

An Exploration of Educational Trends (V2)

An Exploration of Educational Trends (V2):

*A Symposium in Belize,
Central America*

Edited by

Pamela R. Cook, PhD

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A Symposium in Belize, Central America

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INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL TRENDS (VOLUME TWO)

PAMELA R. COOK, PHD

EDITOR, BELIZEAN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER

I have always enjoyed travelling to faraway places. As for all those educators, professors and researchers like myself who live their life vicariously as an academic, it is an ongoing obligation to attend conferences, lectures, seminars, roundtables, and symposiums from time-to-time to fulfil professional obligations. And, of course, there is always an assortment of additional duties in the academic field that may also require research and writing.

Having said that, it is my pleasure to provide additional writing and publishing opportunities for those academics who have presented their educational research from attending and participating in the *Belizean International Symposium on Education*. Let me explain by saying this is a event held yearly in Belize City, Central America. The purpose is to give academics an opportunity to accomplish their yearly professional development and educational learning obligations.

In the first volume of *Educational Trends: A Symposium in Belize, Central America*, the contributors discussed a variety of topics pertaining to the educational trends of diverse learning in Belize and other locations. The articles consisted primarily of topics relating to the Belizean educational system and preschool education, historical literature, the language of Kriol and English as a second language, reading specifics, methods of constructivism, preparing quality teachers, virtual learning and study abroad responses from participating university students.

In volume two, there were several different perspectives taken from diverse educational trends that addressed: culture and diversity, the educational and historical perspectives of Belize, childhood holocaust art, national educational research and political trends, stem research, educational effects of incarceration, bilingual majors, communication

including reading and writing, building peace, new school initiatives, and many study abroad responses from university students.

In addition, there are several individuals that I would especially like to thank as they have been a constant resource for me in coordinating the International Symposium. I would especially like to thank my faithful Belizean friends who have continually supported the International Symposium since its launch in 2009.

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I greatly appreciate Dr. Priscilla Brown-Lopez, associate faculty from the University of Belize, for her on-going support. Many thanks to the Belizean Ministry of Education for their continued support in sending representatives to the symposium each year. Many of the presentations provide our participants with an array of detailed information that regard the plight of educational growth and development in Belize.

As for those college and university students that read this textbook, my only hope is that you will glean a variety of information from the articles and essays to assist you with your own educational careers. I also trust you will continue to stimulate your own thinking and become energised about new learning experiences in research and travel.

My desire is for readers to use this textbook as a scholarly resource of educational information for educators, students and teachers globally. I encourage each of you to enjoy the contents and use it to your benefit to further your knowledge, utilising the materials provided from a diverse group of professionals for the latest in, '*Educational Trends...*'. Use it to enrich yourself from a cultural perspective as I hope to meet you in January for a warm and sunny Belizean experience!

Many kind regards,
Dr. Pamela R. Cook, editor
Executive Director and Founder
Belizean International Symposium on Education

CHAPTER ONE:
CURRENT TRENDS OF BELIZE,
CENTRAL AMERICA

EDUCATIONAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF BELIZE

PAMELA R. COOK, PHD
EDITOR, EDUCATIONAL TRENDS

I wish to wrest education from the outworn order of doddering old teaching hacks as well as from the new-fangled order of cheap, artificial teaching tricks, and entrust it to the eternal powers of nature herself.
—Johann H. Pestalozzi (in Smith 2005, 1)

Introduction

How horrific and devastating it is that young children seem to be the ones who suffer the most from so many of the catastrophic perils of this world. A large number of children are abandoned each year due to the enormous socioeconomic pressures within developing countries (Taneja, Beri, and Puliye 2004). The Executive Director of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) once said, "The world is squandering human potential on a massive scale as hundreds of millions of the world's youngest citizens flounder in poverty and neglect in their first years of life" (Bellamy 2000). The Alternative Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) of Belize reported a 39% increase of Belizean children currently living below the poverty line. Poverty continues to be extensive, persistent, and widespread throughout Belize and neighbouring Central American countries (Liberty Foundation 2004). Cho (2005, 4) concurs that, "Funding and adequate resources are lacking in developing countries." The question still stands as to what can be done to help the situation.

According to UNICEF, Belize has an approximate population of 366,000, with 48.3% under the age of 18 (2006; 2016). This indicates that the youthfulness of the country contributes to the stress on the lower social-economic standings. Increasingly, this occurs within developed countries as well as those that are impoverished or war-torn (Arnold 2000).

On August 4, 2016 it was reported that Hurricane Earl hit near Belize City as a Category 1 hurricane with estimated maximum winds of 80 mph. The main concern across the Yucatan peninsula was that heavy amounts of rainfall and high winds continued to cause major difficulties. It was estimated that over a foot of rain brought the threat of flooding and landslides on higher terrain, causing major distress. The federal transportation authorities estimated that most of the areas had received a month's worth of rain within 24 hours. Other areas that were affected included portions of Honduras, Guatemala, and the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico. It was also reported that Hurricane Earl was the first to make landfall in Belize or anywhere in the Caribbean Sea west of Jamaica since Hurricane Ernesto almost exactly four years prior (August 7, 2012) (CNN 2016; USA Today 2016; Weather Storm 2016).

Historical evidence confirmed that, in September 2007, Hurricane Dean caused an estimated \$100 million in damages, mostly effecting the agricultural areas of Belize. Soon after, Hurricane Felix, the second hurricane of the season, hit after Hurricane Dean's catastrophic winds reached Category 5. This was the fourth time since 1886 that more than one Category 5 hurricane has been recorded in an Atlantic season, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("Hurricane Felix Nears Central America" 2007). Then, in October 2001, Hurricane Iris left approximately one hundred thousand children homeless throughout the Caribbean coastal areas (State Report 2016).

Nonetheless, there is still hope for Belize and the many people living along the Caribbean coastlines. Hurricane shelters are being constructed on a continual basis through many private organisations and volunteer groups. One such group, The International Relations Committee of Scouts, Canada, received funding for a project in the form of a Brotherhood Fund donation. The Scout Contingent group formed the Project Belize Contingent. The Contingent Leaders, Iain Tait and Myles Vanni, travelled to Belize prior to the project to design a plan. The main focus for this trip was to set up relationships with scouting officials near the Valley of Peace Town Council of Belize. Upon further exploration, it was determined that the best plan was to complete the construction of a hurricane shelter and community centre located in the small village of Valley of Peace (See Figs. 1.1. and 1.2. below).

Iain Tait, contingent leader for the scouts, commented:

We spent two weeks working on the hurricane shelter and community centre. We worked by mixing cement, pouring cement, laying down cement, laying bricks, tying rebar, plastering, painting and overall having a fantastic time. It was amazing to see two cultures thrown at each other

coming from opposite extremes in every possible way, and yet still working together, moving together in the same direction (see Figs. 1.3. and 1.4. below). (I. Tait, personal communication, October 2007)

Fig. 1.1. Original hurricane shelter (photo submitted by I. Tait)



Fig. 1.2. Interior existing hurricane shelter (photo submitted by I. Tait)



Fig. 1.3. Valley of Peace renovations (photo submitted by I. Tait)



Fig. 1.4. Valley of Peace hurricane shelter/community centre (photo submitted by I. Tait)



I can relate to those organisations sending volunteers to developing countries with a focus, goal, and mission who come to realise how diverse cultures can work together for a cause. I can especially appreciate Iain Tait's commitment to this project and thoughts toward the scout group. Iain Tait stated, "In my personal opinion, any group like this that can work together and move together will continue to help the world become a better place" (personal communication, October 2007).

Given the perils of devastation in most developing countries, and as we begin to realise the significance of diligent programmes engaging within foreign exchanges, it is encouraging to see the results of many labours.

Belizean Historical Perspectives

The first recorded European settlement of 1638 resulted in English seamen shipwrecked on the Caribbean coastal shorelines. In 1840, Great Britain sent an official representative to the area of Belize, which was formally termed the Colony of British Honduras, and later became a crowned colony in 1862. The official name of the territory was changed from British Honduras to Belize in 1973, and included full independence granted on September 21, 1981 (International Institute of Soccer Tourism 2006; State Report 2016).

Belize is considered a parliamentary democracy and a member of the Commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth II is head of state and is represented in the country by Sir Colville N. Young, Sr., a Belizean governor general. Currently, the government is controlled by the People's United Party (PUP), which assisted when Belize received full independence in 1981 (International Institute of Soccer Tourism 2006; State Report 2016).

It is reported that most Belizeans originate from a multi-racial descent of 46% mixed Mayan and European, including 27% African and Afro-European (Creole) ancestry, as well as approximately 10% Mayan and 6% Afro-Amerindian (Garifuna). Other ethnicities include European, East Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, and North American groups. English is the official language, with Chinese, Creole, Garifuna, Mayan, and Spanish also spoken (International Institute of Soccer Tourism 2006; State Report 2016).

Belizean Educational System

The compulsory public educational system of Belize ranges from five to fourteen years. Furthermore, there are preschool programmes with children attending at ages three and four. At age five, a child enters

primary school for eight years. The first year is designated as infant I. At six a child attends infant II, which is the second year of school. At the age of seven a child attends Standard I, which is the third year of primary school, and at age eight Standard II, which is the fourth year.

Beginning at age nine a child attends Standard III, which is the fifth year of primary school, and at age 10 they attend Standard IV, the sixth year of primary school. At age 11, a child attends Standard V, which is the seventh year of primary school, and at age 12 Standard VI, which is the eighth year.

When aged 12 to 15, a student may begin First Form (i.e. high school) in the event that any of the primary levels have not been failed. At age 14, which is referred to as Second Form, they start their second year of high school, followed by Third Form at 15 and Fourth Form at 16, which are the third and fourth years of high school, respectively. Those students able to afford college may enrol and attend for three or four years depending on the type of study. Some students begin college at age 16, which also depends on the success of the lower level achievements (G. Price and S. Cruz, personal communication, April 2007).

At any rate, the educational system of Belize remains problematic (State Report 2003; 2016). This may be due in part to the migration patterns and educational policies at the end of secondary school. For most Belizean families, the privilege of attending primary and high school is unaffordable given the high cost of the administration fees, books, classroom materials, excursions, and uniforms. Thus, the lack of school attendance leads to low literacy rates of approximately 76% (State Report 2003; 2016). One strong indicator is that extra efforts are needed to address primary school children who engage in commercial activities, domestic work, and agricultural labour during school hours instead of attending public or private school programmes (State Report 2003; 2016).

The ILO/IPEC study on Child Labour (Child Activity Survey 2001, 28) revealed that 77.3% of children aged five to seventeen were working. The attendance of preschool children remains at a continual low, with the national coverage being 27.5%; the highest coverage at 60.4% is in Belize City and the lowest of 2.7% is in the southern Toledo District of Belize (State Report 2003; UNICEF 2006; State Report 2016). This insinuates that approximately 18% of children aged five to seventeen are not attending school and are actually child labourers. The Inter Press Service News Agency (IPS) indicated that approximately 8,582 children were labourers. The seriousness of this definitely impacts Belizean schools through absenteeism, dropout rates, and other related child labour issues.

The United States Department of Labour (2010) statistics reveal working Belizean children and school attendances as follows:

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Aged 5–14 Working: 6.3%

Aged 5–14 Attending School: 93.2%

Aged 7–14 years Combining Work and School: 6.2%

The International Child Advocacy Organisation (ICAO) warns that many Belizean children are working within the region, which exposes them to high levels of toxic pesticides and extremely long working days. In addition, working children are at risk of abuse, traffic accidents, exploitation, and mistreatment by adults (IPS 2006). Maria Conde of UNICEF addresses this issue: “This situation is extremely dangerous for the region, due to the rights of dignified development and health towards children being violated” (IPS 2006).

The Belizean government continue to take precautions. They have partnerships with NGOs and expand awareness through television, posters, and billboards written in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Hindi. Authorities continue to disseminate public service announcements on childhood sexual exploitation, sex tourism, and the demand for commercial sex acts, but do not investigate, prosecute, or convict any child sex tourists. The government does not make efforts to reduce the demand for forced labour or commercial sex acts, and does not provide anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel (United States Department of State 2016).

Interventions have resulted in UNICEF extending its early learning interventions by offering two major programmes. The first programme consists of an Enhancing Holistic Child Development Programme and places an emphasis on children aged up to six. The programme will focus on legislation and policies which may have an impact on the development of curriculums for centres of young children. This programme will also include parenting education projects and the promotion of male involvement within childcare. This programme will also enable the establishment of a community-based nationwide initiative to prevent domestic violence (UNICEF 2006; Cook 2010; UNICEF 2016).

The second programme is the Enabling Environments for Adolescent Development Programme, and will facilitate the development of individualised learning environments. The Adolescent Development programme will also support adolescent participation by offering education projects and reproductive health initiatives relating to teenage

pregnancy and HIV/AIDS (UNICEF 2006; Cook 2010; UNICEF 2016).

It has been discovered that Belize and Honduras have been rated as having one of the highest occurrences of HIV infection and the largest number of AIDS cases in Central America (Stansbury and Sierra 2004). In 1986, over two thousand cases of HIV/AIDS were detected and confirmed in Belize. Approximately 150% of young children may be infected with HIV, which may indicate a high percentage of HIV-positive single mothers (UNICEF 2006; 2016). Essentially, the Belizean Government has implemented programmes to address child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. However, children continue to be exploited through prostitution and many work in risky situations in agriculture. Limited information on the government's enforcement efforts have been reported (UNICEF 2006; Cook 2010; US Department of Labour 2010; UNICEF 2016).

Developing Countries and Early Learning Advancements

At The Convention of The Rights of the Child in March 1990, Belize became the fifth country in the world to ratify the United Nations Convention on the "Rights of the Child." As signatory to the convention, Belize committed itself to upholding all 54 articles, which include: protection of children, provision for their basic needs, and ensuring their full participation in all decisions and discussions which affect them depending on their age and ability (National Committee for Families and Children 2002). Bellamy (2000) supported the "Rights of the Child" and agreed that an investment in the development and care of young children is the most fundamental form of good leadership. Current research and a non-governmental organisation (NGO) will represent rapid growth toward successful early learning within several developing countries. These countries have chosen different ways to address educational learning and health related issues of early childhood education. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) states that, "Countries are launching various efforts to meet their global commitment to the development of care and educational services for young children" (UNESCO 2003, 3).

In 1990, the Jomtien Declaration claimed that "learning begins at birth," and embraced Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to improve their quality of early learning. Ten years later, the world community renewed its commitment to ECCE in the Dakar Framework for Action organisation to expand, improve, and ensure equity in ECCE (ECCE 2006). Rogoff et al. (1993, 162) support this by suggesting, "Each

culture has its own system of norms and values in which the development and interactions of children evolve.” Constant efforts to improve early education and the health of young children have become evident in countries such as Jamaica, Mexico, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Belize, all of which are examples of some of the efforts toward early childhood advocacy. Jamaica has made successful strides towards the quality of education and health for young children (Morrison and Milner 1997).

The country of Mexico succeeded in enrolling 76% of its population between the ages of three and six in early childhood education programmes and is a sign of a strong commitment to early childhood advocacy (Levine 2005). The Ethiopian Ministry of Education created partnerships with various NGOs to improve kindergarten to secondary levels of education (Szente et al. 2004). Communities in Kenya have been providing healthcare and education for HIV/AIDS orphans (Mbugua 2004; Save the Children 2005). Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan have implemented national curricula for pre-primary education. Bangladesh offers pedagogical guidelines that are meant to emphasise the child’s holistic approach to child development (UNESCO 2003).

As a very small developing country, Belize has considered the best interests of children through the support of The National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC). This particular organisation was established in recognition of the “International Year of the Family,” which was launched in 1994 as an advisory body to govern family and child issues. Belize attended the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in May 2002, and joined the international community in pledging support for the new global Plan of Action entitled A World Fit for Children (National Committee for Families and Children 2002).

In addition, two major programmes from UNICEF in Belize have been launched. The first, the Enhancing Holistic Child Development Programme, will place an emphasis on children up to the age of six with legislation and the development of policies and curriculums for childcare centres. This programme will include parenting and early childhood education projects, the promotion of male involvement in childcare, and the establishment of a community-based nationwide initiative to prevent domestic violence. The second, The Enabling Environments for Adolescent Development Programme, will facilitate the development of individual environments. This programme will support adolescent participation, education projects, and reproductive health in relation to teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS issues (UNICEF 2006; 2016).

Children's Rights and Institutionalisation

It has been estimated that the number of orphans will likely increase by 5–6% for all young children in Belize (UNICEF 2006; 2016). This is cause for major concern for educators, researchers, and NGOs within developing countries when regarding institutionalisation. Current research (Johnson, Browne, and Hamilton-Giachritsis 2006) indicates the risk of institutionalised care as children who reside in an institution have limited opportunities to form selective attachments compared to children placed within family-based care.

This is noted especially where there are large numbers of children, small numbers of staff, and a lack of consistent care through shift work and staff rotation. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) consistently detects depressive, internalising problems among orphans (USAID 2004). Johnson, Browne, and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2006, 35) also indicate that even “good institutionalised care can have detrimental effects on children’s ability to form relationships later in life.” Ensalaco and Majka (2005, 16) acknowledge the situation: “The neediest states, even when they act in good faith, lack adequate resources to ensure that institutions, services, facilities, and staff are available to children and families.”

Records indicate that two out of every five Belizean children will not have their basic food and non-food needs met (State Report 2003; 2016). Research suggests that young children who are hungry will perform poorly in diverse learning situations (Morrison 2004). Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory indicates that basic needs must be satisfied before the higher levels (Maslow 1970). Brain research continues to show that nutritious food and water are essential for the proper functioning of healthy brain development (Morrison 2004). Early childhood educationalists and neurologists both agree that the first eight years are a critical time for the healthy brain development of young children. Neurons in the brain are developed before birth, and many are waiting to be programmed through the process of early-learning experiences (Isbell 2001). Brain development in language typically occurs within the first few years of life, and many developmental changes may be necessary for children’s acquisition of language (Martin and Fabes 2006). Isbell (2001, 21) suggests that, “Appropriate and interesting experiences during the early years can have a positive impact on a child’s current development, as well as brain connections that will last a lifetime.”

Research into institutionalisation (Johnson, Browne, and Hamilton-Giachritsis 2006, 57) also suggests that countries with young children who

reside in an institutionalised care facility must develop alternative strategies such as adoption and foster care. The international community should be encouraged to promote the, “Human rights of children in residential care and to support the development of family-based alternatives.”

In 2001, 542,000 children (aged 0–18) were placed in public foster care within the United States, and approximately one quarter (11,777) of these were under the age of five (US Department of Health and Human Services 2003). Johnson, Browne, and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2006, 57) comment that, “Rehabilitating children to their families of origin needs to be adequately supported and monitored.”

The privately-owned charity Liberty Foundation of London, England is a recognised orphanage in Belize. The Liberty Children’s Home (LCH) was established for the care of abandoned and neglected children. Liberty has made every attempt to place children within Belizean families as adoptive or long-term foster care parents. The home continues to maintain supportive communication with families even after a child leaves (J. Rahn, personal communication, February 20, 2006). The executive director of UNICEF (2000) claims that:

The state of the world’s youngest children, citizens with the same rights as all others, is not nearly as good as it should be ... it will only get better when we alter current priorities and accept the sound economic, social and political sense it makes to prioritize the world’s youngest. (Bellamy 2000)

How can children become valued in developing countries, or in any country for that matter? Valentine (2001, 1) believes that, “A child who is valued, is a child who has a right.” Cho (2005, 162) argues that, “researchers and authors make efforts to discuss how children’s rights are not the priority, but where the *value* of children is placed is rarely mentioned.” Children that live in Reggio Emilia, Italy, have a fundamental right to realise and expand their potential. As The Charter of Rights manifesto from Reggio Emilia, Italy declares:

Children have the right to be recognised as subjects of individual, legal, civil, and social rights; as both source and constructors of their own experience, and thus active participants in the organisation of their identities, abilities, and autonomy, through relationships and interaction with their peers, with adults, with ideas, with objects and with the real and imaginary events of intercommunicating worlds. (in Valentine 2001, 4; Edwards, Gandini and Forman 1995).

Summary

It is vitally important for educators and researchers to continue the process of exploring new strategies towards early learning that will ensure the rights of young children. Rogoff et al. (1993, 9) believe that, “understanding development is in the context of children’s everyday activities and culturally *valued* goals of development.” Studies (Taneja, Beri, and Puliyeel 2004, 21) have shown that children living in orphanages are likely to have developmental delays due to poor stimulation and inappropriate learning experiences.

Rosenblith (1992) suggests that the development of deprived children will improve dramatically once the environment becomes more stimulating. Martin and Fabes (2006) agree that environmental factors influence the stimuli that affect the developmental process, as only raising the awareness and radically altering the contexts from where genuine *care* takes place will improve the personal, social, moral, and academic development for the future of children (Cooper 2004; Cook 2016).

A Maori native from New Zealand once said something which parallels the Belizean plight to educate young children:

The bird that eats only the fruits of the forest—theirs will be the forest.
The bird that eats the fruits of education—theirs will be the world.
(Codrington 2004, 187).

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CHAPTER TWO:
EDUCATIONAL TRENDS
WITH HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

CHILD HOLOCAUST ART: IDENTITY AND IDENTIFYING

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Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over obstacles. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.

—D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928/1983)

Introduction

This paper is an exploration of how our self-concept is shaped by what we identify ourselves with. Specifically, the role of the way some of the children of the Holocaust, including their progeny as secondary witnesses, identified as Jews is explored through works of art produced by them. What is missing in traditional theories of identity is an account of how the post-colonial environment affects identity, to which this paper is intended to be an initial antidote. The research is based on the use of unobtrusive methods, the study of stories, artifacts (e.g. paintings), and other commentaries about the Holocaust, often produced by children of the Holocaust, adult reflections, or both, and supplemented by accounts of perpetrators for the purpose of context and credibility. Also, archival research in the form of academic reflections on the Holocaust is used. Recognising the author as an instrument of data collection, some remarks about him allowed for the consideration of extending the case of secondary witnessing to the post-colonial child.

Written in 1928, D. H. Lawrence's opening to his notorious novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* seems prophetic in retrospect. He seems to capture the

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