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Distance Learning around the Caribbean by C Williams

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What is the best way to learn and study if you live in a region of the world that is made up of 41 different islands? For many individuals who live in the Caribbean, distance learning is the method of choice when choosing to gain a higher education. Many also choose to move to study overseas. With continued advances in information technology students are now able to study from anywhere with an internet connection and increasingly are choosing to study from distance to limit costs.

Jamaica is one of the largest proponents for distance learning, as then Minister of Education Hon. Andrew Holness said last year, "distance learning will be the choice of many more students to achieve tertiary level education in the future".

The subjects of English and Mathematics tend to be favored by students of distance learning as there are few limitations to what can be achieved in these fields. For more practical subjects such as engineering or science related fields, the notion of learning by distance is somewhat questionable. Companies have recently backed the trend by recognizing distance learning degrees as providing an adequate grounding in certain subjects.

The number of ways that students can now study online and the variety of tools available to them is continuing to increase. From online presentations, e-books, and interactive lessons students can arguable have access to all they would at a 'bricks-and-mortar' university. Online universities are now able to provide a plethora of facilities for students which just wasnâ€™t available even five years ago.

In Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, some of the world's best known distance learning institutions are providing a launch pad to propel online learning in the Caribbean to higher heights. Jamaican universities have the accreditation required to gain students looking for credible degrees as accreditation is always preferable for companies looking for employees. Jamaican universities now offer a range of certificate, diploma and degree programs based in a wide number of disciplines â€“ including art and culture, architecture and sculpture, science and technology, commerce and management, entertainment and enlightenment.

Certain institutions such as Utech are seen as specialists in their field. Focusing on a specific field means that certain institutions are seen the obvious choice for individuals looking to advance their career.

"The popularity of distance learning courses in Jamaica is due to the recognition of quality around the world. Distance learning courses are very useful not only for students and young people looking for a job but also for people who are currently in work or young professionals" said one distance learning graduate who had just completed her studies for her Bachelor degree in English.

Continued updating of educational information technology will make future distance learning degrees more flexible and allow a greater number of subjects to successfully be studied from home or other places with an internet connection. Students in Jamaica should be looking forward to a positive learning experience in the future as they start to be seen as a real force in the world of distance learning.

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Claire Williams is a freelance writer who has worked with number of education companies. Find out more about a distance learning at an a online university.

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