



Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands  
**Church Teachers' College: Amandeville**

in association with



**The Jamaica Teachers' Association & The University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, USA**

presents its annual

# *Special Education Conference & Workshops*

January 14, 2022 @ 8:30a.m.

## **THEME**

**Problem-Solving Tenacities:**

- **Pivotal Approaches for Overcoming Challenges of the Inclusive Virtual Classroom**



## **Keynote Speaker**

**Dr. Rohan Jowallah**

**Senior Instructional Designer  
University of Central Florida**



'UNITE AND SERVE'

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***The Professional Organization Representing Teachers in Jamaica***

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## ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The inaugural Special Education Conference and Workshops was held in 2014. It was the brainchild of Amy C. Stevens from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and Samantha Radway Morrison from Church Teachers' College: Mandeville. Since then, the conference has become a highly anticipated calendar event held on the second Friday in January. From its inception, the aim of the conference was to bridge the existing gap in the Jamaican education system by empowering teachers, caregivers and parents to meet the needs of exceptional students. The conference has grown from being a workshop with two presenters to its current format with hundreds of participants and presenters from all over the globe.

Our partners from the inception have been the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, the Jamaica Teachers' Association and The John Rufus Williams Education Trust. The conference has also benefitted from support given by The Jamaica Teaching Council, TIP Friendly Society and other partners. The Conference is endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. Over the years, the Conference has attracted presentations by the faculty of Church Teachers' College: Mandeville, local and international experts.

### Themes and Keynote Speakers have been:

- 2014 **Collaboration for Differentiation in the General Classroom**  
Dr. Amy C. Stevens, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater &  
Mrs. Samantha Radway Morrison, Church Teachers' College: Mandeville
- 2015 **Repositioning for the Future – Addressing Special Needs: A National Imperative**  
Dr. Sidi M. Lakhdar, Professor and Coordinator of the Graduate Program in Exceptional Student Education - Nova Southeastern University, USA
- 2016 **The Learner in Difficulty: Strategies, Modifications and Accommodations for the Classroom Teacher**  
Dr. Polly Bowes Howell, Consultant in Special Education and Early Childhood Development & Chairman of the JTA's Educational Conference
- 2017 **Improving Students' Behaviour through Classroom Management and Active Learning**  
Dr. Hixwell Douglas, retired Chief Education Officer for Special Education Unit, MOEYI
- 2018 **Differentiation: Assessment and Teaching/Learning Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom**  
Dr. Joan Spencer Hernandez, Founder of the School of Education Centre for the Assessment and Treatment of Exceptionalities (SOECATE) – University of the West Indies, Mona
- 2019 **What's Trending? Evidence Based Practices for Effective Instruction and Behaviour Management in Special Education**  
Mrs. Samantha Radway Morrison, Conference Coordinator &  
Projects and Research Officer - Church Teachers' College: Mandeville
- 2020 **From Assessment to Intervention: Maximising the Potential of Persons with Special Needs**  
Dr. Shawn Robinson, Senior Research Associate in the Wisconsin's Equity and Inclusion Laboratory (WeiLAB), USA
- 2021 **Teaching and Behaviour Modification Strategies for the Inclusive Virtual Classroom**  
Dr. T. Rowand Robinson, Professor - Department of Special Education,  
University of Wisconsin Whitewater
- 2022 **Problem-Solving Tenacities: Pivotal Approaches for Overcoming Challenges of the Inclusive Virtual Classroom**  
Dr. Rohan Jowallah, Senior Instructional Designer - University of Central Florida

# MESSAGES

## MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE COORDINATOR



Church Teachers' College: Mandeville and its partners are entirely conscious of the importance to provide avenues through which solutions for special education challenges may be exchanged. Hence, the hosting of the 2022 Special Education Conference and Workshops offers participants a relevant context to become involved in varied presentations and purposeful dialogues that suggest strategies for effectual online teaching and learning.

The conference and workshops theme, **Problem-solving Tenacities: Pivotal Approaches for Overcoming Challenges for the Inclusive Virtual Classroom**, highlights the need for continued repositioning in ensuring the success of teaching, and caring for students with exceptionalities. Notably, a flexible mind-set is an essential pre-requisite for stakeholders' tailored responses to the unparalleled experiences of online learning spaces.

This is our second year of hosting the conference online which extends the opportunity for more persons to participate. We are determined to provide quality sessions which we hope everyone finds meaningful. One of the primary objectives is for participants to garner a plethora of problem-solving approaches that may be applied to addressing the difficulties with which individuals may grapple when catering to special education students via virtual modalities.

The College remains absolutely grateful to our partners, the University of Wisconsin- Whitewater, The Jamaica Teachers' Association, The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, for your unremitting commitment. Your invaluable efforts and investments have undoubtedly contributed to the success of the conference and workshops over the years. Importantly, we look forward to preserving our collaboration for the benefit of students who require special care, and customisation of teaching and learning experiences. Thank you to all the team members who worked assiduously in the background to stage another conference. Your hard work has certainly not gone unnoticed. Also, thank you to our presenters and participants for your willing and significant involvement. Your continued support is always welcomed as we endeavour to play active roles in satisfying the needs of students with special emotional, physical and educational requirements.

**Ardene Reid-Virtue (Mrs.)**  
Conference Coordinator

# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

## SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2022



Church Teachers' College: Mandeville preserves its commitment to playing a proactive role in fulfilling critical educational needs. This necessitates a conscious implementation of undertakings that satisfy students' range of academic, social, emotional and physical requirements. As part of meeting this requisite, the College continues to host its Special Education and Workshop Conference. It gives varied stakeholders valuable opportunities to engage participants in presentations and conversations that equip educators, parents, and other caregivers with tools and strategies for providing meaningful special education services.

This year's conference theme, **Problem-solving Tenacities: Pivotal Approaches for Overcoming Challenges for the Inclusive Virtual Classroom**, conveys our interest in resolving the associated difficulties of online teaching and learning. As a College, we remain cognizant of the importance of ensuring that we participate in providing practical solutions for the success of educating students with differentiated abilities. Indeed, special education is an essential arm of the educational organisation. Therefore, as education experiences paradigm shifts, a focus on special education priorities should never be left on the periphery. Hence, the College and our partners forge ahead in our efforts to support endeavours aimed at ultimately enabling exceptional students to maximise their fullest potentials while being engaged via varied modalities for teaching and learning.

Thank you to the conference secretariat and our partners – the University of Wisconsin- Whitewater, The Jamaica Teachers' Association, The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, who have devoted their support over the years. Your sustained interest is definitely appreciated. As well, I extend gratitude to our presenters and participants who play an extremely important role in ensuring pertinent ideas are shared, and eventually impact spaces of learning and support for the students. I hope the conference and workshops provide everyone with crucial information that you deem applicable to your diverse special education contexts. Let us persist on giving keen attention to our exceptional students as we continue to cater to their spectrum of needs. We remain resolute in our motto to "Nurture through Love and Wisdom".

**Garth Anderson, Ed. D.**  
Principal, Church Teachers' College: Mandeville

# MESSAGE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN WHITEWATER



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-WHITEWATER  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is pleased to continue its partnership with Church Teachers' College: Mandeville and the Jamaica Teachers' Association in bringing you the 9<sup>th</sup> Special Education Conference and Workshops. As the Chair of the Department of Special Education at UWW and an original organizer of this event, I am proud of the longevity of this event as a high-quality professional development opportunity for teachers in Jamaica.

More than 25 years ago, the UWW College of Education and Professional Studies began its relationship with Jamaica by bringing education students to the Manchester parish in a program called Live and Learn. This program developed into the UWW Jamaican Student Teaching Experience and this event. Through our long-standing relationship with schools in Mile Gully and surrounding areas we have forged long standing professional relationships between teachers from our countries. This supports students in both countries by allowing for exchange of pedagogy and increased cultural awareness; it helps us all to become better teachers of all students.

The pandemic has restricted our travel again this year, and I look forward to a physical return home soon. In the meantime, through the innovative technology of Church Teachers' College: Mandeville, we are excited to bring this conference and workshops to you via the web. We are so lucky to have a means to continue the conference in such unprecedented times.

On behalf of the University of Wisconsin Whitewater and the College of Education and Professional Studies and the Department of Special Education, welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Special Education Conference and Workshops. Thank you to Church Teachers' College: Mandeville for their ongoing collaboration and partnership. Additionally, thank you to our conference presenters and participants; we are excited to have your virtual participation again this year.

Warmest regards from snowy Wisconsin.

*Amy C. Stevens, Ph.D.*

*Professor and Chair, Department of Special Education*

*Coordinator of the Jamaica Student Teaching Experience*

*Coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia and Language Based Learning Disabilities*

# Special Education Conference and Workshops 2022

## Programme Schedule

Time/Session	Presentation Titles	Presenters
8:30a.m. to 10:00a.m.	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prayer</li> <li>Welcome and Greetings</li> <li>Conference Overview</li> <li>Introduction of Guest Speaker</li> <li>Guest Speaker</li> </ul>	Dr. Monica Dempster, Moderator Vice Principal of Academic Affairs  Dr. Garth Anderson, Principal Church Teachers' College: Mandeville  Mr. Winston Smith President Jamaica Teachers' Association  Dr. Shenika McFarlane-Morris Deputising for Mrs. Ardene Reid-Virtue Conference Coordinator  Ms. Althea Campbell Projects and Research Office  Dr. Rohan Jowallah Senior Instructional Designer University of Central Florida
Concurrent Sessions 1 10:15a.m. to 11:00a.m.	Teaching Life Skills for Students with Severe Autism and Intellectual Disabilities  Teaching Mathematics Concepts Through Stories  The Effects of Technological Devices and Toys on Children's Learning and Socialization, Between the Ages of Zero to Six (0-6) Years in the Jamaican Context	Ms. Maria Parks, Ms. Caitlin Martin and Ms. Dana Furrú  Dr. Margaret Chin  Ms. Renee Barrows
Concurrent Sessions 2 11:00a.m. to 12:00 noon	Providing a toolkit for parents/ caregivers of children with special needs on how to support their children while recognising the need for self-care  Universal Design for learning in the virtual space  Transitioning to the New Norm: Early Intervention Strategies for at-risk students	Mrs. Taneisha Pascoe-Matthews  Mrs. Sherika Powell-Easy  Mrs. Sherika Lawrence Brown
12:00 noon to 12:40p.m	<b>BREAK</b>	<b>BREAK</b>



# Special Education Conference and Workshops 2022

## Programme Schedule

Time/Session	Presentation Titles	Presenters
Concurrent Sessions 3  12:45p.m. to 1:30p.m.	Teachers' coping mechanisms for instructing students with special needs in the online classroom  Facilitating Meaningful Mathematical Discourse in the Virtually Inclusive Classroom  Using Assistive Technology to Increase Literacy	Dr. Joan Reid  Mr. Lamar Edghill  Ms. Stacy-Ann Gunter
Concurrent Sessions 4  1:45p.m. to 2:30p.m.	Lack of Engagement Online? Let's Change That! Make Your Presentation Fun and Interactive  Sustaining learner engagement during online lessons  Fostering inclusivity: Catering to the psychosocial needs of students with exceptionalities	Ms. Madison Mikalauski  Dr. Tony Pellegrini  Mrs. Keisha Smith-Davis
Panel Discussion  2:30p.m. to 4:00p.m.	Parenting your Special Needs Child in a Pandemic: Parent/Teacher Collaboration	Mrs. Samantha Radway Morrison Centre Manager CTC Educational, Assessment & Intervention Centre  Ms. Jacqueline Hendricks'  Mrs. Racquel Rhoden-South  Ms. Yannette Holness  Mr. Everton Anthony Tyndale  <b>Students:</b>  Handel Young  Joshau Counsell

## Guest Speaker - Profile

### Dr. Rohan Jowallah



**Dr. Rohan Jowallah** holds an Ed.D. in Language and Literacy in Education from the University of Sheffield in England, M.Ed. in Special Needs and Inclusion Studies from The Open University in England, BSc in Psychology from The Open University in England, Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from the University of Wolverhampton in England, Diploma in Secondary Education from Bethlehem Moravian College in Jamaica, and a Certificate in Social Work from The University of the West Indies, School of Continuing Studies.

He is currently employed at the University of Central Florida as a Senior Instructional Designer, and is also an adjunct faculty at two universities. He has worked in education for over thirty years, and has international experience teaching in the Caribbean, England, and the USA. His teaching experience includes teaching online, face-to-face, and blended modes of course delivery. He has taught at various levels: elementary school, middle school, high school, and university.

Dr. Jowallah has presented at several international conferences, and has authored several peer-reviewed publications. He also has a published book, and several published book chapters. He continues to develop work for publication. As well, he has been a reviewer for several international journals.

He is a sought-after public speaker who has a passion for addressing topics on education, social justice, inclusion, and diversity. He draws from his life experiences, and the experiences of others to stimulate thoughtful and engaging conversations on critical issues that impact our daily lives.

Dr. Jowallah is also an active vlogger on YouTube with over 140 videos connected to his research interest. He produces weekly content, and currently has over 1300 subscribers.

### **A Non-negotiable Way Forward for Supporting Students with Special Education Needs in Virtual Learning Spaces: The Team Approach**

The landscape of education has changed drastically within the past two years. This drastic change will require a transformation in teaching and learning practice in relation to learning spaces. There must be sound pedagogical pathways for supporting students with special educational needs.

According to UNICEF (2020), students with special educational needs were severely affected by the pandemic. Compounding this issue was the lack of assistive technologies. Consequently, governments must ensure that no student with special needs is left behind. In finding a pathway forward, there should be neither compromise nor negotiation. This keynote session will:

- evaluate global trends in supporting students with special needs in virtual learning spaces.
- articulate the need for a team approach when supporting students with special accommodations (special needs) in virtual learning spaces.
- highlight strategies that will foster the development of inclusive virtual learning spaces.
- articulate the need for proactive support for removing potential barriers for students needing special accommodations in virtual learning spaces.
- evaluate upcoming technological advances that will foster greater inclusivity in virtual learning spaces.

## Concurrent Sessions 1 10:00a.m. to 10:45a.m.

Presentation Title	Presenter(s)	Moderator
Teaching Life Skills for Students with Severe Autism and Intellectual Disabilities	Ms. Maria Parks, Ms. Caitlin Martin and Ms. Dana Furr	Miss Lorain Senior
Teaching Mathematics Concepts Through Stories	Dr. Margaret Chin	Miss Andree Campbell
The Effects of Technological Devices and Toys on Children's Learning and Socialization, Between the Ages of Zero to Six (0-6) Years in the Jamaican Context	Ms. Renee Barrows	Mrs. Delphine Williams-Young

## Teaching Life Skills to Students with Severe Autism and Intellectual Disabilities



**Ms. Maria Parks** graduated from the University of Wisconsin Whitewater in 2018. During her final semester at UW Whitewater, she spent 6 weeks student teaching at Woodlawn Special Needs School in Jamaica. She has a Bachelor's of Science in Education with a Cross Categorical Special Education licence. She is employed with the School District of Waukesha in Waukesha, Wisconsin as a special education teacher working with students with intellectual disabilities and autism.



**Ms. Caitlin Martin** graduated from Carthage College in 2014 with two Bachelor of Arts degrees, one in Elementary Education and the other in Cross Categorical Special Education. She graduated in 2020 with a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Carroll University, specifically focused in personalized learning and reading teacher licensure (#316). She is employed with the School District of Waukesha, Wisconsin as a special education teacher working with students with significant support needs.



**Ms. Dana Furr** graduated from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) in 2003 with a Bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. She continued on at UWM and obtained a Master's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders in 2005, focusing on speech-language pathology in both the medical and educational settings. After graduating, she worked with adults and children in a rehabilitation hospital before pursuing a career in the public-school systems. For the past 11 years, she has worked as a middle school speech-language pathologist for the school district of Waukesha.

### Abstract

This session is centered on life skills in the classroom that build and foster student independence to the greatest extent possible. What happens to our most exceptional students after they leave us? Do they have the skills necessary to function in society? Do they have the skills to gain employment? Believe it or not, YOU have the power to help prepare your students for life after school through meaningful engagement in life skills activities right inside your classroom.

The presentation takes a look at practical strategies and ideas to practice life skills with resources you already have! Come take a look at how you can service your students to equip them with meaningful skills for their future.

# Teaching Mathematics Concepts Through Stories

## Dr. Margaret Chin



**Dr. Margaret Chin** is the Assistant Secretary General in charge of Professional Services at the Jamaica Teachers' Association. Dr. Chin holds a Doctorate in Education from the University of Sheffield in England, an honours degree in School Counselling from Western Carolina University (USA) and a Masters degree with distinction in Special Education from Nova Southeastern University, also in the USA. She received her teaching certification from the then Mico Teachers' College. She has also received several awards for her work in the field of education and research.

Dr. Chin has nearly two decades of experience as a classroom teacher and a Guidance Counsellor. She has worked at the early childhood, primary, high school and tertiary levels. Dr. Chin has been conducting in-service training workshops for teachers for many years both locally, and in the Caribbean. She has worked as Education Consultant on several projects with international agencies such as USAID, Centre of Excellence for Teaching Training (CETT), and the European Union (EU).

### Abstract

Mathematics requires students to understand numbers, abstract symbols, and needs to have a command of the specific academic meanings of many vocabulary words. Teaching mathematical concepts through stories may be one way to improving mathematics achievement. Reading stories can help students read, comprehend, and apply the text so that they may solve mathematical problems.

In this presentation, participants will learn how to provide students are with scaffolding that uses active reading strategies, which are modelled and practiced with mathematics content. Participants will also be able to apply intentional explicit instructional strategies to help students develop strong mathematics vocabulary through the use of stories.

# The Effects of Technological Devices and Toys on Children’s Learning and Socialization, Between the Ages of Zero to Six (0-6) Years in the Jamaican Context

**Ms. Renee Barrows**



**Ms. Renee Barrows** is an Educational Social Worker by profession and is presently attached to the Region 2, Ministry of Education, Youth and Information Office in Portland. She holds a Masters in Counselling and Social Work with distinction from The Mico University College. She has worked in the field of guidance and counselling for over eight years.

She has a passion for helping those who are vulnerable and is ardent about addressing issues that affect the emotional and physical well-being of our nation’s children. As a result, she continues to work assiduously through research, empowerment seminars, and community initiatives to help parents, guardians and other stakeholders cultivate an environment in which children can thrive.

## Abstract

In this era, children, invest much of their time using technological devices to communicate, socialize, play and study. This new surge has created concerns in relation to the effects associated with the present usage. This study assesses the effects of technological devices and toys on children’s learning and socialization.

The data gathered proved that there is marked increase in the use of technological devices and that more time is spent viewing programmes and playing virtual games than physical play. The evidence also revealed that children’s cognitive, social and motor skills are better impacted by early exposure to toys, rather than technological devices. The use of these devices has proven to not only contribute to a lack in social skills development, but also serious health issues such as obesity and sight problems. Though some of the findings are positive, others will create major issues for the growing child and their families.

## Concurrent Sessions 2    11:15a.m. to 12:00 noon

Presentation Title	Presenter(s)	Moderator
Providing a toolkit for parents/caregivers of children with special needs on how to support their children while recognising the need for self-care	Mrs. Taneisha Pascoe-Matthews	Mr. Marlon Virtue
Universal Design for learning in the virtual space	Mrs. Sherika Powell-Easy	Dr. Jean Chen-Wellington
Transitioning to the New Norm: Early Intervention Strategies for at-risk students	Mrs. Sherika Lawrence Brown	Mr. Everton Clarke

## **Providing a toolkit for parents/caregivers of children with special needs on how to support their children while recognising the need for selfcare**

### **Mrs. Taneisha Pascoe-Matthews**



**Mrs. Taneisha Pascoe-Matthews** is the assistant Head Teacher - Inclusion (SENCO and Pupil Premium lead) at The Palmer Catholic Academy in the UK. She started her career as a Mathematics and Computer Science teacher in Jamaica and has over 19 years' experience in the education sector. Since moving to the UK in 2008, she has held other roles such as Mathematics teacher, KS3 Coordinator (Mathematics) and Deputy SENCO.

In the recent past, she completed an M.Ed. in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and launched a number of social media platforms to continue autism awareness campaign under the headings Spotlight on Autism and One of Many Autism Voices. She is the mother of two sons on the Autism Spectrum and has authored a book entitled "The Biggest Surprise: Jadon And The Talking Trains, inspired by her first son.

She is passionate about the care and services available to autistic children and their families and uses her platform to advocate for the best future of all children especially those with special needs.

### **Abstract**

Most families have reported being overwhelmed by the economic and emotional costs of raising children with special needs and who require additional support in varying degrees. Many families turn to the internet to join parent groups for support or to research strategies. The internet can be a source of misinformation, and many unscrupulous individuals and organisations seek to profit from vulnerable families desperate for answers.

It is imperative that parents are provided with the correct information on how to cater to the needs of their exceptional children while simultaneously taking care of their own wellbeing. The role that parents of special needs children can play in planning support for their children should never be underestimated.

This session aims to provide information on the need for a coordinated plan of support for parents and also information on how parents can support their exceptional children while recognising the need for self-care.

## Universal Design for learning in the virtual space

### Mrs. Sherika Powell-Easy



**Mrs. Sherika Powell-Easy** is a Lecturer in the School of Languages and Literatures at Church Teachers' College: Mandeville. She has over twelve years of teaching experience at both the secondary and tertiary levels. She holds a Diploma in Secondary Education, obtained at Church Teachers' College, a Bachelor of Science in Special Education from the Western Carolina University in North Carolina, U.S.A., and a Master in Literacy Studies from the University of the West Indies.

Mrs. Powell-Easy has been involved in literacy development for years, as she is passionate about literacy, and believes every child possesses the ability to learn, despite challenges that may arise in their lives. This passion for educating and molding the lives of every child she encounters has led her to take up positions at numerous academic institutions where her impact is greatly felt and appreciated.

### Abstract

As educators, we are charged with the responsibility of imparting knowledge to students of diverse backgrounds and capabilities. Now more than ever, we are tasked with the responsibility of guiding students on their academic journey, ensuring they become worthwhile citizens amidst the Covid -19 pandemic.

This presentation focuses on a universal approach to learning in the virtual space, and on a number of academic success strategies that teachers can use to enhance the learning of students in both online and face-to-face settings.

### Transitioning to the New Norm: Early Intervention Strategies for at-risk students

#### Mrs. Sherika Lawrence Brown



**Mrs. Sherika Lawrence Brown** is a Special Education Lecturer at Church Teachers' College: Mandeville. She has 20 years of teaching experience and has worked with students at the secondary level with mild-moderate learning disabilities and challenges.

Mrs. Lawrence Brown obtained a teaching diploma from Church Teachers' College: Mandeville, a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Master of Science Degree in Special Education both from Nova Southeastern University.

She is very passionate about the holistic development of children. It is her goal to contribute to future developments in the field of Special Education to ensure that students with special needs are given a fair opportunity to maximise their true potential to achieve their social and educational goals.



## Abstract

Since March 2020, the Covid-19 virus has created a shift in how educators approached the teaching learning process. The instructional approach used during this period is mainly the online platform. The online platform poses many challenges for both students and educators. Research shows that many of our students have little or no access to education during this period, thus there is a learning loss in the system. These students are at a risk. Since November 8, 2021, some schools have been granted permission to open the doors to students for face-to-face learning. While this is good, educators must be cognizant that students are living through a traumatic experience and the transition from online learning to face-to-face learning needs to be approached with caution. An early intervention may be needed to help those students who have suffered a learning loss or who may be at risk. This session will focus on:

- What is trauma?
- Why Covid-19 is a traumatic event?
- How can we as educators alleviate the learning loss?
- How can educators help students transition from virtual classroom to face to face?
- Early intervention strategies for those students at risk

**BREAK 12:00 noon to 12:40p.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions 3 12:45p.m. to 1:30p.m.**

Presentation Title	Presenter(s)	Moderator
Teachers' coping mechanisms for instructing students with special needs in the online classroom	Dr. Joan Reid	Mrs. Shimi Alex-Renjith
Facilitating Meaningful Mathematical Discourse in the Virtually Inclusive Classroom	Mr. Lamar Edghill	Mrs. Adesuwa Omoregie
Using Assistive Technology to Increase Literacy	Ms. Stacy-Ann Gunter	Miss Monique Castle

# Teachers' coping mechanisms for instructing students with special needs in the online classroom

**Dr. Joan Reid**



**Dr. Joan Reid** studied Special Education at Mico College and the University of the West Indies and further studied at the Nova Southeastern University where she received a Doctor of Education, Master of Science and recYellow Belt Lean Six Sigma Excellence. She is currently the Head of the Special Education Department at the Mico University College.

Continued professional development is her hallmark as she believes “there is always a better way... you just need to find it”. This has led to her participation in numerous workshops and certificate courses including: Advanced Educational Management (Mount St. Vincent University), Technology Integration in the Education System (E-I-Jam), Behavior Management, Best Practices in Teaching Reading (Reading Solutions), as well as Improving Quality in Education Systems and Leading with a Purpose, at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Joan Reid is passionate about Special Education and the teaching and learning process.

Paper: The paper will be a combination of various special education teachers' coping strategies in meeting students' special needs in the virtual classroom setting.

## **Abstract**

The history of special education is well documented, providing technical guidelines for teachers to advance the cause of education. Of note is that the skills and techniques needed for educating children with special needs are wide ranging in scope, requiring in-depth understanding of students with special needs. Meeting these needs in today's classroom can be challenging for teachers and must be given close attention. An even greater challenge is being faced with the current Covid-19 pandemic which has seen a new paradigm in online learning. While some students with special needs have very high interest in the virtual classroom settings, others are highly challenged. Teachers must therefore embrace the realities of the changing classroom settings, shift their approach, and adapt to the new situations while finding coping strategies to help students with special needs leverage this new situation.

## Facilitating Meaningful Mathematical Discourse in the Virtually Inclusive Classroom

### Mr. Lamar Edghill



**Mr. Lamar Edghill** currently serves as the Regional Mathematics Coordinator in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MoEYI), Mandeville Regional Office. Prior to his current post, he served in the Ministry as a Cluster Based Mathematics Specialist, Secondary Mathematics Coach, and Primary Mathematics Coach in Region 5.

Mr. Edghill is currently pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at Temple University. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Mathematics Teaching from the University of Technology, Jamaica and Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education, with specialization in Mathematics.

Mr. Edghill currently serves on the National Mathematics Advisory Committee of the MoEYI, and has, through the National Mathematics Programme of the MoEYI, partnered with the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) in the hosting of the Mathematics Leadership of Education Programme in 2020, and our Mathematics Leadership Webinar Series in 2021.

### Abstract

This session aims to explore the learning culture and practices that encourage and support deeper concept related communication among students in the virtual classroom setting. Principles to Actions, a 2014 publication of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) outlines eight effective mathematics teaching practices, one which is to “facilitate meaningful mathematical discourse”. Within the mathematics learning setting, discourse among students builds a shared understanding of mathematical ideas by analysing and comparing student approaches and arguments.

This session seeks to highlight practices in the virtual setting that will promote the facilitation of mathematical discourse among students, and is intended for teachers engaging students in mathematics using online platforms with greater emphasis on synchronous engagement.

## Using Assistive Technology to Increase Literacy

### Ms. Stacy-Ann Gunter



**Ms. Stacy-Ann Gunter** lectures at Church Teachers' College: Mandeville, her alma mater where she obtained a Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature. She also holds a Master's degree in Teaching and Learning from St. Mary's University, Minnesota.

She is a literacy specialist and has over 18 years' experience as a classroom teacher.

Ms. Gunter is passionate about helping students to develop the necessary literacy skills that enable them to function effectively in a globalised world. Her goal for this session is to highlight the literacy learning loss caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and to share ways in which educators and parents can use assistive technology to improve literacy.

### Abstract

Covid-19 has changed the daily lives of students, teachers, and families. Since 2020, educators have been working online to cater to the learning needs of students. Creating a language-rich environment on Zoom and other online platforms has been difficult for teachers, and that may impact students with special needs. The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the literacy learning loss caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and to share ways in which educators and parents can use assistive technology to improve literacy. Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.

### Concurrent Sessions 4      1:15p.m. to 2:00p.m.

Presentation Title	Presenter(s)	Moderator
Lack of Engagement Online? Let's Change That! Make Your Presentation Fun and Interactive	Ms. Madison Mikalauski	Miss Vanessa Walker
Sustaining learner engagement during online lessons.	Dr. Tony Pellegrini	Miss Dorothy Lawrence
Fostering inclusivity: Catering to the psychosocial needs of students with exceptionalities	Mrs. Keisha Smith-Davis	Mrs. Moya Sweetland Palmer

## **Lack of Engagement Online? Let's Change That! Make Your Presentation Fun and Interactive**

### **Ms. Madison Mikalauski**



In 2021, **Ms. Madison Mikalauski** graduated in the Honors Program with a K-12 Bachelor of Science in Education and Cross Categorical Special Education License from the University of Wisconsin Whitewater. During her junior year at UWW, she spent three weeks student teaching at Woodlawn School of Special Education in Mandeville, Jamaica. She is currently employed as a high school special education teacher with the Peotone Community Unit School District.

#### **Abstract**

With all the online lessons these days, it is hard to keep your students engaged. Students are distracted and get bored easily. Because of that, you want to make your lessons fun, but you do not know where to start. You want to get feedback from your students in real time, but do not get a response when you ask a question. This presentation will give you tips and tricks on how to start making your lessons interactive.

This session models topics like inserting audio, games, polls, and making your PowerPoint visually attractive. It also provides linked free resources that will help you create your ideal presentation tailored to your specific students.

### **Sustaining learner engagement during online lessons**

#### **Dr. Tony Pellegrini**



**Dr. Tony Pellegrini** is a professor of Education at Southern Utah University. He received his B.A from Brigham Young University, his M.Ed. from Utah State University, and terminal degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, before eventually becoming school principal at Blanding Elementary School and Three Falls Elementary School in Southern Utah.

Dr. Pellegrini is a regular contributor to the Educational Testing Service's School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA), and the School Superintendent Assessment (SSA) reviews. He collaborates and presents annually at the Utah Rural Schools Conference. He was awarded the 2005 Utah State System of Higher Education's "Technology Innovator of the Year" award. Dr. Pellegrini presents annually, regionally and internationally, on topics involving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and learners, web-based learning tools and approaches, and methods and approaches for crafting graduate research initiatives.

#### **Abstract**

If you have taken an online class, you have seen how learners disappear over time. People get busy. They have trouble making class and keeping up with coursework, or they do not get the support they need and lose motivation.

Online learning presents additional challenges. Online learners must have the motivation and discipline to work in isolation. A lack of face-to-face accountability makes it easier for an online student to give up without the instructor noticing.

An online course that merely provides information is no better than any other in our lifelong learning market. Your leadership must differentiate itself by offering online courses that engage, connect, and transform learners.

As you engage and participate in this online seminar, you should increase your learners' online student engagement. When more learners enjoy and complete your course successfully, your programs benefit from their return business and word of mouth referrals.

## **Fostering inclusivity: Catering to the psychosocial needs of students with exceptionalities**

### **Mrs. Keisha Smith-Davis**



**Mrs. Keisha Smith-Davis** is a Lecturer in the School of Languages and Literatures at Church Teachers' College: Mandeville. She is a trained graduate with over 20 years of teaching experience. She holds a Masters of Arts degree in English Language (Distinction), a post graduate diploma in Language Teaching and a Bachelor of Arts in Literatures in English.

Her teaching experience in the Language Arts classrooms in Jamaica and England has led her to believe that differentiation is not just an educational trend, but a vital strategy that should be at the core of teaching in this era. The diverse classrooms that exist globally have made this an essential skillset for every teacher who aspires for excellence in teaching.

### **Abstract**

At the forefront of the discourse about educating special needs students is inclusivity, granting each student equal access to a quality education. Training the teacher to meet the cognitive needs of the students is indeed a priority, but too often, it is promoted at the expense of preparing teachers to meet the psychosocial needs of students with exceptionalities. Maintaining a healthy psycho-emotional environment is critical in all learning environments and should be a priority, but more so in the inclusive classroom where there may be a predominance of emotionally fragile students. "Negative emotions can exacerbate academic struggles" (National Centre for Learning disabilities, 2017); hence, as teachers strive to unearth the academic abilities in of their students, it is imperative that they exhibit a keen awareness of the importance of promoting a psychosocial atmosphere that is conducive to both academic and emotional development.

This workshop aims to facilitate an exploration of the psychosocial demands of special needs learners, and provide approaches that teachers can utilise in an attempt to address these needs.

## **Panel Discussion 2:30p.m. to 4:00p.m.**

### **Parenting your Special Needs Child in a Pandemic: Parent-Teacher Collaboration**

#### **Samantha Radway Morrison**



Mrs. Samantha Radway Morrison is a Principal Lecturer (Acting) at Church Teachers' College: Mandeville where she manages the Educational, Assessment and Intervention Centre.

Her involvement in the field of education spans over 30 years, which has provided her with invaluable teaching and administrative experiences from the kindergarten to the tertiary levels.

Mrs. Radway Morrison has qualifications in Education - Church Teachers' College: Mandeville; Media and Communication - University of the West Indies (CARIMAC); Special Education - Nova Southeastern University, and Business Administration - Walden University. Her range of studies has furnished her with a gamut of skills and wide repertoire of knowledge.

She is an effective teacher of language arts, written and oral communication, business communication and special education. She has successfully conceptualised, implemented and managed several projects and has organised conferences and workshops covering several areas.

#### **Ms. Jacqueline Hendricks'**



Ms. Jacqueline Hendricks' professional and educational career spans over 28 years. She is currently the Campus Coordinator for the Lyssons Center of Excellence which caters for post primary students diagnosed with intellectual disabilities. She is also the current Chairperson of the JTA Special Education Committee. She is the mother of a special needs son who is 19 years old.

Ms. Hendricks obtained a Diploma in Primary Education from St. Joseph's Teachers' College, a Bachelor of Education in Educational Administration from the University of the West Indies, Mona, and a Master of Education in Special Education at the Mico University College.

Ms. Hendricks is the recipient of the Ministry of Education Region 2 Excellent Teacher Award, 2018. She is also the recipient of other awards including the 2013 JTA St. Thomas 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Award for Service in Education, the JTA R. C. Tavares Award, 2013, and the Edith Dalton James Award, 2017, for Service to Education and Community, respectively.

## **Panel Discussion 2:30p.m. to 4:00p.m.**

### **Parenting your Special Needs Child in a Pandemic: Parent-Teacher Collaboration**

#### **Mrs. Racquel Rhoden-South**



Mrs. Racquel Rhoden-South is the Principal of Woodlawn School of Special Education in Mandeville. Prior to that, she spent sixteen years at Christiana Leased Primary and Infant School, most which was spent teaching students with learning challenges. Her passion lies in getting students with exceptionalities to learn and optimise their potential, ultimately achieve the best they can, and live their best lives.

Mrs. Rhoden-South is a graduate of Sam Sharpe Teachers' College where she obtained a Diploma in Education. Since then, she earned a Bachelor in Primary Education from Knox Community College and a Master's degree in Education – Special Education from The Mico University College.

#### **Ms. Yannette Holness**



Ms. Yannette Holness, an educator for over 45 years. She is a Literacy Specialist and currently an APSE Coach at Robert Lightbourne High School, in charge of the Remedial Unit.

She has worked at the Early Childhood and Secondary levels and has served as principal of Calvary Basic School for several years.

Ms. Holness served as a secretary, Public Relations Officer (PRO) in the Blue Mountain Valley District Association of JTA, and also as PRO at the St Thomas parish level. She is living with special needs.



### **Mr. Everton Anthony Tyndale**



Mr. Everton Anthony Tyndale is the Principal of Porus Infant School and also a Minister of Religion. He is the father of Mathew Daniel Tyndale, a special needs 17 year old who attends the Woodlawn School of Special Education.

Matthew has been diagnosed with Sotos syndrome, (which affects 1 in 1000 persons), epilepsy and some learning difficulties. However, individuals' constant support, love and treatment of him have caused him to rise above the many challenges.

Matthew is very active in school, masters the use of technology, rides his bicycle, and is one of the chief musicians at church.

The support from his teachers, Miss Andrene Wiltshire and Mrs. Blackwood has ignited a genuine love for learning. In his own words, "I am a Rock Star!"

### **Two students with Special Needs**

**Handel Young** is 21 years old and suffers from Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

He is currently attending Lincoln College where he is pursuing an associate degree in Medical Sciences in an attempt to matriculate to a full Medical Sciences programme.

He has encountered and overcome many challenges during his high school years, as result of this disability which continues to impact his life.

**Joshua Counsell** is 13 years old and attends the Lyssons Center of Excellence in St Thomas.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who are children with special needs?**

Exceptional children/children with special needs are those who experience difficulties in learning as well as those whose performance is so superior that modifications in curriculum and instruction are necessary to help them fulfill their potential.

Exceptional/ special needs children is an inclusive term that refers to children with learning and or behaviour problems, children with physical disabilities or sensory impairments, and children who are intellectually gifted or have special talent.

### **What is special education?**

Special education is individually planned, specialised, intensive, goal directed instruction. When practiced effectively and ethically, it involves the use of evidence-based teaching methods and evidence which is guided by direct and frequent measures of student performance.

### **What does inclusion mean?**

Inclusion means that students with exceptionalities are taught in the general education classroom alongside their typically developing peers. The learning experience will be tailored to meet the needs of students. Adaptations in the form of accommodations or modifications increase the chances of students maximising their potential.

### **What is Universal Design for Learning?**

All new curricula materials and learning technologies should be designed to be flexible enough to accommodate the learning styles of a wide array of individuals including children with disabilities. The three principles of UDL are

- Multiple means of representation
- Multiple means of action and expression
- Multiple means of engagement

### **What is differentiation?**

Adjusting teaching environments, curricula and instructional practices to create appropriately different learning experiences for students with different needs, interests, readiness, and learning profiles

### **Individualised Education Plan – IEP**

Specialised plans developed and implemented to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities. These plans contain statements of the individual's present levels, targeted levels, strategies to be employed to meet the desired outcomes and timelines within which these goals will be met.

### **Functional Behaviour Assessment**

A systematic process of gathering information about the purposes a problem behaviour serves an individual. The assessment is used to create intervention plans

### **Behaviour Intervention Plan**

A statement of specific strategies and procedures to prevent the occurrence of a child's problem behaviour and to intervene when necessary based on the results of a functional behaviour assessment.

## Glossary

### A

**Accommodations:** This refers to changes that allow a person with disability to participate in activities.

**Adaptations:** Changes that are made in an inclusive classroom setting in order to facilitate the learning abilities of students who are disabled.

**Assistive technology:** Technology used to assist a person with a disability in order to perform functions that are deemed difficult.

**Assessment plan:** A written description of the assessments that will be used to evaluate a student's strengths, weaknesses and progress and to determine his or her eligibility for special education services, and the types of services that would help that student succeed.

**Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD):** A condition that can make it hard for a person to sit still, control behaviour and pay attention.

**Autism:** a brain development disorder characterized by impaired social interaction, communication and by restricted and repetitive behaviour. Signs usually begin before a child is 3 years old.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** A disorder characterized by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors.

### B

**Behaviour Management:** Responding to, preventing and de-escalating disruptive behavior.

**Behaviour Support Plan (BSP):** A proactive action plan to address behaviour(s) that are impeding learning of a student or of others in his or her classroom.

### C

**Cerebral Palsy:** A series of motor problems and physical disorders related to brain injury. CP causes uncontrollable reflex movements and muscle tightness, and may cause problems in balance and depth perception. Severe cases can result in mental retardation, seizures or vision and hearing problems.

**Collaborative teaching:** A teaching strategy, in which two or more teachers work together, sharing responsibilities to help all students succeed in the classroom.

### D

**Deafness:** A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.

**Disability:** Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

### E

**Early Intervention (EI):** Services that are provided for children who are at risk of being disabled from birth to their third birthdays, as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Emotional Disturbance:** Term used to describe a diagnosable mental, behavioural or emotional disorder that lasts for a significant duration that meets the criteria within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

### F

**Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):** The education to which every student is entitled under IDEA. Every student is entitled to an education that is appropriate for his or her unique needs and that is provided free of charge.

### H

**Handicap:** Refers to a problem or disadvantage that a person with a disability or impairment encounters when interacting with the environment.

## Glossary

### I

**Impairment:** This refers to the loss or reduced function of particular body parts or organs.

**Inclusion:** To include persons with disabilities, with or without special accommodations, in programs, activities, and facilities with their non-disabled peers.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A legal document that defines special education services between the school district and the parents.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** A law that guarantees educational rights to all students with disabilities and makes it illegal for school districts to refuse to educate a student based on his or her disability.

### M

**Mental Retardation:** This term has recently been changed. This disorder is characterized by below average cognitive functioning in two or more adaptive behaviours with onset before age 18.

### O

**Occupational Therapist (OT):** A professional who treats patients with injuries, illnesses or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help these patients develop, recover and improve the skills needed for daily living and working.

### R

**Resource Specialist Program (RSP):** Term used to describe a program that provides instruction, materials and support services to students with identified disabilities who are assigned to general classroom for more than 50% of their school day.

**Response to Intervention (RTI):** A process used by educators to help students who are struggling with a skill or lesson. If a child does not respond to the initial interventions, more focused interventions are used to help the child master the skill. RTI strategies address both learning and behavior.

### S

**Sensory impairment:** A disability that affects touch, sight and/or hearing.

**Speech and Language Impairments:** Communication disorders such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment or voice impairment.

### T

**Transition/Transition Plan:** Transition is a general term used to describe a change in a student's school or program. A transition plan is specific to an IEP: a student who will turn 16 within the life of his or her individualized education program must have a transition goal and plan that outlines how he or she will transition to life beyond high school.

### V

**Visual Impairment (VI):** Impairment in vision that, even with correction, unfavourably affects a child's educational performance.

Submitted by: Casan Moss, Cristal Palmer and Breneisha Wedderburn (January 2020)

#### Reference

Heward, W. L (2012). Exceptional Children: An Introduction to Special Education. (Tenth edition) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

# *Notes*



# Church Teachers' College: Mandeville

PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR NATION BUILDING

## Entry Requirements

B. Ed. - Five Subjects including English Language and Mathematics at the CXC/CSEC General Proficiency Level, grade 1 or 2 (or 3 obtained since 1998), or at the GCE 'O' Level grade A, B or C.

Subjects for the Early Childhood, Primary, or Special Education Programmes should include a Social Science and a Science

Students must have a CXC (or equivalent) Grade 1 or 2 in the specialist subject area.

# Programme Offerings



### > MAIN CAMPUS

- a. Associate of Science Degree for Early Childhood Teachers.
- b. Bachelor of Education - Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary Education & Special Education.
- c. Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) with Advanced Standing - All Specializations (Conditions apply)



### > COLLABORATIONS

(Main and Brown's Town Campus)

- a. The Middle Leaders Training Programme (NCEL)
- b. Pharmacy Technician Programme (UTECH)
- c. Master of Science in Mathematics Teaching (UTECH)
- d. Master of Educational Leadership (Temple University)
- e. Doctor of Education in Educational Administration (Temple University)
- f. Post Graduate Diploma (CASE)



### > BROWN'S TOWN CAMPUS

- a. Associate of Science Degree for Early Childhood Teachers.
- b. Bachelors of Education - Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary & Special Education.
- c. Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) with Advanced Standing - All Specializations (Conditions apply)

