



Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute

Excellence in Africentric Education & Research



DBDLI Research:

Vision, Community Participation and Collaboration

Background

In response to the 1994 Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report on Education, the government of Nova Scotia accepted a recommendation to establish an Africentric Institute. An important mandate of the Institute is to carry out research that is expected to guide and inform policies needed to improve the educational experiences of African Nova Scotians. The Institute now referred to as Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute (DBDLI) was established in 2012 to carry out this mandate. The research unit of DBDLI has been active for the past two years with an appointment of a research director overseeing and guiding the research activities of the Institute through an Africentric lens.

Africentric Vision

As indicated in the BLAC (1994) Report, people of African Ancestry have always cherished the importance of education. Despite this enthusiasm, African Nova Scotian learners often have not been successful largely because of the injustices and institutional racism that have marginalized the cultural relevance of African Nova Scotians in the Nova Scotia public education system. This marginalization has led to an achievement gap where the performance of a typical African Nova Scotian in the annual large-scale assessment of learners' performance in literacy and numeracy is often below the provincial average.

The Institute shares the general contention that, the improvement of the education experiences of African Nova Scotians will require the full and active participation of the African Nova Scotian Community and the integration of Africentric concepts into the Nova Scotia public education system. What Africentric models and practices have worked for African Nova Scotians in the past? How can we make these models and practices work for our learners? And, would these models and practices support the overall improvement in the Nova Scotia education system? These are the basic questions guiding the current research endeavours of the Institute. This approach to applying Africentricity is consistent with traditional African human development enshrined in concepts like 'Sankofa--the traditional proverbial bird reminding us to look back and pick the jewels that we might have missed in our development journey', 'Ubuntu--I am because you are' and the famous African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child". These ideas are consistent with the inclusive education policy rooted in the cultural relevance of learners that the Nova Scotian government is currently pursuing. DBDLI has therefore adopted Community Participation and Collaboration as the key principles guiding DBDLI research activities.

Community Participation

The Institute recognizes the importance of involving community members in all aspects of the research processes to ensure credible interpretation and representation of community voices, it takes a community to make data count. The Institute has therefore started developing research capabilities within the African Nova Scotia Communities through an initiative referred to as 'Community Data Collectors' (CDC). We also intend to develop a data-base of 'Community Research Advocates (CRA) that we hope will help us identify the research needs within the African Nova Scotia Communities.

Community Data Collectors

We expect our African Nova Scotian Community Data Collectors to have: extensive knowledge of African Nova Scotian Community and the education challenges of African Nova Scotian learners in the Nova Scotia education system. The CDCs should have a strong belief in the traditional African concepts that DBDLI has adopted. The key responsibilities of the Community Data Collectors would include: providing support in developing interview protocol and data collection instruments; informing the community about the research, mobilizing the community for data collection, contribute to data analysis and report writing strategies, and mobilize the community for the dissemination of research findings.

Our goal is to recruit CDCs from all the African Nova Scotian Communities.

Historic African Nova Scotian Communities



Research Collaboration

We seek research collaboration with research institutions, communities, regional centres of education and schools. Our research collaborations include:

"Ubuntu Pedagogy of the Community"

Designed to engage community Elders in developing framework for teaching strategies with teachers.

With Professor Susan Brigham, Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU).

Attendance and Engagement Policy

With the title, "Developing Data Systems for evidence-based policy making and implementation: A study of the Nova Scotian Student Attendance and Engagement Policy" Project will also assess the impact of the policy on African Nova Scotian students.

With Professor Joyline Makani, Dalhousie University, in Partnership with Tri-County Regional Centre for Education (TRCE).

Building Africentric Model from Community Voices

"Embracing Transition to College: Building Africentric Models from the Learning and Voices from Community" will assess and develop an understanding of how a transition program (African Canadian Transition Program--ACTP) in NSCC can work for African Nova Scotians.

With Dr. Terrah Keener, Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC).

Making Community Voices Count

"Improving education for African Nova Scotians: Making community voices count" will profile historical education policies and practices for African Nova Scotians.

With Professor Lisa Borden, St Francis Xavier University (StFX).

Using African Nova Scotian Elders to Support Educational Experiences

"Using Elders to support the educational experiences of Black Communities" –a three-year SSHRC project involving Black communities in Toronto, Halifax, South Africa and Ghana.

With Professor Sefa Dei, University of Toronto.

Social Justice Experiential Education Program

Intended for students of colour to explore Canadian Black history, current context, community resilience, and identity, among other themes. Part of this program will take place in Guelph, and part will take place in Halifax--DBDLI will work with two students on their project.

With Professor Jade Ferguson and Cassie Wever, University of Guelph.

Africentric School Discipline

"Africentric School Discipline Model" – to explore the experiences of African Nova Scotian students with school discipline.

With Professor Johanne Jean-Pierre, Ryerson University.

Promising Schools

"Using Data to track Promising Educational Experiences of African Nova Scotian Students" – that will help us identify schools where all learners including minorities such as African Nova Scotians are successful.

With Dr. Marlene Ruck-Simmonds, African Canadian Services Branch (ACSD).

Black Excellence in STEM

Event intended to bring together scholars and students of African Ancestry in STEM and engage high school students in STEM activities. The conference would lead to the production of short videos designed to develop the interest of AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN learners in STEM.

With Professor Pemberton Cyrus, Professor Kevin Hewitt both from Dalhousie University and Sidney Idemudia, Imhotep Legacy Academy.

Africentric-Focused School in Nova Scotia: Lessons from the Toronto Africentric Alternative School

Visited the Toronto Africentric School and developed a report that documented the challenges and the invaluable experiences of the staff and the principal on Africentricity. We expect the report to inform the development of an Africentric-Focused School in Nova Scotia. DBDLI expects this school to serve as a research hub for developing Africentric ideas and products for the Nova Scotia education system.

With Luther Brown Principal of the Toronto Africentric Alternative School.

Reference

Black Learners Advisory Committee. (1994). BLAC Report on Education : Redressing Inequity- Empowering Black Learners. Halifax: Black Learners Advisory Committee.

* We use Community with a capital "C" to denote our message of Black Community.

Contact Details

Questions related to the research collaboration should be directed to:

Dr. George Frempong,
Director of Research
george.frempong@dbdli.ca



Delmore "Buddy" Daye
Learning Institute
Excellence in Africentric Education & Research

5450 Cornwallis Street
Halifax, NS B3K 1A9
Telephone: (902) 407-3200
Toll-Free: 1 (855) 350-3200
Fax: (902) 407-3263
www.dbdli.ca