

College of Education & Leadership (CEL)

(O) The Influence of the Department of Graduate Education & Leadership Programmes of Study on Participants' Practice and Personal and Professional Development

Department of Graduate Education & Leadership Faculty

The Department of Graduate Education & Leadership established on the three fundamental pillars of pedagogy, servant leadership, and faith and learning, offers degrees at the masters and the doctoral levels. At the masters level there are four emphases with an enrolment of 160 participants and 71 graduates to date. The doctoral programme has three specializations with an enrolment of 125 participants and 16 graduates. There is no documented information of the influence of the college's programmes on participants' practice and on their personal and professional development. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to ascertain the participants' perceptions regarding the extent to which they are applying the knowledge gained at Department of Graduate Education & Leadership to their personal and professional life, and how they feel this knowledge has impacted the social and economic growth and development of the nation. This study employs a mixed method approach guided by a survey design with the sample comprising of all participants who have completed at least one year in their programme of study. A five point Likert scale questionnaire and open ended questions will be used to gather data. The SPSS software and the Taba inductive method will be used to aid in the analysis of the data. It is hoped that this study will provide students, administrators, accrediting bodies, and faculty with valuable information concerning the influence of participants' programmes of study on their practice, and on their personal and professional development. In addition, the results of the study will provide the college with information regarding the strength of the three pillars on which the college's programmes are anchored, and will serve as a catalyst for the Department to review its approaches to curriculum development, instructional planning, and implementation of its offerings for national development.

(P) *A Descriptive Study of the Effects of an In-service Cooperative Learning Seminar to Train Teachers to Use Cooperative Learning Strategies at a High School in Manchester*

Marie Wilson - McLaughlin

The study was a descriptive action research on the effects of an in-service cooperative learning training seminar to train teachers to use cooperative learning strategies at a high school in Manchester. It was guided by the following three research questions: (a) what are the effects of a cooperative learning training seminar on in-service teachers' attitude toward cooperative learning? (b) what are the effects of a cooperative learning training seminar on in-service teachers' knowledge of the academic and social benefits of cooperative? and (c) what are the teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of cooperative learning in their classrooms? Eight in-service teachers from the selected high school participated in a four - day cooperative learning training seminar to determine the effects of the cooperative learning training seminar on their willingness to use the strategy. Fifty percent (50%) of the participants confidently expressed a belief in their ability to plan appropriately for cooperative learning and indicated a willingness to make cooperative learning an important part of their future practice. The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the research: (a) cooperative learning training seminars should be undertaken as a school-wide programme to train all teachers to plan for and execute cooperative learning experiences, (b) a teacher study group should be initiated at the high school to provide long term support for the eight in-service teachers who participated in this research, (c) the present study should be replicated using a larger sample in different settings to allow for broader generalization of findings, and (d) the present study should be extended to investigate the actual implementation of cooperative learning techniques, structures, and strategies at the classroom level.

(P) *The Effects of Parental Involvement on Grade Nine Students' Academic Achievement in Four Upgraded High Schools in Region 5, Jamaica*

Yvonne Perriel

Administrators and teachers have the educational expertise of utilizing theoretical and practical experiences in dealing with students, but parental involvement is crucial for improving the educational focus of each child. Parents are involved at the primary level of their children's education but they are not aware of the benefits of parental involvement at the secondary level, hence they are not involved in their adolescents' schooling. The purpose of this study was to explore the components of parental involvement and its relationship to student academic achievement in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, and Social Studies at the Secondary level. Data were obtained using the cross-sectional survey design, in which 367 students participated in the study. Scores from standardized tests taken in the same school year for all students were also used. In this study 172 parents participated, and four questionnaires were administered to four principals along with a semi-structured interview. Data from all sources were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of this study yielded the following major findings: (a) Parents and students perceived support and encouragement as the major parental involvement activity for enhancing students' academic success, (b) Parents reported that helping with homework was important for improving academic achievement, (c) Students' Achievement scores on standardized tests increased when parents were involved. Administrators reported that: (a) Greater partnership among parents, students, and school is needed in order for students to excel, (b) Parents need to sign formal commitment of involvement when their children are admitted to school, (c) Teachers should conduct home visits to enhance the communication channels between home and school, (d) Parents must assume their responsibility by setting goals, rewarding students, and supporting activities at home and at school, and (e) Students need to be more focused and prepared for the demands of school.

Greater parental involvement is needed particularly in the area of encouragement, support, and participation in school activities. The results indicated that parents who were involved in their Grade 9 children's education had a positive impact on the academic achievement of their children in the areas of Mathematics, Reading Comprehension and Social Studies.

(P) *A Study of Teacher Behaviours that Result in Effective Classroom Management in Selected Schools in Jamaica*

Jacqueline HoShing - Clarke

There are teachers in Jamaica who manage their classrooms effectively; this needs to be recorded so that others may be informed concerning the “best of what exists” in order to improve what they do. The purpose of this study is to describe what effective teachers do to manage their classes in selected Jamaican schools and also to present what research literature recommends as essential for effective classroom management. This appreciative inquiry, a strategy for intentional change (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987), was conducted in order to identify the best of what exists in classroom management and to present them to practitioners. This is intended to enhance the practice of teaching, while empowering the teachers. Additionally, these best practices in classroom management will benefit students as they function in the classroom, prepare for the working world, and life in general. The study is important in that it is intended to ignite a reformation in the manner in which teachers manage their classrooms. It is my hope that eventually everyone will benefit because society is in chaos and a change is needed. This research is a qualitative descriptive case study. The data sources were: (a) interviews, (b) observations, (c) review of classroom and other school-related documents, and (d) the review of research literature. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the samples. Six classrooms in three elementary schools located in Jamaica constituted the research field for this inquiry.

Five themes that emerged were: (a) teachers’ instructional behaviours, (b) teacher support, (c) classroom rules and procedures, (d) teaching/learning activities, and (e) classroom environment. The data indicated that essential to effective classroom management was teacher preparation. Teachers of necessity must be equipped with the essential knowledge and skills for effective classroom management. These incorporated (a) the physical classroom arrangement, (b) a positive psychosocial environment, (c) a model of discipline, (d) the use of appropriate teaching strategies, (e) teachers’ knowledge and understanding of students’ behaviours, (f) effective communication, and (g) teacher support systems. Recommendations were made contingent on indications from the data. Among them is that essential support systems for teachers in classroom management be instituted in this region.