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Higher Education in the Anglophone Caribbean

La Educación Superior en el Caribe Anglófono

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Grace Guerrero
Ayurami Rodríguez Rodríguez

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María de Lourdes Cisneros

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Dirección: Apartado Postal: N° 68.394,
Caracas 1062-A, Venezuela.
Telf :+58 (212) 286.1020
Fax :+58 (212) 286.0326

E-mail: iesalc@unesco.org.ve

www.iesalc.unesco.org.ve

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INTRODUCCION

EDWIN BRANDON

This issue of the IESALC journal was commissioned to deal with questions and problems in tertiary education in the Anglophone Caribbean. While educational institutions are notoriously conservative and unresponsive to changes in their surrounding societies, pressures exist to force some adjustments on them. The essays collected here reveal some of the ways in which tertiary education in the Anglophone Caribbean is adapting, more or less willingly, to its environment. One of the more notable developments has been the creation, within the University of the West Indies (UWI), of a new Open Campus, as a way of channelling much of its outreach work. This initiative forms the backdrop to several of the papers in this volume and it will be used as a context in which to introduce them here.

Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald's contribution sets out some of the problems faced by education systems in a context of innovation and looks at the creation of the Open Campus as an attempt to invigorate UWI's distance education and outreach initiatives. A longer and more detailed perspective on this history is provided in Dr Vivienne Roberts' survey in the following paper.

Very briefly, outreach had been part of the UWI's mission almost from the beginning of its existence, with the creation in 1947 of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies (later renamed the School of Continuing Studies). This structure eventually saw a University Centre in almost all the contributing

countries that financially support the University.[1] Beginning in the 1980s the University experimented with various forms of distance education, most notably a teleconferencing system (UWIDITE) that also spread across most of the Anglophone Caribbean, and was expanded with the help of a CDB loan in the 1990s to provide at least one location in every English-speaking country in the region.[2] While this activity made a considerable impression, and indeed impinged on a very large number of people in Jamaica and Trinidad, there were unmistakable signs of stagnation generally and a prevalent thought that distance education in particular was hampered by the way it was then structured and governed. These dissatisfactions came together with the University's clear failure to "deliver the goods" to the so-called "non-campus countries" (those contributing countries other than Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad) to drive a mini-restructuring[3] whereby the three entities under the control of the Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education (the Distance Education Centre, the School of Continuing Studies, and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit) became the organs of a new Open Campus that aspired to become predominantly virtual.

The Open Campus was intended to take the lead in developing distance education, instead of waiting upon the inward-looking Faculties at the three campuses; it was intended to become largely asynchronous in its dealings with students, relying on the Internet rather than unwieldy and decidedly finite audio- or video-conferencing; it was intended to be innovative also in its internal structuring and management, relinquishing Faculties, Deans, and other obstructions to agile decision-making, though its academic programmes and arrangements would still have to be approved by the University bodies established for those purposes.

Moving beyond issues within UWI that led to the Open Campus, Luz Longsworth's paper looks more broadly at the developing international regime, especially GATS and the ubiquitous phenomenon of globalisation, within which the University's decision should be placed. From a position

1 Until 2008, the University had three campuses, at Mona in Jamaica, St Augustine in Trinidad, and Cave Hill in Barbados. There are twelve other countries that support it and which now have at least an Open Campus Centre: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Belize, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. There is also a Centre in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

2 The history of UWI's outreach has recently been chronicled in a volume marking its 50th anniversary, Fergus, Bernard, and Soares, 2007; a fuller account of the distance education activity can be found in Brandon, 1999

3 "Mini-" to contrast with the somewhat more substantial restructurings to which the University is prone, every dozen or so years, that affect all its campuses and governance. The most recent was that of the mid 90s which created the Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education, which for the first time put outreach on par with undergraduate and postgraduate education.

of *de facto* monopoly of higher education, the UWI has seen in the past two decades a burgeoning of national universities and degree-granting institutions as well as considerable penetration of local markets by providers from outside the region.[4] These developments have not been matched by appropriate regulatory systems, despite decades of discussion within CARICOM regarding a regional accreditation mechanism.

Dr Zellynne Jennings' paper reminds us of some of the potentialities of distance education, although her target group is in Guyana and thus not strictly speaking part of the UWI's immediate clientele. Her description of what the University of Guyana managed to achieve in teacher training, using traditional distance education methods, brings home to us the crucial need to reach the under-served communities in all the countries that the University is beholden to. It also reveals once again the ambivalence of education: what for one is empowerment is for another a mortal threat to a traditional way of life. The paper by Soares and Thomas again shows the potential of ICT for addressing needs in a remote community in St Vincent, but as they concede, ICT doesn't come for free. Longsworth also notes unresolved questions of the comparative cost of various educational modalities.

Dr Permilla Farrell looks at how one Trinidad institution is coping with the universal problem of what seems to be a growing mismatch between average student competencies and the traditional expectations of tertiary institutions. Her paper also reveals that expectations themselves vary enormously, which one might think is hardly conducive to students' setting appropriate standards for themselves. One of the advantages, though it smacks of "big brother is watching you", of on-line modalities is that they allow for pretty thorough monitoring of interactions between students and their teachers or facilitators. The centralising of many key decisions also permits greater coherence and uniformity. These pragmatic demands for consistency constitute one of the standing problems for the Open Campus as it tries to co-ordinate contributions from three semi-autonomous campuses, where at the undergraduate level at any rate, "separate but equal" is still an acceptable slogan.

The joint paper by Paul Walcott and Jamillah Grant also reminds us of the need to match what is offered to the actual competencies of our students, and thus of the need for accessible remedial activity at some place within the system, if not at the university itself.

Dr Roberts quotes Shakespeare's Brutus on the importance of timing. One might be forgiven for thinking that the UWI has so far been rather

4 For which see Marshall et al., 2008, and for a more detailed look at one case which highlights the economic benefits for the countries involved, Cassell 2006.

unlucky in this respect. It entered distance education at a time when teleconferencing was at the cutting edge and then undertook a long, costly, and much delayed project to expand those facilities during a period when the Internet was making teleconferencing and print-based teaching materials obsolete. Its frustration with the tardiness and lack of interest of campus Faculties in contributing to such obsolete systems led it to create a separate campus when, arguably, the other campuses were beginning to see the necessity and the desirability of embracing Internet-diffusion of their materials. They were also under heavy pressure to diversify income through outreach activities of various sorts – so predictably no one is clear about the lines of demarcation between the Open Campus and the rest of the University. But humans are also remarkable at making do, so despite a deep economic recession, the Open Campus goes on, ever optimistic, and resolute to meet the many challenges the general situation and the particular socio-economic conjuncture present to it.

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EDWIN BRANDON

Ed Brandon works in the Principal's Office of the newly created Open Campus of the University of the West Indies, and helps out in the Cave Hill Campus' Philosophy programme in Barbados. He spent many years teaching philosophy within departments of Education, at UWI Mona in Jamaica and St Mary's College, Cheltenham, after a short time at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone. Since 1992 he has mainly been occupied with university policy, first in the Office of Academic Affairs and later in a section of the UWI devoted to outreach which has become the Open Campus. A believer in Open Access, his writings are available at http://cavehill.uwi.edu/bnccde/epb/edpubs.htm. ed.brandon@open.uwi.edu

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EDUCATION FOR AN INNOVATIVE SOCIETY A CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVE[1]

EDUCACIÓN PARA UNA SOCIEDAD INNOVADORA. UNA PERSPECTIVA CARIBEÑA

HAZEL SIMMONS-MCDONALD

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
OPEN CAMPUS

SEDE ABIERTA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD
DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES

1 A version of this paper was presented at the Canada-Caribbean-Central America Education Partnership Forum, November 1, 2008.

ABSTRACT
The first part of this paper analyses a given definition of an innovative society and comments on its relevance to Caribbean societies. In part two it discusses the role of education and training in meeting social and economic challenges of the Caribbean; in the third section it presents the University of the West Indies Open Campus as an innovation within the region with the potential to contribute to development in the Caribbean and it explores some specific ways in which this can be achieved.

RESUMEN
La primera parte de este documento analiza una definición sobre lo que es una sociedad innovadora y comenta sobre su relevancia en las sociedades caribeñas. La segunda parte se refiere al papel de la educación y el entrenamiento para alcanzar los retos sociales y económicos del Caribe. La tercera sección presenta a la Sede Abierta de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales (UWI, por sus siglas en inglés) como una innovación en la región, con el potencial de contribuir al desarrollo del Caribe. Explora también algunas de las vías específicas mediante las cuales se puede lograr este desarrollo

INTRODUCTION

The organising group of the conference at which I presented briefly on this topic some months ago provided a definition of *an innovative society* which presenters were asked to use to frame the discussion of their presentations Since then I have reflected on that definition within the context of the Caribbean, in particular, and noted that there are aspects of innovation that are not overtly indicated in the definition, some of which I overlooked in my presentation but which require interrogation and comment. I therefore return to this definition as a point of departure for this paper and will then discuss issues related to the development of innovative Caribbean societies within the context of a broader reading and interpretation of the definition. An innovative society was defined as "*one that is well-governed, prepares youth both for citizenship and work, is strong in science and technology, and makes the links between education, research, industry and prosperity.*"

The definition addresses features that are characteristic of most prospering societies. By highlighting science and technology as a strong characteristic, it suggests that this is critical to innovation and to prosperity. One assumes that other critical factors fundamental to prosperity and innovation, but not specifically mentioned, are to be understood as underlying the concepts of citizenship, good governance, industry and prosperity. I speak of factors related to humanist elements that are important for moral and aesthetic development, including the development of what psychologists refer to as "emotional intelligence" and "social intelligence" both of which are as important as cognitive development (Intelligence Quotient - IQ) and the overall mental development of the human being. Emotional intelligence, referred to in 1995 as a "new concept" (Goleman 1995: 34) is described as involving the following abilities: "to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope."

When one considers the challenges that most developing societies in the Caribbean face, such as increasing crime rates that reflect a growing trend towards lack of respect for human life and consideration for the social rights of those who coexist in a community, increasing early drop-out rates from educational institutions – mostly young males – and poverty, then one has to reflect on the necessity of emphasising the humanist elements in education that are fundamental to the development of the whole person. Emotional intelligence (EI) comes from early nurturing that teaches anger management as well as ways of resolving conflict in non-aggressive ways. These are attributes exhibited by balanced individuals who contribute to the well-being and good governance of their societies. They are individuals who are "emotionally literate" and who collectively enable, through actions that reflect good social conduct, a shift from the overwhelming responsibil-

ity and cost of providing for security and policing for law enforcement, to a state of equilibrium which allows governments to focus on investments that will lead to prosperity. "Emotional illiteracy" is reported to be reflected in the following behaviours from an early age: "withdrawal of social problems", "anxiety and depression, "attention or thinking problems", delinquency and aggression (Goleman, 1995: 233). Individuals displaying these behaviours are said to be lacking emotional competence, and it would seem that increasing numbers of people are showing such a lack of competence. The increasing lack of emotional competence is considered to be a "global" phenomenon, and the specific behaviours noted above, if taken "as a group," can be considered "barometers of a sea change, a new kind of toxicity seeping into and poisoning the very experience of childhood, signifying sweeping deficits in emotional competences" (p. 233). We are also made aware that the phenomenon of emotional competence crosses ethnic and economic boundaries:

No children, rich or poor, are exempt from risk; these problems are universal, occurring in all ethnic, racial, and income groups. Thus while children in poverty have the worst record on indices of emotional skills, their *rate* of deterioration over the decades was no worse than for middle-class children or for wealthy children: all show the same steady slide (233).Good citizenship therefore depends on the ability of individuals in society to behave in ways that demonstrate emotional maturity – or intelligence- and social responsibility. For many children starting school (pre-school and kindergarten) at four and five years, the classroom is the context in which the building blocks for developing emotional maturity or, to use more traditional terminology – "character development" - and social responsibility are laid. The curriculum, from the early stages through primary (elementary) and secondary (high) school, places emphasis on academic intelligence and proficiency, and the affective factors which include motivation, self-esteem, attitude, aptitude, among others that are related to emotional competence are often left to be developed as a "spill-over" from the main business of cognitive and academic development. The literature indicates that both IQ and EI are important and both need to be given attention in our education systems. Innovative societies are, therefore, those that also take into consideration the importance of affective factors in the development of the individual and revise curricula regularly to tailor them so that they address directly critical areas of students' academic, emotional, cognitive and social needs. In developing societies, like many in the Caribbean, periodic review and adjustment of curricula are required to ensure that education responds to the needs of students, as this is one way through which such societies can guarantee attention to national development needs by successive generations.

One danger in the competitive environment introduced by trade liberalisation policies and the drive towards globalization is the entrenchment and promotion of traditional approaches in education that value aca-

demic intelligence without a concomitant focus on affect. The results can be costly to societies as the deficiencies become manifested in a disruption of the social order. The effects of social disorder and unrest can distract and hinder the ability of governments to focus on factors that promote development. This is true not only of developing societies, although the effects are perhaps more starkly evident and seem to be more keenly observed in these contexts. The deduction that these observations invite one to make is that there is an inextricable link between education and the development of good social conduct. The obverse is that the inability of education systems to foster holistic development can result in an increase in social disorder that can pose challenges for good governance.

Preparation for citizenship and work implies the development of a skilled and emotionally literate workforce as an important component for both innovation and prosperity. Making "links between education, research, industry and prosperity" which are presented in the definition as a hallmark of an innovative society requires a planned and integrated approach in which education responds to the findings of research, industry is fed and informed by research and shaped by the product of education. Prosperity depends upon the effectiveness of these factors in providing the right elements that breed success. In order to make a difference, education systems themselves need to innovate and introduce curricula that are relevant to the needs and respond to the demands of the society and nation. In the Caribbean, education has always been considered a vehicle by which an individual could break the cycle of poverty and achieve social mobility. However, in contexts in which children cannot see the relevance of what they are learning to their lives, when they also struggle to learn to use academic language for success without fully comprehending the language that is used for instruction, development of all the intelligences to which we have referred becomes a challenge. A possible result is that the educational experience becomes one of frustration for the student, and leads to resentment and dropping out of the system. Some of the statistics that represent a trend such as this give cause for concern[2] and strongly suggest that at least some of those who did not benefit academically (and possibly emotionally and socially) from the years spent in school are likely to get involved in delinquent and aberrant behaviours and thus contribute to social disorder. A similar point is made by John Daniel (2002: 3) "(T)raditional ways of organising education need to be reinforced by innovative methods, if the *fundamental right* of all people to *learning* is to be realized." An innovative society must then provide education that is learner-centred and which offers students the possibility for meaningful learning that can be applied and help to transform their lives and fortunes for the better.

2 In the case of St. Lucia, for example, functional illiteracy after primary school was indicated at 64% in 1984 (Carrington 1984: 176) and a subsequent literacy survey supports this finding.

II. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN MEETING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

A distinction is sometimes made in the literature between education and training. Comments made about the latter focus more on the acquisition of competences and knowledge that emerge as a result of direct teaching of practical skills through apprenticeships or in programmes at polytechnics or technical institutions. On the other hand, reference to 'education' seems to imply a lofty concept as it speaks of the "cultivation" of knowledge, skills, professions, and mental, moral and aesthetic development. [3] Two or three decades ago and prior to the expansion of the University of the West Indies in the region, university education used to be considered elitist primarily because it could not be afforded by the majority and also because of the series of examination hurdles at successively higher levels that prospective students had to clear in order to gain access. Less advanced certification would guarantee entrance to a polytechnic or technical or "training college". It seems to me that the notion of "innovation" has to be extended to education which itself requires a transcendence of such distinctions if it is to be an important catalyst for industry, prosperity and innovation in society. The introduction of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools in education has been an innovation that promises to transform education systems and the ways in which students are engaged in learning. In this section I will briefly explore the use of ICTs in education and will also focus on the sub-topics of (a) learning and the labour market and (b) lifelong learning that are both relevant to the point at issue.

Traditionally, the transmission model was considered to be the best means of teaching at university level and this method is still widely used, although a slow revolution has been taking place which is forcing an evaluation of the pedagogical approaches that are used. The introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools in teaching and learning has resulted in a transformation of pedagogical methods used in most institutions. Universities are infusing their programmes with ICTs to make the traditional classroom environment more conducive to learning and to make the actual content more appealing to learners. This has resulted in greater flexibility in learning and teaching and it is perhaps true to say that there is a continuum with regard to the extent to which lecturers adhere to transmitting information via the means of lectures at one end of the continuum to the more flexible use of ICTs that result in offering courses in fully online format at the other end of the continuum. One thing seems to be certain, however, and that is the use of more flexible methods has led to a revaluation of learning styles and the best ways of facilitating learning.

3 Wikkipedia definition.

Scott (2003: 66) lists key characteristics of programmes that engage students in active learning and which produce greater retention and more optimal outcomes. They include the following:

- relevance to the background, abilities, needs and experiences of students
- delivery by teachers who are "accessible, responsive, up-to-date, and effective"
- promote more 'active' than 'passive' learning
- link theory with practice and provide "guided practice-based learning opportunities, real-life learning and work placements"
- ensure that learning proceeds in "digestible chunks"
- include opportunities for "self-managed" learning.

The point to be noted is that these characteristics are not exclusive to programmes offered online or via distance; but they attest to the fact acknowledged by research long ago that individuals vary in their learning styles and that successful teaching focuses more on the needs of learners and their active participation in the learning and teaching enterprise. While increased use of ICTs in education demands greater flexibility, the literature cautions about the danger of making online delivery inflexible by the means it seeks to deliver content. In this regard, Scott, in the same article, makes a distinction between more powerful ways in which ICTs can be used to enhance knowledge and less powerful uses of IT. An examination of the lists indicate that the less powerful ways embody several of the principles of the transmission model and involve, among other things,

- the presentation of 'large amounts' of information on-screen for students to read or download
- use of web discussions that are unmediated
- lack of a broad learning system for contextualising online learning
- "infotainment" (Scott, Geoff. 2003: 70).

The more powerful use of ICT tools involve

- use of simulations – these require student engagement in "realistic representations of problems and dilemmas"
- interactive learning – providing in one platform links for access to staff, online library resources, other students
- animations of hard-to-see processes
- online videos with the possibility for discussion
- coaching by staff
- teleconferences.

Accepting that there are distinct benefits to be had from the use of ICTs in education, we can turn to the guiding question of this section, namely, how can education and training, using traditional and new modes of delivery, meet the social and economic challenges of the Caribbean?

If one is to posit a relationship between learning and the labour market, then, the role of institutions of higher learning must be examined more closely. In the past, one of the criticisms made about graduates of the University of the West Indies by employers in both public and private sectors is that they tended to be excellent at theory but needed some additional training for on-the-job performance. There was much discussion as to whether it was the business of the University to provide hands-on training for the specific jobs that its graduates were likely to be employed in after graduation. Some were of the view that it is the responsibility of the university to ensure that its graduates can be critical thinkers and solve problems. However, even these two important skills would not be enough to address the concern of employers and in its most recent strategic plan, the University has included as a component in improving the teaching and learning environment for its students opportunities for internships and attachments in areas where these are most appropriate and feasible. In so doing, the institution has accepted one of the general principles of good education practice noted earlier in this paper, which is presenting the student with the opportunity for practical experience in real-life learning situations. In this way, the University addresses the requirement of having the student relate theory to practice directly in the learning experience and as part of the education process.

Learning and the labour market. - One must admit that the needs of the labour market in most societies are broad and that the services of graduates from tertiary level institutions will be needed to fill the require-

ments of the market. That being the case, the entire process of preparing people for the workforce, presses for a reassessment of the role of tertiary level educational institutions. The spurious distinctions implied in the definitions of education and training as enterprises with specific respective focus on knowledge transmission and skills training cannot be rigorously maintained. In addition to preparing a skilled labour force, training colleges, like universities, should have as primary objectives the development of the intellectual capital of the societies in which they are located. However, the requirement for building innovative societies demands that they do much more than be concerned with the cognitive development of individuals. They must also provide the means by which the outcomes of the learning process at tertiary level must also be the development of skilled workers, critical thinkers, and problem solvers as well as the cultivation of emotional intelligence, and the cultural and creative abilities of learners. These requirements are also necessary for the development of the second requirement of an innovative society alluded to earlier in this paper, namely, that of ensuring good social conduct and orderliness that will facilitate the direction of capital into the exploration of resources that will lead to the greater prosperity of the nation. The UNESCO document on Open and Distance learning makes the following important observation in this regard:

> In developing countries, human knowledge resource development through initial and continuing education is not only seen as critical for economic growth and competitiveness, but also has far-reaching social impact, for example in influencing the birth rate, increasing the independence of women, and improving standards of health and the rural environment (2002: 17).

Developing nations need adequate financial resources in order to provide the quality education that will respond to national development needs. In the current global economic climate in which the economies of individual countries are threatened by a shortage of resources, provision of adequate support for education systems becomes an issue, because the pressure on traditional education systems in developing countries to provide the knowledge base (including skills training and academic) that are required has become more intense. Caribbean countries, indeed developing countries everywhere, need to find innovative methods for improving the educational programmes offered at all levels from primary (elementary) to higher education systems, including training colleges and universities. However, the introduction of new methods will require "new organizational forms, which in turn require re-thinking of education and training policies" (UNESCO 2002: 18).

Lifelong learning - The uncertainty of economic fortunes exemplified in the collapse of the free market in the USA and other countries expose most starkly the vulnerability of the personal fortunes of individuals who invest

in these markets as well as the fragility of these markets themselves. In addition, the escalation of the cost of living world-wide has led adults who may not have originally sought higher education as an option for the future to seek opportunities for learning at tertiary level institutions. Further, the fast-paced development of information and communication technology and the opportunities this presents for learning have motivated individuals to consider education as an option for improving their quality of life. Universities and other tertiary level institutions have had to consider ways of making education accessible to a clientele for whom traditional modes of access do not apply. These institutions have had to grapple with issues such as maintaining standards traditionally held dear, providing a high quality of education and qualifications of the same currency as those of the traditional or conventional system. The issues are central to the question that universities and colleges have dealt with in providing Lifelong learning as a means of providing avenues for continuing education. This is not an entirely new issue, as the concept was promoted by the UNESCO report prepared by Delors (1996) in which he presented lifelong learning as a much broader concept to that of simply focussing on the upgrading of skill sets through continuous and technical and vocational training. The concept in the 1996 UNESCO report embraced education in the broader sense in which I am arguing for it in this paper, and exemplified in the epithets learning to do, learning to be, learning to learn, and learning to live together. The literature leans more in the direction of using the term "learning" to cover the comprehensive scope in which it applies across education systems. As Porter (2006: 3) observes, students with family responsibility and jobs benefit from the flexible access made possible by online and distance learning strategies. In the same context, Halimi (2005: 13) notes that "it clearly falls to lifelong learning to give everyone the opportunity of thinking about the gaps in their understanding and filling them in so as to keep up with progress." She further suggests (p.13) that "Lifelong learning must provide its learners with the tools necessary for 'staying in the race'...This is a race in which states know full well they need to equip themselves with the best skilled and qualified human resources possible."

In the Caribbean the rush of private companies and offshore universities to provide tertiary education to the people of the region generated much discussion about the objectives of tertiary education. Many noted that the development of human resources for the economic benefit of the region was not necessarily the primary role of these institutions. They were in the business primarily to make a profit and issues of matriculation and standards with which the University of the West Indies had been concerned for years and which dictated access to university education were not critical factors to the offer of education by these offshore institutions. I will refer specifically to the case of the University of the West Indies, which is the largest tertiary level institution in the region and which also has the widest reach to demonstrate an example of an innovative response using Distance and ICTs to meet the challenges posed by competition.

III. THE UWI OPEN CAMPUS – AN INNOVATION FOR EXPANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

An important issue that universities have been forced to address is related to the difference between the traditional roles that they have played and the demands of developing societies. Traditionally, universities have provided a staple educational diet based on what their Faculties perceived as necessary. However, the demands of the labour force for qualified individuals to contribute to the process of economic growth led to the necessity of responding to a needs or demands driven model to provide the training of adults in the work force. The flexibility of the technology and the versatile use of ICTs would make possible the introduction of a model that could incorporate the best of the traditional university, which in its bricks and mortar manifestations could, and has been required to, continue to offer a primarily traditional slate of courses in more or less traditional mode but infused with ICTs to appeal to the younger clientele who opt to access education on a campus. As noted in the UNESCO document, "The answer to the challenge of education for development will include the use of information and communication technologies, provided the necessary organizational and policy changes can be implemented to make the technologies effective" (2002: 19).

The University, having established at its inception Centres known as Extra Mural departments to provide continuing education primarily for adults, and having experimented with Distance Education first through the UWIDITE Experiment[4] and subsequently expanding this service through the UWIDEC[5], could harness the capabilities of these entities to create an Open Campus "*to enable the University to expand the scope, enhance the appeal and improve the efficiency of its service to the individuals, communities and countries which it serves*".[6] With forty-two sites in sixteen countries across the Caribbean region, the Open Campus would allow the University to provide increased access to its programmes and make available to those to whom access had hitherto not been possible courses and programmes that would serve to provide them with continuing education and prepare them for the world of work. Through a transformation of the traditional methodologies for teaching and learning, and by broadening the range and scope of content, the Open Campus could address, in a more thorough way, government demands that it contribute to the development of human and economic resources of the region.

4 The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE).

5 The University of the West Indies Distance Education Center (UWIDEC).

6 The University of the West Indies, Strategic Plan 2007 -2012, p. 31.

The Open Campus sought to do this by

- improving service to the countries of the Eastern Caribbean and "under-served' communities in campus countries
- supporting the economic, social and cultural growth of the OECS (UWI 12) countries as well as communities within the larger countries with established campuses and
- providing the peoples of the region with equal access to education and professional development opportunities.

In these ways the Open Campus could respond by providing flexibility of access to full-time employed adults. The establishment of a Pre-University Department within the Academic Programming and Delivery Division would also allow the Open Campus to implement in a meaningful way the concept of openness by providing opportunities for those without certification to register for courses and programmes that would help them to acquire the skills and competences they would need to access successively higher levels of education. With emphasis placed on prior learning assessment (PLA) at entry and exposure to courses of study designed to develop skills and competence that ensure the learning outcomes have met the overall standards of the university at exit.

The pedagogical approaches used by the Open Campus are those which incorporate the principles described by Scott (2003) and promote most effective use of ICTs (see Porter 2006). These methods are student-centred, needs-driven and based on constructivist strategies. They cater to the needs of a wide range of clientele, including teenagers who may have dropped out of secondary school, single and working parents as well as senior citizens, through a laddered approach to education that offers a seamless transition from one level to the next through the application of Prior Learning Assessment to facilitate access and designing re-usable learning objects for building certification. These enable the learner to achieve outcomes of as high a quality as the traditional campuses and they also enable seamless transfer to these campuses.

Using a technology environment that is flexible and meets learner needs, the campus provides the learning online, onsite and on demand to its learners across the region and provides a framework through which Caribbean society can build resources and move towards innovation in the senses discussed in this paper. The existence of forty-two physical sites in different locations also allows the campus to provide selected courses and programmes face-to-face and provide additional support in these contexts for learners who may need special tutoring. By designing an innovative ad-

ministrative structure that places students at the centre of its operations, expanding the technological infrastructure and extending the modalities, methods and strategies for delivering content, the Open Campus has focused on and implemented a more student-centred approach while, at the same time, making provision for greater flexibility of access to its courses and programmes and most important, opening up possibilities for a much wider clientele to access education, particularly higher education.

Through the enhancement of its Distance Education capabilities, the Open Campus of the UWI, itself an innovative entity in the delivery of higher education in the region, seeks to contribute to the development of innovative Caribbean societies by transforming the learning – teaching enterprise to attract and engage adults and young adults seeking personal development opportunities as well as disaffected youth who may have dropped out of the education system early. The potential for an education system such as the Open Campus to transform societies and support the efforts of regional governments to develop the human capital of the region in such a way as to create societies that are ordered, industrious and prosperous are listed succinctly in the UNESCO 2002 document. Among the benefits listed with which the Open Campus can identify are the following:

- increase access to learning and training opportunities
- provide (for all who seek them) opportunities for updating, retraining and personal enrichment
- improve cost-effectiveness of educational resources
- balance inequalities between age groups
- extend geographical access to education
- provide speedy and efficient training for key target groups
- expand the capacity for education in new and multidisciplinary subject areas
- offer the combination of education with work and family life
- develop multiple competencies through recurrent and continuing education (2002: 20-21)

In addition to the methods described for transforming the system of education provided by the Distance arm of its operations, the UWI Open Campus also promotes partnerships as it seeks to achieve its strategic

objectives. One of the critical issues is whether a framework that allows for partnerships would facilitate and accelerate growth and development. In keeping with University tradition, the campus espouses the benefits of establishing partnerships. The University has established partnerships primarily with Canadian institutions since 1998 and there are now seventeen active agreements between Canadian institutions and the University. Partnerships for Open and Distance learning with institutions need to be considered from the perspective of the mutual benefit to the institutions but possibilities for student exchanges can be accommodated.

The Open Campus also partners with established campuses of the University to promote the overall well-being and financial stability of the University. This is an enduring objective to promote the regionality of the University as well as a collaborative effort to position the institution to propel human and capital development in the region.

While partnerships with governments and non-governmental organisations in the region are important for propelling the further development of the peoples of the region, there are issues related to partnerships with other educational institutions. The Open Campus supports the concept of a network of institutions including Community Colleges with which it could partner to (i) further enhance the reach and slate of pre-university programmes to Caribbean communities and (ii) to provide opportunities for staff development through the Open Campus. Such partnerships would not only allow for extending access to University programmes through franchise agreements, they would also lead to better articulation of programmes and the further development of community colleges as affiliates of UWI. Through partnerships with UWI and its Open Campus, State and community colleges would receive assistance in strengthening their institutions to build capacity progressively and create a distinct possibility for offering programmes at higher levels. Through the application of stringent quality assurance procedures, governments would have the assurance that the UWI and other local institutions they support would be providing education of a high quality in a wide range of specialisation to as many in the population who would seek and benefit from this education. These are some ways by which education systems can themselves innovate to become more effective and in so doing contribute actively towards the creation of industrious, prosperous and innovative societies.

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HAZEL SIMMONS-MCDONALD

Hazel Simmons-McDonald is the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of the West Indies Open Campus, a post which she has held from August 1, 2007. Prior to that, she served as Head of the Department of Language, Linguistics and Literature, Deputy Dean of Outreach, Deputy Dean – Planning and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the Cave Hill Campus. She is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Cave Hill Campus of the University, in Barbados. Her research interests include second language acquisition, the development of literacy by Creole and Creole Influenced Vernacular speakers and vernacular literacy within the formal context. Her publications include articles on language acquisition, language education policy, literacy development, and language and culture. She supervises students engaged in these areas of research. hazel.simmons-mcdonald@open.uwi.edu

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES OPEN CAMPUS: RIDING THE WAVES, TIMING THE TIDES

EL SURGIMIENTO DE LA SEDE ABIERTA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES: CABALGANDO LA OLA, Y A LA BÚSQUEDA DEL MOMENTO OPORTUNO

VIVIENNE ROBERTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
THE OPEN CAMPUS

UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES

ABSTRACT

As the University of the West Indies celebrates both its sixtieth anniversary and the launch of the Open campus, the paper reflects on its grand strategy for access or outreach, highlights some relevant landmarks on the road to institutional openness and projects towards a new horizon. In the context of the grand strategy of widening access to tertiary education, there have been a few documented but unimplemented recommendations at UWI for the establishment of a fourth or open campus. This paper reflects on this situation and takes the position that there have been many waves and counter-currents that would have caused the idea to go adrift. However, the emergence and establishment of the UWI Open Campus in 2008 reflects not only a shift by the University into Mode 2 behaviour but also the discernment and seizing of an opportunity as well as the recognition by key stakeholders of an idea whose time had come. The paper also examines the university's attempt to renew itself as its leaders take appropriate steps through strategy, structure, systems and organizational culture in order to maximise opportunities and market share.

RESUMEN

Dado que la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales (UWI, por sus siglas en inglés) está celebrando tanto su sexagésimo aniversario como el lanzamiento de su Sede Abierta, el documento reflexiona sobre la estrategia orientada al acceso o al alcance de la institución. Señala algunos puntos relevantes en el camino hacia la apertura institucional, y presenta una proyección hacia un nuevo horizonte. En el contexto de la estrategia de ampliar el acceso a la educación superior, ha habido diversas recomendaciones documentadas, aunque no implementadas en la UWI, para el establecimiento de una cuarta sede, ña sede abierta. Este documento reflexiona sobre esta situación y asume la posición de que ha habido muchos elementos en contra que habrían podido hacer fracasar la idea. No obstante, el surgimiento y el establecimiento de la Sede o Campus Abierto de la UWI en 2008 no sólo refleja un cambio en la Universidad hacia un comportamiento Modo 2, sino también que los principales propulsores de la idea hayan comprendido que había llegado el momento, y que hayan aprovechado la oportunidad. El documento también examina el intento de la universidad de renovarse a sí misma, mientras sus líderes dan los pasos apropiados mediante una cultura de estrategias, estructuras, sistemas y organización, con miras a obtener el máximo provecho de las oportunidades y del segmento de mercado que le corresponde.

INTRODUCTION

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.
Shakespeare: Julius Caesar
Act 4, Scene 3, 218-224

Living in island states and surrounded by water, one often encounters not only the realities and opportunities of time and tides but also the physical power and sweeping impact of waves and currents. It matters not whether the intention is the pursuit of business or pleasure, fishing, sailing, swimming, bathing or the movement of cargo. The energy of the breaking waves, the turbulence of counter-currents and the ebb and flow of the changing tides embody the realities of life and the constant of perpetual change. The swimmer, the surfer or the sea bather may be experiencing the same environment but the differences in their goals and purposes require that they plan differently, assume different trajectories and take different actions in order to achieve their separate and specific goals efficiently. Ironically, however, success relies as much on the difference in their operations as it does on a measure of harmony in their grand strategy.

It is this grand strategy that Copley (2006) describes when he states that "to succeed, the grand strategy must embrace the realistic and the mystical, the measurable and the intangible. Its underpinnings must consist of immutables: goals which will realistically endure even though circumstances change. Its goals must be sufficiently remote to provide a constant star of hope, and its operational strategy must provide recognizable landmarks, links with history, and familiar horizons."

Returning to the context of the beach, the discerning student can learn many life lessons which are also applicable to the tertiary education environment. These include

- firstly, the lesson of timing: failure to meet the tide when it is high may result in being stranded on the sandy shore, floored by lost opportunity;

- secondly, the lesson of intelligence or understanding of context: it is necessary to perceive not only the speed of the oncoming wave but also how high it will rise, how soon it will break and how wide will be its sweep;

- thirdly, the lesson of planning and strategising: the planner needs to know how to align himself, whether to go with the flow or swim against the current;

- fourthly, the lesson of execution: the implementer needs to launch the project at the right time and for the appropriate target group while using the appropriate approach.

In sum, one can learn from the sea that timing the tide, understanding the currents, planning a course of action and acting appropriately and in a timely manner will influence the extent to which the swimmer advances, the height to which the surfer soars, the degree to which the sea bather stands her ground and the extent to which tertiary educational institutions thrive and maintain their relevance.

In 2008, the University of the West Indies celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, the establishment of the Western Jamaica Campus and the launch of the Open Campus. These are important changes that are no doubt taking place in response to waves and driven by imperatives in the environment. Very likely, they are taking place also in concert with the tides but hampered somewhat by counter-currents.

Reflecting on the launch of the Open campus, some important questions suggest themselves.

- Why has it happened at this point in time? What are some of the factors that have converged to favour its establishment?

- How is this entity different from the other campuses in terms of its relevance to twenty first century tertiary educational demands?

- What are the critical and immediate challenges that the Open Campus faces?

- How can the UWI Open Campus address the challenges related to its sustainable development?

FRAMEWORK

This idea of the ability and imperative of institutions to maintain relevance is central to this paper and relevance is seen to be important both in terms of a changing society and a more demanding clientele. It is becoming increasingly clear that, in an environment which is becoming more and more market driven, students place high premium on programme relevance

and services in relation to their individual needs and preferences. The importance of institutional relevance has been flagged and interrogated by Gibbons (1998) who argues that in light of the changing environment of the twenty first century, universities must change progressively from the role of knowledge production to knowledge configuration, an adaptation which he describes as Mode 2.

The paper also embraces some suggestions offered by Alfred (2000) who argues that if tertiary education institutions are to compete in the future, they have to be able to renew themselves from within and their leaders must take appropriate steps through strategy, structure, systems and organizational culture in order to maximize opportunities and increase market share.

In the context of the grand strategy of widening access to tertiary education and looking back over the past sixty years, there have been at least three explicit recommendations for the establishment of a fourth entity at UWI. Prior to 2008, the recommendations had not been implemented. This paper reflects on this situation and takes the position that in the past, there have been many waves and counter-currents that would have caused the idea to go adrift. However, the emergence and establishment of the UWI Open Campus in 2008 reflects:

- an increasing shift by the University into more relevant and adaptive behaviours;
- the discernment and seizing of a development opportunity;
- a response to regional and international competition, as well as
- key stakeholder' sponsorship of an idea whose time had come.

ORGANISATION

This paper presents firstly a historical overview of the transformation of tertiary education organization in response to significant waves of change and counter-currents in the prevailing environment. For convenience, the paper identifies three periods comprising (i) early establishment in colonial times – the beginnings which represent a period of erecting walls to create discrete structures; (ii) the post-independence period which embraces both the expansion of physical structures as well as the connection of different structures through administrative amalgamation or programme articulation, thus beginning a breaking down of the boundaries; and (iii) expansion beyond the walls, a focus on open and distance learning. Sec-

ondly, the paper points to and discusses some of the waves of change and counter-currents that are associated with this on-going transformation. Thirdly, it argues that the expansion of Distance Education in the region in general and the emergence and establishment of the UWI Open Campus in particular are a manifestation of the transition from a shift in focus of universities from knowledge production to knowledge configuration along the lines of Gibbons' Mode 2 model. This reality has been in the making for several years and can be seen now as an idea that has timed the tide.

The paper concludes by looking at the manifestations of the Open Campus as an institution committed to knowledge configuration and examines the challenges for its continued development and safe anchor. It also notes that for the campus' sustained development, new approaches need to be adopted in order to achieve relevance through changes in strategy, structure, processes and culture.

SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION – THE BLURRING OF INSTITUTIONAL BOUNDARIES

Broadly, during the colonial period, the development trend was from unorganised and dispersed local activity to the establishment of small specialist institutions – mainly Teachers' and Theological Colleges and later a School of Nursing. Starting in 1745 with Codrington College (operating first as a school), other theological colleges joined the pool. Subsequently, Teachers' Colleges were established. These institutions probably evolved in response to the imperative of achieving social control and with the assistance of philanthropists and religious groups such as the Moravians. The point which is being emphasised here is that this was a period of erecting discrete institutions.

The decade of the 1940s was also, in the main, a period of establishment of specialist institutions including a focus on Agriculture and Public Health. The imperatives of greater secondary school output, the development of the middle class and the expanding interest in trade unionism and friendly societies also created demand for higher education and contributed to the establishment of the University College of the West Indies – a College of London University, designed for the study of Arts and Sciences.

The 1950s was also a period of establishment of other specialist institutions, including technical institutions such as the College of Arts, Science and Technology in Jamaica. On the other hand, the sixties represented a turning point where the University College of the West Indies became an independent university (the University of the West Indies, UWI) and multiplied itself into three campuses. As soon as the university became an independent entity, it also set about affiliating itself to the theological colleges

and linking itself with the teachers colleges through a Joint Board arrangement. This represented a start to the blurring of institutional boundaries.

The first Community College, Barbados Community College, was also established through a process of amalgamation of sixth form studies with a Technical Institute, and with plans for incorporating other institutions in the future. This began a process of bringing institutions closer together into single administrative units but independently of UWI.

The 1970s saw a proliferation of community colleges in The Bahamas and Jamaica and the 1980s represented a period of community college establishment in many of the Caribbean countries that did not have a UWI campus. These were created in four different ways. In Antigua, Dominica, St Lucia and St Vincent, they were formed by the amalgamation of different types of specialist institutions. Brown's Town and Montego Bay Community Colleges in Jamaica resulted from the merging of similar sections, the sixth forms, of multiple institutions. In a few instances such as Portmore and Turks and Caicos Community College, they were new institutions. In the vast majority of cases, the creation of community colleges represented the breaking down of discrete specialist institutions in order to create more multidisciplinary and multi-purpose institutions.

The community college represented a jigsaw puzzle piece that did not easily fit in the pre-existing picture. It seemed to be a hybrid institution reaching down into the upper levels of the secondary school, up into the lower level of the university and across into the world of work. Some embraced it as an effective mechanism for widening access to tertiary education. Others endorsed it as a means of rapidly responding to community and market needs. Yet others criticised it as a misfit which would lower the academic quality of tertiary education. Still others saw these colleges as glorified secondary schools. It would take many years for them to establish their legitimacy and form linkages with the universities of the region.

This trend of blurring the boundaries was also taking place within the UWI itself. The Extramural department was a part of the University from its inception. In many ways, however, it was parallel and not integrated. Over time, the extramural department underwent expansion through the establishment of physical structures throughout the region, but there were clear boundaries between intramural and extramural studies.

A significant erosion of boundaries occurred with the introduction of the 1977 Mona Faculty of Social Sciences' Challenge initiative, spearheaded by Fred Nunes. This opened up an opportunity for collaboration between the extramural department and the Mona campus to help off-campus and non-campus students prepare for the sitting of challenge examinations.

The 1980 establishment of the UWIDITE system also provided an alliance between the campuses and the extramural centres and further laid the groundwork for the establishment in 1996 of the UWI Distance Education Centre.

The change in name of the extramural centres to the School of Continuing Studies in 1990 perhaps identified also a phase of greater collaboration between outreach and mainstream UWI. In 1996 a number of certificates from the Schools of Continuing Studies in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were recognized by the campuses for normal matriculation. In this first decade of the twenty first century, School of Continuing Studies Associate degrees were also recognized by the UWI campuses for normal matriculation and advanced placement. It is true to say therefore that the walls of separation have become increasingly permeable.

Over the entire period, the overarching imperative has been the provision of access to students for the development of the society. From decade to decade, the immediate need and strategy have varied. During colonial times, the nominal interest in education for the wider public was for social control and the focus was mainly on religious education. By the 1940s, the wave would have been that of functional training for persons in friendly societies, trade unions and other community activities as well as catering to the needs and interests of the emerging middle class.

The 1950s invited a pragmatic response to technical and public health needs and the 1960s to the provision of trained managers and leaders for the newly independent states and those that were contemplating nationhood. The change from elitist higher education to mass education of diverse groups was becoming a reality from the 1960s and in the 1970s, larger numbers of persons were seeking training to help them find employment in the emerging manufacturing and service industries. The single university could not keep pace with the demand and as new institutions met the demand in some areas, public pressure began to be exerted on the pool of institutions to create connecting access pathways. At the same time, students, employers, the wider public and governments were beginning to hold tertiary institutions more accountable, particularly as training was becoming more expensive and also because the reputation of the new institutions was not yet established.

Feeling the impact of globalisation and competition from actual and virtual foreign tertiary education providers, with the expansion of information and communication technology and attention to knowledge based economies in the 1990s governments advocated and supported expanded human resources development. This trend continued and became even more evident in the first decade of this century as attempts have been made to produce life-long learners and create knowledge societies.

ATTEMPTS AT ESTABLISHMENT OF A FOURTH UWI CAMPUS

It is reported that in 1970 the UWI Council approved the establishment of a fourth outreach entity, agreeing that:

> *The University should accelerate its efforts to include external studies, using where possible all the means at its disposal, such as correspondence courses, radio, television, audio-tutors, itinerant lecturers, and vacation courses, and that the university participate more actively in post-"O" level and technical education in the territories with special reference to the non-campus territories." (Ramesar, 1992)*

This initiative implies an expansion of the work of the extramural department with a focus on expansion in the non-campus countries (NCCs). The following decade was one in which tertiary education access was high on the agendas of all the contributing governments and those of the NCCs were moving to improve tertiary enrolment through national approaches, mainly through the establishment of Community Colleges. It is true to say that within UWI at that time, the thrust for expanded outreach seemed to be coming from the Faculty and departmental levels. Thus, the initiatives were neither at the highest level nor did they have broad-based internal support.

After the restructuring of the UWI in the 1980s, the countries without a campus agitated for greater visibility in the University. In response UWI established an Office of University Services to represent their interest and mobilise UWI's resources to deal with their needs. Additionally, the School of Continuing studies expanded its offerings and succeeded in receiving institutional recognition of some of its certificates.

Esmond Ramesar (1992), Resident Tutor of the Extramural department in Trinidad and Tobago, submitted a comprehensive proposal for the establishment of a fourth entity, a college. In this proposal, he:

- projected the college as an integrating entity among campuses which would serve the non-campus countries but not be limited to them; it would enhance intellectual and cultural development across the region, supplement pre-university education and mobilize campus faculties to design, deliver and update programmes and supplement it with their own staff as needed;

- pointed to financing mechanisms which included the provision for extra mural work as well as redeploying university grants and contributions from governments, external agencies and fees;

- identified objectives including the delivery of high quality, part-time and full-time external UWI degrees,

He also envisaged that this College would be established as a Faculty in its own right offering its own certification – certificates, degrees, diplomas – in the same way as other Faculties, institutes, etc. The idea was that the work of the extra mural department would be subsumed under this entity and facilitate credit transfers from the Community Colleges. It would deal with all matters related to non-campus countries, accreditation, certification and affiliation and should have a credit system for ease of operation and transfer. By virtue of its expertise and grounding in adult education, it would be responsible for research in that field and for the education of adult educators.

The Chancellor's Report of 1995 reflected the prevailing mood for increased access, accountability and service to the external environment. In response, a Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education was established. Under its umbrella, The University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC) launched a number of programmes, and the SCS expanded its offerings and introduced a number of Associate Degree programmes. Greater collaboration was also fostered with national institutions through the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit. However, a fourth autonomous UWI entity, a college, was not established.

PREVAILING WAVES AND COUNTER-CURRENTS IN THE TERTIARY EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

It is interesting to note some of the prevailing factors which have enabled the launch of a fourth campus as well as some of the counter-currents which made the launch difficult. Enablers include:

1. students' demand,
2. employers' demand,
3. commitment of the governments of campus countries,
4. support of the governments of countries without a campus,
5. interest of UWI outreach departments,
6. growing national and regional competition,
7. international competition,
8. societal technology readiness,

9. interest, numbers and level of UWI champions,

10. leverage of the institution's grand strategy and

11. articulation of a clear concept and a credible plan.

In the environment of the 1970s, conditions 1 to 5 were met but levels of competition, technology readiness, high level campus champions, the thrust of the UWI strategy plan and credibility of the campus plan were limited. Additionally, during the 1990s, the advocacy of high-level campus champions, the technology readiness of contributing countries and society's demands were not yet in full force. In 2006, the advocacy of UWI leaders at the highest level, the articulation of a clear plan, an unflinching proposition for the campus, and the buoyancy of the UWI Strategic Plan have been very significant waves in the launching of the campus.

The counter-currents include historical challenges, cultural norms and educational beliefs. The English-speaking Caribbean has a colonial history of separateness. There have been many attempts at regional integration in the areas of politics, policy, economics, trade, sports and education. Much progress has been made, albeit with prevailing counter-currents of nationalism. Of note is the case of the University of the West Indies which has a regional mandate and a regional support base, despite which it struggles to retain its regional character as campuses become more national in their student and staff profiles as well as in their funding base.

Culturally, on one hand, there are the proponents of traditional educational norms and values, including restriction to face to face education delivered by eminent scholars within cloistered institutions served by well-stocked libraries; an environment where students are only assessed by written examinations constructed and administered in an age-old format. On the other hand, there are the advocates of distance and blended learning, challenge examinations, open access and individualised learner support, prior learning assessment and recognition, non-linear learning arrangements (for example, absence of pre-requisites) , flexible assessment policies and strategies. Similarly, co-existing in a single institution there are those who embrace and others who oppose the paradigm of quality related to mission and goodness of fit, a focus on outputs above inputs, the student as customer, the lecturer as facilitator and the whole community and the internet as the learning space.

All of these tensions are serving to transform tertiary institutions radically throughout the world. Some of these changes are the core of what Gibbons characterises as Mode 2.

THE OPEN CAMPUS AS A MODE 2 INSTITUTION

Society is changing. In the Caribbean, new universities have come on the scene. No longer are universities treasured as ivory towers but are valued as instruments of human, community and national development. No longer can universities and colleges function successfully as small, elitist institutions designed to serve a small percentage of high achievers. With the introduction of mass tertiary education, the university has been forced to cater to a wider cross section of the society – diverse in age, interests, aptitude, learning styles, attitude, aspirations and educational background. In light of these changing norms, tertiary educational institutions have to revise their strategies, their organisation, their functional linkages and their service culture in order to maintain relevance.

The Open Campus bears some relationship to the entity proposed by Ramesar in 1992, but the concept has been crystallized, modernised, re-interpreted and repackaged by Carrington in recent times. The Open Campus is the fourth campus of a single university, but in many ways it is different from the others. Its differences are driven not only by practical but also by philosophical considerations.

Over the past year, the new managers have begun the actual creation of an Open Campus which bears significant differences from the other three campuses. These include the following.

- The focus on openness which is a testament to its commitment to opportunity, diversity and student support.

- The absence of its own Faculties while drawing on faculty from the other UWI campuses and other resource persons from the region and the world. Its academic programming department is lean and agile and is intended to achieve its programming objectives through teamwork, partnership with UWI faculties and other institutions inside and outside of the region.

- Its programme development, design and delivery which are informed by the market, and its transdisciplinary and solutions-focused programming intended to cater to learner needs and interest.

- Its research which is issues driven and its agenda drawn up in consultation with other stakeholders in other institutions, the private sector and civil society.

- Its organisational structure that shows a student-centred design, a flatter administrative hierarchy and the use of teams and matrix management in many of its processes.

- The campus which functions in a distributed environment with staff based in 16 countries and learners from all over the world accessing programmes and working together mainly through electronic linkages both synchronously and asynchronously.

- There is compelling evidence of the infusion of information and communication technology in its teaching and learning and administrative processes.

- Marketing is considered to be critical to the campus' growth and development.

- Quality assurance is jointly pursued with a wide cross section of interest groups.

It is true to say that these attributes present a stark contrast with the discipline-based specialist oriented, supply driven programming of past decades. In that environment, it was acceptable and even required that programmes be designed, delivered, informed by research, and quality assured mainly if not totally by faculty. Although there have been gradual and localised changes on many UWI campuses, the Open Campus by its emergence at this time requires and has the opportunity to carry out a fundamental and comprehensive transformation.

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF THE ATTRIBUTES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MODE 1 AND 2 (BASED ON GIBBONS, 1998).

Mode 1	Mode 2
Disciplinary structure is the pillar Specialist knowledge is valued Teaching content, delivery and validation is disciplinary	Focus is on knowledge and priorities with a trans-disciplinary focus
The disciplinary structure defines the research agenda	The issues determine the agenda and value is determined externally
Problems relate to academic interest, are disciplinary, rely on homogeneity of skills, the environment is hierarchical and validation is by disciplinary peer review.	Knowledge is produced in a context of application, relies on heterogeneity of skills, flatter hierarchy, more socially accountable and reflexive, uses more temporary teams and validated by wider group of heterogeneous practitioners

THE OPEN CAMPUS' RESPONSE TO THE TIDES

In concert with the tide, the Open Campus has been launched and has been transformed from a concept to a legal entity with an organisational structure, a budget and an organisational plan. The implementation of any large-scale change presents important challenges and the establishment of the Open Campus is no exception. These hurdles include broad issues which have to be addressed through policies, strategies, systems and culture change.

A unique challenge for the Open Campus is its operation in a dispersed environment where staff and students are located in different countries and do not have the facility to see their colleagues face to face on an on-going basis. This is compounded by the campus' trans-disciplinary programming which requires networking among diverse groups of persons for the development and delivery of programmes. Its attempt to provide access to a diverse population and at the same time to preserve transparency and common UWI standards also demand creativity and innovativeness. Undoubtedly, communication, matrix management, team work , harmonization of systems, quality assurance, human resource development and student support are areas which pose special challenges and have required urgent attention.

A policy of inclusiveness is necessary to build teams and allow for input from internal UWI colleagues, external stakeholders including employers, the external environment including competitors, potential students, funding governments, funding agencies, other institutions and civil society.

THE OPEN CAMPUS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In spite of the many challenges, the demand for access, the burgeoning interest in technology and the emerging culture of lifelong learning are sustaining the tide for open learning. Similarly, the incursion of foreign providers is stimulating a competitive response from the UWI.

The Open Campus is responding through alignment with the University's grand strategy and in that way will devise:

- *an access strategy* to maximise opportunities and market share to beat the competition;

- *an appropriate structure* to make the campus lean, agile, nimble, but efficient and effective;

- carefully designed *systems* to enable open entry, assure high exit standards, operate modular curricula, adopt flexible approaches in working with partners to achieve common objectives;

- *processes* which are transparent, well understood and articulated, well documented and disseminated and guided by research;

- *quality* in service and processes, student-centred and customer friendly initiatives to gain and sustain competitive advantage;

- renewed organizational *culture* so that colleagues achieve trust and commitment to the achievement of the targets and goals of the campus;

- creative *financial planning* to provide affordable, high quality programmes and services to its students and well resourced work environment for its staff in order to establish a sustainable and self-financing campus in the future.

CONCLUSION

In the Caribbean, over the years, tertiary education has become more accessible and more interconnected. The amalgamation of single institutions into larger entities and the articulation of programmes within and between institutions have reduced the level of separation. Additionally, the delivery of distance education courses and programmes by a number of institutions has made the tertiary education system more open. Undoubtedly there are currently more pathways and greater opportunities leading to and through tertiary education institutions. Many barriers have been removed and many learners are being provided with the opportunity to enter, leave and re-enter the system at different points as they embrace lifelong learning in these emerging knowledge societies in the Caribbean.

However, if tertiary institutions are to achieve and sustain excellence, survive, grow and compete against global competition, they must continue to collaborate and rationalise their offerings within their campuses and divisions as well as among each other. Many young institutions are anxious to evolve into university colleges and universities and in order to do this are trying to advance independently or in collaboration with foreign providers. This approach will normally address short term goals and short term development. But it is now possible and more advantageous in the long run for the region to use the available technology, the experience and talents of its educators and build on its individual institutional strengths to produce world class service and programmes for delivery to the wider world.

The UWI Open Campus has been launched with the tide and is beginning to move with the waves and currents. Its rapid progress implies that its architects, advocates and pilots have learnt the lessons of timing, intelligence, planning and strategising. It has been launched on the open seas with many counter-currents lying ahead. The region continues to grapple with the tensions of tradition and modernity, quality and access, regionalism and nationalism and doing more with less,.

The Open Campus can be seen as a manifestation of UWI's re-invention of itself to be relevant, responsive and appealing; to cooperate with the other three campuses to use modern information technology to offer the best possible programmes to the widest possible audience in the region and beyond; to be more innovative and entrepreneurial, and to partner with other campuses and tertiary institutions in the region to promote not only local development through national engagement but also the development of learning societies throughout the entire region and to compete on the global stage.

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VIVIENNE ROBERTS

Vivienne Roberts is Deputy Principal of the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI). She holds a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Zoology and a Diploma in Education from UWI, a Masters in Educational Leadership from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and a Ph D. in Educational Administration from the University of the West Indies. She has spent most of her working life in tertiary education as a teacher and administrator at the Barbados Community College and at UWI. She serves as a course coordinator and supervisor in UWI's on-line M Ed Educational Administration in the area of Educational Leadership. She is involved in the supervision of graduate students at UWI and also at the University of Bath, U.K. Her major research interest is in the field of Tertiary Education covering such areas as accreditation, quality assurance, inter-institutional linkages, access and the creation of a regional tertiary education system. She has published a book, monographs and several articles related to Tertiary Education Administration in the Caribbean. She served for many years as Senior Programme Officer in the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit and in that capacity was involved in the negotiation and management of a number of transfer arrangements between several colleges and UWI. Over the years she has maintained close professional ties with the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI) and the Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA). vivienne.roberts@open.uwi.edu

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GLOBALISATION AND BORDERLESS HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN: THE UWI OPEN CAMPUS CHALLENGE

GLOBALIZACIÓN Y EDUCACION SUPERIOR SIN FRONTERAS EN EL CARIBE ANGLOPARLANTE: EL RETO DE LA SEDE ABIERTA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES

LUZ M. LONGSWORTH

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
OPEN CAMPUS

EL CAMPUS ABIERTO DE LA
UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES

ABSTRACT

The Higher Education landscape in the Anglophone Caribbean has been transformed dramatically in the 21st Century. The end of the 20th century saw traditional approaches to higher education being questioned and replaced by an aggressive growth in the penetration of extra-regional institutions into the Caribbean, normally the stronghold of the University of the West Indies (UWI) in the 15 English Speaking countries which contribute to the UWI. A selective review of the literature on Globalisation and the liberalisation of trade in services, particularly through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), indicate the challenges that faced the University of the West Indies in crafting its strategic plan for the period 2007-2012. The competitive environment in higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean and the increasing demand for the UWI to balance the need for high quality accessible education within its constituency is reflected in the internal and national discourse between 2000 and 2007. The role of the UWI in its approach to expansion, both within the Caribbean as well as internationally is examined in the context of its response to the challenges faced by the growth in borderless higher education in the Caribbean. Although the UWI is seen as being responsive to the competitive threat of extra-regional (and indeed national and intra-regional developments in higher education), the paper proposes that the formation of the UWI Open Campus represents an opportunity for the UWI to respond to the needs for widened access to higher education in its constituency as well as to mount in a pro-active way a challenge in borderless higher education both in the region and extra-regionally.

RESUMEN

El panorama de la educación superior en el caribe angloparlante ha cambiado dramáticamente en el siglo XXI. Hacia finales del siglo XX los enfoques tradicionales hacia la educación superior se vieron cuestionados y fueron reemplazados por un agresivo desarrollo en la penetración de instituciones externas a la región del Caribe, cuyo dominio natural había estado en manos de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales (UWI, por sus siglas en inglés) en los quince países de habla inglesa que contribuyen con la UWI. Una revisión selectiva de la literatura sobre la globalización y la liberalización del comercio de los servicios, particularmente en virtud del Acuerdo General sobre el Comercio de los Servicios (GATS, por sus siglas en inglés), señala los retos que enfrentó la UWI en la elaboración de su plan estratégico para el período 2007-2012. El ambiente competitivo de la educación superior en el Caribe angloparlante y la creciente demanda para que la UWI equilibrara la necesidad de educación accesible y de alta calidad dentro de su circunscripción quedan reflejados en lo que se dijo interna y nacionalmente entre los años 2000 y 2007. El papel de la UWI en su enfoque hacia la expansión, no sólo dentro del Caribe sino también en el ámbito internacional, es examinado en el contexto de su respuesta a los retos que enfrenta el desarrollo de la educación superior sin fronteras en el Caribe. Aunque se percibe que la UWI responde a la amenaza competitiva de desarrollos universitarios fuera de la región (y en realidad nacionales y dentro de la región), el documento propone que la formación del Campus Abierto de la UWI representa una oportunidad para que la UWI responda a las necesidades de un acceso ampliado a la educación superior en su circunscripción, como también para que se convierta, de un modo proactivo, en un reto para una educación superior sin fronteras, dentro y fuera de la region

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INTRODUCTION

The paper undertakes a critical examination of the decision of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to move into a Mode 1 form of programme delivery. According to the General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS) classification, Mode 1 delivery refers to the cross border supply of education, under which distance and on-line delivery falls. (Table 1 gives a full listing of the four modes of delivery defined by GATS). It also examines some of the opportunities and risks faced by the UWI in the development of the Open Campus, and it does so in the context of the liberalisation of trade in higher educational services. Although the paper does not intend to give a detailed discussion of the globalisation phenomenon, it attempts to use it and the GATS as a platform to discuss the changes occurring in the higher education environment. An exploration of the growing competition in the higher education industry and the growth in borderless higher education is used to develop a framework for situating the UWI's newest initiative – the creation of an Open Campus.

The paper draws on literature on the globalisation phenomenon from an interdisciplinary perspective. In addition, literature exploring the GATS and its effects on transborder higher education internationally and with specific reference to the developing world and the Anglophone Caribbean in particular is discussed in some depth.

In evaluating the Open Campus' potential given this context, the paper seeks to explore elements of teaching and learning, structure, marketing and technological capability of virtual universities in the developing world. Specifically, the paper seeks to respond to three research questions.

- What are the primary motivating factors for the development of the Open Campus in the University of the West Indies?
- What opportunities will the Open Campus be able to grasp in the globalised and competitive environment of Higher Education in the Caribbean and internationally?
- What are the risks that the Open Campus will face or take in order to achieve the goals set out?

RESEARCH APPROACH ADOPTED

The literature on globalisation in the cultural, social, political and economic environment is surveyed. In particular, the work of Held and McGrew (2003, 2007) is seminal to the discussion of the phenomenon of globalisation. The effect of globalisation on higher education and the commercialisation of teaching and learning is examined through a number of works including those of Naidoo (2003, 2007) and Marginson et al. (2006, 2007). The Observatory on Higher Education provides a rich resource of studies on the GATS and the effects on the developing world, with particular emphasis being placed on the groundbreaking work of Jane Knight and the thorough study of the Latin American and Caribbean environment by Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta (June 2007).

A survey was used to solicit the views of members of the executive and senior management and administration of the University of the West Indies in relation to the role that globalisation has played in the University's decision to launch this Open Campus. Information obtained from this survey helps to identify in later sections of the paper some of the key risks and opportunities facing the University in this innovative venture. The questionnaire sought to identify common areas of agreement on the challenges that the leadership of the UWI at various levels expected to face in the operationalisation of the Open Campus in August 2008.

Other empirical data collected came from internal U.W.I. documentation, including the Strategic Plan for 2007-2012, private memoranda, and papers prepared for the University Council meetings.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND GLOBALISATION

The link between higher education and globalisation is one that has not always been clearly defined in the socio-political and economics literature on globalisation. Held and McGrew (2003) espouse a primarily political definition of globalisation, stressing the transborder movements of social, economic and political activities. Further, Held and McGrew, supported by other "globalists" (Isaak, 2005; Keohane and Nye, Jr., 2003) indicate that the signal feature of globalisation is the speeding up of global interconnectedness (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Peralta, 2003) or the "death of distance" (Held, Mcgrew, 2007, p.43).

The role of Higher Education is at least implied in the literature which seeks to interrogate the effects that this "phenomenon" of globalisation has had on culture, knowledge creation and dissemination (Bhagwati, 2004; Isaak 2005, Tomlinson, 2003). The ascendancy of the knowledge economy is described equally as a response to, an outcome of and in some cases a necessary myth emanating from globalisation (Hirst and Thompson, 2003; Tomlinson, 2003). However there is general agreement that globalisation requires that societies respond rapidly to the technological imperatives created by global competition. The consensus among writers is that globalisation has ushered in an era of "learning how to learn quickly or learning to fail quickly" (Isaak, 2005, p. 148).

To the extent that these views capture the reality of globalisation**,** many pressures therefore are exerted on higher education. Although the early scholars of the globalisation phenomenon often allude to the need for the knowledge economy to be driven by technological and educative forces, it is only fairly recently that the role of higher education in this transformation process has been more clearly linked to the socio-economic and political drivers which affect countries and, in particular, developing nations. Indeed, increasingly in this discourse, higher education is seen both as saviour and victim of globalisation. Naidoo (2003) sums up this view of higher education in the new consumerist world created by globalisation in the following way:

> *The perception of higher education as an industry for enhancing national competitiveness and as a lucrative service that can be sold in the global marketplace has begun to eclipse the social and cultural objectives of higher education generally encompassed in the conception of higher education as a 'public good' (p. 250)*

Here the lines are drawn clearly. On the one hand higher education and specifically the University are seen as a developmental tool for nations to educate their populations in order to be competitive in the marketplace. On the other hand, higher education, particularly in the OECD countries, is itself being transformed by the very forces that it seeks to control.

The "accelerating pace of transborder interactions and processes" (Held & McGrew, 2007) is now extended to national institutions of higher education which traditionally were concerned with mainstream teaching and research for the normal post secondary students in the 18-24 age cohort in a collegial environment. Globalisation is transforming the traditional higher education sector to one that, like the economies of the nation states, must transform itself to compete in the liberalised higher education market, while maintaining its mandate to develop the necessary knowledge sources to allow its host country to compete globally.

As governments put more pressure on higher education institutions to increase access because of their own "social objectives, economic development and world competitiveness" (Marginson, 2007), Universities are seen to be adopting a business model which, as Naidoo (2007) points out, "[has] propelled universities to function less as institutions with social, cultural and indeed intellectual objectives and more as producers of commodities that can be sold in the international marketplace" (p.4).

The "commodification" of higher education has both a positive and negative effect on nation states. In responding to market forces, it is often argued that higher education can only increase access by adopting this model which focuses less on the 'public good' (Knight, 2002; Naidoo 2003) element of a university education, and more on a market driven, competitive confrontation of the hostile forces of globalisation.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE GATS EFFECT

The transformation of the higher education sector into an industry was recognised with the inclusion of higher education in the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) signed in 1995, coming out of the Uruguay round of the WTO. (Knight, 2002). In its inclusion of education as a service subject to trade liberalisation, the GATS set the stage for a paradigm shift in the provision of higher education on an international scale. Knight succinctly summarises the four modes of delivery of higher education services that the GATS addresses in the following table:

TABLE 1: MODE OF SUPPLY (KNIGHT, 2002, P. 5)

Mode of Supply According to GATS	Explanation	Examples in Higher Education	Size/Potential of Market
1. Cross Border Supply	the provision of a service where the service crosses the border (does not require the physical movement of the consumer	Distance education - e-learning -virtual universities	-currently a relatively small market -seen to have great potential through the use of new ICTs and especially the Internet
2. Consumption Abroad	-provision of the service involving the movement of the consumer to the country of the supplier	-students who go to another country to study	currently represents the largest share of the global market for education services
3. Commercial Presence	-the service provider establishes or has presence of commercial facilities in another country in order to render service	-local branch or satellite campuses twinning partnerships - franchising arrangements with local institutions	-growing interest and strong potential for future growth -most controversial as it appears to set international rules on foreign investment
4. Presence of Natural Persons	- persons travelling to another country on a temporary basis to provide service	-professors, teachers, researchers working abroad	-potentially a strong market given the emphasis on mobility of professionals

It is fully recognised that the GATS places the pressure on governments to transform their societies' global competitiveness through increased participation in higher education (Naidoo, 2003; Marginson, 2007) by liberalizing this sector. Equally, the GATS presents countries, particularly in the developing world, with several perceived threats and risks. The strong suggestion is that the "massification" and "commodification" of higher education threaten the very idea of the role of the university in national development as well as the role of the state in transforming its Higher Education systems. (*The Economist*, 2005)

> *The problem for policymakers is how to create a system of higher education that balances the twin demands of excellence and access, that makes room for global elite universities while also catering for large numbers of average students that exploits the opportunities provided by new technology while also recognizing that education requires a human touch. (The Economist Vol. 376, issue 8443, p.4)*

Without doubt, the liberalisation of higher education globally can be seen as presenting nation states with several opportunities, primarily:

1. increased access to higher education without the attendant costs to the public purse of either developing expensive national systems or providing funding for movement of students to external universities, mostly in the high cost OECD countries;

2. the breaking down of the elitism reinforced by the divide between university graduates and non-university graduates through increased access, thus a larger percentage of the population receives higher education, creating the potential for more equitable distribution of wealth;

3. the development of a competitive national/regional higher education sector as national institutions, which, prior to the liberalisation of the sector, have had the luxury of "monopoly" status, leading to inefficiencies in delivery and higher costs;

4. the transfer of technology in the development of new modes of delivery, including e-learning and other virtual methodologies (Marginson, 2006, 2007; Didou Aupetit & Jokivirta, 2007)

However, after over ten years of liberalisation the jury is still out on the true benefits of the liberalisation of higher education and its effects in creating access, driving down costs and improving quality and technological competencies, particularly in developing countries. In the past ten years the trend in developing countries has been to concentrate on Modes 2, 3 and 4 in terms of the liberalisation of higher education. There has been an explosion of foreign universities entering the markets in a North to South directional flow. For Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta (2007, p. 13) indicate in decreasing order of importance the types of trans-national presence in the region:

1. joint degree programmes

2. provisions offered virtually or at a distance

3. branch campuses

4. franchising arrangements

5. corporate universities

The growing demand and market potential for provision of higher education services is seen in the relatively low enrolment in LAC compared to the OECD countries. Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta indicate an

average rate of 27 percent of the relevant age cohort in the region is enrolled in higher education in contrast to 55 percent in the OECD countries (p. 8)

Despite this apparently lucrative market, growth in transborder provision in Latin America and the Caribbean has not been as rapid as would otherwise have been expected given the obvious financial benefits to external providers. Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta indicate that the majority of transborder providers in LAC concentrate on "courses with minimum cost and maximum outputs" (p.14) such as Business and Economics. Additionally, in their wide study of transnational provision they have shown that the cost of education of external providers (particularly face-to-face instruction) is significantly higher than that of domestic providers. (p.18). Thus they conclude "Although it serves to satisfy some unmet demand, transnational delivery also exacerbates the enrolment imbalance in LAC, in direct opposition to widespread governmental re-distribution efforts within the region." (p 14)

This conclusion is also drawn by Daniel et. al. (2005) in examining the cases of India, Jamaica and Sierra Leone: "Judging from these cases cross border Higher Education is, at present, making a negligible contribution to the provision in developing countries of higher education that is accessible, available and affordable." (p.1)

In fact, there is a strong suggestion that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are responding to the growing entry of foreign universities with a regionalisation approach, or turning "inwards" (Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta, 2007) as they have done in other areas of trade through the formation of regional trading groups such as the South American Free Market system (MERCOSUR) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Similarly, countries are implementing systems that would limit or control the free entry of foreign universities into their domestic higher education systems. Jamaica, for example, has a University Council of Jamaica that requires registration and accreditation of all tertiary level programmes offered in that country. Brazil requires a collaborative relationship in order for foreign providers of higher education to enter the country. A general summary of regulatory requirements is extracted from Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta below.

TABLE 2: NATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR TRANSNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION IN LAC

Model	Regulations	Examples of Countries
1. No regulations	There are no special regulations or control of foreign providers, which are free to operate without seeking permission from the host country.	Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, most Anglophone Caribbean countries
2. Liberal	Foreign providers must satisfy certain minimum conditions prior to commencing operations (e.g. official recognition in the home country).	Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago
3. Moderately Liberal	The importing country is actively involved in licensing and (in some cases) accrediting transnational providers. This model requires that foreign institutions gain accreditation or other formal permission by the host country (e.g. Ministry of Education) prior to commencing operations. This category is diverse, ranging from compulsory registration to formal assessment of academic criteria. Requirements are generally straightforward and nonburdensome.	Bolivia, Chile, Jamaica, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela
4. Transitional: Moving from Liberal to more restrictive	A more restrictive regulatory framework is gradually being introduced	Anglophone Caribbean?

Verbik, L. and L. Jokivirta (2005), National Regulatory Frameworks for Transnational Higher Education, Observatory on Borderless Higher Education

This research indicates that despite the liberalisation of Higher Education under the GATS, countries in the developing world are not necessarily benefiting from the increased access to higher education due to high costs, limited range of subjects and regulatory limitations. In the studies conducted by Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta (2007), as well as that of Daniel et.al (2005), the role of distance education and the virtual university (Mode 1) in accelerating that access is seen as having great potential for achieving that goal. The following section will look at the virtualisation of higher education and its challenges and risks.

THE VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY AND THE CHALLENGE TO DISTANCE

The growth in distance, e-learning and the virtualisation of higher education is seen by some scholars as signalling the decline of the traditional university (Wood et. al, 2005). Both studies by Daniel et al (2005)

and Didou Aupetit (2007) which focus on countries in the developing world indicate that virtualization holds the potential to meet the needs of these populations.

> *Whilst still a minority trend, the market for foreign on-line and distance learning has been identified as an area of potential growth, particularly in regions such as the Anglophone Caribbean where populations are widely dispersed. (Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta, 2007, p. 8)*

Daniel et. al. also see the potential for the electronic delivery of services in education as changing the business model dramatically for this "industry".

However, the appropriateness of e-learning for the countries of the developing world is questioned by many scholars. While Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta admit in their study that the cost of distance programmes is somewhat lower than face-to-face delivery, they also point out that in LAC countries the internet penetration is uneven and thus technology could also create an unwanted divide in very much the same way that high cost has done. The average internet penetration rate in South America is 18% and 13% in the Anglophone Caribbean. The rates of internet penetration regionally vary from a low of 4% in Bolivia to a high of 59% in Barbados. (www.internetworldstats.com). This may lead, and some would feel it has already led, to a state where "those who lack access to the Internet are disconnected, marginalized, left outside..." (Marginson and Sawir, 2005, p. 286)

Other concerns about the appropriateness of distance education/e-learning are expressed widely in relation to issues of quality of instruction and homogenization of information in a pre-packaged form. Newman and Johnson further challenge the appropriateness of the "decomposition of knowledge into packages" (p 81) as well as the generalised view that e-learning is less costly. Their thesis claims that the costs for administering the technology are very high and negate the view that this is a more cost effective method of transmission of knowledge. Despite these arguments it is very clear that, as a response to the liberalisation of higher education, virtualisation of learning offers a very different business model that is likely to change the pattern of delivery of education. With delivery through the technology, Portaencasa (2000) points out that there will be a lack of emphasis on physical facilities which will lead to an explosion in the enrolment in Universities.

This argument however is discounted by Glenford Howe (2005) who sees the push towards internet based education disconnected totally from the bricks and mortar of Faculties as a "construct of foreign ideologues", as is the case of the World Bank's promotion of the development of virtual

universities (the African Virtual University). Howe's rejection of the virtualisation of education in the Caribbean is somewhat validated by the central argument put forth by Naidoo and Jamieson (2005), that the virtual university is particularly vulnerable to the forces of commodification and that repositioning it as an international service which operates on economic considerations is "inimical to high quality learning" (p. 37)

The impact, however, of the virtualisation of higher education on teaching and learning as well as research is yet to be studied. The general view is that virtual higher education is able to harness general undergraduate education and professional training, but is not appropriate for higher level thinking and research or to the expression of the linguistic and cultural diversity of a country which lead towards its socio-economic development. (UNESCO, 2004)

The final negative element often highlighted in the research is that distance education and e-learning delivery dehumanize the learning process and create a sense of alienation and loneliness in cyberspace (Newman and Johnson, 1999; Wood et. al., 2005). Further, the teaching and learning process requires the interaction between tutor and student in order for the student to acquire the skills transferred by the tutor, through an apprenticeship model of learning.

> *The project of virtualising higher education exhibits naïve empiricism which ignores the role of apprenticeship and implicit, craft knowledge in the generation of technical progress and scientific discovery (Newman and Johnson, 1999, p. 79).*

However, there is no doubt that the e-learning model is now the wave of the future that will seek to overcome the negatives of the 'distant' mode. The potential of the Virtual University to truly transcend borders is tremendous. Despite the various regulatory frameworks in the developing countries, the monitoring of e-learning programmes is extremely difficult for any regulatory body. One constraining factor for developing countries is the limitation of internet bandwidth which, arguably, has already led to the creation of a technological and educational divide between developed and developing world. In addition, the potential of e-learning to create economies of scale and standardization of knowledge can be seen as a double-edged sword: while increasing access it can also result in the homogenisation of knowledge which can lead to an erosion of local cultural values.

Some of these are the issues that have faced the University of the West Indies, one of only two regional universities in the world as it seeks to confront the challenges of globalisation and borderless higher education.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES PIONEERING DISTANCE EDUCATION

The University of the West Indies (UWI) was founded in 1948 as a College of the University of London. One of three such colleges created that year by England in its colonies, the major aim of the colonial power was to create a mechanism that would allow the colonies to develop an intellectual elite to guide the development of the countries (Sherlock and Nettleford, 1990). The first campus was established on the Mona estate in Jamaica, while campuses in Trinidad (St. Augustine) and Barbados (Cave Hill) followed in 1961 and 1963 respectively. Having received its own Royal Charter in 1962 the University College of the West Indies was transformed into the University of the West Indies serving fifteen countries in the region.[1]

From its inception, however, the UWI was involved in a dual mode of delivery of education. The founders of the University, recognising the need for the University to embrace the dispersed populations of the Anglophone Caribbean, insisted on not just the residential campus model, but instituted at the same time an Extra Mural Department that would operate in each of the countries as the outreach arm of the University.

The aim of the Extra Mural Department was to provide adult education in a systematic way to all classes and conditions of persons across the region. There was, indeed, general consensus on the need to establish Extra Mural Centres in the so called Non-Campus Countries (NCC's) in order to provide them with access to higher education (Fergus et al, 2007).

Without a doubt, this model adopted by the UWI's founders anticipated the need for distance education and can be aligned to the modes three and four forms of extending education under the GATS classification cited earlier from Knight (2002). For many years the Extra Mural Department in the NCCs brought higher education to the smaller territories through visiting lecturers from the main campuses, access courses taught locally with the aim of allowing students to matriculate into the main campuses, and cultural and artistic exchanges.

In its evolution to face and meet the needs of the NCCs for greater access to university education, the University, through the facility of the Department of Extra Mural Studies, introduced in 1977 the "Challenge" examinations. These examinations allowed students in the NCCs to sit the same examinations that on-campus students would sit but without benefit of the face-to-face instruction that their campus based colleagues had. This

1 Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago

was yet another stage in the development of the UWI's distance education project that would widen access to the region.

The "Challenge" system, although instrumental in giving opportunities to students in the NCCs to matriculate into the campuses created a bottle neck in the system, as limited places on the campuses prevented some who qualified to enter the UWI. In 1983 another stage in the development of the distance education project was launched. The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE) was launched from the Mona Campus. According to Brandon (1999), regular programming began in the academic year 1983/84, but prior to that there had been several years of piloting of courses using this modality.

The "Experiment" sought to provide students with full certificate and degree programmes particularly in the Social Sciences, available within the country without the need to travel to one of the main campuses to complete the degree. The UWIDITE platform was based on a blended learning model which included audio conferencing, local face-to-face tutorial support, and pre-packaged course material. Attempts at developing video conferencing capabilities were unsuccessful due to the inadequacy of the technology available to the University at that time.

The Distance programmes were offered through the Extra Mural Department in the NCCs and in stand-alone facilities in the Campus Countries of Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. This revolutionary approach allowed students to complete their programmes in-country without the need to travel overseas thus reducing the cost to the governments for funding higher education in their countries. The UWIDITE ceased to be an experiment in 1996 and was re-branded as the UWIDEC (UWI Distance Education Centre). Also in 1996 the Extra Mural Department was re-named the School of Continuing Studies to better reflect the evolving nature of the programming:

> *The change is seen as necessary to reflect more faithfully a less rigid distinction between the large number of on-campus and off-campus programmes and activities which are developing throughout the University . . . With so many of the Non-Campus countries, as well as areas within campus countries, located far away from campuses wishing greater participation in University life through distance education . . ., the lines of demarcation between certain intra-mural and extra-mural work are increasingly becoming blurred. (Memorandum to University Registrar from Director/Professor of Extra Mural Studies 7th July 1989, p. 1 as cited in Fergus et. al., 2007)*

The UWIDITE/UWIDEC project signalled the UWI's first challenge to the geographical imperative of the Anglophone Caribbean to engage "the tyranny of distance" (Afterword by Professor Rex Nettleford in Fergus et.al., 2007) This technological leap offered great promise to the region to begin to face the regional demand for higher education in a globalised world. However the growing demands for higher education in the region were difficult to keep up with as the UWIDEC, with its reliance on campus based faculty and resources to develop its programmes showed relatively small growth in student numbers when compared to the on-campus growth at the UWI.

TABLE 3 UWI ENROLMENT IN DISTANCE PROGRAMMES 1997-2000, AND 2005 -2007

1997	1998	2000	2005	2006	2007
1,447	1,888	2663	2762	3236	3670

1997 – 2000 figures taken from Fergus et. al , 2007, p.102, 2005-2007 figures provided by the Project Office, UWIDEC

Although having a stellar start in 1997, the growth in distance students ten years later had not fulfilled its earlier promise, nor had it addressed the need faced by the region's students. Note that these figures do not include students enrolled in the School of Continuing Studies. In comparison, on-campus enrolment over the period increased by approximately 100 percent on average at UWI's three campuses in only the last five years with now a total enrolment of nearly 40,000 students region wide.

In 2004, the new Vice Chancellor of the UWI, began a series of consultations with the NCCs to evaluate the UWI's response to the region's needs. The findings of those consultations were critical to the development of the UWI's new strategic plan for the period 2007-2012 and provided the UWI with an eye-opening and critical evaluation of its response to the needs of the region in Higher Education in the context of globalisation. Many of the countries consulted expressed disappointment with the role that the UWI was playing in meeting the imperatives of access to higher education, particularly in the smaller member countries of the UWI. (Country Consultation Reports, Internal documentation from the Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education). In the context of the goal set by the CARICOM Heads of Government to have at least 15 percent of the 18-24 age cohort enrolled in post secondary education and with the liberalisation of the higher education system, extra-regional providers had become a cheaper and less problematic way for the countries to grow their enrolment in higher education.

In his discussions with stakeholders the Vice Chancellor of the UWI indicated the disadvantages of the Anglophone Caribbean relying on extra-regional provision of higher education as follows:

Disadvantages of "Non-Regional" Providers included:

- quality of programmes uncertain ("unknown institutions" in USA providing distance programmes) – there was a need for a Regional Accreditation Agencycurriculum content and programmes not directed to Caribbean development needs (limited relevance)
- risk of loss of most talented young people from the region (remittances cannot replace loss of "knowledge capital")
- capital out-flows in payments of tuition/fees and support to extra-regional providers
- restriction of programmes to "what is profitable" (business, computer science) not what is necessary for national development
- loss to students of mentorship and role models of Caribbean origin ("psychic loss")

(Country Consultation Report on St. Lucia, November 9 and 10, 2005, Board for Non-Campus Countries)

After the completion of 12 such country consultations, it was clear that the University of the West Indies had to restructure its offerings in order to respond more adequately to the needs of its stakeholders while driving innovation in learning technologies. The concept of the Open Campus was then proposed to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the UWI in November of 2006 and the establishment of the Open Campus approved by the UWI Council in May of 2007. (UWI Internal documentation)

THE UWI'S OPEN CAMPUS

MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT

In the UWI's Strategic Plan for 2007-2012, it is clear that the University's management is fully aware of the imperative to transform UWI to respond to the challenges of the globalisation of higher education. The following excerpt from the Plan indicates the concerns of the UWI.

The following will be of particular importance to the UWI going forward to 2012:

- the dynamics of the knowledge-based economy and society
- the multiple impacts of globalisation, including implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
- the public policy commitment of contributing countries to the expansion of participation in tertiary education
- the continuing revolution in information, computer and telecommunication technologies

(UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012, presented to the University Council in May 2007)

The development of the Open Campus is highlighted in the strategic plan as one of the four strategic areas of focus for the period, the other three being Teaching and Learning, Graduate Studies, and Research and Innovation. (UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012). However, given the bulleted points taken from the plan and listed above, it is clear that much is riding on the success of the Open Campus to transform the UWI into a more flexible, responsive and proactive institution. The Open Campus combines the resources of the outreach arms of the University, namely the UWIDEC, The School of Continuing Studies both discussed earlier, and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit which was established in 1996 to develop collaborative links with other regional tertiary institutions.

Feedback received from questionnaires sent out to senior members of the executive management and administration of the UWI across the campuses and countries revealed the expectations for the Open Campus to lead the transformation of the University in competing with the global inflows of Universities by providing:

- access to the same quality UWI education through flexible means of on-line and other distance modes of delivery. Eight out of the ten respondents indicated that the move of the UWI into this mode of delivery would enhance the University's image as moving with the times and breaking out of the traditional modes of delivery
- enhancing the University's ability to increase enrolment regionally without the need for major investments in new bricks and mortar facilities. In addition half of the respondents felt that the Open Campus would be able to attract increased enrolment from the Diaspora. In addition, four out of ten respondents pointed to the growing demand for online and distance programmes in the private and governmental sectors

- providing the University with an opportunity to transform itself and the region to participate and compete in the globalised economy.

A quick review therefore suggests that in its Strategic Plan, the major motivation of the UWI in establishing the Open Campus is to service the needs of the University and the other Campuses in addressing many of the issues that it faces through a "virtualization" (Wood et.al., 2005) of the University's outreach arm.

The Strategic Plan, however, also sets out another objective for the Open Campus which indicates the UWI's entry into the arena of globalisation, the need for the Open Campus to operate not only on a cost recovery basis but to also achieve surpluses. Thus the UWI's Open Campus could be seen as becoming the "private" arm of a "public" university. This internal privatisation mirrors the approach of many of the Universities of the OECD who have formed separate campuses and consequently are able to act more flexibly in the competitive environment. This model is seen in several US State systems (for example Penn State's World Campus) and has the advantage of leveraging the brand name of the University while developing quite a different product in a niche market. It therefore represents the UWI's foray into Borderless Higher Education where "geographic and sectoral boundaries are no longer as important [as] name, brand, reputation and quality" (Wood et al., 2005, p.431)

An aggressive UWI response to the challenge of GATS was advocated from as early as 2004, by the Principal of the UWI's Cave Hill Campus, Professor and Pro Vice Chancellor Hilary Beckles (2004) who stated

> *It is widely believed that a market-driven philosophy cannot or should not be a core part of the ethos of UWI because of its deeply public functions and its reputation as a highly socio-cultural institution." Again, this posture is obsolete as GATS mode three provision confronts the notion of a special relationship to public funds.*
>
> *Despite having a well-established worldwide network of graduates, supporters and admirers, UWI has not attempted to go global with its academic product under mode three provisions. In this sense, then, it can be said that the institution has not attempted to use GATS to cash in on its enormous international intellectual capital. The rising number of mode three arrivants in the region is now urging this possibility and UWI stakeholders should expect it to respond appropriately. But in order to do so it must work skilfully with the rules of GATS, and seek the full support of its Government stakeholders. (p.11)*

Clearly, the establishment of the Open Campus is largely motivated by the need for the UWI to grapple with and confront the challenges of globalisation. Additionally, the Open Campus has the potential to exploit the GATS and to transform the UWI into a global player in the provision of borderless higher education.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL THE OPEN CAMPUS BE ABLE TO GRASP IN THE GLOBALISED AND COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CARIBBEAN AND INTERNATIONALLY?

The UWI Open Campus is entering a growth market in the provision of on-line and distance education. With the growth in access to the Internet in the Caribbean as well as the impetus for mid-career professionals to achieve certification or credentialing, there is a tremendous market for the provision of on-line and distance education.

The Open Campus' primary market is the Anglophone Caribbean with a population of just over 5 million spread among 15 countries. Air transportation among the countries is expensive, there are three time zones spreading from Belize in the West, to Jamaica and Cayman in the Central Caribbean to Trinidad and Tobago in the south eastern part of the Caribbean basin. The geographical dispersion of the Anglophone Caribbean provides an opportunity for the Open Campus to offer on-line programmes which would be more cost effective and scalable for larger numbers of students throughout the region.

Although the trend in the liberalisation of Higher Education under the GATS is towards the "even playing field" model for both extra-regional and intra-regional providers, it is safe to say that prospective students and governments are sceptical of insurgent foreign providers of higher education, particularly those with no history within the region. Many of the private sector employers in the region are still reluctant to recognise degrees from virtual universities such as Phoenix and Capella. The Open Campus of the University of the West Indies has a window of opportunity to enter this gap and leverage its reputation for high quality and relevant education. This opportunity is recognised within the University and was reinforced by almost unanimous agreement among the senior managers and administrators surveyed.

> *"The enormous regional goodwill enjoyed by UWI, and its history of community engagement, constitute primary assets that can be leveraged. The time is right for this initiative." (Member, UWI Executive Management team).*

As is set out in the UWI's Strategic Plan 2007-2012, the Open Campus will provide the same quality of degree as the traditional campuses.

Students of the Open Campus will enjoy the same quality of instruction and receive the same qualifications as students in other parts of the University.

Differences in rules governing their studies will be related only to the differences in the mode of teaching and the requirements of their scholarly experience. (UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012, p.29)

Its programmes will be subject to the same scrutiny of the relevant quality assurance Boards such as the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS) and the Board for Graduate Studies and Research (BGSR). (Creation of the UWI Open Campus, Concept Paper, May 2007). This process will serve as a strong selling point for the programmes to overcome the often expressed view in higher education circles of the inferiority of the quality of on-line programmes. (Portaencasa, 1996).

Therefore by leveraging its brand and name recognition regionally the Open Campus will be able to take advantage of the growing market in on-line and distance education.

DEFEATING THE LONELINESS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

One of the disadvantages of distance learning is the sense of loneliness, isolation and disconnectedness that students feel in the virtual environment (Newman and Johnson, 1999; Wood et. al, 2005). The Open Campus of the UWI has a strategic advantage over many other extra-regional providers. As "a network of real and virtual nodes" (UWI Strategic Plan, 2007-2012 p. 28) the Open Campus can provide physical support to its Caribbean student body through the presence of various Open Campus sites situated in each of the fifteen countries of the Anglophone Caribbean. With a complement of over thirty such "learning centres", the Open Campus students in each country will have the opportunity to interface with a brick and mortar representation of the UWI. These physical nodes will provide basic services such as computer access, access to library and on-line information systems as well as opportunities for students to meet each other at least once per year at orientation programmes. This represents a competitive advantage for UWI over other distance providers, who would have to expend large sums of money to provide similar physical access in the region.

In addition, the Open Campus Learning Centres will be a physical reminder to the region of the central role of the UWI in the countries' national development.

GLOBALISATION VS. REGIONALISATION – OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE OPEN CAMPUS

One of the interesting side effects of globalisation generally has been the tendency for countries to favour economic regionalisation to confront the challenges of the liberalised market (Held and McGrew, 2003). Through the creation of regional trading groups, small countries have banded together to be able to confront the challenges of the larger countries with more resources.

As a regional institution, the University of the West Indies' Open Campus is optimally placed to confront the challenges of the inflow of extra-regional providers of distance learning by capitalising on the economies of scale that it can achieve by virtue of its regional nature. Apart from the relatively limited market of the Anglophone Caribbean, the Open Campus also has a major opportunity to link into the Diaspora of Caribbean peoples everywhere. In that market, the brand name and image of the UWI will have much currency as members of the Diaspora, some of whom are themselves UWI graduates, will be a good target for the marketing of programmes.

This is a major opportunity as it is shown that globalisation, instead of destroying cultural identity has actually been responsible for a reassertion of national and regional cultural identities (Tomlinson, 2003; Bhagwati, 2004). Held and McGrew (2003) summarise the rise of regionalism in the global economy as follows: "Regionalism has not been a barrier to contemporary political globalisation… but on the contrary has been largely compatible with it." (p.12)

The Open Campus can then capitalise on this resurgence of cultural identity taking place in the Diaspora particularly in North America and Europe, by offering programmes by distance mode that will be attractive to that market. The Open Campus has the opportunity to promote programmes in the areas of cultural studies, eco-tourism, environmental studies and disaster management which have become key areas of interest in and on the Caribbean. In this regard, the Open Campus can capitalise on the GATS which will enable it to access the markets of the OECD and other countries.

In addition, the Open Campus can make available such programmes to students outside of the Diaspora who may also be interested in Caribbean Studies.

THE OPEN CAMPUS AND THE REVENUE STREAM FROM DISTANCE AND ON-LINE PROVISIONS

Another major benefit of the Open Campus is its potential to break away from the traditional financial model applied to higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean that has limited the UWI's access to funding. As the UWI main campuses are funded by the governments of the region, the funding formula is tied to the number of FTE (full time equivalents) that each of the traditional campuses have. The reliance of the University on the governments to fund the budgets each year does not allow for the security of the University and poses a constant risk to the sustainability of its programmes. "In order for the Open Campus to be sustainable it must adopt a business model which will rely on full cost recovery for its programmes. (UWI Strategic Plan, 2007-2012, p. 40).

Through the disaggregating of fees in a modular programme structure, the Open Campus has the potential to increase revenue while ensuring that the student is able to choose an affordable menu of courses. This is in apposition to the traditional on-campus programmes where students pay for courses on a semester basis and are required to take a minimum number of credits to remain enrolled.

In addition, the current policies of the World Bank and UNESCO and other funding agencies embrace the move towards the development of virtual universities in developing countries as a cost effective and efficient way of providing higher education. (Light, 1999; Didou Aupetit and Jokivirta, 2007). Thus funding the enterprise through grants and soft loans provided by these agencies is a bright prospect for the injection of the capital needed to develop the Open Campus' technological infrastructure.

THE RISKS FACING THE OPEN CAMPUS

As with any new venture there are tremendous risks facing the Open Campus of the UWI as it moves into the full scale provision of higher education through e-learning models.

The risks can be classified as:

1. technological
2. financial
3. academic (Quality Assurance)

TECHNOLOGICAL RISKS

The success of any virtual enterprise is heavily dependent on the technological capabilities of the organisation as well as of its stakeholders. In this regard, the relatively low levels of internet penetration in the countries of the Caribbean present a major challenge to the Open Campus. Internet penetration statistics for November 2007 show total internet penetration in Latin America and the Caribbean at only 22% of population and in the Caribbean, a penetration of only 15% [2]

TABLE 4: INTERNET PENETRATION IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

CARIBBEAN	Population (2007 Est.)	Internet Usage, Latest Data	% Population (Penetration)	Use Growth (2000-2007)
Anguilla	13487	3,000	22,2%	226.4%
Antigua & Barbuda	72,377	29,000	40.1%	480.0%
Bahamas	335,142	103,000	30.7%	686.3%
Barbados	267,353	160,000	59.8%	2,566.7%
Belize	312,233	38,000	12,2%	153.3%
British Virgin Islands	22,434	4,000	17.8%	n/a
Cayman Islands	50,348	9,909	19.7%	27.0%
Dominica	71,388	26,000	36.4%	1,200.0%
Grenada	101,008	19,000	18.8%	363.4%
Jamaica	2,710,063	1,067,000	39.4%	1,678.3%
Montserrat	4,796	n/a	n/a	n/a
St. Kitts and Nevis	39,382	10,000	25.4%	400%
St. Lucia	169,576	55,000	32.4%	1733.3%
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	125,882	10,000	7.9%	185.7%
Trinidad and Tobago	1,330,164	160,000	12%	60.0%

Extracted from http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats2.htm

The table shows a wide distribution of internet penetration rates in the countries which are the main targets of the Open Campus – from a low of 7.9 percent in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to a high of 59 percent in Barbados. It is clear that the reliance on distance and on-line modalities could create a technological divide within the region and may leave those countries with low access out of the "space of flows" (Marginson and Sawir, 2005).

2 http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm accessed January 27, 2008, 9:30 p.m (EST)

However these figures also indicate that the growth in internet access in the Anglophone Caribbean has been over 900 percent on average between 2000-2007. This suggests an increasingly competitive and growing market for the Open Campus.

The leaders of the Open Campus need to pay specific attention to those countries with low penetration rates and relatively low growth such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines and devise strategies in collaboration with the governments and telecommunications providers. Such strategies will ensure the inclusion of these countries in the growth of on-line delivery.

FINANCIAL RISKS

Much of the success of the Open Campus is predicated on the possibility of the on-line model to be more cost effective than the traditional face-to-face model. There is much scepticism of the claim that the on-line distance mode has proven to be more cost effective. Newman and Johnson (1999) in their study of 12 developers of on-line education in Northern Ireland conclude that the administration of the technology will require highly paid personnel to "mind the technology" (p.85), thus leading to high costs.

This is particularly risky for the Caribbean where access to trained human resources to manage the technology is limited. The Open Campus is faced with the potential of having to import persons at a high cost with the technological skills necessary to maintain the system due to a lack of a domestic pool of human resources. However, the Open Campus can also provide the Caribbean with a pool of technologically capable personnel through the knowledge exchange from internal and external collaborative relationships.

The second issue is the high cost of hardware and software in the region which will affect both the administration of the Open Campus and the target market that for the most part does not have easy access to personal computers. This challenges the Open Campus to work in building relationships with organisations in the educational sector (colleges, high schools) with access to computers to make these available in off use times to students of the Open Campus.

ACADEMIC RISK

The true value of on-line education is often questioned by scholars of teaching and learning. In some cases the on-line model is seen as an inferior tool that provides information but does not adequately transfer knowledge (Marginson and Sawir, 2005, p. 83). In addition, the lack of contact between tutor and student and the pre-packaging of information in a con-

sumerist form could "eclipse the social and cultural objectives of higher education generally encompassed in the conception of higher education as a 'public good'" (Naidoo 2003, p.250).

Further, the risk to the University's reputation is that the offering of its programmes in on-line mode through the Open Campus is an opportunity for the state institution to produce low cost and consequently lower quality teaching. (Naidoo, 2007). In somewhat hyperbolic terms Newman and Johnson (1999) characterize this risk as follows "The decomposition of knowledge into packages of information [displays an] affinity with post modernistic characteristics of fragmentation, relativism and individual indulgence." (p.87)

The matter of quality assurance therefore is of tremendous importance in the development of the Open Campus. In the responses to the survey of senior managers and administrators of the UWI this was one element that was agreed on by a majority of respondents. Respondents suggested that if the Open Campus does not produce recognizably high academic quality and student experience, then the damage to the University's reputation as a whole could be irreparable.

The fact that all its programmes will be subject to similar quality assurance guidelines as are applied to the traditional campuses is a heartening one. However, the danger does exist that in the rush towards responsiveness to market forces, the Open Campus could attempt to shortcut the traditional processes of course and programme development. The Campus therefore needs to implement checks and balances at all stages of the development and delivery of on line programmes to ensure a strict adherence to the UWI standards of excellence and that the output of the Campus "measures up as they enter the workforce" (Stallings, 2002, p. 50)

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the forces of globalisation in the sociopolitical and economic realm are now bearing down rapidly on the Higher Education Sector internationally. In the drafting of the GATS many countries, particularly in the developing countries and, as indicated by Beckles (2004), the Anglophone Caribbean, did not recognize the enormity of the effect of the liberalisation of services in Higher Education. Although there has been some hiatus in working out the details of the GATS, its effect on higher education continues to snowball in the developing world with a proliferation of extra-regional institutions entering these markets.

The original concept of the Open Campus was a narrower one responding to the local and regional needs of providing increased

access to our populations to the offerings of the UWI. However, on examination of the issues which are raised by the opportunities and the risks facing the Open Campus, it is clear that its potential is much greater than was originally anticipated in its conceptualisation. The research done on other developing countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean exposes both the potential gains and losses for the UWI's venture into a virtual environment. The virtual university in the developing world has not been fully tested and so the Open Campus' foray into this mode of delivery is a risky one. However as is often said in the field of business, a high risk can have a high yield.

In the planning and execution of the Open Campus, therefore, serious attention needs to be paid to the level of preparedness in the region for this mode 1 delivery. If the Open Campus is to fulfill the mandate of increasing mass education at the tertiary level, then it will have to use a creative combination of partnerships with governments and other institutions to develop technological infrastructure in its target countries. In addition, it will have to embrace a business model that will seek to diversify its revenue base from within the Anglophone Caribbean and reaching out to the Diaspora and beyond.

The core of the success of the Open Campus lies in providing a cost effective, high quality and positive learning experience and environment for students. There are often repeated stories of disillusionment of students, governments, and communities in the Caribbean with the impact of the University on the region, particularly in the smaller countries without campuses. The affirmation therefore of one senior manager that we are in a time of "redress" needs to be taken very seriously. Adequate funding for the initiation of the Open Campus needs to be put in place to ensure that the project is successfully launched. Full self sustainability of this new venture is unlikely to be realised within the first three years of its launch, thus the UWI will have to find a combination of sources of funding to ensure the success of the venture.

Finally, with the launch of the Open Campus, the UWI is thrusting itself into a highly competitive market which includes very aggressive players with global experience. The Anglophone Caribbean is attractive to these players, primarily in the areas of professional development and training. The Open Campus will have to adopt a style of marketing and promotion which is alien to the traditional UWI mode of operation. The challenge for academics and administrators alike is to ensure that the Open Campus has enough flexibility and freedom from the traditional bureaucratic decision making structures inherent to universities, while still maintaining an organic link with the acknowledged high quality academic and research base of the University and its Faculties. The latter will feed into the developments of the Open Campus and ensure that the high quality learning experience that will make the Open Campus and the UWI competitive is realised.

The University of the West Indies has a history and proven track record of innovation in its outreach sector. The Open Campus has the opportunity to reshape the face of regional higher education, and to enter the competitive world of borderless higher education in an aggressive rather than defensive mode.

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LUZ M. LONGSWORTH

Earned her B.A (First Class Hons.) and her MBA degree at the University of the West Indies. She also holds a Master of Arts degree in Hispanic Studies from Queen's University, Ontario, Canada. Ms. Longsworth has over 25 years of experience in both academia and business in Jamaica, the British Virgin Islands and Belize. She taught Spanish Language and Literature in the former Faculty of Arts and General Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus as well as Organisational Development and Transformation and Behavioural Sciences with the Cave Hill School of Business, UWI, Cave Hill. While in Belize, she taught in the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences at the University of Belize before becoming Resident Tutor/ Head of the UWI School of Continuing Studies (SCS). She was appointed Deputy Director of the School of Continuing Studies in January of 2007 and Acting Director in August 2007. Since January 2008 she has been Director and has played a significant role in the integration of the SCS into the Open Campus, now overseeing the management of 42 sites in 16 countries. She is currently completing a Doctorate in Business Administration (Higher Education Management) offered by the International Centre for Higher Education Management at the Faculty of Management, the University of Bath, U.K. Her areas of research interest include globalisation of higher education, and leadership and organisational development in the virtual higher education sector.
luz.longsworth@open.uwi.edu

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HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL: THE CHALLENGES OF INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING IN GUYANA

UN LARGO CAMINO POR RECORRER: LOS RETOS DEL ENTRENAMIENTO INICIAL PARA LOS EDUCADORES GUYANESES

ZELLYNNE JENNINGS

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, MONA CAMPUS

LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES, CAMPO DE MONA

ABSTRACT

How to increase access in a cost-effective way while maintaining quality and being flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of society and their clients are challenges which face tertiary education institutions in the Caribbean today. But how does a Teachers' College in one of the most impoverished countries in the English-speaking Caribbean meet such challenges?

This paper is concerned with the preparation of teachers for schools in the more remote and inaccessible regions of Guyana which are largely occupied by its indigenous population. The paper examines the attempts of the Cyril Potter College of Education in Guyana to train teachers for these remote areas using various delivery modes. It underscores the tremendous drive for tertiary education amongst a people deprived of the sophisticated technologies used in teacher training in more advanced societies. Apart from challenges in human, physical and material resources and threats to family values, in the context of a country which embraces access, equity and quality as its main educational goals, the paper also highlights their role in the preservation of the culture of a minority at risk as an imperative for of tertiary educators in Guyana.

RESUMEN

Cómo aumentar el acceso de una manera rentable y, a la vez, mantener la calidad y ser lo suficientemente flexible para responder a las cambiantes necesidades de la sociedad y de sus clientes, son los desafíos que las instituciones de educación superior enfrentan en el Caribe hoy. ¿Pero cómo hace frente a estos retos una universidad pedagógica en uno de los países más empobrecidos del Caribe de habla inglesa?

Este documento se refiere a la preparación de maestros para escuelas ubicadas en las regiones más remotas e inaccesibles de Guyana, habitadas en gran parte por población indígena. El documento examina los intentos que realiza el Instituto Universitario Pedagógico Cyril Potter de Guyana, para llegar a estas remotas áreas mediante el empleo de diversos modos de entrega [de los trabajos realizados]. También destaca la fuerte disposición hacia la educación superior de un pueblo privado de las tecnologías sofisticadas con las que cuentan las sociedades más avanzadas para la formación del profesorado. Además de los retos en cuanto a los recursos humanos, físicos y materiales y a la amenaza a los valores de la familia, en el contexto de un país que abraza como principales metas educativas el acceso, la equidad y la calidad, el documento también destaca el imperativo que representa para los profesores universitarios en Guyana su papel en la preservación de la cultura de una minoría en peligro.

INTRODUCTION

In the Caribbean, 'higher' and 'tertiary' education are used interchangeably for institutions that deliver "various types of formal post-secondary education to middle and high level personnel in degree, diploma and certificate programmes" (Peters 1998:65).This includes Teachers' Colleges and they, like other tertiary institutions in the Region, are challenged to expand access and provide a flexibility of delivery that will meet the learning needs of clients where they are located, enable them to complete their studies in their own time and at their own pace. But this must be done at an affordable cost and must ensure the maintenance of quality. This, argues Leo-Rhynie (2007), is dependent on their being *relevant*, especially in terms of improving access to educational opportunities, being *responsive* to the education and training needs of their students and "improving the efficiency and effectiveness of programme development, delivery and the quality and value of educational inputs, process and outcomes" (p.19). In an earlier work, Leo-Rhynie (1998) referred to the definition of relevance in the UNESCO Plan of Action for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean as:

> *The capacity of the educational systems and of the institutions to respond to the needs of their locality, region or country, and to the demands of the new world order, with diverse outlooks, instruments and modalities (p. 74).*

Responsiveness is seen in terms of how the institutions react to the needs of their locality, region or country and both responsiveness and relevance are seen as components of quality.

Responsiveness to the needs of their country has become more challenging for all countries in the English-speaking Caribbean in light of the goal of universal secondary education which they all share and the target of meeting 15% tertiary participation by 2005 which has eluded most. Throughput at the secondary level, the foundation for higher education, is deficient and poses a challenge to both expansion and quality maintenance at the tertiary level, since, as Tewarie (2007) rightly notes, some tertiary institutions will have to offer remedial programmes to support student achievement, incurring far greater costs thereby than if the secondary system had been effective. This may not be so problematic for countries which are small and with strong economies which can support free tuition at the tertiary level, like oil-rich Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados; but for a huge country like Guyana, which second to Haiti is the poorest economically in the Caribbean, this poses untold challenges.

MAIN AIMS OF THE PAPER

This paper focuses on the extent to which tertiary education in Guyana has met the criteria of relevance, responsiveness and quality in initial teacher training. The institution with the mandate for initial teacher training in Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary education is the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) which was formed in 1985 by the amalgamation of all government teacher training institutions (Jennings 1999). More specifically, the paper examines how the CPCE has diversified the delivery of its programmes over the years in order to meet the training needs of all teachers in Guyana, particularly those of the indigenous population in the more remote and inaccessible parts of the country. Discussion of relevance and responsiveness will be limited to examining: (i) the need for access to teacher training in the Guyanese hinterland: (ii) curriculum content: (iii) trainee teachers' needs, beliefs and values and: (iv) language and cultural issues. The paper also highlights a number of threats to the maintenance of programme quality. To put the discussion in context, however, a country background to Guyana is given following an outline of the methodology used in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

This paper draws on: (i) a summative evaluation of the Hinterland Teacher Training Programme (HTTP) by Jennings (1996). The evaluation involved administering questionnaires to 80 trainee teachers involved in that programme, 38 tutors, subject specialists and regional coordinators and interviewing education officers, the Chief Planning Officer in the Ministry of Education and Cultural Development and the Director of the National Centre of Educational Resource and Development.[1]: (ii) data collected in a number of workshops during the course of 2003. These include: (a) a stakeholders' workshop held in Georgetown in March 2003 to obtain views on the content and delivery of the hinterland Certificate programme: (b) a study on four of the hinterland regions designed to inform the Ministry of Education of the appropriate region for pilot testing the new delivery model for the Trained Teachers Certificate in Early Childhood and Primary Education (Fanfair and Dongen 2003): (c) two stakeholders' workshops conducted in August 2003 in Mabaruma in Barima-Waini (region 1) to ascertain recommendations for programme content and delivery of the hinterland Certificate programme. The writer was the Curriculum Development consultant at both workshops. The stakeholders at these workshops included the regional education officers, tutors and community members among whom were regional councillors, owners of small businesses, and toushaos (village chiefs). The paper also draws on the evaluation of the Trained Teacher Certificate delivered by distance

1 NCERD was formed in 1987 from an amalgamation of units that previously functioned autonomously within the Ministry of Education .These units were : Curriculum Development Centre, the Schools Broadcasting Unit, the Mathematics and Science Unit, the Test Development Unit, the Learning Resource Centre and the Materials Production unit. For further details see Craig (2006/2007).

(Jennings 2005) and consultations held with 58 members of the CPCE staff, Heads of Centres from seven regions and representatives of the University of Guyana. These consultations took place at the CPCE campus in Georgetown in February 2008 when I served as the Curriculum Development consultant for the development of a curriculum blueprint for the delivery by distance of the Trained Teachers' Certificate in the secondary academic programme.

THE CONTEXT

A former British colony, Guyana, 'the land of many waters', covers a land area of 24,970 sq. kilometres. It is situated on the north-eastern seaboard of the South American continent and shares borders with Venezuela to the west, Brazil to the south-west and south and Surinam to the east. Although surrounded by Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese speaking neighbours, Guyana, the only English-speaking country on the South American continent, has always identified with its Caribbean neighbours. The country is divided into ten administrative and geographical regions, each headed by a Regional Executive Officer (REXO). These regions correspond with the administrative education districts. Each of these has a principal education officer and Regional Education Officers (REDOs) who are responsible for monitoring and supervising all educational activities within their respective education departments (Paul 2007). Georgetown is treated as a separate education district. The central Ministry of Education is located there. It is responsible for policy formulation, curriculum development (from Early Childhood Education to secondary), evaluation of school performance and financing.

Guyana gained its independence from the British in 1966 and became a Cooperative Republic in 1970. Guyana's population is made up of approximately 51% East Indians, about 38% African-Guyanese, 4.5% Amerindians, with the remainder being largely of Chinese or European descent. Population growth has declined, and with high levels of migration of the professional and skilled sectors, the population stands today at about 730,000.

Guyana is potentially one of the wealthiest countries in the English-speaking Caribbean, with an economy which depends on sugar, rice, bauxite, timber, gold and diamond mining. The 1970s, however, witnessed the beginning of a prolonged and serious economic decline that was triggered by an increase in oil prices and a fall in the prices of key exports. The country did not begin to recover from this decline until the beginning of the 1990s under an Economic Recovery Programme. Despite this, the country's per capita income remains among the lowest of the countries of the Western Hemisphere. A Living Conditions Survey conducted in 1999 found a reduction in poverty levels from 43% in 1993 to 35% of the population living below the poverty line but noted that absolute poverty had risen in the remote interior from 79 to 92 percent. The Government of Guyana (2002) wrote:

> *Amerindians, the indigenous people of Guyana, represent less than 10 per cent of the population but account for 17 per cent of the poor because they live in the geographically isolated and inaccessible rural interior (p 13).*

Understandably, these problems have had a marked effect on Guyana's education system. Guyana, like other Commonwealth Caribbean countries, has access, equity and quality as major educational goals. One of the reasons for decentralising the education system was to enable the achievement of the goal of equity (i.e. to provide all citizens with an education of comparable quality). But the Government of Guyana's Strategic Plan for 2003-2007 acknowledges that the achievement of this goal is not an easy task due to adverse economic and social factors. These include teaching/learning resource inadequacies and the fact that "a large proportion of the teaching force is unqualified and untrained" (p. 4). As elsewhere, so in Guyana, better educational conditions are provided in the urban/coastal areas, particularly in the capital city, Georgetown. The geography of the country and its size has made it difficult to travel to and communicate with the relatively small and widely dispersed Amerindian communities in the interior with the result that "the educational and other services provided to hinterland and deep riverain regions are clearly below national standards" (Government of Guyana 2002: 4).

RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

TO THE NEED FOR ACCESS TO TEACHER TRAINING IN THE HINTERLAND

One of the most serious problems affecting education in Guyana is the difficulty of maintaining a large enough core of well-trained teachers for the education system. Most of the trained teachers are located in the urban/coastal areas. According to the Government of Guyana (2000) 69% of teachers in the hinterland are untrained/unqualified, thereby underscoring the fact "that the majority of pupils in the hinterland are exposed to unqualified and under qualified teachers"(ibid:5). A major reason for this is that initial teacher training has always been offered on the campus of the CPCE on the outskirts of the capital city. To the Amerindians, to access such training, would be like having to travel hundreds of miles to a foreign land.

There are nine Amerindian tribes in Guyana. The *Makushi* and *Wapishana* are found in the Rupununi savannahs of southern Guyana (region 9) roughly separated by the Kanuku Mountains; the Makushi in the North and the Wapishana in the south savannahs. The *Akawaio* live on the North Pakaraima plateau along such rivers as the Mazaruni, Kamarang, Kako and Kukui (region 7). The *Arekuna* is a small tribe settled close to the Venezuelan

border (region 7), and the *Patamona* live in the central Pakaraima mountains (region 8). The *Wai-Wai* live in the relatively isolated deep south close to the Brazilian border (region 9). While pockets of *Warau* and *Carib*s live in relative isolation up the creeks and rivers of the vast North-West district (region 1), most live in close proximity to the *Arawaks* along the Atlantic coast (regions 2, 10). Trainee teachers from these areas would have to leave their homes to spend three years in residence in the city. Amerindians have tight-knit families which are very protective of the girls in particular, so allowing them to live away from home runs counter to their cultural values. Moreover, the contrast between living in the quiet seclusion of the rain forest and life under the glare of bustling city lights is a culture shock which is a deterrent to most. Very few of the African or East Indian Guyanese teachers are attracted to teach in the hinterland. The working conditions are deplorable. Small houses are provided for teachers, but they are poorly maintained, have little furniture and some have neither water supply nor electricity. Not speaking the Amerindian language, and being unattuned to the culture, the teachers too suffer culture shock.

Nevertheless, in the 2003-2007 Strategic Plan, the target was to increase the proportion of trained teachers in the hinterland regions by 50% by 2007 (Government of Guyana 2003). The difficulty in meeting this target is that there are very few secondary schools in the hinterland where persons seeking training as teachers could receive the quality of secondary education that would give them the necessary skills for formal teacher training. Only the exceptionally bright students are given scholarships to go to the good secondary schools in Georgetown and few take them up because their families fear for them living in the city. As a result, many of the potential trainee teachers in the hinterland do not qualify for entry to the Teachers College on leaving school. They therefore need an upgrading programme which gives them the necessary qualification.

The CPCE's first attempt at responding to the need for this kind of training was *The Hinterland Upgrading Programme (HUP)* in 1985-86. This involved face to face training in Centres in the regions with lecturers from the CPCE travelling to the various locations to teach. The CPCE has 'satellites' (Paul 2007) or Centres in six regions including Georgetown, with facilities for teaching and resources for use by students and staff. Although 55 of the 61 teachers who did the programme were successful, the model was not repeated because of its costliness. One of the Centres for training was in the North-West (at Port Kaituma, region 1). Students who lived in region 9 could not travel directly to that centre. They had to go a roundabout route by air first to Georgetown, and then by road and steamer to Port Kaituma – a lengthy and costly journey. The programme proved too costly to continue. The challenge then was how to offer an upgrading programme for teachers in the hinterland without the costs incurred by the HUP.

The Ministry of Education and Cultural Development (1995) acknowledged the need to "use flexible and innovative delivery systems (distance learning etc.), for intensive training programmes to ensure that at least 80% of all teachers at the nursery, primary and secondary levels are trained by the year 2000"(p.35). With the help of the European Union, the CPCE implemented the Hinterland Teacher Training Programme (HTTP) Phase 1 in 1994. The contract governing the HTTP clearly stated that the trainees were to be trained in the four core areas – English Language, Mathematics, Socials Studies and Integrated Science – to the level of performance needed to enter into professional training at the CPCE and "to effectively teach at several grade levels in their own communities" (Jennings 1996:62). 150 under-qualified and untrained teachers in the hinterland regions were targeted. The training entailed using the distance mode (which was print based) and involved the development of distance education modules in the four core areas. Trainees studied the printed materials in their own time and met at Regional Resource Centres (RRCs)[2] established by the CPCE for face to face sessions at least once per month.

One hundred and fifty nine trainees were admitted to the programme, of whom 132 (83%) completed the programme, but only one hundred and twenty two trainees actually sat the final examination, while 37 dropped out of the programme, largely on account of domestic difficulties. However, less than fifty percent of the students passed the foundation programme and became eligible for formal training at the CPCE. According to Jennings (1996), this was partly due to the fact that most of the trainees were from "primary schools with tops" which only offer secondary education up to grade 9 (age 14+) and so the few who took the Caribbean Examinations Council Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) (designed for graduates of grade 11) obtained failing grades. The level of attainment in Mathematics and English of the trainees was weak. Other contributory factors included the difficulty in getting the print materials prepared on time and the fact that the content and production of the materials themselves were poor.

No provision was made to prepare the teachers in multi-grade teaching, and so the graduates of the HTTP were at sea in terms of how to cope with small classes with multiple grade levels. Teachers being trained to work in schools in the hinterland must be prepared for multi-grade teaching situations. This is particularly important since many children in the hinterland do not begin primary school until age 7, 8 or sometimes even older. This means, for example, that a teacher who would normally expect a class of children in the first grade (called Primary One in Guyana) to be aged five plus, can expect to also have children aged nine or ten who are attending school for the first time.

2 The Centres set up by the CPCE served this function, but sometimes the RRC was on another site (e.g. a room in a school).

Another serious problem was the paucity of funds for transportation, which denied access to the HTTP to teachers who needed training. Trainees had to travel as much as one hundred and sixty nine miles to reach the RRCs. The most widely used mode of transportation was by river (using paddle or an outboard engine) or by foot. While some teachers who walked could complete the journey in less than one hour, others had to walk for four hours or more. In the case of one teacher the distance from his home in the southern part of region 9 to the RRC was about one hundred miles. His journey, mostly by foot and river travel, took almost two weeks. The motivation for professional development which drove some of these teachers to suffer all odds is evident from the summative evaluation:

> *Teachers in region 9 had to travel vast distances by foot. Having arrived in Lethem (region 9), no comfortable accommodation or meals awaited them. Reports are that they were lodged in an unoccupied house, so sparsely furnished that some had to sleep on the floor. One teacher even traveled with her baby as she had no one to care for the child at home. The baby had to share her space on the floor (Jennings 1996:105).*

Following a summative evaluation in 1996 Phase II of the project was implemented in 1997. This included training in the writing of distance education modules with a multi-grade teaching bias and the creation of capacity in the CPCE for the printing of training modules.

In 1996 CIDA undertook to provide Guyana with assistance in strengthening basic education in the hinterland regions and the deep riverain and remote areas on the coast through the introduction of the *Guyana Basic Education and Teacher Training Project (GBET)*. Through this project, a two-phased training programme was introduced using the distance mode. The first phase was a foundation programme for unqualified teachers to qualify them for formal training. GBET benefited from the experiences of the HTTP in that it was able to use CPCE's facilities for printing the modules and so it avoided some of the difficulties encountered in the HTTP. While multi-grade teaching was absent from the HUP and the HTTP, this was included in the GBET foundation programme. Special modules on multi-grade teaching were written and other course materials included suggestions to the teacher on grouping strategies, the use of peer tutoring, the development of study corners and class libraries, how to involve parents in support of their children's learning and generally how to harness community resources to support and enhance learning.

The second phase was the offering of the Trained Teachers' Certificate (TTC) programme using the distance mode to qualify those who were successful in the foundation programme as trained teachers. Worthy

of note is the fact that the TTC had not been revised for some twenty years. CIDA funded the revision of the training programme and the delivery of the Early Childhood and Primary (ECP) options by distance. The writer was the Curriculum Development consultant who led the revision and evaluated the pilot phase of the implementation of the TTC by distance in five regions which included a mix of remote rural and coastal areas (Jennings 2005). For the first time, teachers in the more inaccessible areas of the country were able to attain trained teacher status without having to leave their homes for the city. The piloting of the TTC (ECP) began in the deep rural, hinterland regions in 2003. In 2008 GBET enabled CPCE to commence the development of the TTC Secondary Academic programme in the four core areas for distance delivery.

TO CURRICULUM CONTENT

The same criticism levelled against schools' curricula in Guyana has also been levelled against all the distance education (DE) modules developed for the various programmes, namely that they are 'coastal' in emphasis with little relevance to the hinterland. This is understandable given that, just like the schools' curricula which are centrally developed in Georgetown by persons who often have little knowledge of the Guyanese interior, the DE modules are developed by lecturers many of whom have not travelled far beyond the outskirts of the city. The Art and Craft modules, for example, dealt with mixing colours and sketching, but omitted any reference to craft-making using local materials in which the Amerindians had much experience, for example nibi, tibisiri, mukuru and balata[3]. In a Science module, the writers used a car to illustrate properties of matter whereas in hinterland areas the only modes of transport that children are familiar with are foot and bullock-drawn carts. The car illustration had to be modified using a bullock-drawn cart. This however does not mean that children in the hinterland should not learn about cars. The content of the curriculum has to create a balance between being relevant to their reality and preparing them to live in the global world just as much as their coastland peers since many will spend their adult lives in cities in Brazil, Venezuela, or even further afield.

In responding to the 'coastal' nature of the curriculum, through GBET, some Amerindian educators from the hinterland were hired to review the distance education modules. This review revealed how the content could be made more relevant to the hinterland. It was essential for the Health and Family Life modules, they felt, to focus more on drug and alcohol abuse. This

3 **Nibbi** is a liana whis is uses as the basis of handicraft materials. **Mukru** is a small palm with a reed-like stem which is split and scraped for basket-weaving. **Balata** is the coagulated latex of the bulletwood tree.

continues to be a serious problem in Amerindian communities where a young man's entire earnings may be spent on alcohol. Other areas pointed out were sanitation, abusive relationships (particularly incest), and water treatment to prevent water-borne diseases, given traditional beliefs in the sweetness of creek water drunk untreated. Incest emerged as a sensitive area given the isolation of many Amerindian tribes. Some live in villages with two or three families that intermarry, with relationships beginning within families, between uncles and nieces, sometimes ending in marriages. Pauline Melville's The Ventriloquist's Tale captures such intricacies of Amerindian family relationships.

Because there is a dearth of employment opportunities in the hinterland for young school leavers, many of them, when asked, speak of seeking jobs in Brazil or Venezuela. This is why community members who attended the August 2003 workshop stressed the need for the curriculum to include training in areas that would enable the children, the ultimate beneficiaries of the teacher training initiatives, to access jobs. They stressed the need in the TTC not just for Agricultural Science (which they saw as keeping the young people tied to the land) but also Home Economics, Industrial Arts, and Computer Technology.

TO TRAINEE TEACHERS' NEEDS, BELIEFS, AND VALUES

Several writers have urged the need for those who initiate innovations to take cognizance of how the users perceive the innovation, not only in terms of the relevance of the innovation to their needs and interests but also to its compatibility with their values (Fullan 1993; Rogers 2003). In a workshop on Teacher Education in the hinterland held in March 2003, stakeholders identified the following as reasons for the DE TTC: the teachers would be able to remain with their families and could continue to work in the region, hence alleviating the acute shortage of teachers in these areas; they would feel safer studying at home, given their knowledge of the violence and political and racial disturbances in the city; it would 'reduce culture shock' as city life is so different from life in the hinterland; it would be less costly for the trainees. The majority of the trainees supported training by distance with the preference for the distance mode being stronger amongst males than females, except for the two regions (7 and 9) where transportation difficulties are most acute (Jarvis 2003). Here the females had a stronger preference for the distance mode. Some women, however, expressed a preference for going to the city to do the training programme full-time at the Teachers' College. Among the reasons given for this preference were a confidence in the long tradition of training in Georgetown, uncertainty about the quality of the tutors and the kind of training to which they would be exposed in the distance programme, and a lack of confidence in their own ability to study at the same time as doing a full-time job.

Also worthy of note were two concerns expressed by trainees from region 1 who attended the August 2003 workshop. Firstly, they were particularly fearful of the danger of isolation and cultural impoverishment, given that they would be trained in their schools and would not benefit from interaction with different cultures and the exposure to different schools and children from varied social backgrounds which they would get were they to be trained at the CPCE campus in the city. This was acknowledged as a real problem in a country which is multiethnic. The administrators of the CPCE considered the possibility of the trainees spending the final semester at the CPCE campus, but this did not materialise due to cost.

The second concern of the trainees related to community values. These trainees were Arawaks who tend to live in close proximity to coastlanders and often intermarry. The trainees were of the view that their community would not regard them as "real teachers" since being a "real teacher" was traditionally associated with going away for training in the city and returning fully qualified. In Amerindian communities where career options and paid employment are generally limited and literacy levels low, a teacher is still accorded considerable social esteem. Elders in the community will look to them for help in matters which require skills in literacy. The fears of these teachers were only allayed after they were advised that they would need to wear the College uniform while they were in the DE TTC programme. This would immediately set them apart from other teachers and they would be looked on with admiration by community members who would for the first time see trainee teachers in uniform, walking along the streets in the communities.

TO LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL ISSUES

The standard of attainment of the trainees in English is a persistent cause for concern in all the training programmes, be it the HTTP or the DE TTC. The evaluations of these programmes reveal real concerns about the low level of performance of the trainees, particularly in Mathematics and English, in the upgrading programmes referred to earlier. The general inability of the trainees to cope with the English courses has been attributed to deficiencies in the approach to teaching Standard English in the school system generally. The typical Guyanese teacher speaks a Guyanese Creole vernacular which, according to Craig (2006), differs significantly in grammar and idiom from Standard English with which it shares a considerable amount of vocabulary. Craig argues that the Guyanese Creole, like other Creoles in the Anglo-phone Caribbean, interferes with and complicates the learning of Standard English.

The work of teachers in the Guyanese hinterland is exacerbated by the fact that they, as Creole speakers, have to teach Standard English

to children whose first language is an Amerindian language and for whom, in some cases, English is their third language. This situation has arisen because whereas in the past Amerindian children were largely exposed to teachers who were missionaries and from whom they learnt to speak excellent Standard English, Amerindian children increasingly are getting their first exposure to English from coastlanders working and living in the hinterland who speak Creole, and from untrained (sometimes even trained) teachers who are poor models as speakers of Standard English for the children. Thus an Amerindian child in region 9 whose first language is Makushi 'picks up' non-standard English (Creole) from his community and then has to learn Standard English in school. The teacher not only has children like this to contend with in her classes, but may also have some children who understand no English whatsoever, others whose first language may be Wapishana, Portuguese, or Spanish. These last two languages occur because some parents in Venezuela and Brazil send their children to schools in the Guyanese hinterland to learn English. Consequently it has long been recognized that teaching English as a second language should be a key component of the TTC generally and especially for teachers destined for the hinterland (Fanfair and Van Dongen 2003). Provision was made for this, through GBET, by commissioning a Guyanese national who was a leading language educator in the Caribbean to prepare a manual for training teachers to teach English as a second language. Although this work was completed in 2003, it had not yet been implemented five years later. This was largely due to the fact that the CPCE did not have the appropriately qualified staff to deliver such training.

Teaching English as a Second Language may go some way to solving the problem highlighted, but there is a deeper issue here. Article 15 of the 1993 United Nations Draft Regulations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples asserts that all indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions, providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. But the policy of the government of Guyana dictates schooling in Standard English in the public system. May et al. (2003) contend that formal education and schooling as an institution has contributed significantly to the loss of indigenous identity, control and self-determination. In other indigenous societies. English-only schooling has been blamed for the loss or decline of indigenous languages; for example, amongst the Navajo Indians in the United States of America (McCarty 2003), and the Maori in New Zealand (Bishop 2003).

But who really cares about this? What I found interesting at the workshop in 2003 attended by the village chiefs was the fact that the only persons who expressed concern about the impending loss of their indigenous languages were the elders who bemoaned the fact that what all the young people seemed more concerned about were their designer clothes and cell

phones .And this included those youngsters who were aspiring to be teachers. The death of the Amerindian languages would be a tremendous loss to the cultural variety and richness of Guyana. Teacher training institutions have a role to play in ensuring the survival of this aspect of the Guyanese culture. Not only the CPCE but also the University of Guyana need to offer courses in Amerindian languages.Indeed, if teachers are encouraged to teach in the hinterland , as part of their training, they should be exposed to at least one Amerindian language preferably as a course which is credited towards their Teachers College Certificate.

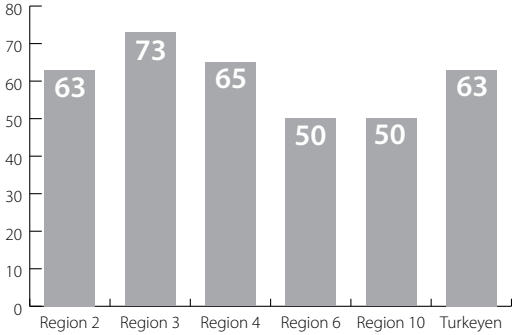
PROGRAMME QUALITY: SOME THREATS

Quality in teacher training programmes is measured in different ways, depending on how quality is perceived. Leo-Rhynie (1998) mentions measures of quality such as excellence, quality as standards, quality as transformation, as value for money or as fitness for purpose. For the purposes of this discussion, the quality as value for money interpretation will be used. Here the concern is with efficiency and accountability with particular reference to such indicators as student performance, the qualifications and experience of staff in the DE programme, library and laboratory facilities, resource provisions and throughput.

STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE:
DE MODE V FACE TO FACE DELIVERY

In terms of performance, at the June 2004 sitting of the DE TTC and the TTC delivered face to face, a total of 256 out of 281 actually took the examinations. Of these a little over 65% passed. At the CPCE campus where the DE Certificate programme was delivered face to face, the performance of the primary trainees surpassed those who did the DE TTC in the five RRCs. However, the performance of ECE trainees in regions 2, 3 and 4 surpassed that of the trainees who did the programme face to face (Table 1). Noticeable in the final results were the strengths and weaknesses of the Regions. Regions 2 and 4 appeared strong in ECE, but weaker in Primary while the reverse was true in regions 6 and 10. Jennings (2005) noted that at the graduation ceremony for the 2001-2004 cohort, the award for the two best performing students went to two students in region 6 who did the DE TTC. They attributed their perseverance in the programme to the dedication, commitment and extra help given to them by their tutors as well the caring attitude of their Head of the RRC. The quality of leadership offered at the regional level is therefore of critical importance.

TABLE 1: PERFORMANCE OF TRAINEES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION BY REGION



Note: Regions 3 and 4 are coastal. The CPCE campus is located at Turkeyen, on the outskirts of Georgetown).

What the evidence suggests is that trainee teachers in full-time jobs who do the DE TTC on a part-time basis can perform as well as those who do the same programme while studying full-time in residence on the College compound. Similar findings have been observed comparing students studying a course full-time in a Bachelor of Education programme at the University of the West Indies (UWI) with those doing the same course by distance (Jennings 2007). In this case, the DE students in fact performed better than the full-time ones. This may be due to the fact that lecturers tend to be more lenient towards the DE students, for example, by giving them more time to complete assignments, exacting less strict penalties for late submissions, etc. Furthermore they are able to apply in their classrooms concepts and ideas as they are learnt and so "facts are learnt in the context of meaning" (Fry et al. 1999:18). This is associated with a deep rather than a surface approach to learning (Biggs 1987). The fact that (in the Jamaican context) they are provided with a book of essential readings for each course means that they can spend more time making sense of these readings, compared with their full-time colleagues who are expected to search for the materials on their course reading lists themselves. These are clear advantages that the DE students have despite what they feel they might be losing as a result of studying part-time. The eagerness that the full-time students at CPCE display in getting hold of the course materials of the DE students indicates that they see these materials as advantageous to their learning.

QUALITY OF LEARNING IN DE PROGRAMMES

In the model of distance learning used by CPCE, students, having read the course materials beforehand, should come to the tutorial sessions prepared to initiate discussion by identifying points that needed

explanation, expansion, etc. Few students, however, managed to read the materials beforehand. This was a frequent complaint of the tutors. However, because of the slowness of pace in the development of the modules – a characteristic common to all of the DE programmes – some were only delivered to the students when they were already well into the course. This meant that there was a heavy reliance on lecturing in the face to face tutorial sessions (see Table 2). One tutor in fact said "When they come to the face to face sessions they expect the tutor to read the units with them and do the explanations" (Jennings 2005:26).

TABLE 2: TUTORS AND TRAINEES' VIEWS ON THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH FACE TO FACE SESSIONS SHOULD BE HELD IN THE DE TTC.
TUTORS TRAINEES
(N=22) (N=35)

Held frequently enough	6(27%)	14(40%)
Held too frequently	-	2 (6%)
Should be held more frequently	16(73%)	19(54%)

Some people argue that distance education is "second best", inferior to face to face education, while others claim that its quality lies in the skills in independent study and self-learning which it develops and in which conventional education often falls short. The frequency with which the students in Table 2 want face-to-face sessions raises questions about this claim.

Programmes that are learner-centred not only respond to students' needs by enabling them to study anywhere at any time but they also involve the students actively in the teaching-learning process. Students actively construct rather than passively receive knowledge. Yet some writers contend that DE programmes based on print are unlikely to foster active learning, regardless of the interactive strategies one tries to build into the print materials. But surely this depends on the agents of the interaction. If the tutors themselves are of like mind as the trainees, as Table 2 shows, who will initiate the change? As Koul (1999:113) maintains, DE is just a "mechanism that provides education with speed, variety and reach…….. DE will not show us how to achieve quality …nor how to create a learning or just society." To achieve the approach to learning that we desire, requires a radical change of our mind-set. And this has to begin with the teacher educators.

THE AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLY QUALIFIED TUTORS

One of the reasons why 80% of all teachers at the nursery, primary and secondary levels were not trained by 2005 is that "despite a virtual trebling of salaries since 1995, teachers continue to exit the system for greener pastures because of the unattractive terms and conditions of service, and the aggressive method of recruitment of overseas based agencies" (Government of Guyana 2002: 5). The same can be said of lecturers at CPCE. Having to fill ten or more posts for the beginning of an academic year from a reducing pool of qualified personnel is not unusual for the institution. Aggressive recruitment policies from overseas have deprived the institution of even its top administrators. If this is the situation in the city, how much worse it must be in the more remote parts of the country.

The evaluation of the DE TTC by Jennings (2005) shows that the highest level of qualification of most of the tutors is the trained teachers' certificate from the CPCE. This means that the tutors have not gone beyond the certification for which they are training the students. Over 60% of the tutors in region 7 only have CXCs, GCEs or College of Preceptors (CP) qualifications. In region 8, 14 of the 16 tutors had the trained teachers' certificate while two had BEd. degrees. Region 9 was exceptional in that all of the ten tutors had Bachelor degrees (mostly BEd.) from the University of Guyana , including one with an MEd. degree.

In terms of status, most of the tutors are classroom teachers, mostly with between fifteen to twenty years of experience in teaching. But many years of teaching in the school system do not make someone a good teacher educator. If their practices are bad, they do more harm than good because they will pass these on to the trainees. Teachers do teach as they are taught. Poor or mediocre teacher educators will turn out teachers who are mediocre like themselves. As so many writers have pointed out, the first step to addressing the poor performance of children in the schools is to train to an appropriate standard the trainers of the teachers who will be teaching them (Howey and Zimpher (1999)). This advice was taken very seriously by the GBET project team. Prior to the start of the DE programme each academic year, the tutors are given three weeks of training during which they are given a thorough induction into the teaching of the modules by specialists from the CPCE. Although the process is repeated at the beginning of each semester, this clearly is not sufficient to raise them to an appropriate standard. This is evident from this typical response from a trainee who was asked why students don't read the modules before the face to face sessions:

> *Reading the modules has to do with motivation. If you have a good teacher who sets tasks and you feel motivated, then you will read the modules. Some tutors have no idea. They come unprepared. They don't know what's in the modules themselves.*

INADEQUACY OF PRINTED MATERIALS

Curriculum materials produced for DE Programmes should be developed by experts who can "provide up-to-date and rich content and specialised instructional design for easy access, grasp, retention and retrieval" (Koul 1999:110). Importantly, they need to have good lead time for development and should be available to the students before the commencement of the courses. This is a problem that has plagued all DE programmes delivered by the CPCE. In the HTTP phase 1, for example, the subject specialists were of the view that the modules were written at too low a level for prospective entrants to the CPCE. This meant that even those who passed the final examination needed a remedial programme to increase their content knowledge before they could attain a standard appropriate for entry to the CPCE. Secondly, the content of the modules were considered inappropriate for teachers in the hinterland. For example, in one of the exercises in the Science modules, the materials needed were a large mayonnaise jar, knitting needles, masking tape and a bathroom scale – materials readily available in the city but not in the hinterland. An education officer described visiting a class in region 9 and being struck by the difficulty with which the teacher tried to explain the principle of the liquid in the glass thermometer. It was obvious that neither the teacher nor the children had ever used a thermometer before. Thirdly, the production of the materials was of a generally low quality. The materials were in black and white and cyclostyled and the messages conveyed in the pictures were lost due to the smudgy appearance. Insufficient funds were allocated in the project for materials production because there was an underestimation of the technical expertise and resources required to produce modules of good quality.

Getting the materials produced on time was a problem in all the DE programmes. In the case of the HTTP Phase 1, for example, although the project started in August 1994, by the end of March 1995 one module each in English Language and Social Studies and three in Sciences were still to be provided. The HTTP was scheduled to end in June 1995! When asked about the modules, a typical comment from students in the DE TTC was:

- Most times modules were given minutes before we needed to use them.
- There was no time to go through them before the face to face session.
- Then you were told you have a short time to study them (Jennings 2005:19).

Thus, when many modules became available they were used more as support materials rather than as the materials central to the programme.

In many developing countries, printed materials produced for use in education systems are poorly produced, contain poor illustrations and many technical errors. At the same time, research has shown that the quality of print materials is a significant factor in learning achievement. Jamieson et al. (1981) emphasize that the success of the Philippine' Textbook Project in the late 1970s was due not simply to having new textbooks, but rather to having new textbooks of high quality, reasonably on time, well understood and well used by teachers. Because the materials used in the GBET project had a "dry run" in the distance programme offered in the coastal areas, the revision process led to an improvement in quality in terms of their content validity, significance, pedagogical soundness and standard of production. Being able to make use of the production facilities at the CPCE also enabled GBET to avoid the difficulties in timely production encountered by the HTTP.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Teachers in initial training regardless of the mode of delivery need support of various kinds. They need heads of schools who are supportive and will facilitate their attendance at the face-to-face sessions by making provisions for substitute teachers for their classes. In the schools themselves, they need supervision by a trained and experienced teacher who can function as a mentor to whom the trainee can turn for advice and guidance. In their communities or within easy reach, the trainees also need access to a Resource Centre where they can consult textbooks and other materials to supplement such readings as they are given in their printed materials.

The development of support systems was emphasised in the DE TTC. Release time has been granted by the Regional Education Departments for trainees and mentors and tutors for 2 weeks and 4 weeks respectively every school term. Provisions have also been made for mentors for the trainees. In some cases the mentor is not in the school where the trainee is located but in a nearby school. Or the mentor may be a retired teacher who is easily accessible to the trainee. At the meeting in February 2008, Heads of Centres from the hinterland especially (regions, 7, 8, 9) reported grave difficulties being experienced in providing mentors for the trainees or even supervisors of their teaching practice due to the tremendous cost of transporting the mentor or supervisor from one area to another. The rise in oil prices on the world market creates untold hardships for ordinary people in the most remote parts of the globe.

The DE TTC relies on community support for the programme itself. This can even include the counselling of a husband who does not want his wife to attend the face-to- face tutorials at the RRC for fear of her being distracted by admirers. Volunteers from the community are also used to serve

as teacher substitutes during the periods of the trainee's attendance at tutorials. There is a heavy reliance on community support to assist the trainees with river transportation free of cost to the Resource Centres. Again, in the face of rising fuel costs even the most willing owner of a speed boat can no longer afford his services free.

An objective of the HTTP was to provide the Regional Resource Centres (RRCs) with teaching-learning resources, textbooks for use by the trainees and their tutors. Some of the RRCs served as venues for the face-to-face sessions as they had adequate classroom space, but all were inadequately stocked with the current texts and other reference materials the trainees needed. In the HTTP phase 1, it was found that teachers used the modules designed for their training as textbooks in their classrooms (Jennings 1996). This was clearly a case of necessity being the mother of invention, given the dearth of resources in most classrooms. This explains why, almost a decade later, the teachers in the DE TTC registered strong objections to not being able to keep the modules as they were needed for use by the incoming batch of trainees (Jennings 2005).

In the DE TTC, GBET provided supplementary materials for the RRCs. But Jennings (2005) found that 75% of the trainee teaches said they did not have access to them. I understood why when I visited one of the RRCs. Basically it was a small store room, resembling a cubby hole in which no more than two steps could be taken in any direction. The books and other materials were not shelved but piled one on top of each other. Any attempt to access a book would send all the piles tumbling down. This RRC was located in a secondary school on the outskirts of the city. It was in stark contrast to another RRC I visited in a school one hour by air from the city. Books, (though rather dated) were neatly stacked and accessible and there were desks and chairs for comfortable seating for both trainees and staff. This was not far different from the library on the College campus. The problem here, however, was that due to shortage of staff the library was closed during the very times when the students were free to use it.

COST

In developing countries, like Guyana, whose education system is project driven and dependent on funding from external agencies, the availability of funds poses a threat to the sustainability of programmes. DE programmes are attractive because they are considered to be more cost effective. Rumble (1999:93), for example, highlights the fact that information on the average cost of distance education systems shows that they can achieve lower unit costs per student than those found in traditional classroom-based education.

Attempts to establish cost effectiveness of one mode of delivery over another have typically tried to establish an average cost per student or graduate of the DE mode and compare that with the average cost per student or graduate of the face to face mode. The Planning Division in the Ministry of Education in Guyana has done this and concluded that it is cheaper to train teachers by the DE mode than face to face.[4]. But there are so many factors that can affect actual costs, for example, the number of students. Producing large quantities of print materials for small numbers of students can hardly be cost-effective. Other factors include the number of courses offered, the frequency with which materials have to be reprinted, the frequency of examinations and re-sits, the level of student support, and, of course, staff costs. The staff costs of teaching must be lower in the DE mode than in the face to face mode if economies are to be achieved. And in reality this is achieved by using tutors in the DE mode who are part-time and (as learnt from my interviews with them) under-paid. In fact they experience grave difficulties in getting any pay at all.

Some students have to do their classes in sub-standard conditions and their support systems are poor. Furthermore, some students benefit from free river transportation. Others rely on family or friends for free accommodation when they have to attend the face to face sessions at the RRCs. In other words there are a number of "hidden costs" of the DE programme on which we cannot put a figure and this creates an impression of considerable savings in the DE programme, and suggests that it is much less costly than face to face delivery than it really is.

CONCLUSION

While tertiary education institutions in the Caribbean are challenged to be relevant and responsive to individual and societal needs, some are better able to rise to the challenge than others because they benefit from access to the technological advancements of the 21st century. CPCE's attempt to increase access to its programmes to the more disadvantaged in society and to respond to diverse needs has been as arduous and challenging as the journey of the teacher who had to travel over one hundred miles and back to face-to-face sessions in a DE programme. Why didn't the teacher go by air? Because there are no planes on that route. And even if there were, he would not have been able to afford it. He had to travel well armed not only with a knife in case of attack by a jaguar or some other wild animal, but with his lore of natural intelligence which told him the importance of a stick to beat the earth as he walked to ward off poisonous snakes and the skill of

4 The information was contained in an internal document of the Ministry of Education which was in draft form and which acknowledged that findings were tentative, given the difficulty in accessing all data to determine cost of the DE programmes.

slinging a hammock between trees to bed down for the night. He had to rely on community support – a lift on a passing truck that was going his way, or a free ride on a speed boat.

Canadian experts who reviewed the work done through GBET commented on the fact that computers were available in most regions so the modules could be sent by diskettes to be printed locally and that "cost gains could be applied on the development of a strong electronic network to support the student learning process" (quoted in Jennings 2005: 2). When this idea was put to the stakeholders, the responses were varied: not all schools have computers and even those who have only have a few and no access to the Internet; the students would have to use Internet cafes, several miles away and this is too costly; there is no electricity in the riverain areas, etc. In other words, it is not that there wasn't the will; the infrastructure and available technology did not provide the way.

Like the traveller, the CPCE had to draw on its knowledge of the culture of its clients to shape appropriate responses to curriculum content, to the needs, values and beliefs of the trainee teachers, to language issues associated with teaching in the hinterland and it had to rely on community support in the implementation of its programmes. This is why even workshops that focus on academic issues associated with the curriculum need to have in attendance community members such as village chiefs, owners of boats and planes who could assist in transporting the modules and REXOs and REDOs. The importance of the latter being present was underscored in the February 2008 workshops where Heads of Centres reported the obstructions to the delivery of the programme caused by REXOs who hold the financial purse in the Region. Tutors could not receive their pay because the REXOs refused to submit the invoices. And this was due to their lack of understanding of the DE programme.

Insufficient resources are a perennial problem. Those regions that have a physical space for a CPCE Centre are fortunate. For others, a Centre is like a virtual reality which will come into being once there are funds. But such funds are hard to come by. The Government of Guyana (2003:6) notes that "the percentage of the national budget allocated to education, although rising, has remained below the sum necessary to cover all educational needs." Until this situation is redressed, without access to the technologies that would speed up progress, institutions like CPCE will have to take the hard road in meeting the challenges of tertiary education.

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ZELLYNE JENNINGS

Zellynne Jennings is Professor of Curriculum Development and Director of the School of Education at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. She is a former Professor of Education at the University of Guyana where she also served as Head of the Department of Foundations, Administration and Teaching. She has undertaken consultancies with a number of international organisations including DFID, UNESCO, CIDA and UNICEF. She has presented many papers at international conferences in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean and published over 40 papers in international academic journals, She has also written three monographs. Her research interests include curriculum innovation and change, teacher training, distance education and literacy. eddevser@cwjamaica.com

5

LEVERAGING ICTS FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR CARIBBEAN WOMEN: THE CASE OF ST.VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

APALANCANDO LA TECNOLOGÍA DE LA INFORMACIÓN PARA LA ENSEÑANZA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA EN LA EDUCACIÓN NO FORMAL PARA LA MUJER EN EL CARIBE: EL CASO DE ST. VINCENT Y LAS GRANADINAS

JUDITH SOARES AND MICHAEL THOMAS

ABSTRACT
This paper is a continuation of the debate on issues of relevance to the development of education in small island states with specific reference to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In this respect, it seeks to unveil the experience and the lessons of non-formal education in the Anglophone Caribbean. In so doing, it examines the experience of rural women in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who have embraced the possibility of leveraging ICT as a means of accessing relevant information to enable them to improve their quality of life and that of their families and community.

RESUMEN
Este documento es una continuación de lo ya tratado sobre temas de importancia para el desarrollo de la educación en pequeños estados insulares con referencia específica a St. Vincent y Las Granadinas. A este respecto, intenta develar la experiencia adquirida y las lecciones aprendidas sobre educación no formal en el Caribe anglófono. Al hacerlo, examina la experiencia de mujeres del medio rural, en St. Vincent y Las Granadinas, que han abrazado la posibilidad de apalancar la tecnología de la información como medio para el acceso a la información relevante que les permita mejorar su calidad de vida y la de sus familias y comunidad.

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the 1980s, there has been a trend towards research and the publication of articles on education in small island states. This paper is a continuation of that trend as it documents developments in this field that are both dynamic and relatively recent. It, therefore, provides an agenda for both reflection and debate in the discipline of education.

It is clear that one of the most important developments in the non-formal education sector debate in recent years has been the *Dodds Report* (1996) which has formed the basis for much deliberation at a number of international fora. This is so because his research has had the distinction of documenting the worldwide uses to which distance learning approaches have been applied to non-formal education. His effort resulted in the compilation of a directory of programmes, for which information was available at the time, classified geographically and cross referenced by content and media used. In highlighting a number of issues arising from the survey, Dodds' conclusion that there is an urgent need for continued research to document this experience and test the lessons which can be drawn from it forms the basis on which this work seeks to unveil the experience and the lessons of non-formal education in the Anglophone Caribbean. In so doing, we examine the experience of rural women in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who have opened themselves to the possibility of leveraging ICT as a means of accessing relevant information to enable them to improve their quality of life and that of their families and community.

CONCEPTUALISING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In the context of open and distance education, non-formal education is perhaps the most illusive and ill-defined sector of distance educators' work worldwide (Spronk, 1999). In our attempts to incorporate methods of open and distance education into non-formal education, issues of definition arise.

Non-formal education has been recognized, since the early 1970s, as the wide range of educational activities, mainly for adults, taking place outside of the academy. These activities were considered to be vitally important in contributing to social and economic development in the less industrialized countries of the South and the more industrialized countries of the North. It must be noted that, according to the literature, the term 'non-formal education' was coined by Phillip Coombs, Ahmed Mansoor, Jim Sheffield and Victor Diejomaoh to describe these activities (Dodds, 1996). From as early as 1968, Coombs observed that non-formal education was characterized by a diversity of activities known by different names: adult education; continuing education; on the job training; accelerated training; farmer or worker training; and extension services. Later in the 1970s, Coombs, along

with Posser and Manzoor, offered an expanded definition of non-formal education by including educational opportunities for rural young people. In this respect they categorized these programmes of activities in the following way: agricultural, artisan and craft, vocational and pre-vocational preparation, leadership training and civic service, general, multi-purpose and miscellaneous which includes literacy training and school equivalency programmes.

At the same time, Sheffield and Diejomaoh (1972: xi) in their contribution to the literature argued that non-formal education is supposed to serve three basic needs: as an alternative for those who lack opportunities for formal schooling, extension of formal schooling for purposes of employment, and as a means of upgrading skills for those already involved in productive employment, and as a means of upgrading the skills of those already employed. Later in the 1980s, Bates offered that the basis of non-formal education is the improvement of an individual's personal, social and work life. It is intended to help them make practical changes in their daily lives and to advance personal development in the context of their own goals and wishes. Hallack's input (1990) recognizes four broad areas of non-formal education enumerated as follows:

1. paraformal education (evening classes, distance education, and so on), which refers to programmes that provide a substitute for formal schooling, that is, offer a 'second chance' to those who cannot attend regular schooling;

2. popular education, which is explicitly targeted to serve marginal groups. It is the least institutionalised component, including adult literacy, co-operative training, political mobilization, and /or community development;

3. education for personal improvement (music, languages, sports and so on) which is provided by clubs, cultural institutions and associations, and in most cases paid for by the client; and

4. professional or vocational non-formal education and training, which can be provided by firms, trade unions, private agencies and, of course, schools.

For his part, Fordham (1993) suggests that in the 1970s, four characteristics came to be associated with non-formal education:

1. relevance to the need of socially disadvantaged groups;

2. concern with specific categories of person;

3. a focus on clearly defined purposes; and

4. flexibility in organization and methods.

The definitions of non-formal education in the existing literature by conventional theorists do not necessarily fit the mould in the Caribbean where we define non-formal education within the context of our experiences in the region. While there are attempts to present clear-cut definitions of non-formal and informal education in the literature, it is our view that there can be no such cut and dry definitions. Our experience in the Caribbean indicates that forms of schooling that do not take place within the walls of the classroom, yet which teach the formal curriculum and which ultimately feed into the formal examination and credential system are often lumped with the informal system, and so do incorporate elements of both non-formal and informal practices. In addition, other Caribbean experiences also do not fully validate the experiences discussed in the literature with respect to the prevailing definitions of non-formal education. These definitions do not consider national literacy programmes such as the Jamaica Adult Literacy programme (JAMAL) in Jamaica, Cuba's literacy programme, the Adult Literacy Programme in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) in Trinidad and Tobago where non-formal education was introduced and legitimized by governments. In other instances, we find, for example, The UWI's Radio Education Unit, airing for years, "Listening Post", an information programme for Jamaican farmers; government extension services in agriculture through the ministries of agriculture in some countries of the region; the introduction and use of radio broadcasts to support curriculum in primary schools by various governments; and in Trinidad and Tobago of the 1940s, Rawle Farley, Resident Tutor, The UWI's School of Continuing Studies, used radio as a medium to discuss literary works as a means of encouraging critical thinking. It is because of these experiences that Soares & Thomas (2006: 2) contend that:

> *Regardless of the nature of its organization, non-formal education programmes are often those most closely linked with direct application and functional outcomes. Frequently centred around adult literacy, learning addresses issues of local relevance, thus providing an orientation into which the concerns of sustainable development [and sustainable livelihoods] easily fit.*

They conclude that, "non-formal learning offers ways of bringing organized educational opportunities to a diverse range of learners from rural women to out-of-school adolescents to redundant workers and the retired".

We, therefore, conceptualise non-formal education in an ideological context which forces critical thinking through modes of delivery and

'curriculum' development which would allow participants to raise their levels of social consciousness and knowledge through adult upgrading and encouraging them to take action to address change in their social and economic condition, and by extension, that of their community. While this may be a start in the right direction, it is by no means a way of effecting social change or addressing issues of national development, defined as social progress and social justice. Such issues are ones of mass mobilization and political commitment at the national level.

FANCY: ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Fancy is a small remote, rural community in the Caribbean island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines which lies south of St. Lucia and north of Grenada, its closest neighbours. This community comprises some 240 women, 270 men and 140 households. In this community which has one primary school, a health clinic with regular opening hours and several churches, the main means of subsistence are fishing and cash crop farming. While there is a post office, there are no government offices, commercial banks or other business enterprises to facilitate employment so there is a high level of unemployment, particularly among women who are either farmers or homemakers or both. Although the community is a remote one, community members are linked to the 'outside world' through telephone connection, and a transport bus which makes daily runs to Kingstown, the country's capital. In terms of access, there is only one entrance and exit to the community which lies in a hilly terrain in an area which is prone to land and rock slides. The poor state of the access road removes Fancy even further from communities in the north-eastern district where the community is located. Telephone access is not universal in terms of fixed lines, a situation which is the reverse in the case of mobile phone availability. Most households have a radio and a television set. At the best of times, however, community members have great difficulty in receiving radio transmissions from broadcast centres in St. Vincent and this situation becomes more acute in times of natural disasters. Internet access is virtually non-existent.

Fancy is one of those communities where people are more socially disadvantaged than poor as defined in conventional economic terms. However, because of their socially disadvantaged position, they can be thrown into poverty at any time. That is to say, the people of Fancy all own the land on which they live and subsist, as common property. They own their houses which are of concrete structure and are furnished with all modern conveniences. But because there is no constant flow of money, they become vulnerable to economic difficulties and its remoteness also puts the community at a disadvantage in terms of the ability of its members to gather information on issues which affect their daily lives such as farming methods and techniques, information to assist their children with their academic work,

health issues etc. This means that for adults, there is really no way of expanding their knowledge base except by leveraging information and communication technology to facilitate the process of learning to improve their quality of life. Community members also have little access to government training programmes. Unless these training programmes are held in the village, it is extremely difficult for adults to participate in any learning activity since training sessions are usually held after regular working hours.

Recognising their situation and the possibility for creating change, the women of Fancy got involved in a process of 'community development' in which they combined organisational capacity building with economic necessity and social ideas to achieve their goals of developing their technical skills, expanding their economic activity and broadening their views on social issues towards improving their livelihood and providing a socio-economic cushion for themselves, their families and the community. Theirs was to develop a model of 'development' which was equitable, inclusive and self-reliant. Including research and documentation, income generating projects, social training and non-formal education, this model of development embraced both women and men based on the unifying principle of 'equality in ownership and benefits'. Notably, this community project was conceived and run by the women who had constituted themselves in the *Fancy Community Help Group* (FCHG) with the expressed purpose of improving the quality of their lives and that of their fellow citizens in a socially cohesive community built on notions and practice of the African tradition of the extended family. In fact, the focus of the FCHG has been to address issues of social well-being and strengthening social cohesion, creating initiatives which would stimulate and improve their livelihood opportunities and paying attention to historical and cultural issues which would encourage a positive sense of self, family and community. Over the past decade, the FCHG has undertaken several initiatives to further social and economic development: income earning activities to supplement the financial resources of their families, creating an indigenous banking system to provide loans to families, particularly for health and education purposes, conducting research and documentation of the community's history, and participation in training aimed at personal and organisational development.

Given their circumstances, of social and economic disadvantage, the remoteness of their community and their thirst for information, the 22 women who comprise the FCHG were not only interested in creating an economic and financial base to strengthen their livelihoods. They were also intent on creating a knowledge-based community through the use of modern communication information technology (ICT) which they felt would allow them to access information relevant to their daily lives and to link them with the outside world. For them, ICT is not just a teaching tool, but a research instrument and a source of information. This is critical because Fancy community members appreciate the value of education, learning and social progress.

It was against his background that the women of the FCHG decided to get involved in an ICT project which had the strong backing of their husbands and partners who felt that such a project would also benefit them and their children. In developing this project, the women were guided by the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of The University of the West Indies (UWI) in collaboration with a sister department, The University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC) both of which were located within The UWI's former Outreach sector, now the UWI Open Campus.

AN ICT PROJECT

It is our view that distance learning offers an essential opportunity for the beginnings or continuation of education for women, particularly rural women precisely because the program can be adapted to the rhythm and the life style of each woman individually. With this in mind and couched in the non-formal mode of learning, the idea of an ICT project was introduced to the community in 2004.

At this time, WAND discussed with the Fancy Community Help Group the possibility of establishing a small training centre and a community radio. The Group had identified a building as a possible location for both activities but were unsuccessful in securing its use as a community training centre. The quest for a second building also proved unsuccessful and so a decision was taken to house the project in the community's only preschool building where it would provide services for the health clinic which is also on the school complex.

In this community driven, multi-stakeholder project the goal is to establish community access centres to achieve "anywhere, anytime, anyplace" education. The original idea involved the placement of 10 computer terminals in a small building with the possibility of extending it to provide space for a community radio station, so as to create a multi-media centre. The project will include training to use the internet, word processing, spreadsheets, accounting packages, etc and eventually getting the community to establish a community portal with e-mail accounts, etc. An important consideration is the use of wifi for the whole community using a shared network. Another consideration is the use of renewable energy e.g. solar panels and a Bio Diesel plant as cost reduction measures and as a means of sensitizing the community to the use of alternative sources of energy.

WHY A RADIO STATION?

A community radio station is one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. The community can be territorial or geographical - a township, village, district

or island. It can also be a group of people with common interests, who are not necessarily living in one defined territory. Consequently, community radio can be managed or controlled by one group, by combined groups, or of people such as women, children, farmers, fisher-folk, ethnic groups, or senior citizens. What distinguishes community radio from other media is the high level of people's participation, both in management and program production aspects. Furthermore, individual community members and local institutions are the principal sources of support for its operation.

Community radio gives community members access to information because it gives them access to the means of communication. The most relevant information - educational and developmental - is disseminated and exchanged. Important local issues are aired. A free market place of ideas and opinions is opened up and people are given the opportunity to express themselves socially, politically and culturally. Community radio helps to put the community members in charge of their own affairs.

OBSERVATION(S)

Access to ICT can provide the tools of empowerment for women and build their self-confidence and self-esteem and give them a sense of independence, but such a community project, as experience has shown, can create conflicts between women and men. As a matter of fact, feminists and women activists have indicated that when women pursue an interest or activity which have very little or no bearing on their domestic role, and effectively expose and challenge unequal power relations within the family, they often meet with strong resistance from their male partners because of suspicion/jealousy as well as ridicule (Evans 1995). In Fancy, this is not the case.

First, the men do not feel threatened by their women's efforts to achieve and to educate themselves. They feel that such an exercise will also benefit them and their children. According to one husband who has been married for 15 years, "I support my wife, I believe in myself and I believe in her and if she is interested (or involved) in a project, I will support her: I feel this project is a good one, my children can learn it and then they will teach me". Another "I am not jealous and I am not suspicious of her; I want good things for her, she is a good wife to me and I trust her". This sentiment was corroborated by women of the FCHG who clearly stated that "Jealousy and suspicion do not exist in this community" and that "(the men) encourage their women to get ahead and show an interest in our work and even if the women get more money than them, it does not matter".

Second, both women and men have worked together to implement and sustain projects women have been involved in over the years. While

we are aware of the unequal power relations which characterise social relations between women and men, we note that in Fancy gender inequalities have been reduced, mainly because both women and men have equal access to land made possible by the nature of land ownership, mentioned above, and the practice of women and men working together in both the home and the field. Land ownership and notions of equality, therefore, have passed down through generations. This relationship to the land has also influenced ideas of democracy which figure centrally in the organisation and implementation of community projects.

It has been claimed that for developing countries, without investment in women's education and health, "human capital will continue to remain undeveloped and the [economies] … will suffer unnecessarily the consequences in terms of foregone production, diminished family welfare and rapid population growth" (Women's International Network News, 1990). Evidence has been presented (for example, Chaudry,1995) that women who attended adult education classes became more confident, which in turn equipped them with better mobility, expression, understanding and ability to make decisions and accept responsibility. There were benefits not only for the women themselves, but for their husbands, children, families and communities.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

- Enhancement of knowledge of agricultural techniques, skills, technology and technological developments, farming practices, availability of resources, environmental and developmental issues etc.
- Generate employment opportunities for the community.
- Research, news, information, community programmes.
- Health information, e.g. healthy eating habits, for healthier living and assisting the creation of a database recording system for the community health centre.
- Opportunities for increased technological training.
- Knowledge of accounting procedures.
- Knowledge of issues relating to women and other women's groups.
- Cheaper and faster communication with friends and families through email.

- Reduction in expenditure for community events e.g. printing of wedding invitations and programmes.

- Greater cohesiveness centred around the project which would be owned by FCHG and the community.

BENEFITS TO THE UWI

- Provide the platform for future delivery of UWI programmes for personal development and career enhancement through the School of Continuing Studies - integrated into The UWI Open Campus

- To deliver higher education programmes to potential students in the remote, rural areas of the Caribbean

- To provide a model for replication throughout the Caribbean.

- To confirm, within The UWI Open Campus, the value of non-formal education and learning in its educational construct.

As the literature indicates, and as our experience has confirmed, women generally prefer distance learning because of its very nature which allows them to optimally combine learning and career development with domestic responsibilities (May 1994, Kokkos and Lionarakis 1998, Keegan 2000). Furthermore, it enables them to learn at their own pace, while minimizing costs - saving money and time on commuting and child care. Older women students, in particular, comment that the "virtual classroom" minimizes the discomfort and alienation they sometimes experience on conventional college campuses populated by 18 to 22 year-olds. (Kramarae 2000, Furst-Bowe 2001).

Another factor is made manifest by the fact that further difficulties may present themselves in lessons that demand the extended use of computers for example (Furst-Bowe 2001, May 1994) due to the fact that women may have (whether they believe or not) less ease of use and experience working with technological interfaces. Female students may have less experience with working with technology than do their male counterparts and may become frustrated with distance learning courses that require extensive use of computers. Despite this, the belief continues to persist that females are by nature technologically ignorant and unable to absorb scientific and technological information or to acquire technical skills.

The main challenge is to create an infrastructure from which an IT learning environment can be launched and developed; … once this is

achieved many benefits can be realised (Ward, 1999). Technology infrastructure includes all the elements that support the integrated use of technology: the computers themselves, the wires that connect them, the administrative rules and regulations that apply to the acquisition and use of computers, the fiscal resources, and the professional development that is needed to use computers (Weikart, and Marrapodi, 1999).

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APENDIX A

MODELS OF FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

	formal	non-formal
Purposes	Long -term & general Credential basedl	Shhort-term & specific Non;redential based
Timing	Long cicle / preparatory / full time	Short cicle / recurrent / part-time
Content	Standardized / input centered Academic Entry requirements determine clientele	Individualized / output centered Practical Clientele dedtermine entry requirements
Delivery system	Institution-based Isolated from environment Rigidly strctured, teacher centered and resource intensive	Environment-based Communuty related Flexible, learner-centered and self-governing / democratic
Control	External / hierarchical	Self-governing / democratic

JUDITH SOARES

She is Senior Lecturer and Head, Women and Development Unit, The University of the West Indies. As Head of the UWI's Women's Outreach Unit, her work centres on issues relating to women's social and economic advancement through non-formal education and distance learning, community income generating projects, research and documentation. jsoares@uwichill.uwi.edu.bb

MICHAEL THOMAS

Formerly Research Officer at the UWI Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC), Michael Thomas is now Research Officer in the Institutional Research Unit, Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal, University of the West Indies-Open. A graduate of the Mausica Teachers' College, he had 25 years experience as a teacher in Trinidad and Tobago before joining the UWI and has taught throughout the education system from primary to adult education. He was Trinidad and Tobago's first Research and Development Officer in its then newly created Distance Learning Secretariat, Ministry of Information, Communication, Training and Distance Learning. He is also a Fellow of the COL/Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme and holds both a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDDE) and Master's Degree in Distance Education from the Indira Gandhi National Open University. He is the editor, author, and co-author of a number of articles and book chapters and has presented papers at a variety of international conferences on distance education in Africa, Canada, Hawaii and New Zealand as well as in the Caribbean. His research interests are in the area of adaptive mobile learning technology and its potential for revolutionizing distance education, blended learning, and trade issues related to higher education. mthomas99@gmail.com

6

APPLYING QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO CURRICULUM DESIGN

APLICACION DE PRÁCTICAS DE GERENCIA DE CALIDAD AL DISEÑO CURRICULAR

PERMILLA FARRELL

ABSTRACT

The paper reports on a survey conducted by the Department of English and Communication Studies in a community college in Trinidad and Tobago which led to a revision of the department's Developmental Education course offerings. The survey was conducted of full-time and part-time faculty members, who teach college-level courses, to identify their reading and writing requirements of students. Of the 259 surveys distributed 31 were completed. Despite this however, some picture of the reading and writing of college-level courses was provided. The qualitative and quantitative data generated suggested that lecturers of college-level courses require higher-order cognitive skills in the reading and writing tasks they assign students. They expect students to be highly intellectual self-regulated learners so that the reading and writing tasks they assign are considerable both in number and degree of sophistication. Although most of the reading and test activities have focussed on the traditional textbook and lectures, to a substantial degree reading activities are also of a non-traditional nature—notably web based reading, journal articles and the reading of newspapers and magazines. While most lecturers felt students handled the assigned writing tasks adequately, a considerable percentage of respondents felt that students do not handle writing assignments very well. Not surprisingly, lecturers felt that the reading and writing skills taught should be relevant and transferable to courses outside of the developmental education classroom. The findings of the study have informed new drafts of learning outcomes for two Developmental Education courses offered by the department.

RESUMEN

El documento trata sobre un sondeo de opinión conducido por el Departamento de Inglés y Estudios sobre la Comunicación de un Instituto de Enseñanza Superior en Trinidad y Tobago. Este estudio condujo a una revisión de los cursos sobre Educación para el Desarrollo que ofrece el departamento. El sondeo fue realizado a profesores universitarios a tiempo completo y por horas, con el objeto de identificar los requerimientos de lectura y escritura que se espera de los estudiantes. Aunque de los 259 cuestionaros distribuidos, sólo 31 fueron respondidos, se logró cierto panorama con respecto a la lectura y la escritura en los cursos universitarios. Los datos cualitativos y cuantitativos generados sugirieron que los profesores esperan habilidades cognoscitivas de un nivel superior para las tareas de lectura y escritura que asignan a sus estudiantes. Ellos esperan que los estudiantes sean individuos de alto nivel intelectual y que se regulen a sí mismos. Por esta razón, las tareas de lectura y de escritura que asignan son considerables, no sólo en número sino también en cuanto al grado de sofisticación que demandan. Aunque las actividades de lectura y los exámenes, en su mayoría, tienen como foco los libros de texto tradicionales y las conferencias dictadas, también tienen que ver, en gran medida, con fuentes no tradicionales de lectura de artículos de diarios, periódicos y revistas publicados principalmente en la Internet. Aunque la mayoría de los conferencistas expresaron sentir que los estudiantes manejaban sus tareas de escritura adecuadamente, un considerable porcentaje de los participantes en la encuesta sentían que sus alumnos no manejan la escritura muy bien. No es de sorprender que los conferencistas sintieran la relevancia de la enseñanza de la lectura y la escritura y que ésta debiera ser llevada a otros cursos además de los de Educación para el Desarrollo. Los resultados del estudio han llevado a nuevos bosquejos en cuanto a lo que se espera en dos de los cursos de Educación para el Desarrollo ofrecidos por el departamento.

BACKGROUND

As a run up to The World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 5-9 October 1998), the Regional Conference of UNESCO on *Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean* was held in Havana, Cuba from the 18th to 22nd November, 1996. The outcome of this conference was the "Declaration about Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean" which, among other things, ratified article 26, paragraph 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "every person has the right to education" and that "the access to higher education studies will be equal for all, on the basis of their corresponding merits". It also acknowledged the "special stage in history, characterised by the emergence of a new production paradigm based on the power of knowledge and the adequate handling of information" and the necessity to train "a highly skilled staff" to ensure the requisite economic and social development. The participants at this conference declared that "higher education is an unavoidable element for social development, production, economic growth, strengthening cultural identity, maintaining social coherence, continuing the struggle against poverty and the promotion of the culture of peace." (p.4)

In answer to the regional and subsequent world UNESCO conferences, and consistent with the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) of the UN Millenium Declaration of September, 2000, Trinidad and Tobago launched its Vision 2020. This was also accompanied by an effort to enhance its competitiveness and to cope with the challenges of globalisation and trade liberalisation through becoming a knowledge-based economy. This primarily means social and economic transformation to achieve developed country status by the year 2020. At the core of this transformation is human development, and education is seen as one of the dimensions of human development that would assist in reducing poverty, generating sustainable employment opportunities and creating a harmonious society. This can be seen in the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's (GORTT) vision statement which proposes inter alia that "all citizens are assured of a sound, relevant education system tailored to meet the needs of a modern, progressive technologically advancing nation" (Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, 2007 p. 1).

By 2000, just over 6% of the labour force in Trinidad and Tobago had tertiary education. This reality, combined with the thrust towards human development coming on the heels of the World Conference on Higher Education (1998), led to the view that increased access to tertiary education is critical to social and economic development. It is in this context therefore that the College of Science Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) was set up by Act of Parliament in 2000. It is a community college which offers two- and three-year degrees and certificate programmes and it is the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago. By the aca-

demic year 2006-2007 it already boasted an enrolment of 5,000 part- and full-time students of diverse profiles (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: ACADEMIC PROFILES OF APPLICANTS TO COSTAATT

1	Five O-levels but with deficiencies in Math, English, Science or Computer Literacy
2	No secondary education; mature, employed and experienced
3	High school dropout/ no secondary school education
4	Completed secondary education but incomplete certification
5	Five O-levels but no prerequisites for the career to be pursued
6	Five O-levels obtained more than a decade ago. Re-entering tertiary level to update skills

The College in its mission statement aims "(t)o be the premier educational institution in providing, high quality, affordable and accessible educational programmes, serving the needs of business, industry and its diverse campus communities…"(Faculty Orientation 2007). Its vision is to "be a dynamic, innovative and student-centred multi-campus college, promoting excellence in teaching and learning, serving diverse communities and producing lifelong learners who can compete globally" (Faculty Orientation 2007). The goals of the College are as follows:

- to increase the number of citizens participating in tertiary level education and training
- to broaden access to tertiary level education and training through an open admissions policy and the development of multiple delivery modes including distance education
- to design and deliver customized programmes to cater for the specific needs of different sectors of the economy
- to collaborate with business and industry in the development and delivery of programmes which are relevant to current and future labour market needs
- to ensure a quality educational experience by constantly reviewing and improving services offered to students in terms of student guidance, learning resources and facilities in general
- to raise the level of graduate competency by assisting students in developing the professional and interpersonal skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

(FACULTY ORIENTATION 2007)

Further to increasing access to tertiary education, by 2004, a Green Paper on Tertiary Education, Training, Distance and Lifelong Learning made major recommendations to reform, restructure and govern the tertiary education system so as to establish a Seamless Education and Training System (SETS). SETS proposes the creation of an integrated education system that facilitates the smooth transition for students from the primary to tertiary levels. The tertiary education climate was further affected when in 2006 free tertiary education was introduced through the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) programme which makes provisions for all tuition fees of nationals enrolled in higher education to be paid up to the first degree and 50% for post-graduate degrees.

Since its establishment in 2000, enrolment of students at COSTAATT has increased steadily over the years from 2001 to 2007. Table 2 provides a picture of enrolment statistics.

TABLE 2: ENROLMENT AT COSTAATT

Year	No. of students in COSTAATT
2000-1	0
2001-2	108
2002-3	2545
2003-4	2932
2004-5	3401
2005-6	4403
2006-7	5532
September 07-08	4944

With the increases in student enrolment have come concomitant increases in the numbers of under-prepared students; so that the numbers of students who have failed the College's placement tests in English and Mathematics and have had to be enrolled in the College's developmental English and Mathematics courses have also increased (Table 3).

TABLE 3: STUDENT ENROLMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS COURSES

Year	No. of students COMM001	No. of students MATH 090	No. of students MATH 095	No. of students MATH 096	No. of students MATH 097	No. of students MATH 098
2000-1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001-2	0	0	6	0	0	0
2002-3	113	16	145	0	0	0
2003-4	92	202	407	0	0	0
2004-5	139	396	478	0	0	0
2005-6	299	658	855	0	0	0
2006-7	1171	1132	1420	0	0	0
2007-8	340	0	0	666	564	62

The dramatic increases in the numbers of students failing the College's placement tests in English and Mathematics and having to be enrolled in the College's developmental English and Mathematics courses led the College in 2007 to investigate first-hand the approaches used by other international colleges to cater to under-prepared students. As a consequence seven members of faculty attended a conference on developmental education held by the National Association for Developmental Education in Nashville Tennessee from March 21, to March 24, 2007. Members returned to the College determined to re-examine and revitalise their approaches to "scaffolding" the under-prepared student to the college experience. It is within this context therefore that the Department of English and Communication Studies sought to improve its developmental education offerings to the rest of the College.

The courses *Introduction to Communication I*: COMM 001 (soon to be called Developmental Writing) currently being offered and *Developmental Reading* (COMM 002) soon to be offered, are within the Department of English and Communication Studies. Entitled 'Introduction to Communication I: COMM 001', our developmental writing course is a one-semester non-credit course. Passing the course permits students to enrol in Communication I: Fundamentals of Writing (COMM 107). Students are placed in this course as well as in Communication I: Fundamentals of Writing (COMM 107) based on the test scores of a college created placement test.

THE PROBLEM

The dramatic increase in the numbers of under-prepared students entering COSTAATT has propelled the College to investigate established approaches to ease these students' transition to tertiary level education. In

addition, so far, there has been no in-depth investigation into the reading and writing requirements of COSTAATT so as to make curricular decisions. This lack of research on the reading and writing requirements at COSTAATT limits the extent to which curricular decisions could be made to cater to the educational needs of under-prepared students who enter tertiary education. There is therefore a need to explore the following: the types of reading and writing tasks assigned by lecturers to students of the College; the extent to which these students are able to accomplish these tasks and lecturers' expectations and assumptions of students' abilities to accomplish those tasks.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were investigated by this study.

- What reading expectations do lecturers have of students?
- What writing expectations do lecturers have of students?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that the study will add to the general body of knowledge on tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago and inform educational practitioners' attempts at curriculum redesign and change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION?

Developmental Education is that blend of courses offered at the tertiary level in order to help under-prepared students to cope with college level work and facilitate their successful completion of a degree. It is often characterised by interventions in the form of tutoring programs, special academic advising and counselling programmes, learning laboratories, and comprehensive learning centres. In addition, there is the inclusion of non-credit bearing developmental courses in Mathematics and English that may extend the time of students' degrees (Boylan, H., 1999). Developmental Education is also based on the Vygotskian principle of scaffolding students from the level they are at to the level they should be. It is therefore grounded in sound pedagogical practice.

In most colleges, developmental education focuses mainly on remediating skill deficiencies in mathematics, reading and writing. Mandatory testing of students before they enter college usually is conducted so as to determine their readiness for tertiary level work. A 2004 study conducted by the National Centre for Developmental Education (NCDE) revealed that testing of students entering community colleges in the US was mainly done through the American College Testing's (ACT) COMPASS or the Educational Testing Service's ACCUPLACER. Some 21% of the community col-

leges studied developed and used their own assessment instruments (Gerlaugh, K, Thompson, L., Boylan, H. & Davis, H., 2007). At COSTAATT the placement test that is administered to in-coming students has been developed by faculty of the College.

DEFINITION OF READING

"Reading is thinking guided by print ... or the skill of transforming printed words into spoken words" (Perfetti, 1986 p. 18). It is interactive (Cooper, 1997) and consists of overlapping processes (Perfetti, 1986). It is not a natural act (Fitzsimmons, 1998; Lyon, 1998; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2001) but must be taught (Asselin, 2001; Cooper, 1997; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Joseph, 2002; Lyon, 1998; Mills, 1970; Moats, 2001; Perfetti, 1986; Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky & Seidenberg, 2002; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2001). It is not merely a collection of skills but is related to prior learning, meaning and context (Cooper, 1997; Friere, 1991; Goodman, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1991) and its acquisition is inextricably linked with culture – ethnicity, social class and primary language (Au & Mason, 1981; Au & Raphael, 2000; Craig, 1999, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Delpit, 1986; Nagle, 1999).

It is also established that like reading, writing is an active construction of meaning. In addition reading and writing are both processes that are interactive and symbiotic (Loban, 1963;) so that problems with writing start with problems with reading (Alves, 2007). They are both used to conceptualise and communicate thoughts and meaning (Langer, 1986).

COLLEGE READING AND WRITING AND CRITICAL THINKING

Critical reading and critical writing are fundamental to functioning at the tertiary level and involve critical thinking. Students need to develop the ability to summarise large volumes of complex texts while at the same time thinking critically about and questioning those texts. These complex texts often contain multiple layers of meaning that are not immediately apparent upon a single superficial reading and so require sophisticated reading comprehension skills and strategies (2006 ACT Inc). This implies the ability to evaluate texts, accepting or rejecting the information gathered in terms of its relevance to identified purposes. Critical literacy therefore involves an awareness of the social and political implications of written communication. Students must not only decode texts in a dictionary sense but must draw inferences, make predictions, summarise, and synthesize various versions of the same concept (Swanson, C., 2004). College-level writing requires that the writer begins with "an intellectually well-defined task" (Elder & Paul, 2006 p. 39). Such writing must be logical, unbiased, precise, informed and relevant rather than focussed on rhetorical style and flourish.

HOME ENVIRONMENT AND READING

Literacy practices in the home have an impact on children's reading success or failure. The parents who read provide models for their children to follow. Moreover home literacy practices – making inferences, predicting and making judgements about text – enable children to construct meaning on a variety of levels (Roser & Martinez, 1985; Teale, 1981). Children who have stimulating literacy experiences, such as lap reading, before entering formal schooling, have improved vocabulary growth and develop an awareness of print and literacy concepts (Hiebert, 1981;Lyon, 1998; Mullis, 1995; Ninio, 1983). Family rules about TV watching can often lead to children's reading for entertainment (Guthrie, Schafer, Wang & Afflerbach, 1995) with the possible "Matthew effect"—cumulative growth in vocabulary development, reading ability and attitude to reading (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003).

Moreover there is a correlation between low reading achievement and SES (Capella & Weinstein, 2001; Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1993; Jimerson, Egeland & Teo, 1999). The general perception is that the poor student is not exposed to as many books and parental modelling of positive behaviours as in the middle class home environment (Teale, 1981); that in the low SES home environments if reading is practised at all it may be for strictly utilitarian purposes—reading the Bible or the newspapers. These home literacy practices may not be congruent with success in the school and may be different from those to which children are exposed in middle class homes (Deosaran, 1988; Nagle, 1999; Alves, 2007). Conversely, however, studies imply that middle class students show more reading readiness and a greater adaptability to the school environment than students of low SES. Capella & Weinstein (2001) suggest that poor students are less likely to be academically resilient by 12th grade because of a lower internal locus of control, lower educational aspirations and exposure to a less challenging high school curriculum. Such students are therefore more likely to fail college entrance tests (Alves, 2007).

Poor students are especially dependent on the school, and by extension the college, to provide them with literacy promoting activities since these are not readily available in their homes (Craig, 1999; Lee & Croninger, 1994; Alves, 2007). The child who enters school without pre-school reading advantage is quite likely to experience disadvantage cumulatively which may plague him to the tertiary level. In order for him to cope with the literacy requirements at the tertiary level, then, the student will have to be scaffolded into college-level literacy practices.

VYGOTSKY'S 'ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT'

The scaffolding of the college experience is in keeping with Vygotsky's theoretical approach which sees intellectual skills as growing out of social interactions in the accomplishment of tasks. "Learning on the inter-

psychological plane often involves mentoring provided by more culturally knowledgeable persons, usually elders, who engage in activity with less experienced or knowledgeable persons" (Lee & Smargorinsky, 2000, p. 2). The metaphor, 'scaffolding' (Lee & Smargorinsky, 2000, citing Bruner, 1975) has been used to describe the process of supportive guidance that is adjusted to the learner's progress, providing the necessary help for mastery while encouraging the child's assumption of greater responsibility as his/her ability increases.

Developmental education, according to the Vygotskian perspective therefore, provides support for the struggling student through tutoring programmes, special academic advising and counselling programs, learning laboratories, and comprehensive learning centres. As the student gains more proficiency, this support is gradually reduced. The distance between where the student is and should be is called the zone of proximal development.

TRINIDAD CREOLE AND READING ABILITY

The vernacular in Trinidad and Tobago, although different from Standard English, shares enough of a vocabulary base with it to influence the student into thinking that he knows the standard when in fact he does not. This can impede students' comprehension of text. Craig (1999) posits one approach that seems akin to the UK position in the Bullock Report—*A language for life*—in the 1970s. Craig's approach to fostering literacy recognises the validity of the Creole. He suggests, however, that the teacher's role is to provide models of language use appropriate to particular purposes and contexts. This should be done using a wide variety of teaching techniques involving class discussions, group projects, and various types of mediated learning (Boylan and Saxon, 1999). In this approach, the College is seen as the place where students are inducted into the use of Standard English and taught skills – time management, how to read effectively, note-taking and test-taking. This approach also recognises that students bring with them language capabilities that must be built upon if induction into the standard language—a passport to educational and economic success—and international communication is to be facilitated.

READING ACHIEVEMENT, SELF-CONCEPT AS A READER AND ATTITUDE TO READING

While it is generally accepted that reading problems should be diagnosed and remediated early in the student's life, it is also a fact that a number of students never had the benefit of this early intervention. Having reached the tertiary level, the student with low reading achievement will have experienced reading difficulty all his life (Capella & Weinstein, 2001; Juel, 1988; Lerner, 1997; Sousa, 2001) and will be unprepared for the increased demands of the curriculum—the higher order learning activities that are encountered

at the tertiary level of schooling in the process of making meaning in text. He would be disempowered—barred from fully and beneficially participating in the "Secondary Discourses" (Gee, 1990 cited by Lankshear, 1994) of college. Secondary Discourse is that use of language which is needed to function in secondary institutions (institutions beyond the home as primary socializing unit—for example, the college). According to James Gee (Lankshear, 1994), mastery of language uses within Secondary Discourses is literacy which empowers. This is so whether empowerment is defined as access to the acquisition of social goods (money, power, status) (Gee, 2000) or becoming socially and politically conscious about one's position in society and being spurred to working for equity (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Friere, 1984; 1991).

With respect to Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Woolfolk, 2001), a student lacking literacy skills would have suffered a maturational lag. Inadequate reading skills limit exposure to the information that would give the requisite prior knowledge to allow for assimilation and, consequent accommodation of the new knowledge of college level work in the student's schema (Stanovich, 1991; Valtin, & Naegele, 2001; Brown, 1994). Moreover, now that the student can think in terms of past, present and future (Woolfolk, 2001), he can envisage how his inadequate literacy skills may impact his life in the future.

MOTIVATIONAL THEORY

Self-efficacy theory: Self-efficacy is content-specific—that is, a person may be competent in one area of endeavour and not another. Perceived self-efficacy is people's beliefs about their capabilities. Sewell and St. George (2000) identify four sources of beliefs about our efficacy: past mastery or failure experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social or 'self-persuasion' of capability and one's physiological and emotional stress reactions. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. People who doubt their capabilities shy away from tasks they perceive as difficult (Bandura, 1994).

Research findings suggest the range of perceptions of self-efficacy on learning and motivation. Highly efficacious students will spend more effort on challenging learning tasks (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990) and the efficacious reader has multiple purposes for reading (Greaney & Neuman, 1990). Sewell and St. George (2000) have summarised the cognitive, metacognitive and motivational processes seen in highly efficacious students. According to them, such students:

- choose to participate in their learning
- expend more effort in their learning
- seek more challenging learning experiences

- persist longer when faced with difficulty
- cope serenely in the face of adversity
- recover from failure more quickly
- are more motivated to learn
- achieve higher goals in learning
- use a variety of learning strategies
- quickly discard a faulty strategy
- attribute success to ability and strategic effort
- attribute failure to inappropriate strategy use (p. 60).

The student with low reading ability shies away from reading because it is a slow, painful task with the result that he is involved in a cycle of frustration with further deleterious effects on his self-efficacy—he cannot read well so he does not like to read; he gains insufficient reading experience and so is unfamiliar 'with the vocabulary, sentence structure, text organization, and concepts of academic "book" language' (Moats, 2001). Since the language of academia may pose a challenge to the student with poor literacy this may further increase his feeling of inadequacy (Field & Boesser, 2002).

COLLEGE LEVEL READING AND WRITING

Learning, studying, reading, writing are complex processes, interactive processes. They depend on the text and the task so that all students, especially students in developmental classes, need to engage in strategic learning in order to be successful at college (Stahl, N.A. 2006). In engaging in strategic learning, students must determine the courses they are taking, the texts they are reading what is expected of them by lecturers and how to study. In short, students need to be active, self-regulated learners to be successful at the tertiary level.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATORS

Lecturers in developmental education programmes must inform their practice by the latest research in the area. Beyond teaching students the basics of reading and writing, they must teach students to be strategic learners who are able to transfer strategies learnt in the developmental classroom to real college-level tasks outside the classroom. In the classroom lecturers should select activities from real college-level books from the content class and have students transfer skills learnt in the developmental class to their content class.

There is a connection between the skills of reading and writing at all levels of education. Seen in the context of communication theory, reading is decoding thought and writing is encoding thought. College level reading and writing require sophisticated interfacing with

texts but this required level of proficiency is not always evident among all applicants desiring tertiary level education. This has grown abundantly clear in the current drive in Trinidad and Tobago to open access to higher education and the consequent development of a knowledge-based economy. The purpose of any course in reading and writing at the college level is to remediate students' ability to encode and decode thought. The instructor's role, therefore, is to reduce if not eliminate the noise that would stymie students' communication in the academic context by instructing students in strategies of critical reading and writing, vocabulary development, study skills and the usage of grammar and mechanics of the language. These strategies must be taught using the materials that students encounter in their college-level courses. Moreover, underpinning all activities must be an awareness of affect—students' beliefs about studying, reading, learning and writing. Students must be educated to value mastery of reading and writing skills in the college setting and ultimately become self-regulated learners. Finally, any effort to remediate students' reading and writing proficiency must be informed by careful assessment of their needs and application of current research in addressing them.

PROJECT SCOPE

The Department of English and Communication Studies decided to create, administer and evaluate a survey to acquire adequate information about actual college reading and writing requirements so as to re-evaluate and design/re-design its developmental course offering.

Several goals were established for the project:

1. to give faculty teaching college level courses the opportunity to say what are the actual reading and writing demands in their classroom using a faculty survey;

2. to analyse the results of the faculty survey;

3. to meet with faculty teaching the developmental Communication course to discuss its objectives and compare with the results of the survey;

4. to predict resource demands that may be necessary to prepare developmental students to satisfy the college reading and writing requirements; and

5. to design/re-design the developmental course offering of the Department of English and Communication Studies.

PROJECT LIMITATIONS

The primary instrument of data collection was a survey and, as with all surveys, it was limited by the willingness of faculty members to respond. Another limitation was the extent to which the survey questions were clearly worded to elicit the responses needed to provide a clear picture of the reading and writing requirement of the college level courses.

PROJECT TIME

The time of the project spans from September, 2007 to May, 2008 Methodology

Although there is no panacea in improvement approaches in management practice, it is however important that the right methodology, tools and change vehicle be used for the problem.

One of the process change methodologies related to Six Sigma – define, measure, analyze, design, validate (DMADV) – has been recommended as the best for designing or re-designing a new process or service (Harvey 2004). In this approach the needs and wants of the customer are researched. These needs and wants are measured and the measurements used to determine the nature of the new service.

Translated to the current situation, DMADV would involve, first, identification of the best way to investigate the reading and writing needs at COSTAATT. This was done by first a brainstorming of ideas by members of the Department of English and Communication Studies. A number of ideas were generated by the brainstorming session which necessitated selection of the most workable ideas. As a result, it was decided that administration of a survey of faculty would be the most feasible method. This then led to another brainstorming session to decide on the questions to be included in the survey

A summary table below relates DMADV to improving the development offerings of the Department of English and Communication Studies to the College:

TABLE 4: DMADV

Define	Research: define objectives; survey construction; deciding on items to be included in faculty survey
Measure	Pilot of faculty survey
Analyze	Assessing the results of the pilot to determine suitability; analysing the survey to determine the reading and writing needs of the College.
Design	Re-designing the survey; designing the courses.
Validate	Administering the survey; implementing the new courses.

SURVEY

In addition to the brainstorming session with faculty of the Department of English and Communication Studies, the inclusion of other survey questions was informed by this researcher's twenty-six (26) years' experience as a teacher of English and training as a teacher of reading. In addition, survey items were found from a similar study conducted by Colarusso, 2000.

The survey was chosen because it was felt that it would give the largest possible amount of data in the shortest possible time. It was also felt that since faculty could be accessed via the Internet soft copies could be e-mailed to members of faculty and additionally, hard copies distributed.

A pilot of the faculty survey to determine ease of answering revealed that further changes were necessary in formatting as well as in precision of items. It was determined that since not all members of faculty were teachers of reading, the reading jargon should be simplified and thereby made clearer to those who did not teach reading. It was also felt that, since the survey would be e-mailed, item one (1) should be made optional so as to be less intimidating to participants.

After its revision, the survey was completed by faculty members. Of the 259 surveys that were distributed via e-mail as well as hard copy, 31 were returned. The total response rate is therefore .11 according to the formula as outlined by Neumann, 2000 (cited by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). The completed surveys were analysed with the use of SPSS edition 10 software. Table 5 below details the breakdown of completed surveys by department.

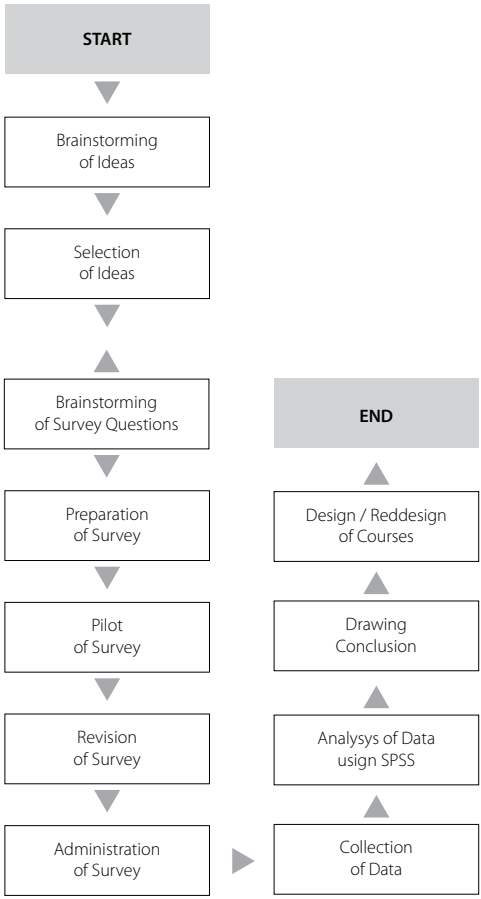
TABLE 5: CHECK SHEET OF COMPLETED SURVEYS BY DEPARTMENT

Department	Completed Surveys
Business Studies (BUS)	√√√
English and Communication Studies (COMM)	√√√√√√
Environmental Studies (ENV)	√√
Health Sciences (HEALTH)	√√√
Information Technology (IT)	√
Library Science and Information Studies (LIBS)	√
Mathematics (MATH)	√√√
Natural and Life Sciences (NAT SCI)	√√
Nursing (NURS)	√

Department	Completed Surveys
Behavioural Sciences (PSYCH)	√√
Performing Arts: Music (PERF)	√√
Radiological Sciences (RAD SCI)	√
Social Sciences (SOC)	√√√
Total	31

The process of determining the reading and writing needs at COSTAATT could be illustrated by the flow chart in figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: FLOW CHART
THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING READING AND WRITING NEEDS



FINDINGS

The two research questions ("What reading expectations do lecturers have of students?" and "What writing expectations do lecturers have of students?") were operationalised primarily through the administration of a faculty survey that produced both quantitative and qualitative data. The items on the faculty survey were semi-structured allowing for the elicitation of lecturers' reading and writing requirements of students. Analysis of the survey results was facilitated by the use of software SPSS edition 10. Consideration of the results of the survey must however be mitigated by the fact that 31 of the 259 surveys distributed were completed. Despite that fact though, those surveys that were completed did give valuable data on the reading and writing requirements of college level courses.The readings assigned to students varied in length and type. Tables 6 to 8 below provide a picture of the variety and lengths of readings required of students.

TABLE 6: TYPES OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

TYPE OF READING ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Textbook assignments	74%
Lecture notes	68%
Newspaper or magazine articles	35%
Journal Articles	29%
Laboratory manuals	23%
Online texts	26%
Short stories	3%
Anthology	3%
Novels or plays	3%
Graphics (maps, graphs, charts, etc.)	23%

TABLE 7: AMOUNT OF READING ASSIGNED TO STUDENTS PER TRIMESTER

NUMBER OF PAGES OF READING	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
800+	6%
600- 800	16%
400-600	38%
0-200	32%

TABLE 8: LECTURER'S EVALUATION OF STUDENTS' READING COMPETENCE

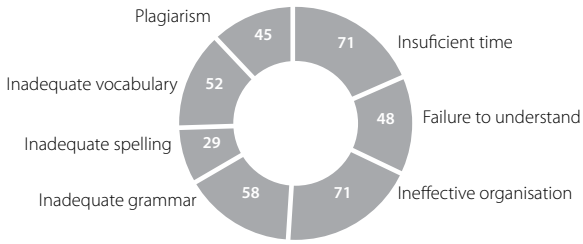
Students' Reading Competence	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Students read very well	6%
Students read adequately	71%
Students do not read well	8%

Lecturers generally evaluated students as reading adequately (71% of responses) and mainly required that students read their textbooks and lecture notes (74% and 68% respectively). To a lesser degree, lecturers also assigned laboratory manuals, online texts, graphics and articles in newspapers, magazines and journals. Few lecturers assigned readings in novels or plays, short stories and anthologies. The length of these readings mainly ranged from 400 to 600 pages.

Instructors revealed the use of a variety of test/evaluation formats with a high percentage of material requiring higher level thinking skills: 74% used problem solving and oral presentation respectively, 71% essays and group work respectively, 81% short answer and 52% multiple choice. There was also 42% use of true-false, 29% use of fill in the blanks, 23% use of laboratory manuals and 19% matching. Also 94% of lecturers say their test questions come from their text and lectures.

Information about writing assignments was also revealing. Of the respondents, 61% required in-class papers, 58% reports and 55% required research papers. When asked about the length of these papers, 65% of respondents said 1-4 pages, 42% said 5-10 pages, 19% said 11-15 pages and 6% said 16-20 pages. Three percent of respondents required students to write 30-40 pages and 41-50 pages respectively. In answer to the question about how well they thought students handled writing assignments, 68% of lecturers responded "adequately", 26% responded "not well" and 6% responded "very well".

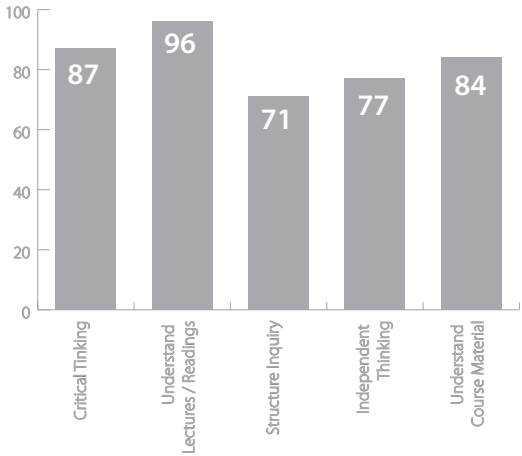
The ranking of reasons why students had difficulty with writing assignments also revealed an interesting picture (see Figure 2). Figure 2: Difficulties with Writing Assignments



Faculty were required to rank the reasons 5 to 1 (5 being the most common). "Insufficient time devoted to writing assignments" and "Ineffective organisation of information" were both ranked 3-5 by 71% of respondents. "Inadequate grammar" was ranked 3-5 by 58% of respondents and "Inadequate vocabulary" was 3-5 by 52%. 45 percent and forty-two percent of respondents ranked respectively "Failure to understand the assignment" and "Plagiarism" 3-5. Eighty-seven percent of respondents required students to do library research. In answer to the question about preferred documentation format, 23% of respondents chose American Psychological Association and Modern Language Association respectively and 19% chose Chicago Manual Style. Nineteen percent of respondents indicated that they accept any documentation style.

In seeking to elicit faculty's objectives in assigning writing, opportunity was again allowed for ranking that produced data which suggest lecturer preference for higher order cognitive skills. (See Figure 3).

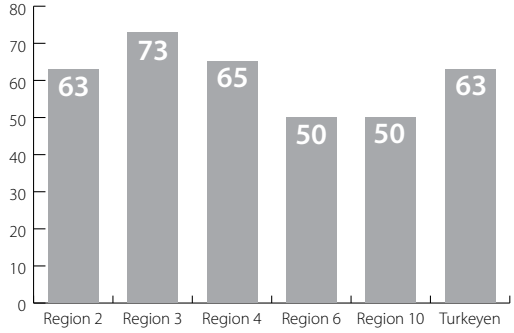
FIGURE 3: OBJECTIVES OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS



Respondents were asked to rank reasons 5 to 1 (5 being the most preferred). The percentages that follow record those responses which ranked the reasons 3-5. Ninety percent of lecturers said that they assign writing aiming "to help students demonstrate what they understand from lectures or other learning activities"; 87% said they assign writing "to help students engage critically and thoughtfully with course readings"; 84% assign writing "to assess students' understanding of course materials"; 77% assign writing "to encourage independent thinking" and 71% assign writing "to structure and guide inquiry".

A similarly interesting picture was painted of lecturer expectations of student reading and writing skills (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4:
LECTURER EXPECTATIONS OF READING AND WRITING SKILLS (TOP 6)



Lecturers were required to rank from 5-1 (5 being the most preferred) their expectations of student demonstration of reading and writing skills. For our purposes the top six expectations were chosen. Again percentages reflect that lecturers have ranked the reading and writing skills they require from 3-5. Sixty-five percent of lecturers expect students to demonstrate the ability to summarize information; 58% expect correct grammar and adequate vocabulary; and 55% expect students to read complex texts without their instruction or guidance. On the other hand, 48% of lecturers expect students to develop and adequately support a thesis and 42% expect students to be able to use the Internet to locate information and to check for correct spelling.

Lecturers preferred students' reading and writing to be characterised by highly intellectual habits. Seventy-four percent of lecturers expect students to value "research as a means of exploring new ideas"; 65% expect students to prefer "facts and information in situations where feelings and intuitions often prevail"; 58% expect students to value "carefulness in executing reading and writing tasks"; 48% expect students to be aware "that what one researches, how one researches, and how one communicates information may differ depending upon disciplines, purposes, and readers" and 32% expect students to show "initiative … taking responsibility for their own learning".

Some of the more valuable information came from faculty comments. These comments reflect common themes both in terms of reading (Table 9 shows: Affinity Diagram-Suggested Reading Needs; see Figure 5 for -Articulated Reading Needs) and writing (see Table 10 for -Affinity Diagram-Suggested Writing Needs; and Figure 6 for -Articulated Writing Needs).

TABLE 9 : AFFINITY DIAGRAM- SUGGESTED READING NEEDS

Critical Reading/Thinking	Motivation/Affective	Transfer Across the Curriculum	Study Skills
Ability to comprehend complex tasks to allow for their execution	Develop a love for reading to expand vistas and horizons	Guidance to read applications of subject area,	to. . .learn in a shorter space of time
To be able to think and view critically and look for alignment . . .with laws of logic	Help students approach reading. . .activities with confidence	See the value of this course as they develop skills within their own curriculum	Time management re analysis of reading material and summarizing relevant data
Techniques for extracting pertinent information	most students seem to lack the motivation to read	Include comprehension skills in technical written work (as part of communications course)	Techniques for extracting pertinent information
Help them to problem solve. . .	. . .a plateau from which reading appreciation will be heightened	. . .to understand and interpret basic ideas and concepts in the courses	
Please teach them to think/reflect	strengthened sensibilities for the various genres of reading materials		
It will help them to become more critical readers. . . make inferences	. . .the power potential of thorough comprehension skills. . .can remake an individual		
Students are generally weak in cognitive skills, creative skills and in generating ideas	. . .develop an appreciation of simple but effective writing style.		
. . .learn to actually read and understand			

BACKGROUND

As a run up to The World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 5-9 October 1998), the Regional Conference of UNESCO on *Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean* was held in Havana, Cuba from the 18th to 22nd November, 1996. The outcome of this conference was the "Declaration about Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean" which, among other things, ratified article 26, paragraph 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "every person has the right to education" and that "the access to higher education studies will be equal for all, on the basis of their corresponding merits". It also acknowledged the "special stage in history, characterised by the emergence of a new production paradigm based on the power of knowledge and the adequate handling of information" and the necessity to

train "a highly skilled staff" to ensure the requisite economic and social development. The participants at this conference declared that "higher education is an unavoidable element for social development, production, economic growth, strengthening cultural identity, maintaining social coherence, continuing the struggle against poverty and the promotion of the culture of peace." (p.4)

In answer to the regional and subsequent world UNESCO conferences, and consistent with the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) of the UN Millenium Declaration of September, 2000, Trinidad and Tobago launched its Vision 2020. This was also accompanied by an effort to enhance its competitiveness and to cope with the challenges of globalisation and trade liberalisation through becoming a knowledge-based economy. This primarily means social and economic transformation to achieve developed country status by the year 2020. At the core of this transformation is human development, and education is seen as one of the dimensions of human development that would assist in reducing poverty, generating sustainable employment opportunities and creating a harmonious society. This can be seen in the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's (GORTT) vision statement which proposes inter alia that "all citizens are assured of a sound, relevant education system tailored to meet the needs of a modern, progressive technologically advancing nation" (Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, 2007 p. 1).

By 2000, just over 6% of the labour force in Trinidad and Tobago had tertiary education. This reality, combined with the thrust towards human development coming on the heels of the World Conference on Higher Education (1998), led to the view that increased access to tertiary education is critical to social and economic development. It is in this context therefore that the College of Science Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) was set up by Act of Parliament in 2000. It is a community college which offers two- and three-year degrees and certificate programmes and it is the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago. By the academic year 2006-2007 it already boasted an enrolment of 5,000 part- and full-time students of diverse profiles (see Table 1).

FIGURE 5
PARETO CHART FOR -ARTICULATED READING

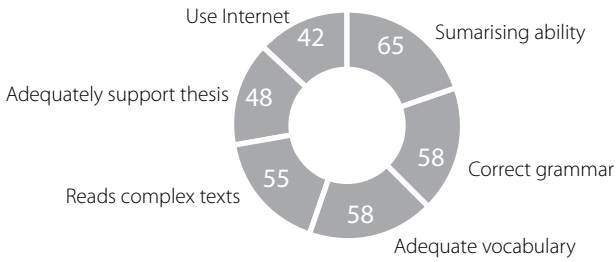
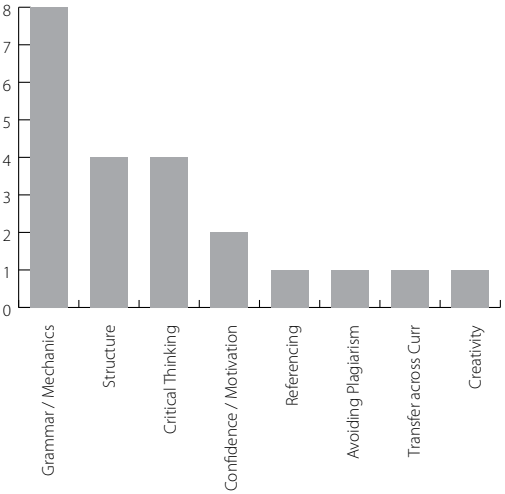


TABLE 10: AFFINITY DIAGRAM—SUGGESTED WRITING NEEDS

Grammar/ Mechanics	Structure	Critical Thinking	Transfer Across the Curriculum	Motivation	Plagiarism/ Reference
Writing lucid and grammatically correct essays	How to structure ideas in written form	Critical thinking and writing	Ensure an understanding that the writing does not stop when COMM001 ends	Help students approach. . . writing activities with confidence	Not to plagiarise
Help in improving grammar and spelling	How to develop writing	Ability to produce clearly thought our pieces;	Using scientific data, information to write creativity	. . .boost the latent writing capabilities suppressed by fear in many adults.	Documenting research materials accurately
Short answer, grammar, spelling	Clear descriptions	Techniques for organizing		Thorough comprehensive skills. . .can remake an individual	
The basics—the sentence—the paragraph etc	Structuring answers, to write abstract introduction, core and conclusion	evidence of analytic ability			
grammar as a vehicle of meaning	Illustrating a viewpoint with coherence				

FIGURE 6:
PARETO CHART OF ARTICULATED WRITING NEEDS



READING

THEME: CRITICAL THINKING

Many comments reflect lecturers valuing of critical thinking and requiring the department to encourage student development in this area. Lecturers asked for an "improvement of functional literacy [and] the ability to comprehend complex tasks to allow for their execution." Another indicated that students "needed to be able to …think and view critically and look for alignment … with the laws of logic." Yet another wanted students to be taught summary skills "techniques for extracting pertinent information" and another said outright that students should be helped "to problem solve".

THEME: MOTIVATION TO READ

Lecturers were conscious of the importance of reading and of students' reluctance to read. They felt that this should be corrected: "develop a love for reading to expand vistas and horizons"; "help students approach reading … activities with confidence"; students need "a great deal of support because most students seem to lack the motivation to read"; "instil strengthened sensibilities for the various genres of reading materials produced locally, regionally and internationally; "develop an appreciation of a simple but effective writing style. This can be achieved through reading a wide range of material-both fiction and non-fiction."

THEME: TRANSFER ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Many lecturers were anxious that the skills learnt in the developmental courses be transferred across the curriculum. One lecturer wanted students to be given "guidance to read applications of [their] subject area, current research, journals, scientific magazines and publications"; another wanted students to "see the value of [the developmental reading] course as they develop skills within their own curriculum"; yet another wanted an inclusion of "comprehension skills in technical written works" (as part of the reading course) and finally, one lecturer wanted students to be able "to understand and interpret basic ideas and concepts in the courses".

THEME: STUDY SKILLS

Several comments reflected lecturers' cognisance of the necessity for the development of study skills if students are to cope at the college level. One lecturer asked that students be helped to "learn in a shorter … time"; another that students be taught "time management re analysis of reading material and summarising relevant data" and another wanted students to be taught "techniques for extracting pertinent information".

WRITING

Like their comments on what reading needs they wanted the Department to satisfy for students, lecturers' comments on writing needs also reflected themes.

THEME: CRITICAL THINKING

Again the theme of critical thinking occurred in lecturers' assessment students' fundamental writing needs. One lecturer said outright—"critical thinking"; One said further, the "ability to produce clearly thought out pieces; illustrating a viewpoint with both coherence and evidence of analytic ability" was necessary and another felt that the ability to use "just enough data to cover the point" was essential.

THEME: MOTIVATION AND TRANSFER ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Just as in their comments on reading requirements, so too, the themes of motivation and transfer across the curriculum recurred in lecturers' comments on how the developmental writing programme could be helpful. Lecturers felt that students needed to be helped to "approach …writing tasks with confidence"; that there was a need to "boost the latent writing capa-

bilities suppressed by fear in many adults" and that the "magic of word use, grammar as a vehicle of meaning and the power potential of thorough comprehension skills together can remake an individual." One comment was that students should be given the "understanding that the writing does not stop when … [the developmental writing course] ends". Another wanted students to be taught "creative writing in the science field"; to use "scientific data/information to write creatively".

THEME: GRAMMAR/MECHANICS AND STRUCTURE

A considerable number of comments reflected lecturers' concern that students master the grammar and mechanics of the language to organise their writing. Many comments called for students to be (i) taught to write "lucid and grammatically correct essays"; (ii) helped "in improving grammar and spelling"; (iii) taught "the basics—the sentence—the paragraph etc."; "the use of grammar"; "the magic of word use, grammar as a vehicle of meaning" and (iv) be given "more specific help in their weak areas such as grammar and organisation of their work". Several comments called for students to be taught "to structure ideas in written form"; "techniques for organizing" ; "structuring answers"; "how to develop writing as the preferred communication tool" and "how to write essays: (abstract, introduction, core and conclusion)".

In summary, the data generated by the operationalisation of the two research questions gave a fairly comprehensive picture of the reading and writing requirements of college level courses. The data that was generated was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. This was facilitated by the fact that there were closed as well as open questions. Careful analysis of the data should inform curricular changes that are to be made in the future.

CONCLUSION

Lecturers expect students to be highly intellectual self-regulated learners—valuing facts, valuing research as a means of exploring new ideas while being cognisant of the fact that the researching and communication of information differs according to subject area, purpose and audience. Such self-regulated learners must also be careful about reading and writing tasks. The findings suggest that the developmental offerings have to be revised to embrace not only writing but also reading as well.

Reading tasks assigned at the College are considerable both in amount and degree of sophistication. There has been a noteworthy trend of increasing the amount of reading assignments over the years. While most of the reading and test activities have focussed on the traditional textbook and lectures, a substantial amount of reading is of a non-traditional nature—notably web-based reading, journal articles and the

reading of newspapers and magazines. Most lecturers felt that students read adequately to meet the needs of their courses but a mere 6% felt that they read very well.

Writing tasks assigned too are considerable both in amount and degree of sophistication. Organisation—how to structure writing to express logical thought—is highly prized. Seventy-one percent of respondents ranked ineffective organisation of information as a major reason for students' writing difficulties. Writing activities range from in-class assignments which may be essays or short-answer responses to longer research based essays and reports with appropriate vocabulary usage and following established rules of grammar/mechanics and documentation guidelines. Again while most lecturers felt students handled the assigned writing tasks adequately, a mere 6% felt they did so very well and a noteworthy 26% felt that students did not handle writing assignments very well.

Another phenomenon to be noted is the preference for collaborative learning as evidenced by the existence of group work. Seventy-one percent of respondents identified group-work as an evaluation strategy. Students must therefore be taught how to take advantage of learning opportunities that present themselves in study groups (Stahl 2006).

While there is a call for focus to be placed on teaching the basics— vocabulary use and the grammar/mechanics of the language, a dominant objective behind the reading and writing tasks assigned is the promotion of critical thinking as embodied in critical reading and writing. A significant 87% of respondents identified critical thought as an objective in their writing assignments for students. Comments on how a developmental reading course and a developmental writing course could help, clearly identified that it is important to inculcate critical thinking as embodied in critical reading and critical writing in students. Seventy-four percent of respondents identified the higher-order thinking skill of problem solving as being required for success in their tests/evaluations.

Not surprisingly, lecturers felt that skills should be relevant and transferable to courses outside of the developmental education classroom. They called for the inculcation of study skills—time management, summarising, selecting relevant information, retention and retrieval of information. In fact, time management was ranked highest by 71% of respondents as the reason why students have difficulty with writing assignments.

The findings of this study have informed a draft of course objectives for a new course (see Appendix Q: Developmental Reading Course Objectives) and validated the course objectives for COMM 001—a course being currently offered The Developmental Reading Course will attempt to

improve the reading and study skills of students so as to enable them to negotiate the college curriculum. It recognises lecturers' requirements for critical thinking, summarising, study skills and vocabulary development. Lecturers' call for the teaching of grammar and mechanics have already been addressed in the course, COMM 001, currently being offered by the department; and so there seems to be no need to revise the objectives of that course.

The draft of course objectives for the new Developmental Reading course (COMM 002) together with the findings of the study will be presented at a meeting with faculty who teach the developmental communication courses. Feedback from faculty on the draft of the new course objectives will further inform a revision of courses objectives piloted in January, 2008. This will be followed by an evaluation of this pilot of the new course. The evaluation of the pilot would involve an evaluation of student learning outcomes through surveys or focus groups of lecturers and of students who have experienced the course as well as formative and summative assessments of students' learning as a result of their pursuit of COMM 002.

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PERMILLA FARRELL

Permilla Farrell is the holder of a Master's degree in Education and a Certificate in Applied Quality Management. She is currently senior lecturer at the College of Science Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) and has taught in the public school system for twenty-five years. As a member of the steering committee that is currently leading the College's thrust towards institutional accreditation, she is highly cognisant of the importance of applying quality management principles to educational practice in higher education. Her interests lie in developmental education (specifically the teaching of reading, study skills and writing) so as to facilitate students' transition from secondary to tertiary level education. She has developed a number of courses in this respect. pfarrell@costaatt.edu.tt=

7

SIZING-UP STUDENTS' COMPETENCIES FOR SUCCESSFUL BLENDED LEARNING

EVALUANDO LAS CAPACIDADES DE LOS ESTUDIANTES PARA UN EXITOSO APRENDIZAJE COMBINADO

JAMILLAH M.A. GRANT & PAUL A. WALCOTT[1]

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
CAVE HILL CAMPUS

LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES

1 The authors of this paper wish to thank the Scholarship of Teaching through Action Research on Teaching Group at the UWI Cave Hill Campus who created and conducted the survey used in this paper. The mission of this group, which was formed in 2005, is to produce quality action research articles on teaching and learning in the Caribbean.

ABSTRACT

Expanding opportunities in tertiary level education requires a serious examination of student technical competencies, curriculum and methods of delivery. Face-to-face and online learning delivery methods incorporate technical skills needed for blended learning. This study reports on a technical competency survey administered at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus. The results show that students lacked the necessary face-to-face technical skills required to create multimedia presentations; advanced word processing skills; as well as many of the skills needed to create spreadsheet and database applications. While most students possess the necessary skills for online learning, certain crucial abilities were lacking: for example, nearly half of the students surveyed indicated that they had difficulty searching online databases and creating email filters. This paper concludes by providing recommendations for enhancing a curriculum which includes technical skills training that supports successful blended learning. The findings of this research will assist and guide future creators of blended learning environments.

RESUMEN

El incremento en las oportunidades para la educación superior requiere un serio examen de las capacidades técnicas del estudiante, del plan de estudios y de los métodos para la entrega [de sus trabajos]. Los métodos de entrega en el aprendizaje cara a cara y en línea incorporan habilidades técnicas necesarias para el aprendizaje combinado. Este estudio presenta los resultados de una encuesta sobre capacidad técnica, aplicada en la Sede de Cave Hill de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales. Los resultados demuestran que los estudiantes carecían de la capacidad técnica requerida para la creación de presentaciones multimedia, conocimientos avanzados para el procesamiento de textos, así como muchas de las habilidades necesarias para crear hojas de cálculos y bases de datos. Aunque la mayoría de los estudiantes poseían la destreza necesaria para el aprendizaje en línea, carecían de ciertas capacidades cruciales. Por ejemplo, casi la mitad de los estudiantes encuestados indicaron que tenían dificultad para la búsqueda en línea de bases de datos y para crear filtros de correo electrónico. En la conclusión de este trabajo se proporcionan recomendaciones para un plan de estudios mejorado que incluya entrenamiento técnico orientado a lograr un exitoso aprendizaje combinado. Los resultados de esta investigación servirán de asistencia y dirección para los futuros creadores de ambientes de aprendizaje combinado.

INTRODUCTION

Sizing up students' abilities is a primary investigation that educators undertake before planning curriculum or instruction. Usually it is based on an informal observation of perceptions, impressions and soft data. However in this study, sizing-up is used as a formal skills assessment of students' ability to use certain technology tools. Sizing up assessment provides initial information about students that will help in the planning of blended learning curricula. In order to expand blended-learning opportunities, special attention needs to be paid to students' abilities and competencies in technology before methods of delivery are considered.

The technological skills needed in face-to-face learning include word processing, presentation tools and other software applications. The skills needed for online learning (in synchronous and asynchronous modes) include: downloading of files, viewing of web pages; searching the internet for information; chatting; sending and receiving email; handling junk mail; and creating email filters.

In the remainder of this paper the importance of this study will be outlined; the theoretical framework presented; the purpose of the study described; the research questions listed; the methodology presented; the results detailed; and recommendations provided.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Sizing up assessments are conducted by educators to guide students' interest in content or to determine the abilities and competencies of student cohorts. The value of sizing up students lies in the information obtained from the exercise, since it helps to create obtainable and sustainable learning goals and informs faculty of the technical abilities of students prior to planning blended learning.

Kim and Bonk (2006) state that online learning is becoming a long-term strategy for higher education institutions. According to the results of their survey on online teaching and learning, blended learning is an increasing trend for universities. Over eighty percent of students predicted that all courses would have some form of online component by 2013. Therefore, the relevant technical abilities of students should be of great concern to both students, lecturers, and administrators.

Several studies have examined students' competencies in the use of technology tools: Haywood, Haywood, Baggetun, Harskamp and Tenhonen (2004), Kvavik & Caruso (2005) and Davis, Smith, Rodrigue and Pulvers (1999), among others. Haywood *et al.* (2004) and Kvavik & Caruso (2005) compared and contrasted students' technical skills, while

Hawkins & Paris (1997) and Davis *et al.* (1999) studied students' Internet-related abilities.

This cornucopia of studies which focus on assessing students' technical abilities all point to the crucial need to study the technical abilities of Caribbean students before designing instruction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Blended learning is simply defined as "instruction that combines face-to-face with online offerings" (Kim and Bonk, 2006). Blended learning generally occurs when students attend courses administered face-to-face but receive administrative direction from their instructors via an online management system. These types of system are commonly known as Learning Management Systems (LMS) or Course Management Systems (CMS). Herein, Online Management Systems (OMS) will be used to refer to both LMS and CMS software.

The features that students encounter when using OMS technology are usually posted syllabi; online readings; grades on assignments; turning in assignments online; discussion boards; and taking exams or quizzes. The Kvavik & Caruso (2005) study gave a detailed account of these features; however, the technical skills required for learning with OMS were not queried. Kim and Bonk indicated that OMS are designed to manage learners rather than integrate interactive emerging technology such as video streaming, learning object libraries, or online exams.

Students require specific technical skills to operate efficiently in a face-to-face or online environment. Common applications used in face-to-face learning are word-processors, presentation software, spreadsheets and databases (Grant, 2004). For online learning, students require the ability to upload and download files; view web pages; search the Internet for information; chat (synchronous communication); send and receive emails (asynchronous communication); handle junk mail; and create email filters. These skills are needed to manipulate OMS (such as Blackboard, eCollege, and Moodle).

Technology-mediated learning may be manifested in the use of pedagogical strategies via an online interface with or without using an OMS. Lofstrom and Nevgi (2007) revealed the value of sizing up students' computer skills with respect to technology-mediated learning. Even though the extent of students' computer skills was not a direct query, the Lofstrom *et al.* study suggested that students' lack of technological ability made it difficult for them to learn. Students tend to interface with technology better when they are comfortable with the given tool. This result corresponds to

the findings of Kvavik & Caruso (2005) that students seemed to value OMS more if they were experienced in using them; therefore, it appears that students' technical skills influenced their ability to learn in a blended learning environment.

In Keengwe's study (2007), students perceived that they needed direct instruction in the effective use of computer applications in order to improve their learning. The fact that students perceived such a deficit gives additional credence to the need for a curriculum which includes technical skills training.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

In order to expand teaching and learning at the tertiary level across the distributed environment of the Caribbean, a clear picture of students' technical competencies is needed; this will allow for curricula development and blended learning instruction to be properly planned. This research is intended to assist creators of learning environments in the establishment and subsequent provision of the pre-requisite technical skills for blended learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three research questions were explored in this study, namely:

1. What technical skills do students possess for face-to-face learning?

2. What technical skills do students possess for online learning?

3. Do students possess the technical skills for interacting in a blended learning environment?

METHODOLOGY

CONTEXT

The University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill campus is one of three campuses of the University of the West Indies. The Cave Hill campus, located in Barbados, has four Faculties: Humanities and Education, Pure and Applied Sciences, Social Sciences, and Law; and two Schools, namely the School of Clinical Medicine and Research and the School of Education.

The student population at the Cave Hill campus currently stands at nearly 7000 students with projections for 15000 or more by 2015. Students from ten Caribbean countries were represented in this study: Anti-

gua, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Lucia, St Vincent, St Kitts, and Trinidad. Eighty-six percent of the respondents indicated that they were citizens of Barbados. Nearly five percent of the students were St Vincent citizens and two percent were citizens of St Lucia. St Kitts and Trinidad were equally represented at 1.3 percent each, with the rest of the countries under one percent.

DATA COLLECTION

The START[2] survey instrument was used for this study (Walcott, Grant & Depradine, 2008). The survey investigated demographic information; academic and computer experience; computer and Internet access; and technical skills. This paper and pencil survey which was conducted in September 2006 was administered to 397 students by faculty members during class time; there were 397 responses. All of the Faculties were included in the study except Law; the School of Clinical Medicine and Research and the School of Education were also not included. Scaling and analyzing of the survey was performed by members of START.

For the purpose of this paper, only those prompts relating to Caribbean students were considered; this totaled 387 students. In addition, only the technical skills related to a blended learning environment (face-to-face and online) were considered. This represented about 60% of the technical skills queried on the survey.

The technical skills investigated were related to the use of word-processing, spreadsheet, presentation, database and email software applications. In addition, online skills were also investigated, namely: viewing web pages; typing web addresses; shopping online; sending and receiving email; chatting; downloading of files; saving images from the Internet; searching the Internet for information, with and without the use of Boolean variables; blocking/unblocking pop-ups; and online telephony.

LIMITATIONS

This study was administered at the Cave Hill Campus and as a result a large proportion of the students were of Barbadian citizenship, some eight-six percent. It would therefore be useful to expand the study to the twelve University Centres which are located in the other Caribbean islands.

2 Scholarship of Teaching through Action Research on Teaching Group, at the Cave Hill campus.

RESULTS OF BLENDED-LEARNING SKILLS

WHAT TECHNICAL SKILLS DO STUDENTS POSSESS FOR FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING?

Word-processing tasks could be performed by most of the students. Almost 98% could perform spell-checking; 95.9% could cut and paste; 92.8% could create bulleted and numbered lists; and 91.2% could use a thesaurus. A slightly smaller percentage could create tables, 89.7%; change bullet symbols, 88.4% set alignments/tabs, 85.5%; and set the language of the document, 84.2%.

Fewer students were able to perform the spreadsheet activities. About 86.3% of the students could insert/delete rows or columns; 78.8% could create charts/graphs; 71.1% could sort data; 70.8% could create fields; 66.9% could create formulae; and only 17.8% could create macros.

Presentation tools also seem to pose some difficulty for students. 69.8% of the students could save a PowerPoint document as a PowerPoint show; 59.7% could add animation; 57.1% could adjust the timing of slides for presentations; 55% could toggle between views; 51.7% could change templates; 49.9% could add sound and/or video; but only 39.8% could transfer or download templates from an external source.

For databases, 64.2% of the students could create a table; 58.3% could create database fields; 57.8% could add database records; 52.2% could create forms; 50.6% could sort a database; and 47.5% could perform a query.

WHAT TECHNICAL SKILLS DO STUDENTS POSSES FOR ONLINE LEARNING?

A large percentage of the students were able to complete many of the online activities. Noticeably lower percentages of the students, however, were able to complete the activities of blocking/unblocking pop-ups; searching using Boolean variables; and online telephony.

A large percentage of students could search the Internet for information without Boolean variables, 95.3%. Almost ninety-five percent, 94.8% and 94.6% of the students respectively, said that they were able to send and receive email and view a web page. About ninety-two percent, 92.2% and 91.7%, respectively of the students could download files from the Internet and chat online. A moderate number of students, 83.5% could type internet addresses, while 82.4% could save images from the Internet. Almost seventy-one percent (70.8%) of the students could shop online, while 65.9% could block/unblock pop-ups.

Only 32.0% of the students could perform online telephony. Although a large number of students were able to search the Internet without the use of Boolean variables, a drastically lower percentage could conduct Boolean searches, namely 25.3%.

Approximately ninety-two percent (91.7) of the students were able to send and receive email; 82.7% could handle junk-mail; 81.4% were capable of editing email messages; 70.0% could create email groups; 49.1% were able to create email filters; and 48.6% could create email signatures.

DO STUDENTS POSSESS THE PRE-REQUISITE TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR INTERACTING IN A BLENDED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

It appears that students possess the skills needed to successfully interact in a blended learning environment that is primarily text-oriented. This is evident from the high percentage of students who were able to: search for information on the Internet (without Boolean variables); send/receive email; view web pages; and use word-processing and spreadsheet applications. The degree of adeptness with word processing applications implies that students have used this tool extensively during the preparation of research reports, essays and other assignments.

A further supposition is that teaching styles remain instructor-centered even when technology has been integrated, or a blending learning environment has been employed. This supposition is supported by the fact that students were less competent in student-centered activities, such as: searching the Internet using Boolean variables; transferring or downloading presentation templates from an external source; adding sound and/or video to a presentation; sorting a database; or performing a database query.

Student could add visuals to documentation such as tables, charts and graphs. This is additional evidence of the dominance of document production in the blended learning approach. Students were adept at using the Internet to search for information and to download files. Again, both of these are activities needed to support research paper production.

Student-centered learning activities such as presentations before peers using slide shows, moving between various slide views, using various design templates, animation and slide timing were problematic for students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this work have highlighted that in order to expand teaching and learning at the tertiary level in the Caribbean, there is a need for training in the use of technologies that are required for blended learning. What is also evident is that there is a need to move away from instructor-centered learning to student-centered learning.

It is therefore the recommendation of the authors, that the current curriculum for students be expanded to include training in software applications required for student-centered learning. In addition, faculty members need to be trained in order to achieve the paradigm shift from instructor-centered learning to student-centered learning. Only if both of these are achieved will students and faculty members be truly ready for successful blended learning.

It is therefore recommended that the following three courses be introduced:

1. Information Literacy. This course will train students and faculty members on how to perform Boolean searches using online databases.

2. Software tools. Both students and faculty members need training in the use of application software, namely spreadsheets, presentation tools and databases.

3. Seaching Methods. Faculty members need to participate in seminars and workshops on methods of delivery.

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PAUL WALCOTT

Dr. Paul Walcott received his PhD in Information Engineering from City University (UK) and is a Lecturer of Computer Science at the University of the West Indies (Barbados). He was the winner of the 2007 UWI/Guardian General Premium Teaching Award and is the current Chairman of the Scholarship of Teaching through Action Research on Teaching (START) group. Dr. Walcott is the Editor-in-Chief of a new open access journal called the Electronic Journal of Computing for Undergraduates in Developing Countries. He teaches courses in software engineering, information systems and e-commerce; and his research interests include computers and education, e-commerce, e-portfolios and e-learning. paul.walcott@cavehill.uwi.edu

JAMILLAH M.A. GRANT

Dr. Grant received her PhD in 2004 from Boston College, USA. Her research interest is technology in education. She published her first article on the use of technology to teach Reading in 2004; *Are Electronic Books Effective in Teaching Young Children Reading and Comprehension*. Subsequently, Dr. Grant worked at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Barbados, as an Instructional Development Specialist. During that time she formed the research group Scholarship of Teaching through Action Research on Teaching, (START). The group produced several collaborative research publications based on surveys and action research, including: *Are Students Ready for a Virtual University; Toward a Policy for a Computer Literacy Programme*; *Helping New Faculty to Document their Scholarship through the Creation of e-Portfolios; New Directions in University Education: Perspectives from the Caribbean; Teaching French in the Anglophone Caribbean* and *Let the Games Begin*. jgrant@uwichill.edu.bb