Title: Exploring Jamaican Preservice Teachers’ Voices on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Teacher Preparation

Jamaica has made important strides in the use of ICT in education. Some schools are equipped with computer labs and other technological infusions. However, there is concern about the preparedness of teachers in training to include the available technology in their instructional activities. This concern has led to a study in the Institute of Education on the USE of ICT in pre-service teaching (with emphasis on Literacy Studies). The study addresses three questions: What are preservice teachers’ impressions of their preparedness for the use of ICT in their teaching? What are preservice teachers’ descriptions of their competencies in the use of ICT? What recommendations do student teachers have for the use of ICT in teacher preparation? Data were collected through questionnaires and semi structured interviews. In analyzing the qualitative data, inductive and deductive modes of analysis are engaged. The deductive mode of analysis was guided by the research questions while themes that emerged during data analysis were as a result of inductive analysis. Qualitative findings are arranged in themes and classified based on a process of coding for themes and their related sub-themes. The questionnaires will provide simple descriptive statistics on the pre-service teachers’ feedback on their preparation and engagement with ICT. The preliminary findings of the inquiry suggest that most respondents consider the ICT skills valuable to their teaching tasks. However, many do not possess the requisite skills to integrate ICT in their instruction. Many also view their teachers training institutions as ill-equipped to prepare teachers in the use of ICT.

The Jamaican education landscape is currently in transformation mode and the use of ICT is advocated in policy and curriculum documents. However it is necessary to examine the realities of teachers who are being prepared for the classroom contexts. Their voices on their preparation as well as their practicum experiences provide insight on their impressions of the state of ICT in teacher education as well as in the classrooms of a Developing nation. Their perceptions of the value of ICT in their pedagogy and the fitness of their teacher training institutions for promoting ICT are important considerations in this research. Student teachers impressions will also be viewed in the context of education transformation in Jamaica and the congruence between the mandates of transformation concerning ICT in education and the realities of these student teachers.

The voices of literacy pre-service teachers are also important since literacy acquisition is a major consideration in the Jamaican context. The focus on the voices of these pre-service teachers will provide information on the levels of ICT infusion in their training and their suggestions for improving the quality of the offerings. While the research is located in the Jamaican education system, the findings and recommendation hold implications for Countries with similar circumstances namely the Caribbean and other territories that grapple with issues of ICT in teacher preparation.