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'Student engagement: The language centre perspective'

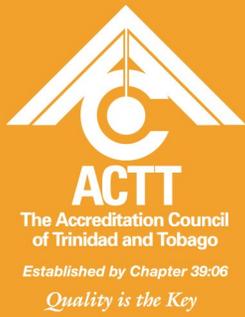
Title of Paper

Enhancing the student learning experience in a dynamic environment
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Abstract

The Centre for Language Learning (CLL) at The University of the West Indies (UWI) St. Augustine Campus is the only UWI language centre. Stating its uniqueness is not meant to underscore its outlier status, or suggest it is antithetical to the stated goals of The UWI, or of higher education institutions (HEIs), generally. On the contrary, this paper posits that language centres, and the CLL specifically, exemplify what Prof. Emeritus John Goddard refers to as the "engaged civic university". Goddard (2009) contends that "all publicly-funded universities (in the UK) have a civic duty to engage with wider society on the local, national and global scales, and to do so in a manner which links the social to the economic spheres."

The primary stakeholders of a university language centre are the students and staff of the HEI where it resides. Alignment with the needs of this core constituency determines its focus. But in offering access to the community at large, a language centre must engage with a far larger body of "students", not just matriculated UWI students. The challenge then is how to ensure that at both strategic and operational levels, the student experience is "unique, memorable, fulfilling and meaningful", and to do so in the case of the CLL while remaining responsive to UWI's Strategic Goals of Alignment, Access and Agility. This paper presents the case of East Asian languages at the CLL and explores how we have promoted quality student and civic engagement despite the constraints in our context.



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Author's Profile

Beverly-Anne Carter PhD (UWI) is Director of the Centre for Language Learning at The UWI St. Augustine Campus. Dr. Carter has researched and published in several areas of foreign language education, including learner and teacher autonomy, language policy and planning, non-specialist language learning, technology in language learning, and in language and competitiveness. Dr. Carter is also Local Director of UWI St. Augustine's Confucius Institute. She has worked extensively with the Caribbean Examinations Council at both CSEC and CAPE levels.



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