

Caribbean Curriculum

Foreword

From the post-independence era, one constant in education has been the rhetoric related to education reform in Trinidad and Tobago. While change is widely supported, continuities stemming from as far back as the genesis of the education system endure, generating tensions and conflicts which serve to undermine efforts at reform. Change and continuity though, are nothing out of the ordinary, since social institutions mirror the flux of social life. In this issue, researchers grapple with the long hand of the past in shaping the problematic contexts of education today, and offer a 21st century challenge in deconstructing received paradigms that weaken education reform.

Sandra Robinson takes this challenge head on as she interrogates ingrained practices and ideologies related to the teaching of English in secondary schools in the Anglophone Caribbean. **Rhoda Mohammed** and **Jerome De Lisle** investigate how postcolonial learning contexts, in this case primary schools, influence data use, for example, the socialised values and beliefs of principals. **Janice Jules** explores early literacy acquisition in Anglophone Caribbean countries by going beyond inherited paradigms to consider strategies requiring professionals to assess and proclaim their own worth. **Tyrone Ali** and **Charmaine Christopher**, through their research of literacy practices in Grenada, unearth the ideology of uniformity in expecting instruction to conform to a standard. **Georgette Medford** and **Rinnelle Lee-Piggott** report on an action research project, using clinical supervision. The project seeks to displace the long-established place of the teacher at the centre of instruction, arguing for the relevance of constructivist, collaborative and reflective approaches to teaching and learning in the 21st century. With similar aims, **Roland Birbal**, **Iris Hewitt-Bradshaw** and **Freddy James**, focus on action research and student voice research in transforming cultural practices grounded in ideologies of power, equality, and inequality, which tend to influence curriculum change and renewal. Finally, **Paul Balwant** pursues an under-researched area, the destructive leader in higher education, questioning, while adding to, the traditionally accepted categories of transformational, authentic, and ethical leaders.

Vimala Kamalodeen's article on computational thinking (CT) is being published posthumously. She invites us to see CT as a 21st century skill allowing teachers and students to develop a set of mental tools necessary to use computers to solve complex human problems. It is therefore in conflict with the long-established disciplinary

curriculum where what is taught is considered knowledge and argues for CT as a way to approach learning in a digital world. It promises to be something of a 'battle royale' as traditional values and beliefs about intelligence, academic ability and, what knowledge is of most worth, meet with ideas that see CT as central to harnessing the potential of computers in our daily lives in the 21st century.

The articles in this issue contribute in valuable ways to our understanding of the intermingling of the past and present within education. Whether they are examining data use in a school or trying to identify a destructive leader or examining literacy practices, researchers demonstrate a keen sensitivity to the backdrop against which their ideas, theories and interventions evolved. This awareness acknowledges the tensions and conflicts that accompany attempts at reform and can therefore inform how even seasoned researchers in education conceptualise their projects.

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