

## **Department of Graduate Education and Leadership**

### ***P. Reflective Practices: An Examination Of The Implementation In The Teacher Training Curricula In Jamaica***

Knola L. Oliphant

The introduction of reflective practices in the teacher education programme is rapidly on the increase for different countries since Donald Schon (1983) introduced the concept, the reflective practitioner. Despite the introduction of this innovative strategy, reflection is not yet fully integrated in the curriculum of the teacher training curriculum. This study was conducted to determine to what extent integrating reflective practices in the teacher education curriculum has impacted the performance of student teachers on their second year teaching practicum exercise. Six data sources were used to collect the data: documents, journaling, video recordings, interview of teacher educators, focus group interviews, and observation. The data were analyzed by identifying themes and categorizing them into five social processes as named by Prus (1996): acquiring perspectives, achieving individuality, experiencing relationships, situating the act, and doing the act. Five second year student teachers and two teacher educators participated. The findings of the study revealed that the student teachers' personal understandings of the term reflective practices varied and that the teacher training curricula was not explicit about reflective practices for the three subject areas studied. The study also indicated that the student teachers learned to reflect through their interaction with others such as their peers, cooperating teachers, and supervisors; as well as the significant others in the student teachers' environment. It was clear from the study results that subject specialist teachers and other lecturers helped to guide student teachers' thinking and as a result the student teachers became self reflective. It was then concluded based on the findings of the study that Reflective practices are to be integrated into the teacher training curriculum at the college.

Nicole Mauzard

**Problem.** The MA and PhD participants find it difficult to revise effectively for the comprehensive examinations as well as for their pre and public oral defenses.

**Purpose.** The Pyramid to Success Game is designed to create a positive environment in which players encode, rehearse, and transfer factual information gleaned from learning experiences they have had in and out of classes. For a few hours the players are immersed in an intense educational/learning experience, where past knowledge is revisited, extended, and new knowledge emerge.

**Rationale.** The Pyramid for Success Game was conceived **first** out of a felt need to provide some type of synchronized study method that would evolve into a synergistic approach to getting ready for scholarly transfer of learning, and eliminate as much as possible studying in isolation, and the fear of taking examinations.

**Who may play?** Two to six persons who have not yet completed their dissertations, theses, comprehensive examinations and or oral defences in a graduate programme.

**Goals.**

To induce oral communication in graduate participants

To induce scholarly discourses among graduate participants

To engineer/orchestrate reciprocal teaching

To encourage team building

To present facts in a low anxiety context

To promote cooperation among participants

To encourage creativity and elegance in the formulation of oral answers

To provide easy access to ongoing/ formative assessment

To encourage peer coaching

To gradually guide participants in scholarly transfer of facts, ideas, and theories

To develop in participants an awareness of their obligations as graduate participants

## **Results**

1. Learning is made contextual and activities are designed around students' interests and emotional make up.
2. Players learn in teams and benefit from peripheral learning.
3. Players, while assessing themselves, get to understand their own learning styles and preferences.
4. Integration of units of knowledge practiced/rehearsed
5. Expansion and refinement of learning is modeled
6. Participants realize their deficiencies and make note to revisit information poorly encoded.
7. Participants gradually relax and enjoy themselves while learning

## ***O. The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence And Debt Servicing By Student Loan Borrowers: A Correlational Analysis In The Jamaican Context***

Dianna Davis-Smith

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine if a relationship existed between emotional intelligence and debt servicing. The primary factors that have prompted this study are (a) the importance of emotional concept to performance and (b) the need for objective assessment of loan applicants particularly in the absence of a credit history. The participants of this study were randomly selected from the database of borrowers at the Student Loan Bureau of Jamaica. Bar-On EQ-i was used as the instrument to measure emotional intelligence with the loan servicing records of the participants used to measure debt servicing. Pearson  $R$  was used to determine strength of correlation results and significance of relationships between the variables. The findings revealed significant relationships between the three levels of debt servicing and the emotional intelligence construct. The categories of debt servicing were Category 1 – Non-performing; Category 2 – minimal delinquent, and Category 3 - Satisfactory. The results revealed that a borrower's total emotional intelligence (EI) score has a positive correlation with loan servicing. The composite scales scores of Interpersonal and General Mood

Emotional Intelligence were found to be significantly related to satisfactory debt servicing. The findings of this study is consistent with Bar-On's theory that individuals with higher than average emotional quotients (E.Q) are, in general, more successful in meeting environmental demands, obligations and pressures. Also individuals with high EI also have the capacity for positive decision-making. There were no statistical differences in the emotional intelligence levels between the genders this is consistent with most emotional intelligence studies; however there was a noted difference in the pattern of loan servicing between the genders. Based on the positive relationships found within this study it is recommended that institutions and organizations that offer credit to individuals incorporate emotional intelligence assessment into the loan application process. Such an adoption will minimize the increasing levels of non-performing loans. Individuals most likely to satisfactorily service their obligations, will make better leaders and will satisfy the Bank of Jamaica regulations which guide employment within the financial sector. These individuals will have better relationships managing themselves and others.

***P. Employers' Perspectives On The Effectiveness Of Technical And Vocational Education And Training (Tvet) At The Secondary Education Level In Jamaica In Preparing People For Employment***

Olive M. Bujham-Maragh

This study addresses the issue of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) which is undergirded by a wide range of personal views and biases. Numerous studies conducted locally and regionally in this field have revealed that TVET is viewed by society as being inferior and second class to the traditional academics (Morris 1993, Christian 2005, Rose 2006). Consequently, many persons who would have pursued courses in this discipline are often discouraged from venturing into this career path.

However, at a meeting in Germany in 2004, it was pointed out that TVET is the master key to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. This study, therefore, sought the views of employers regarding the effectiveness of TVET in the Jamaican Secondary Education System in preparing people for employment.

A basic qualitative approach was used in the collection and analysis of data for this study. An interview schedule with structured and open-ended questions was designed to collect information from 16 employers on a face-to-face basis in both the private and public sectors in eight industries that produce goods and services in Jamaica.

The results of this study suggest that employers believe that TVET training programmes are effective at the Secondary education level to prepare people for entry-level employment in Jamaica. The findings also indicate that the competencies developed by graduates of TVET programmes make them efficient and flexible. Employers expected their employees to be competent in areas such as Information Communications Technology, and work skills and they stated that the Government should be more supportive of TVET programmes at the Secondary

education level if graduates are to be efficient in the production of goods and services in the country's economy. Besides, employers believe that TVET is effective at the Secondary education level to develop Jamaica's human resource and a competitive workforce.

***P. Examining Posttraumatic Stress Disorder of Grade 11 Students in Selected High Schools in Kingston Jamaica***

Patric R. Rutherford

The inner-city communities in Kingston have had increasingly high levels of violence over the past 25 years. The emotional trauma that children living in those communities experience has serious negative effects on their ability to perform in school academically and socially. The purpose of the study was to determine the nature and frequency of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in selected high schools from inner-city communities in Kingston, Jamaica. This is a quantitative study utilizing the Posttraumatic Symptom Scale - Interview Version (PSS-I). This PSS-I is a semi-structured interview for data collection. This tool gives a definitive diagnosis of PTSD. I also collected demographic data on gender, church attendance, and area of residence. The study focused on 11th grade students in the three selected high schools located in the inner-city communities of Kingston. A random sample of the population was selected and the PSS-I was administered by trained data collectors. There were 198 participants in the study; of that number 170 experienced trauma. Of those who reported trauma 31 or 18.2% were diagnosed with PTSD. Of the 31 with PTSD the difference in occurrence by gender was statistically significant with 21 females or 68% and 10 males or 32% with PTSD. The differences in occurrence by church attendance and area of residence were not statistically significant. Those experiencing violent trauma were 89 or 52% of the sample. The study reveals that PTSD has a negative effect on academic performance. It also reveals an urgent need for making available diagnosis and treatment services so that those affected will be able to

achieve their academic potential. This study also shows the need for additional research on the occurrence of PTSD in other sections of the society and the urgent need for prevention in the form of reduced crime and violence.

***O. Effect of Unequal Sample Sizes on the Power of Procedures for Test Bias Detection: A Monte Carlo Study with Simultaneous Item Bias TEST and Mantel-Haenszel Procedures***

Risper Akelo Awuor,

This simulation study focused on determining the effect of unequal sample sizes on statistical power of Simultaneous Item Bias TEST (SIBTEST) and Mantel-Haenszel (M-H) procedures for detection of differential item functioning (DIF) of moderate and large magnitudes. Item parameters were estimated by, and generated with two parameter logistic model (2PLM) using WinGen2. MULTISIM was used to simulate ability estimates and to generate response data for 1000 students that were analyzed by SIBTEST. The SIBTEST with regression correction was used to calculate the test bias statistics, namely the effect size and the p-value for SIBTEST procedure. The older SIBTEST was used to calculate the DIF statistics for the M-H procedure. SAS provided the environment in which the ability parameters were simulated; response data generated and DIF analyses conducted. Test items were observed to determine if a priori manipulated items demonstrated DIF. The study results indicated that with unequal samples in any ratio, M-H had better Type 1 error rate control than SIBTEST. The results also indicated that not only the sample size, but also the ratios and the magnitude of DIF influenced the behavior of SIBTEST and M-H with regard to their error rate behavior. With small samples and moderate DIF magnitude, Type II error was committed by both M-H and SIBTEST when the reference to focal group sample size ratios was 1:10.

*P. Determining the Perceptions and Barriers of Faculty and Administrators Towards Distance Education at Williams Community College in Jamaica*

Verona Williams

Faculty and administrators at Williams Community College (pseudonym) are aware of the competitiveness and changes in the marketplace and the need to maintain the competitive advantage for students. Despite the preparation made so far through conference and workshop attendance, the upgrading of the telephone system, and the rapid growth of distance learning programs elsewhere in the country, faculty and administrators of the College have shown no clear or present plans to urgently change any of the course offerings into a distance learning format. The purpose of this quantitative study will determine the perceptions and barriers of faculty and administrators towards Distance Education at Williams Community College. The participants in this study will be drawn from full and part-time faculty, administrators at the Community College and from the Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica. Participants include principal, vice principals, lecturers, laboratory technicians, registry, student support services, and library personnel. The simple random sample principle will be utilized. The Predictive Analytics SoftWare (PASW) will be used to analyze the data, which include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, simple analysis of variance and tests of association. The findings of this study will be used to influence decisions about the facilitation and implementation of distance education at Williams Community College and add to the knowledge of existing research on distance education. Everett Rogers' (1995) theory of diffusion of innovations, and Fullan and Miles' (1992) theory of change will be used as the theoretical underpinning for the study. Roger's theory drives social change and provides a framework to determine obstacles that can impede the facilitation of distance education, and advance



understanding of its adoption rate based upon attributes of the innovation, while Fullan and Miles' theory is pertinent to the management and improvement of school change.

***O. Exploring The Relationship Between Perceived Spirituality And Religious Commitment Among NCU Undergraduate SDA Students***

Noel Ruiloba and Risper Awuor,

Jesus wants all persons to be drawn to Him (John 17:3). His purpose is for salvation of every one. The Holy Bible presents baptism as the highest level of religious commitment. Not much has been documented on the spiritual climate at Northern Caribbean University, and the relationship between Religious Commitment and Academic Achievement. This study explored the relationship between the perceived Spiritual Climate at Northern Caribbean University (NCU) by undergraduate Adventist students, and the students' commitment to the SDA church. The study also determined the relationship between Religious Commitment and Academic Achievement. A selection of five curriculum variables was preferred on this quantitative study: Integration of Faith and Learning, Bible Classes, Spiritual Climate on Campus, Relationships among Faculty and Students, as well as Relationship among Adventist Students. For gathering data, researchers developed a *Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI)*. The RCI was pilot tested using NCU undergraduate SDA students, for clarity and validity. Information gained from the pilot study was used to improve the instrument. Permission was sought from the NCU administration and other relevant authorities to administer the instrument. RCI was administered to 300 randomly selected SDA undergraduate students at the beginning of Spring Semester 2011 using a two stage cluster sampling technique. Correlational statistical analyses were run using SPSS (version17). Significant relationship was observed between Spiritual Climate and Religious Commitment. However Religious Commitment and Spiritual Climate did not correlate significantly with Academic Achievement. Apparently there were possibly confounding variables that affect Academic Achievement, besides those included in this study, therefore the results should be interpreted with caution. Recommendation was made to Institutional Management to ensure positive Spiritual Climate within Adventist Institutions to enhance Religious commitment of SDA graduates.

***P. Examining Gender Differences In Motivation To Read And Reading Achievement In A Selected Grade Four Class At An All-Age School In St. Catherine, Jamaica***

Nikeisha M. Jackson

This action research study focused on gender differences in motivation to read and reading achievement in a selected Grade 4 class at an All-Age School in St. Catherine. Teaching students to read is an exciting, rewarding, and honourable responsibility. Motivation is a key ingredient for acquiring success in this area. It is, therefore, important to investigate the impact that motivation has on students' reading ability and interests. A purposeful sampling technique was used in the study with a group of Grade 4 students. The following instruments were used to collect data: Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) reading surveys and conversational interview, teacher interview, and informal reading inventory. It is anticipated that the results of the study will encourage educators to implement strategies that will motivate all students to acquire literacy. Lack of motivation to read affects students' reading achievement negatively. There is a gender difference in motivation to read. The results of this study indicate that girls are more motivated to read than boys but this gap can be narrowed if a reading program that facilitates motivation is implemented. Teachers have the unique opportunity to help motivate students to read by selecting and implementing an instructional programme that ensures quality instructional time in basic language arts elements such as word recognition, use of positive reinforcement to elicit appropriate and frequent responses from all students, and the necessity of overt, accurate, and rapid responses to keep students focused while providing books that focus on students' interest, and modelling reading.

*P. An Investigation Of The Effects Of Cellular Phones On Students' Academic Achievement In A Selected High School.*

Milbert Miller

This study sought to highlight the effects the use of cellular phones have on students' performance in a selected high school. The investigation sought to ascertain whether the use of cell phones by students and teachers can improve students' performance, as well as, whether the cell phone could be incorporated by teachers and administrators as a tool in the teaching and learning process to enhance learner outcomes.

The research included grades ten (10) and eleven (11) male and female students preparing for the Caribbean Secondary School (CSEC) exams and teachers at a recently upgraded high school.

The findings of the study revealed that most students used their cell phones to capture audio (sound) or video (picture) data and store it, to perform calculations and store personal data, to text assignments and to capture pictures of field trip activities, although some teachers were hesitant to incorporate the use of the cell phones in the classroom for fear of disruptions even though some teachers have been incorporating the use of the cell phones in the teaching and learning process to good effect.

The conclusions and recommendations were stated for further developments of the use of cell phones within the classroom base on data collected. The teachers, parents and students should work together to arrive at an amicable solution how to manage the use of cell phones during school hours and clear guidelines outlined governing usage. Every effort should be made to capitalize on student ownership of the cell phone to bring freshness, excitement and the enhancement of learning into their instruction. Time should be taken to understand the power of the cell phone as a tool to enhance instruction when used appropriately.

***P. An Investigation In The Use Of Video Games To Enhance Learning In Principles Of Business Among The Fifteen (15) To Seventeen (17) Age Group***

Yvonne A. Samuels

Customarily, learning was seen as a means of chalk-and-talk or a lecturer in a physical environment but that which constitutes a learning environment is changing with the vast number of technology available. As a result many educators and researchers such as Malala, Shaffer, Squire, Halverson and Gee (2003) concluded that video games motivate students to learn, allow learners' to experience the concrete realities that worlds and symbols describe, challenge students' curiosity, build students' confidence, and enhance students knowledge, intellectual skills and abilities. Despite this discovery by educators, research has shown that many educational institutions have not yet developed a level of understanding in the use of video games in the classroom.

This study was conducted to investigate the use of video games to enhance the teaching of Principles of Business among students between the ages of fifteen (15) to seventeen (17) in the parish of Manchester. This investigation used two main data sources Pre and Post Test and a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the SPSS descriptive statistics and the use of the Microsoft Excel software. The participants of this research were two (2) males and eight (8) females. This group of students consisted of students who were exposed to the Principles of Business syllabus.

The findings showed that video games can be used to enhance students' learning as was seen through the pretest and posttest results. The study also showed a significant improvement in the scores of students and the impact of the intervention strategy (Monopoly Tycoon). Also consistent with the literature review, the results from this study indicated that students were more interested, fascinated and motivated to learn the concepts of Principles of Business.

According to the results of the posttest, video games can be used to enhance teaching and learning in Principles of Business and other business subjects that are taught within secondary schools as this can be seen as a way of getting students interested in the content, motivated in what they do and help them to understand principles in a real-life situation.