

**School of Education Television and Learning Studio:
An Innovative Single Virtual School Space (SVSS)**

There has been much talk about student-centred classrooms and students being in control of their own learning. Such notions, even with good intentions, create tensions in classrooms as the power relations between teachers and students are never equal. Students expect teachers to take charge and to teach; teachers expect students to learn and to know who is in charge! Everyday classroom spaces are clearly not ideal for teachers to become learners and learners to be teachers in role reversals that lead to both learner and teacher empowerment. Teachers of English in training and teachers pursuing postgraduate degrees at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus have carved out a new dialogic space in their dual roles as teachers and learners preparing to teach English language and Literature in Creole-speaking environments.

This Single Virtual School Space (SVSS) in the form of a computer technology –enhanced Television Studio that links School of Education with Caribbean classrooms was birthed out of a five-year intervention in which teachers pursuing undergraduate courses that support the delivery of the CSEC English syllabus planned, staged and filmed their assignments for assessment in the form of conferences, Readers Theatre, seminars and workshops before live audiences of 1550 students from selected schools. The films were usually edited into 30 min sessions, and taken to local cable television operating in confined geographical spaces for dissemination as examination revision sessions. There was need for a physical but wall -less space on the Mona Campus that merge teachers learning, students learning, syllabus inquiry, research and innovation. This search gave birth to the appropriation of the television studio into a place with pedagogical significance for the professional development of teachers and the improvement of student learning.

Today, the SVSS breaks away the walls of fixed classrooms and geographically confined -cable television spaces and transforms university classrooms into televised -theatre-settings which engage secondary school students preparing for CSEC and CAPE English and their teachers in syllabus inquiry, innovation and experiment. The SVSS now facilitates the dissemination of information and engagement with a larger audience through live streaming and the archive of films on the SVSS webpage.

The Television Learning Studio: Philosophy, Pedagogy and Practice

This new television pedagogical space is cognitive, professional and reflective in nature and synchronizes teaching and learning and research in a university setting with teaching and learning in everyday classrooms. It is framed by the belief that the television is an arena for teaching and learning that promotes best quality practices and performances from teachers and students. The use of the camera in

teachers' professional space places their practice under the microscope of self-scrutiny and to be scrutinized by others. This is nurturing a teacher-in-built quality assurance mechanism in the search for new ways of knowing and doing. These new teacher – learner dispositions are providing new knowledge and insights for practice that map curriculum and syllabus goals and expectations with the closing of gaps in student learning and achievement. This synchronization of curriculum experiences through film is nurturing a wall-less classroom practice that is pedalled and sustained by a pedagogy of enjoyment and engagement in real-life learning contexts.

Building a performance rich environment that promote visual literacy in the study of literature

The concept of a performance rich classroom environment has emerged out of teachers' and students' explorations with process drama in the staging of literature texts on the CSEC syllabus for filming. These explorations inject a performance quality in novels, plays, short stories and poetry to give students greater access to texts through listening, speaking and viewing. This has strengthened the need for building visual literacy in the study of literature in Creole-speaking environments where students are not motivated to read the texts selected for study. The television provides a space for *reading into* texts and *seeing through* texts. These new 'reading' dispositions are modelling and paving the way for greater learner empowerment and autonomy in regular classrooms. Schools participating in the televised events are given pre-conference peer-teaching tasks which engage them in the stage productions alongside teachers.

New ways of doing and new sites for teacher training and professional development

In 2012 the undergraduate course *The Teaching of Literature the Secondary School*, which charted this innovation was awarded *The UWI Best Practice in Education Content and Quality for the Caribbean* as part of the Vice Chancellor's Initiative for institutional excellence. The best practice findings were applied to other undergraduate and post graduate courses: exemplary in quality to produce superior results; efficient resources; engagement of internal and external stakeholders; documentation, utility and recognition beyond the practice site. This has exposed 1, 226 student teachers of English as well as teachers beyond practice site to the innovative pedagogy. This SVSS teaching-learning space now twins media education with language education. It is widening the scope of the service learning that is built into university undergraduate and post graduate programmes in language education. All courses which engage teachers in the delivery of CSEC and CAPE English have assessment components that involve the use of the television studio as a platform for engaging students in skills development for syllabus mastery or for

sharing classroom research that inform teacher pedagogy in the teaching of English and teaching in English in other subjects. The new Bachelor in Language Education and Media Studies has emerged out of this innovative teacher *assessment for learning* space and student *alternative learning space* that close gaps in syllabus goals and expectations for teachers and students. This creative teacher-student learning space is forging new partnerships with the university radio for teacher and student education and development.

School of Education and News Talk 93FM Collaboration

A university radio station is strategically positioned to sustain a break- away from four-walled classroom spaces into a single real as well as virtual space for teaching and learning. The School of Education has charted this transition through partnership with News Talk 93 FM. *The Radio Active Classroom* now being aired on News Talk 93 FM expands the SVSS modality to a radio in education environment. The new partnership integrates radio as a new teaching learning space and a platform for modelling classroom pedagogy and School Based Assessment (SBA) as learning. The synchronization of the School of Education physical classroom space with university radio studio space provides real and virtual learning solutions for improvement in the quality of secondary and tertiary education through research and innovation. This Single Virtual School Space has the potential to institutionalize media technologies as integral components of teacher education and training.

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