

**BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF TWO TEACHER EDUCATORS
IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR
WHOLE COLLEGE APPROACHES**

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ABSTRACT

Beliefs and Practices of Two Teacher Educators in Environmental Education: Implications for Whole College Approaches

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Continuing professional development of teacher educators tends to emphasize the development of their professional knowledge and pedagogical skills and fails to adequately take into account their beliefs and practices. There are few, if any, studies in the Caribbean that have explored educators' beliefs and practices regarding environmental education (EE). Yet, the educators' beliefs and practices play a major role in defining and enhancing their practice.

This qualitative case study explores the beliefs and practices of two teacher educators regarding environmental education in the disciplines they teach at an urban teachers' college in Jamaica. It was done to inform educators' professional development for implementing EE, including whole college approaches to EE in teacher education.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, conversations and observations over a twelve month period and analyzed. Findings indicate that the educators' holistic view of the environment and the high value they place on environmental education were influenced by early life experiences. While they incorporated environmentally related activities in their teaching, their own beliefs constrained their practice in important ways. Their beliefs also influenced the way they addressed the limitations on their practice posed by the context and culture of the college, and the curricula. The study analyzed findings in relation to the implementation of whole college approaches to EE and made suggestions for developing cross-disciplinary approaches, communities of practice, constructivist practice, and reflective practice in EE in teacher education. Continuing professional development needs to take into account these numerous opportunities for individual and interactive reflection and action that deepen understanding and improve practice in environmental education.

Keywords: environmental education; teacher education; whole college approaches; teacher beliefs; cross-disciplinary approaches; constructivist practice; reflective practice; communities of practice.