

Faculty Development Teaching and Learning Excellence in Higher Education

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The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) has, since its establishment over thirty years ago, made appreciable strides in the area of Faculty Development through scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning, which have served to improve practice and manage change by enhancing individual strengths and abilities as well as organisational capacities.

The 27th volume of the *UWI Quality Education Forum*, entitled “**Faculty Development: Teaching and Learning Excellence in Higher Education**”, is therefore dedicated to The Centre of Teaching and Learning, in recognition of their contribution to the areas of educational development and teaching and learning at The University of the West Indies which has seen many advances in building a culture of teaching excellence, while improving instructional quality.

This volume invited academic essays and research reports on Faculty Development and teaching and learning in higher education with focus on excellence. The volume comprises the following seven essays:

- An Interpretative Understanding of Faculty Development at the UWI, Mona Campus
- Towards Reflective and Collaborative Praxes: A Case for Building Institutional Capacity in Quantitative Research
- The Integrative Approach to Student Development: An Investigation of Debaters’ Involvement in Radio Broadcasting at The University of the West Indies
- Arts and Cultural Education in Suriname: Reflecting Cultural Diversity from Primary to Higher Education

- Online Faculty Learning Communities for Part-Time Faculty: The Future of Faculty Development at a Regional University
- Level Up! Utilising Gamification to Engage Faculty in Professional Development Courses in an Anglophone Caribbean University
- Virtual Reading Room Research Support at a Caribbean University: Piloting Innovation in Supervising TVET Graduate Students.

Mervin E. Chisholm's submission, "An Interpretative Understanding of Faculty Development at the UWI, Mona Campus" offers clarity concerning the faculty development work being undertaken by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies since 1992. Transformative Learning is used as the major lens or theoretical perspective to understand the work undertaken, along with critical reflection and critical faculty development, all of which comprise the conceptual framework discussed in the article. Based on historical analysis, the position is advanced that the interpretation of the work is best undertaken with recognition of the progression to the professionalisation of university teaching. A descriptive model of the Caribbean University Teacher Reflective Teaching Model (CUTRTM) is identified as one of the major approaches to faculty development that focuses on the professionalisation of university teaching in the Caribbean.

"Towards Reflective and Collaborative Praxes: A Case for Building Institutional Capacity in Quantitative Research" by **Talia Esnard, Letetia Addison, Fareena Alladin, Delia Brito, and Keisha Samlal** draws attention to growing evidence of apprehension and anxiety among staff and students across the globe regarding quantitative research, despite the development of competencies within institutions of higher education worldwide. Actions undertaken to deconstruct experiences as educators, which included reflective journaling, and individual reflections on key questions related to building institutional capacity, highlight the need for educators to remain mindful and accountable when building and managing competencies that promote continuous adjustment/refinement of teaching strategies. The use of more flexible modes of delivery with the potential for cross-disciplinary interventions is recommended.

"The integrative Approach to Student Development: An Investigation of Debaters' Involvement in Radio Broadcasting at The University of the West Indies, Mona" is the focus of research undertaken by **Shinique Walters and Roger Bent** who examine debating and students' public speaking involvement in co-curricular activities in radio broadcasting at The University of the West Indies, Mona, using

an integrative approach. The study utilised a qualitative and exploratory research design technique and highlighted interviews from the students as well as focus group sessions with lecturers. Findings reveal that the approach had a positive impact on respondents' analytical skills and gave practical understanding to theoretical concepts not fully ventilated in the classroom.

In “Arts and Cultural Education in Suriname: Reflecting Cultural Diversity from Primary to Higher Education”, **Patrick Tjon-Jaw-Chong** posits that although arts and cultural education play an important role in the sharing of insights and the understanding of the variety of events and traditions in Surinamese society, there is nevertheless a gap in the arts and cultural education after primary education. He further contends that this is due in large part to the lack of uniform guidelines in the development of school curricula. Based on his research, he shares the belief that the establishment and implementation of uniform guidelines would result in a constructive alignment of arts and cultural education from primary to higher education which would ultimately result in a completely new approach to arts and cultural education in Suriname.

“Online Faculty Learning Communities for Part-Time Faculty: The Future of Faculty Development at a Regional University”, by **Paul A. Walcott**, draws attention to the possibility that part-time Faculty may not have opportunities to participate in sustained, on campus faculty development activities, despite unquestionable evidence supporting the benefits of faculty development. In attempting to gain empirical data on the matter, Walcott explores the creation of online faculty learning communities (OFLCs) to address the developmental needs of part-time faculty at a multi-campus, regional university. In so doing, he employs a critical review design that examines the potential benefits, barriers, and technology toolsets needed for the implementation of OFLCs. Results of the analysis reveal that although OFLCs can provide sustained technical and teaching support for part-time faculty, barriers such as buy-in, attrition, scheduling conflicts, and competence in the use of technology may negatively impact widespread adoption.

“Level Up! Utilising Gamification to Engage Faculty in Professional Development Courses in an Anglophone Caribbean University”, by **Michelle Stewart-Mckoy**, seeks to determine the extent to which the addition of game design elements could support faculty development activities. This was done by incorporating game features into the asynchronous aspect of a faculty development course at a Caribbean University and undertaking a pilot with fifteen facilitators. Select game mechanisms were interwoven into the learning experience based on the participants' game-playing profiles. Although more comprehensive research with

a larger pilot is needed, “the initial findings offer encouragement for bolstering faculty development activities, minimising academic ennui, increasing faculty engagement, and allowing Faculty to break free of, and inevitably advance beyond the academic malaise of information dispensation.”

“Virtual Reading Room Research Support at a Caribbean University: Piloting Innovation in Supervising TVET Graduate Students” by **Debra Ferdinand-James, Karlene Nelson, Beverly Burte, and Yolanda Tugwell**, describes the piloting of a Virtual Reading Room (VRR) at a Caribbean University library to support graduate students’ research. A mixed methods convergent parallel study design was used in collecting and analysing quantitative data on usage statistics for graduate students’ TVET/WFD Library Guides (LibGuides). Qualitative data via a feedback survey on their reactions to VRR was also used for supporting their graduate supervision. The study results indicate that the LibGuide Homepage followed by the Thesis Preparation, Databases/E-Journals, and Research Methodology webpages were the most used by graduate students. Overall VRR feedback from graduate students indicate that these virtual resources were very necessary and useful for sustaining their graduate research. It is believed that these results could contribute to the scholarly Caribbean literature on virtual reading room use and inform local policy and practice for TVET graduate supervision.