



A Selection of Seminal Research Work which has influenced EDUCATION POLICY AND CURRICULA

UWI Mona's Influence on Jamaica Language Education



#55870127

Policy Influenced: Towards a Language Education Policy for Jamaica

Year Implemented:

Conceptualized and drafted in 2001 - Not yet implemented

Objective of the Policy:

Three of the six major objectives of the proposed policy are:

- Ensuring the development of confident and competent language learners
- Applying a variety of instructional modes to meet the needs of language learners
- Providing for the preparation of teachers to work in a bilingual environment through teacher education and professional development programmes

Summary:

Nature of the Proposed Policy:

The Government of Jamaica in its Vision 2030 is committed to implement its Language Education Policy (p.4). The proposed Language Education Policy of Jamaica, written in 2001

by Beverley Bryan, builds on the exceptional work of many Caribbean linguists, but especially owes much of its insights to the work of the late Dennis Craig.

Dennis Craig (1929-2004), a Guyanese who lived in Jamaica for much of his career was a researcher in the field of Caribbean linguistics and a prolific writer whose work focused on how to improve the teaching of English within contexts where a "Creole-related vernacular" existed alongside another language, typically European.

Additionally, Beverley Bryan, with Ivy Mitchell and a team of educators and Ministry personnel spearheaded the Literacy Improvement Initiative of 1999. The two main goals of the study were to facilitate an informed national dialogue on literacy development, and to formulate a five-year action plan to improve the low literacy levels in Jamaica (48% in the Grade Six Achievement Test, and a 35% CSEC grade 1 pass rate). Amongst the comprehensive list of recommendations, one was to construct a language education policy.

Armed with Craig's research, as well as rich

data from the Literacy Improvement Initiative, Beverley Bryan produced the very first draft of Jamaica's Language Education Policy, which was refined by the Education ministry's Literacy Advisory Committee. Aspects of the draft policy has since been used to guide practice.

Impact of the Policy on Education:

This work, although not officially ratified, has contributed in several ways to our understanding of our language identity as a nation. First, it is officially recognized that Jamaica has two languages, Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole. Second, the policy draft offers guidelines for indigenous approaches to the teaching of English given our complex language situation. And currently, the GFLT pass rate is 86.5% as of 2015, owing much to the collaborative work of the Ministry of Education, UWI and other stakeholders, including those involved in research work.

Reference

- *Government of Jamaica (2009)* Education Sector Plan – Vision 2030
- *Bryan, B. (2001)*. Language Education Policy of Jamaica. Kingston, Jamaica: Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture.
- *Bryan, B. & Mitchell, I. (1999)*. National Literacy Improvement Initiative. Kingston, Jamaica: Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture.
- *Craig, D. (1980)*. Models of educational policy in Creole-speaking societies. In A. Valdman & A. Highfield (Eds.), *Theoretical Orientations in Creole Studies* (pp. 245-65). New York: Academic Press.

