

**EDUCATION FOR ALL IN THE CARIBBEAN: ASSESSMENT 2000
MONOGRAPH SERIES 20**

Series Editor: Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina

**Educating for Peace
Changing the Culture of the Classroom**

**A Report on an Innovative Teacher Training Programme Implemented by
UNESCO/CARNEID**

Colleen Winter-Brathwaite

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FOREWORD

Education for All in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000 is a remarkable output, which is the culmination of intensive collaborative efforts between the countries of the Caribbean sub-region, the Regional Advisory Technical Group and the EFA Forum Secretariat, and relevant agencies and institutions.

The Country Reports, Monograph Series, and Case Studies highlight and pinpoint, in an extremely effective manner, some of the issues and concerns that drive education policy and action in the Caribbean. At the same time, the documentation presents a balanced and informed overview of the rich and varied educational and cultural experience of the sub-region; a knowledge which is critical to the understanding of the unfolding social and economic developments.

UNESCO is pleased to have been associated with this endeavour, particularly through our regional office in Kingston, Jamaica which, as co-ordinator of the Regional Advisory Group for the Caribbean Sub-region, was integrally involved in every aspect of the exercise. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Caribbean on activities of a mutually rewarding nature as the consequences and implications of the EFA Assessment become manifest.

Colin Power
Deputy Director-General for Education
UNESCO

SERIES INTRODUCTION

At Jomtien in 1990, member states of the United Nations adopted the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* and created the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (EFA Forum). One decade later, the EFA Forum embarked on an assessment of this initiative, intended to assist member states in examining their education provisions to inform the formulation of policy. Once the Caribbean EFA Regional Advisory Group had embarked seriously on the assessment, it was quickly realised that it would be difficult to capture, in any one place, an assessment of all that had transpired in education in the Caribbean during the period 1990-1999. Moreover, the technical guidelines constrained assessors to specifics within quantitative and qualitative frames. However, because it was felt that education in the Caribbean is too dynamic to be circumscribed, the idea of a more wide-ranging monograph series was conceived.

Researchers, education practitioners, and other stakeholders in education were invited to contribute to the series. Our expectations were that the response would be quite moderate, given the short time-frame within which we had to work. Instead, we were overwhelmed by the response, both in terms of the number of enthusiastic contributors and the range of topics represented.

Caribbean governments and peoples have invested in the *hardware* for education--buildings, furniture, equipment; in the *software*, in terms of parent support and counselling services; and they have attended to *inputs* like books and other teaching/learning resources. They have wrestled with ways to evaluate, having gone through rounds of different national examinations, and modifications of ways to assess both primary and secondary education.

But, as the efforts to complete the country reports show, it has been more difficult to assess the impacts, if we take the eventual aim of education as improving the quality of life--we have had mixed successes. That the sub-region has maintained relative peace despite its violent past and contemporary upheavals may be cited as a measure of success; that the environment is threatened in several ways may be one of the indicators of how chequered the success has been.

Writers in the monograph/case study series have been able to document, in descriptive and analytic modes, some of the attempts, and to capture several of the impacts. That this series of monographs on Education for All in the Caribbean has been written, edited, and published in nine months (from first call for papers to issue of the published titles) is itself an indication of the impact of education, in terms of human capability and capacity.

It reflects, too, the interest in education of a number of stakeholders without whom the series would not have been possible. Firstly, the work of the writers is acknowledged. All worked willingly, hard, well, and, in most cases, without material reward. The sterling contribution of the editor, who identified writers and stayed with them to the end of the process, is also recognised, as is the work of the printer, who came through on time despite the severe time constraints. The financial contribution of the following agencies also made the EFA assessment process and the publication of the monograph/case study series possible: Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Department for International Development (DFID), International Labour Organization (ILO), Sub-Regional Headquarters for the Caribbean of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill; the World Bank, and the UN country teams based in Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

We invite you to peruse individual titles or the entire series as, together, we assess Caribbean progress in education to date, and determine strategies to correct imbalances and sustain positive impacts, as we move towards and through the first decade of the new millennium

Claudia Harvey

UNESCO Representative and Coordinator, Regional Technical Advisory Group (RTAG)
EFA in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000

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About the Author

Colleen Winter-Brathwaite, J.P., SCM, is the UNESCO Representative to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. She is also the Co-ordinator of the Caribbean Network of Educational Innovations for Development (CARNEID) and a member of the Regional Technical Advisory Group for the Caribbean EFA Assessment 2000. A former Principal of Queen's College, Barbados, and Past President of both the Barbados Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools (BAPPSS) and the Caribbean Association of Principals of Secondary Schools (CAPSS), Mrs. Winter-Brathwaite, who has a Master's degree in English as well as a Bachelor's degree in Education, gained her experience as teacher and administrator in Canada and Barbados. She was a contributing author of *A Handbook for Secondary School Administrators (1984)*, a member of the Caribbean Examinations Council and host of a weekly teaching programme on English usage. Mrs. Winter-Brathwaite is the recipient of the Silver Crown of Merit for her contribution to education in Barbados.

Abstract

The future of our communities, our nations, our world depends, in large part, on the kind of education with which we endow our children today. *Changing The Culture Of The Classroom* is an innovative teacher training programme based on the premise that children can be educated in ways of peace as effectively as they are socialized into a culture of confrontation and hostility. The many violent and aggressive messages which pervade our world through the media, entertainment, and popular culture need to be countered by furnishing our children with the necessary tools to enable them to build lives based on values of peace and respect for all people. *Changing the Culture of the Classroom*, as its title suggests, is an innovative programme designed to promote positive change in the environment in which children learn. In light of the changing value placed on teaching today, it seeks to reassert the power and influence of the teacher in moulding young lives. One of its core beliefs is that the child who is educated in an environment in which he feels nurtured, validated, and respected is the child who is more likely to embrace values of peace. Teachers need to be equipped with the personal skills and resources which will enable the creation of a nurturing classroom, where children may be empowered to develop in all aspects of their humanity. To this end, *Changing The Culture of The Classroom* seeks to draw into sharp focus the important emotional component of the learning process in producing young citizens who are confident, healthy, and able individuals who have indeed “learned to live together,” in peace.

The Context

The Prevailing Culture of Violence

In the last few decades, throughout the region, the eager assimilation of the negative values of the “developed” world has reinforced and intensified the destructive effect of our own legacy of physical and verbal violence. According to the Women’s Media Watch (1997) in Jamaica, by the time a child in the USA reaches 18 years of age, he/she will have seen over 18,000 murders on television and in movies, most of them involving women as the victims. The Caribbean, with its daily diet of the same fare, cannot be far behind. Information published by this group includes the following facts:

- almost one-third of adult paperbacks contain the use of some kind of force or violence against women;
- of the hundreds of video games now available, between 80-90% are based on violent themes;
- music videos linking eroticism and violence reach a multitude of young people who watch these videos repeatedly;
- media violence has been shown to cause children and adults to become more irritable, and to increase the number of beatings and assaults in the home and in the community at large.

The issue of “masculinity” and violence is indeed an important and inescapable component in any discussion of our present culture of violence because men, rather than women, are central figures in the display, sale, and acceptance of violence in the mass media, sports, and entertainment. Violence has become the prime focus of entertainment for all, from kindergarten to old age--in cartoons, songs, movies, commercials, books, videos, and video games. The impact on children and young people, especially boys, is predictable and alarming. Indisputably, many men are non-violent and many male organizations are dedicated to the promotion of peace but, undeniably, men, almost exclusively, are responsible for the decisions that launch internecine, civil, and international wars. Most of the world’s soldiers are men, and it is common in military training to associate manliness with force and brute strength, and to discredit fear or sensitivity as unmanly.

There are, of course, many and varied causes of violence but none so influential as the societal norms which glamourize military and combative skills by providing boys, even of tender age, with the means of violent action such as toy weapons and even real instruments of mischief. The peer pressure to be a “real” man is often linked to the practice of dominance and violence, and real men are too often associated with the taciturn, profane, and monosyllabic heroes of simplistic “shoot-’em-up” sagas, whose manly exploits involve wholesale battery and multiple killings.

Our society must analyze more closely these characteristics of social masculinity--the institutions, ideologies, and types of entertainment which make these violent stereotypes acceptable for the escalating rate of crime, particularly among young people in so many countries of the region, cannot be reduced merely by building bigger prisons or by introducing harsher penalties.

The aggression which has become such an alarming reality may also be fuelled by limited financial opportunities for males, which they interpret as economic disenfranchisement. Society must, therefore, address the problem of the rapidly changing economic landscape which may put at risk, or destroy, men’s traditional livelihoods. Of course, women are not exempt; the economic threat of globalization, the tensions, hardships, and profound social changes which characterize this era are pressures that affect everyone. Moral

standards are easily scrambled in the frustrating reality of joblessness, the examples of affluence from developed nations via the media, the proliferation of drugs, and the appeal of easy money.

In addition, the historical changes in gender relations, with the demands for equity and the reshaping of the traditional roles of men and women, may exacerbate the problem. The resulting sense of displacement, especially among males, makes violent, unlawful conduct, militarism, or racism attractive options for the release of pent-up feelings of frustration, despair, or failure.

Building peace is a difficult and complex task but the paradigm must be changed. Solving the problem of violence and building a culture of peace will require, among other things, a change in the concept of masculinity, while guarding against a “sissification” of men.

Education - the Key to Positive Change

Education is the key to this change, not for the purpose of cloning passive non-violent males, but rather by opening up to boys and men a diversity of pathways which will introduce them to a broader spectrum of their capacities--emotional, communicative, and political. Education can train both males and females in the techniques of peace in much the same way as they are presently acculturized in the techniques of combat.

As one of the primary agents of socialization, the school is expected to develop in all students the intangible qualities of self-confidence and emotional security which will make this possible. However, this change cannot be effected in isolation. All elements of the society must be involved in the thrust; all of the social partners must be committed to this change--the entertainment sector and its nihilistic elements who demonstrate, all too frequently, the attractiveness of increasing licence and decreasing responsibility; the music industry which accepts no responsibility for the negative influence of suggestive or sexist lyrics; movie makers and sellers who accept no responsibility for the imitation of the violent anti-social behaviour depicted in films; and parents who accept no responsibility for abandoning their toddlers to the convenient babysitter--TV, with its candy store of violent cartoons.

Young people, both male and female, are being socialized into bad behaviour, but lessons learned can be unlearned, for socialization for evil is no more potent than socialization for good. This socialization process is a tripartite enterprise, comprising the home, the school, the church and community. When youngsters are exposed to abuse--verbal, physical, spiritual, and mental--their deep psychological wounds cannot be bandaged or salved by a few social programmes or by stiffer penalties for anti-social behaviour. The concepts of self-respect, self-love, and self-esteem, thoroughly inculcated through home, school, church and community, will be translated, over time, into respect for others as well.

The Culture of Peace

UNESCO has been committed, since its founding in 1945, to the promotion of a culture of peace, in accordance with the principle enshrined in the preamble of its Constitution: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.” The question then is this: How do we begin to pass this value of peace on to our children?

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace, and the period from 2001-2010 as the International Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the children of the world. This idea of a culture of peace, born in Africa in 1989, has now grown into a global movement. It began as a call to base our actions on the “universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women.”

This culture of peace and mutual respect is linked intrinsically to the concept of non-violent struggle. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. called it “active non-violence,” demonstrating through their own struggles with oppression that although the non-violent walk to freedom is long, it is a sure way to peace.

In the struggle for a culture of peace and non-violence there must be mutual respect, for there are no enemies- everyone must be a potential partner.

Through education we can reawaken in our citizenry a sense of civic and public responsibility, a recognition and acceptance of the fact that, in the words of John Donne, “no man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...” and, thus, every one’s violence is an assault on the body politic.

The Issues

The School Culture

In an address to the Conference on Education for Non-Violence held in Curacao in December 1997, Dr. Winthrop Wiltshire pointed out that “just as peace does not merely mean the absence of war, a non-violent school should not merely imply a school in which there are no overt acts of physical injury, student to student, or student to teacher.” That, indeed, is a minimum condition. “A non-violent school,” he concluded, “has to be much more than that. It must be one in which every student is the beneficiary of a climate of emotional nurturing... where students learn negotiation skills so that disputes are resolved on the basis of rationality and mutual respect... where classrooms are safe havens in which [students] feel nurtured and appreciated and loved.”

There is, of course, no disputing his further assertion that although “many teachers in the Caribbean setting perform selflessly, often in overcrowded primary and secondary classrooms with all the stresses and strains of being undervalued and underpaid, understandably many often transmit their frustrations to the students by invalidating them.”

Adults in a classroom have incredible power over the minds of the children in their care. The most dedicated teacher and the most indifferent teacher both have their impact. While there are many children who have positive experiences of school and the classroom, unfortunately, there are others whose experiences are painful. Can one imagine, for example, the impact on a student made to stand in the trash can, as has been done, as a punishment for misbehaviour or a lack of comprehension? Can there be any excuse for a teacher who speaks to a child in abusive language and then reports that same child for punishment when the child replies in kind? What of the more general verbal abuse that may also go on behind the closed classroom door? How often are some of the less co-operative and, hence, more vulnerable children within our school system reminded of their “worthlessness” or “stupidity” by someone in authority over them?

These are, admittedly, examples of extreme, atypical teacher behaviour, but such examples are, regrettably, not rare occurrences either. Instances of the insensitive labelling or singling out of the child or young person who presents specific teaching challenges cannot fail to have an impact on the psyche of that child. Teachers must come to the realization, as educator Haim Ginott did, that they are the decisive elements in the classroom.

Gender Considerations

In a 1997 research paper, *Gender and School Achievement in the Caribbean*, Dr. Vena Jules, Prof. Anthony Layne, and Dr. Peter Kutnick take us into classrooms in selected countries to observe the gender differences in classroom interaction which may affect the learning achievements of certain students. Selected classes in a number of primary and secondary schools in three English-speaking Caribbean islands were observed over a period of time as part of this research project which, as the researchers explained, was carried out “within the scope of concern for human development and particular concern for documented areas of gender discrimination within education” (p. 1).

Of the many pertinent examples given in this study, their observations on School A should be instructive:

In School A, boys were less attentive in class than girls when the teacher was present and during teacher-less times. Boys were more likely to be disobedient (gum chewing in class and talking back to the teacher). Boys were more likely to enter class late, be

noisy upon entry, and be the first to leave the classroom at the end of a lesson. In teacher-less time, boys tended to converse about non-school subjects rather than read or study.

These conversations included boys from the full attainment range; the higher attaining boys preferred to socialise with other boys than focus on their studies. Christopher, the lowest attaining boy, did not concentrate or work in class, did not socialise with others, and often sucked his thumb.

One time, Christopher had his hand “wrapped” and complained that it was so sore that he could not do his homework. His teacher told him: “he was wasting his time to come to school.” Boys also displayed poor reading skills. Often, when asked to read to the class, they were stopped and criticised. Girls, as identified earlier, were more frequently chosen for classroom readings.” (p. 18)

Based on their collective observations in the selected schools, the researchers noted several interesting points from their data. In one island, for example, it was found that while boys and girls showed the same attainment level in primary school, this changed significantly with their arrival in secondary school. The researchers note:

Teachers, schools and classrooms play a major role in the development of student attainment. Selection to secondary school was based on CEE results, and virtually no differences were found between the scores of males and females in each of the schools studied. Within a year of secondary schooling class attainment differences appeared between boys and girls.” (p. 28)

A few more points are also worthy of note here. Some of the general findings of the project regarding research done in all three islands showed that “lowest attaining children (mainly boys) displayed poor social skills” (p. 121), and that “boys have few examples of high attainment role models. The few high attaining boys in the observations tended to act and misbehave like their lower attaining male classmates” (p. 121).

With regard to instances of the teacher’s preference within the classroom, the report also makes the point that:

Where school and classroom rules are ambiguously applied, it appeared that the boys are most likely to be criticised and punished (even if girls had presented the same behaviour). Without clear boundaries, both expressed and perceived teacher preferences are likely to occur.” (p. 123)

The school experience for boys may, therefore, not be quite as fulfilling and rewarding as might be assumed because of the provision in most systems for universal access and, presumably, equal opportunity. To some extent, boys may indeed be short-changed in some classroom situations because they do not fit into the idyllic concept of the “tidy classroom” of neat, attentive students who sit quietly to receive the daily transfusion of knowledge. Disciplinary problems are inevitable in these scenarios, and the issue of discipline exacerbates the problem of a frustrating, unproductive classroom environment for some students.

The lack of attention, criticism, invalidation, and even humiliation; the inability to release safely the resulting anger and frustration; the narrow academic focus which negates the talents of those gifted in other areas--in short, the frequent mismatch between the secondary school environment and the psychological needs of many adolescents, especially boys, must be of paramount concern. Although, in such circumstances, the academically gifted and the socially adept may still do well, many others may leave school without the positive self-awareness, self-confidence, emotional security, and a sense of belonging and value which are

vital character builders for the younger citizens of any developing nation committed to forging a path of peace and sustainable development.

Discipline

The question of appropriate discipline is, therefore, central to any discussion about classroom management, student learning, and teacher effectiveness. Very often, discipline in schools is measured by how well children behave according to the established rules, and how effectively order is maintained within the school environment. Implicit in these expectations is the idea of submission to the control exercised by those in authority, along with the corresponding idea of punishment for those who resist such control.

Discipline is, however, much more than simply following rules and sitting attentively in class. At its heart, discipline is concerned much more with attitude than with behaviour, with personal rectitude rather than external enforced compliance. This “truth” is recognized in all systems and, yet, the kind of psychological damage described above is too frequently inflicted on young people in the classroom in the name of discipline. It is obviously undesirable for a child’s primary motivation for obedience and learning to be fear of the teacher or of the consequences of disobedience. Cooperation that is merely the result of a fear of punishment falls far short of the much broader ideals of discipline which have, at their core, the idea of mental and moral training.

In order to teach effectively, the teacher does need the cooperation and participation of all members of the class. Standards of cooperative, attentive behaviour are therefore vital. It is indisputable, however, that different teachers receive different responses from the same children. One class may seem incorrigible and completely indifferent to the idea of productive effort but, with another teacher, the same class may be eager learners, full of potential. The difference is the teacher’s impact on the climate of the classroom.

Teacher Impact

Teachers bring *themselves* to the classroom. If teachers have a naturally positive and resourceful attitude to life and to themselves, this attitude cannot fail to be transmitted to their students as they unconsciously model, in their everyday interaction, the self-respect and confidence in their own abilities which they expect their students to demonstrate. Insecure teachers who perhaps feels less confident about their own personal resources will also be less able to pass on positive attitudes to their class. It is not possible for one person to give another something which he himself may not have.

Teachers’ own attitudes and self-image will, therefore, determine how effective they are in reaching the children in their class and in engaging the minds of the children in rewarding and productive effort. Any discussion of the development of teachers must, therefore, include societal perceptions which reflect or shape teachers’ own value of themselves. In an age where information is readily accessible, and higher education is so widely available that the acquisition of knowledge is no longer as highly prized and valued, the status of the teacher has steadily diminished. Contributing to this loss of status in the eyes of society is the fact that the teaching profession cannot compete financially with some of the more lucrative and socially prestigious careers and, moreover, for the ambitious career professional, teaching holds relatively few promotional opportunities.

The changing value placed on teaching has also led to a different kind of approach to the role. Instead of seeing teaching as a lifetime career or vocation, teaching has become a brief stopover for many, on the road to a more lucrative or respected career in a completely different field. The effect on classroom practice is inevitable. Those who undertake the role of teacher on the way to some other type of career are less likely to be completely interested in, and committed to, developing the skills that will make them effective, interesting, and dedicated educators. They may also be less likely to embrace the idea of the teacher standing in *loco*

parentis, preferring rather to concentrate on teaching the required syllabus of their subject, rather than on seeking to contribute to the development of the child as a whole.

All of these influences must have a direct effect on the quality of care in the classroom. It seems clear, therefore, that in order to improve care in the classroom one needs to invest in promoting and protecting the teacher's well-being as well as that of the student.

Changing the Culture of the Classroom

The Programme

The report, to UNESCO, of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century identified four pillars of education:

Learning to know
Learning to do
Learning to be
Learning to live together

The exceptional and traditional success of Caribbean education systems would seem to rest largely on the first two pillars but, in view of the increasing aggression and the promotion of anti-social role models in our society, it is surely time for educators in the Caribbean to give equal emphasis to the other two pillars, namely, *Learning to be* and *Learning to live together*.

We have seen that the culture of the classroom in many Caribbean educational institutions is one in which many students feel invalidated but, with the pressure of examinations, large classes, less compliant children, less cooperative parents, and less supportive Ministries, many teachers also feel harassed and unappreciated. The pressures of this environment may result, in turn, in a host of destructive, dysfunctional responses developed as coping mechanisms by both teacher and student.

One 19th century writer, Tryon Edwards, suggested that the great end of education is to discipline rather than to furnish the mind, and to train it to the use of its own powers rather than fill it with the accumulation of others. Such a view would seem to support a broader idea of education as a means of empowering children to develop, within themselves, the personal, social, and other skills needed to create a successful and rewarding life within their environment.

Teacher training is at the centre of the necessary change. Traditionally, teacher education programmes intended to counteract the negative behaviour of students in the classroom have mainly been directed towards changing student attitudes. The focus has been on control mechanisms--the system of rewards for the conformists and punishment for the dysfunctional. What has not been frequently addressed is the emotional/spiritual well-being of the teacher.

Most educators will agree that teaching can be frustrating and physically exhausting. The tension of the classroom can quickly make a bad day much worse but, equally, when things are going well, the harmony of the classroom can be an uplifting and positive reminder to teachers of the value of their contribution to the development of the students in their care. In recognition of the teacher's pivotal role in influencing the atmosphere of the classroom, teachers need to be given a new way of coping; a new concept of their role and of their scope of influence.

In order to change the culture of the classroom, teachers must first be given the opportunity to focus on their own personal well-being, and to deal with any emotional scars and hurts that they may have experienced, both inside and outside the classroom. Dr. Winthrop Wiltshire, former UNESCO Representative (Southern Caribbean) and Caribbean Science and Technology Adviser, is the primary consultant for the UNESCO/CARNEID project *Changing the Culture of the Classroom*. He describes the impact of the teacher's emotional health on the quality of care in the classroom in these words:

I have deduced that a teacher will function in the classroom in a predominately nurturing mode or conversely a predominately invalidating mode depending on the nature and extent of his/her emotional baggage, irrespective of the content of subject being taught.[...] the behaviour of the messenger with a significant amount of emotional baggage will distort the message.” (Wiltshire, 1998)

In Dr. Wiltshire’s view, the ability to recognize the fact that unresolved hurts and needs may exert a subconscious effect on the teacher’s present behavioural responses is one important way of helping teachers to understand their own responses better, and to function more effectively in the classroom.

Thus, teachers who are emotionally self-aware and confident of their own resources and abilities are likely to be teachers who will be open to more positive ways of managing their students. While there is need, then, to invest in the emotional health and well-being of the teacher, there is equal need for the type of training that will help the teacher to promote the emotional well-being of the individual child.

Changing the Culture of the Classroom places emphasis on this kind of training. Its goal is to promote the kind of skills that can help to transform the classroom into a peaceful, nurturing, and validating environment for all children. It is a telling measure of its importance to note that success in this goal carries the even wider potential to affect, positively and permanently, the violent character of so many of our communities.

The Workshops

In 1997, Dr. Wiltshire developed and piloted, in Trinidad and Tobago, this innovative teacher training concept which is designed to produce a personal transformation in the teacher who will, in turn, be empowered to be a positive influence in fostering a culture of peace and non-violence among students. In short, teachers must feel good about themselves and what they do.

The pilot project of the programme was facilitated by Educational Consultant, Mrs. Marilyn Atherley. In this workshop, 50 teachers from 12 schools in Trinidad underwent 6 sessions of training, in which they were taught techniques of effective listening, as well as the processes involved in releasing the pain of unresolved emotional distress. The teachers also spent time reviewing the 10 lessons contained in *Educating for Peace: A Life Skills Curriculum*, a teacher’s manual also prepared by Mrs. Atherley. As a result, the teachers reported a change in their thinking with regard to the importance of creating an environment in the classroom that is not punitive, but supportive and cognizant of the child’s emotional needs, and that is validating rather than critical.

Following this successful pilot exercise, UNESCO/CARNEID proposed the expansion of this innovative idea throughout the Caribbean. A formal proposal was approved and funded by UNESCO Headquarters in 1997 and the programme was started in February 1998.

Programme objectives

- To train, through a UNESCO-funded project, a core of teachers (primary and secondary) in each country;
- To provide an ongoing in-service training capability in each country by conducting a Training of Trainers Programme;
- To promote the inclusion of these strategies in the curricula of teacher training institutions;
- To produce training manuals for each country;
- To secure national commitments and adequate funding from governments for the continuation of the programme;
- To realize a sustainable and expanding process of improved behaviours in the classroom and, ultimately, in the communities at large.

Recognizing that the sustainability of this project must depend largely on the goodwill, conviction, and commitment of the leaders of the educational community, the concept “Changing the Culture of the Classroom” was first introduced, in three sub-regional seminars, to principals of teacher training institutions in the region and to principals of secondary schools.

Workshop for principals of teacher training colleges

A 2-day workshop for principals of teacher training colleges in the region was held at the Valley Vue Hotel, Trinidad, from 5-6 February, 1998. The workshop was facilitated by Mrs. Atherley (1998) and was attended by principals, Ministry officials, and university representatives from nine Caribbean nations:

Bahamas	College of the Bahamas
Barbados	Erdiston Teachers’ College
Belize	Belize Teachers’ College
Dominica	Dominica Teachers’ College
Guyana	Cyril Potter College of Education
Jamaica	Church Teachers’ College
	Mico Teachers’ College
	Shortwood Teachers’ College
St. Kitts and Nevis	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	St. Vincent Teachers’ College
Trinidad and Tobago	Corinth Teachers’ College
	Caribbean Union College
	School of Education Laboratory Pre-School
	Valsayn Teachers’ College
	Ministry officials
	Representatives of The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

Its aim was to familiarize participants with the goals of the project, and to enlist their support for the programme by sharing the information with their colleagues and by renovating the curricula of their colleges to include specific training in these skills.

This 2-day workshop was divided into five sessions:

- Session 1. Constructive Listening - Its Use in Educational Change
- Session 2. The Learning Process
- Session 3. Teacher Oppression
- Session 4. Support Groups
- Session 5. Educating for Peace Curriculum

Each session consisted of a short presentation of theoretical principles, some group activity, and a question and answer segment. In the first session, participants introduced themselves and were also given the opportunity to ask the facilitator questions in order to open up communication within the group. The theoretical component of this session focussed on the principles of constructive listening and its ability to help individuals to work through their thoughts and feelings and to release some of the pain attached to a hurtful event. Equipped with guidelines on effective listening, the participants were then put into groups of three in order to practise these skills.

The second session of this workshop involved a presentation of the ways in which the brain processes information, including the fact that unreleased painful emotions interfere with the brain’s normal functioning.

It was shown that in order for learning to take place effectively, painful, locked-away emotions need to be recognized and dealt with. A demonstration was also given to show how facilitation could assist in the removal of stored feelings of anger. The last part of this session was then given over to practical work, and participants were divided into groups of four in which they practised constructive listening by sharing with each other their thoughts and feelings about their early memories of their own school days.

Session three began on the second day of the workshop and involved a review and discussion of the theory and demonstration of the previous day. A focus of this third session was a discussion of the reality of teacher oppression within the society, and the way in which this hampers the effective functioning of the teacher in the classroom.

In the fourth session, participants again met in their support groups in order to explore the issue of teacher oppression. Key questions for discussion included:

- What can you do to help break down the isolation of teachers?
- In your opinion, how do schools fail to respect teachers?
- What can you do as an administrator to ensure that teachers are fully respected?
- When do you feel afraid to stand up for better policies?
- What makes you afraid?

In this session, the participants also addressed the topic “Requirements for teacher training programmes” and, after a period of “brainstorming,” they created a list of 36 suggested requirements.

In the final session, participants worked in pairs to complete an evaluation sheet on the draft manual of the *Educating for Peace: A Life Skills Curriculum*, as well as a second evaluation sheet on the workshop itself. The general response to the workshop was very positive. In answer to the question “What did you learn that was immediately useful to you?” the two main answers given centred around the value of good listening skills in helping others to release pain and so learn more effectively, and the effect of teacher oppression on good teaching.

Workshops for principals of secondary schools and classroom teachers

UNESCO/CARNEID has continued to work in cooperation with the member states to host these workshops for teachers. To date, over 500 educators from 12 countries of the Caribbean sub-region have been introduced to these concepts and have enthusiastically endorsed them. Workshops have been held in Barbados and Guyana for secondary school principals, and for classroom teachers in Antigua, The Bahamas, The British Virgin Islands (with teachers from Montserrat and St. Maarten), Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. There are still a number of countries within the CARNEID Network in which such workshops will be held in the year 2000.

The workshops for classroom teachers are structured a little differently. They are of four days duration and, although the essential information is the same, greater emphasis is placed on:

- educating teachers in the concept of healthy classroom culture;
- assisting them in dealing with their own frustrations and emotional hurts;
- teaching them effective counselling and listening techniques.

In each training workshop, the participants are invited to consider the importance of their role in helping to foster in the young person the kind of qualities which identify a whole and healthy individual. Focus is placed on their potential to help mould their students into young people who:

- love themselves completely;

- are emotionally secure and self-confident;
- respect their own thinking and opinions as well as the thinking and opinions of those with whom they may disagree;
- respect cultures which differ from their own;
- respect people with physical or other disabilities;
- have good verbal and written skills;
- are skilled in seeking information;
- demonstrate excellent skills in critical thinking and problem solving.

The emphasis in the workshops is on giving participants an opportunity to discover techniques for discharging and releasing the emotional pain of past, unresolved hurts which retain the power to affect present functioning. This practical element is an important part of the workshop as it enables the participants to experience the process of emotional healing for themselves. They, in turn, are then able to recognize the potential power of such techniques to furnish students with new tools for peaceful conflict resolution.

The workshops are generally divided into several sessions. Sessions focus on theory presentations and demonstrations of the counselling process, but time is also spent in small groups in which the counselling techniques are practised and participants have the freedom to explore feelings related to their experiences of teaching. Participants also work in groups to examine the manual described earlier.

While it is not the plan here to comment, in detail, on all of the workshops which have been carried out so far, it might be instructive to review some of the issues covered in three of these workshops held in Antigua, Dominica, and the Bahamas.

Antigua

The workshop in Antigua was facilitated by Dr. Wiltshire. The 28 participants included 10 school principals, 11 teachers, and 7 Ministry of Education officials. Practical exercises, including the power of effective listening techniques, constituted the primary activity of the workshop. Participants were also involved in the exploration of many themes promoting the emotional health and well-being of the child, such as the mentally debilitating effects of early emotional hurts which remain unresolved; the importance of validation and praise in helping students to develop self-confidence and emotional security; the negative impact of corporal punishment; and the role of love in seeking to train children in ways of non-violence. The workshop also covered issues concerning ways of learning including, for example, the concept of flexible and multiple intelligences.

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to respond to a number of questions evaluating the activity. For example:

- What did you learn that was immediately useful to you?
- In what way has your thinking about teaching and learning changed? Give one example.
- What did you particularly like about the workshop?

Here, in their own words, is a sample of responses which highlight some of the insights gained by the participants:

- I have the power within me to change the environment in which I interact with others.
- The usefulness and importance of constantly making an effort to validate other individuals.
- Being emotionally secure helps you to cope with and deal with all situations.

- There are no bad children, but children displaying inappropriate behaviours because of something that is happening or has happened to them.
- More emphasis must be placed on recognizing the individuality of the person--his uniqueness and limitless potential.
- Negotiation and sanctions are possibly better avenues for punishment, (resulting in) increased performance and development of new attitudes.

Dominica

This workshop was held from 23-25 September, 1998 with 28 participants. These included 16 principals, 3 of whom were from primary schools, and 12 classroom teachers.

The issue of corporal punishment was one of the dominant themes of the Dominica workshop. Participants were shown the possible undesirable effects of such a negative recourse and its potential to simply contribute to a cycle of violence. One of the principals at this workshop had also participated in a previous workshop in Guyana and she was able to share the fact that, as a result of what she had already learnt through the Guyana workshop, corporal punishment was no longer used at her school.

As in other workshops, practical demonstrations were given to show how past emotional hurt still played a part in affecting present behaviour. Participants were also invited to take part in exercises of mutual validation and effective listening techniques. It is interesting to note that some of the participants even expressed awareness of positive changes in themselves before the workshop had finished. Emphasis was placed on relating to young people in ways that would help to build their sense of emotional security and self-esteem.

At the end of the workshop in Dominica, participants were asked to say what they felt they had gained. Here again is a sample of some of the insights they took away with them:

- The power of validation and praise in changing behaviour of students
- The reason for anger and learning how to understand and control it.
- Being more sensitive to the past hurts of others and teaching in a manner that students can be free to respond and learn unencumbered.
- Recognising that no child deliberately prevents himself from learning.
- The syllabus does not have to be rigidly followed to obtain good results on exams.

Bahamas

The Bahamas workshop took place in Nassau from 16-19 August, 1999. A total of 32 teachers took part: 23 from primary schools, 4 from senior high schools, 4 from junior high schools, and 1 from an alternative educational establishment.

As in other workshops, techniques of effective listening were explored, with emphasis being placed on the underlying effects of unresolved pain in the individual's life, as well as on the power of the teacher to help to promote the emotional well-being of the child. In addition to practical exercises and discussion of some of the core themes of the programme, participants were divided into groups in which they were asked to discuss various practical strategies for changing the culture of their own classrooms. Suggestions included:

- the use of role-play to help children to think through the effects of their words and actions on others;
- handling wrong answers with tact;
- praising pupils openly;
- encouraging class discussions;
- affirming each child's strengths;
- encouraging self-expression;

- valuing local dialect as a form of identity while still teaching Standard English;
- encouraging pupils to keep a journal of positive experiences;
- peer tutoring.

At the end of the Bahamas workshop participants praised the learning experience:

- I now understand that I have the power to change children’s perceptions about themselves.
- I am in charge of my classroom and therefore can effect change without feeling restricted by administration.
- Corporal punishment cannot be practised if we are to promote non-violence.
- I can improve the slavish attitude to the curriculum and celebrate the uniqueness of each child.

The Teacher’s Manual

Educating for Peace: A Life Skills Curriculum is the teachers’ manual prepared by Educational Consultant, Marilyn Atherley. The programme complements the academic curriculum and presents students with life skills information on violence prevention, cultural diversity, emotional self-control, self-esteem issues, and relationship building. It consciously centres itself around one key issue: the need to equip young people with skills in peaceful conflict resolution with the aim of creating a more peaceful world. The programme is structured in a way which encourages discussion and the free expression of ideas and feelings within the classroom. It is recognized that young people often use games and other forms of play to express feelings that they would normally withhold or repress. The programme is helpful in that it creates a “safe place” in which young people can engage in discussion and role-play, thereby giving them greater freedom to release feelings which may have been suppressed.

Part of the teacher’s role in this process is to counter, tactfully, any expressions of feelings which are displayed in a way which invalidates the self or others. In such cases, the teacher’s aim should be to acknowledge the expressed feelings while still seeking to direct the children away from the usual put-downs, insults, and prejudicial statements and into alternative and more appropriate forms of expression. It is expected that the teacher will model the kind of behaviour and attitudes which the class is working to achieve and, in this way, the manual encourages teachers to share their own experiences of learning and growing with the class as well.

The lesson on “Effective Listening” takes the students through the practical skills involved including: looking directly at the speaker; paying full attention to words, facial expression, and body language; listening for the feelings behind the words; responding in ways that show you are listening; and validating the speaker.

In the lessons entitled “Handling Emotions,” students learn the four basic feelings--anger, sadness, fear, and happiness and the many shades of these feelings. Focus is placed on helping students to express their feelings in appropriate ways which do not invalidate themselves or others. Role-play is also used here.

In the lessons on “Violence Prevention,” students define violence and learn about its causes and consequences. They are given practical suggestions of ways to channel anger without resorting to violence, and they are also taught alternatives to violence in dealing with conflict.

The lessons on “Cultural Diversity” help students to become aware of the many false assumptions behind prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, and it leads them in exercises structured to promote appreciation and respect for the ways in which people are different.

The lesson on “Conflict Resolution” helps students to learn to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a constructive way when faced with a conflict situation, and it also seeks to teach them effective skills in problem solving.

The Way Forward

Evaluation

A thorough review of the programme to date will be undertaken through questionnaires/interviews with all the stakeholders--teachers, students, parents, principals, in order to identify:

- Problems experienced in the workshops and classrooms
- Appropriate corrective methods
- Improved learning achievements
- Improved classroom behaviours

It is already recognized that the workshops are, of necessity, very brief, and participation in these sessions must be limited to a fraction of the teachers in any given school or country. It is also recognized that any attempts to change traditional practices by the few who have been trained may be regarded with some suspicion by their colleagues. It is, therefore, essential to engage the full support of the administrators, and to continue the training in each country before the impetus dies and the socialization process of “business as usual” overrides the entrepreneurial spirit of those who were inspired to institute changes in their classrooms and schools.

It is also noted that a training programme of this kind cannot be expected to yield immediate, measurable results because lasting behavioural changes are developed over time and by a process of refinement. It is expected, however, that the evaluation after two years should reveal some reorientation to change and innovation in the classroom.

Development and Sustainability

Commitment to this programme and adequate funding from national governments for its continuation is the only guarantee of sustainability. There are thousands of teachers in the region. It is obviously impossible for UNESCO/CARNEID to assume total responsibility for their training. In order to provide an on-going training capability in each country, the development of a cadre of trainers is essential and, for this, UNESCO/CARNEID will provide the necessary technical assistance. Future workshops must, however, be funded by national governments as part of their own development and reform plans for the education sector. In addition, application for this programme may be made to UNESCO/CARNEID by individual schools through Ministries of Education.

Ensuring that the classroom is a nurturing and validating environment is an imperative that cannot be overstated. This is not, however, the only way in which the culture of the classroom needs to be modified. Increased sensitivity to the student’s emotional needs should be reflected in an improved quality of care which, in turn, can be expected to generate greater concern for learning achievements and outcomes.

The new millennium should provide the opportunity and the impetus for education planners and providers to formulate programmes that will teach our young people to think critically and inventively; to put their minds to creative, original thought rather than mere regurgitation, to learn *to know for themselves* and *to do for themselves*.

Formal systems confined by standard curricula, shaped by standardized exams and certification, authoritarian structures, and age restrictions, may themselves be barriers to learning. Across the region, there seems to be an increasing recognition of the need for a delivery of education which enhances student learning by

catering to multiple intelligences in the classroom; a system which reflects the truth of George Bernard Shaw's observation that the pool of education is the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.

Caribbean people are proud, and rightly so, of the educational systems in the region, but it must be conceded that they tend to reward, primarily, linguistic and mathematical skills with the recognition and certification required by employers and institutions of higher learning, and to give less credit to other manifestations of intelligence which are not measured by mastery of the traditional curricula.

The system must deal with those students who may find subjects like theoretical physics difficult, but who are entirely at ease with the mechanics of an engine and can take apart and reassemble any electrical or electronic equipment. How should that expression of intelligence be measured? It is true that not all knowledge is useful or uplifting, but even that knowledge which may be useful, if it is does not derive from the classical disciplines, may not be respected.

Independent thinking and respect for all manifestations of intelligence will not be possible until the curricula of our schools are crafted to meet the students' needs, rather than designed to force them into a common mould and brand them as failures if they do not show an aptitude for subjects outside the range of their interests and talents. Our classrooms need to become more interactive; students need more hands-on experience, more opportunities for individual discovery, and less reliance on regurgitation of pre-packaged knowledge.

This was the experience of Tod Maffin, a high school dropout. In 1998, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that this 28-year old "net guru," in an address to 1,000 educators from around North America, had described himself as "a member of the "Net" generation and thus, a failure of the educational system.... I've known since as early as I can remember that I wanted to be in communications," he explained.

By the age of eight I had begged, borrowed and stolen enough spare parts to build a pirate radio station in our family basement... And then came high school, where the teachers kept trying to change my mind about my chosen career path. I was forced into geography, science, and math, and told I'd better learn the capital of Bolivia because one day I'd need that knowledge and that I'd better learn how to calculate a square root, because otherwise they would have to flunk me.

I was not following procedure but messing with something they kept calling 'the system'. It didn't take long before flunking started to sound appealing....

He urged his audience to accept that

"today's 'Net' generation needs schools that recognize the student's role as co-discoverer of knowledge, with the teacher responsible for seeing that the discovery takes place; that children are beginning to see themselves as intellectual agents - members of real and virtual communities, expressing themselves across boundaries of geography, culture, language and age. With the right support, classroom learning can become student-driven, interactive, experiential and collaborative. Students will no longer passively ingest information but will manage and integrate it and even contribute to it. ("New Education Model," 1998)

It was a powerful statement from someone who had lived with the frustrations of the system, and it is a statement to which all educators will give intellectual assent. It is also the kind of notion which, in most classrooms, would be revolutionary. Tod Maffin's prescription for change highlights the need for a critical review not only of *what* is taught but *how* it is taught if students are to be adequately prepared for the diverse, multi-media, technological world of the 21st century.

In the course of the last two decades, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) has been very influential in changing both the content and the methods of teaching. Their emphasis on indigenous material and on School-Based Assessment as an integral part of the certification process is welcome, but the same emphasis needs to be at the core of the classroom experience in order to encourage more inter-active learning experiences, and a greater commitment from students to be responsible for their own education.

When students are encouraged to be collaborators in the business of education; when they are expected to use their preferred intelligences in learning, both student and teacher will be the beneficiaries. The former achieves a deeper level of understanding and the latter hones and perfects the skill of transferring information in a variety of ways. Such an approach also allows for different rates of development among the students, and a broader range of learning assessment methods such as projects, journals, profiles, creative problem-solving, art, and musical expression.

For the student, there are multiple benefits:

- Recognition of and respect for individual intelligences;
- Unbiased assessment of learning;
- A challenging, comprehensive, and integrated curriculum;
- Improvement in academic achievement, thinking, problem-solving, and retention of information;
- Increased self-confidence and preparation for life-long learning;
- Equal access to learning;
- Personal and social development as part of the curriculum.

For the teachers, the benefits should be equally stimulating:

- A positive classroom climate that supports, motivates, and promotes success for student and teacher;
- An improved and expanded repertoire of instructional strategies;
- Understanding of learning differences instead of a concentration on learning disabilities;
- Greater success in meeting the demands of the common curriculum;
- Greater sense of accomplishment and professionalism.

Enhancing the learning experience by renovating the curriculum to cater for multiple intelligences in the classroom is, thus, another development goal of this training programme. It will broaden the concept of “Changing the Culture of the Classroom” to embrace all approaches to the task of “Crafting Relevant, Innovative Systems for a New Generation.”

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APPENDIX

Recommended Topics for Renewed Emphasis in Teacher Training Curricula Suggestions From Principals of Training Colleges

Effective Teaching Practices

- Encourage student teachers to share their classroom experiences with each other.
- Train teachers to learn how to learn.
- Give student teachers a clear outline of expectations.
- Provide opportunities for them to develop their talents.
- Provide a better system of accountability.
- Provide follow-up activities for teachers after training college.
- Make a checklist of teacher competencies available to student teachers.
- Give practical training, including computer literacy.
- Hold meetings to address specific difficulties encountered in class.
- Develop the necessary skills to identify special needs students in the classroom.
- Establish agreement of expectations between principal and student teacher.
- Give training in effective listening skills to be used in the classroom.
- Promote study groups for student teachers grouped according to their geographical area.
- Introduce student teachers to parenting programmes.
- Train parents to provide support to teachers.
- Allow new teachers to observe classroom practice before starting to teach.

Raising the Profile of Teaching as a Valuable Profession

- Provide a clear Code of Conduct.
- Provide a programme of support, especially for novice teachers.
- Discuss the issue of teacher oppression.
- Instill a sense of professionalism.
- Allow student teachers opportunities to express their need of support.
- Foster a sense of being part of an important profession.
- Have an annual retreat for teacher-trainers and support staff.
- Encourage unions to take a more active role in providing professional development for trainers and trainees.
- Create a better system of rewards within the profession.
- Celebrate achievements made within the profession.
- Upgrade teaching facilities and equipment.
- Create a strategic plan for improving the educational system with input from all stakeholders.
- Promote a national appreciation of teachers, e.g., Teachers' Month.
- Promote a teacher cadet programme to give young people with an interest in teaching an opportunity to observe teacher training programmes.

Personal Self-Development

- Encourage student teachers to reflect on their own experiences.
- Provide opportunities for personal, social, and spiritual growth.
- Provide opportunities for greater understanding of themselves and others.
- Foster a strong sense of self and one's freedom to choose not to be a victim.
- Teach proper values and appropriate attitudes.
- Encourage the development of a healthy self-concept and supportive peer-coaching skills.

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