



GLOBAL-READY WORKFORCE LEVERAGING DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION FOR WORKFORCE READINESS IN THE CARIBBEAN

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Abstract

Change has become commonplace in every sphere of life and learners must be taught as part of their formal and informal learning and development indoctrination to deal with many unknowns and interact in diverse environments. Diversity is an important asset in any educational establishment as well as the changing workplace and must be fully leveraged in the every teaching and learning curriculum in the Caribbean. When teaching and learning organizations embrace diversity as an element of their learning and development culture, learners are given a competitive edge, given the level of cultural sensitivity they develop in their interaction with other students who are dissimilar and when the teaching and learning process and content, address the subject of diversity. Thus, when students are prepared to deal with the challenges presented in the globally connected and economically linked society, they are better prepared to succeed in the workplace both locally and globally. Therefore, educators, policy-makers and workplace professionals must be intentional in their chosen inclusion strategies to truly cultivate a learning climate that is safe to learn because students are made to feel valued, recognized and appreciated for who they are and what they bring and share in each learning encounter.

Keywords: diversity; globalization; culturally dissimilar; education leadership, generationally dissimilar; linguistically dissimilar; ideologically dissimilar, biologically dissimilar, Caricom, economically dissimilar, West Indies, globalized teaching and learning, Caribbean, teaching and learning diversely.

Introduction

Globalization has changed the world in ways that are yet to be understood, far less properly managed, especially in the Caribbean (see: Premdas, 2011; Colón, 2010; George & Lewis, 2011; Barker, 2012; Martin & Bray, 2011). But globalization cannot be seen as localized to the Caribbean or some distance nation, but seen as “monumental structural changes occurring in the process of production and distribution in the global economy” (Cogburn, 1998, p.1). Therefore, globalization must be recognized as a phenomenon that involves all nations, all organizations, all communities, and certainly all persons given the changes, opportunities and challenges it brings, the lives transformed by it and the systems, practices, policies and investment patterns that must be changed because of globalization (Hewapathirana and Bowen, 2008; Summer, 2008; Scott, 2000).

These changes have many implications for the transmission of new and globalized quality knowledge that have as a natural derivative the need for congruent job creation and students preparation for competitive placement in the global economy (Carnoy, 2005). However, these opportunities can only be realized if there are changes in the mindsets of the people and the leaders of the Caribbean about their place in the global marketplace and what they need to do to affirm that placement. It is important, however, that changing the mindset includes reaffirming and redefining the Caribbean and its people to



include their own cultural identity and histories instead of hastily trying to live out the histories and experiences of others as they try to find their place in this globally interconnected world.

In their assessment of research capacity in the Caribbean, Lewis and Simmons (2010) pointed out that the Caribbean is in a vulnerable position to the threats of cultural fusion which can downgrade and in some situation marginalize smaller Caribbean states. To mitigate some of these resultant threats, it is important that Caribbean leaders identify the things that make the Caribbean people unique and use this understanding to begin reinforcing the distinctive Caribbean identity as a way of acknowledging the existing mindset, intentionally changing mindsets that need to change, merging mindset and adopting new mindsets where necessary and appropriate in order to move forward. A strong self-identity makes the Caribbean nation and its people better positioned to compete as an equal partner rather than a silent or minority partner in the global marketplace.

Such intentional course of action will help create a new path for globally ready Caribbean people and a new Caribbean economy with global intent and persons who have the ability to compete in the global marketplace with their identity intact, with heightened cultural sensitivity and with the intended purpose of thriving and being successful in the global economy. These measures serve as organizers from which Caribbean leaders can earnestly assess their current structures, policies, procedures and practices, evaluate the current economic environment and begin identifying new structures that if adopted will lead to a stronger more global conscious people and a well-positioned Caribbean economy. This self-assessment process ought to result in developing strategies for moving the Caribbean people forward, developing knowledge through collaborative research and knowledge sharing systems that are usable and can be evaluated for impact and needed adjustment, frequently.

According to the International Labour Organization “Global Employment Trends 2011” Report, it has been more than three years since the beginning of the fastest and deepest economic crisis since the great depression. Employment-population ratios, pronounced vulnerable forms of labour, stagnant labour productivity growth, and rising discouragement – particularly among youth still persist with noticeable and ongoing consequences (ILO, 2011). These noted trends are evident in the elevated unemployment and slow job creation globally, especially in developed economies. Like the rest of the world, the Caribbean is affected by the global economic crisis with most noticeable signs beginning with the decline of employment in 2008-2009. These are difficult times for all people and it is critical for leaders of the Caribbean to react less and be intentional and proactively response to these global challenges by developing their people, their infrastructure, policies, procedures and practices to stabilize and reenergized the people of the Caribbean to take advantage of the opportunities globalization presents.

Hence, the changes and challenges brought about by globalization are inevitable phenomenon among all entities and these changes as noticed have immense implications in every aspect of academic and worklife as well as the composition of those who lead these organizations (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Karoly & Panis, 2004). As a matter of speaking “almost, if not all, social life facets are affected by the globalization process: culture, politics, economy and social relations are all deemed to be transformed by this process” (Vaira, 2004, p. 483). Therefore, Caribbean leaders must avoid the natural impulse to reaction and to think about globalization in both specific and general terms, as to do differently results in many new behaviors that are incongruent to the existing structure and may very well derail individuals, organizations and nations from forging ahead with the right attitude and sense of responsibility, strategies and purpose to be successful in this global economy (Carnoy, 2005).

In a global economy, nations are connected and interconnected even if they don’t want to be connected or be interconnected that is why individuals, communities, organizations and nations must come to expect that diversity will be a part of their existence and will change them whether they like it or not. Guillen (2000) pointed out that “globalization encourages diversity rather than homogeneity” (p18) as people move freely within and among nations. Each movement brings persons who are dissimilar to the



Caribbean and people of the Caribbean must increase their level of sensitivity to these individuals and what they bring, but they should not view their own cultural heritage as subordinate to those persons. The Caribbean's culture is not inferior to another culture; it is simply different and should be celebrated and respected, especially by the people of the Caribbean in ways that encourages tolerance and inclusion of others. It is therefore necessary for Caribbean educational leaders to understand the international interaction requirements in order to operate in a global business environment and ensure that their students and workers acquire these skills as diversity and complexity increase (Jokinen, 2005; Neves & Caetano, 2009).

However, there are instances where employers are having a difficult time filling certain positions because many available workers lack credentials, attitude, work habits and social skills employers prefer (Kirk, Woody, Burns, Howard and Rice, 2001) and must resort to hiring persons who are not of the Caribbean. Therefore, Caribbean leaders must be premeditated in their chosen policy positions about human resource development strategies to include those ideas that are, not only, creating discourse about diversity, but also generating meaningful strategies for changing the existing education approach to fit a global operational market place. However, despite the noted changes and challenges, "proponents have been cautious about advocating significant change" within respective nations and organizations (Richardson & Skinner, 1990, p. 486). Truly, a cautious approach is necessary, but to be cautious in the Caribbean should not be equated with doing nothing as to do nothing ignores the changes that are happening right here in the Caribbean today and are creating all kinds of dysfunctional consequences because of lack of foresight, planning, structure, leadership and movement.

Furthermore, in the case of work and worklife, the last decade has seen many changes, in the way work is performed and measured, the people performing the work and the reward and work arrangement systems. Hence, the way these changes are perceived, conceptualized and managed and the way students in the Caribbean are educated should also change, given the increased diversity and complexity these changes bring and support (Jokinen, 2005). These changes are manifested in predictable ways, as well as, unanticipated ways (Dollard & Winefield, 2002). Regardless of how these changes manifest, they appear to be constant occurrences in every aspect of workers' readiness-requirements, professional identity as well as individuals' personal lives and should be taken seriously. Because the world is becoming smaller and more complex, it means that diversity has to be a factor in the way educators in the Caribbean teach and the way students learn and are evaluated.

The purpose and outline of this paper

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the global trends and how the Caribbean can take advantage of the benefits it brings and mitigate some of the challenges it presents. To accomplish both political, educational and workplace leaders are to incorporate strategies into their policies, curriculum and workplace learning and development endeavors that leverage aspects of diversity from the local cultures as well as globalized diversity patterns. To elucidate this, this paper explores eight main areas and provides some key definitions. The first section presents key definitions. The second sections examined global trends and the Caribbean. In the third session, behavioral requirements for Caribbean workers of all kinds working in a changing global economy which may require them to work alongside foreign workers, work as part of a global team or be an expatriate working in another country. The fourth explores issues of diversity and some of the challenges posed. The fifth discusses some of the ways people think about diversity. The sixth examined effective ways of teaching and learning in a diverse, learning community. The seventh examines strategies for preparing students for the boardroom and beyond. The eighth section explores strategies for leveraging diversity in education. The sections are presented in such a way as to illuminate the link between the changing operational environment and the need to have cross-cultural acumen, world knowledge and to teach and learn diversely. Following this, the implications for



educational leaders and workplace professionals are considered, together with some concluding remarks and learning and development professionals possibilities for collaborating with educators.

Key definitions

Like the rest of the world, the Caribbean has distinctive communities and sub communities, many ways of interacting and communicating face-to-face and through different electronic modalities. All these elements of culture are influenced by and are instrumental in helping to shape the values, beliefs, practices and expressions that make the Caribbean people unique and deserve equal respect and dignity (UNESCO, 2008). Because of this, it is important to establish some common definitions that are useful in thinking about and responding to the challenges teaching and learning diversely presents. The definitions considered in illuminating the ideas presented in the document are as follows:

Table 1: key definitions

Term to be defined	Definition
Cultural diversity	A set or sets of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of the Caribbean people.
Teaching and learning diversely	Creating a learning environment that is physically and psychologically safe, socially aligned to tap into the deepest human need to be themselves, where creative learning is encouraged and errors are seen as opportunities for further exploration of one’s potential and not as a marker of defeat or failure.
Globalization	“Economic "globalization" is a historical process, the result of human innovation and technological progress. It refers to the increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through the movement of goods, services, and capital across borders” (International Monetary Fund, 2008).
Generation difference	“It is the theory that people born approximately 20-year time period share a common set of characteristics based on the historical experiences, economic and social conditions, technological advances, and other societal changes they have in common” (Reeves and Ho, 2007, p. 295). The groupings are traditionalist, veteran or silent generation (1925-1943), baby-boomers (1943-1960), generation X (1961-1981) and the millennium generation (1982-2000) (see chart in appendix A).

GLOBAL TRENDS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Population density is high in some Caribbean countries with some harmful effects on deforestation and fresh water availability (Free World Academy). But despite the challenging global economic environment in the Caribbean, the ILO (2006) reported that over 85 million people still migrate to developing nations like the Caribbean for employment opportunities which present its own diversity for Caribbean leaders, including educators. For instance, Thomas-Hope (2002) reported that “the Caribbean have always been part of the global network of production and labour transfer” (p. v) but the rate at which this is happening today warrants deeper understanding and purposeful attention by Caribbean leaders.



However, the intensification of globalization has accelerated the rate at which information becomes available, reformulated and the ease at which both skilled and unskilled Caribbean residents are hired by foreign nations, especially developed nations (Thomas-Hope, 2002). The evidence of this assertion is supported by the liberalization of immigration policies by a number of developed nations to attract the movement of skilled professionals (Thomas-Hope, 2002). This free movement of workers between nations is fueling a brain drain in the Caribbean which requires prompt redress by Caribbean leaders.

Clearly, globalization and internationalization are creating a context for Caribbean nations and organizations to redefine themselves and their people by re-engineering their curriculum and teaching and learning practices for better positioning and for global competitiveness. This is largely true because the changes experienced are rapid, unpredictable and pervasive (Burnes, 2004). Furthermore, the ILO (2006) reported that global economic growth is increasingly failing to create new and better jobs that are meaningful and sustainable that would lead to reduction in poverty.

These changes present many opportunities and challenges for the people of the Caribbean but changes must be made in the curriculum to fully realize the opportunities presented and to mitigate unsuspecting threats that are before the Caribbean nations. In many situations, globalization has not met the simple and legitimate aspirations for decent jobs and a better future for workers and their children (ILO, 2011). The failings of globalization are evident in the Caribbean as well and since one size does not fit all, the people of the Caribbean must become a more close-knit community to solve the problems they face in this global economy. Any intervention must be intentional in that they are pivotal in creating “an economy that generates opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, skills development, leadership development, job creation and sustainable livelihood” because the current model of jobs creation is not producing sufficient jobs nor are the jobs diverse enough (ILO, 2006).

In spite of the way changes are experienced in the Caribbean, these changes warrant swift and decisive actions to mitigate the impact they are having on students’ preparedness for the workplace and their readiness to interact with other students and workers who are diverse with the right level of cultural sensitivity and world knowledge to avoid being left behind. Consequently, educational leaders in the Caribbean must set direction from the top and engage people from all levels of the organization (Beer and Nohria, 2000) in reshaping the educational system to do business with a global mindset, world knowledge and in a borderless economic environment (Károly and Panis, 2004). These leaders must also be willing to take on the role of change agents who are not afraid to “encourage risk-taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions” (Kotter, 2007, p.3).

Most of all, these changes are catalytic events resulting from a flood of new and evolving technological tools, work options, multilingualism, world disasters and conflicts, insidious deregulation, diverse abilities, demographic shifts, multiculturalism, blurring of the lines between work and personal time, internationalization, multigenerational workforce, knowledge-information sharing methods, work arrangements, cross-cultural interactions among other things (Károly and Panis, 2004; Black, Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991). These changes are experienced all over the world, including the Caribbean, with both direct and proximate consequences. As a matter of fact, internationalization and the globalized interchange have affected every aspect of policy-making, governance, communication, organization, academic and work identities (Vaira, 2004). Moreover, given the projected shortage for skilled and unskilled labour, most governmental agencies want to welcome foreigners, not scare them away (Stopford, 1998-1999), therefore more immigrants entering the workforce increase the level and complexity of diversity. Because of the freedom of movement in this borderless economy, Fairl (2009) believed that “valuing diversity and fostering inclusion produces diversity of thought and improves potential for recruiting and retaining highly qualified employees” (p. 20).



Despite one's placement in this storm of change, there are some important behaviors and practices that must become part of the futurist teaching and learning process in the Caribbean to best equip the next generation of students to function in multicultural, multilingual, multigenerational and multi-ideological interconnected work environments. As students develop their world knowledge, team building capabilities, language skills, cross-cultural communication, global ethics and specialized skills with a cross-cultural emphasis and are encouraged to find and tap their creative capacity, they will be better able to function in a global economic environment. Guillen (2000) argued that as students become mutually more aware of others in the global economy, new knowledge will multiply the chances of linkages with others and generate possibilities for exchange.

Umbach & Kuh (2006) contended that "the very act of experiencing diversity during college helps students develop the habits of the mind and heart that enlarge their capacity for doing so after college" (p. 170). Therefore, it is imperative that educational leaders in the Caribbean put in place those teaching and learning systems that will help students learn and grow holistically in readiness to work in a diverse work environment with a tolerant and creative mindset. It is also necessary to set clear pathways to prepare educators to teach diversely in every Caribbean classroom. This is an urgent need that requires serious consideration because to do differently, not only, places students at a competitive disadvantage, but it also leaves the Caribbean region lagging behind and waiting for handouts from other nations which usually have incongruent requirements attached to them and many times launch the Caribbean backward instead of forward which is needed for proper global positioning.

globalization, creativity and learning

Human beings have the ability to grow and be creative and society cannot achieve economic and cultural progress without supporting human growth and development (Charan, Dotter & Noel, 2001). That is why it is so important for Caribbean educational leaders to find the right mix of leadership, instruction, supports, staffing and environmental appropriateness to prepare students to work in a complex intercultural, globally-influenced operational environment. However, Caribbean leaders must be mindful that as a result of increased internationalization and globalization many challenges have surfaced, especially with "the need to design effective multinational organizations, to identify and select appropriate leaders for these entities and to manage organizations with culturally diverse employees" (Northouse, 2007, p. 301). Furthermore, the changing world is, not only, challenging, but ill-defined, misunderstood, and has no clear pathway for addressing these concerns given the uniqueness of each; the rate at which these challenges evolve; the lackluster responsiveness to these challenges by major leaders; and the lack of congruent training and preparedness of Caribbean educators (Mark, 2008; Lewis and Simmons, 2010) to research and address these concerns in meaningful, yet in sustainable ways that are still to be attained.

The changes have landed in the Caribbean are creating a level of diversity as never seen before and educators in the Caribbean need to take note of these changes and modify their teaching and learning models, education commitment, funding and evaluation methods, recruitment and promotion practices and futuristic planning and developing methods, accordingly.

Arsenault (2003) acknowledged that "today's workforce is more diverse than ever" (p. 124). With the increasing richness of diversity in the world and in the workforce, we need to expand our outlook in the Caribbean and encourage creative thinking and use creative strategies to be successful (U.S. Department of Commerce and Former Vice President Al Gore National Partnership for Reinventing Government, 1996). Clearly, the issues of diversity are crucial as the interconnectedness of people today is astounding given internationalization influences, globalization and the pervasive use of technological tools to interact with diverse peoples and in multiple settings.



Cogburn (1998) pointed out that knowledge is becoming increasingly important factor of production and in some cases even more important than land, labor and capital. However, the ease at which information can be attained and its pervasiveness is putting pressure on the education and learning paradigm around the world in order to better meet the demands of the knowledge and information-intensive global economy (Cogburn, 1998). For instance, in the Caribbean the ways in which students learn have become indistinct, in that, much what is learned in the classroom from primary school to university lack Caribbean relevance or students lack the creative drive to make the knowledge useful in solving challenges in the Caribbean, especially socioeconomic disparities, misaligned issues of diversity and inclusion, educational transformation and alignment, economic stagnation and repressed creativity, socio-psychological issues and leadership and followership dynamics (Lewis and Simmons, 2010). Also, students are exposed to real-time information at the touch of a button and must be taught the rudimentary knowledge, skills and abilities to be functional in such environments with the appropriate cultural competencies to be effective and with the ability to use such knowledge, skills and abilities constructively in nation building activities. The level of diversity seen, presents many opportunities for Caribbean students to learn and grow with global mindsets, but the differences also increase the level of vulnerability for those who are different and live, learn and work in predominantly homogeneous areas where there isn't much appreciation for diversity or understanding of the powerful benefits diversity brings.

the diversity challenge

Lippin (2008), reported that each year faces “more than 125 very diverse students, who are hungry to relate to each other across the boundaries that society has setup. Hungry, yes, and curious, and also terrified” (p. 24). Evidence has shown “from freshman to senior year, students become less authoritarian, dogmatic, and ethnocentric” and they are more apt to develop greater social, racial, ethnic, and political sensitivities and show greater support for individual rights (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn & Terenzini, 1996, p. 175) when they are exposed to a diverse teaching and learning environment. Promoting this level of sensitivity in a changing world poses many challenges for educational leaders and policymakers but they must be intentional in the way they manage these challenges by responding to the requirements of the changing educational and work environment.

Challenges usually surface given the advancement in information technology, coupled with deregulation and market liberation globally which has created increased presence of multinational organizations and these entities must rely on “human skills to promote growth and remain competitive” (Stopford, 1998-1999, p. 15). Consequently, Caribbean leaders “who are unaware of their own racial/cultural social identity, and unaware of differing worldviews of culturally diverse [students] risk perpetuating insensitive behaviors and unconscious exclusion” (Lippin, 2008, p. 25). Subsequently, “failing to accept diversity can result in negative feelings and consequences for both educators and learners” (Manning, 2000, p. 127). Overtime, this posture stagnates any human resource development strategy in the Caribbean; thus leaving many students lagging behind their peers in other countries and the Caribbean operating with a colonial model of existence and development that has outlived its usefulness in a global economy.

Lanier (2004) held that “in today's competitive environment, diversity is a key element in succession planning process” (p. 273) at all levels of organizations and organizations are “reinventing themselves in diverse ways” (Stopford, 1980, p. 12). But Caribbean leaders must not miss the opportunity to begin their own self-assessment journey and reinvention process. Gunter (2006) held that diversity is an inseparable attribute of humanity, but it is constructed as a positive or negative dependent on political, economic and social structures in the Caribbean. Looked at another way, diversity can be beneficial and advantageous to both the individual and the organization, especially when properly acknowledged and aligned with other dimensions of the organization's operations (Lanier, 2004). However, a point worth



noting is that “while people do share the same basic human needs, encounter many like work issues, and experience similar life events, our differences do matter” (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003, p. 31-32). Yet, the existence of these differences requires proper self-awareness, application and mastery of emotional intelligence and self-management to allay some not so pleasant consequences diversity presents, however, this must be taught for it to be learned.

Walton (2009); Kandola (2004) noted that poor interpersonal relationships at work, especially those between the boss and their colleagues, continue to be a challenge in the Caribbean and become the basis for why people tend to quit or are fired from their jobs. Studies on “employee well-being continues to point to poor interpersonal relations with ‘key others’ as a prime source of stress, tension, poor performance and organizational disruption” (Walton, 2009, p. 8). These kinds of problems can persist especially when there are incongruent expectations that stems from the era in which one was born, personality, linguistic, cultural and ideological differences presented.

Furthermore, Caribbean students can be expected to “interact with others in ways that are friendly, courteous, and tactful and that demonstrate respect for individual and cultural differences and for the attitudes and feelings of others” (U.S. Department of Labour, 2002, p. 21). Therefore, the challenges for the private and public sectors in the Caribbean include improving educational outcomes through collaborative efforts at all the levels of the educational system while developing opportunities for career-long cultural sensitive learning through formal and informal learning opportunities. Roach (2009) believed that the issues about accountability and the importance of learning outcomes and assessing what those outcomes have been are important elements in shaping the workforce of tomorrow in the Caribbean.

BEHAVIORAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CARIBBEAN WORKERS TO BEHAVE DIVERSELY

Surviving in a global and international operational environment in the Caribbean calls for some novel approaches by Caribbean educational leaders and policymakers if the Caribbean people are to be adequately equipped to function in a diverse interconnect economic operational environment. For instances, “if [Caribbean nations] are to survive and thrive, they must be able to change themselves continuously and fundamentally” (Medley and Akan, 2008). Some changes are already visible in the way people in the Caribbean interact, conduct business, the products and services sold and consumed, the meaning ascribed to work and certainly change should be seen in the way students learn, what they are taught and the efforts employed in facilitating skill transfer from the classroom to the workplace (Fenwick, 2001). This paradigm shift has redefined what workers are required to do, in that, workers are expected “to perform multiple tasks, learn new skills and self-manage to meet competitive demands” (Dollard and Winefield, 2002, p. 5).

Because students are expected to function in an ever-changing global operating environment, it is crucial that they are able to attend to, encode, store, and retrieve culturally sensitive information that exists in the surrounding environment (Aleksander, Ellis, Porter, West & Moon, 2003). Therefore, Caribbean nations must take a critical look at their strategies for building a workforce that can work with a global mindset, work on global teams, or work in other nations. Such a strategy can help to translate most economic activities in the Caribbean in ways that will increase their capabilities to compete in a global interconnected economic environment and provide additional revenue sources. This is a required measure because according to the ILO (2010), globally there is an estimated 630 million people who are considered the working poor; women still earned 10-30 percent less than men; young people are more than three times as likely to be unemployed as adults; Latin American and Caribbean unemployment rose from 7 percent in 2008 to 8.2 percent in 2009, thereby adding 4 million jobless (ILO, 2011).

Furthermore, Caribbean nations must proactively take steps to understand the new global operational environment and define the specific knowledge, skills and abilities students must have to work with a global mindset, work on a global team and work in or for other countries without leaving the



Caribbean. All these skills are important competencies for students to have to increase their competitiveness, not only in the Caribbean region, but in a wider global economy environment that is ruthless and fast. Subsequently, it is also necessary for Caribbean leaders and policymakers to be aware of the vocational shortage areas and prime their students to fill those positions with the specific competencies and with the appropriate cross-cultural orientations.

It is also important for educators in the Caribbean to be supported by educational leaders and policymakers and be encouraged to recalibrate their teaching and learning strategies and their curriculum to best equip students for global citizenship, work and family life in a changing and diverse world where tolerance and creativity are fundamental requirements (Couch, 2006). In fact, Barceló (2010) believed that in these revolutionary times of staggering economic, demographic, and cultural change, mission-driven investments in diversity are more important than ever. In the same breath, institutions must show their commitment and priorities through meaningful and sustainable curriculum reconstruction, support for faculty training and development efforts and for establishing the pertinent pathways for meaningful collaboration and information sharing that will help align the curriculum to the workforce knowledge, skills and abilities needs in the Caribbean (Mayhem & Grunwald, 2006).

As the pace of globalization and internationalization intensifies, educators need more than ever to draw on the talents, knowledge, and abilities of work, human capital, human resource development, and workforce planning professionals in collaborative exercises to discern the competencies required and to develop competency-based learning models that will equip students to compete in an evolving global and international workplace.

Furthermore, it is therefore necessary for educational leaders and policymakers to be intentional in removing the behavioral, financial and other organizational impediments that stand in the way of cultivating a diverse teaching and learning environment where students can sharpen their cultural intelligence skills, world knowledge and level of diversity awareness for success in a global economic work environment.

Barceló (2010) contended that it is imperative to continue investment in diversity to avoid perpetuating opportunity and achievement gaps. Caribbean educational leaders and policymakers must be careful not to ignore the need to diversify their curriculum as to do differently perpetuate existing racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, educational and gender disparities. As such, Caribbean educational leaders and policymakers must develop those structures that articulate connections between new behaviors and the institution's success (Kotter, 2007) as those following their lead may have different mores, beliefs, and entirely different ways of understanding and responding to the world (Eagly and Chin, 2010).

Equally, educational establishments are required to be responsive to the major shifts in the demographics of their student population, the globalized and international influences and the cultural changes before them. This is important as these changes are pronounced and are most noted in areas of race, ethnicity, gender proportions, socioeconomic disparities, learning and work styles, generational differences, abilities, religious affiliation, language proficiency, sexual orientation, other aspects of culture and many more.

The perverseness of diversity calls for creating learning and work environments that are culturally sensitive and promotes inclusion across broad areas of organizational life in the Caribbean. This can only happen by creating inclusive spaces where diversity is fundamentally embraced, celebrated, affirmed, reaffirmed, and where responsibility for creating a culturally intelligent work and learning environment across all levels of Caribbean organizations are seen as important attributes of a healthy organization that is striving to be best-in-class (Barceló, 2010). The days when people resisted interventions to diversify Caribbean organizations has to be a thing of the past. The issues of today demand a different approach and educational leaders in the Caribbean must ensure that their institutions are not promoting behaviors of exclusion because an environment of inclusion prepares "students for life and leadership in an



increasingly diverse society” (Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini and Nora, 2001, p.172). As a matter of fact, to do differently, not only lead to deeper brain drain issues but far greater such actions will lead shortages of viable workers given the high mortality rates reported before age 60 (73%) in the Caribbean if some students continue to be marginalized because of their differences (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2010).

strategies for developing Caribbean workers to behavior diversely

Students in the Caribbean must be taught to work with and manage encounters with people who are dissimilar from as early as kindergarten and all the way through post-secondary learning (Lippin, 2008). Therefore, students must be taught in a culturally sensitive environment where they can become aware of their own Caribbean cultural history, develop and master cross-cultural intelligence, develop stronger academic and social self-concept and other behavioral skills necessary to communicate cross-culturally and to be able to engage others in healthy interchanges as members of diverse teams or as consumers in a global marketplace (Kim, 2002; Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Bjorklund & Parente, 2001; Lippin, 2008). Some of these competencies or attributes can be developed through meaningful business-education partnerships geared toward creating growth-related internships, job shadowing, concentrated mentoring and coaching, take-your-child-to-work day, business speeches about cross-cultural engagements, focused developmental summer jobs, businesses developing and participating in meaningful career development or career day activities at a local school and by adopting a school, especially a school in underrepresented communities (Karoly and Panis, 2004; Dollard and Winefield, 2002). By developing core cross-cultural competencies, students in the Caribbean become more versatile, which makes them more competitive because these skills are portable and can be transferred from one job, organization or nation to another and thus enhance students’ creativity and employability rather than job, organization, nation-specific skills (Kim, 2002; Dollard and Winefield, 2002).

Furthermore, educational establishments in the Caribbean must be so structured to provide students with erudition about the many differences that the changing world presents. And educators must try not to “allow their feelings to interfere with their social interaction with learners and also with their implementing appropriate teaching-learning experiences” (Manning, 2000, p. 127). Also, students in the Caribbean must be taught through experiential learning activities, students exchange opportunities, reading of international publication, pen pals’ correspondent, teacher exchanges, cross-cultural research, multimedia materials and programming, cross-nation collaboration, language training and collaborative teaching and learning in a global distance educational environment how to manage these relationships as well as their own behavior in those situations. However, it is vital for Caribbean educational leaders and policymakers not to get so fixated on outcomes, but must be equally committed to supporting the right kinds of interventions that reflect the uniqueness of the Caribbean people that will produce those outcomes that will put the Caribbean on the right footing in the global marketplace and command a place in the global workplace for “ALL” Caribbean people.

THINKING DIVERSELY

Umbach and Kuh,(2006) reported that “diversity-related experiences benefit individual students, institutions, and society at large” (p. 169). Still there are noted areas of resistance to diversity despite the potential for enriching students’ educational experience, positioning students for a globalized work environment and building communities and nations in the Caribbean (Umbach and Kuh, 2006). Part of the issue of diversity is the persistent discomfort some individuals have with the role equity plays in creating a diverse teaching and learning environment and this discomfort continues to perpetuate a range of disparities/gaps (Clark, 2010). This discomfort most likely stems from the ways diversity is defined and



perceived. Supporting this assertion is a report by the U.S. Department of Commerce and Former Vice President Al Gore National Partnership for Reinventing Government which found that:

Frequently, diversity is viewed in a limited fashion, primarily addressing issues of race, ethnic or gender differences, and linked to the laws providing protected status to certain groups. We have used a very broad definition of diversity, to encompass most characteristics that individuals possess that affect the way they think and do things (1996).

In the past, “diversity has been mostly about developing awareness of differences rather than about developing leadership skills from the perspective of diversity” (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996, p. 164). Hofstede (1994) argued that “the effective way of leading people and organizations can differ depending on a national environment” (p. 4). Therefore, “as businesses expand into new markets, they will face an increasingly complex Human Resource environment, particularly as they try to recruit and retain foreign talent and integrate diverse cultures” (Krink & Strack, 2008, p. 31).

Similarly, Schaefer (2004) argued that globalization and internationalization have created situations in the workplace where: More and more, the workforce reflect the diversity of the population as ethnic minorities enter the Labor force and immigrants and their children move from marginal jobs or employment in the informal economy to positions of greater visibility and responsibility (p. 205).

Because of these trends, Caribbean nations can expect to experience many shifts in the in the composition of the population in ways that reflect a level of diversity as never been experienced before. Cohen (1998) argued that “individual human beings differ in myriad ways, and each specific difference may be important” (p. 30). Besides, “what we see as racial differences in behavior may reflect that people have different cultures “grammars” and categorize things (and therefore think) in different ways” (Cohen, 1998, p. 2). Moreover, “races, as imagined by the public, do not actually exist. Any attempted definition of “race” produces more exceptions than sound classifications. No matter what system we use, most people don’t fit” (Cohen, 1998, p. 30). That is why, to think of diversity only in terms of race leaves many aspects of diversity, such as culture, language, ability, religious affiliation, values, divergent viewpoints, gender composition, economic and other disparity gaps, ideas, generational difference, information sharing and nationality by the wayside and out of the public discourse, policymaking positions and the teaching and learning curriculum in the Caribbean. As a matter of fact, if diversity is narrowly defined, students are taught less and not more by ignoring the richness other aspects of diversity add to the teaching and learning process, the workplace esprit de corp and global positioning requirements.

strategies for thinking diversely

Creating a diverse learning environments in the Caribbean must start with developing an understanding of what diversity is and what diversity is not and learning how to use the knowledge about diversity to teach students how to engaged and interact with others who are different in a myriad of ways in the learning environment. By creating such a diverse learning environment, educators by their behavior are “creating greater equity and parity in the experience and outcomes of individuals from diverse backgrounds” (Kezar, 2008, 407).

Additionally, Caribbean educational leaders in their quest to diversify the educational system must be careful to encourage equity and parity by building “top-down momentum, developing and communicating an accessible theme and build bottom-up momentum by enlisting employees who already embrace change” (Hirschhorn, 2002, p. 23). However, when educational leaders in the Caribbean redesign their teaching and learning environment to accommodate diverse interactions and align the curriculum, they must also be intentional in redistributing learning and other opportunities among a greater number of students and educators without discrimination, while building capacity within educators to cope, given the rate of change to the nature of work (Dollard, and Winefield, 2002).



Caribbean nations must begin to think about the possibilities of their students working in global markets or being sought by other nations and must rearrange their approaches to educating students to function effectively in such environments. It is therefore necessary for Caribbean leaders to think about diversity in the broadest context as “culture influences the way people behave in organizations” (Charles, 2000, p. 62). Therefore, Caribbean educational leaders and policymakers will have to anticipate “change, through managing demographics, managing change and cultural transformation, and managing globalization” (Krink and Strack, 2008, p. 30) if their students are to be suitably positioned to function competitively in a global work environment.

It is therefore necessary for educators to help Caribbean students develop a sense of awareness of how their own cultural and racial backgrounds and life content, attitudes, values, and biases influence their interaction with those who are different as to do differently put students at a disadvantage in the global economic environment (Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, 1991).

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A DIVERSE LEARNING COMMUNITY

In today’s globally interconnected, internationally-focused world, citizens have become used to events like Libyan leader is dead, European economic crisis “the war on terror; made in China; Blue flu; and technical support in Bangalore” (NASFA, 2006, p. 1). All these events together with the sporadic unrest in different parts of the world and economic crisis need to become part of the Caribbean students’ world knowledge that we are living in a period where what happens in one part of the world deeply affects what happens in another, thereby making the world smaller, more complex, more interconnected and certainly more diverse. Hence, in this globally connected environment students must become internationally competent and culturally aware, not only, of their own culture but the culture of others, even though they may be unrelated. Caribbean educators must be at the forefront in helping students become proficient in these competencies if students are to have the skills employers are seeking (NASFA, 2006).

Camden (2008) declared that diversity is a critical issue, and the practices, procedures and ways of interaction hinge in part on how well educators leverage diversity. Marquardt (2002) recognized that “we live in a world in which technology and globalization affect every part of our lives” (p. ix). These changes are creating the need for a new kind of worker and educators, policymakers and education leaders must reflect this knowledge in how they approach teaching and learning.

The centrality of technology and technological development entails a greater emphasis on: knowledge production and information processing for competitive purposes; the wider and faster flow of communications; the shift in the occupational structures from manual workers to highly educated and flexible knowledge workers; and, consequently, on the role of educational institutions to form the human capital fitted to these developments (Vaira, 2004, p. 488).

Futuristically speaking, students must be job-ready upon graduation to fit into organizations that are constantly evolving linguistically, biologically, generationally, ideologically, gender/economically and culturally and must be so prepared. For that reason, learning cannot be seen as a separate activity that occurs either before one enters the workplace or in remote classroom settings; instead learning must be seen as a constant activity and should evolve so that it is congruent with the changing work requirements.

Ashton, Sung, Raddon & Riordan (2008) pointed out that “a lack of adequate formal training is frequently viewed as a “market failure” and thus as something that governments can legitimately take action to rectify” (p. 3). It follows that given their leadership positions and compensation, educational leaders and policymakers in the Caribbean have a significant impact on the depth and breadth of



classroom educators' preparation and how well students are equipped to become productive contributors in the changing workplace (Kaplan, Klebanov & Sorensen, 2007).

Moreover, the new workplace calls for workers who have the capacity to engage in identifying and solving problems that are products of a changing globally-influenced workplace. In order for students to become that type of worker, they must become committed life-long learners who are able to grow, improve and achieve goals through empowerment and experimentation in a diverse work environment that is constantly evolving (Draft & Marcic, 2001).

Lewis (2010); Stevens and Campion (1994) pointed out that team-work is a frequently used work design in organization of all types globally and if students are not taught how to work in teams, then they may encounter many challenges with team members, especially those who are dissimilar and those who have a different life history or those with whom they must work with virtually.

Cummins (1997) noted that despite the benefits diversity offers, "issues related to equity and education have been fiercely debated in many countries during the past 30 years" (p. 105) without any clear indication of what should be a universal standard to ensure that every student has a safe place to learn and grow unobstructed. What is more, diversity plays an important role in students' overall development and when properly incorporated in the teaching and learning activities, creates opportunities for students to cultivate different aspects of their personality and provide a basis for enriching the socialization process.

To some, diversity is a problem because it forces them to challenge their own assumptions of others and in some ways may change their perceptions of their predetermined status. Many resisters to diversity fail to see that resisting attempts to meaningful inclusion stifle students' growth and development, cheat students of a rich learning opportunity, in many ways hinder students' identity formation and stagnate a whole community and eventually a nation.

Furthermore, Miller and Sessions (2005) make the claim that "diversity should be considered the very patchwork of our society. It is through diversity that the many gifts and talents we possess enrich and touch our lives" (2005, p. 3). Yet, "some educators do not accept rapidly changing demographics, different cultural and ethnic differences, and interactions with people who speak a native language other than English" (Manning, 2005, p. 125). Such attitudes negate the purpose of education since the main thrust of education is to transfer knowledge from the culture to the individual (Pea, 1987).

Therefore, "in any given situation, an individual has a vast storehouse of prior knowledge that could be related analogically to the present occasion" (Pea, 1978, p. 47). However, the "lack of acceptance of unfamiliar customs, languages, and traditions can be lessened by learning about actual people and gaining firsthand familiarity with their characteristics" (Manning, 2002, p. 126). For instance, "there are many classrooms today where teachers have students who can speak ...different languages" (Cohen, p. 3), and may belong to religious groups that are not Protestant, Hindu or Muslim. These dimensions of diversity, if embraced, can add richness to the teaching and learning process and challenge educators to deepen their understanding of diversity and to augment their teaching and learning practices to bring about a richer learning experience for all students.

strategies for effective teaching and learning in a diverse learning community

A World Bank Report (2000) stated that "international markets offer a huge opportunity for job and income and growth in agriculture, industry, and services" (p.8). The recognition of these trends suggests that if students are to participate in these opportunities, Caribbean educators would have to acknowledge the diversity presented and the importance of such knowledge in aligning the curriculum because of the importance of diversity. It follows that Caribbean educators and policymakers must institute proper diversity policies, social policies, training, accountability and benchmarking systems as



well as evaluation structures that are tailored to the specific needs of the Caribbean people that will achieve equality in opportunities to help “All” persons realize their capabilities (ILO, 2006).

Moreover, Caribbean educators must, not only, emphasize their own work culture, but must be intentional in teaching students about cultural values and the meanings members of different societies attribute to work from culture-level value (Schwartz, 1999). To accomplish the task of preparing students to function in a global-operation environment, educators must be prepared to train, coach and counsel students in rudimentary knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes while modeling culturally sensitive behaviors so students learn how to appropriately respond to the diversity in the classroom and beyond if their preparation for worklife is to be considered adequate. Caribbean leaders must also be intentional in actively working to create a more inclusive and responsible learning-type community where students despite their ability, economic standing and generational placement feel as if they fit (Lippin, 2008; ILO, 2006).

Consistently, this is period in Caribbean history where “ALL” persons “MUST” matter and should be given the best chance of being productive contributors to nation building but they can only become meaningful contributors if the teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom is equitable irrespective of the students’ cultural heritage or life content. The days where a student is put to sit to the back of the class or intentionally excluded from the mainstream teaching and learning activities because the educator don’t understand or care to understand has to be a thing of the past as to do differently places that student at a disadvantage socioeconomically and promote perpetual illiteracy which can potentially lead to displacement from the new workplace and from legitimate participation in the global economy.

Displacement from the global economic activities can lead to all kind of antisocial behaviors, low self-esteem and sometimes stagnation, not only, on an individual level, but on a national level, as well. Therefore, what is modeled in the classroom about equity has a direct relationship with how students view equity in their personal and professional lives. As a matter of fact, research indirectly shows that there is relatedness to college students’ openness to racial, cultural, and value diversity, which tends to alter students’ openness and tolerance to the dissimilarities of others (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn & Terenzini, 1996). This is necessary because according to Karoly & Panis (2004) only “[students] who can exploit diversity to generate new knowledge about customers, suppliers, products, and services will be more likely to succeed in a competitive global environment” (p. 201).

Without a doubt, it is necessary for Caribbean educators to structure students’ learning to reflect the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes (KSAA) that will best prepare them for interaction in a globally interconnected world. Indeed, transforming the teaching and learning curriculum is extremely important because ultimately, today’s students will become part of tomorrow’s workforce, if they are not already so enjoined and must be able to relate to others who might be dissimilar. Therefore, any diversity policy must be all-encompassing, promote tolerance and respect for “ALL” people through persistence attention to these details that make each individual unique and fit where they find themselves (Miller & Sessions, 2005).

Therefore, educational leaders and in particular curriculum specialist and policymakers must seek ways to collaborate with local and international human resource development professionals, business leaders and congruent professional organizations to glean from them what is the required knowledge, skills and abilities potential employees must have if they are to be considered for employments by those entities. Additionally, the curriculum development process should not be done without the proper broad boundary spanning to discern what are the fundamental knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude (KSAA) needed for potential workers to be competitive in a global economy environment. However, this is not to say that Caribbean educational leaders and policymakers should ignore the fundamental KSAA that are required but use these as the foundation for developing the new knowledge, skills and abilities that will give students increase opportunities in a borderless global economy.



In spite of this, educators can't teach what they don't know so it is imperative for educational leaders and policymakers to get on a path of enhancing the teaching and learning preparation curriculum to help teachers reflect, not only, on their own cultural history and its evolution, but the culture of others in the Caribbean and elsewhere (Gay, 2002). This understanding empowers teachers to better teach diversely as they are more knowledgeable of their own socialization process, protocol for interacting with students who are different and can leverage their own gender and other identities in helping students understand their gender, cultural diversity, identities and other socialization processes (Gay, 2002). When educators can express their own vulnerability, they encourage students to do likewise and by so doing, not only cultivate an inclusive learning environment but inspire students to venture into new areas of learning and exploration that serves to heighten their level of creativity, world knowledge and competitive standing.

Like educators, students must be aware of their own racial and cultural heritage and how this knowledge shape their understanding of what is normal and what is abnormal (Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, 1991). Hence, it is important that educators teach students how to work with others in diverse settings and with diverse activities by creating a learning environment where students feel respected, valued and are intellectually challenged congruently despite their overt and less overt differences. It is probable, that when students interact in such an environment, that they begin to learn more about themselves, their propensities and others and are better able to manage relationships with a level of cultural sensitivity that teaches them how to behave in work and other social interactions. Through these experiences Caribbean students learn how to manage conflicts constructively, practice collaborative problem-solving, communicate respectfully, engage in self-management, become less repressed socially and most of all, they develop the appropriate cultural intelligence as differences in values, orientation and objectives can be potential sources of conflict. By the same token, "individuals must be trained to acquire skills, and [teachers] must decide how to use an endowment of training time" (Jones, 2008, p. 4) to improved their effectiveness and impact.

Moreover, by heightening their level of cultural awareness, educators are better able to align their teaching and learning strategies with diversity trends in education with congruency to the requirements of the workplace. This is extremely important so students that can develop the cultural intelligence acumen and other competencies if students are to be adequately prepared for the changing world of work. This is especially proper because education and training systems in the Caribbean must evolve to better meet the needs of the twenty-first century workforce (Jones, 2008). Hence, it is critical for educators to partner with business, trade organizations and other stakeholders to better understand the workplace requirements and to accurately forecast the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors students must know and be able to reproduce if they are to be successful in their worklife. When educators are armed with this piece of information, they are better able to align their curriculum and help students develop the needed competencies that will prepare them to live and work in a globally interconnected society.

On the other hand, if those who champion diversity can better understand why people resist attempts at creating an environment of inclusion from an objective point of view and come to understand it for what it is, we may be able to adopt a more sensible course of action to promote a climate of inclusion in the Caribbean (Skinner, 2005). And since the individual's behavior explains the group phenomenon, if we can change the way in which people in general think about diversity, it can result in a more inclusive learning environment for all students. So by getting to know the students and their backgrounds, educators are going to be more likely to help the student integrate and feel accepted among their fellow students in their learning environment, even where difference exist (Hodgkinson, Dec 2000/Jan 2001). Besides, if Caribbean educators can help students effectively apply the concepts, skills, and strategies students have acquired in everyday life and work situations in an integrated manner that matches the demands of



everyday problem solving, then educators can get closer to creating a diverse teaching and learning environment and helping their students form healthy self-identity.

When educators incorporate more inclusive ways of teaching and learning, students will be given the best chance of living and working in a diversely interconnected society with a level of sensitivity that prepares them to connect and operate in their academic and vocational pursuit with global mindsets and greater level of cultural sensitivity. By enriching the socialization process for students, educators are helping them improve their self-image and image of society as a precursor to formulating their professional identities in a global operational environment.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR TOMORROW'S BOARDROOM AND BEYOND

People of the Caribbean have a very rich history that encompasses experiences from slavery, indentureship, colonialization, inventions and the present which have influences of the French, Spanish, Dutch, British, Africans, Indians, Chinese, the United States and elsewhere. All these experiences have some relevance to the Caribbean people and should inform the present and help chart a new future. Still, how students are prepared for the future workforce is crucial as their past should become the bedrock for helping students better understand their own Caribbean identity in relation to the rest of the world. This is a very important first step as students' self-knowledge and their experiences are important elements in teaching tolerance for others and for their involvement in nation building.

As the world changes Caribbean students will find themselves supervising and being supervised by people who are dissimilar and should be prepared for those realities (Schaefer, 2004). Accordingly, Charan, Drotter & Noel (2001) recognized that "just about every major organization is attempting to hire "stars" offering enormous compensation to entice the best and the brightest" (p.1). However, organizations' most desperate attempts to recruit outsiders reflect the inadequacy of the current employee pool (Charan, Drotter and Noel, 2001). Some of these challenges stem from the failure of the teaching and learning to adequately align their teaching and learning to meet the changes in technology, biology, medicine, engineering, economic and finance, social values, demography, the environment and international relations which continue to challenge our collective abilities to adequately deal with them (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth & Smith, 1999). This is particularly proper, given the wave of technological advancements, internationalization and globalization which have created borderless societies in which the rules for being successful has changed and remain undefined.

Similarly, Hall (2002) argued "that work is a fundamental area in which to achieve social equity, workplace diversity and personal liberation" (p. 13). It follows that the Caribbean workplace is an area which is heavily impacted by what students learn in the classroom and students must be prepared to enter the workplace equipped to function in a diverse work and interconnected environment with a level of sensitivity to differences and a sense of responsibility for lifelong learning and productive activity as well as an awareness of their role in nation building. Workers who are increasingly expected to interact in a global and international marketplace and participate in global work teams, will require the skills needed to collaborate and interact in diverse cultural, linguistic, economic and dissimilar geographical settings (Károly and Panis, 2004). As a matter of fact:

Workplace diversity has been a topic of growing interest to the world of business and management in the past decades, emerging from merely a sentence in some corporations' mission statement to complete departments, managerial positions, and courses in higher business education" (Marques, 2010, p. 435).

Accordingly, "diversity, at its most basic level, is simply all the ways in which people are different" (Resurreccion, 2008). Senge (2006) believed "diversity is about our ability to understand and



appreciate how [others] think, communicate, and relate. It is about living together” (p. 312). Additionally, the workforce is anticipated to continue to evolve along the lines of age, gender composition, and the racial and ethnic makeup. That is why, it is important to think of each classroom in the Caribbean as representing the boardrooms and the varied workforce of tomorrow and students must be primed for those roles.

Pea (1987) believed that “students need to acquire skills of analogical thinking, of generating analogical connections from knowns to unknowns as a means of understanding” (p. 48), therefore permitting students to be better able to transfer what they have learned in the classroom to the workplace and in other social context is of paramount to overall nation building initiatives.

Consequently, when the world changes, the way educators see and educate students must also change so as to give students the best learning opportunities for the future realities. “Workers who increasingly interact in a global marketplace and participate in global work teams will require the skills needed to collaborate and interact in diverse cultural and linguistic settings” (Károly and Panis, 2004, p. xxxvi). As a matter of fact, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Facts on Decent Work reported that “the labour migration is on the rise. There are more than 85 million migrant workers in the world, 34 million of them in developing region.” Since the Caribbean is part of the developing world, they too are affected by these migration patterns as Caribbean people must interact with persons who are dissimilar from them as migrants and as locals students and workers. Furthermore, the ILO Global Employment Trends 2010 added that there are “45 million young men and women entering the global market every year.” Therefore, when workers have the freedom to work globally, it means that they bring everything about them to the host country, including their customs, nationality, language, history and influences of their birth to the host country and must be aware of what they bring to that work situation and be able to manage their propensities in that global context.

Furthermore, students themselves are connected and interconnected in a myriad of ways and are exposed to varied experiences and people that have helped shaped their thinking and the way in which they respond to the world but these experiences must be harnessed as part of the teaching and learning process. The complexities presented by these exposures enrich students’ lives and learning and should not be discounted in the teaching and learning process. The days when diversity was seen through narrow lenses that displayed only race and ethnicity has to be a thing of the past because students are diverse because of their life content which include their country of origin, life experiences, family constellation, people they have met, information received and shared, conversations they would have had, places they have been, books they have read, the way they learn, the neighborhood they live in and those they have visited, and the way they were taught and the entities to which they were and are associated. All these connections help to shape students’ lives and they bring these diverse attributes of their lives to the classroom and the workplace and there should be a place where these attributed are celebrated, respected and learned through healthy engagements.

strategies for preparing students for tomorrow’s boardroom and beyond

Hewapathirana and Bowen (2008) argued that “the continuous improvement of education systems from the primary to higher education and life-long learning are the keys to sustaining healthy socio-economic conditions in a global society” (p. 7). Without such universal intervention, some students might move from grade to grade with very noticeable deficiencies that become a problem as students move through the system, therefore, throughout the education system educators must be fully aware of what students should know and be able to do as they move through the system and intervene early when deficiencies are noticed.

It is therefore incumbent on businesses, educational systems and other entities in the Caribbean to collaboratively seek ways to forecast workforce needs and to increase workers’ success in the workplace



by developing a system for creating alignment among these systems. Hence, students must be taught to live and work with people who are different because the increasingly networked way in which work is getting done is of greater consequence to organizations today than in the past (Senge, 2006). What's more, Caribbean educators must become more intentional in incorporating teaching and learning strategies that will build more inclusive learning communities to best prepare students to function with a greater depth of cultural sensitivity in a networked world of work (Senge, 2006).

In the same manner, students must be taught to confront those things that are destructive to the richness diversity offers in the teaching and learning process in constructive ways. By giving students opportunities to increase their level of cultural sensitivity, they are better able to deal with issues of diversity, prepared to think diversely and work with others who are dissimilar beyond their classroom experience. Thus, each student must be seen as being part of the new workforce and must be equipped for the realities of the world where people are connected and interconnected in ways that create a unique level of complexity that remains elusive.

That is why it is so important for educators to think about how to enrich the learning experience of each student by harnessing the many experiences students have had in the teaching and learning process. Consequently, the issues of diversity must become part of the mainstream discussion and decision-making with real policy implication for the unbiased teaching and learning of all students if there is to be any meaningful transfer of knowledge beyond the classroom and into the workplace.

ENRICHING STUDENTS' LEARNING FOR TOMORROW'S WORKPLACE

Tomorrow's workplace is being shaped mainly by the precipitous infusion of technology in multiple areas of life, globalization and internationalization. One of the significant challenges facing employers everywhere is finding a suitable labor pool (Resurreccion, 2008). In some circumstance, Cerna, Hollifield, & Hynes (2012) said policy-maker narrowly doing what necessary to protect jobs and native workers and this weakens competitiveness the economies in the Caribbean who are falling prey and losing their best and the brightest.

Diversity has varying expectations, modification of one's behavior and deepening of one's understanding of diversity should be a likely consequence (Becker & Useem, 1942). The requirements for increasing one's sensitivity to diverse ideas, people and customs are crucial given the increased unemployment and complexity that resulted from a shrinking global economic activities and the ease at which people move from country to country seeking congruent employment opportunities (ILO, 2006; 2011; United Nations 2005). Because of this free movement of people in the borderless global economy, to get suitable workers, employers may have to consider hiring people who they might otherwise not have hired such are more women, foreign nationals, senior citizens and persons with disabilities to meet their work requirements in some sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure development in the Caribbean (Karoly and Panis, 2004). These actualities also present many opportunities for foreign workers to fill the gaps created by increased unemployment for skilled and unskilled workers in some sectors or regions where certain skills maybe underutilized or obsolete in one region, but needed in another region. The evidence of this can be seen in the healthcare system in Trinidad and Tobago which has attracted doctors and nurses from across the globe, mainly various parts of Africa, Indian, Philippines and other parts of the Caribbean (UNDepartment of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, 2010). Therefore, if students are to be able to take advantage of opportunities in these sectors and other sectors, they must learn the core knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude required for healthcare workers and they must be prepared to work alongside workers of varied backgrounds both locally and globally as jobs may require them to interact with workers from other countries on a daily basis in a borderless global society and they will need to know the protocol for interacting with dissimilar workers.



Marques (2010) recognized that “workforce diversity is a broader concept that includes all the ways that people can be different” (p. 436). Diversity, as understood by Davis, Smith and Sorenson (2004) encompasses an understanding and appreciation of the depth and variety of how human beings group themselves, and find themselves grouped by others. Accordingly, diversity in education has no real right or wrong answer or approach as to how it should manifest because the way diversity unfolds in one context will be different in another. However, differences in the way diversity manifest is no reason to do nothing to ensure that each Caribbean student has a safe place in the classroom and there is a forum for the unique voice and experiences of each student because such interactions broaden students’ world knowledge and cross-cultural competencies and increase their versatility. This is more than ever true because people are different, sometime with little influence over their differences since the things that define students are enmeshed in genetic tendencies, learned behaviors, values, mores, geographical origins, life experiences and expectations. “Equally, culture structures our behavior, thoughts, perceptions, values, goals, morals, and cognitive process just as language is more than vocabulary, culture is more than art and music” (Cohen, 1998, p. 2). Hence, the attributes that students bring to the classroom are what make them who they are, even in the classroom and this is why the issues of diversity in education need to be given more than mere lip-services because of the implications they have beyond the classroom. As students learn the rudimentary behaviors and practices of a safe diverse learning environment, they become more aware of differences and develop a level of sensitivity that equips them to learn and work with persons who are dissimilar in and interconnected.

Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Bjorklund and Parente (2001) pointed out that problem-solving and group-skill development were found to be the same for classroom diversity and reported learning. This kind of result makes diversity in Caribbean education so important that it requires understanding and proper management to ensure that there is a place for students’ differences and there are meaningful injections of intentional strategies to leverage the rich body of knowledge and experiences each student brings to the learning environment. Some educational establishments “are increasingly recognizing the need for diversity in the classroom and its positive effects on student’s learning outcomes” (Mayhew and Grunwald, 2006, p. 148).

Mayhew and Grunwald (2006) reported that research show that diversity in the classroom positively affects learning outcome, yet some educators resist the idea of integrating diversity-related material into their course content. The idea that some students may celebrate events and may engage in activities unknown to those who must teach them specialized content or those who sit beside them is a great learning opportunity for both Caribbean students and educators.

strategies for enriching students’ learning for tomorrow’s workplace

Identity formation is a known derivative of students’ learning, so by increasing students’ knowledge and understanding of their own cultural history in the richest ways possible is an important first step in enriching students learning for tomorrow’s workplace. This can be done by adding a rich set of cross-cultural materials and experiences to the curriculum and assignments on different cultures, including the Caribbean and encouraging students to become more introspective about their own tendencies with regard to dealing with diversity so they can learn what these are and develop ways to manage those inclinations from multi-culture contexts.

To further facilitate a more globalized and internationalized teaching and learning environment, Caribbean educational policymakers must ensure that their policies and consequences reflect the realities of a diverse student population that include students who reside in local communities, those from faraway nations and those learning the local language as a second, third or even a fourth language. In addition students learn from parents, fellow students, peers and teachers, therefore, members of these groups are pivotal in “providing structure and corrections between their experiences, highlighting task-relevant



information in a situation and establishing continuity to functional learning contexts in which students can come to take over part activities of a whole problem-solving task” (Pea, 1987, p. 50).

Incorporating students’ experiences into the teaching and learning process can help other students grasp a concept by connecting some experiences to the content being taught or even learn about a new culture. As a matter of fact, diversity that is part of the broader society needs to be reflected in the student body, faculty and staff and certainly in the approaches to the teaching, learning and the curriculum (Mayhew and Grunwald, 2006). Broadening the curriculum content to include diversity themes provide, not only, opportunities for students to interact with their classmates, but these diverse learning experiences prime them for living and working with individuals who are differently dissimilar in a globalized and internationalized work environment.

Regardless of what students bring to the classroom, whether it is their race or ethnicity, abilities, language proficiency, culture, prior learning or life content, there has to be a place for all students to learn and grow in a facilitated teaching and learning environment that reflects the realities of diversity in a changing global environment. The rights of any one student should never be trampled upon under the guise that they are different or that they are not proficient in the local language and mores. In some cases these students might be better equipped to deal with challenges of an interconnected, global, socioeconomic environment than those who reflect the sameness of the local community. That is why, educators in the Caribbean must commit themselves to better understanding each student's situation so that they are better equipped to teach each student and help them to make the best of their education in a culturally dissimilar environment and thus transition to a successful work life with the level of cultural intelligence mastery that will make them competitively positioned in a globalized work environment (Hodgkinson, Dec 2000/Jan 2001).

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS AND WORKPLACE PROFESSIONALS

In a world where everything is changing and moving very fast there is need for new knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors in the Caribbean. This is the only meaningful way to engage in the much needed nation building that is required to be competitively position in this global economy. Because, these changes are expected to transform the way work is organized, performed, and rewarded and the mix of people making up the workforce. Caribbean students will have to be taught how to interact in healthy ways with workers who are dissimilar and respond to the changing demands of an evolving workplace (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini, 1996; Jokinen, 2005). If the projected shifts in the demographic realities persist then it is likely that future college graduates will be challenged by a society that is increasingly diverse in terms of race, culture, age, ideas, and values (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini, 1996).

Kim (2002) believed that “changes in skill demand or skill requirements have been investigated in a wide range of academic fields from sociology, economics and education to psychology over the long period dating back to the turn of the century” (p. 89). Many knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors have been identified as being important requirements for success in the undulating work environment where the primary operation environment is domestic, international or global (Jokinen, 2005). This is mainly the case because workers are expected to interact cross-culturally and in some situations to live in other countries and take up assignments (Black, Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991). Black, Mendenhall and Oddou, (1991) noted that “research show many Americans do not succeed in their overseas assignments” (p. 291) suggesting that they lack the required competency for the assignment which cost companies thousands of dollars. Therefore, the main thrust of Human Resource Development and other workplace professionals in the Caribbean is to ensure that workers perform their jobs effectively and in healthy ways within the environment. As a result, these professionals can be pivotal in identifying work requirements for the future



and helping workers succeed in a changing workplace while shaping workforce/workplace policy position and discourse about workplace and workers skill requirement needs (Russ-Eft, 2002; Jokinen, 2005).

The issues of diversity transcend institutions in many ways, but if we can begin to prepare students to work in a diverse society, we would have to equip them for success in an evolving work environment where organizations are more global and transnational focused (Jokinen, 2005). Barcelo (2010) forecasted that diversity will be so deeply embedded in the ethos of organizations that it will permeate everything they do, in every space they inhabit, “from classrooms and research centers to faculty and administrative offices to campus services and facilities to meeting spaces in partner communities” (p. 20).

Given this, if longitudinal studies can be done to explore what might be the right combination strategies and content that might best prepare students to work with others who are dissimilar with a level of cultural sensitivity and world knowledge, they will have many healthy workplace experiences. Thus, education and workforce researchers must attempt “to identify the specific college experiences that influence changes in values, attitudes, and the ways in which individuals relate to their external world” (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn and Terenzini, 1996, p.75). Information from this kind of research can provide invaluable information for educational leaders to devise targeted strategies for aligning the teaching and learning curriculum with workplace knowledge, skills, abilities and behavioral requirements for students’ success in the workplace.

Most specifically, Brooks and Normore (2010) “suggest that contemporary educational leaders must develop global literacy in nine specific knowledge domains: political literacy, economic literacy, cultural literacy, moral literacy, pedagogical literacy, information literacy, organizational literacy, spiritual and religious literacy, and temporal literacy” (p. 52) to be able to adequately instruct Caribbean students in the rudimentary requirements to function in a globally and internationalized influenced workplace. It is therefore, prudent that educational leaders work collaboratively with Human Resource Development (HRD) and other workforce professionals to set systematic and planned activities designed to provide students with opportunities to congruently learn the necessary skills, abilities, knowledge and behaviors to meet current and future job demands (Russ-Eft, 2002).

CONCLUDING

REMARKS

In the coming years, work is expected to continue to be transformed and “shaped by demographic trends, technological advances, and economic globalization” (Karloly and Panis, 2004, p. xiv) and migration patterns. It also follows that “the workforce will continue to evolve along these same lines in terms of age, gender- composition, and the racial and ethnic makeup” (Karloly and Panis, 2004, p. 30) and students are expected to develop and apply a level of cultural competencies that make them suited to work in such diverse environments. This is especially so, since persistent change and increase in globalization and “international competition place the spotlight on the skills and preparation of the workforce, particularly the ability to adapt to changing technologies and shifting product demand” (Karloly and Panis, 2004, p. xiv). These anticipated changes illuminate the need to prepare students to function in a knowledge-based workplaces that favors students with “strong non-routine cognitive skills, such as abstract reasoning, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration” (Karloly and Panis, 2004, p. xiv) and educators must take the lead to ensure that students acquire these skills and are able to use them in a diverse global work environment in creative ways.

Hodgkinson (Dec 2000/Jan 2001) maintained that the shifting demographics around the world affect every aspect of teaching and learning and it therefore, necessary for Caribbean educators to better understand their students in holistic ways to best teach them and prepare them for the world of work. For those reason, accepting and respecting diversity help build a more comprehensive understanding of the



human experience and a better learning environment, workplace, communities, and society over time but we must start somewhere to begin to effect change (Miller and Sessions, 2005). Thus, “higher education institutions as well need to create curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to experience integration - to-interact in meaningful ways and to learn from each other - if diversity is to have a positive educational impact” (Gurin, Nagda & Lopez, 2004, p. 18). Such activities will help students develop the norms, attitudes, values, knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in a globally connected economic environment with a level of cultural sensitivity that will make them stand out among their peers and over time influence the way their peers think in the classroom and in their work lives about diversity.

Workplace changes will persist; the way they appear or are presented, will vary. However, to deal with the challenges of changing operational environments, educational leaders and policymakers must find new and practical ways of doing business and change themselves in various ways so they can take control and shape their organizations in ways better suited to the ever-changing environment (Schrujier & Vansina, 1999). In spite of this, the choices made and the responsiveness to them will determine the extent to which these choices will continue to impact the workplace and in some cases render leaders helpless. Hence, advocating for improving the K-16 curriculum will ensure that there is some congruency between the needs of the workplace and what students are being taught and what they learn. Next, if leaders equip their Human Resource Development team, other workplace professionals and educators with the tools and other resources needed and provide clear pathways to the halls of power, many of the human resource development issues affecting the organization in the Caribbean will be met with meaningful solutions and measurable results that will be reflected in students readiness for the workplace and in the organization’s bottom-line.

Furthermore, in creating a diverse operational environment, educators and organizations must be willing to move beyond the urge to meet quotas or to be politically correct in their quest to prepare a distinct learning environment and begin to embrace the benefits of having a diverse populace, given the many benefit variation brings. Equally, students must also be encouraged and trained to increase their understanding and appreciation for diversity and be encouraged to embrace the benefits it offers because the cost of homogeneity is too great to forgo the opportunities diversity offers. Thus, educators and organizations have an important part to play in advancing a culture that makes people feel connected despite their differences; empowered because their abilities are recognized; safe because they are respected and valued; as if they are treated fairly because the standards they must meet are the same as their peers; challenged intellectually and are allowed and encouraged to interact with others who are dissimilar.

However, educational leaders and policymakers must go beyond their written and spoken words and be intentional in their commitment to diversity through their policy positions, implementation strategies, the accountability systems instituted, their openness to benchmarking and to the evaluation of their practices, global learning and collaboration, level of financing and adjustments in their own mindsets and behaviors if the people of the Caribbean are to be suitably positioned to take their placement in this global economy. But no change can take place until the people of the Caribbean believe that change need to take place or that the promises ahead are good for them as it is good for others, therefore, educational leaders and policymaker must be careful how they craft the message for inclusion and tolerance as to convey the wrong message only create resistance, stagnation, regression and sometimes multiple dysfunctions which are all counterproductive for proper positioning of the Caribbean people in this global economy.

What must be clear, nonetheless, is that diversity is about people – different people – living, working, studying, playing and engaging each other in a place of their choosing where they feel that they fit; where they feel they can achieve; where they feel they can be more and do more for themselves and their families; where they see a place for their differences and creative drive; and where the quality of life



is enhanced because differences are respected and celebrated despite overt and less overt differences. That should be the message of educational leaders and policymakers if they are to cultivate a place for “ALL” Caribbean people in this global economy where nation building is paramount and where everyone must be involved in this endeavor and should matter. The days where we can choose to push some forward at the expense of others can no longer exist or be tolerated. We need everyone and everyone needs the other to move forward to build the best global workforce ever if the Caribbean is to compete globally. It is therefore crucial for educational leaders and policymaker in their pursuit to create diverse organizations that they response with truth, understanding and determination to get it right the first time as diversity represents who we are in the Caribbean and outside the Caribbean and it is how diversity is managed that will determine the placement of Caribbean people in this global economy.





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Appendix A: generation differences

Work Preference	Generations			
	Traditionalist	Baby boomers	Generations X	Millennial
Birth year	1900-1945	1945-1964	1965-1980	(1977-1994) 1981-2000
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A birthright 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A way to get there 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incredible expense
Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training should contribute to the organization's goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is a contribution to the organization's goal, but is also a path to promotion and add formal compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training enhances their versatility in the marketplace and investment in their future. Not necessarily loyal to the company who trained them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing and eager to take risk, don't mind making mistakes – they consider this a learning opportunity.
Work Ethics/Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated • Pay your dues • Work hard • Respect authority • Hard work • Age-seniority • Company first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven • Workaholic – 60 hr work week • Work long hours to establish self • Work ethic – worth ethics • Quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance • Work smarter and with greater output, not work long hours • Eliminate the task • Self-reliance • Want structure & direction • Skeptical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious • What's next • Multitasking • Tenacity • Entrepreneurial
Preferred work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative • Hierarchal • Clear chain of command • Top-down management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat organization hierarchy • Humane • Equal opportunity • Warm friendly environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional, fun, positive • Efficient • Fast paced and flexible • Informal • Access to leadership • Access to information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative • Achievement-oriented • Highly creative • Positive • Diverse • Fun, flexible, want continuous feedback
Attitude towards authority/rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They value conformity, authority and rules, and a top-down management approach • 13% included authority among their top values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may still be uncomfortable interacting with authority figure • 5% included authority among their top 10 values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are comfortable with authority and are not impressed by titles or intimidated by them • They find it natural to interact with superiors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They believe that respect must be earned • 6% included authority in their top 10 values



Work Preference	Generations Traditionalist	Baby boomers	Generations X	Millennial
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6% included authority in their top 10 values 	
Business Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution
Work Ethics and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value honor Value compliance Value sacrifice Value dedication Value good attitude Value attendance Value practical knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value personal growth Value team work Value youthfulness Want respect from younger workers Want flexibility into retirement Willing to take risk Work efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move freely between jobs and criticized for no attachment to a particular employer/job Output focused Outcome oriented Prefer diversity, technology, informality and fun Rely on their technology and acuity and business savvy to stay marketable Want to get in, get the work done and move on to the next thing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal oriented Looking for meaningful work and innovation. May be the first generation to accept that readily accepted older leadership Looking for career and stability Mentoring is important to them Obsessed with career developments Prefer diversity, technology, informality and fun Recognized that people make the company successful Tolerant Thrive in a collaborative work environment Training is important to them Understand the importance of great mentors Want to enhance their skills by continuing their education
Top Development Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills training in my areas of expertise Computer training Team building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill training in my areas of expertise Leadership Computer training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Skill training in my areas of expertise Team building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Problem solving, decision making Skill training in areas of expertise