

## ABSTRACT

### Transforming Post-Secondary Education: A Caribbean Perspective on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

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In recent times there has been a trend towards the adoption of an inclusive and seamless education system in many countries. Where are students with disabilities located in the transformation process? Even as there is transformation at The University of the West Indies, there is a perceived gap between persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons and their rights to access, retention and successful outcomes at the postsecondary level, in this case at the university level.

This research has examined the lived experiences of students with disabilities and non-disabled students at the three main campuses of The University of the West Indies – St. Augustine (Trinidad and Tobago), Mona (Jamaica) and Cave Hill (Barbados).

In seeking to answer the research question, this study engages the call of disability studies for research and scholarship to expand beyond the traditional Medical Model of disability and embraces the Social Model and Rights Model of disability. It explicates the core principles of a qualitative research design being grounded in Action Research theory while utilizing phenomenology as the data interpretation technique which gave a voice to those being researched. The analysis has cut through taken-for-granted assumptions of disability and inclusive education at the three campuses as there is the revelation that there are gaps in the operationalizing of teaching and learning and accessibility of the physical environment. The recommendations of policy development and implementation with emphasis on Universal Design provide prescription for addressing the research problem.

Keywords: Jacqueline Huggins; disability; tertiary; inclusive postsecondary education; Caribbean.