

Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training: A Summit of the Americas Initiative

Assessment of Teacher Training and Reading Instruction
Needs and Capacities in the Caribbean

BEPS

Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity

CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL[®]

In collaboration with

CARE, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, AND GROUNDWORK



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Needs and Capacities in the Caribbean**

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PREFACE

The Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity, a five-year initiative sponsored by USAID's Center for Human Capacity Development, is designed to improve the quality, effectiveness, and access to formal and nonformal basic education. As an indefinite quantity contract (IQC), BEPS operates through core funds and USAID Mission buy-ins to provide both short- and long-term assistance to missions and regional bureaus.

BEPS focuses on several important program areas: basic education; educational policy analysis and reform; restorative and additive educational work in countries in crisis (presence and non-presence); and the alleviation of abusive child labor. Services to be provided include policy appraisals and assessments, training and institutional strengthening, and the design and implementation of pilot projects, feasibility and applied research studies, seminars/workshops, and evaluations. Under BEPS, USAID also will compile and disseminate results, lessons learned, and other generalizable information through electronic networks, training workshops, national conferences, quarterly and annual reports, publications, and other vehicles.

One of the buy-ins for the BEPS Activity is the Improved Human Resource Policies task order, a task order funded by LAC/RSD-EHR that provides technical assistance in basic education to USAID's Latin America and Caribbean region. Helping to launch President George Bush's Centers of Excellence in Teacher Training Initiative is one of the subtasks under that task order.

This assessment report was prepared as an input for USAID in the early conceptual, developmental stages of the Caribbean Center of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT). The recommendations contained in this report should neither be interpreted as conclusions, nor final decisions. The process of developing CETT is dynamic; it evolves and changes as new information and inputs that become available are considered. Ongoing research and activities continue to inform the appropriate developmental focus and structure for each sub-regional Center of Excellence.

GLOSSARY

ALTA	Adult Literacy Tutors Association of Trinidad and Tobago
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BEPS	Basic Education and Policy Support
CARE	Center for Adolescent Rehabilitation and Education
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEE	Common Entrance Exam
CETT	Center of Excellence for Teacher Training
COSTATT	College of Science, Technology and Arts of Trinidad and Tobago
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
DFID	Department for International Development
DTEEA	Division of Teacher Education & Education Administration
EC	Eastern Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines)
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECERP	Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project
EDUTECH	Education Sector Enhancement Program
EEEU	Educational Evaluation & Examinations Unit
EFA	Education for All
EHR	Office of Education and Human Resources
IEA	International Organization for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements
GSAT	Grade Six Achievement Test
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
IT	Information Technology
JA	Junior Achievement
JACLD	Jamaica Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
JBTE	Joint Board of Teacher Education
JCSEF	Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation
LAC	Latin American and Caribbean Bureau
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture, Jamaica
MTC	Mico Teachers' College
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OERU	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Education Reform Unit
PEACE	Personal Empowerment in Arts and Creative Education Program
SALCC	Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
SOE	School of Education
SOW	Statement of Work
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

UWI University of the West Indies
WC Western Caribbean (the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the result of an assessment conducted September 1-29, 2001 of teacher training needs and capacities related to reading instruction in Caribbean countries to be served by the Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT). Through meetings with selected institutions, USAID Missions, ministries of education (MOEs), teachers' unions, and other stakeholders, the assessment team aimed to verify and augment the findings from prior desktop research on teacher training needs and country capacities in the Caribbean region. The information gathered by the assessment team is to be used for the purpose of enabling USAID-LAC/EHR to design a strategy and mechanism for implementing CETT within each of the participating Caribbean countries.

A team of hemispheric educational experts serving as the CETT Consultative Committee recommended that, because of the historical leadership and perceived capacity of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to address teacher training needs, the Caribbean assessment should give priority consideration to UWI as the leading regional candidate for hosting and implementing the Caribbean CETT.

The assessment team visited Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, each of which has a branch campus of UWI. St. Lucia was selected as the fourth country for the assessment because: (a) it experiences low student achievement, especially among disadvantaged groups; and (b) its population generally speaks French-based Creole, which represents a challenge to literacy efforts in the official language, English. (An explanation of the methodology used during the assessment is included in Chapter I, section D.)

This report is organized and presented through the lens of the primary research questions that informed the assessment team's Statement of Work (SOW). The assessment team presented an array of pertinent findings and made recommendations that will help guide the development of the Caribbean CETT. The report concludes with recommendations for a follow-up field visit in order to conduct an in-depth institutional assessment, including on-site focus, roles and responsibilities, institutional capabilities required, exemplary training content, and key factors in the organization of the Caribbean CETT.

Training and Related Educational Needs

The countries of the Caribbean region are especially sensitive to the importance of quality education programs that equip their citizens with the skills to succeed in increasingly competitive markets. Leaders of the education community and civil society in these countries are rightfully concerned about the weaknesses that often characterize their public education programs. There remains strong interest in compelling and enduring reform to help ensure that future generations will be prepared for the rapidly shifting requirements of modernity and the attendant changes in the workplace.

The assessment team found that student underachievement is directly associated with teacher training issues and needs due to a variety of factors: Untrained rural teachers have limited access to training; therefore many begin teaching with little or no pre-service teaching practice or

orientation. Specifically, teachers are inadequately prepared to teach a curriculum driven by subject matter. Public-school classrooms are often characterized by an inattention to diverse, specific needs of students and a tendency towards teaching for examinations. Ineffective teacher training methodologies and strategies are commonly utilized and no adequate follow-up support is given to improve and enhance teaching skills.

Significant impediments to teacher performance and student achievement can be attributed to several areas. The assessment team found that a theory-practice gap in the Caribbean region has resulted in a deficiency among reading instructors in practical teaching methodologies. Particular stresses faced by teachers have perhaps been overlooked by teacher training programs, and common problems and conditions within the schools are often not addressed in pre-service and in-service training. Students with specific needs and frustrated readers alike need remedial help and accommodations that teachers are not trained to give and administrators are not equipped to support. Social promotion of nonreaders persists as teachers do not have time to provide personal tutoring and have not learned techniques for handling multi-age, multi-ability classrooms. The aforementioned problems are particularly acute within poor populations, where qualified teachers are sometimes in short supply

The widespread utilization of Creole as a primary language compounds problems of educational policy and practice that are acutely felt and hotly debated within the region. Given current language policy debates, what remains important is the delivery of appropriate teaching techniques in a way that minimizes frustration for teachers and bilingual or trilingual children, who often enter school without any significant English language skills.

The assessment team found that there are severe challenges, needs, and problems associated with student achievement and teacher training, particularly in reading, which can be transformed into opportunities for action consistent with the founding of a Caribbean CETT. A solid foundation of institutions, capacity, interest, and research exists upon which to establish and develop a regional CETT. Various key public- and private-sector institutions and stakeholders demonstrate interest, motivation, and capacity to support and complement the vision of public-private partnerships that underlies the CETT initiative. There is no question that political stakeholders, as well as educators and corporate leaders, feel that there is a strong need to improve teacher training. Reading has been the weak link in a series of curriculum reforms in the Caribbean and CETT appears to be a welcome intervention to help fill a need in the education system.

I. INTRODUCTION

“We are committed to making education a centerpiece of our economic agenda—because learning and literacy are the foundations for development and democracy.”

President George W. Bush
April 21, 2001

A. Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training

Countries worldwide are making concerted efforts to improve educational outcomes. Changes and reforms seemed necessary after several studies established the correlation between educational attainment, and economic and social progress. At the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001, President George W. Bush drew attention to the fact that key educational indicators for Latin America and the Caribbean compare poorly with the rest of the world, with the lower socioeconomic groups being hardest hit by the deficiencies in the education systems. While acknowledging the complexities involved in determining the reasons for underachievement, President Bush highlighted inadequacies in teacher quality as a major contributing factor. The President further noted that most teachers and school administrators in the hemisphere have limited resources and that their training is inadequate in preparing them to deal with the special needs of disadvantaged students.

In response to this need to improve teacher quality, President Bush announced that his administration will support the creation of three Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT), to be housed in existing institutions in the Caribbean, the Andean region of South America, and Central America. These regional teacher training and resource centers are to provide training to improve the quality of teachers, school administrators, and early instruction in classrooms, with special emphasis on disadvantaged communities in poorer countries. Specifically, the major focus of the training programs will be on improving reading instruction and upgrading the knowledge and pedagogical skills of poorly qualified teachers. It is expected that about 15,000 teachers will benefit from this training over four years.

USAID will administer the resources and coordinate the program for these hemispheric Centers of Excellence, with the guidance of an advisory panel of U.S. and Latin American experts. The Departments of Education and State, the Organization of American States, MOEs, business and citizen groups, faith-based organizations, international donors, and other hemispheric governments will be enlisted to form a partnership with USAID for program implementation.

The rationale and programs envisioned for CETTs are based on the following assumptions:

- Weak reading skills contribute significantly to scholastic underachievement.
- Teachers have limited skills to teach reading adequately, particularly to disadvantaged groups.

- Through improvements in decoding and reading-comprehension skills, appropriate teacher training will help to create a more literate society which, in turn, will fuel improved local economic development.
- A regional approach, centered on the training of trainers (TOT) and appropriate support, will be the most efficient and effective strategy to address the poor teacher quality and inequities in education.

Thus, CETTs are expected to provide:

- a TOT program to improve teachers' and school administrators' skills, especially in reading instruction;
- a clearinghouse of teacher training materials; and
- an Internet portal linking teacher training institutions, think tanks, schools, teachers, and universities so that they can share materials, best practices, and lessons learned as well as provide virtual training.

B. Purpose of the Activity

In June 2001, USAID contracted with Creative Associates International, Inc. through the BEPS Activity (Contract HNE-I-00-00-00038-00, LAC/SD-EHR Task Order No. 04) to assist in laying the groundwork for the Centers of Excellence in Teacher Training. As specified in the scope of work and work plan (see Annexes A and B, respectively), BEPS was given responsibility for two major activities: assessing regional teacher training needs and the potential capacity of institutions to serve as regional Centers; and establishing and supporting a consultative committee for CETTs. Key to this assignment is the implementation of three regional needs and capacity assessments—one each for the Caribbean, Central America, and the Andean region of South America.

Each assessment will:

- identify major teacher training needs that the Centers of Excellence could address,
- identify institutions that could serve as partners to the Centers of Excellence,
- determine institutional needs to create a Center of Excellence, and
- recommend alternative choices based on assessment findings.

C. Research Questions

The needs assessment for the English-speaking Caribbean region focused on answering the following seven research questions:¹

¹ Five of the questions were included in the original scope of work and work plan. A sixth question concerning reading instruction for children whose mother tongue is Creole or another indigenous language was added in response to a suggestion from USAID and the advisory committee. The last question, which addresses key questions that remain unresolved and need to be addressed in the Phase II assessment, was added in response to feedback from USAID after its review of the draft Caribbean Assessment Phase I Report.

1. To what extent are teacher training issues specifically regarded as contributors to underachievement in the Caribbean?
2. To what extent is reading instruction perceived as being a critical problem in the Caribbean and by which group(s) of stakeholders? What specific aspects of reading instruction are deemed problematic?
3. What are the major teacher training needs in disadvantaged communities? How do these differ from other communities?
4. Are there special programs to address the learning/reading needs of children whose mother tongue is Creole or an indigenous language?
5. To what extent is the current network of teacher training institutions headed by the Schools of Education (SOEs) at UWI addressing the teacher training needs of the disadvantaged communities? What are the major gaps in service? How might these be addressed?
6. To what extent is the private sector willing to support teacher training through the vehicle of a CETT?
7. What are the key questions that remain unresolved and will need to be addressed in the Phase II assessment?

D. Methodology

A team consisting of an Education Specialist/Team Leader and a Teacher Training Specialist conducted the assessment field work for the Caribbean region during the period September 1-29, 2001. The assessment team spent five days each in four countries: Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. The two consultants spent five days per country engaged in intensive research on student achievement problems, teacher training needs and issues, and potential collaborating institutions to serve as CETTs. The consultants were informed by an extensive literature search conducted by BEPS staff. The field study relied primarily on qualitative research in informal surveys, structured interviews, focus groups, and observations across a wide range of populations, institutions, and public-private associations to ascertain a breadth of perspective and focus.

Three of the countries—Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago—were selected because of the teacher training institutions they housed. UWI, a regional institution serving 16 countries with the mandate to set syllabi and examinations and to certify teacher training in the region, was identified prior to the field visits as potentially having the greatest institutional capacity to serve as a CETT. Most of the teacher training colleges in the English-speaking Caribbean fall within the purview of one of the three UWI SOEs located in Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago. The assessment focused on these three UWI-affiliated SOEs and offered insight into reading problems in two of the larger countries and one country where major educational reform is underway. St. Lucia was selected both to determine the impact of the SOEs in a non-campus country and also to research the challenges faced in teaching reading in standard English,

especially at the lower-primary level, in a country where French-based Creole (called “Kweyol”) is the dominant language.

The primary methods for this assessment were:

- review of available literature related to several topics: primary education; teacher training needs in the Caribbean; approaches to teacher training, particularly in reading instruction; policies and plans for professional development; and constraints to implementation;
- face-to-face interviews and focus-group meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff of ministries of education at headquarters and district levels, teachers’ colleges, principals and teachers of primary schools, UWI faculty, and representatives of reading associations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) involved in remedial education, bilateral and sub-regional organizations, and the private sector in Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago; and
- classroom observations in both rural and urban areas.

Following the field research, the assessment team spent one week working together to discuss results, debrief USAID/LAC representatives, and prepare the foundations for an assessment report. Feedback from USAID on earlier drafts of the report was used to develop this final document. References are provided below, and the list of people interviewed is included in Annex D.

E. Scope and Limitations

The initial phase of the assessment focuses on teacher training and reading issues. It was envisioned that in a second phase the research team would assess the potential host institution(s).

As the stated objective of CETT is improving teachers’ reading instruction techniques and students’ reading skills in grades 1-3, the scope of the assessment was limited to a focus on issues in early grade instruction. Reading deficiencies at the lower-primary level have an impact on student performance at the secondary level and beyond. Two important related issues—post-primary literacy and the critical role and impact of early-childhood education on later learning—are recognized but were beyond the scope of this assessment.

The scope of the assessment was also limited by the restricted time available for the research. Only five days in each country for interviews and school visits did not permit in-depth study of the range of teacher training issues across the countries. Although the assessment team made every effort to visit rural and semi-urban communities in the countries visited, the acute teacher training problems that prevail in remote areas of multi-island states such as the Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, or in Belize, Guyana, and other countries with a multilingual school population could not be analyzed specifically.

Third, the lack of comprehensive statistical and comparable data for each country impeded the type of comparative analysis that the study warranted. Nonetheless, the research data that were

available provided insight into the complexities of teacher development across the region. Unfortunately, there was less information on the impact of teacher training on student achievement, and the statistical data on in-service teacher training was inadequate, as it tended to be primarily project-related.

F. Organization of the Report

The remainder of this report presents the results derived from the needs assessment. Chapter II provides an overview of the Caribbean context. Chapter III presents the findings as they relate to the research questions provided by USAID. In Chapter IV, the assessment team draws on the research findings reported in Chapter III to develop recommendations for designing a Center of Excellence for the English-speaking Caribbean region. Chapter V includes a summary of key questions that remain unresolved and need to be addressed during the follow-up assessment.

Chapter II provides supporting data in an overview of the Andean region, including the socioeconomic situation faced by teachers, politicians, and the public and private sector. Sections on the educational climate and country/regional capacity are also included.

Chapter III details teacher training needs identified in the countries visited.

Chapter IV offers design recommendations for the Andean CETT.

Chapter V offers conclusions and next steps.

Finally, the report contains five annexes:

- A. Scope of Work
- B. Work Plan
- C. Research Questionnaires used in Country Visits
- D. List of Contacts
- E. Program Summaries

II. THE CARIBBEAN CONTEXT

A. Overview

For this research, the region is defined as the twelve geographically dispersed countries that make up the independent English-speaking Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago (see Figure 1).

This designated region has several characteristics that make it distinct from Latin America. These include:

- English as the primary language,
- common history and culture,
- small population,
- relatively new states,
- limited natural resources,
- a higher level of dependency on international economic and political influences,
- economic vulnerability, and
- fragile ecosystems.

Figure 1. The English-speaking Caribbean



While these countries have many commonalities, they are somewhat diverse in terms of size and social and economic development. Basic information about human development and the status of education in each country can provide an important context for the assessment.

B. Human Development/Socioeconomic Rankings

Socioeconomic rankings vary throughout the region. As indicated in the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index (UNDP, 2001), two Caribbean countries—Barbados and the Bahamas—were ranked among the countries with high human development, with rankings of 31 and 42 respectively. The other English-speaking Caribbean countries included in UNDP’s 2001 report—Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Belize, and Guyana—were ranked in the medium range. According to reports on poverty assessments undertaken in the 1990s (World Bank, 2000), the percentage of the population considered below the poverty line ranges from below 10 percent in the Bahamas and Barbados to above 30 percent in Belize, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with Guyana at a high of 43 percent.

Thus, while Caribbean countries experience prosperity, they also are faced with high levels of crime and delinquency, large numbers of out-of-school youth, growing social and economic inequities, and high unemployment. In addition, there is concern about the growing spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as other health and nutrition issues, particularly among the more disadvantaged groups.

C. Status of Education

Relative to other middle-income countries, the Caribbean is considered to have made commendable strides with respect to the provision of education, particularly at the primary level (children 5-12 years). For example, a recent *Education for All (EFA) Caribbean: Assessment 2000* report highlights the following:

- The priority that education is accorded in the Caribbean is evidenced by the relatively high percentage of GNP (5 percent) most countries devote to the sector.
- All Caribbean countries are engaged in education-reform initiatives, which include improving the quality of primary education.
- Early-childhood education for children between the ages of three to five years has been expanding with more than 70 percent of the age group having access to some form of pre-school education. Access varies, ranging from 23 percent in Belize to 100 percent in the Bahamas. Similarly, there is great variability in the quality of education provided.
- Universal primary education has been achieved in almost all countries, and most have compulsory education laws.
- There are high rates of internal efficiency at the primary level, attributable to automatic promotion practiced in most countries.
- With the exception of Belize, which does not implement automatic promotion, with a primary-school completion rate of 72 percent, approximately 90 percent of students maintain enrollment until grade 5.

- Nine of the 16 countries have attained universal secondary education, with the remaining seven providing upper-secondary education to approximately 50 percent and some form of post-primary or lower-secondary education to all children up to age 15.

A recent World Bank document, *A Caribbean Education Strategy*, confirms the region's recognition of the importance of education as follows:

Significant and consistent public investment in education, in relation to their economic status, is being made in most countries in the region. Except for Haiti, more than 85 percent of total investment in education is derived from the public sector. Education expenditure as a percentage of GDP ranges from approximately 2 percent in the Dominican Republic to 7 percent in Jamaica. The regional average is approximately 4 percent, compared with 3.3 percent for low and middle-income countries, and 5 percent in high-income countries (www.worldbank.org, 2001).²

Additionally, efforts have been made in collaboration with other Caribbean countries to address issues of educational quality and accountability. These efforts have been most pronounced in the areas of curriculum development, teacher training, and examinations. For example, a regional examinations body—the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)—was established for testing at the secondary level.

Yet, for all the progress, challenges remain. First are issues of effectiveness. An examination of indicators such as literacy rates, access to libraries, and the availability of newspapers and other print material might lead one to conclude that populations in Caribbean countries do not have a reading problem. Adult literacy rates are upwards of 85 percent, and each country has newspapers, libraries, and bookstores. As outlined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), however, it is not sufficient to know the mechanics of reading. People in all societies now require higher levels of functional literacy (which must be sustained in a rich-literate environment) in order to fully participate in a rapidly changing global economy. According to the International Adult Literacy Survey team, being literate in today's world requires having a broad range of information processing skills that enable individuals to perform different types of work at home and in their communities.

Second is the issue of equity. It is recognized that students from lower socioeconomic groups and those living in remote communities (e.g., in the hinterlands of Guyana, the Family Islands in the Bahamas, or St. Vincent and the Grenadines) fare poorly in terms of fundamental learning resources, including adequately trained teachers. School stratification and variable inputs contribute to higher rates of attrition of students from the lower echelons by the end of the period of compulsory schooling and to their limited access to secondary and tertiary levels of education. There is also growing concern that although there is equal access for boys and girls, fewer boys gain a place in secondary schools, which are competitive in most countries. Recent studies have highlighted the need for special measures to increase motivation and levels of performance of boys.

² In this World Bank strategy, the Caribbean includes French-speaking Haiti, which is not included in this Caribbean assessment.

It is evident that all countries in the region are aware of the continuing constraints to providing a quality and equitable education, and many are undertaking comprehensive education reform. Most of these reform efforts are taking place within the broad framework of a number of global, regional, and sub-regional initiatives, including the Education for All Summit of the Americas Education Agenda, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Education Strategy, and the OECS Education Reform Strategy. As the World Bank reports (Caribbean Education Sector Strategy, 2000), “[t]hese strategies have spawned a plethora of projects, which receive support including policy advice from a wide range of multilateral and bilateral partners.”

D. Summary

The English-speaking Caribbean—Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago—share several common characteristics beyond the English language. They are relatively new states that have a common history, culture, and environment. Human development indicators document pockets of rural and/or disadvantaged populations for whom quality basic education is particularly important. Having committed to ‘education for all’, countries throughout the region have achieved almost-universal access to primary education. Yet low rates of student achievement at the primary level, particularly in reading, hinder performance in primary and secondary school.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS: TEACHER TRAINING IN THE CARIBBEAN

The assessment team was provided with a Scope of Work (Annex A), Work Plan (Annex B), and Research Questions (Annex C) to guide both their data gathering and subsequent analysis. The field research harvested a rich field of data from which to extract and refine findings and conclusions. The assessment team conducted an oral debriefing for the USAID/LAC team that presented a full range of findings relevant to the CETT initiative. In order to help the assessment team focus the development of a final report, the LAC/EHR team submitted to BEPS a series of key questions (listed in Chapter 1) to focus the reporting of their findings.

The following sections are organized in response to the first six key questions. Each section contains research findings with a corresponding summary and analysis. The last question is addressed in the final chapter of this report.

A. To what extent are teacher training issues specifically regarded as contributors to underachievement in the Caribbean?

Underachievement in the Caribbean

Although access to education at the primary level is nearly universal throughout the region and governments in the Caribbean have shown a strong commitment to human-resource development and education reform, student achievement continues to lag behind. Achievement statistics underscore problems which suggest related teacher training issues. Examples include:

- Overall achievement levels on the Common Entrance Exam (CEE) in the region indicate deficiencies even in basic areas such as reading, writing, and numeracy.
- It is estimated that at least 30 percent of primary-school students fail to acquire the basic cognitive skills that would enable them to fully benefit from education offered at the secondary level.
- Of the 21,186 students who took the Secondary Entrance Assessment in Trinidad and Tobago in 2001, 11,144 (52 percent) scored below 50 percent on the English language test, and 3,391 (16 percent) were deemed low achievers (having scored below 30 percent overall) and had to be assigned to remedial classes at the secondary level.
- In Jamaica, approximately 50 percent of eleven-year-olds have low literacy skills (Wilson, Smikle and Grant, 2001). In response, the Jamaican Ministry of Education (MOE) has declared that students who fail to achieve the minimum standard on grade 4 literacy tests will not be promoted until the standard has been attained. Further, the MOE has launched a National Literacy Improvement Program.
- In St. Lucia, where minimum standards were introduced to monitor performance in 2000, only 37 percent of grade 2 students attained the minimum standard in English language and 23 percent in mathematics; only 37 percent of grade 4 students attained the minimum standard in English language and 26 percent in mathematics. The Common Entrance

Exam is used to select students for secondary-school placement, yet only 53 percent of students who took the exam in 1999 and 2000 passed, and of those who passed, 10 percent scored below the national mean.

The Caribbean region, having embraced the importance of a highly educated and skilled workforce to promoting social and economic development and competing effectively in the global market, acknowledges the current underachievement and the need to change that low performance. Importantly, most countries are developing mechanisms and building capacity to measure student achievement and identify inequities in the system. Through these efforts, it is becoming clearer that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds in urban and rural areas and remote islands do not tend to perform as well as children from more affluent families.

In exploring the issue of low achievement, those interviewed highlighted several contributing factors that have implications for teacher training. These include underprepared teachers, low expectations of teachers for what can be achieved by students, and the schools' limited ability to identify learning difficulties. It was widely acknowledged that shortcomings in the practice and quality of teacher training are major contributing factors to the underachievement of children in primary schools. These shortcomings are highlighted below.

Teacher Training as a Contributing Factor to Underachievement

The lack of preparedness of teachers for the task of teaching reading was underscored during the assessment and clearly documented in available literature. McDowell and Joseph (1981), cited by Heydorn et al. (1986), described reading lessons as being teacher centered, where word calling was stressed, "with comprehension being virtually ignored, and very little time devoted to the affect aspect of reading, silent or otherwise." They cited the inadequate preparation of teachers, particularly with respect to diagnosing reading problems, applying remedial techniques, and devising meaningful reading activities as being significant. Also noted was the negative connotation reading has for many children.

McDowell and Joseph highlighted the teachers' lack of knowledge about children's learning problems and their reading interests, and grossly inadequate library facilities. They noted that there was "little use of supplementary readers and less use of library, recreational or personal reading and other reading material such as newspapers, magazines, comics, etc.," leading them to conclude that there was "a lack of an integrated, coordinated, sequential, comprehensive and current reading series with particular relevance to the West Indies in general." They confirmed the common practice of whole-class or ability grouping in the classroom. Peer, interest, and project grouping methods were seldom utilized. Within this context, phonics, individualized reading, and sight word were the frequently used approaches.

The importance of teacher competence in teaching reading skills bears emphasis and is supported by Tomlinson and Myers (1991) who, in evaluating the Primary Textbook Project in Jamaica, contended that the impact of the project on student performance was minimized by the teachers' ineffective teaching skills. Thus, the provision of textbooks alone, in the absence of training in effective teaching strategies to use those textbooks, may not achieve the desired improvement.

In analyzing teachers' skills in diagnosis, they noted heavy reliance on observation and word recognition lists. Very few other diagnostic methods were utilized. It appeared that many commonly used diagnostic reading tests were not available, nor were many teachers aware of them. Persons interviewed during the assessment also noted teachers' limited skills for diagnosis and the paucity of tools available for diagnosis.

Research findings indicate that, despite shortcomings, teachers make efforts to impart reading skills across the curriculum. Heydorn et al. (1986) indicated that a high percentage of teachers were attempting to incorporate the teaching of reading with a wide range of subjects—more than 90 percent doing so with language arts, science, and social studies, and 80 percent incorporating reading with mathematics. Educators interviewed confirmed that this practice prevails.

The assessment team explored some of the problems identified in the literature with professors of education, principals, and teachers and noted that teacher-preparation programs and in-service training programs have been attempting to provide teachers with training in more child-centered, innovative, and experiential techniques for the teaching of reading and language arts. These include literature-based approaches using storybooks with children, read-aloud, phonetics, teamwork, and remediation techniques. Several externally funded projects have been providing support for English language improvement, including the teaching of reading. Language-arts curricula are being revised across the region to promote a more integrated or whole-language approach. There has been an increase in the availability of reading materials, although this can be further improved, especially in rural schools. Teachers also have some limited exposure to diagnostic methods, but teachers and administrators deem the exposure to be too insufficient.

Even though a review of the literature and discussions with teachers indicate that the teaching of reading in Caribbean classrooms has changed and is changing, there remains dissatisfaction with the process and results. The commonly held belief is that problems persist and much more needs to be done to improve reading instruction and the environment in which reading is taught. A team from the Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project (ECERP) noted the teacher-centeredness of kindergarten and grade 1 classes, the high incidence of choral responses to teacher talk, isolated teaching of phonics, and relatively little opportunity for oral work. The same emphasis on the teaching of phonics in isolation was observed at the primary level, and there was also very little silent reading. The researchers observed that while teachers seemed concerned about the reading-comprehension problems, they did not employ discussion techniques to address them (ECERP, 1998).

In their findings concerning the views of college reading instructors about reading in Jamaica, Lambert and Hayden noted that instructors in general found the approaches to teaching reading in primary schools to be inappropriate. Teachers relied too heavily on basal readers, and this was often the sole mode used to teach reading in reading lessons. Too much time was spent on testing, rather than on the teaching of reading. These views were also shared by student teachers they interviewed. Both professors of education and student teachers acknowledged the many challenges the teacher faces, such as large classes and insufficient instructional materials, and the need for developing strategies to teach reading in the context of these realities. Perceptions regarding the actual practice of teaching reading have changed little over time, which may

suggest that the innovations are not sufficiently widespread to have made a difference or training has not yet achieved the desired impact.

During site-visit interviews, responses from teachers, principals, administrators, and teacher trainers indirectly supported the position that teacher training issues contribute to underachievement. In responding to questions about underachievement and problems with reading performance, none of the people interviewed named poor teacher training as a major contributor. Collectively, however, those interviewed during this assessment identified the following characteristics of the current system for teacher training as key contributors to underachievement:

- Limited access for untrained rural teachers. Although there has been steady progress in providing pre-service and in-service training in most countries in the region, at least 25-30 percent of primary-school teachers remain untrained. Some of these are new recruits. Others do not meet the matriculation requirements of the teachers' colleges, or they have limited access to a teachers' college. In rural and remote communities, the percentage of untrained teachers reaches 50 percent or higher, primarily due to limited access. This relatively high percentage of untrained teachers has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Minimal pre-service training requirements and insufficient teaching practice for new teachers. The general practice is that teachers teach for at least two years before participating in the two-year pre-service (which is in fact in-service) training (George et al., 2001). As a consequence, teachers may adopt inappropriate pedagogical practices that are difficult to correct later on. Indeed, current research suggests that teacher training has little impact on teachers' practices once early habits become ingrained during their initial year in the classroom. The implications for restructuring pre-service training are evident. Learning how to teach is at the core of teacher training. The goal should be to prepare confident teachers, armed with effective teaching strategies they have practiced with constructive guidance. Professors of education and teachers confirmed research findings that insufficient time was devoted to teaching practice—only twelve weeks in most cases. In addition, it was noted that there was considerable variety in the experiences. Much depended on the level of cooperation of the principals and schools to which student teachers were assigned.
- Ineffective teacher training strategies and methodologies. Teacher training strategies are deemed too didactic, and there is little modeling of innovative instructional practices that teachers are expected to implement (Morris and Joseph, 2001). Thus, innovative hands-on, child-oriented, and experiential strategies are commonly taught using formal, traditional techniques. The idea of a child-centered model for learning has not been complemented yet with an experiential learning model for teacher training. Also, although subjects have been integrated in the revised school curricula, it is reported that teachers' colleges have not fully adopted an integrative approach to their own programs. If teacher training is to have the desired impact, it should model the desired behavior in its format and methodologies. Moreover, pedagogical strategies do not take into account the realities of disadvantaged classrooms—overcrowded or multigrade classes, limited teaching resources—and the other factors which characterize poor learning environments. Teachers also do not have the

opportunity to acquire skills in systematic observation and reflection, which are important in devising strategies to meet the learning needs of a diverse student population. Specifics about the disconnect between theory and practice in the teaching of reading are provided in the following section.

- Inattention to diverse, special needs of students. The majority of teachers interviewed felt they had insufficient exposure to strategies for teaching the range of students they encounter. Teachers' colleges tend to focus on the average child; therefore, teachers have difficulty teaching high or low achievers. Moreover, there is insufficient attention given to the impact of socioeconomic issues on the lives of children and the implications for teaching and learning. The special needs of disadvantaged children receive limited attention. Teachers are not adequately prepared to diagnose learning or emotional difficulties, nor to teach children whose mother tongue is not English.
- Weak academic preparation of teachers for teaching a curriculum driven by subject matter. It is expected that teachers must have sound knowledge of the subjects they teach. At the primary level, teachers must have in-depth knowledge of all the subjects on the curriculum. Newly recruited teachers generally have weak academic skills, and much time is spent at teachers' colleges upgrading these. Despite time spent improving poor skills, their deficiencies, particularly in English language, mathematics, and science, are not always fully addressed. Teachers display these weaknesses in their teaching.
- Inadequate follow-up professional support to improve teaching skills. Interviewees indicated that there is no adequate follow-up for the primary teacher once he/she leaves the teacher training college. MOE officials such as curriculum specialists visit schools from time to time, and some principals and fellow teachers may offer support. In general, however, there is no structured support program for the newly certified teacher.
- Inadequate training in tools and methods for assessing reading problems. Schools are not focused on assessment of student problems, learning needs, and individual performance-related issues. The tools and methods for assessing problems and needs are not emphasized in teacher training, nor do they form a basis for student, teacher, and school evaluation. Without an ability to understand, apply, and utilize learning assessment tools, teachers are handicapped in their ability to adapt their teaching to specific needs.

Summary and Analysis

Underachievement is a consistent challenge in the Caribbean region, varying across island nations in focus and intensity. Student underachievement is positively associated with teacher training issues and needs, which include:

- limited access for untrained rural teachers;
- teachers who begin teaching with little or no practical training;
- ineffective teacher training methodologies and strategies;
- insufficient pre-service teaching practice;
- inattention to diverse, special needs of students;

- weak academic preparation of teachers for teaching a curriculum driven by subject matter;
- no adequate follow-up professional support to improve teaching skills; and
- Low ability of school to assess learning needs

Appropriate responses to address these issues need to be systemic, integrated and specific in order to correct teacher training deficiencies which, in turn, contribute to underachievement. Responses should include:

- adoption of new, higher standards for identifying and recruiting potential teacher candidates appropriate for teaching in disadvantaged areas;
- articulating, setting, and enforcing higher standards for teacher candidate performance both within teacher training programs and school settings;
- increasing and improving teacher practicums so that continual monitoring and feedback reinforces continual quality improvement (mentoring, coaching, and peer review may be ingredients to explore);
- decreasing teacher emphasis on examination-driven teaching practice coupled with increasing teacher formation based on mastering learning needs assessment techniques, interpreting results, and developing viable teaching strategies based on those results;
- defining and setting in place motivational strategies, with appropriate incentives, that encourage and reward teachers to set higher teaching standards and expectations for themselves and their students (appropriate management support and follow-up is needed to ensure that the expectations become a permanent and positive aspect of teacher performance; identifying and utilizing role models drawn from within local teacher populations might be a good avenue to demystify teacher performance issues, demonstrate good practice, and reinforce higher standards; see box: Jamaican First Grade Teacher);
- developing a cadre of highly skilled teacher instructors/trainers whose training approach, style, and methods are aligned and resonate with the active, innovative, and adaptive pedagogical practice that teachers are taught and by which successful performance is measured;
- defining and supporting actively a system for pre-service and in-service training which provides constant support for teachers to improve their academic preparation and subject-matter mastery; and
- setting in motion regional and national communication/sensitization campaigns to heighten community awareness about education issues and problems, improve the public image of teachers, reinforce higher standards of teacher and student performance, and both enlist and motivate parents and communities to get involved and support local solutions.

Best Classroom Practices: A Jamaican First Grade Teacher

In an ordinary classroom in urban Jamaica, a teacher stands in front of 64 first graders. For nearly 20 years, she has been initiating her young charges into the formal world of learning. Few of these children come to school ready to read; almost none could be called readers. In just three weeks, this remarkable teacher has oriented her 64 charges to the practices and behaviors to which she expects them to adhere for the entire school year. She does not waste a single second with these children, nor does she allow them to waste any of her or their own seconds. She follows a pattern of challenging them with focused, direct, and specific instructions to which many eagerly respond. As their mercurial energy swirls away from her directives, she switches to body-clapping games so that they refocus on the task at hand. With 64 children swirling about in their own energy cocoons, the teacher manages to inspire enthusiasm for answering her questions about a story. There is palpable joy for learning in that room. Children are so eager that they shoot their hands up before the question is asked. This is called “attending to task.” Not all children attend to her guidance and instructions 100 percent of the time, but a significant number are with her, answering her questions, making connections, and offering thoughtful responses. There is something happening in this overcrowded classroom, and it is called “making connections.”

Making connections might not be the mainstay of effective teaching, and it might not be measurable by scientific research standards. It is not the sort of thing upon which donor agencies typically design intervention plans. But here in a setting where all the odds for success are against this teacher and her pupils, yet something meaningful and effective is going on. It is called “learning.”

Juanita Campos, 2001

B. To what extent is reading instruction perceived as being a critical problem in the Caribbean and by which group(s) of stakeholders? What specific aspects of reading instruction are deemed problematic?

Approaches to Teaching Reading

The complex range of skills involved in teaching reading includes phonics awareness, and fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension instruction. Each one of these areas also involves mastery of distinct subsets of associated skills for which corresponding reading instruction is required (Armbruster and Osborn, 2001). Our understanding of how these five general skill areas work is dynamic and fluid. In other words, the identification, understanding and sequencing of the necessary skills to attain reading literacy are revealed increasingly through careful, solid, and refined research. It is becoming less the domain of generalists and more that of specialists. This has very important implications for how reading is taught and how reading teachers are prepared to teach. (See previous section for other details about reading instruction.) Successfully teaching reading skills is additionally complicated and challenged by a myriad of sociocultural, historical, political, and economic forces, and therein lies the challenge.

One of the challenges for the region is to find effective ways to have an impact on the manner in which instructional material is delivered at both the teachers' college and primary classroom levels. A number of Jamaican reading and language-arts specialists at UWI and Mico Teachers' College (MTC) agreed that the "style of instruction, if espousing learner-centered, experiential learning, must be delivered in an experiential manner." In reality, too many educators continue "to teach about experiential education in a non-experiential manner. We still have too many chalk-and-talk teachers teaching our young teachers." These remarks were similar to the concerns of professors of education in the other three countries visited.

While practical teaching experience is still often lacking in teacher training programs, approaches to reading instruction used in Caribbean classrooms have changed over time much as they have in other countries. Typically, new reading approaches originate from research institutions and educational reform efforts spring from governments. The extent to which research institutions and governments collaborate to improve schools varies throughout the region. Colleges and universities tend to generate innovations from a theoretical perspective and impart new knowledge to student teachers who are somehow expected to apply new learning in classrooms. New trends are reflected in new curriculum guides, and new teaching and learning materials are developed. Finally, some level of re-tooling or retrofitting occurs at the school level. The assumption is that the new reading strategies will have a positive impact on teachers and pupils.

Even when there is agreement and collaboration between governments and academic institutions, the degree to which the collaboration affects classroom and school children varies. Schools are complex and dynamic organisms, and interventions need to be targeted to result in broad-based change. Thus, it is difficult to attribute reading improvement to particular interventions.

Across countries in which English is the official language of instruction, too many children struggle with learning to read. The White House commissioned a study on reading, *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks of Reading Instruction* (Armbruster and Osborn, 2001), which has served not only to underpin the CETT initiative, but has also guided this needs assessment. *Put Reading First* speaks to an American school population that wrestles with the same reading challenges that characterize school populations in countries around the world. Not only do children worldwide struggle with learning to read, but teachers universally grapple with teaching children to learn to read, and educators in colleges and universities with teaching teachers how to teach reading.

For purposes of this report, we use the simple definition of reading as described by the Barbadian reading instructor. However, the numerous and varied classroom settings visited during this needs assessment attest to the need to devise context-specific definitions of reading to fit local contexts. Moreover, the needs of the region require an urgent response that promotes the development of context-specific instructional material, rather than using foreign instructional reading materials. Curriculum guides and instructional material reviewed by the assessment team indicate that Caribbean educators are in step with current innovations in reading instruction even though many educators lament the fact that "most of what we use is for North American classrooms."

Problematic Areas of Reading Instruction

The Caribbean assessment team visited a full range of stakeholders during its field-based research, including: MOE representatives, university presidents and their corresponding SOE leaders and instructors, reading teachers, teacher trainers, students, parents, NGO leaders, and school superintendents, supervisors, and inspectors. Across this range of stakeholders, a number of trends were identified as problems and challenges, many of which were confirmed through the assessment team's school visits and classroom observations:

- Lack of trained teachers. While universal access at the primary and secondary levels has opened the doors to educational opportunity, the supply of trained and effective classroom teachers cannot keep up with the demand. There are many seasoned, inadequately trained teachers in the teaching force who are resistant to change. The importance of early-childhood education as an important mechanism to give disadvantaged children a head start in school is weakened by untrained teachers assigned to the most vulnerable groups. Reforms in incentive systems have not produced visible results in attracting a higher level of qualified candidates to the profession.
- Social promotion of nonreaders. An unanticipated and negative consequence of universal access is the practice of social promotion. Many children move through primary school without acquiring basic reading skills. Failure to master these skills, especially in grades 1-3, compounds children's problems as they move through an increasingly challenging school system. A discussion with out-of-school St. Lucian youth revealed that they wished their teachers had given them attention at the time that they could feel themselves slipping. Some of these children who appear to be achieving satisfactorily from grade to grade enter secondary school without having developed proficiency at the most basic level.
- Frustrated readers. Many children's learning disabilities or weaknesses are undetected due to a lack of meaningful continuous assessment. Many children begin their school years reading at the "frustration level" and remain there (Teachers' Union President, Trinidad and Tobago, 2001). Reading progress for a significant number of pupils is inhibited, thus nullifying content-area learning and higher-order critical thinking. Children do not decode easily, they cannot read with fluency, their word-recognition skills are tentative at best, and they do not achieve text comprehension. Benefiting from innovative reading strategies, such as integrated language arts or reading across the curriculum, is a "dream" for many pupils who generally read at the "frustration level" (Language Arts Specialist Faculty, MTC, Jamaica, 2001).
- Importation and application of inappropriate innovations. As a response to the growing demand for effective reading instruction, reading innovations are often borrowed from abroad. Innovations that are not relevant to local realities complicate an already taxing situation. The call for Caribbean solutions to Caribbean problems is clear and critical.
- Inadequate support of and stresses faced by reading teachers. Many primary-school teachers are faced with extraordinary challenges, such as large classes (as many as 55-65 nonreading first graders in some Jamaican schools), scarce or irrelevant instructional materials, lack of

instructional support, absence of monitoring or supervision in the classroom, and demands on teachers to be parent, nurse, social worker, and counselor to many children. Teachers' roles and responsibilities continue to change in response to societal stresses and strains. For many children, the ability to learn to read is dependent on methodic, detailed, and consistent face-to-face instruction. Such focused instruction cannot be provided easily in overcrowded classrooms in which multiple ability levels and learning styles are present.

- Teaching to prepare for specific testing. The response to an absence of continuous assessment in a significant number of cases has resulted in excessive and inappropriate testing in the lower-primary grades. More time is spent on testing or on “teaching to the test” than on reading instruction. Test samples that were randomly reviewed indicate that many tests for primary pupils are too advanced and culturally irrelevant.
- Need for remediation for students with special needs. There is a growing need for reading remediation. However, many learners are misdiagnosed as slow readers when they are, in fact, victims of faulty reading instruction. Diagnostic instruments used to identify reading difficulties were not available for review by the assessment team, but many teachers admitted that they do not know what to do after children’s reading problems have been diagnosed. An official of the Trinidad and Tobago Teachers’ Union commented that “too many children are diagnosed with reading problems when the problem is they were not taught to read in the first place.”
- Theory-Practice gap for reading instructors and trainers. There is ample evidence that teacher training colleges and universities, and ministry-sponsored in-service training is up-to-date, innovative, and relevant for classroom teachers. Assessment of its effectiveness was beyond the scope of this needs assessment. However, these educational institutions find that even when student teachers receive quality college or university training or education, their new learning cannot be applied in the classroom. This theory-practice gap is common in many countries. While successful efforts have been made in this regard, they tend to be isolated and informal rather than collective, collaborative, and strategic.
- Deficient teaching methods by educators of teachers. Many student teachers do not internalize the meaning of effective, interactive learning. There is ample evidence that student teachers are taught about hands-on, child-centered, or experiential learning in a manner that contradicts the philosophy of active learning. College educators tend to teach in a formal, non-dialogical, chalk-and-talk manner, thereby reinforcing teaching strategies from which they want student teachers to move away. College teachers admitted that they teach to the test and their students tend to merely read for the test. While this is not true across the board, college educators mentioned it frequently enough in all countries visited for the assessment team to consider it a trend that needs to be addressed.

Corroboration of Reading Problems in Test Results

Performance on international, regional, and national examinations attests to the deficiencies in this area. Table 1 shows the performance of nine-year-old students from Trinidad and Tobago who participated in an International Organization for the Evaluation of Educational

Achievements (IEA) Reading Literacy Study in 1991-92. In all domains—narrative, expository and document—as a group, performance was below the international mean of 500. In all cases, however, the upper five percent exceeded the international mean. The range reflects the considerable diversity in the quality of schools, parental cooperation and the nature of the home environment in support of school activities, availability and use of books, and nutritional status of students.

Table 1. IEA Reading Literacy Results, Trinidad and Tobago, 1991-92

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Range</i>
Narrative	455	232-678
Expository	458	196-668
Document	440	220-620

As in all the other countries participating in the study, girls outperformed boys. This trend in the underachievement of boys vis-a-vis girls is well documented in all countries in the region.

Tests administered either for selection or entry into secondary schools reveal the same weaknesses in comprehension. For example, results on the comprehension portion of the English language test for the Common Entrance Exam 2000 showed that 54 percent of the 4,476 candidates scored at or below 30 percent. The CXC examinations point to continued deficiencies in comprehension skills at the secondary level, as illustrated by the following excerpts from recent reports on English language examinations:

- Candidates were unable to use the content of the passage or the context to help them find the meaning of strange words (CXC, 1997).
- Candidates seem to react to writing at a purely literal level. Devices like hyperbole, understatement, and innuendo are completely misinterpreted. Reading and interpretation seem to be confined to a sequential or word-by-word gathering of information with little attempt to relate one set of information to the rest of the passage. It is almost impossible for many candidates to come to any reasonable conclusion about why a particular piece of writing was written or about how the different elements contribute towards this purpose (CXC, 1998).
- Candidates were unable to make inferences, thus their answers were inaccurate. The best responses were given to the straightforward questions, whereas the response to questions which required an understanding of implicit meaning of the text was beyond most candidates (CXC, 1999).

The Challenges of Reading Instruction and Comprehension

Throughout the visits and interviews, many Caribbean teachers and educators commented that “children can read but they don’t *understand* what they can read.” This formed the basis for exploration into why the aforementioned trends exist and provided the necessary question to get at some of the larger issues.

A number of teachers interviewed admitted that teaching phonics is difficult because teaching reading is a complex process. Student teachers enrolled in reading classes admit that they “are learning things about reading for the first time.” Many teachers’ college students are in need of reading remediation. The need for these classes is increasing. College teachers commented that “student teachers are *confident* readers but they are not *competent* readers.”

Reading is a complex process that develops over time. Although the basics of reading—word recognition, decoding, and fluency—can be learned in a few years, reading for comprehension does not occur automatically once students have “learned to read.” Helping students comprehend text needs to start very early on and in very simple ways, rather than waiting until students have mastered the basics of reading that to many teachers means reading phonetically.

Helping children to comprehend text involves relatively simple strategies, but many teachers do not think that the following constitute “real reading,” nor do they believe these activities can lead to higher-order critical thinking. Some simple comprehension strategies include:

- reading aloud to students;
- asking students to read to each other;
- discussing the physical attributes of a book;
- asking students to predict what the story is about;
- monitoring students as a story is read to them and asking them what they understand so far;
- asking students to identify what they do not understand or find confusing;
- thinking about the story aloud;
- talking about the story;
- making use of prior knowledge;
- using mental imagery;
- facilitating cooperative learning, i.e., good sixth-grade readers reading to third graders;
- summarizing text;
- encouraging students to ask questions about the text; and
- talking about the physical attributes of the book before reading it.

While these simple strategies alone do not result in the development of higher-order critical-thinking skills, international research findings and discussions with Caribbean educators confirm that these skills are reflected in education courses at teachers’ colleges as well as in government-adopted curriculum guides. Higher-order, critical-thinking skills are needed in order to comprehend content-specific or unfamiliar text, problem-solving passages, and examinations.

Interviewed Caribbean educators provided their views on why these simple comprehension strategies are not generally applied in the classroom setting:

- Teachers believe that talking about a book has little to do with reading.
- Teachers mis-teach phonics and spend a great deal of time undoing mis-taught concepts.
- Time spent attempting to remedy reading problems detracts from focused, purposeful and directed teaching.
- Overcrowded classrooms and noise levels inhibit instruction of comprehension strategies, including simple activities like silent reading or round-robin reading.
- Formal and rigid seating arrangements and lack of space inhibit child-centered seating.

- Teachers have difficulty managing large groups of children in cramped classrooms.
- There is a belief that noisy children are misbehaving.
- There is a belief that quiet children are well behaved.
- Teachers fail to recognize and facilitate cooperative or peer-learning opportunities.
- It is often easier to teach the same thing to 50-60 children than to strive to provide instruction for multiple-ability groups.

Summary and Analysis

Reading—simply defined as the process of making meaning out of print—is a complex process that incorporates a number of skill areas, including phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. How these skills are taught successfully is not only dynamic and fluid, but is complicated and challenged by a myriad of sociocultural, historical, political, and economic forces.

Impediments to reading performance cited by stakeholders visited and interviewed include:

- lack of trained teachers,
- social promotion of nonreaders and reading slippage,
- frustrated readers,
- importation and application of inappropriate innovations,
- stresses faced by reading teachers,
- teaching to prepare for specific testing,
- need for remediation for students with special needs,
- theory-practice gap for reading instructors and trainers, and
- deficient teaching methods.

During on-site interviews, teachers, educators, and administrators agreed that basic reading instruction in the Caribbean needs to be improved. Despite universal access to primary and secondary schools, the region has high percentages of nonreaders, frustrated readers, and children who do not understand and analyze presented concepts. These findings are corroborated by the performance results of a sample of primary-level students on reading literacy tests and secondary students on the English language examination for the Common Entrance 2000.

Reading comprehension is a key problem area in both teacher training and practice. Teachers have not yet internalized simple techniques that reinforce comprehension and meaning. Appropriate and effective interventions designed to improve reading performance need to factor in and address the full range of aforementioned systemic problems and challenges.

C. What are the major teacher training needs in disadvantaged communities? How do these differ from other communities?

Through school and intervention-program site visits and a review of program documents, the assessment team sought to evaluate the teacher training needs and identify distinguishing characteristics of disadvantaged communities and their children. It is interesting to note that many of the factors identified as contributing to low achievement are also characteristics that

identify disadvantaged environments, including inadequate physical facilities, overcrowded classes, insufficient teaching and learning materials, home environments that are not conducive to learning, low expectations on the part of the teachers, parents, and communities, and under-prepared teachers.

Disadvantaged Communities

Throughout the Caribbean, there are two broad types of disadvantaged communities: the urban poor and the rural poor. Within urban poor communities, there are often high incidences of violence, crime, and juvenile delinquency, crowded living conditions, and little space for children to play except in the streets. Children are frequently malnourished since parents know little about good nutrition and are unable to prepare adequate meals. In some cases, they cannot afford to buy even the most basic food supplies, and public support is often minimal. In rural communities, there is less violent crime and, although living conditions are cramped, children have abundant space to play outdoors. While the rural poor generally have greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables than the urban poor, malnutrition is still common among children.

In both communities, parents tend to have low levels of literacy and, in general, the home environments do not promote academic achievement. Non-standard English, Creole or an indigenous language is likely to be spoken in the home, which may also impede early academic achievement. Neither rural nor urban poor communities have the requisite resources to prepare children for school.

Schools in disadvantaged rural communities are typically large halls in which multigrade classes are divided by a partition, screen or blackboard. The inadequate physical facilities are distracting. Enrollment is low in remote areas, teaching and learning materials are in short supply, attendance is inconsistent, and a high percentage of teachers are untrained.

Like their rural counterparts, urban communities also have inadequate learning environments with overcrowded classrooms holding as many as 60 children, making it virtually impossible to devote individual attention to children.

Teacher Training Needs in Disadvantaged Communities

Throughout the Caribbean, there appears to be insufficient attention given to the special training needs of teachers who must work in disadvantaged communities—urban or rural—in terms of access and the type of training provided. In general, teachers in remote areas have less access to training than their urban or semi-urban counterparts; hence, in several countries there are higher percentages of untrained teachers in the rural areas. For example, in Belize the percentage of trained teachers ranges from 40 in Toledo (a rural environment) to 70 in Belize City and its environs. Teachers in remote areas must teach the most disadvantaged children in multigrade classes with limited instructional materials. Teachers who attend teachers' colleges are introduced to multigrade teaching, but are rarely provided in-depth information or appropriate techniques to manage and teach with the added challenges of overcrowding and limited resources.

In addition to the basic academic grounding and pre-service training all teachers receive, teachers assigned to disadvantaged communities require additional instruction in:

- community development,
- preparation of teaching and learning materials,
- classroom management,
- approaches for teaching students whose first language is other than English (Creole or other), and
- team and peer teaching.

As important as additional training is ongoing instructional and administrative support. Regular encouragement, interest, and technical support are essential for all teachers, particularly those in disadvantaged communities. In many respects, these teachers' responsibilities are more onerous. Burnout is likely to become a major problem, especially in urban settings. Training in stress-reduction techniques and personal development may also be helpful inclusions in the training of teachers in disadvantaged communities.

Summary and Analysis

Two challenges are to: (a) provide in-service training in rural areas, bearing in mind that many of those teachers require both academic and pedagogical education; and (b) offer more relevant training to teachers in poor urban environments. For the former, school-based training and distance-education methodologies must be considered. For the latter, classroom management and ongoing support mechanisms are key issues for inclusion in the training.

Any training must be designed with close attention to, and critical scrutiny of, past training techniques. One training approach that seems to have left lasting negative reactions is the cascade model of teacher training. One educator commented disparagingly in Creole that “when I tell you, and you tell he, and he tells she, after that is a mess.” Moreover, some educators indicated that teachers are not always keen on their peers training them. Detailed analysis of these methodologies seems essential if they are to be considered for use in future program designs.

Throughout the Caribbean, programs are being implemented to target underperforming and disadvantaged schools. These tend to be donor-funded interventions, and their potential for sustainability and mainstreaming into the formal education sector should be studied in greater detail. The following have been identified as having potential for further investigation and potential replication:

- the Barbados Education Sector Enhancement Program (EDUTECH),
- the government of Jamaica/Inter-American Development Bank Primary Education Improvement Program II,
- the government of Jamaica/USAID New Horizons for Primary Schools Project,
- the Mico Care Center,
- the Anguilla Reading Recovery Program,
- a Programmed Reading Intervention for Mainstreaming At-risk Youths, and

- the National Literacy Improvement Program.

A summary of each program is included in Annex E.

D. Are there special programs to address the learning/reading needs of children whose mother tongue is Creole or an indigenous language?

The Debate

The use of Creole for instruction in the formal school system is a sensitive topic among Caribbean educators. A faculty member at MTC suggested a high level of political interest regarding the topic of Creole in the classroom.” Throughout the region, the issue of Creole as a factor in the teaching of reading was raised as an important element in understanding the reading difficulties children encounter.

For about half a century, linguists and educators have aired their views and called for a national policy regarding Creole. Caribbean educators and policymakers are fully cognizant of the issues associated with teaching standard English to children whose mother tongue is Creole or an indigenous language and assessing what children have learned. Yet, no systematic action has been taken to address the matter in the school system, and the debate continues about the role of Creole in the formal school.

Denis Craig (1980) advocated the use of the child’s home language as a medium of instruction and the teaching of English as a second language. Yet today in rural St. Lucian schools, which serve French-based Creole speakers, classroom teachers are uncertain about the degree to which Creole can be used in classroom instruction (School visit, Sept. 2001). Simmons-MacDonald indicated during an interview that the term “bilingual education” is not commonly used in the region, nor is the concept formally practiced.

In St. Lucia, English is the official language. French-based Creole, spoken by many St. Lucians, is learned informally from infancy. Some feel that there are two official languages in St. Lucia—standard English and French-based Creole.

French-based Creole is a written language with a dictionary and a set of grammatical rules. It is studied in at least five universities in the United States and spoken in nine areas of the world in addition to St. Lucia. These are: Creolophone people in Louisiana in the United States, 600,000 inhabitants of the Pacific Island of Mauritius, over 500,000 people in Reunion who speak a similar form of Creole, the inhabitants of Madagascar and the Comoros Islands, 6 million people in Haiti, 84,000 people in Dominica, 335,000 in Guadeloupe, 400,000 in Martinique, and 150,000 in France. At the university in neighboring Martinique, the Creole language has an entire faculty of its own.

Children who speak French-based Creole are sometimes viewed as bringing a language problem or “interference” to school. Currently, there are no tests or assessments given in French-based Creole. These children simply take tests in standard English.

A failure to assess children in their maternal language can severely limit our understanding of their intelligence. Not providing children with minimal instruction in their maternal tongue can stunt language development in general and also reduces the likelihood of children demonstrating excellence in a variety of skill areas in their mother tongue. Since French-based Creole is a written language, children could potentially be taught basic reading skills in their mother tongue, thereby increasing the probability of school achievement and personal success.

Many St. Lucian classroom teachers use French-based Creole to clarify instructions for children, but this appears to be done informally and is not based on an understanding of bilingual or bi-literacy principles. The use of the child's home language can signal to the child that his or her home culture and language of comfort is recognized and valued at school, positively affecting the child's self-esteem.

Implications for Teaching Reading

Narinesingh and Watts (1992) outline some of the difficulties children whose mother tongue is other than English encounter when faced with reading in standard English:

- The connection between the acoustic signals provided by speech and visual representation of that speech may be problematic.
- Syntactic, morphemic or semantic differences may cause problems.
- Communication formats may pose considerable problems for the reader who is not used to the format represented in the reading text.
- The first language does not routinely make use of patterns of organization in categorizing the world (e.g., cause-effect, spatial sequences, comparison, contrast coordination, and subordination), which may intensify potential reading comprehension problems in the language of instruction.

They further note that dialect speakers must often learn new sets of decoding strategies "since the cues for interpretation of both the spoken and written forms vary considerably."

The implications for the teaching of reading and the assessment of the child's capabilities are profound. The high levels of frustration many children endure in learning to read and teachers' sense of helplessness teaching reading may well be reduced by a more thorough understanding of the complexities of the language issue, the establishment of appropriate policies, and implementation of requisite language programs. Also, given the fact that achievement tests are all written in standard English, results may not indicate the learning acquired by a large proportion of children who are struggling with reading and understanding standard English. In no way are these tests a measure of their potential.

Teachers need clear guidance and training in how to use children's mother tongue, be it Creole or an indigenous language, to facilitate their learning to read in standard English. They also need training in how to measure learning in children who do not yet read and write in standard English.

Translating Theories into Action

The CARICOM Advisory Task Force on Education, commenting on the language issue and the research findings available, observed:

What is required now is the translation of those theoretical insights and formulations into general and specific principles of instruction and applied to the production of appropriate teaching/learning resources and instructional materials (Jennings, 1998).

The task force urged the implementation of carefully planned experiments that would be thoroughly evaluated. Almost a decade later, this proposal has not been implemented. This assessment team echoes the recommendation that policies, programs, and instructional materials be put in place to enable teachers to take the child's mother tongue into account in the teaching of reading.

We examine the teacher requirements and the extent to which they are being addressed. Within this context of the absence of a policy direction about the role of the mother tongue in schools, the complexities involved in teaching reading in standard English to children with a first language other than standard English, and the paucity of materials in Creole or indigenous languages.

Summary and Analysis

The official language in the Commonwealth Caribbean is English. While countries such as Trinidad and Tobago have announced the promotion of Spanish as a second language, there was no evidence to indicate that Creole or indigenous languages are being accorded the same status as other modern languages being taught.

Creole varies from country to country, but apart from the St. Lucian and Dominican French-based Creole, it is spoken and understood by a majority across the region. In St. Lucia, there is a Kweyol radio station, newspaper, and books. Thus, for the majority of children in the region, standard English is a second language. In countries such as Belize, Dominica, Guyana, and the Bahamas, there are indigenous languages spoken in addition to Creole (in the case of Belize and the Bahamas, there are Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole spoken). However, on entry into school, standard English is the language which children are expected to speak and write. The challenge of teaching reading and learning to read in standard English has been highlighted in several studies for at least four decades. Teachers and professors of education confirmed the difficulties encountered. They recognize the need to bridge the gap between the child's mother tongue and standard English, and admit their deficiencies in developing and implementing appropriate strategies.

Researchers have put forward numerous recommendations for governments to express a clear policy regarding the use of Creole and indigenous languages in the classroom. These recommendations have been endorsed by CARICOM. However, as yet there appear to be no policy statements on the matter. This may be due to the fact that government officials and a

large percentage of the population, despite the evidence to the contrary, consider English to be the language of the region.

Teachers' colleges and UWI offer courses that introduce the issue of Creole and English as a second language; however, teachers admit that they are not adequately equipped with teaching strategies and instructional materials to facilitate the acquisition of literacy skills in Creole-dominant speakers. A recent UNESCO/CARICOM study on curriculum materials in several countries—Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago—noted that the presence of the varying forms of the Creole vernacular was practically ignored in curriculum materials (Jennings, 1998). Attitudes are also well entrenched on the issue of language, with the middle and upper classes generally opposed to the teaching of Creole. Nonetheless, all agree that some compromise is in order to bridge the gap between the home and school languages.

The revised English language curricula in some countries reveal an appreciation of the problem. Curricular revisions are a step in the right direction. Based on the low achievement in reading comprehension, however, specially designed reading programs are needed that incorporate the lessons and recommendations of linguists and experts in reading instruction and provide teachers with the tools to implement the new strategies. Content, instructional materials, methodologies, and teacher training would be essentials of the program. Colleges and universities include the topic of Creole in their courses; however, the assessment team found no evidence that they offer special programs that provide in-depth knowledge and skills for teaching Creole speakers, taking into account the findings of linguists. There is a need for ministries of education to formulate unambiguous language policies that would guide the development and implementation of the required programs. A key issue to be resolved is whether the Caribbean should adopt a bilingual approach to the teaching of reading and the English language.

Each country should have trained reading specialists with an in-depth knowledge of linguistics as it applies to the Caribbean. As previously outlined, the language complexities of the Caribbean require a deep knowledge of linguistics to address the issues that arise in the teaching of reading and which currently may be overlooked. These specialists should be attached to teacher training colleges and MOEs, and should be involved in the design, delivery, and supervision of reading instruction programs. The assessment team is aware of reading specialists in the countries visited, but not of their qualifications and experience.

E. To what extent is the current network of teacher training institutions headed by the SOEs of UWI addressing the teacher training needs of disadvantaged communities? What are the major gaps in service? How might these be addressed?

In order to address this set of research questions in a comprehensive manner, the researchers found it necessary to first gain a thorough understanding of UWI's structure for teacher training and how training actually reaches the teachers in the schools. The following provides an overview of the teachers' colleges, SOEs, and the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE). The task of teacher training at the primary level falls to the largely government-financed teacher training colleges. UWI, through the JBTE and SOEs, and the University of Guyana play important roles in terms of their technical advisory and certification functions, as well as in their responsibility for training school principals.

Teachers' Colleges

Teachers' colleges have prime responsibility for pre-service teacher training at the primary level, and virtually each territory (except for Anguilla) has at least one teacher training institution (see Figure 2). However, with only one teachers' college usually located in each urban area, several countries face difficulties in serving remote teacher populations.

Most colleges throughout the region offer full-time, two-year, certificate-level programs for untrained primary teachers. The programs focus on academic content, pedagogical skills, and personnel development. Candidates in most countries are expected to obtain a passing grade in teaching practice, education theory, English language and individual study, mathematics, science, and social studies. In most countries, teacher training is carried out in collaboration with UWI, which certifies candidates.

Several colleges now offer degree programs, some in conjunction with UWI. For example, Mico College in Jamaica offers the bachelor of education (B.Ed.) in special education, and Shortwood Teachers' College offers the B.Ed. in early-childhood education. Other colleges offering degree programs are the College of the Bahamas, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, and the University College of Belize.

Recognizing the importance of reaching teachers in remote districts, in 1994, Belize Teachers' College introduced a distance-education program for teachers in rural areas. There are four essential elements to the program: self-study materials, monthly supervision visits by college tutors, monthly workshops at regional resource centers, and summer workshops at the college (Miller, 2000).

Although instructional equipment and other resources such as computers, VCRs, projectors, and other audiovisuals are reported to be in short supply, teachers' colleges are beginning to employ current technology to modernize their teaching, primarily with the support of ministries and private companies.

Figure 2. Teachers' Colleges in English-speaking Caribbean Countries

Country	School	Location
Antigua and Barbuda	Antigua State College	St. John's
The Bahamas	College of the Bahamas	Nassau
Barbados	*Erdiston Teachers' College *UWI School of Education	Bridgetown Cave Hill Campus
Belize	Belize Teachers' College	Belize City
Dominica	Dominica Teacher Training College	Bath State
Grenada	T.A. Marryshow Community College	Tanteen, St. Georges
Guyana	Guyana School of Education University of Guyana Cyril Potter Teachers' College	Georgetown Georgetown
Jamaica	Bethlehem Moravian Teachers' College Mico Teachers' College Shortwood Teachers' College Sam Sharp Teachers' College Church Teachers' College St. Joseph's Teachers' College *UWI School of Education *UWI Institute of Education *UWI, the JBTE	St. Elizabeth Kingston Kingston Kingston Kingston Kingston Mona Mona Mona
St. Kitts and Nevis	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College	Basseterre
St. Lucia	*Sir Arthur Lewis Community College	Castries
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	St. Vincent Teachers' College	Kingstown
Trinidad and Tobago	*Valsayn Teachers' College *Corinth Teachers' College Caribbean Union Teachers' College *UWI School of Education	Valsayn St. Fernando Maracas-St. Joseph St. Augustine

* Teachers' colleges visited by the assessment team.

Schools of Education

Certificates and diplomas in teaching and education are offered throughout the Caribbean. In the Eastern Caribbean, high-school graduates can earn a Certificate in Teaching after two years of study, and in Belize, after three years of study. In Jamaica, students who have completed high school receive a Diploma in Teaching after three years of study. UWI grants a Certificate in Education after one year of full-time study to students who hold a Certificate in Teaching. Universities also grant a Diploma in Education after one year of full-time study to holders of bachelor's degrees.

In general, universities in the region, namely UWI and the University of Guyana, have SOEs which provide certificate training for teachers as a follow-up to pre-service training and for specialization. Over the years, a range of training programs has been provided by the SOEs at all three UWI campuses. Not all programs, however, are offered at all campuses. SOEs offer certificate courses in areas such as early childhood education, the teaching of language arts, and the teaching of mathematics. In addition, the Mona campus of UWI offers a certificate in literacy studies through distance education, and a B.Ed. in educational administration is available to primary-school principals and senior teachers. Other B.Ed. options include primary education, literacy studies, learning-difficulties management, and special education. This Diploma in Education is considered initial teacher training for holders of other degrees who will generally teach at the secondary level.

SOEs offer curriculum development courses and graduate programs, leading to master's and doctoral degrees in areas such as primary and language education. Many of the programs are suitable for professors of education.

The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE)

The JBTE is a statutory body of UWI, funded through the university grants committee and examination fees from students enrolled in teacher-education programs in the three campus territories. The Secretariat of the JBTE for the Western Caribbean (WC) is located within the Institute of Education. Membership is drawn from the ministries of education, teacher training colleges, the SOE, teachers' unions and associations, the student body, and independent persons. In accordance with Ordinance 14.4 of the Statutes of UWI, the JBTE is mandated to:

- consider and recommend or approve the syllabi of teachers' colleges,
- examine and assess the work of students in training, and
- make recommendations on teacher training and allied matters to the appropriate bodies.

Thus, the JBTE is involved in curriculum design and development, materials development, professional training, project management, and policy advice and advocacy. It operates through two standing committees, namely the examinations/accreditation and the curriculum committees. There are boards of studies for each subject area taught in the teacher-preparation programs. Membership on each board includes the subject tutors from the teachers' colleges for that particular subject, curriculum officers responsible for that subject from the ministries of education, and external examiners appointed by the JBTE. The responsibility of the boards of

studies is to provide recommendations on curriculum and examination matters. They also are engaged in vetting examination papers and moderation of examination grades. They are expected to keep abreast of the latest developments in teaching in their respective subject areas, develop and recommend criteria determining minimum standards that must be obtained, and determine the content of the coursework that will form part of the examination process.

The curriculum committee is chaired by a staff member of the Institute of Education. Chairpersons of the boards of studies, and representatives of the MOE and teachers' associations also sit on the committee. The curriculum committee receives and considers advice from the boards of studies on curriculum matters. The committee is also mandated to review curricula at teachers' colleges to ensure relevance and responsiveness to changing demands, and that the curricula are integrated and well-articulated in each program area. In addition, the committee makes recommendations on the criteria for accreditation, staff development, and best practices. The curriculum committee will have an important role to play in the preparation of training programs for teachers in disadvantaged areas. As previously discussed, there are no special programs to address the needs of teachers in poor communities.

The examination/accreditation committee includes principals or nominees of teachers' colleges who are members of the JBTE, and representatives of the teachers' associations and ministries of education. This committee coordinates all external examinations and makes recommendations on all matters pertaining to student assessment and evaluation.

The JBTE-Western Caribbean (WC) in Jamaica has an impressive infrastructure consisting of a small but well-equipped materials development unit which produces affordable Caribbean-focused textbooks for colleges and an information technology (IT) division including a central server, a modem pool, and a management information system for the colleges and schools. The IT division operates a Web site (jbte.edu.jmo) and is in the process of establishing an intranet site to link all its member institutions in Jamaica using microwave technology. The technology infrastructure is intended to enable students to take courses from any of the member institutions, facilitate greater interaction, articulation, and integration of colleges and universities involved in teacher training, and support professional development of professors of education.

The JBTE-Eastern Caribbean (EC) was established in 2000 in accordance with Ordinance 14.4 of the statutes of UWI and has similar functions similar to those of the JBTE of the WC. It has not yet developed an extensive infrastructure. Prior to the establishment of the JBTE-EC, the Eastern Caribbean Standing Conference on Teacher Education served in that capacity; it was an informal arrangement which brought together educators to review issues in teacher training and make recommendations.

Capacity of the Teacher Training Institutions

Teaching about reading. UWI offers a number of courses in the area of literacy, and teachers' colleges include the teaching of reading and literacy as elements of several courses. Jennings, who conducted an assessment of the teaching of language arts and reading, commented that countries in the region generally appear to attribute great importance to the teaching of reading and the development of oral skills. UWI has trained reading specialists for many years, and more recently the University of Guyana introduced specialist courses.

Teaching how to teach reading. Preparing teachers to teach reading is the responsibility of the teachers' colleges. In assessing the capacity to do so, Jennings noted that several college programs include information appropriate for addressing reading issues. For example, the Dominica Teachers' College offers instruction in remedial reading and the use of multimedia materials in reading. Furthermore, the content of courses provided at the colleges matched the curriculum at the primary level, and several countries have integrated reading into language arts. However, some countries still treat reading discretely in curriculum guides, and colleges do not provide teachers sufficient guidance on how to use an integrated approach.

Despite the seeming appropriateness of courses, one recurring problem in the region is that teachers do not consider themselves sufficiently trained in teaching under-performers, especially in the Creole-speaking context. Colleges, therefore, need to provide teachers with a better understanding of the theories and methodologies for teaching reading to Creole speakers. It would be important to determine the number of reading specialists in each country both within the teachers' colleges and the MOEs. While the assessment team interviewed persons who identified themselves as reading specialists, none was attached to the teachers' colleges. Furthermore, one linguist at UWI explained that most professors of education who teach language arts are trained in English literature and may not have the expertise to grapple with the linguistic complexities of teaching reading to Creole speakers, especially the French-based Kweyol. The assessment team did not have an opportunity to probe this issue further, but it would require careful analysis.

Another shortcoming often voiced and previously noted is that even when professors of education are exposed to potentially effective strategies, they often lack the ability to adopt these innovative practices in their own teaching. Professors of education complained of the limited equipment, e.g., computers, and materials for innovative teaching. Furthermore, the pressures of completing the syllabi and preparing for examinations were also cited as factors in weak teaching.

Capacity for distance education. Given the fact that there are several island nations, and the terrain and transport system in several countries are arduous, a single teacher training institution is unable to meet the needs of the rural areas and Family Islands. There is a need to devise mechanisms to reach remote areas, and some countries have taken steps to do so. For example, Guyana and Belize have instituted distance-education programs to reach teachers in isolated areas.

There have also been regional initiatives in distance education. The UWI Distance Teaching Enterprise, with a main office at the Cave Hill campus in Barbados, is the most comprehensive network for distance education in the region. UWI has had capacity for teleconferencing since 1983. In the early 1990s, much was done to upgrade and expand its facilities. Today there are 27 distance-education centers in its 16 member countries, serving approximately 3,000 students. UWI, including the SOEs, is in the process of converting its courses for delivery in a distance-education mode, thus facilitating the provision of a greater number of courses to countries without a UWI campus. Despite this impressive resource, those being served are primarily from urban areas.

As discussed above, the JBTE has links to all teachers' colleges within its network and is in the process of establishing satellite facilities. This development will increase its capacity to provide professional development for its members.

Distance-education models are often advocated as being cost effective and flexible, especially in rural areas. However, they require a sound support infrastructure, such as transport, library resources, reliable delivery of materials, and well-designed study materials, opportunities to put materials into practice in the classroom, and continuous mentoring and guidance from instructors. Furthermore, the credibility of the programs needs to be well established.

Capacity for research. While professors of education are expected to engage in research on teaching and learning issues, this seems to be an area of relative weakness in terms of the quantity of output. Most of the research in the area of education is done by UWI and the University of Guyana. Teachers' colleges and universities teach research methods, including action research, to students who are required to carry it out as part of their training. But as institutions, they themselves do not pursue research activities with the necessary effort.

The assessment team was able to obtain references and some reports on research studies conducted on language development and reading by linguists, teacher trainers, and students. Nonetheless, much more research on pressing issues needs to be done if solutions to educational issues are to be found. For example, a number of reforms have been implemented over the years, and there has been inadequate evaluation of the impact.

Research is often financed by regional and sub-regional agencies, such as the CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS or by external agencies as part of projects. These efforts are generally not sustained. Inadequate financial resources, little time, and the lack of a research culture in the region are cited as factors that contribute to the less-than-vigorous approach to research in education.

Capacity for regional collaboration. In 1957, Caribbean territories signaled their interest in collaborating on matters of teacher development by holding the first regional conference on teacher training. Since then, the territories have recognized that through regional cooperation they can address teacher training issues more effectively. They have taken various steps which eventually led to UWI and the JBTE playing a pivotal leadership role in teacher education through the SOEs on three campuses. These campuses are:

- the Institute of Education in Mona, Jamaica;
- the JBTE in Mona, Jamaica, which serves the WC (the Bahamas, Belize, and Jamaica); and
- the JBTE established in 2000 in Cave Hill, Barbados, which serves the Eastern Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines).

In addition, Trinidad and Tobago has its own Board of Teacher Training, within the recently established Ministry of Human Development, and Guyana retained its Board of Education within

the MOE. The network of institutions, which constitutes the JBTE and the SOEs, has an impact on teacher training in every English-speaking Caribbean country except Guyana.

Summary and Analysis

The JBTE and the SOEs/UWI collaborate in the preparation, delivery, and accreditation of teacher-education programs. The curriculum review and renewal committees of the JBTE are responsible for ensuring relevance and responsiveness to the changing demands on the education system. There is an awareness that teachers in disadvantaged communities have onerous responsibilities; however, due to the limited access to training facilities and the relative inattention to analysis of the inequities in the system, little has been done to address the special teacher training needs in disadvantaged communities.

It is only recently that countries have been conducting poverty assessments and identifying needs within poor communities. MOEs have not yet established detailed profiles of schools and students of such communities. The policy in addressing the issues of inequity in the school system has been based on what is clearly visible. Focus has been on improving the physical environment and increasing the supply of instructional materials. The specific training needs of teachers in disadvantaged communities need to be studied in greater detail.

In general, there is little targeting of teacher training interventions for disadvantaged communities. Those that exist are mostly project related, e.g., New Horizons and GUIDE, both of which are externally funded. These in-service training projects are linked to training teachers to implement enrichment programs for students. While local trainers are involved in these training projects, they are not structured to be a part of the teacher training system.

Neither the teachers' colleges nor UWI offer specific courses to meet the needs of teachers in disadvantaged communities; however, all trained teachers would have had some exposure to the social context of disadvantaged communities and the needs of children as part of their initial training. Also, there have been bridging programs for unqualified teachers to upgrade their academic skills for entry into the teachers' college programs.

There is a need for more in-depth analysis of the broad needs of disadvantaged and under-performing schools in each country and identification of those issues which teachers can address and those which require other interventions. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to assess the impact of the project-related training that has been provided thus far in order to determine its effectiveness.

Caribbean teachers often fall short in a number of the requisite teaching areas for several reasons. First, there are many untrained teachers in the system. In most countries, teachers teach for at least two years before gaining admission to teachers' colleges, and in many cases, there is little or no introduction to teaching. As a consequence, they cannot be expected to possess appropriate skills for teaching. Furthermore, since teachers function in the classroom with minimum orientation or guidance for at least two to three years before entering the colleges, during this time they adopt practices which may be inappropriate and difficult to alter during college.

Second, it is acknowledged by teachers' colleges and UWI that teachers at the preschool and primary levels often have weak academic backgrounds. In order to teach at the primary level, teachers must have a secondary-level education and are required to show passing grades in four to five subjects at the CXC, one of which must be English language at the general proficiency level of grade 1 or 2. Some colleges also require a passing grade in mathematics. Teachers may obtain these passes over several years. Despite the passing grade with which they enter the teaching service, professors of education lamented that trainees demonstrate deficiencies in both oral and written English.

Third, teacher-preparation programs do not appear to be achieving the objective of teaching how to teach. Some of this failure may be due to the inherent difficulties in teacher instruction, as noted above, as well as the present structure and instructional methods of the college programs. The curriculum at teachers' colleges includes courses in reading and language education, and teachers are exposed to a fairly wide repertoire of teaching strategies, an awareness of Creole influences, and reading and language-arts teaching. Despite this exposure, many teachers acknowledged that they were challenged by the slow or reluctant readers. There is a general feeling of having had inadequate grounding in teaching methodologies for the diverse groups of students they face and insufficient opportunity to put their skills into practice to develop confidence in their usage.

A study conducted by UWI on the impact of newly certified teachers on the school system highlights similar findings. All teachers interviewed for the study admitted having gained some knowledge and skills participating in the foundation courses. However, they found that the program at the teachers' colleges in Trinidad and Tobago was too academic, the content in some of the subjects was not relevant to what was being taught at the schools, and the methodology was insufficient. These teachers suggested that college lecturers need to demonstrate what they are trying to teach in their own teaching. One teacher observed:

I think some of those lecturers need to come and spend some time in a primary-school classroom and see what it is really like, and then try to apply what they are telling you and see if it is feasible (Morris and Joseph, 2001).

In discussing the issue of balance between theory and practice at both the colleges and the university, several persons pointed out that the two-year training may be insufficient to cover all that is required, especially since there is a need to bolster the weak academic background of students. According to Quamina-Aiyejina et al. (2001), the dilemma over the theory and practice may stem from notions about a teacher. In examining the teacher-education program in Trinidad and Tobago, which is similar to those throughout the region, they found that the underlying philosophy in the curricula of the teachers' colleges is that a teacher is "a well-informed and knowledgeable individual, capable of imparting that knowledge to the young." Consequently, teacher-education programs focus on knowledge, and what is offered is "a wide array of content at varying depths, interspersed only sporadically with teaching practice in schools. Pedagogical preparation thus assumes second place."

It was also noted that some trainees may not derive full benefit from teaching practice as they are not adequately supported by principals and cooperating teachers. Roles and responsibilities of

the college and the host school are not always clear, and trainees suffer as a result of the lapse in communication. In some cases, the physical facilities of the host school do not permit trainees to put their newly acquired knowledge and skills into practice.

Furthermore, there is a commonly held belief among teachers—also admitted by some professors of education—that the training program is too examination oriented. Students, therefore, focus on studying for the final examinations. A similar observation was made about the OECS/UWI/Department for International Development (DFID) Primary Teacher Education Project.

There was consensus that there is inadequate follow-up for primary teachers once they leave the teacher training college. MOE officials who are curriculum specialists visit the schools from time to time and some principals and fellow teachers may offer support, but generally there is no structured mentoring program for the newly certified teacher.

As yet, Caribbean countries have not fully embraced the concept of continuous professional development of teachers. In-service training is for the most part ad hoc and, more often than not, associated with externally funded projects. Particularly over the past ten to fifteen years when most countries embarked on developing and implementing reform programs, Caribbean teachers have had exposure to various innovative strategies for improving teaching and learning, especially in language arts and mathematics, commonly recognized as specific areas of weakness. In light of the deficiencies teachers demonstrate after pre-service training, long-term in-service training, rather than brief interventions, are required. There is also a need to assess the impact of training and provide follow-up support.

F. To what extent is the private sector willing to support teacher training through the vehicle of a CETT?

The region is clear in terms of the importance of establishing partnerships between the public and private sectors for the improvement of the education system. MOEs in recent years have begun to involve the private sector more fully in education reviews and consultations. In 2000, with the support of DFID, a regional conference was held in Jamaica to explore mechanisms for strengthening the partnership.

The assessment team met with representatives of the private sector to determine the level of interest and commitment to the field of education as a whole and primary-teacher education in particular. Representatives indicated that private-sector companies were already supporting various aspects of education. They did note that support may sometimes be somewhat ad hoc, and the private-sector companies were not always well informed on specific areas to which they might pledge support. However, recently, several companies have donated computer equipment and other supplies to schools on request. For example, the Barbados government, through EDUTECH, equipped Erdiston Teachers' College with computers; the Belize Teachers' College benefited from grants from the Ashcroft Foundation; the College of the Bahamas received support from IBM, Bahamas; and several colleges in Jamaica received assistance from the Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation (JCSEF).

One noteworthy example of private-sector partnership in the region includes Junior Achievement (JA), which operates with the support of chambers of commerce in several countries. The overall goal of JA is enterprise education. In Barbados, for example, JA is offered both at the primary and secondary levels. At the primary level, children are introduced to the economic system through various themes. Children at this level are expected to understand concepts and skills related to interdependence, business wants and needs, decision-making, and teamwork. Teachers are provided training in interactive techniques to implement the program.

In Jamaica, the Multicare Foundation works in partnership with schools and teachers to enrich the teaching and learning process. The foundation is funded by the Mechala Group Jamaica Limited, the Caribbean Cement Company Limited, and Cable and Wireless Jamaica Limited. Much of their work includes employing the visual and performing arts in academic and personal development. Teacher training is integral to the program.

Private-sector representatives pointed out that their capacity to support education or any other public-sector initiative is very much dependent on the financial viability of the companies. It was noted that several large companies in the region, which previously supported education, have since collapsed. One senior education official reported that the school system does receive some support from the private sector, but suggested that private-sector support can be unreliable, particularly during financially stringent times.

Summary and Analysis

Caribbean governments have been promoting public-private partnerships in education by involving them more systematically in education-sector reviews and consultations. The team met with representatives of various chambers of commerce to discuss the interest and commitment of the private sector in supporting measures such as teacher training to address problems of low achievement in the school system.

The private sector is fully aware of the implications of an inadequately educated workforce on productivity and has, therefore, been providing financial assistance to education initiatives in the region. Support has been in the form of student scholarships, books and supplies, computer equipment, and enrichment and leadership programs. Representatives expressed their willingness to continue to provide such support. It was clearly stated, however, that their capability to lend support depends on the financial viability of their operations.

It would be prudent to involve private-sector representatives during the design phase of the proposed Center of Excellence.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGN

While the design of CETT for the Caribbean region is outside of the scope of this report, a number of issues that flow from this assessment can be considered. The following recommendations have been developed based on the field research, complemented by discussions with USAID. Recommendations are organized into seven categories: location, programmatic focus, roles and responsibilities, priority capabilities, training content, organization, and next steps.

Location

- Institute of Education, UWI, Mona Campus, Jamaica

Focus

- Development of integrated, systemic, critical analysis of problems and solutions.
- Implementation of practical, grassroots, reality-based issues, problems, and solutions .
- Building on successes and best practices already in place.
- Facilitation of linkages between those who experience a problem and those resources (local, national, regional, and international) that might positively respond.
- Implementation of learning strategies and solutions that support teachers' academic and intellectual development.
- Increasing and improving teacher practicums so that ongoing monitoring and feedback reinforces continual quality improvement (mentoring, coaching, and peer review may be ingredients to explore).
- Decreasing teacher emphasis on examination-driven teaching practice coupled with increasing teacher formation based on mastering learning needs-assessment techniques, interpreting results, and developing viable teaching strategies based on those results.
- Definition and active support of a system for pre-service and in-service training that provides constant support for teachers improving their academic preparation and subject-matter mastery.
- Modeling, utilization, and reinforcement of active, experiential learning methods and techniques in reading instruction.
- Development of innovative responses to the Creole language by sponsoring pilots that recognize local dialects and second languages within national official language contexts.
- Provision of practical strategies to households, schools, communities, media, and national governments that will motivate and reinforce reading as an essential skill.
- Development of broad social awareness and motivation to address teacher training and reading instruction problems and issues; then, mobilization of resources to address those issues.
- Identification of locally excellent role models (teachers, students, schools, communities) and best practices (in teaching, learning, and supporting literacy efforts) that can be part of public outreach and the generation of training solutions.
- Bridging theory, knowledge, and practice gaps between universities, government, and local schools.

- Building and reinforcing networks and partnerships between key stakeholders from national to local, public to private, and across the education system at all levels on behalf of teacher training improvement in reading instruction.
- Short-term focus on in-service training; long-term focus on pre-service training.
- Expanded utilization of NGOs and nonformal education practices in teaching reading skills.
- Involvement of students, teachers, school supervisors, parents, and community members from disadvantaged communities in assessment, problem identification, and program implementation and review.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Conduct ongoing assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of teacher training skills, needs, issues, and problems relevant to teacher training and reading instruction.
- Serve as clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of research, technical assistance, distance education, and communications materials, and other resources pertinent to improving teacher instruction and student achievement in reading.
- Adoption of new, higher standards for identifying and recruiting potential teacher candidates appropriate for teaching in disadvantaged areas.
- Offer access to training to the 50 percent of untrained teachers who work in the rural and remote communities.
- Decrease teacher education emphasis on examination-driven teaching practice and increase teacher formation based on mastering learning needs-assessment techniques, interpreting results, and developing viable teaching strategies based on those results.
- Provide technical assistance to help identify and address teacher training issues and problems.
- Facilitate design and delivery of teacher training interventions and activities.
- Provide follow-up training methodologies that support and improve teachers' skills.
- Develop a cadre of highly skilled teacher instructors/trainers whose training approach, style, and methods are aligned and resonate with the active, innovative and adaptive pedagogical practice that teachers are taught and by which successful performance is measured.
- Define and set in place motivational strategies, with appropriate incentives, that encourage and reward teachers to set higher teaching standards and expectations for themselves and their students. (Appropriate management support and follow-up is needed to ensure that the expectations become a permanent and positive aspect of teacher performance. Identifying and utilizing role models from within local teacher populations might be a good avenue to demystify teacher performance issues, demonstrate good practice, and reinforce higher standards.)
- Advocate for improvement of educational quality in disadvantaged communities (e.g., bilingual education and improvement of teacher incentives).
- Offer innovative new strategies, methodologies, techniques, materials, training designs, and curricula to improve teacher reading instruction and student performance.
- Facilitate regular exchanges and other communications between teachers, students, and other key stakeholders about reading instruction issues, needs, and problems.

Priority Capabilities

- Coordinate, manage, and reach out through national training institutions, MOEs, and district levels to provide training, monitoring, and follow-up services
- Access and utilize distance education and Internet resources to respond to identified problems (although these resources alone are not sufficient for meaningful responses)
- Identify, mobilize, and target appropriate resources to teacher training problems and issues identified
- Develop and maintain databases appropriate for monitoring and analyzing ongoing assessment and evaluation data
- Provide locally appropriate technical assistance to strengthen local teacher training capacity

Exemplary Training Content

- Active learning methods and materials.
- Student assessment techniques for diagnosis of special needs.
- Reading instruction in large and/or multigrade classrooms.
- Reading instruction in resource-poor districts and areas.
- Stress-reduction techniques and personal development for teachers.
- Monitoring and evaluation techniques.

Organization

- Emphasis on building broad, regional, network-based vision and strategic management.
- Small management and coordination team located at Institute of Education, UWI, Mona Campus, Jamaica.
- Mobilization of CETT technical point people identified at each of the regional teacher training institutions in each country.
- Private-sector involvement in CETT design and in more traditional types of support, e.g., scholarships, books, and supplies.
- Maintenance of active links and support with MOE, reading associations, effective reading resource teachers, and resource specialists in each country.

V. NEXT STEPS: QUESTIONS FOR PHASE II ASSESSMENT

1. What is the current and projected interest and capacity of UWI/Mona in serving as a regional Center of Excellence?
2. What approach would UWI recommend for initiating the foundation of the Caribbean Center of Excellence in UWI/Mona, Jamaica?
3. What is the specific experience of UWI/Mona in teacher training for the non-campus Caribbean countries? What strategies have been utilized? With what results?
4. How might UWI/Mona work with other regional partners and key stakeholders to develop a CETT?
5. Which CETT stakeholders might help to reduce the gap between UWI and teachers in disadvantaged communities? What other institutions can be used to assure access to training?
6. What could be a strategy for developing, in the short-term, in-service training and then transitioning to longer-term goals of reform in pre-service training?
7. What will the strategy be for engaging the private sector in CETT?
8. What will the strategy be for engaging the ministries of education in CETT?

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ANNEX A: SCOPE OF WORK

2.0 PROPOSED WORK PLAN

- 2.1 Target Completion Date
- 2.2 Deliverables
- 2.3 Summary of strategic approach
- 2.4 Contact and Coordination
- 2.5 Data Sources
- 2.6 Key Methodologies
- 2.7 Schedule of Sub-task Order Activities

At a time when education is acknowledged as the most decisive factor for national progress, educational indicators for Latin America and the Caribbean compare poorly with the rest of the world. In some countries fewer than 60 percent of children who start school reach the fifth grade and illiteracy rates remain high. The deficiencies in the education systems strike hardest at the poor. Although the reasons for the poor performance of the region's educational systems are complex, one of the major reasons is that teacher quality has deteriorated. Most teachers and school administrators in the hemisphere have limited materials, little support in the classroom and poor training that is ill-suited for dealing with disadvantaged students.

Purpose of the Activity

In response to this problem, President Bush announced the creation of three Hemispheric Centers for Teacher Excellence, to be housed in existing institutions in the Caribbean, the Andean region of South America, and Central America. These will be regional teacher training and resource centers. Their objective will be to improve teacher and school administrator quality and to improve the quality of early instruction in the classroom throughout the hemisphere, with special emphasis on poorer countries and for teachers who work in disadvantaged communities. It is expected that about 15,000 teachers will benefit from this training over four years. The focus of the program will be on improving reading instruction and upgrading the knowledge of pedagogical skills of poorly qualified teachers. Teachers and administrators who work with poor populations and in rural areas will be targeted.

The Centers of Excellence will consist of:

- A training-of-trainers program so that teachers and school administrators can bring the training back to their communities;
- A clearinghouse of teacher training materials; and
- An Internet portal linking teacher-training institutions, think tanks, schools, teachers, and universities so that they can share materials, “best practices” and “lessons learned” as well as provide virtual training.

USAID will administer the resources and coordinate the program for the Hemispheric Centers of Teacher Excellence, with the guidance of an advisory panel of U.S. and Latin American experts. The Department of Education, the Organization of American States, Ministries of Education, business and citizen groups, faith-based organizations, international donors, and other hemispheric governments will be enlisted to form a partnership with USAID for the implementation of the program.

Scope of Work

The Team will visit the following countries in order to conduct their work activities: Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, and (Trinidad & Tobago or Belize). Prior to departing to the field, the team will spend one week in Washington, DC reviewing background materials and meeting with key personnel.

I. ACTIVITIES:

The objective of these activities will be to produce a customized assessment with the particular needs of the Caribbean region.

A. Country Assessments - In an effort to assess the participating countries needs and available resources, in each country the Team will:

- 1) Establish what conditions are to be investigated, identify teachers and principals training needs
- 2) Inventory private sector and NGOs that develop and deliver training programs
- 3) Inventory teacher training institutions and their programs, looking for ways in which they could support the program

B. Institutional Assessments – gather information and draft a profile of institutions that could serve as a Caribbean hub for the Center for Teacher Excellence.

- 1) Inventory teacher training institutions, think tanks, schools and universities technical capabilities
- 2) Identify the possibilities of gaining financial support for the project or its alternatives from the public and private sector
- 3) Identify possibilities of forming Center of Excellence partnerships with public and private institutions in the participating Caribbean countries

C. Regional Summary – Based on the above Country and Institutional Assessments, the Team will summarize the collective needs of the Caribbean region

II. TASK ORDER

The Team will be composed of two individuals, an Education Generalist/Team Leader and a Teacher Training Specialist.

A. More specifically, the Team Leader/Education Generalist duties will include but not be limited to:

- 1) In collaboration with the Teacher Training Specialist, produce a strategy for conducting the assessments, inventories, and criteria and implement these activities in a timely, effective, and efficient way.
- 2) Oversee the activities of the contracted field staff in order to assure that activities are carried out in a timely, effective, efficient way, and that appropriate systems to assure quality control are in place.
- 3) Manage communications with collaborating institutions in the U.S., participating countries and the Advisory Committee.
- 4) Submit deliverables to Creative Associates Intl. Inc. and the Advisory Committee as specified in this Task Order.

B. The Teacher Training Specialist, in collaboration with the Team Leader/Education Generalist, will:

- 1) Produce a strategy for conducting the assessments, inventories, and criteria and implement these activities in a timely, effective way.
- 2) Conduct country- and region-specific research on the context and status of education in order to assist and support successful planning and implementation of assessments, inventories and technical assistance.
- 3) Identify institutional resources in the areas of teacher training and reading instruction.
- 4) Research, write, and produce deliverables and other types of documentation for the activity including inventories, assessments, and criteria.

III. DELIVERABLES:

1. Country Assessments Final Report for each of the four countries visited.
2. Institutional Assessment Final Report
3. Regional Summary Final Report

IV. TIMEFRAME:

Fifteen (15) working days between August 20 and September 30, 2001.

ANNEX B: WORK PLAN

2.0 PROPOSED WORK PLAN

2.1 Target Completion Date:

The completion date for the first phase of the Caribbean assessment is scheduled for October 31, 2001.

2.2 Deliverables

The team of consultants will produce the following:

1. A draft report which summarizes:
 - the teacher training needs of the region;
 - the status of teacher training with focus on reading instruction;
 - the region's capacity resources, and sources of public and private support for the center; and
 - a profile of each of the SOEs of UWI, assessing the capacity of each to respond to the identified training needs
2. Presentation of findings to Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII)
3. Final Report based on comments on the draft report.

2.3 Summary of strategic approach

The three SOEs at UWI (Mona, Cave Hill and St. Augustine) have been identified as potential Centers of Excellence by virtue of the fact that UWI is the sole regional institution which has responsibility *inter alia* for teacher training in all its 16 member countries, and has an appropriate infrastructure including distance education facilities which spans those countries.

A two person team consisting of a team leader/general educator and a teacher training specialist will conduct the preliminary assessment in the Caribbean. Using qualitative research methods, the team will identify teacher training needs within the region, with special focus on reading instruction, and assess the capacity of each of the SOEs to address the identified teacher training needs. This will involve bibliographic research and analysis of relevant documents, and the conduct of interviews with representatives of *inter alia* the following groups of stakeholders: university including SOEs, Distance Education Centers (DECs); national teacher training institutions; ministries of education; teachers; parents and children; donor agencies; and the private sector. The team will visit four countries: three campus countries, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica, and one non campus country, St. Lucia.

During the week of August 27- 30, the team will review relevant literature, design the instruments to be used for the field work, and finalize the work plan.

The team will conduct field work in the four aforementioned countries on September 1-29, and prepare a draft report for discussion on or before October 10, 2001. Following review and receipt of comments, the team leader will finalize the report. CAII will disseminate the report, as necessary.

Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, one or more of the SOEs will be selected as the potential Center of Excellence and a more in-depth assessment of this institution will be undertaken October/November 2001.

2.4 Contact and Coordination

The CAII/BEPS sub-task order manager, Ms. Antonieta Harwood will coordinate the activities of the consultancy team. In Washington, the team will meet representatives of USAID, the US Department of Education and Creative Associates to clarify the Scope of Work. In the field, contacts will be made with officials of the MOEs in the English-speaking Caribbean, the SOEs, UWI, stakeholders, donor agencies, private sector and other relevant personnel. All products will be delivered to the sub-task order manager, Ms. Antonieta Harwood for review and transmission.

2.5 Data Sources

The following will serve as primary data sources:

- World Bank
- Inter American Development Bank
- Caribbean Development Bank
- UNESCO
- UNICEF
- USAID
- UWI

2.6 Key Methodologies

The methodologies to be used for the conduct of the assessment are bibliographic review and field research in St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica. The latter will include structured and unstructured interviews and questionnaires.

2.7 Schedule of Sub-task Order Activities

Activities	Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bibliographic survey	August 27 – October 30, 2001
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare work plan• Prepare instruments• Arrange for interviews• Field visit to St. Lucia• Field visit to Trinidad⁹• Field visit to Barbados• Field Visit to Jamaica	August 27-28 August 28-29 August 27-30 September 1-8 September 8-15 September 15- 22 September 22 – 29
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare draft report	October 10, 2001
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of findings	October 15, 2001
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present final report	October 31, 2001

ANNEX C: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Key Research Questions

The following primary questions will guide the assessment:

- To what extent are teacher training issues specifically regarded as contributors to underachievement in the Caribbean?
- To what extent is reading instruction perceived as being a critical problem in the Caribbean education systems, and by which group(s) of stakeholders? If so, what specific aspects of reading instruction are deemed problematic?
- What are the major teacher training needs in disadvantaged/poorer communities? How do these differ from other communities?
- To what extent is the current network of teacher training institutions headed by the SOEs addressing the teacher training needs of disadvantaged communities? What are the major gaps in service? How might these be addressed?
- To what extent is the private sector willing to support teacher training through the vehicle of a Center of Excellence for Teacher Training?

ANNEX D: LIST OF CONTACTS

(Listed chronologically)

St. Lucia, September 3, 2001

Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports

Mrs. Leonise Francois	Deputy Chief Education Officer, Instruction, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports
Mrs. Betty Combie	Tests and Evaluation Officer, Educational Evaluation & Examinations Unit, (EEEU)
Ms. Josephine Stewart	Special Needs Officer, EEEU

Organization for Eastern Caribbean States, Education Reform Unit

Mr. Johnson Cenac	Project Officer, Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project (ECERP)
Dr. Henry Hinds	Curriculum Specialist
Marcellus Albertin	Program Coordinator, Windward Islands Education Project, Department for International Development

September 4, 2001

Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC)

Dr. George Forde	Principal, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
Mrs. Ramonde Joseph	Dean, Division of Teacher Education & Education Administration (DTEEA)
Dr. Cheryl Remy	Senior Lecturer, Science Education, DTEEA
Mrs. Sonia Severin	Senior Lecturer, Mathematics/Curriculum, DTEEA
Mr. Matthew Roberts	Resident Tutor, University of the West Indies, School of Continuing Studies

Roseau Combined Primary School

Mr. Sylvester Phillip	Principal
Ms. Zephrina Lansiquot	Teacher, Grade 1
Mrs. Brenda Joseph	Teacher, Grade 1
Mrs. Albertha Simpson	Teacher, Grade 2
Mrs. Anne Giffard Elcock	Teacher, Roseau, Grade 2
Ms. Angela Simon	Teacher, Grade 3
Ms. Theodora Charles	Special Education Teacher

September 5, 2001

Peace Corps, St. Lucia

Mr. Earl Phillips	Director
Ms. Claudia Francis	Regional Training Manager
Mr. Michael Aubertin	Associate
Mr. Ron Williams	Volunteer
Mrs. Evelyn Holler	Volunteer
Ms. Wendy Wilson	Volunteer
Ms. Colleen Middleton	Volunteer

Ti Rocher Combined Primary School

Mrs. Judy Johannes	Principal
Ms. Emerly Julian	Teacher, Kindergarten
Ms. Sandra Lamontagne	Teacher, Grade 1
Ms. Victoria Cornibert	Teacher, Grade 2
Ms. Sophia Prospere	Teacher, Grade 3
Ms. Dewyanna McClean	Teacher, Grade 4
Ms. Electra Pierre-Louis	Teacher, Grade 5
Ms. Diana Charles	Teacher, Grades 6 and 7
Ms. Kathleen George	Teacher, Grade 8
Ms. Andrea Gajadhar	Teacher, Special Education

Grande Riviere Combined Primary School

Ms. Caterina Mark	Acting Principal
Mr. E. Charles	Teacher, Grade 8

September 6, 2001

St. Lucia Teachers' Union

Mr. Urban Dolor	President, St. Lucia Teachers' Union
Mr. Kentry Jean-Pierre	General Secretary
Mrs. Fortuna Anthony	President, National Principals' Association

SALCC, Division of Teacher Education and Education Administration

Ms. Ramonde Joseph	Dean
Dr. Cheryl Remy	Senior Lecturer
Mrs. Veronica Simon	Head, Language Arts Department
Mrs. Sonia Severin	Senior Lecturer

Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Brian Louisy	Executive Director
Mr. Adrian Augier	Office of Private Sector Relations

Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation and Education (CARE)

Bro. Patrick Dominic	Director
Hon. Mr. Mario Machel	Minister of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports

Trinidad and Tobago, September 10, 2001

University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

Dr. June George	Deputy Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, SOE
Dr. Carol Keller	Senior Lecturer, SOE
Dr. Jeanette Morris	Head, SOE
Professor Mervyn Alleyne	Professor, Liberal Arts, SOE
Dr. Valerie Youssef	Deputy Dean, Distance & Outreach, Liberal Arts/Linguistics
Dr. Barbara Lalla	Head, Liberal Arts/ Co-chair, Cultural Studies
Dr. Maria Byron	Lecturer, SOE
Dr. Winford James	Lecturer, SOE
Mr. Rawle Gibbon	Head, Centre for Creative and Festival Arts
Dr. Ian Robertson	Dean, Faculty of Humanities and SOE
Dr. S. Moodie-Kublalsingh	Director, Centre for Language Learning

U.S. Embassy

Mr. Richard Sherman	Acting Deputy Chief of Mission
Mr. Bart Putney	Acting Public Affairs Officer

September 11, 2001

Dr. Bhoe Tewarie Pro Vice Chancellor, Principal, UWI, St. Augustine

Ministry of Education

Ms. Jennifer Sampson Permanent Secretary
Ms. Sharon Mangroo Director of Curriculum Development
Ms. Janice Blackman Director of School Supervision
Dr. Janet Stanley-Marcano Chief Education Officer
Ms. Yvonne Lewis Acting Director, Educational Research and Evaluation

Ministry of Human Development

Hon. Mr. Ganga Singh Minister
Mr. Emmanuel George Permanent Secretary

September 12, 2001

Valsayn and Corinth Teachers' Colleges

Ms. Lynette Simmons Principal, Corinth Teachers' College
Dr. Lois Phillips Dean, Faculty of Education, Caribbean Union College
Mr. Winston Emmanuel Principal, Valsayn Teachers' College
Mrs. Pamela Lewis-Lee Sam Professor of Education, Reading, Valsayn Teachers' College
Ms. Cynthia See Wai Professor of Education, Reading, Valsayn Teachers' College
Ms. Wynette Joseph Professor of Education, Reading, Valsayn Teachers' College

Reading Association

Dr. Hyacinth MacDowall Reading Specialist

Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association

Mr. Trevor Oliver President
Mr. Rouston Job Third Vice President
Mr. Orville Carrington Second Vice President

September 13, 2001

Dr. Gillian Paul College of Science, Technology and Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTATT)
Mr. Jack Alexis Trustee, Morris Marshal Foundation Learning Center
Ms. Josleen McCloud-Smith Secretary, Morris Marshall Foundation Learning Centre

September, 14, 2001

Mr. David Martin CEO, Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce
Ms. Paula Luci-Smith Executive Director, Adult Literacy Teachers' Association
Ms. Gail Rajkumar Financial Accountant, PowerGen/Director, Project Jump Start

Barbados, September 17, 2001

U.S. Embassy

Ms. Kathleen Boyle Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Education

Mr. Glenroy Cumberbatch Deputy Chief Education Officer
Dr. Derrick Layne Senior Education Officer, Planning, Research and Development
Mr. Dan. C. Carter Education Officer, Planning, Research and Development
Miss Idamay Denny Deputy Chief Education Officer
Ms. Cherianne Clarke Research Officer, Planning, Research and Development

Caribbean Development Bank, Human Resource Development Unit

Mr. Herman Grant Chief, Human Resource Development Unit,
Mr. Desmond Durant Project Officer
Mrs. Toni Pilgrim Project Officer
Mr. Quince Francis Project Officer

September 18, 2001

Mr. Roger Cunningham Department for International Development

Erdiston Teachers' Training College

Ms. Barbara Parris Acting Principal
Ms. Patricia Saul Language Arts Tutor
Mr. Winston Mayers Acting Deputy Principal
Ms. Benita Byer Acting Senior Tutor

September 19, 2001

UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Dr. Arthur Richardson Director, SOE
Dr. Bevis Peters Director, Tertiary Level Institutions Unit, UWI, Cave Hill,
Professor Winston King Professor of Curriculum Development and Science Education
Dr. Desmond Clarke Senior Lecturer, Language Arts
Professor Badri Koul Director, Distance Education Centre

Sir Keith Hunte Principal

September 20, 2001

Mr. Orville Aimey Language Arts Officer, MOE
Mr. Calvin Briggs Principal, Luther Thorne Primary School
Mr. Myers Principal, St. Mary's Primary School
Ms. Carol Charles Barbados Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Thecla Walrond Director, Junior Achievement Program

September 21, 2001

Ms. Bev Neblett Lashly President, Reading Association of Barbados
Ms. Katherine Jordan Principal, Alma Parris School

Jamaica, September 24, 2001

USAID

Ms. Claire Spence USAID Mission
Mr. Alex Dickie Assistant Mission Director, USAID
Ms. Angela Harvey Senior Cultural Exchanges Coordinator, U.S. Embassy
Ms. Evadne Barnes Student Advisor, U.S. Embassy
Dr. Ernest O' Neil Project Director, New Horizons Project
Ms. Yasmeen Yussef-Khalil Internal Evaluator, New Horizons Project
Ms. Margaret Bolt Principal, St. Peter Claver Primary School
Dr. Claudia Harvey UNESCO Representative

September 25, 2001

Mr. James Watson Director, Caribbean Regional Programs, USAID
Hon. Mr. Burchel Whiteman Minister, Ministry of Education and Culture
Mr. Michael Brown Principal, Elleston Primary School
Mr. Noel Watt Principal, Maxfield Park Primary
Ms. Joan Spencer-Rowe Director, Jamaica Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (JACLD)
Ms. Ann Mc Gee Administrator, JACLD
Ms. Michelle Chapman Itinerant Teacher, JACLD

September 26, 2001

UWI, Mona Campus

Dr. Monica Brown Director, SOE/Deputy Dean, UWI
Dr. Zellynne Jennings Head, Department of Educational Studies
Mr. Karl Craig Senior Lecturer, Visual Arts, Institute of Education

Dr. Gagindra Persaud Lecturer, Psychology, Institute of Education
Dr. Donald Wilson Former Director/Deputy Dean, School of Education/Consultant on
Literacy Development Project

Joint Board of Teacher Education

Dr. Claude Packer Principal, Mico Teachers' College
Mrs. Norma Darlington Principal, Shortwood Teachers' College
Sister Avril Chin Fatt Principal, St. Joseph's Teachers' College
Ms. Lucinda Pearl Principal, Bethlehem Moravian College
Ms. Gloria Johnson Principal, Moneague College
Ms. Yvonne Marshall Senior Education Officer, Tertiary Unit, Ministry of Education
Mr. Kenneth Gardner Principal, G.C. Foster College of Physical Education and Sport
Ms. Lorna Stephenson Vice Principal, Sam Sharpe Teachers' College
Ms. Jean Ramsay Vice Principal, Church Teachers' College
Mr. Eric Downie Jamaica Teachers' Association
Ms. Sybille Hamil Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies, University of
Technology
Professor Errol Miller Chairman, Joint Board of Teacher Education/Director, Institute of
Education

September 27, 2001

Shortwood Teachers' College

Mrs. Norma Darlington Principal
Mrs. Yvette James Brown Lecturer
Ms. Judy Fernandez Lecturer, Spanish Department
Ms. O. Beckford-Smith Lecturer, Science Department
Ms. A. Harris-Levy Lecturer, Home Economics
Ms. S. Shelly Lecturer, Social Studies
Ms. Verona Barnes Lecturer, Visual Arts
Ms. Carol Long Lecturer, Physical Education
Ms. Audrey Corrodus Vice Principal
Ms. Y. Beaumont-Walters Lecturer, In-service Department
Ms. Sylvia Bryan Lecturer, Language Arts
Ms. Margaret Clarke Lecturer, Language Arts
Ms. C. Hamilton Flowers Lecturer
Ms. Joy Crooks Lecturer
Ms. Rhona Rhone Lecturer, Reading
Ms. J. Patterson Lecturer, Language Arts
Mr. R. Thomas Lecturer, Physical Education
Ms. Iris Johnson Lecturer, Language Arts
Ms. Ethel Dixon Lecturer, Home Economics
Ms. Marjorie. James Head, Secondary Section
Ms. Elaine Cunningham Lecturer, Education

Mr. Joshua Peart	Lecturer, Education
Ms. Marjorie Hutchinson	Principal, Jonestown Primary School
Ms. A. McPhil	Teacher, Grade 1, Jonestown Primary School
Mrs. Eugena Robinson	National Coordinator for Early Childhood Education (ECE)
Ms. Delores Robinson	Officer, ECE

Mico Teachers' College

Dr. Claude Packer	Principal
Ms. Kay Anderson	Vice Principal
Dr. Lorna Down	Head, Dept. of Languages
Mr. Denver O. Holt	Lecturer, Dept. of Languages
Mr. Burnett Burton	Lecturer, Dept. of Science and Technology
Ms. Norma Fisher	Head, Humanities Department
Ms. D. Royes-Graham	Head, Professional Studies
Ms. Beverley Harris	Lecturer, Dept of Languages
Ms. Maisie Rowe	Lecturer, Dept. of Languages
Mr. Rudolph Sewell	Head, Computer Studies

September 28, 2001

Mitzpah Primary School

Ms. V Davy	Teacher
Ms. P. Weeks-Barret	Teacher
Ms. H. Wray-Smith	Teacher
Ms. Doreen Spence	Principal
Dr. Sam Myers	Literacy Specialist, New Horizons Project

Bethlehem Moravian College

Ms. Valda Henderson	Lecturer, Education & Home Economics
Ms. Phyllis Wint	Lecturer, Literacy Studies
Ms. Lorine Bateman	Lecturer, Business Education
Mr. George Henry	Senior Lecturer, Physical Education
Ms. Annette Piper	Lecturer, Education
Ms. Winsome Ewart	Lecturer, Home Economics
Ms. Monica Buchanan	Lecturer, Literacy Studies
Ms. Karen Granston	Senior Lecturer, Business Department
Ms. Andrea Wilson	Acting Vice Principal
Ms. Lucinda Peart	Principal

ANNEX E: PROGRAM SUMMARIES

The Barbados' Education Sector Enhancement Program (EDUTECH)

By far the most impressive activity within the context of reform efforts is EDUTECH 2000 in Barbados. EDUTECH seeks to redefine the teaching and learning environment by retooling its human and financial resources in order to prepare students for the 21st century. Its vision is forward thinking, global in scope, innovative, and rooted in local sensibilities and a clear understanding of what Barbadians want to achieve. In effect, EDUTECH promotes paradigm shifts at the key levels of: the relationship of government and the people it serves, the MOE and its teaching corps, and teacher-student interaction. It is preparing Barbadian society to shift from an agrarian-based to a service and knowledge-based society. Above all, EDUTECH 2000 aims to be preventative rather than curative.

Initiated in 1998, EDUTECH is an ambitious and comprehensive long-term program which aims to improve learning outcomes at the primary and secondary levels. The program also aims to improve the range and relevance of skills of school leavers (students who have completed the primary or secondary cycle of schooling and may or may not have achieved the prescribed standards) to enable them to function more effectively in a knowledge-based society. It involves the training of teaching and administrative staff, curriculum reform, widespread introduction of computer technology and related software, and physical rehabilitation of school facilities. The training component provides for the training of teachers and administrators in child-centered strategies, information technology management, and the integration of new strategies into the IT teaching and learning process. The training utilizes a cluster approach made up of school subject-matter coaches, IT leadership teams, professional cadres, classroom teachers, and MOE staff.

With regard to reading, the MOE employs a language officer at the ministry level in addition to language-arts officers who serve the needs of individual schools on a rotating basis. This unit has developed an impressive collection of curriculum guides which reflect an outcome-based approach to learning with clear and achievable attainment targets. Attainment targets are clearly stated and specify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which pupils are expected to achieve at each grade level. The approach is based on the belief that when social and emotional learning is reinforced through artistic and cultural expression, students are more likely to be rooted in a positive value system designed to effect positive behavioral change.

Primary schools are staffed by trained teachers who have been sufficiently oriented to the EDUTECH reform strategy. Visits to EDUTECH schools revealed that teachers possess a firm grasp on the basic reading skills needed to develop confident and competent readers. While phonics and phonemic awareness are skills that children learn in Barbadian schools, they do not do so at the expense of reading comprehension. Great efforts are made to expose pupils to rich literature that fits local realities—meaningful and instructive. Higher-order critical thinking skills are taught to the youngest pupils by engaging children in sustained discussion *about* a book *before* introducing isolated word attack skills.

Particularly impressive is the inclusion of the Personal Empowerment in Arts and Creative Education Program (PEACE). This program teaches values through the performing arts. Here, the whole child is educated and nurtured throughout his/her school life. Phonics and phonemic awareness are reading strategies in which teachers are conversant and knowledgeable, but phonics instruction is not isolated from life experiences or contexts that are meaningful and relevant to Barbadian children. This sensibility and understanding makes a measurable difference in the school performance of young readers in Barbados.

The parameters of this report did not allow for an exhaustive coverage of this superb educational innovation. The Barbados EDUTECH effort is a best practice.

The Government of Jamaica/Inter-American Development Bank Primary Education Improvement Program II

This program was launched in 1993. The objective of the language-arts component was “to equip primary-school teachers with skills and resources to ensure that primary-school leavers can read, write, and speak Standard English.” The language-arts component included training language-arts teachers of grades 4-6 in: reading diagnosis and remediation, learning-plan preparation, production of materials to assist children in grades 4-6 with a reading at or below second-grade level, and the development and implementation of a grade 4 literacy test. Children will not be promoted to higher grades until they pass the test.

The Government of Jamaica/USAID New Horizons for Primary Schools Project

This seven-year joint initiative aims to increase levels of literacy and numeracy in 72 underachieving schools, many of them in the rural areas. Included in the ten interventions are in-service teaching in reading and mathematics, training resource teachers, parent education and training, governance and leadership training, and provision of materials. There is recognition that teacher training alone will not suffice.

The team had the opportunity to meet with some of the principals and staff involved in the New Horizons Project. Both principals and staff were unanimous in their praise of the project’s interventions and the impact on classroom practices. Preliminary assessments attest to the effectiveness of the project. Among the strategies being used for improving literacy instruction are:

- authentic immersion in literature, which encourages reading of a wide range of books and opportunities to read and write in various genres such as poetry, stories, advertisements, etc.;
- reciprocal teaching, which is designed to help low achievers improve reading comprehension;
- the portfolio approach to documenting growth and performance;
- special projects, such as competitions to encourage literacy;
- the use of technology; and
- the use of reading resource centers.

Training is being delivered through trained resource teachers at each project school. Site-based workshops are convened at each school. Technical specialists collaborate with resource teachers to promote the new strategies, provide feedback to classroom teachers and demonstrate/model instructional practices. Clinical supervision is of a collaborative nature, and teachers have the opportunity to share best practices.

The New Horizons Project appears to have included in its design most of the lessons learned from effective service training programs internationally (as outlined by Craig). These suggestions include:

- focusing programs on specific needs over a long term;
- promoting high levels of participation of teachers, principals and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation;
- and ensuring a good balance of pedagogy and subject matter with practical approaches to teaching the subject matter and theories to increase the understanding of how students learn.

Craig also noted that the school-based model is regarded as being most effective in changing classroom practices.

New Horizons provides for the empowerment of schools and communities through participation at the local level; provides opportunities for context-relevant materials to be developed by teachers, consultants, and local decision-makers; promotes site-based school management in order to transfer decision-making power to local schools and communities; emphasizes the importance of parental involvement; and values all school personnel including cooks, janitorial staff, etc.

The Mico Care Center

The Mico Care Center was established by Mico Teachers' College (MTC) in Jamaica in response to the need for improvements in the area of diagnosis and remediation in education. The Mico Care Center provides diagnostic, referral and remedial services to children with learning difficulties. A Jamaican-normed reading test, developed by MTC, is one of the instruments used. The Mico Reading Test is also being used in other Caribbean countries.

The Anguilla Reading Recovery Program

This early identification/early intervention program is delivered at the end of first grade to the lowest achieving students. The program involves the training of reading recovery teachers who work with children in groups of four to five. An assessment of the program for the year 1998-99 showed that approximately 65 percent of the children met the criteria for discontinuation, 26 percent were referred for mainstream remedial reading, and 9 percent were referred for longer-term support. The strategies being used in the Reading Recovery Program are being incorporated into the kindergarten and grade 1 curricula, and all teachers at that level will be trained in their use.

Jamaica Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (JACLD)

JACLD is the only organization in Jamaica focusing on the needs of persons aged 6-16 with learning disabilities. JACLD provides psychological and education assessment, full-time school placement in classes with a 1 to 12 pupil-teacher ratio, extracurricular tutorials, counseling and special sittings for the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT). Educational workshops and counseling are offered to parents, teachers are regularly updated, and research on student progress is conducted. The belief at JACLD is that many learning disabilities are not caused by low intellectual ability, but rather by an inappropriate learning background or emotional difficulties. Unraveling the fundamental cause of a child's learning problems often leads to the conclusion the child was miseducated. JACLD is supported by tuition and minimally subsidized by the government. JACLD is typically underfunded.

A Programmed Reading Intervention for Mainstream At-risk Youths

This reading intervention was started at five inner-city schools in Kingston, with the assistance of the JACLD in collaboration with the private sector and the MOE. It is aimed at arresting and preventing reading failure and reducing the number of at-risk students. Students are assessed, placed in a remedial reading program according to their levels, and provided workbooks, flash cards, and other learning aids. In-service training is provided to teachers and National Youth Service Workers who assist in the program. Itinerant specialist teachers supervise and provide guidance to teachers in the schools.

The National Literacy Improvement Program

The Jamaican Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) established the National Literacy Improvement Program in 1999 to combat the problem of illiteracy, estimated to be approximately 24 percent. As of 2001, two Literacy Research and Development Centers at Montague and Bethlehem Moravian Colleges were under construction. These centers are expected to provide literacy training from the diploma to the master's degree level (the latter in collaboration with UWI and external universities), provide literacy training for workers, offer technical assistance to feeder schools, promote research in literacy, and develop facilities for testing children.

Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation and Education (CARE)

Located in Castries, St. Lucia, CARE collaborates with local communities, officials, relevant government officials, the private sector, and other funding agencies. A two-year program is offered. During the first year, all students enroll in an adolescent development program, which provides remediation in all the socialization and emotional areas that have been neglected. In addition to literacy and numeracy, communication skills, health education, sexuality, spirituality, and value systems are stressed. During the second year, students are provided training in income-generating skills of their own choice. The program, which closely links learning to earning, is highly successful. The students who benefit from CARE are prepared academically and emotionally for the world of work. CARE is typically underfunded.

Adult Literacy Tutors Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ALTA)

ALTA provides free and effective literacy instruction to persons over 16 years of age. ALTA is a comprehensive program that teaches basic reading and writing skills up to the school leaving level through the use of real-life materials and topics of interest to adults. Classes are held in churches, community centers or schools. Volunteer adult-literacy tutors are trained at no expense during four six-day sessions. In turn, they commit to volunteer for one year as literacy tutors. ALTA trains prison officials who, in turn, train literacy volunteers in prison. In the late 1990s, ALTA published a series of literacy workbooks accompanied by a tutor's book and phonics cassettes. ALTA maintains a lending library of 1,600 books. ALTA is typically underfunded.

The Center for the Creative and Performing Arts in the School of Education, UWI, St. Augustine Campus

The merging of the Humanities Department and the SOE at UWI, Trinidad and Tobago, was driven by financial considerations, but has yielded positive results. Specifically, an associated unit, the Center for Creative and Performing Arts, has developed activities that have had a positive impact on the community. The Center has developed popular theater or education activities based on the philosophy of Paulo Freire. These community-focused activities address literacy issues in Trinidadian society. Insufficient information was gathered on the center's activity, but it is an example of combining educational concerns at the university level and reaching out to the community on issues that are relevant to local groups. The theater activities build on local culture, folklore, poetry, music, dance, and drama. Further exploration is necessary in order to tap this valuable resource.