

ABSTRACT

Exploring the Pedagogical Practices of Grade 1 Primary Teachers from Two Pre-service Programmes: A Qualitative Narrative Case Study

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This qualitative multiple case study employs an interpretive, narrative approach in exploring the pedagogical practices of four newly qualified Grade 1 primary teachers in four schools in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica. The study examines and compares the classroom pedagogy and perspectives of two graduates of the JBTE Early Childhood Education Diploma Programme and two graduates of the JBTE Primary Education Diploma Programme, providing an in-depth analytical description of their pedagogy under the themes: views on teaching and learning at Grade 1; classroom organization and curriculum orientation; planning, teaching and assessing; classroom and behaviour management; relationships with parents and colleagues. The analysis also explores sources of influence on the teachers' practices relative to these themes. The themes emerged from data obtained through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, participant and researcher journals, relevant documents and photographs. The main findings of the research are that the teachers' classroom practices revealed similarities and differences that were substantially influenced by their pre-service education and to some extent by their personal experience and inner creativity. However, the extent to which each teacher was able to apply her college knowledge to classroom practice was mediated by variations in the structural, administrative and collegial elements of their particular school context. *The C-Triad: confront, compromise, conform*: emerged as a distinct pattern and potential model of teacher coping responses to various classroom challenges. Other findings revealed a fundamentally caring attitude of the teachers toward their students and a surprisingly high level of competence of one of the novice teachers. The study recommends a reorientation of school improvement policies to include structural aspects of school environments that negatively affect teachers' classroom pedagogy, as well as improved induction support programmes for newly qualified teachers and better articulation of training programmes preparing teachers to teach at the same grade level.

Keywords: pedagogical practices; pre-service teacher education; early childhood teacher education; influences on practice; developmentally appropriate practice