

July 15, 2021, Vol. 2, Issue 3

# THE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE RESEARCHERS IN EDUCATION

Improving Educational Outcomes Through Research

## About AGRE

The Association of Graduate Researchers in Education (AGRE) operates from the School of Education at the University of the West Indies, Mona. The AGRE was established in 2006 but after a few years of being dormant, the association was re-activated in 2016.

### *Vision*

*AGRE, the leading research association for graduate researchers in the field of education*

### AGRE's mission and mandate are to:

- create platforms to discuss and address issues and concerns related to education, locally and internationally;
- promote professional development of members through seminars, conferences and mentorship;
- network with key stakeholders in addressing issues and practices impacting education;
- augment the capacity of members in conducting high quality research; and
- collaborate with School of Education faculty in conducting research relevant to issues and problems impacting the education system.

# The President's Message

For varying reasons, we may find that we are dedicating our time and effort to, *inter alia*, family, friends, work and studies. Eventually, we often forget the importance of self in everything we are doing. If we are not careful, it is easy for us to become consumed by things and people around us that we fail to take care of our own health, as well as our emotional and spiritual well-being.

For this third quarter, the AGRE dedicated some time to ensure that our members, including members of the Executive Body, were taken on a journey of reflection, self-affirmation and reassurance. We recognised that a simple question, '*What makes us human?*' evoked a number of hidden emotional responses that reminded us that our struggles, joys, pains, sorrows, resilience, benevolence, compassion and so many other things are key to who we are, what we do and how we interact with other humans.

Yes! For many of us, we have lost loved ones. We found it difficult to overcome some insecurities. We have struggled with school work. We try to balance work demands. We are at times demotivated. We are scared to even think that we are able to start a new journey or to continue once we experience a setback. We continuously try to be that superhero for family members and friends while we become our own kryptonite. We sometimes hide behind a smile because we think no one else will understand our burdens. Sadly, we may have even asked ourselves, 'Why me?'

My fellow AGRE members, I wish to use this opportunity to remind you that you are human and every experience that you undergo is one that is worth further exploration. It is for this reason that we sought to explore autoethnography and how this research approach can help us to better understand and appreciate our experiences, those we deem good and those we deem bad.

Regardless of the circumstance, there is a beauty in your story that only you can chronicle. Only you can truly express what has caused you to be who you are today and where you see yourself going. As teachers, I believe we have mastered the art of concealing our true emotions as we have had to set aside how we feel in order to deal with issues facing our students. As researchers, we often examine the stories of others and how they are impacted by several factors. But, what about you? When will you pen your story so others may be inspired by what you have been through and how you have conquered your fears, failures and fragilities?

Let today be a new day. A day where you accept that you are human and you too have feelings and emotions.

*Keriffe Clark*  
President  
2020-2022



# Webinar Highlights



- The conversational approach taken to discuss the topic allowed for a number of attendees to reflect and share on the question. Attendees shared stories from personal and professional experiences and how those experiences have impacted them.
- Dr. Cook noted that she found the responses very interesting, reiterating that humans are very complex with a bundle of complexity, feelings and contradictions and a part of the issue is that people are hurting and they don't know how to deal with it.
- With reference to Star Trek, Dr. Cook reminded us that the Star Trek captain exclaimed, *"If you take away my pain you will take away who I am"*. This served as a reminder that all our experiences influence who we are.
- The AGRE had a titillating conversation themed *"Let's Talk: What Makes You Human? An Autoethnographic Approach"*. A conversational approach was employed for the session and left our participants requesting more.
- The nature of the session which required participants to share openly about their emotions, experiences and vulnerability as humans.
- Two specially invited guests shared in the conversation. They were Dr. Aisha Spencer who is an expert in literature and Dr. Loraine Cook who is an expert in Educational Psychology. Both guests have expertise in and have conducted autoethnography research.
- The session was attended by 45 participants.
- Dr. Cook intimated that attendees could think about writing their autoethnography of their journey through Covid-19 together because each of us has different and complex stories. She went on to state that these stories could be told through stories and poetry.
- In sharing aspects of her journey and how she has been able to become who she is today, Dr. Spencer encouraged us to be ourselves on our journey.
- Another key point shared by Dr. Spencer is that autoethnography helps us to represent our personal story in a way that is academic, embodying principles of high quality interrogation and research.
- Throughout the conversation, Dr. Spencer shared that representation of self and our journey become our professional story through the use of autoethnography.

# What were your thoughts on our PD?

WE ASKED PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE QUESTION:  
"IDENTIFY TWO (2) THINGS THAT YOU LIKED THE MOST ABOUT THE SESSION"

HERE ARE SOME COMMENTS

"It was useful to clarify what is the auto ethnography approach and I liked the sense of community that was fostered during the session"

"(1) The conversational tone (2) The non-traditional approach to research"

"I liked the introduction to the discussion also I like the participation of the becoming researchers and seasoned researchers"

"Well executed and inclusive"

"The speakers' message was rich and I like the idea where participants could share their views"

"The atmosphere was inviting and the presenters' ability to explain"



# Motivation Mondays

The AGRE commenced its Motivation Monday initiative as a source of inspiration to members on their research journeys. This initiative was started in May 2021. If you missed any of the posts, here they are!



"The beauty about qualitative research is that you capture and tell the untold stories and experiences of people who are often ignored."

Keriffe Clark, President  
May 2021



"As researchers we extend ourselves by going beyond the average mind to formulate, analyse and interpret data with a purpose."

Marjorie McKinley, AGRE Member  
June 7 2021



"Your research is not just research. It is a part of the legacy that you will leave behind. Your research will make a difference."

Keriffe Clark, President  
May 2021

#MOTIVATIONMONDAY



**"No matter the complexity of the problem, be assured that if you devote some time to conducting the necessary research a solution is inevitable."**

Terry-Ann Wallace, AGRE Member  
June 14, 2021



"I initially feared research because I thought it was hard and that it had to be perfect. However, I've realized and accepted the fact that it doesn't have to be perfect; you just need to challenge yourself to put in the work."

Ruth-Ann Edwards, Vice President  
May 2021

#MotivationMonday



Research can be like that hill you think you can't climb until you find yourself at the top! Keep moving. It can be done one step at a time.

Kerry Taffe, AGRE Member

June 21, 2021



The AGRE congratulates and celebrates the following individuals on their respective achievements:

- Denise Lloyd is commended for her publication in the Caribbean Journal of Education. The title of her study is "**Exploring benefits of the East Street and Greater Portmore Junior Centre Visual and Performing Arts after School Programme: Parental Perceptions**".
- Congratulations to Keriffe Clark on this publication "**Giving a Listening Ear: Male Student Teachers' Experiences and Perspectives of Practicum Supervision**". The study was published in The Qualitative Report journal and has since been downloaded in over 45 countries by over 214 individuals.

## Coming Soon!

- Research conference  
November 24, 2021
- Newsletter for the  
fourth quarter
- Research publication  
seminars
- More professional  
development research  
webinar workshops
- Research mentorship  
for postgraduate  
students
- AGRE's official  
website
- AGRE's Podcast

## Connect with us



**agrejamaica or agrejamaica@gmail.com**