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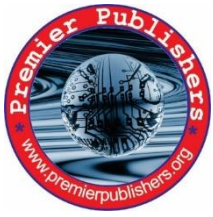
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Review Article

Educational Leadership and the University of Guyana: A Critical Look

Kerwin A. Livingstone, PhD

Education Specialist, Guyana

Email: profesordelenguasmodernas@yahoo.es

In recent decades, Educational Leadership has been receiving considerable attention from all interested parties and education stakeholders within the educational landscape. Educational institutions around the world have been carrying out research endeavours in order to boost leadership and leadership practice and improve didactic efforts in those educational establishments. Considering the afore-mentioned, this critique paper, which also is a review paper, examines issues in Educational Leadership in the context of the University of Guyana (the only national university in Guyana, South America). This critique paper is the first of its kind to be written about this University. It takes a critical look at the governance and institutional culture of the University. Attention is paid to Educational Leadership and what it entails. The issues discussed, with specific reference to the above-mentioned higher education institution, are the University's Aim, Mission and Vision in the changing context of Educational Leadership; Shared Leadership; Pedagogic Leadership; Transformational Leadership; Ethical Leadership; Professional Development; Professional Learning Community, and Quality Education. The review highlights that the different kinds of Educational Leadership practices and activities at the University of Guyana are not as effective as they ought to be, and this is causing the institution to not live up fully to its mandate. It is emphasised and recommended that effective Educational Leadership has to be the nucleus of its educational practices if the University of Guyana is expected to provide cutting-edge, high-quality 21st century pedagogy.

Keywords: educational leadership, leadership, leadership practice(s), quality education, high-quality education, learning, teaching, educational institution, University of Guyana (UG).

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, education stakeholders and all other interested parties have placed considerable attention on Educational Leadership within the educational ambit. In any organisation, educational or other, leadership is crucial to its effectiveness and success. Without it, organisations would not be able to function; they would thus become chaotic and probably collapse. "The most important factor in the implementation of any pedagogical method in a department or faculty is its *leadership*" (Biggs and Tang 2011: 291). When leaders are able to convince their follows or staff members to act in particular ways and to attain common objectives, within an organisation, they are demonstrating leadership. These followers readily execute orders given by their leaders (Northouse, 2007; Duignan and Cannon, 2011; Harris, 2014). Bearing this in mind, it is reasonable to suggest that the type and quality

of leadership in any educational institution would have a profound impact on educational outcomes. This is to say that leadership would determine whether or not (new) educational ventures are embraced, or whether or not existing ones are improved.

Recent studies in Educational Leadership have underlined that it is an essential requirement for promoting good governance in educational institutions (Lingam, 2012; Livingstone, 2014; McGee, Haworth and MacIntyre, 2015; García-Martínez, Díaz-Delgado and Ubago-Jiménez, 2018). Good governance paves the way for the delivery of high-quality pedagogical practices (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). The principal objective of effective (educational) leadership is to make sure that all educational plans are carried out cooperatively and collaboratively in agreement

with an institution's aim, mission and vision. Rutter and Williams (2007) underscore the point that there must be effective leadership in educational institutions in order to maximise learner outcomes. Another vital point to note is that for leadership to achieve specific results, it should be delegated or shared (Hulpia, Devos and Van Keer, 2009). This is to say that leadership practice should be fostered continuously within educational institutions. Distribution of leadership is evident when all staff members work in concert with each other, partake actively in the decision-making process, set targets, and analyse their performance. In any educational organisation, there should be, at the very least, three kinds of leaders (Biggs and Tang, 2011): firstly, *process leaders* who manage the different phases of the adoption and institutionalisation of an educational initiative; secondly, *content experts* whose express role is to give advice and to coordinate technical matters; finally, *political leaders* who possess comprehensive knowledge of how the system functions and the requisite skills to ascertain a seamless execution. Therefore, in order to successfully espouse and implement high-quality educational ventures, there must be a range of educational leaders with different responsibilities.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned, this critical review paper focuses on Educational Leadership and leadership issues at the University of Guyana (UG). The term 'Educational Leadership' is defined and explained. Considering that this paper is the *first* of its kind to be written about the UG, the discussion centres on the UG's Aim, Mission and Vision in the changing context of Educational Leadership; Shared Leadership; Pedagogic Leadership; Transformational Leadership; Ethical Leadership; Professional Development; Professional Learning Community, and Quality Education. For the UG to remain relevant (nationally, regionally, and internationally), cutting-edge, high-quality 21st century pedagogy must be sustained. This can only be achieved through effective Educational Leadership.

UG's AIM, MISSION AND VISION IN THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

"Since 2000 there have been dramatic changes in the nature of higher education. It is not just that participation rates are higher than ever ... but that these and other factors have altered the main mission of higher education and modes of delivery" (Biggs and Tang 2011: 3). The Bologna Process, initiated in 1999 with the issuance of the Bologna Declaration, has significantly influenced the delivery of high-quality higher education (HE) not only in Europe, but also around the world: learners are demanding value for money; universities are finding (or trying to find) ways and means to improve and sustain the quality of education and its delivery; more attention is being paid to training and development for academic staff (teacher training) and administrative staff (leadership training); many quality assurance bodies have sprung up with the express objective of ensuring programme quality,

and more education stakeholders are participating in the educational process, among others. Consequently, HE must divorce itself from traditional pedagogical practices and delivery modes and espouse more modern didactic practices and instructional delivery modes, especially considering the increased number of learners with different learning abilities who enter these institutions. It is an established fact that learners possess different styles of learning. Thus, instruction should ensure, as far as possible, that learners' learning styles are taken into account.

The Aim, Mission and Vision of the UG are as follows:

Aim

The aims of the University are to provide a place of education, learning and research of a standard required and expected of a University of the highest standard, and to secure the advancement of knowledge and the diffusion and extension of arts, sciences and learning throughout Guyana (UG Act 1963: 4; UG Strategic Plan 2009-2012: 16).

Mission

To discover, generate, disseminate and apply knowledge of the highest standard for the service of the community, the nation and of all mankind within an atmosphere of academic freedom that allows for free and critical enquiry (UG Strategic Plan 2009-2012: 16).

Vision 2009-2012

The University will be academically stable and will have consolidated its curriculum in a manner that reflects the needs and constraints of Guyana and be on a trajectory to becoming a Centre of Excellence for the delivery of tertiary programmes, for its administration and management, and as a leader in research that contributes meaningfully to the development of Guyana and all mankind (UG Strategic Plan 2009-2012: 16).

The Aim, Mission and Vision of the UG are not being fulfilled in their entirety. The UG celebrates its 56th year of existence this year (2019); however, it is yet to be fully cognisant of the changing context of Educational Leadership and leadership practice. Educational leaders continue with their traditional leadership styles, even though there is a clamour for change (Livingstone, 2013). The UG's leadership isn't oblivious to these changes around the world, regarding tertiary teaching and learning. Despite the fact that the UG's leadership is aware of these impending changes, adoption is extremely slow (Murray, 2013; Livingstone, 2015a). There is no visible innovation to learning and teaching (Livingstone 2015a, 2015b). Teacher-centred strategies are still in vogue (Gaffar, Singh and Thomas, 2011; Murray, 2013; Livingstone, 2015b). Face to face teaching is still the "preferred" delivery mode

of instruction (Gaffar *et al*, 2011; Murray, 2013; Livingstone, 2015c), where university teachers are like the 'sage on the stage' transmitting knowledge to learners. Professional, technical and vocational educational (TVE) programmes are absent from the general curriculum of the UG (even though there is a growing demand for technical, specialised skills all across the country).

In relation to the afore-mentioned, a quick navigation of the UG's website can confirm that such TVE programmes are not offered, even though academic staff members of the UG are also members of the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training of Guyana (CTVET) (Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2019). The principal objective of the CTVET is to promote TVET programmes throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. How are these two issues to be reconciled? Coming back to the point of UG's general curriculum, this needs to be revised urgently, since no curricular restructuring has taken place in over three decades (Murray, 2013; Livingstone 2013, 2014). Many of the course curriculum documents that were used in the 1990s remain the same (for example, the curriculum documents for the Modern Languages programme (Spanish and French) which are in the possession of the author of this paper). The National Development Strategy (NDS) (2001-2010) has highlighted that many students are opting to pursue undergraduate studies at foreign universities because those students are convinced that the UG's courses and programmes are not sufficiently improving their learning outcomes or helping them to derive significant educational experiences. It is therefore incumbent upon the UG to move in the direction of restructuring its educational programmes, as well as introducing different educational delivery modes, in order to ensure that they meet learners' expectations.

Considering the above paragraphs, it is not prejudicial to suggest that the delivery of *Quality Education* is still a very big issue. There is a dire need for modernisation and quality assurance and enhancement: improvement in *all* UG's facilities (and *not* a few), a restructuring of course offerings and curriculum, and an inclusion of more postgraduate programmes (Masters/PhDs), matching the entrepreneurial and developmental phases of the country (business, science, technology, and the like). With reference to the afore-mentioned, a national youth group of Guyana, *Move on Guyana Inc. (MOGI)*, comprising past and present UG students, has made repeated calls to the UG to improve its tertiary learning and teaching practices (MOGI, 2019). With respect to facilities, Ramsden (2003) affirms that there must be appropriate facilities for engaging with learners at their level of understanding. UG students and other stakeholders have made calls for improved learning facilities (Guyana Times, 2018; Guyana Chronicle, 2019). Even though there have been some upgrades to *some* educational facilities at the UG and the construction of new departments and schools, between 2015 and 2019 (Guyana Times, 2019), much more still needs to be done. The learning-teaching experience has

to be improved substantially, in harmony with the UG's Aim, Mission and Vision, if the UG expects to be(come) a world-class university. The fact that the UG has not produced an updated *Strategic Plan* (the last one was for the period 2009-2012) speaks volumes about the direction in which it is heading, and could very well be part of the reason why this institution is experiencing a plethora of problems. An updated Strategic Plan, which is responsible for delineating and appraising the educational objectives of the university, could help to reposition the UG so that it is able to fully achieve its Aim, Mission, and Vision.

SHARED LEADERSHIP

Many years ago, educational institutions were run single-handedly by leaders who thought that that was the best approach to ensure that the institution met expectations. Spillane (2005) calls this the "heroics of leadership" (p. 143). The author admonishes us that this is an antiquated way of viewing leadership, given that times have changed and leadership practices must also change. No one person can do it all, or the result would be over-burdened leaders and under-utilised staff. *Shared Leadership* (also called *Distributed Leadership*), the modern approach to leadership, is a strong reaction to traditional leadership or *Bureaucratic Leadership*, since it is primarily concerned with leadership practice across the educational institution (Spillane 2006, 2013). In Shared Leadership, the objective is to ensure that the matters of the educational institution are addressed by all staff members, since it is a matter of concern to all (Hulpia, Devos, Rosseel and Vlerick, 2012). Every individual within the institution has a say in how it should be run. It is not to be left up to one individual alone to make all the decisions. Educational leaders can facilitate opportunities for teachers to work together and to help build on-going collaborative structures that encourage teachers to take leadership. They can create the environment, the time and the opportunities for leadership to arise. By sharing responsibility for making decisions and exercising leadership, educational leaders let their teachers know that their voice is important and that they are partners in making the educational institution a place where learners, teachers, parents, and community members can thrive.

Shared Leadership encourages *participation* (Taylor and Canfield, 2007; Davis, 2012; Göksoy, 2015). This suggests that staff members should be very much involved in all matters relating to institutional governance, bearing in mind that a participatory approach lends itself to new and creative ways of learning and teaching. The *decision-making process* in any educational institution, which fosters *inclusivity* and *full participation* of all members, is vital to its smooth governance and its enhancement of *learning that matters*. Leaders should exercise faith and confidence in their teachers to use their initiative in planning for the instructional process. Teachers should be encouraged to share their ideas and develop their talents. They should be given the freedom to explore innovative

and creative ways of engaging their learners. Learners should be taught using a repertoire of learning and teaching strategies that will enable the teachers to meet the needs of each learner within their classroom, thus promoting *creativity, application, and life-long learning*.

The UG presents a very exceptional situation in which there is minimal input and participation from staff members (Livingstone, 2015b). It is a case of 'micro-managing' or managing from a distance (Livingstone, 2013; iNews Guyana, 2013). Senior leaders and educational leaders in very 'high' offices in this institution of higher learning (for example, the HODs, the Deputy/Assistant Deans, the Deans, and the Board of Deans) make all administrative and pedagogical decisions (Livingstone, 2013; Livingstone, 2015b). In other words, there is *exclusive participation* and *bureaucracy* in the decision-making process. More often than not, policies are created and forced on staff members. From personal experience, solutions are prescribed, policies are developed, editorialised and politicised without ever listening to those who know: staff members. When decisions are made, lecturers are expected to accept without objection (Livingstone, 2015b). This is the kind of poor and ineffective leadership practice that plagues the UG. This is a recipe for disaster because institutional effectiveness cannot be attained in this manner. In order to prevent the (rapid) decline of educational institutions, the voices of all members of the teaching faculty need to be heard. There needs to be a sense of *democracy, inclusivity/inclusive participation, and active involvement* by all stakeholders. Bottom up and top-down approaches (Bush, 2011; Sackville, 2012) should be balanced judiciously in leadership practices in order to foster the delivery of high-quality education.

PEDAGOGIC LEADERSHIP

One of *the* most important areas in Educational Leadership is the concept of *Pedagogic Leadership* (also called *Instructional Leadership*). The emphasis of this kind of leadership is learning and teaching. This means that all that is carried out in the educational institution has the objective of ensuring that instruction - learning and teaching - is effective and that learners are able to maximise their outcomes. It is primarily concerned with *why* learners learn, *what* learners learn, *how* learners learn, and *how well* they learn what they are supposed to learn. Lunenburg & Irby (2006) assert that the goal of education is *learning*, and the vehicle used to achieve that goal is *teaching*. The phenomena of learning and teaching have been around since the genesis of civilisation, though quite different in their applicability and function throughout the ages. Shuell (1993: 291) affirms that "Within an educational context, the two phenomena [teaching and learning] are so inextricably intertwined that it often is difficult to imagine one without the other". Here, it is established that there is a very close connection between learning and teaching. For learning to be effective,

teaching must also be effective. In this same way, if teaching is deficient, learning will also be deficient. The two phenomena are mutually interdependent: one cannot exist without the other.

In an educational institution, pedagogy is one of the most important functions of the pedagogical leader (which could be the Department Head, the Subject Head, or the Dean). The pedagogical leader should possess a wealth of experience in this area and should be able to translate this body of knowledge to staff members, so that best practices are adopted for learning and teaching (Bolívar, 2015). This is where professional growth and development comes in. Once teachers are frequently involved in it - to improve themselves in their area(s) of expertise - then student learning will improve. For any educational institution, *teaching effectiveness* (Biggs and Tang, 2011; Boothe, 2011; Lingam, 2012) must be the objective. Teaching effectiveness suggests that all kinds of learners are to be considered in the learning-teaching process, since one teaching method cannot be apt to address the needs of all learners. In other words, the one-size-fits-all approach is obsolete and counterproductive. Learning and teaching effectiveness suggests that traditional teaching methodologies should no longer take centre stage. *Teacher-centred* practices should be rejected, because they hardly ever address learner needs. *Learner-centred* practices should be embraced as the way forward, since it is primarily about what learners do (and are able to do) to maximise their learning and engender significant educational experiences.

Learning and teaching at the UG still leaves much room for improvement. In some cases, from personal experience, pedagogic leaders have to implore some of their teaching staff to do research. A quick survey of the research output at the UG can confirm this trend. In fact, some lecturers are quite comfortable with using traditional didactic methods to deliver course content (Gaffar *et al*, 2011; Murray, 2013), at the expense of learners and learning. These traditional teaching practices promote a regurgitative process where learners give back to lecturers what they want (in some cases verbatim), come exam time. The NDS (2001-2010) has also revealed that university learners are tired of the traditional face to face method, and they are calling for other modes of educational delivery to be introduced into the learning-teaching process. From personal experience, HODs, Deans and other stakeholders seem not too interested in addressing this issue, since nothing much is being done at the UG to improve pedagogical practices. It can thus be deduced that some (or many) lecturers do not engage in *reflective practice*. Reflective practice is the backbone of quality learning and teaching (Quality Education) (McGee *et al*, 2015). As such, the UG should make it a mandatory component in pedagogy so that learning and teaching can be improved, and cutting-edge curricular practices can be sustained.

In the case of technology-based education at the UG, its implementation is slow. Even though the UG adopted 'Moodle' as its chosen learning management system in 2014, and began to offer four degrees online in that same year (University of Guyana, 2014), educational technology is not (fully) embraced by some teaching staff because some of them are resistant to change (Gaffar *et al*, 2011; Murray, 2013). Important to note, though, is that some members of the teaching faculty have been engaging with technology and technology resources in their instructional practices (Singh and Gaffar, 2011; Thomas, Singh and Gaffar, 2013; Singh, 2014; Persaud and Persaud, 2019). While some university lecturers have expressed their readiness to embrace ICT use in their pedagogy (Gaffar *et al*, 2011; Livingstone, 2015a), the idea is for ICT adoption to be widespread. One can only hope that, in the near future, all teaching faculty at the UG adopt the use of technology and technology resources in their didactic practices. It is no secret that educational institutions (in both developed and developing countries) are making technology-enhanced learning and teaching a priority because of its proven potential to cater for diverse learners and learning styles, and to improve and achieve learner outcomes.

There first needs to be *consciousness-raising* about the need to ensure *good teaching* and its inevitability in improved student learning outcomes, before trying to implement current pedagogical practices and methodology. To enhance learning and teaching, lecturers ought to undergo constant transformative reflection through action research, reflective practice, and by doing actual research. When teachers are frequently involved in it, the likelihood of improved student learning would be high. Further, a *learning team* could be established. The objective of the learning team is to facilitate self-development and interdependence. All members of the team are actively involved in upgrading themselves and their colleagues. They are involved in an on-going cycle of improvement. Another suggestion would be to have a *departmental learning and teaching committee* or even a *centre for learning* to make on-the-ground decisions relating to the setting up, design and implementation of courses and programmes to monitor teaching, define problems, and solve them collaboratively. Added to the above-mentioned, it would also be best to have a *Quality Enhancement Team/Department/Committee* which has the responsibility of reviewing not only how well the institution works in achieving its mission, but also *how it may keep on doing so*. In this way, learning and teaching would always remain current. In this regard, the UG launched its Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning (CoETaL) in 2018 (University of Guyana, 2019a) the objective of which is to transform learning and teaching at that institution. Since it is still a fledgling centre, its effectiveness to impact on instructional practices at the UG is still to be observed. The Inaugural Teaching Conference of the CoETaL was held on October 3 and 4, 2019, under the theme "Investing in educators for academic growth and

development" (University of Guyana, 2019b). It is hoped that this conference can (begin to) sensitise and encourage education stakeholders of the UG, primarily academic staff, to engage in effective Pedagogic Leadership practices.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The concept of *Transformational Leadership* was initially introduced by leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership can be seen when leaders and followers work with each other to advance to a higher level of morality and motivation. Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions and motivations *positively*, and work towards common goals. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned with (and involved in) the process, but they are also focused on helping every group member to succeed as well.

A few years later, researcher Bernard M. Bass expanded upon Burns' original ideas to develop what is today referred to as *Bass' Transformational Leadership Theory*. According to Bass (1985), Transformational Leadership can be defined based on the impact that it has on followers. According to the author, transformational leaders garner trust, respect and admiration from their followers. Bass (1985) highlights that there are four different components of Transformational Leadership: intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealised influence. Since change is inevitable, educational leaders ought to be the propellers of change. Leaders should seek to employ principles which motivate other leaders and staff to want to work, to want to participate, and to want to be involved in decision-making, so that good governance and institutional effectiveness can be accentuated in the educational environment.

Transformational Leadership practices are not evident at the UG (in accord with the reasons discussed in the three sections above). This is because participatory leadership and leadership practices are being stifled due to the *top-down approach* which is *controlling* and *inflexible* (Livingstone, 2015b). It has already been discussed in this paper that the issues of *Shared Leadership* and *Pedagogical Leadership* are plaguing the UG to such an extent that the implementation of the UG's Aim, Mission, and Vision is being hindered. The *status quo* is preserved and transformation is jeopardised. UG's educational leaders need to break with the past and articulate a clear vision for staff members. They should be primarily concerned with developing a vision that informs and expresses the institution's mission, laying the foundation for strategies, policies and procedures. They should use strategies and techniques to empower all members of

staff, enhance their self-efficacy, change their values, norms and attitudes (which should be consistent with the vision for the university), and help them to experience the same passion and motivation to fulfil these goals effectively and efficiently. Educational leaders at the UG should not only challenge the *status quo* but also encourage creativity among staff. Leaders should encourage staff members to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn. In order to foster supportive relationships, the lines of communication should be kept open so that the teaching staff can feel free to share ideas, and leaders can offer direct recognition of each unique contribution. In essence, UG's educational leaders ought to be a role model for their staff, encouraging them to be role models especially for their learners. This would foster an educational climate which is conducive for optimised learning. Effective and efficient Transformational Leadership can ensure that the UG accomplishes its Aim, Mission, and Vision.

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

In every educational institution, there is either a written *Code of Conduct* to which staff members adhere, better known as the *Code of Ethics*. These behavioural norms determine what teaching faculty members do, as well as how, where, when and why they do it. This is to say that all activities within an educational institution or organisation must be governed by ethical statutes. Ethics governs how people act, behave, think, feel, speak, and the like. Ethical practices in the educational institution should be maintained at all times to avert disaster and to ensure good governance. *Ethical Leadership* is vital to everything that concerns Educational Leadership. Ethics is like the invisible thread that runs through all leadership practices, issues and situations.

In Ethical Leadership, *real leaders concentrate on doing the 'right thing', not on doing things right*. "Ethical behaviour includes key principles such as honesty, integrity, fairness, and concern for others. This is a situation in which leaders engage in behaviours that benefit others and refrain from behaviours that can cause harm to others" (Bello 2012: 229). *Ethics must begin at the top* (Bello, 2012). Leaders cannot shirk from their obligations to set a moral example for their followers; formal ethical codes and ethic training have little chance of success unless the *ethical actions and behaviour of leaders are consistent with what they teach and preach*. Leaders are the key to determining the outcome of organisational goals and to setting the tone for employee behaviour which may include promotion, appraisal, and strategies.

The UG has experienced all sorts of uncomfortable situations through the years, either alleged or confirmed. There have been allegations of lecturers' sexual misconduct, lecturers leaking exam papers, and lecturers victimising and threatening students, among others. There

have been allegations of lecturers' submitting student grades months after the deadline has passed. There have been allegations of financial malpractice by some UG staff members. There have also been allegations of some of the UG staff members not responding to telephone calls or emails from university students, or treating students in an unprofessional manner. Even though the UG staff members are aware of ethical norms and behaviours for HE staff, some choose to demonstrate total disregard for these principles. Whether or not they have been proven, these examples, in themselves, are indicative of alleged unethical behaviour at the UG. It is unclear whether or not these kinds of situations are still taking place, since there have been no reported and confirmed cases. The bottom line is that such allegations should never be given the opportunity to raise their ugly heads. This is where the UG's Administration needs to make a decided effort to promote sound ethical behaviours and practices continuously. There needs to be workshops, seminars, conferences, and training sessions, among others, which deal with these types of issues and situations. The university staff *must* understand that serious consequences would follow, should such allegations and accusations be confirmed. They *must* understand that, at all times, they *must* hold themselves to higher standards.

One contentious issue at the UG, over the years, is that of the increase of tuition and other student fees. Often times, the UG students are opposed to the increases for various reasons. One such case occurred in the recent past in which the university students were not in agreement with the fee hike. As such, the University of Guyana Student Society (UGSS) launched a protest action to vehemently oppose this action, claiming that it was too sudden (Guyana Times, 2016). Members of the student body raised their voices in unison against this seemingly unjust move, while bemoaning the state of the UG, and calling feverishly for improved infrastructure, better facilities, conditions, equipment, materials, tools and resources, and spacious classrooms, among many others (Newsroom, 2016). One of the protesting students boldly stated the following: "I will come to school anyway because this is our university and decisions for our university cannot be made without us" (Demerara Waves 2016a, n.p.). The words echoed by the student bring to light not only the issue of ethical conduct, but also the need for participatory, inclusive practices in making decisions. This suggests that the UG's educational leaders should not only be involved in top-down practices, but also bottom-up practices. Even though the UGSS is represented by its President on the University Council, the highest decision-making body of the UG, it is but *one* voice (among many others). As a result of the protest action by the UGSS, the UG Administration decided to postpone implementation of the increased tuition fee until a later date (Demerara Waves 2016b). This ugly situation could have been avoided had there been a meeting between the UG Administration and the university students. With such a meeting, an amicable consensus could have been reached.

Educational leaders are entrusted with a heavy responsibility to lead their staff. Leaders and staff need to sensitise each other about the importance of maintaining good ethical practices at the UG. The Code of Ethics must always serve as a guide, in order to prevent public embarrassment, shame and disrepute. It is the responsibility of leaders to demonstrate to staff that their dignity and self-respect are very important to them, that they live by ethical principles, and that they should seek to execute their duties knowing that they have weighed the issues and made informed decisions in the best interest of all concerned parties. Even though at times it may be difficult, it is advisable that they remain above reproach and above condemnation. Though they are not perfect, they are very much aware of their strengths and weaknesses. These are to be embraced and portrayed to staff; in fact, leaders let staff members know that they are *authentic* and *credible*: they have firm beliefs about doing things, and they will uphold them even if it means that some feathers will be ruffled in the process. In so doing, their staff would also be encouraged to allow their every action to be guided by ethical standards. It becomes necessary for leaders to care strongly about certain ideas that deserve robust concern, and to be persons of prudence. In other words, leaders and staff need to understand the dynamics in Ethical Leadership and seek to embrace them for the greater good. By so doing, quality pedagogy can be delivered.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“Another professional development day! What an inconvenience!” (Mizzell 2010: 1). This is the comment that is usually emitted from the lips of many teachers in many educational institutions, both from new and experienced educators. From time to me, Professional Development (PD) is seen as a burden. Mizell (2010: 6) contends that “Educators who do not experience effective professional development do not improve their skills, and student learning suffers”. Staff PD has the objective of familiarising teaching staff with (a) classroom management, institutional culture, operations and administration/administrative issues, and (b) the necessary skills to deal with students’ learning challenges, curriculum and instruction, and learning, teaching and assessment. In other words, it deals with *administrative issues* (as in a) and *pedagogical issues* (as in b). PD is vital for the sustenance of any educational institution since, through it, the emergence of best practices could be ensured in concert with the educational context and the instructional goals of that same context (Marks and Printy, 2003; Jenkins, 2009). Just as learning and teaching are intimately entwined, so also are PD and instruction. PD is the strategy that institutions of learning take advantage of to guarantee that educators continue to strengthen their practice and hone their craft throughout their career. Given that learning and teaching are the nucleus of educational institutions, pedagogical reformation should always be paramount. It can therefore be surmised that *PD is the lifeblood of pedagogy*.

As discussed in the section above on *Pedagogical Leadership*, little or no attention is paid to instructional leadership at the UG. Many university teachers are comfortable with their (traditional) teaching practices, and oftentimes it is very difficult to get them to embrace pedagogical enhancement and innovation (Gaffar *et al*, 2011; Murray, 2013). In the case of the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the learning-teaching process, “Top management should champion the ICT initiative of the university since this will enable them by their actions to stimulate staff and make them more receptive to change” (Murray 2013: 40). By becoming involved in the ICT adoption process, university administrators and educational leaders can send the right signals to their staff, stimulating them to undergo a paradigm shift in order to promote *teaching effectiveness*. Teaching effectiveness can only result in *learning effectiveness*, which should be the chief objective of educational institutions.

It has been emphasised that in order to improve pedagogy, PD must take centre stage. The PD focus, therefore, should be placed on the improvement of pedagogical practices because the core responsibility of any institution of learning is to promote high-quality learning and teaching. Livingstone (2013) argues that too often, too much time is spent on addressing administrative issues, at the expense of pedagogical issues, and this gives way to the maintenance of traditional didactic practices at the UG. Upholding conventional practices, however, does nothing for learning. Even though the UG sponsors the Postgraduate Diploma in Education, that alone is not enough. Since universities all over the world are constantly engaging in PD, in order to remain relevant in this ever-changing world, then the UG ought to do likewise if it intends to compete with these universities on the world stage. In its earlier years, the UG used to be considered as the leading university in the Caribbean Region. For this institution to return to its former glory, PD should be (come) the standard and regular practice.

In response to this dire situation, the first step in the right direction would be to have teachers change their *conceptions* about staff development and what it entails. Teachers/lecturers need to have a clear picture of why there is a need for professional growth and development. Once this is understood, then steps can be taken to implement PD programmes. A *Professional Development Team* needs to be instituted and established at the UG, whose specific responsibility would be to facilitate on-going training and development for all teachers. This team could consist of a body of experts and specialists in the relevant subject areas. There should be regular *departmental ‘sharing sessions’* where staff members tell each other what is working for them and what is not. The experience of one teacher could easily provide the answer for another who is experiencing problems, like a novice teacher. A genuine sharing of problems and solutions through the lens of effective teaching can lift the game of

the whole department. In addition, a regular *departmental retreat* can be held where teaching-related matters are at the top of the agenda.

Another important suggestion would be to ensure that organisers of PD do so in ways that energise and assist educators, rather than alienate them. It would also be good to get lecturers' input on PD issues that they would like to see addressed. At all times, the voices of the teaching faculty need to be considered in this process. PD organisers need to be cognisant about specific, current improvements taking place in the learning-teaching arena, or it may be difficult to determine the PD steps needed to achieve desired performance levels. This is to say that poorly conceived and ineffectively implemented PD leads to complaints, monotony and lack of interest. When PD is organised well, educators value and embrace it because they know that it will be of great benefit to them as administrators and teachers. This is the way forward for sustainable development in education.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Stemming from the discussion above on PD, another facet that is sometimes overlooked or disregarded is the formation of a *Professional Learning Community (PLC)*. According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012), a PLC shares a vision. There is vision building. People are brought together to create the mission statement, develop the vision and value statements, establish the institutional goals, and develop co-operative and participatory learning processes with a view to having good governance. In a PLC, also, educational leaders and staff members behave professionally: they have respect for each other, they maintain dignity, and they work, learn and grow together in order to achieve institutional effectiveness (Contreras, 2016).

At the University of Guyana, there exists a professional community but *not* a PLC. This may be the general trend in the university. If a survey were to be carried out about the existence of a PLC at the UG, the results would certainly reveal that there is none. The possibility exists that some teaching staff may not even know what a PLC is. This is the situation that needs to change at the UG. All energies should be channelled into ensuring that learning and teaching practices are top quality. A PLC can help in this regard. By working with other leaders and staff, approaches to decision-making would be participatory; effective communication would be developed and sustained; professional relationships and individual and collective capacities would be built; potentials would be unleashed; empowerment would be encouraged, and on the job training would take place (persons developing persons), giving rise to positive feelings and changing behaviours due to interpersonal interactions. It therefore follows that a PLC is the way forward in the 21st century for promoting and encouraging people to positive action, since people are central to good governance. It is the *right thing* to do.

QUALITY EDUCATION

The primary business of any educational institution is the provision of *Quality Education (QE)*. Considering the discussion in this paper, QE depends on whether or not learner outcomes are aligned to the aim, mission and vision of the educational institution, and whether or not there is effective Shared Leadership, Pedagogic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Professional Development, and Professional Learning Communities. For QE to be delivered, therefore, these prerequisites must be addressed. In the context of education, the term quality has many definitions which all testify to the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the concept. Terms like efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have all been used synonymously. There is considerable consensus about the basic dimension of QE. Adams (1993) stresses that QE includes learners who are healthy and well-nourished to participate in learning; environments that are safe, healthy and protective with adequate resources and facilities; relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of skills; trained teachers who use learner-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms, and outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, linked to national education goals and positive participation in society. In other words, *quality is tantamount to sound pedagogical practices*.

Other educators around the world advocate that educational institutions must ensure that all learners are provided with the highest quality of learning and teaching (Veleros Valverde and García Hernández, 2013; Tahirsylaj, 2015; Sousa, 2015). In Guyana, for example, education stakeholders are calling for renewed efforts to carry out the mandate of QE delivery in order for learners to become educated, intelligent and prolific citizens. This means that traditional instructional practices should be abandoned in favour of more modern didactic practices which support a high-quality curriculum of excellence. Some dimensions which come into play include the use of a wide array of learning contexts; different didactic approaches, methods and techniques; feedback solicitation, and the provision of well-adapted learning environments and support services for learners, all with the objective of maximising learner outcomes and producing significant learning experiences.

At the UG, QE provision is a major concern for all stakeholders. University learners are calling for programme accreditation at the international level (MOGI, 2019). They contend that the UG should seek funding and grants for research from international bodies as a means of improving programme quality (MOGI, 2019). For the programmes of the UG to be considered for international accreditation, they must first be accredited nationally. While the UG has been taking steps towards receiving international accreditation for its programmes (Department of Public Information, 2018), it is surprising to learn that the UG is only now moving in the direction of attaining national

accreditation (Department of Public Information, 2019). It is incumbent upon the UG's educational leaders to pay more attention to the provision of QE to their learners because this is part of their mandate to do so. In fact, the UG should be the *protagonist* of QE delivery. There needs to be quality educators in this institution of higher learning, since only quality educators can impart QE. For there to be quality educators, the requisite training must be conducted so that educators can deal with issues as they emerge.

The UG should ascertain that the quality of education provided is always in harmony with learner expectations and outcomes, as well as employer demands. One way of guaranteeing this is by connecting the UG's Aim, Mission, Vision, goals and objectives to sound leadership practices and pedagogical innovations. If cutting-edge, high-quality educational practices are embraced at the UG, it can be transformed into a centre of learning and teaching excellence. Since QE distinguishes a high-ranking institution from a low-ranking institution, it is not unfair to suggest that if the UG were to attain and maintain extremely high pedagogical standards it could attract a higher number of learners than those educational institutions with low educational standards. Delivering QE is a basic human right, and this paves the way for learners to experience holistic development and demonstrate *creativity, application, and life-long learning*.

CONCLUSION

This critical review paper has centred its attention on issues in Educational Leadership and the UG. It is necessary to indicate that this kind of paper is the *first* to be written about the governance and institutional culture of the UG. The issues discussed - the University's Aim, Mission and Vision in the changing context of Educational Leadership; Shared Leadership; Pedagogic Leadership; Transformational Leadership; Ethical Leadership; Professional Development; Professional Learning Community, and Quality Education - have all shed light on the state of Educational Leadership at this institution of higher learning. Educational Leadership promotes *leadership practice*. As already pointed out, an educational institution can only be as effective as its leaders (administrative and academic). Institutions of learning have the express duty to prepare learners to confront 21st century challenges effectively. Failing to engage in effective leadership practices can put learning and teaching at risk, resulting in a poor quality of education; almost always, the ones who suffer the most are the learners.

A poor quality of pedagogy cannot foster creative, critical and complex cognitive skills in learners; it does not stimulate the *development of the whole person*, or support *life-long learning*. Leadership practice has to be distributed or shared if any educational institution is expected to fulfil its main mission. Effective pedagogical, transformational

and ethical leaders should work together for the betterment of the institution; in fact, effective educational leaders should possess some of the qualities of each type of leadership highlighted in this paper. Educational institutions cannot ignore the inevitability of professional growth and development, and all of its facets (for example, Professional Learning Communities), which creates the way for high-quality pedagogy and pedagogical practices; in simple terms, without it, the institution dies. The responsibility, therefore, rests with the educational leader to be efficient and effective, influencing staff members in this same way. If the quality of leadership in the educational institution is improved, it would give rise to the delivery of high-quality education.

This paper has also highlighted that there is significant room for improvement at the UG in all aspects of Educational Leadership. It is clear that leadership is a critical part of any organisation and that without it no organisation can function (effectively). Even though the UG has been making attempts to improve the quality of leadership and pedagogy, a major effort still needs to be exercised in order to ensure that educational quality meets the expectations of all relevant education stakeholders (the most important of whom are the learners). Educational leaders at the UG must be prepared to embrace *change*, a key factor which links leadership to sound educational practices. Since the core business of the UG is education promotion and delivery, positive change in behaviour can offer a comprehensive opportunity to impact didactic practices, offer educational best practices, and serve as the impetus and catalyst of innovation. Innovative learning and teaching practices can cater for the delivery of quality learning experiences which are specifically geared towards addressing learners' learning diversity, preferences, needs, and interests.

Instigating change through practical leadership sets the pathway for meaningful and determined outcomes. It therefore follows that the UG's educational leaders must do what is right for that institution and, ultimately, for learners; in fact, right-doing can allow the UG's leaders to cope with change and to master their educational context. This means that educational leaders at the UG have to be suitably skilled and experienced to lead their staff members in the right direction: *enhancing and promoting learning that matters*. It is underscored that Educational Leadership has to be the heart of educational practices if the UG is expected to deliver cutting-edge, high-quality 21st century pedagogy. In this way, positive learning is promoted, learner enthusiasm for learning is sparked, and a strong foundation for life-long learning is provided, all with a view to fostering *creativity, application, and life-long learning*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggestion is made for the UG to restructure its educational programme offerings to closely reflect its *Aim*,

Mission and Vision. Course goals should be linked to programme goals, programme goals should be linked to institutional goals, and institutional goals should be linked to national goals. In this way, there would be a four-way harmony which would ensure that the UG meets the needs and expectations of its learners, the university itself, employers, and the country.

The recommendation is made for the UG to make a decided effort to embrace *Shared Leadership*. For too long, the top-down approach has been in effect and it is clear that it is not working. The bottom-up approach needs to be practised as well, and in tandem with the top-down approach. All education stakeholders, with the exception of none, should be actively involved in the decision-making process. This can ensure continuity, transparency, and a smooth flow of organisational and institutional processes and practices.

Since the main concern of any educational institution should be learning and teaching, the UG ought to ensure that *Pedagogical Leadership* is at its peak. Educational institutions can only be as effective as their educational staff and leaders. Since teachers are the drivers of pedagogy, then they ought to be sufficiently motivated to be leaders. Pedagogical leaders must inspire their staff to be their best selves which could only redound positively to the UG.

There is a dearth of transformational leaders at the UG, and this issue must be addressed from an individual perspective. The UG's educational leaders must have the conviction to be transformational and transformative. It is only in this way that they can be effective role models for their staff who can then be role models for their learners. For the UG to fully accomplish its Aim, Mission and Vision, *Transformational Leadership* must take centre stage.

It is recommended that the UG pay close(r) attention to *Ethical Leadership* and what it means for the institution. This kind of leadership style ought not to be taken for granted because it can make or break that institution (and determine whether it rises or falls), especially considering that it *is* the binding force among all types of leadership styles and practices. The UG cannot allow itself to be under negative scrutiny. Educational leaders, staff and students *must*, at all times, be above reproach.

It is suggested that the UG's educational leaders put *Professional Development* at the top of the agenda. For too long, sufficient attention has not been paid to this issue. Since pedagogy drives an educational institution, then everything must be done to ensure that this momentum is maintained. The UG's academic staff must understand that the only way for them to become effective teachers - thereby producing effective learners and engendering meaningful learning - is by continuously improving their pedagogical skills and techniques. The UG's leaders must ensure that this is attained.

Stemming from the previous paragraph, the establishment of a *Professional Learning Community* at the UG is hereby proposed. This kind of community supports and sustains professional growth and development among teaching faculty. For instructional skills, strategies and techniques to be honed, academic staff must rely on each other and grow and develop together, through peer review and peer support, for positive and lasting action.

The objective of all seven recommendations above is to promote one thing at the UG: *Quality Education*. It is suggested, therefore, that the UG make (the delivery of) high-quality education a priority. Quality Education can only come from a quality educational institution. If the UG intends to become a cutting-edge institution of higher learning, then it must do everything in its power to ensure, assure, and sustain quality in education and quality educational practices.

This critical review paper is a relevant and significant piece of work, as it relates to Educational Leadership and leadership practices at the UG. There is no documented evidence about any kind of critical review paper ever written or any kind of research ever conducted which addresses the governance and institutional culture of the UG. In fact, there are very few studies conducted about leadership and leadership practice in educational organisations in Guyana. Those documented studies focus on the primary and secondary education sector (and not on the tertiary education sector). In the Guyana context, this paper does fill a gap in the area of Educational Leadership because it is the *first* of its kind in the HE context. This paper can be useful to those educational institutions, inside and outside of Guyana, which are in the process of revisiting and re-examining their leadership practices - in order to foster high-quality learning and teaching and to become institutions of learning and teaching excellence - and those which are yet to do so.

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