child Development Centre, UWI. •



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Spanish Language Teaching/Learning in Jamaica: The Way Forward in the 21st Century

This research project is being undertaken for the purpose of investigating factors which affect the teaching-learning of Spanish in Jamaica. It should provide more information on:

- The reasons for the high rate of attrition in high schools after the Grade 9 level;
- The methodologies and teaching strategies currently in use in the Jamaican classroom;
- The attitudes of different stakeholders to the teaching-learning of Spanish;
- The level and nature of the training of teachers of Spanish;
- How gender impacts on the teaching-learning of Spanish; and,
- The amount of the TL/Native language used in the Spanish classroom.

This research will break new ground in that there are no existing studies undertaken in the 21st century which examine the problems related to teaching-learning Spanish in the Jamaican classroom. Furthermore, given that the last extensive study on Spanish in the Jamaican classroom was undertaken in 1988, the current situation needs to be assessed. The findings will be of significant value, as there is need for up-to-date information on Spanish teaching/learning in Jamaica.

Spanish has been designated the official foreign language of CARICOM countries and it is expected that the citizens in the Region will be proficient in the language, which is not the case in Jamaica at present. It is important to use empirical research to identify reasons for this situation.

The Ministry of Education and Youth, CARICOM officials, school administrators, teachers, curriculum planners and other stakeholders should find this information very instructive. Educators in other countries, who may be experiencing similar problems with this area, may find that the recommendations and suggestions are useful for addressing their problems. Also, educators involved with the teaching-learning of other languages may be able to extrapolate the findings and recommendations and apply them to the problems they are experiencing with their languages.

In general, persons who have an interest in foreign languages should find the information garnered from the study very useful. •



Principal Researcher:

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Gender Differentials at the Secondary & Tertiary Levels of the Educational System in the Anglophone Caribbean

Jamaica is often presented in the national media as 'the largest English speaking country in the Americas outside of Canada and the USA'. This official language ideology sees the majority of the population as linked by a common language, English. For this reason, some of the public discourse which recognise the existence of the Jamaican language (Creole) do so by labelling it the 'second language of Jamaica'. Within this perspective, the first language is, by definition, English. This is in spite of the fact that for most persons, Jamaican is the first, and in some cases, the only language they ever learn.

The purpose of the *Language Attitude Survey of Jamaica* (2005) and the *Language Competence Survey of Jamaica* (2006) is to explore the attitudes of the wider society towards the recognition of the Jamaican Language as an official language of state and to examine the extent to which Jamaicans speak both English and Jamaican. The results of both surveys point to a bilingual society, and strongly support official recognition of the Jamaican language, bilingual education in schools and the use of Jamaican in parliament. •



Principal Researcher:
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Education for Transformation: Primary and Secondary Curricula in the Caribbean

Education systems in the Caribbean have over the years implemented reforms and innovations designed to bring about change in schools. Invariably, this involves modification of existing or the development of new curricula. The change model used for introducing these new curricula is typically described as 'top-down' whereby instructions are handed down from the Ministry of Education to the implementers, the teachers and principals of schools. Literature from the developed world suggests that this change model is inappropriate for implementation effectiveness and sustainability. Is this true for the Caribbean? Indeed, what have we learnt from our attempts in the past to bring about change? And how can such learning inform our attempts in the future?

In essence, this research is designed to address these questions. Its scope is Caribbean wide in that it involves an analysis of existing research on attempts to change the primary and secondary curricula of schools in the English-speaking Caribbean over the past three decades. Some of this information will be obtained from the Caribbean Education Research Information Service in Trinidad, but it also involves the collection of new data, particularly on more recent attempts at reform, with the help of research assistance. In this regard, special attention will be given to the Revised Primary Curriculum and the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) Curriculum in Jamaica. The primary curriculum was implemented in schools in 2001 and embodies changes which are designed to transform the curriculum, the role of the teacher as well as the method of teaching. An important component of the ROSE programme, implemented in the 1990s, was a common curriculum for grades 7-9 designed to improve quality, access, equity and productivity in the education system. Its innovative features include its focus on student-centredness, its multi-level nature, the new role ascribed to the teacher and a new curriculum - resource and technology' - which integrates technical-vocational areas with the visual arts. This aspect of the research involves classroom observations designed to illuminate how teachers actually implement these innovative ideas, as well as, highlight the concerns they have about the process.

Expected outputs of this research include the publication of articles in international journals, the compilation of abstracts of existing research in the area and a book, which, through an analysis of the findings of the research, will seek to address the questions highlighted earlier. This research should prove informative to Ministries of Education in the Region, and especially to Curriculum Development Units which have responsibility for the development of national curricula and for in-service training of teachers. Additionally, the findings should add to the growing body of knowledge on curriculum change in Caribbean education systems. The book should be very useful to students and lecturers in Curriculum Development at Universities and Colleges of Education in the Caribbean as well as to those elsewhere who have an interest in education in developing countries. •





Principal Researcher:
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Education and Information Resources and Services for the Hearing and Visually Impaired in the Caribbean: A Survey, Assessment and Critical Evaluation

The study focuses on investigating and developing solutions to the communication barriers experienced by the deaf and blind in the Caribbean. At present, most of the available information on the hearing and visually impaired in the region is to be found in dissertations, research papers, and in reports/papers presented at meetings, seminars, conferences and workshops. The information is generally not formally published, and therefore cannot be easily accessed by those who need it most. This research project seeks to rectify this shortcoming by identifying and compiling relevant information in one location. Individuals, institutions, organizations, libraries and information services wishing to provide information to these persons in the Caribbean could access this single location for information. It will also assist hearing and visually impaired persons in enrolling in educational and skills training programmes to improve their chances for independent living.

Work will be carried out to identify the existing education and information resources available to persons who are visually and visually impaired. The study will also seek to identify problems related to the provision of these resources and services, and document attempts made at providing solutions. Based on the analysis of the data, recommendations will be made on the best ways to enhance affected persons' access to these resources and services. The empirical information generated from this work should guide the policies and programmes of policymakers in the regions Ministries of Education.

On completion, the project should result in the creation of a database (portal), accessible by the Internet for anyone interested in resources and services for the hearing and visually impaired in the Caribbean. It should result in greater engagement of policy makers, charities, institutions, organizations, associations and various other stakeholders to ensure wide usage of available data through the organisation of a special seminar on hearing and visually impaired. Finally, it should make available more Caribbean-relevant reading alternatives for modules on information resources and services for the hearing and visually impaired, and also lead to revised and updated course outlines for the teaching of these modules in the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. •



Principal Researcher:
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Conflict Talk and its Implications for Social (Dis)integration in Jamaica in the 21st Century: A Discourse Analytical Study

In Jamaica, public-formal interaction is constantly overtly conflictual. Public discussions and negotiations can be confrontational, and criticisms are often delivered in an acrimonious manner. Inter-personal and domestic interaction is no less conflictual, on many occasions ending in physical violence, and, too often, death. The old 'no problem' Jamaica, renowned for its gentle, slow-paced lifestyle, with minimal disruptions in everyday living, has currently developed a reputation of aggression and violence, in both talk and action.

Language is central to the fuelling of conflict, with verbal exchanges in Jamaica being regularly characterised by invective and great passion, and several people talking all at the same time, and often seeming to do substantially more talking than listening. Jamaican conflict talk, including speech events such as labrish, trieess, mek gyeem, troo wod, giv aagyumen and dis, may be conducted at various levels. Such events may be characterised by a brief verbal disagreement about an issue, attitude or belief on the one hand. On the other hand, these events could develop into a protracted, elaborate sequence of verbal moves and counter-moves in which combatants negotiate, for example, identity; group solidarity or alienation; gender roles; power or authority.

The study presents a data-driven, qualitative analysis of the nature and significance of the language choices and patterns of discourse which interlocutors in Jamaica employ during sustained conflict talk in three contexts: radio & television; courtrooms; domestic and community disputes. Transcripts of audio and video recordings and courtroom interaction, which constitute the data base, are included in the text. The consequences for social (dis)integration in the Jamaican cultural context are also explored.

There is significant social benefit to be derived from a study of conflict talk, and especially its role in driving the social disintegration which currently exists in Jamaica. Details of the language and discourse choices which potentially lead to conflict, and which therefore need to be addressed or avoided for cooperation to be achieved, can inform negotiators, such as trade unionists; mediators resolving disputes in which community members clash with authority figures such as the security forces; and guidance counsellors and teachers involved in domestic or school disputes. In the academic arena, the study will provide, for local and international researchers studying conflict talk, primary data, and an extended analysis of conflict talk in Jamaica, from an insider's perspective. It will also facilitate comparative socio-cultural analyses of the phenomenon, within and outside of the Caribbean, by researchers in discourse analysis. •



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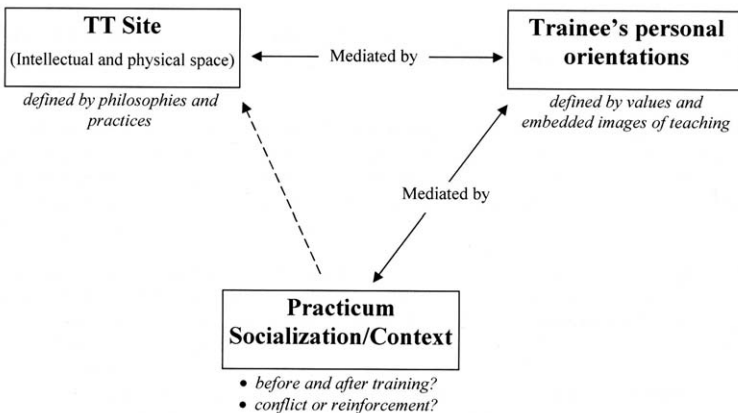
Aspects of the Ecology of the English Language Classroom: Analysis of the Context of the Professional Preparation of Teachers of English

This study examines the contexts in which teachers of the English language arts receive their training (as students) and mentoring (as newly qualified teachers - NQT) in an attempt to understand the genesis of the epistemic roles that teachers of English display in the classroom. It uses ethnographic techniques for data collection and ethnographic techniques combined with elements of discourse analysis for data analysis.

Exploration of the available data indicate that the main question regarding the kind of epistemology that is generated in the context in which teachers of English receive their professional training, might best be answered on three different levels or from three perspectives:

1. The Conceptual/philosophical positions as articulated in official documents designed to guide training;
2. Articulated philosophies from teacher educators, where such philosophies have been construed to imply certain pedagogical stances or models; and,
3. Visible models (what is actually seen in TT and NQT classrooms).

Matrix of influences



Interviews, observations and content analysis of policy documents have revealed a number of challenges including the quality of student intake, social ambivalence about the value of SJE competence, resourcing of training institutions, practicum related challenges and recidivation after training. Recent mentoring initiatives of the Ministry of Education and a growing recognition among educators concerning what commitment to the constructivist ideal entails appear to be playing a positive mediating role.

The findings of the study will be integrated with aspects of related work previously completed by the researcher and published in a text, tentatively titled, "Anatomy of Verbal Interaction and its Correlates in English Language Classrooms". It will be shared with policy makers, teacher educators and classroom teachers, and thereby, make a contribution to the way English language pedagogy is conceptualised in Jamaica. In general, it should enrich our understanding of the forces that help to shape teachers of the English language arts.

By the end of the second phase of the research, the researcher should be able to make some definitive statements about how the verbal interaction practices of teachers of the English language arts have been shaped by the following matrix of the influences which predispose them to construct distinctive ecologies (networks of cognitive and social relations) in their classrooms. •

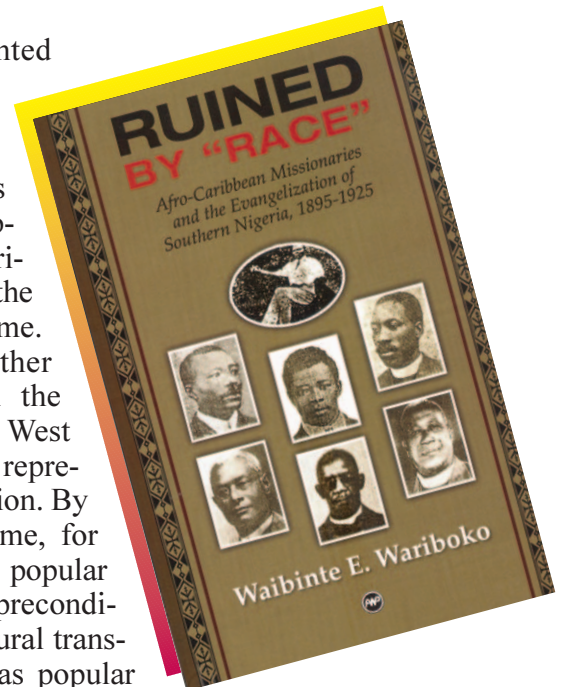


Principal Researcher:
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Ruined by “Race”: Afro-Caribbean Missionaries and the Evangelization of Southern Nigeria, 1895-1925

This research project sought to investigate, narrate and analyze the activities and contributions of black West Indians to the implantation, growth and development of Christianity in Southern Nigeria. This research effort culminated in the publication of a book which provided a new perspective to its readers on the Caribbean-African connection. To this end, the book chronicled the transition from the episcopate of Bishop S. A. Crowther to that of Bishop Herbert Tugwell in the Niger Mission, which was marked by sociopolitical and economic problems around the end of the nineteenth century. The work also details the various problems posed by the separation of the Niger Delta Pastorate Church under Archdeacon D.C. Crowther. The Niger Mission was also faced with an acute shortfall in its workforce due in large part to the loss of its traditional Sierra Leone supply market for African missionaries. As a result, Tugwell turned to the West Indies for the recruitment of black West Indians for service in Southern Nigeria. Informed by the notion of racial affinity between black West Indians and West Africans, Tugwell and his allies in the Caribbean and London required the former to make Africa their home so that they could be perceived and rewarded like African agents. However, because the idea involved a substantial devaluation in the material benefits to be derived from missionary service, the black West Indians vigorously objected to the proposal.

These black West Indians wanted instead to be perceived and rewarded as foreigners on the same footing as Europeans. Unresolved tensions over status and identity, including the redistribution of symbolic and scarce material resources, ultimately led to the premature collapse of the scheme. This book, explores, among other things, the connection between the socioeconomic interests of the West Indians and their construction and representation of race in the Niger Mission. By refusing to make Africa their home, for example, they were rejecting the popular notion that race-belonging was a precondition for the sociopolitical and cultural transformation of Africa. This idea was popular among those who believed in the essentialist notion of race in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Foremost among them were Tugwell and his allies in London and the Caribbean, including those black activists, scholars and publicists such as Edward Wilmot Blyden, Albert Thorne, Henry Turner, Alexander Crummell, and Marcus



Ruined by “Race”: Afro-Caribbean Missionaries and the Evangelization of Southern Nigeria, 1895-1925

Garvey, who advocated for the back to Africa movement in the New World. The overall conclusion is that the factors influencing how we construct identity and represent race are largely dependent on our desires, for example, the desire for recognition or status, association or affiliation, and economic empowerment.

The arguments as presented in the book, challenges one of the key concepts held by most readers about the notion of race unity and belonging - upon which the whole idea of the African diaspora has been constructed. For this and other reasons, this book should not only be read by undergraduate and graduate students but all persons interested in issues related to the African diaspora. •