

gramme on their behalf. Erdiston College will also provide support to those teachers if they so desire. The Diagnostic Centre will also be stocked with current, research-based literacy materials that Erdiston Tutors will use to model teaching strategies that teachers can employ to implement intervention programmes. The centre will also make some of these materials available to schools on loan, where there are dire needs.



How will the trained assessors Function?

The trained assessors have been drawn from nursery, primary and secondary schools and the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training.

It is envisaged that those teachers who have been trained in diagnosis will be released by the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training on a one-day-a-week basis to assist in the testing of students who have been identified by their schools. The College will only request the release of teachers if there are children to be tested and profiled. Additionally, all teachers would not be needed at the same time since the centre will only test a limited number of students on the days when testing is scheduled.

How will ETTC support teachers who have children in the programme?

Erdiston Teachers' Training College, through its professional development programme, will mount training sessions for teachers of children who are in the programme. The training sessions will help teachers to upgrade their skills in implementing intervention programmes for struggling students. The sessions will be held on a one-day-a-week- release basis. Literacy tutors from ETTC will also visit schools to give onsite assistance to teachers as requested.

How will ETTC support parents who have children in the programme?

Erdiston Teachers' Training College, through its Continuing Education Programme, will mount evening courses for parents of children who are in the programme. The training sessions will equip parents with knowledge and skills that they can use to help their children to upgrade their literacy skills. The sessions will be held once a week from 5:15 – 7:15 p.m. The cost of the evening programme which will run for two semesters is \$660.00 per person.



How will the Diagnostic Centre be funded?

Erdiston Teachers' Training College is a beneficiary of the Skills for the Future Programme Post-Secondary Institution Improvement Grant, \$150,000 of which has been earmarked for the establishment of the Diagnostic and Early Intervention Centre. The funds will be used to buy the relevant tests, secure the training for the twenty (20) teachers, and purchase computers, SPSS software package, literacy teaching materials to be used by Tutors of Erdiston College in the delivery of model lessons and for loan to teachers in schools.

Parents will be asked to pay a minimal fee for the testing and diagnostic services. A means test will be done, and where persons are unable to pay, the fee will be waived so that no child who needs the services is denied.

Funds for stationery and other miscellaneous items will be included in the annual estimates of expenditure. There will be no need to pay the teachers who will be conducting the testing and developing the IEPs since testing will be done during the regular school day and teachers will be released on a one day per week basis as the need arises.



Diagnostic and Early Intervention Centre



Erdiston Teachers Training College



Diagnostic and Early Intervention Centre

Background

Literacy is an essential foundational skill that is required for persons to function effectively in modern life. Early diagnosis of deficits in literacy is needed to identify gaps so that the necessary corrective measures can be taken. Too often students' difficulties in the area of literacy are detected, but are not addressed early in their development. Consequently, students are allowed to saunter through the system from primary to secondary with these deficits only to exit the school system many years later totally incapable of meeting the literacy demands of everyday life. Consequently, many of them suffer from poor self-esteem, become involved in crime and end up incarcerated where they become a further drain on the system.

According to the Human Resource Development Strategy 2011-2016, while Barbados can boast of a very good education system, and a well-qualified and competent workforce, still between 30% and 40% of students writing Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations leave secondary school under certificated for the labour force and lacking in work related skills (p. 46). According to Brooks (2002) the key elements of effective teaching approaches for low achievers in literacy include: early intervention, one to one and/or small group support and personalization. Longitudinal studies indicate that children who are poor readers by the age of 7 almost never acquire average reading skills by the end of their primary school unless substantial sustained remediation is used.

Rationale

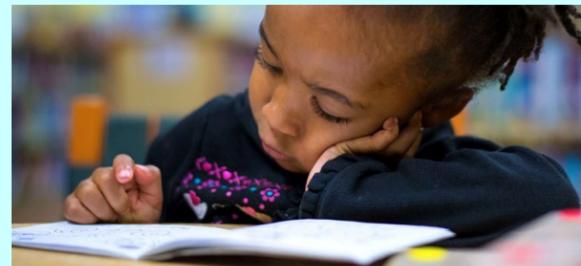
The Diagnostic and Early Intervention Centre at Erdiston Teachers' Training College will provide literacy testing, intervention approaches and monitoring services for students in primary schools who have been identified by their teachers as having literacy problems. The information obtained from the assessment will translate into curriculum modifications and specific intervention instructional plans to match the individual needs of each student. The trained specialists at the centre will work collaboratively with the students, teachers and parents to address the identified deficits in the area of literacy. In this way, students would have a better chance of achieving their full potential.

Objectives

- * Provide diagnostic testing services to children who have problems in the area of literacy
- * Create profiles of children tested to guide their intervention programmes
- * Create IEPs for students tested to guide their intervention plans
- * Monitor the progress of students who have been tested until they have overcome their deficits
- * Provide guidance and support to teachers of students who have been tested to help them implement the intervention plans
- * Deliver professional development courses for teachers to strengthen their skills in literacy instruction

The Training of Teachers in Literacy Diagnosis and Intervention Strategies

In preparation of the establishment the Diagnostic and Early Intervention Centre, Erdiston Teachers' Training College will coordinate the training of twenty (20) teachers in Literacy Diagnosis and Intervention Strategies in preparation for the setting up of a Diagnostic Centre in September 2019. Teachers with the relevant background skills were invited by Erdiston College to indicate their willingness to participate in the programme. A total of fifty-three (53) persons applied to



participate. From this list, twenty (20) persons were selected by the College to participate in the training.

The training is scheduled to be held from 07 to 30 August 2019 at Erdiston College and will be delivered by Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald, a noted expert in this area. Erdiston College is in the process of procuring the tests and other materials to be used in the training.

The Diagnostic Centre

The Diagnostic Centre will be set up in a room in the Dorothy King Teaching Complex. It will be stocked with a battery of test that will facilitate assessment in many discrete areas. The tests will include the The Woodcock - Johnson IV Tests of Achievement Standard Battery, the Ekwall Shanker Reading Inventory, Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills, the Test of Phonological Awareness (TOPA) and the MICO Test.

The following is a brief description of each test:

⇒ WJ IV Tests of Achievement

This Woodcock Johnson battery is ideal for accurately screening, diagnosing, and monitoring progress in reading, writing, and mathematics achievement areas. Three forms (A, B, C) with parallel content provide the means to monitor progress two to three times per year.



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⇒ Ekwall Shanker Reading Inventory

The Ekwall Shanker Reading Inventory (ESRI) features forty diagnostic tests to help educators, school psychologists, resource teachers, and reading specialists successfully assist individual students in developing their reading ability. This comprehensive guide can be used to measure nine different areas of reading, including: oral and silent reading ability; listening comprehension; phonemic awareness; concepts about print; letter knowledge; basic sight vocabulary; phonics; structural analysis; context clues; dictionary skills; fluency skills; vocabulary; reading comprehension; and reading interests.

User-friendly examples, directions, and printable testing materials make it easy for pre- and in-service teachers to administer assessments, interpret results, and prepare diagnostic reports. Using the results of the *ESRI*, educators are able to differentiate instruction in order to successfully develop all readers.

⇒ Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills

Brigance is a screening tool widely used by schools for students in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade. The test is not an IQ test nor is it a full scale educational assessment – it is a norm referenced test that compares each child's results with the performance of other examinees. Brigance Testing covers a variety of school based curriculum topics through a series of 12 assessments.

⇒ Test of Phonological Awareness (TOPA)

The TOPA is a group administered, norm referenced measure of phonological awareness for children ages 5 through 8 years. It can also

be administered individually.

⇒ MICO Diagnostic Reading Test

Culturally sensitive and normed on Regional students, the MDRT was designed to identify not only the level at which the individual child is reading, but also provides insight into weaknesses which need to be addressed in school. The MDRT is a product of Mico University, Jamaica.

How will the Diagnostic Centre Work with the Schools?

Schools across the island will write Erdiston Teachers' Training College, identifying students who are presenting with severe literacy problems. The College will set up appointments with the teachers for the students to be brought to the College by their parents to be tested. The team of trained persons at the College will test the students and diagnose their reading strengths and weaknesses. Individual profiles will be created for each student. These profiles will be sent to the teachers in the schools, but a copy will be given to the parent of each child tested.

Based on the diagnosis, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed for each student indicating the intervention strategies that need to be employed to help the student to compensate for his/her developmental lags. The College will provide training for the teachers through its professional development programme to assist them in implementing the strategies outlined in the (IEPs) for students in their care. Teaching materials will also be provided to schools on loan from the Diagnostic Centre in instances where schools



may not have the necessary resources. The College will keep track of all students tested by the centre through regular meetings with the teachers. Students will exit the programme when they have compensated for their developmental lags and can reenter the regular reading programmes at their schools. Those students who are moving on to secondary school and still have deficits, will take their profiles with them so that the teachers will be able to carry on the remediation pro-