Productive Disruption: Personal and Professional Learning through Curriculum Creation and

Implementation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the personal and professional knowledge, skills and competencies garnered by a group of trained and untrained instructors, through unstructured curriculum creation and implementation in one primary school at the grade six level, in Kingston, Jamaica. The intention of the thesis is to explore a richer and nuanced understanding of the phenomena, through the experience of six primary school instructors from the same school, who carried out the activity for two consecutive years with different cohorts of students. Accordingly, the researcher's aim is to contribute information to the established and emerging literature germane to this field. The depth of description of teachers' Adult Education benefits can be acted on across all other countries, through instructors' reflection of their involvement in creating change as presented in this thesis. The main benefit of this study is the advancement of knowledge for future and present educators as well as persons involved in curriculum design, implementation and evaluation. It will surpass the targeted level of the research, which is primary education, and could be used across all levels of the education system.

Keywords: Jamaican curriculum, curriculum gap, critical thinking, curriculum creation and implementation, teachers' personal and professional lessons

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me that it is all within me to complete this mission. You reminded me of the importance of contributing to Jamaican scholarship in education and tarried with me during this journey. For that I am grateful.

Let us all continue to do our part in advocating for effective education systems, and more importantly, education where all stakeholders are encouraged to be lifelong learning contributors and beneficiaries.

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Preface

This research paper can be regarded as a celebration of the work of a team of instructors with whom I worked during the 2016-2017 school years. I served in the capacity of Principal of the institution during the tenure of the researched phenomenon and witnessed instructors' reactions to what was deemed an institutional crisis spurred by unsuccessful implementation of the national curriculum. They responded with the creation and implementation of a curriculum they thought was more relevant to the demands of their students, in the form of an alternative curriculum intervention program.

I was a colleague and supervisor of the participants during the time and assisted with initiating the intervention being studied. Given the qualitative nature of this work, I share the role I played at the time of the intervention, but only as a potential source of bias and lens through which I am understanding the participants' voices. I was not a part of the case study and simply aimed to understand what the team members, most of whom are still working in the same location, learned from the intervention experience and if or how they attributed their experiences to shaping their subsequent professional growth since that time.

I was aware that there may have been perceived power relationships and to eliminate perceived conflict of interest and bias during the time that the study was conducted, I was referred to as 'The Researcher', with no position of authority over the participants and with no ability to make decisions on any course of action regarding the institution or the individuals during or after the study. In relation to the research, I am consistently referred to as a student of Mount Saint Vincent University, with correspondences made using the university's email contacts. Memoing was used to assist with transparency where "concepts derived from narrative data were used as building blocks to construct theoretical arguments" (Hsiung, 2019, para. 1), In

addition, memoing also assisted me to "identify specific aspects of excerpts worth exploring, note patterns, significance, or uniqueness, comment on variations and or interconnection among repeated instances and to pose unanswered questions" (Hsiung, 2019, para. 1) . This was also a self-regulatory tool for me as the researcher, so that I was constantly aware of decisions, interpretations and conclusions to protect the objectivity of the research.

The instructors coming together to seek solutions and implementing their creative ideas to stem the issue in the first year of implementation required assistance from me in the capacity of Principal. I became more curious about their decision, without being asked by the school's administration and without requesting any directives from me, to implement an intervention program in the second year spanning the cohort of students at the entire grade six level. Based on the proficiency with which the instructors worked on their own, it appeared as if a light went off in their minds individually and collectively during the first year, and for some reason, the switch was never turned off during the second year. It became important for me, as a colleague and fellow educator, to understand the depth of what this team did and seek a way to communicate the stimuli for their volition and the lessons they learned from their work. I believe their story is of utility to others with similar goals of curriculum change for student engagement and retention, and educators' personal and professional development.

Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith

Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 4, 2019

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Curriculum: What is it and how do public schools implement it?

In general terms, a curriculum is the subjects or courses with predetermined content (i.e. knowledge, attitudes, skills) offered by an institution. Marsh and Willis (2003, p. 13) defined curriculum as "an interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school". Posner (2004), shared contrasting definitions: "Some claim that a curriculum is the content or objectives for which schools hold students accountable. Others claim that a curriculum is the set of instructional strategies teachers plan to use" (p. 5).

What is referred to as classical curriculum development and evaluation by Stenhouse (1975), is common among many countries and Educational jurisdictions. The curriculum in its introductory stage, is simply a proposal that seeks to encapsulate behavioural objectives and learning outcomes. In order to determine its effectiveness, there are pre or diagnostic tests also referred to as formative assessment, followed by a series of post-tests or summative assessments. The results, which are measured and compared against a control group of students, are used to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. One common misconception that arises in the creation and implementation of national curricula is that the teacher and their teaching/learning context are all constants rather than variables (Stenhouse, 1975). In essence, the development and implementation of a curriculum is experimental in nature, and can lend itself to numerous misinterpretations, creating many gaps.

Stenhouse (1975) described the curriculum gap as the disparity between the planned and the enacted curriculum. As stated by Einhorn (2010), "Stenhouse saw curriculum as both what a school (or teacher) intends to do, and what it actually does." Contradictions exist as it pertains to

creating formal courses of study that will reflect what are the expected "ideas and aspirations" and the "attempt to operationalize" these ideas and aspirations (Stenhouse, 1975). It is difficult to identify all the possible reasons for curriculum gaps, as they are "complex, interrelated and not all known yet" (Klein,1986, p. 2).

As stated by Teale, Paciga and Hoffman (2007), "The curriculum gap must be bridged if we hope to ameliorate the achievement gap" (p. 347). In order to reduce this gap in intention and delivery, teachers should be aware of and study how best to understand the curriculum both on their own and together(Stenhouse, 1975; Einhorn, 2010). When teachers talk with their colleagues, it allows them to verbalize and make known their thought processes, intentions, plans and concerns that may otherwise remain internalized. This helps to uncloak the "shroud of silence encapsulating solo teaching" (Brookfield, 2012, p. 244), for as colleagues, they have the opportunity to check, reframe, and broaden their own theories of practice (Moon, 2007; Brookfield, 2012). It also provides a platform for discussing and evaluating multiple viewpoints of curriculum content, allowing for the possibility of problem-exploration, problem-solving, and practical understanding of how to implement what is expected of students (Moon, 2007).

In accordance with Posner (2004), the Jamaican curriculum is a combination of instructional strategies for teachers, suggested content, objectives and assessment activities for students. The latest version of the Jamaican National Standard Curriculum (NSC) is based on the hierarchical Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, known as Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Edward, Hill, Walker & Krathwohl, 1956). This taxonomy is a framework for classifying learning objectives from simple to complex, or from concrete to abstract.

The Centre for Teaching and Excellence highlighted that, in the publication of the revised version of the 1956 hierarchy, Krathwohl and Anderson (2001) introduced:

a key change to the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy: it shifted the language used from nouns to verbs and thereby focused the attention away from acquisition and toward active performance of the types of learning involved in each stage of the hierarchy. "Synthesis" was also dropped and "create" was moved to the highest level of the domain. (para. 1)

The integrated and sequential NSC is developed on the assumption that each level of a students' learning is a direct result of the foundation laid by the previous level, and that teachers will engage students in activities requiring them to move from low level cognitive skills that simply require them to recall information, to higher order cognitive skills where they evaluate and ultimately create information. It must be impressed in academic settings that curriculum implementation is a team activity and hence critical discussion as a means of support is essential.

Ferguson-Murray (2018), with reference to the University of the West Indies' Change From Within Program, explained that stakeholders engaged in the program have the opportunity to explore alternative perspectives, developing skills necessary to treat with similar challenges they may face, and particularly those negatively impacting the present education system. The program facilitates participation in critical conversations among peers, opening them up to each individual's version of events they have collectively experienced (Brookfield, 2012). Critical thinking "allows you to take informed actions that are grounded in evidence and that can be explained to others and stand a good chance of achieving the results we desire" (Brookfield, 2012, p. 24). Critical thinking is a kind of evaluative thinking which involves both criticism and creative thinking and which is particularly concerned with the quality of reasoning or argument which is presented in support of a belief or a course of action (Fisher, 2005). These critical thinking discussions serve as a process of unearthing or searching for assumptions, examining

these assumptions, seeking the viewpoints of others and by examining the presented alternatives, make informed decisions on the actions to be taken.

A Social-psychological Explanation of Teachers' Needs and Adult Learning.

Marchis (2011) outlined the importance of self-regulated learning for teachers. Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a form of learning, through which the learner sets goals and makes plans before starting to learn; monitors and regulates his/her cognition, motivation and behaviour during the learning process; and then reflects on his/her learning process and outcomes (Pintrich, 1995; Pintrich, 2000; Zimmerman, Schunk, & Ebooks Corporation, 2001). The components of SRL, which can be broken down into small sets of individual actions, span a gamut of critical thinking techniques.

Self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan ,2000) is based on the type of motivation as opposed to the amount of motivation one receives. Two types of motivation-autonomous and controlled- are clarified by Deci (2017). Activities carried out when there is a full sense of volition, willingness and choice (Deci, 2017) are the result of autonomous motivation. The teacher has an interest, sees value and feels enjoyment in carrying out the tasks. On the contrary, controlled motivation results in activities being done solely for reward or to avoid punishment. The teacher feels pressured, obliged or demanded (Deci, 2017) to carry out the tasks. The set of basic psychological needs related to SDT: competence, relatedness and autonomy, as stated by Deci is applicable to teachers' work.

The feeling of competence occurs when teachers are confident that they have the required skills, knowledge and attitudes. They know 'the what' and have the 'know-how' for what they want to achieve. This enables them to effectively carry out their tasks. Regardless of how competent teachers may feel however, they are required to work as members of a common

community. This brings relatedness to the fore. Teachers must feel belonged to a community, where the care they give to others within the group is reciprocated. This process of relatedness facilitates the knowledge exchange necessary for new perspectives to be explored.

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) analyzes behaviour in terms of reciprocal determinism. Bandura (1978) claims that reciprocal determinism is characterized by three factors that influence behaviour: the environment, the individual and the behaviour itself as manifested and interpreted by the individual and others. Bandura (1978) makes it clear that "people's efficacy and outcome expectations influence how they behave, and the environmental effects created by their actions in turn alter their expectations" (p. 346).

Bandura (1978) further outlines that:

By their actions, people partly determine the nature of their experiences;

through their capacity to manipulate symbols and to engage in reflective

thought for innovative action, they can generate novel ideas and fashion new

environments for themselves and others. (p. 351)

As summarised by Cherry (2018): "while people are affected by the things of the experience in their environment, they also have the power to exert a change on their situation and the circumstances through their own choices and behaviour" (para. 14). While reciprocal determinism explains how behaviour and learning are socially and interpersonally moderated processes, it fails to explain large learning curves needed to change one's practices drastically or how to engage with conflicting systems or insights in ways that moves work, and adult learning, forward.

As outlined by Roberts, (2006), Transformative learning often follows some variation of ten phases. There needs to be a disrupting event or circumstance that challenges the perceptions

and understanding of the teacher, referred to as a disorienting dilemma; the teacher recognizes

the present short comings through the process of self-examination, usually with feelings of fear,

anger, guilt, or shame. This leads to a critical assessment of assumptions, particularly if the

teacher is of the view that all the right things were being done, yet the expected results were

unattainable (a gap exists). Extending the critical assessment phase to critical discussions leads to

the recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared by others who

have had similar experiences. A spin-off to critical discussions is the very important exploration

of options for new roles, relationships, and actions, allowing for the selection and planning of a

feasible course of action. To fill the existing deficit, teachers must acquire the knowledge and

skills necessary for implementing their plans and trying new roles on a provisional basis. A key

component in the process is for teachers to build their competence and self-confidence in their

new roles and relationships, thereby feeling empowered to reintegrate this new perspective,

knowledge, attitude and skills into their operations based on conditions dictated by the new

perspective gained (Mezirow, 2000).

Caffarella and Daffron (2013) noted that adult learning can encourage continuous

growth and development of individuals intellectually, morally, spiritually and aesthetically. As

teachers are involved in the adult learning process, they would be required to be engaged in

higher level thinking skills (Bloom, 1956), thereby considered apt for formal educational

settings. In order to respond to the practical problems and issues of adult life, teachers should be

able to apply knowledge, skills and experience through life-long, learning based on experience.

This, with the intent to empower and improve themselves, their students and their institutions, as

well as attaining the ultimate goal of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970) based on each past,

current and future experiences. This empowerment, however, is appropriated when teachers feel

highly motivated and self-directed (Knowles, 1975), willingly assuming responsibility for their own learning.

Assessment of teachers as adult learners, which is competency and standards based, thrives on feedback and reinforcement (Skinner, 1974). The utilization of group discussions, group learning and group tasks is a main feature assisting schools to achieve their desired results and adopting to change. One major change necessary is for teachers to recognize that their students at some point can be considered to be equal with their instructors in the learning process and possess the power to decide the direction of learning. Both teachers and students then, must be groomed to create and effect changes in curriculum, through a combination of reflection and action (Brookfield & Johanson, 2011), thus the learning environment becomes one that is problem-centered rather than content-oriented (Tough & Knowles, 1985).

Context

The Socio-historical Context of the History of Education in Jamaica

Jamaica's educational development is steeped in its colonial past, as all existing formal education system and administration were based on the British model. As is the case today, major developments in the history of Jamaica's education system were reactive in nature, responding usually to some major event or disorienting dilemma, like the abolition of slavery in 1834, the country gaining independence in 1962 and the 2004 Task Force on Educational Reform Report. There is very little recorded information of formal education opportunities for the Indigenous Taino people and the African slaves on the island during the pre-emancipation era. The white children, particularly boys, of landowners and slave masters were sent back to England for schooling, had hired private tutors or attended the few free schools that were established using the inheritances from wealthy planters and merchants. Note, however, that the course of study in the free schools was based on that offered by similar schools in England. Boys were being groomed to be gentlemen who could continue the 'backra' tradition (expression used to refer to any white person in a position of authority, a slave master or slave driver) (Jamaica Patois, 2019). The establishment of a modified curriculum for girls by the Wolmers Free School in 1770, reinforced the already existing and accepted domestication of girls regardless of their colour, with very few of those educated being able to secure local teaching positions.

Slave children, when given any form of schooling, were exposed to a curriculum mandated by foreign missionaries. Despite the good intentions of missionaries, they assisted the colonial government by providing a system of access and control over the slave population by introducing a curriculum riddled with ulterior motive: perpetuating religious beliefs for the continued peaceful submission of slaves to their masters. This was done by breaking down

traditional methods of sharing information, history and culture and over time, created a belief among this population that their traditional culture was backward and uncivilized and that they should aspire to be like the 'civilized' British (Coles, 2008).

The Negro Education Grant was endowed by an inheritance left by Lady Mico in 1690. Lady Mico, the wife of Sir Samuel Mico, an English trader, spent much of her fortune on charitable work. Although she was childless, she believed in doing what she could to assist poor and slave children. Her inheritance was originally endowed to her nephew, Samuel, on condition that he married one of her nieces. He refused to do so, and the funds were craftily diverted by the trustee (Murray, 2018). The Lady Mico Charity was established by an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom in June 1835. Under the leadership of abolitionist Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who served as chairman of the Mico Trustees from 1836-1845, "four teachers' colleges and 300 elementary schools were set up by the charity in the British colonies of Mauritius, The Seychelles, and the West Indies. This was during the period of apprenticeship, two years before full Emancipation" (Jamaica Gleaner, 2011, para. 2). The Emancipation Act which provided for this activity received financial backing from the Imperial Government and through the Negro Education Grant (Hunte,1976).

During the immediate post-emancipation era, formal educational development for the Jamaican masses who were ex-slaves (Hunte,1976) was delivered by Christian missionaries. The education system was then taken over by the colonial government in 1860, with an established curriculum emphasising reading, writing and arithmetic- the three 'Rs'. The disparity in the curriculum based on gender continued, as boys were taught additional agricultural and other manual skills with the hope that they would continue working on the estates, and girls were taught sewing and other domestic skills.

As outlined in a celebratory feature on the Mico University College.

> In Jamaica, The Mico Training College, as it was then named, started with two
>
> male students and one female. It was set up to train British teachers to teach the
>
> children of ex-slaves. Once referred to as the poor man's university. The focus
>
> at that time was on elementary education.
>
> (Jamaica Gleaner, 2011, para. 3)

Between 1836 and 1858 approximately 278 teachers were trained at Mico normal schools.

> According to Coates (2011):
>
> There was a significant shortage of trained teachers to meet the growing demands
>
> for education, which significantly impeded the quality of education provided. In
>
> an attempt to improve the educational quality within the West Indies, in 1867
>
> the Commissioners of Education implemented regulations, which mandated that
>
> individuals must obtain a professional certificate of competency in order to be
>
> appointed as a schoolteacher. (p. 349)

The history shared by the Mico University College (2019) outlined that the Mico, in response to the cessation of funding through the Negro Education Grant, and based on the belief that training native teachers would prove more economical, transformed itself into a single-sex male institution focused on training elementary native school teachers. The institution reverted to co-educational again in the 1960s and remains so to date. As the scope of secondary education for the native children of Jamaica was increased by the Government of Jamaica, the junior secondary schools were introduced. "The Mico included in its portfolio, the training of teachers for junior secondary schools. By the end of the 1970s. The Mico further expanded its training of teachers for secondary

schools to cover the entire range of secondary education" (The Mico University College, 2019, para. 5).

The University of the West Indies (UWI) was founded in 1948 at Mona, Jamaica. This was an important step in establishing what was perceived as educational independence. The birth of the Department of Education at UWI in 1952 was also a major step toward a completely 'home-grown' educational system. Jamaica had been forced to import university graduates who assumed leadership positions, who could not identify with and therefore could not effectively address the needs of the students nor those of the local teachers in the schools assigned.

The findings of the 1945 Lord Moyne Report regarding Jamaican education were many, including that a lack of central control over the island's primary schools had for years resulted in inefficient administration. The issue of curriculum gap was also highlighted, as Moyne pointed out that there was a lack of correlation between the schools' curricula and the primary needs of the citizens of Jamaica. Hunte (1976) contended that the British academic traditions had resulted in the creation of "a higher education system in the West Indies that was highly competitive, selective, and largely unresponsive to the needs of the area" (pp. 189-192).

As with the present situation, numerous modifications were deemed necessary by Moyne, and with the lingering effects of colonialism, Jamaica continues to fashion an educational system that places importance on high stakes academic testing in the form of the British originated Common Entrance Exam, replaced by the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT), now replaced by the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) exams at the primary level. Education in Jamaica, though well into the 20th century, had continued to be based on the 19th century colonial practice of educating children to fit their station in life, which runs contrary to the now purported expectation that education in Jamaica is the means of upward social mobility. This is in concert with observations

made by Klein (1986), who stated that existing curriculum gaps were attributed to institutions' resistance to the culture of change, noting that "policies and practices work to maintain the status quo, and the history of curriculum is replete with examples of attempts that failed" (p. 2).

There is, however, a steadfast thrust by the Ministry of Education Youth and Information to create a more appropriate localized curriculum relatable to the students of Jamaica, with recognition being given to the importance of developing technical education streams along with the overarching academic education. Unlike in the British system however, it seems to be much more difficult to bridge the divide between academic and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education in CARICOM countries like Jamaica (George, 2016).

Note that formal education in Jamaica continues to be provided mainly by the government solely or in partnership with churches or private trusts ("History of Education in Jamaica – WSF", 2019). To date, The Lady Mico Trust continues to give support to the Mico University College, "over and above that available from the Government of Jamaica, to assist the education of young persons resident in Commonwealth countries of the West Indies, having regard in all of this to promotion of education in the Christian faith" (Charity Commission for England and Wales, n.d.).

It can be argued that improvement levels related to curriculum development and implementation occurring over the last 20 years are not proportionate with the value of the investments made by the oversight body of Jamaica's present education system the local Ministry of Education Youth and Information.

The Ministry of Education Youth and Information, Jamaica. The Ministry of Education of Jamaica, now the Ministry of Education Youth and Information (MoEYI), was first established pre-independence in 1953, as the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. It serves

as the government entity responsible for the management and administration of public education in Jamaica (MoEYI, 2018). The organization has oversight of regional offices, with its central office having over 40 units, falling under five divisions. Together these entities serve over 20,000 of the island's teachers (MoEYI, 2018).

One important unit of the MoEYI is the core Curriculum Unit. The Core Curriculum Unit has as its responsibility the designing of holistic programs, and as such develops, supervises and monitors the essential curriculum offering for children at the Primary and Secondary levels (MoEYI, 2018). As stated by Mead-Thompson (2018), once there is an assigned national curriculum, there can be expected continuous challenges associated with its implementation. The change in the primary level curriculum is one such example, where the New Revised Primary Curriculum (NRC) is being replaced by the National Standard Curriculum (NSC).

The Jamaican National Standard Curriculum is based on the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, known as Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956). Former State Minister in the MoEYI, Hon. Floyd Green, in his presentation to the 2016/2017 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, June 8, 2016, explained the new curriculum has an implementation period of two years, "with focus on a new methodology that gives priority to the development of higher order thinking skills" (Dennis, 2016, para. 2). With regards to teachers Green, states that "implementing this new curriculum focuses on greater accountability and more student-centered engagement" (Dennis, 2016, para. 3). The ripple effect of curriculum change is an alteration in the country's National Assessment Program, (which consists tests such as the Grade One Individual Learning Profile Test, the Grade Three Diagnostic Test, the Grade Four Literacy and Numeracy Tests), with the greatest impact being the structure and demands of the exit exam

which also doubles as a placement exam, formerly the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT),

which has been replaced by the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) as of September 2018.

As such, MoEYI's Student Assessment Unit, provides oversight and informs the

MoEYI's Planning Division for various analyses and evaluations. This helps to direct changes to

curricula and instructions, as well as teacher training.

An Education Officer in the MoEYI's Student Assessment Unit sought to clarify the

significance of the unit not being an evaluation centre:

> Instead we use the information to determine how we can adjust the curriculum or how
>
> to design specific instructions. Through the assessment process, the ministry can
>
> formulate proactive programmes, effect new teaching strategies and school leadership
>
> styles, and develop educational materials which will enhance learning. (JIS, 2014,
>
> para. 8)

It is noted that through assessment, there is an expectation of the national government body, the

MoEYI to make the necessary changes to the education system, twinned in all cases with new

teaching strategies. It therefore means that the accountability of teachers comes into play once

students' performance is assessed. If teachers are to be held accountable, there is need for

professional standards.

In 2011, the Commonwealth Secretariat initiated "a consultative and participatory process

to develop a broad pan-Commonwealth framework for professional standards for teachers and

school leaders" (The Commonwealth Education Hub, 2015, para. 1). The envisioned standards

framework would serve to transcend the professional, to include the personal attributes of the

teacher. It was hoped that participating countries would have a guide "in defining the basic

requirements related to knowledge, pedagogical skills and personal attributes that teachers and

school leaders must demonstrate in order to achieve the objectives of education" (The Commonwealth Education Hub, 2015, para. 1).

The Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC), in response to the need for improved teacher accountability, developed the Education Professional Standards. The Education Professional Standards lay the foundation for a dialogue- based appraisal to be carried out in the context of agreed expected outcomes of the assigned tasks and responsibilities of the teachers and principals. In this context, excellent performance becomes a shared responsibility (JIS, 2011). The Ministry of Education Youth and Information Guidelines for Performance Appraisal, (n.d.), emphasized that "the appraisal document is not intended to be punitive but rather to provide a frame of reference in which the educator may assess himself or herself in pursuit of excellence" (p. 3). While the evidence-based instrument is declared to be standards by which to determine excellence in the Jamaican education professional, the format allows the individual institutions to define this excellence according to their context. It is noted that the quality and validity of the evidence is left to professional judgment and dialogue. It is expected that the results of these teacher appraisals are aligned to their individual students' assessment performances, and so must influence a culture of change where it is needed. As outlined in the Ministry of Education Youth and Information Guidelines for Performance Appraisal (n.d.), there is emphasis on outcomes of education, as these are paramount and are set out in various policies underpinned by the curriculum.

Over the course of time, the focus of the MoEYI has changed, with their most recent strategic objectives seeking to encompass the present challenges being faced in the education sector. The urgent need to respond to the purpose of the formal education system is articulated in the MoEYI's present vision statement: "A nation empowered by a dynamic system of care,

education and training" (MoEYI, About, 2018, para. 1). There is emphasis on the need for care, though it is not quite defined what this 'care' looks like. The mission statement provides an extension of the vision: "providing quality care and education in an innovative, inclusive and enabling environment thereby creating, socially conscious and productive Jamaicans" (MoEYI, 2018, Mission Statement, para. 1). Of interest is the concept of lifelong learning being now considered as one of the policy priorities of the MoEYI. In addition, Quality Education and Training as well as Stakeholder Engagement are among the Priority Policy Areas which the current government administration is focusing.

Allman Town Primary School. The Allman Town Primary School is located in an inner-city community of Kingston, Jamaica, politically denoted by the Kingston Central Constituency (Electoral Commission of Jamaica, 2018). It is within close proximity to the Ministry of Education Youth and Information's Regional Office (Region 1), Central Office, as well as the Caenwood Centre which houses several units including the Core Curriculum Development Unit.

As stated in its School Profile, "the public perception of an underachieving and undisciplined institution located in a community known for crime and violence has changed and it has been an obvious school of choice in recent years" (Allman Town Primary School, 2017a, p. 5). The school has earned numerous awards for participation in traditional and non-traditional educational, cultural and sporting activities.

The academic and socio-economic levels of students are varied, as the school does not carry out academic screening of prospective students. There is a 'first come, first serve' policy, as directed by the MoEYI. It is reported that the student cohort consists of students who have been sexually and physically abused and who are in need of assistance and psychiatric monitoring. In addition, there are students with learning, behavioural and mental disorders and challenges.

There continues to be requests for placement of students who are not exposed to formal education before entering the school (Allman Town Primary School, 2017a).

The National Education Inspectorate (NEI) was established to address the issue of performance and accountability in the educational system under recommendation of the National Taskforce on Education Reform in 2004. The NEI serves as the independent National Quality Assurance Authority (NQAA) to address the issues identified, and effect changes complementary to the transformation of the education sector (National Education Inspectorate, 2018). The interim report of the Allman Town Primary School's inspection carried out in 2012 identified the key strengths in the work of the school: Good use of classroom learning aids including manipulatives and teacher made charts as well as a wide range of traditional and non-traditional co-curricular activities designed to improve student behaviour and enhance talents and skills have also resulted in improved level of academic achievement; a committed leadership and management team with a vision to improve students' academic performance and social skills with good relationship among the stakeholders in the school and the wider community. There are qualified, competent and dedicated teachers who are efficiently deployed to see to the educational and social well-being of students (National Education Inspectorate, 2012, p. 5).

The NEI findings are indicative of the effort of the institution to align to one of the MoEYI's Strategic Objective of maximizing the numbers "of Jamaican students and teachers who have access to a safe and secure, physical, social, emotional and spiritual environment in which to learn and work" (MoEYI Strategic Objectives 7, 2018). Regardless of this concerted effort, and the apparent emphasis on discipline, with the school's motto being "Excellence through Discipline and the value statement "Discipline, Order, Excellence" (Allman Town Primary School, 2017a, p. 5), like most other institutions located in inner-city communities, the

teachers at Allman Town Primary often "cite challenging student behaviours, discipline and classroom management as areas of concern and therefore priorities for professional development" (McCready & Soloway, 2010, p. 111).

The school has a generally good relationship with its stakeholders, facilitating the participation of community organizations and individuals in academic, cultural, spiritual and social development of the school population. The reciprocal is true of the school as well, as the students and staff also participate in community related activities and organizations. The local Anglican Church houses school functions like Graduations and Peace Day services, government granted parent training and development programs. One major service club, The Optimist Club of St. Matthew's Kingston, participates in fundraising activities, providing academic grants and hosting a community homework program and Reading Club. Individuals from the Allman Town Primary School academic and support staff are members of this service club.

Cohort Description. In this study, the researcher sought to gain firsthand information of the personal and professional knowledge and skills garnered by instructors who created and implemented an ad hoc curriculum in response to challenges using a national curriculum. The instructors developed a curriculum influenced by the multisensory approach to address increased gang-like activities, classroom disruptions and low academic performances among a class of grade 6 students. The class profile as described by research participant Vinette A. Lewis had "a vast majority of them [who] could not read but there were some of them in the class who could at least help themselves." The students did not attain mastery in an of the four sittings of the Grade 4 Literacy and or Numeracy Test, and therefore were not qualified candidates for the GSAT. The class had a total of 30 students: 5 girls and 25 boys. The students were branded within the school, as research participant Tasheka explains, they were students "who were seen as troublemakers,

per se. They were not doing so well academically and because of that we have a lot of behavioural issues"

The Jamaican education system is data driven and demands the collection of quantitative data consisting of students' personal and performance data in numerous forms. The data usually generates a judgement of teachers' performances based on students' performances. With the continuous changes in the education system and the changes in national curricula, consideration must be given to the effect on teachers' mandatory participation in implementing curriculum. There is a need to understand to what extent they believe they can and proactively exercise flexibility and use initiative to meet the needs of students.

So, while teachers are expected to move students along the Taxonomy, revised or original, how do teachers themselves, in implementing the state given curriculum, also move from the lowest cognitive skill levels of remembering and understanding what is within that given curriculum, to evaluating and creating one that is effective in their context to fill an unperceived curriculum gap? What were the personal and professional knowledge and skills garnered through thought processes, conversations and actions that occurred among instructors who developed and implemented their own ad hoc yet effective learning program in response to challenges implementing a national primary curriculum? With the use of qualitative data, we will examine how instructors' personal and professional lessons through ad hoc curriculum development and implementation can be captured and be used to guide colleagues at various levels of the education system.

Implications of Research

The intention of this study is to assist educational instructors to explore and uncover some of the personal and professional knowledge, skills and attitudes that may be garnered through curriculum development and implementation at the school-based level. It examines the inerrant effects of colonialism on teacher volition, and the conditions under which they can become creative to address a gap in the curriculum. It should give curriculum developers and teacher assessors an indication of ways Adult Educators, like their students, may be engaged in the various hierarchies of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956; Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001), the co-relation of self-actualization, critical discussion and transformative learning. The process of national curriculum creation, implementation and evaluation needs to be a transparent process that is clearly understood by the various stakeholders. It is hoped that personnel responsible for educational policy planning and delivery at the national and local school levels, regardless of country or jurisdiction, will be encouraged by this study to further listen to the 'teacher's voice' to facilitate effective personal and professional development. There must be new paradigms in teachers' Adult Education courses, with consideration given to instructors' Self-regulated learning (Bembenutty, 2011), critical reflective practice and effective research skills.

Thesis Statement.

Teachers are expected to use standardized curriculum goals and objectives to assess their students' learning in detail but are rarely required or encouraged to assess their own learning in relation to themselves once they have utilized the same curriculum. This study sought to describe the personal and professional knowledge and skills garnered by a group of instructors who developed and implemented their own ad hoc learning program in response to challenges implementing a national primary curriculum to a specific group of Grade 6 students.

Methods

The underpinning design and the method by which data was collected and analyzed is qualitative. The research is qualitative, as it seeks to explain and describe the personal and professional lessons constructed from the experience of productive disruption in which the participants found themselves rather than claiming to uncover or communicate a single truth (Patton, 2002).

Case Study

A case study methodology was used to carry out this research. It was chosen because recording and reporting the detailed descriptions and stories by each participant, while integrating any artifacts the participants deem relevant seemed the best way to capture the learning experiences. It is an enquiry into a specific aspect of teaching and learning that was carried out in a regular usual classroom context (Taber, n.d.) with no intentions to tell the story in its entirety, but to relate the story of the various pieces that bind together to make a whole. It seeks to identify the relatable pieces in the development of an innovation and to communicate same with an understanding of the effects of the existing boundaries that were present (Stinson, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, the bounded system was the development of an ad hoc curriculum at the grade 6 Primary level. It was bounded by time (2 years), by location (the Allman Town Primary School, Kingston, Jamaica), by personnel (those instructors who were directly involved in both the development and delivery of the intervention to the students), and by a specific curriculum framework (a multi-sensory model to lesson delivery at the grade 6 level). It was also bounded by its particular purposes and goals (to engage Primary grade 6 students by developing and implementing an effective learning program in response to challenges implementing a national primary curriculum to a specific group of Grade 6 students).

Data Collection.

In an effort to capture 'teacher voice' (Kirk & MacDonald 2001), the best way to collect data was through interviews and focus groups. The data was gathered from one school through multiple unstructured, semi structured individual and group interviews mainly over the course of one and a half school terms (6 months). The completion of a demographic survey (see Appendix B) was done by each interview participant to further assist with characteristics such as identifying gender, age, education and assigned job description/role during the intervention. It was anticipated that the information could assist with identifying and allowing analysis of any sub-groups among the participants. Questions from the 24-item scale which was adapted from the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (Chen et al., 2015; Schultz, Ryan, Niemiec, Legate, & William, 2014) were used as qualitative prompts to guide the researcher's questions during individual and group interviews in ways aligned with self-determination theory. Main, follow-up and probing questions (Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S., 2005) were used to generate responses during the interviews (see Appendix C).

Five of the six participants agreed to being interviewed alone and all six agreed to a group session, based on their preference and availability. The same protocol was used for both types of interviews (see Appendix D). Individual interviews were scheduled by the participants during their free /non-teaching sessions, scheduled after school and/or during a common planning period or at times indicated by the participants so as not to interfere with their students' contact time. The Grade Supervisor was integral to organizing the group interview based on the most convenient times agreed on by the participants. Initial focused group discussion session with the participants were followed by one-on-one interview sessions for clarity and further information.

Group interview was conducted with the researcher serving as lead facilitator and taking notes. All interviews and discussions were audio and video taped. They were conducted via Skype video conferencing through Microsoft Teams and or What's App Video calls or voice recording. Questionnaires were distributed via email to each individual using their indicated preferred email addresses. The researcher transcribed all audio/video recordings.

Discussion techniques included, but were not limited to Circle of Voices, Peer Review or Feedback and individual informal, conversational interviews. Participants were asked to share narratives of some activities in sequential order from beginning to end (Richards & Morse, 2013). Data was coded and analyzed both manually and with the help of computer software. The researcher was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2002).

A review of references made in the School's Improvement Plan, a quantitative report of the phenomena, grade supervisor's summary of weekly teachers' planning meetings, the individual teachers' appraisal documents and minutes of monthly staff meetings during the 2-year tenure were available for review by the researcher. These could be obtained from the Grade Supervisor through the School's Principal. The Guidance Counsellor's log and individual teachers' lesson plan records could be obtained from the individuals themselves. Where key change leaders and emerging information needing clarification were identified, follow-up informal interviews were conducted up to two months later. Results from data analysis were shared with the participants as a member-checking process to ensure that the case presented accurately reflects the experiences of the participants.

Sample population and participation selection.

Purposive sampling, which is widely used in qualitative research helps to identify and select cases that provide rich information creating the most effective use of limited resources

(Patton, 2002). Kemper and colleagues (2003) identified seven principles that are key to deciding on the population sample:

- The sampling strategy should stem logically from the conceptual framework as well as the research questions being addressed by the study

- The sample should be able to generate a thorough database on the type of phenomenon under study

- The sample should at least allow the possibility of drawing clear inferences and credible explanations from the data

- The sampling strategy must be ethical

- The sampling plan should be feasible

- The sampling plan should allow the researcher to transfer/generalize the conclusions of the study to other settings or populations

- The sampling scheme should be as efficient as practical (Palinkas et al., 2013, p. 10).

The participants selected as the sample were those identified as the group of individuals that experienced the phenomenon of interest and were believed to be especially knowledgeable about it (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. As such, data was gathered from a homogenous group of six instructors: four trained classroom teachers who were at the grade 6 level, 2 of whom served alternately, and two who were present throughout the two-year tenure of the intervention. This included the grade 6 supervisor, who was in that position during the tenure of the intervention. One trained Guidance Counsellor assigned to the school, who served in that capacity during the two-year tenure of the

intervention and one community member who is not a trained educator but carried out instruction in at least four courses of the ad hoc curriculum as a volunteer assigned by the school in the first year and two courses in the second year of intervention.

Selecting focused codes. In the initial coding process, axial coding was utilized. During this process, an attempt was made to link "relating codes (categories and properties) to each other" (Borgatti, Brass & Halgin, 2014, p. 1) using a combination of inductive (predicting outcomes and behaviour based on patterns) as well as deductive thinking (observing facts to make logical conclusions). Based on the participants' accounts the researcher used descriptions of the event, the procedure or activities related to the event, the emotions and behaviours manifested throughout the intervention, the participants' views on the national school curriculum, and the results of and lessons learnt from the intervention to form the basis of coding.

Transcribed excerpts from participants' individual and focus group interviews were tagged with short phrases and written descriptions during initial coding (Erickson, 1986) as transcripts were read and re-read. To ensure consistencies in the recollection of information, data and activities, for example, secondary data sources: Allman Town Primary School Improvement Plan (2017), intervention quantitative data presentation and report) as well as focus group interviews session were referenced to affirm individual interviews. The intention was to "find patterns across the data corpus that could be housed within unique and exhaustive categories" (McFadden & Roehrig, 2017), which would better contextualize and create a clearer understanding of each participant's description of the experience.

Indicator descriptors (McFadden & Roehrig, 2017) constituted instances where instructors felt varying degrees of support or lack thereof, and how it impacted them in carrying out their tasks and overall performance during the intervention; discussions focusing on the

limitations and challenges associated with the NSC causing instructors to be hesitant in using their creativity during implementation; instructors reviewing the qualities they deemed necessary for educators, personalizing the experience and discussing its effect on their professional lives.

Findings

The Program

An intervention curriculum was implemented at the Allman Town Primary School located in Kingston, Jamaica, in one of three grade six classes in the last 3 months - April, May, June- of the 2015-2016 school year, in lieu of the national curriculum. The program was once again implemented in 2017, expanding from one class to all three classes at the grade six level following the sitting of the national standardised Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) in March.

This alternative education program was based on the multisensory approach which utilised visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile modalities (Moustafa,1999). This program, as described in the Allman Town Primary School Improvement Plan (2017), had students doing mostly interactive and tactile activities, while challenging them to improve their reading levels, manifested as a Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program with foundational knowledge and skills that could lead to possible employment or entrepreneurship.

In addition to Language Arts and Mathematics, the course of study included: speaking Japanese; electrical circuitry; computer coding and game creation; garment and pull-string bag construction; floral arrangement; slippers making; playing chess and floorball. Additional components in the second year included t-shirt printing, cooking, ceramic tile art, basket weaving and vegetable gardening.

The cohort of the 2016 intervention group consisted of 5 girls and 25 boys on roll. The presence of a male dominated cohort is an attribute of the institution, as at the Allman Town Primary School general history indicates there are traditionally at least 100 more boys than girls enrolled (Allman Town Primary School, 2017a).

Although the group was co-ed, Tasheka explains that the participating students in the first year of the program were branded as "a group of boys who were seen as 'troublemakers', per say. They were not doing so well academically and because of that we have a lot of behavioural issues.". The Principal's assessment of the class conducted immediately prior to the beginning of the intervention showed high frustration levels in students and teacher with 17% (approximately 5 students, 3 of whom were girls) fully engaged, 17% (inclusive of 1 girl) somewhat engaged and 66% (inclusive of one girl) totally disengaged. 10 of the boys, all of whom were struggling readers, were reprimanded consistently for carrying out gang-related activities during the lunch break. Members of staff and students complained about the disruptive behaviour of the class in general to the Middle and Senior Management Team of the school.

The objectives of the program were based on the school's value statement: Discipline: To decrease the number of incidents that lead to whole class or school disruptions daily; Order: To enable students to develop a sense of purpose and pride in themselves; Excellence: to unearth, identify, develop and expose the creativity of students by giving them the opportunity for the showcasing of skills and talents.

At the end of the first intervention period, negative behaviours trended downwards over the course of the three months, and overall academic averages improved by 83% compared to the previous term. Students were publicly rewarded and recognized by their teachers and Principal for their improved behaviour. Increased learner engagement led to improved attitudes toward learning, hence improved academic achievement. The overall impact was more calmness and lower aggressive behaviours in the students involved.

The Instructors

Participants consisted of four females and two males, with teaching experiences at the time of the intervention ranging from 0 years to over 22 years. Each participant, in identifying their specific role, did not focus only on the formal job descriptions they had on their files, but also the activities they were assigned and voluntarily undertook based on their individual skill sets during the intervention.

The newly assigned classroom/homeroom teacher, Vinette A. Lewis (VAL), was redeployed from grade 1 at the beginning of the intervention. She was selected based on her previous experience teaching students in need of remedial support at the Grade 6 level. In addition to being a classroom teacher at the General Primary, Grade 6 level, Vinette also had the responsibility of Grade 1 Supervisor, Student Assessment coordinator, and as such was a member of the school's Middle Management Team, with over 22 years of experience in the classroom. VAL opted to teach the main academic subjects - Language Arts and Mathematics, guided by the strands outlined in the NSC.

Toyan McLean (TM) had over 14 years of experience in the classroom and served as a Grade 6 teacher and supervisor during the 2016 and 2017 intervention period. His duties also included supervision of the school's plant, with a keen interest in the school's vegetable garden. These he incorporated in the intervention program, working with all three classes during the second year of the program. Among his extra-curricular responsibilities, he served as Staff Officer of Unit #2 St. John Combined Cadet Division. The school had members of the cadet corps among those in the intervention cohort. Prior to the intervention, Toyan made 2-3 visits daily to address behavioural problems with the 2016 intervention cohort. Once the intervention

commenced, the disciplinary visits reduced dramatically and were replaced by visits to give curriculum support to individual students or the instructors using the new curriculum.

The school's Guidance Counsellor, Tasheka (T), had 2 years of experience in the classroom at the time of the 2016 intervention. She was responsible for the delivery of the overall Guidance and Counselling program throughout the school community, required to serve teachers, students, parents and community members. Prior to the intervention, she was called to the classroom by the teacher to address disciplinary problems a maximum of 18 times between January to March. During the first month it decreased to 6 visits and by the final month to 0. As was the case of Toyan McLean, once the intervention began, her visits were voluntary, and her role was converted to providing teacher and student support.

A community-based member of the team, Roger R. Smith (RRS), who was closer in age to the students than the teachers, used the multisensory approach to deliver four of the modules: speaking Japanese; electrical circuitry; playing chess and floorball. These were delivered mostly in an informal setting. Teaching the intervention program was his first time conducting any teaching activities. At the time he served as instructor of the program, he was a tertiary level student who was seeking a means of paying his tuition fees. He, however, joined the program as a volunteer, as he lived in walking distance from the school's campus within the community. In 2017, he was asked by the school's administration to return and deliver 2 of the modules to the general Grade 6 population.

General Primary Grade 6 Classroom Teacher, Mrs. Williams (MW) had five years of teaching experience at the time of the 2016 intervention. In addition to her regular classroom duties, she volunteered to deliver the visual arts aspect of the curriculum to the intervention group, as well as all three groups the following year.

Cadena Lumsden Walcott (CLW), who had ten years of teaching experience at the time of the intervention, was a General Primary Grade 6 Classroom Teacher in 2016. Her additional duties included being a member of the Shadow Middle Management Team at the institution. She was instrumental in initiating the t-shirt printing, embroidery and cooking aspects of the intervention program.

The Allman Town Primary School Board of Management at the time of the intervention activities sanctioned the proposal by the Principal to carry out the activities. They endorsed the vacation request of the former teacher, the redeployment of VAL and the funds needed to acquire the services of a certified behavioural coach for the ten students with excessive behavioural and disciplinary challenges. The behaviour coach met with the students once weekly in the school's air-conditioned library, which provided additional comfort and privacy from the rest of the students. The assigned class teacher was invited to a one-on-one session to discuss the findings and progress of the students once monthly. These sessions also served as a 'check-in' for the teacher.

One School Board member who had offered to provide mentorship sessions with the boys, made a total of four logged visits to the class prior to the intervention. Other impromptu visits were made once he was on the compound for official school business. He continued to have dialogue with individual students during the intervention and was asked by the students to visit to examine their completed project pieces.

The Process

In 2016, after receiving numerous complaints from the general staff, and in addition to being called at least three times to address fights and other disruptive behaviours during the second term of the school year, the Principal raised the issue of the students' indiscipline coupled

with the previously assigned teacher's frustration in a general staff meeting. Teachers were asked to share their experiences and suggestions to address the matter. At this point some teachers voluntarily offered their services to assist where they could for the one term that remained for these students at Primary school.

After discussions with RRS the initial technical vocational aspect of the program was formulated. There were further discussions and consultations with the Middle Management staff, the students and parents who would be involved in the intervention. The school's administration inventoried the available resources and had them available for use by students and teachers. These included a fully equipped computer lab, an interactive learning centre with Eno board, chess boards and pieces, floor ball game equipment along with a marked and paved court. Teachers were asked to prepare and submit a list of items they may need, and students were asked to share their views on the proposed activities with the opportunity to give suggestions.

As a policy of the institution, there is a time tabled Common Planning Time held once weekly for approximately two hours. Teachers utilized these sessions to discuss curriculum related and teacher professional matters. NSC lesson planning, delivery and evaluation were the focus of discussion. Sessions were led by the grade supervisor who designed the collaborative methodology that was used to guide the sessions. Summary notes were taken to capture the discussions during each session. Although there is a set time for the activity, in some instances, teachers or the grade supervisor requested sessions as deemed necessary at the group's convenience.

All students were placed in 3 groups of 10 participating in learning activities in a different location on the compound for each 1-hour rotation sessions during the first year. This was not typical of the Jamaican primary school setting where general primary teachers deliver

most and, in some cases, all teaching instruction in the same room for the 5 daily sessions. The most disruptive students were separated, with only 3-4 in each group.

In 2016, a student with coding skillset from one of the grade 6 classes not involved in the intervention was asked to teach the Kodu computer game creation and coding module, for three different sessions daily. It was observed that four of the students from the intervention group, including one of the boys deemed a gang leader and key troublemaker displayed the aptitude for coding and game creation. They were given individual attention and instruction by their peer-instructor and facilitated as classroom assistants in the preparation of the computer lab and equipment prior to their group sessions. This assisted them to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to the point where they mastered the Kodu game creation and became the instructors when the peer-instructor returned to his class after 1 week of instructional time.

The instructors organized an open day/student exposition at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Teachers, parents, students and the general school community were invited to view the finished products of the students. In addition, students from the original cohort performed at the school's annual graduation exercise at the school's monthly prize giving recognition and award ceremony. Students from amongst the group were awarded and recognized for their helpfulness, improvements in behaviour and academics by the instructors.

All students at the grade 6 level sat a common End of Term Examination paper at the end of June 2016. It is interesting to note that 76% of boys and 100% girls from the intervention cohort showed an overall improvement in term 3.

In the second year of implementation, the Grade six teachers designed their whole grade alternative curriculum without any influence or request of the school's administration. They

selected the course activities, instructors, sourced all the necessary resources, and timetabled the lesson delivery sessions.

What is sure is that the teachers learnt multiple lessons not only about more effective ways to execute their classroom duties but had the opportunity to reflect on their personal development prior to, during and after the intervention program in 2016 and 2017. The program directly influenced their actions and thought processes.

The Learning

The information developed from the data was based on support in varying degrees and formats that instructors experienced, their perceived limitations of the local national primary level curriculum and its effect on teacher volition.

The presentation is based on the selected conceptual categories (McFadden & Roehrig, 2017) comprising traditional Jamaican Proverbs and expressions: *Check Yuhself [Check Yourself],One Han' Cyaan Clap* [*One Hand Cannot Make an Applause], Nuh Gimmi Baskit Fi Carry Watah [Do Not Give Me a Basket to Carry Water]*, *T'ink* O*utsida De Box [Think Outside of the Box]).*

Check yuhself [Check yourself]. The National Education Inspectorate (NEI) reported that the Allman Town Primary School had "qualified, competent and dedicated teachers who are efficiently deployed to see to the educational and social well-being of students" (National Education Inspectorate, 2013, p. 5). All the instructors, when asked to share about their personal and professional lessons from the experience of creating and implementing an alternative curriculum, manifested this dedication in an identical manner. Their perception of success was based on students' academic performance. Teachers know this and it is perpetuated by the

MoEYI, colleagues, parents, the wider community, School Boards and administration. All responses were preluded by references of students' behaviour and academic achievement:

> Now my experience was a particular student who, he was disruptive for the entire year. And I tried, and I tried, and I tried, and I tried to meet the need of this child but could not. I thought something was wrong with me. There is this child who, no matter what I do, I just can't get to this child. Then I got to the point where I started telling myself, it's not me. It's not me, it must be the child. So then, I started to change things to have him change his ways…It wasn't until after, when the program was implemented, that he actually changed his ways. And now that he is no longer in primary school, he is the same child who comes back to look for me and say sir, big up yuhself. I felt accomplished. (T M)

> I felt freedom. I made the choice to participate in the intervention program and at no time did I ever feel like I was being bombarded by this work, or that work. I willingly participated in the program knowing that it will benefit the students and, in the end, will benefit me as well. When the student achieved, I achieved as well in terms of my contributing to their transformation. (MW)

In all cases, the researcher had to repeat and reframe the question, with intentional emphasis on the instructor as a person, an individual, not necessarily as the teacher, and not referencing the students, in order to get a response to the question asked. This brings to the fore the need for teachers to explicitly stop thinking about others, and think about themselves, their own thinking and their own learning. This metacognition (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014) will require a new learning curve for teacher professional development in Adult Education.

Once it was established that the instructors were persons with learning needs, and now had the opportunity to reflect on how their learning needs were met, they were better able to share their perspective of how and the extent to which the issue affected them:

"to be honest, a lesson that I learnt is that anything you can put your mind to you can achieve. A week before I started, I knew I didn't know how to teach anybody. 2016 came now and I just executed. You know if someone told me I was going to be a teacher; I would have told them, no that can't happen." (RRS)

This contemplative process revealed that the instructors not only acquired content knowledge: "Oh I learnt how to make paper flowers! I didn't know how to make a game, but I learned it from those boys" (VAL), but also learnt about themselves within the context of delivering that content (English, 2006): "I should probably feel terrible knowing that I had to be taught by my students, but I don't care! I felt good knowing that those same students were able to teach me something. That's good!" (VAL)

The mentality of teachers in general involves a tendency to hide their emotions so as not to be deemed weak and ineffective by students, parents and colleagues. There is the perceived risk that emotion can negatively impact the critical thinking process and influenced the manner in which teachers work with ideas and material of learning. This helps to solidify the need to create 'safe' or risk-free environments in which teachers can learn to express the outcomes of their critical thinking (Moon, 2007, p. 70). When asked directly if she spoke with other persons about herself, her own well-being and development throughout the program, VAL responded "I don't think I spoke to anybody other than my principal about how I felt at that time. I don't think I had spoken to individual teachers about that."

And when RRS was asked to share some adjectives that he would use to describe the process he went through as an instructor, he responded:

> Alright, nervousness, honestly nervousness. And I was traumatized. I was terrified because even though I wasn't working, and I did agree to volunteer I was saying to myself did I really think this thing through? Although I was confident in myself, this was totally different. At first nervousness. But when I realize that this is my chance to actually teach something how I would have wanted to learn as a child, I couldn't refuse it."

Once the process started, RRS then stated he felt: "Confident, very confident. And comfortable and I was enjoying it because at that moment I knew what to do and I felt sure of myself than before when I just started". Unknown to him, VAL was having a similar experience, as she thought:

> better than me go inna de class an haffi leave them [better than I have been to the class and had to leave the students] so what was I going to do? As a matter of fact, I was scared going in it, because I didn't know what I was going to do with the kids! (VAL)

This feeling of fear or "nervousness" as RRS puts it, though common to other persons on his team, was never shared openly with anyone of the team members. There was an underlying self-imposed judgement that the instructors were expected to be great, and definitely better than those who previously taught the students.

In VAL's case:

I didn't want the children to fail and I couldn't allow myself to fail. I could not

go home and know that I had a class for a little over a term and I wasn't able to

do anything with them.

T's experience, though not as explicitly stated, was similar:

… before the intervention I was in it like directly. I was running out of ideas; I

was running out of options. Personally, I am thinking that it might look on the

outside that we don't know what to do and we are not trying because sometimes

you hear the utterances to say you're not doing anything, when really and truly

in the system itself we are limited. Resource limited and action limited as well.

While there is urgent need for teachers to refrain from constantly twinning themselves to student

achievement, keeping this matter in the foremind is correlative to teachers' metacognition being

not just about how the students react to the planning and delivery process, but it allows the

teacher to monitor how the planning and delivery process affects him or her. In this way, the

instructors engaged self-regulated learning, the experience that taught the teacher wisdom by

paying attention to their actions and thinking (metacognition).

In examining her own learning and thinking (VAL) shared:

I, more than anything learnt that…I went into that group with a perceived

mindset. No matter what I do with this boy, he is not going to do any better. You

know that sort of thing. That's how I went in. But I was pleasantly surprised.

What she experienced was as a result of her extending herself to becoming a part of the

learning process, rather than trying to establish her position of being in charge of the students

and the impending curriculum:

> I was pleasantly surprised by just, I don't know, it's like I became a part of their class itself. 'Cause when we were all singing, we were all dancing and jigging and doing all that together. I wasn't a teacher; I was on the same level as them." The valuable professional take-away from this was that "sometimes we just need to get on the same level as the students to see where they are coming from, understand their points of view to be able to move them from one point to the next. (VAL)

The intervention was inspired and shared by the teacher-learners who were having their own experiences as well. Adult education then began to transcend the classroom space, as according to VAL:

> one of the things learned with that group is that I had to develop patience. More than anything else, I had to be patient. And I - trust me I don't know where that patience came from. But I developed a vast amount of patience during that time. And I guess it went over into my personal life because I have become a lot more patient. And because I have become a lot more patient, I am a calmer person too"

For RRS, the assimilation manifested as:

> …confidence and patience. Definitely confidence in anything that I do. And to humble myself to say that even though I don't know something, I won't let that deter me. I am eager to learn because at the end of the day, though we give ourselves the title of teachers, that doesn't mean we know everything. So, we ourselves have to constantly learn something new. After all, we are not God. So, I think that what I learnt and what I take into my other career in life is confidence in myself, you know, and patience at all times to stay humble in what I do.

Over the course of time, as adjustments were made to the program after each evaluation or reflection by any member of the team, adjectives that were being used to describe themselves and their learning process included: empowered, accomplished, valued, enlightened, ready, able.

One han' cyaan clap [One hand cannot create an applause]. While there are various sub-groups in operation spanning all categories of staff, the Allman Town Primary School "fosters collaboration within the team and allow space for autonomy" (Allman Town Primary School. 2017b, p. 8). What was apparent was the importance of teachers having a support system and learning community made up of peers who could relate to and understand their anxieties, feelings of failure and distress as well as celebrate their successes.

Ferguson-Murray (2018), explained that one component of the University of the West Indies' School of Education (SOE) Change from Within (CFW) program, the Circle of Friends, offers local: "school Principals an informal network within which challenges and best practices can be shared, and leadership qualities fostered" (Ferguson-Murray, 2018, para. 13). The program expanded to include Guidance Counsellors and Middle Managers, including members of the Allman Town Primary School. Meetings are held on the university's campus on a monthly basis, as Ferguson-Murray believes educational activities "can lead individuals at all stages of life to reflect on their individual beliefs and values, to critically think and communicate about issues, and to creatively address problems" (Ferguson-Murray, 2018, para. 22).

For T, this CFW was a welcomed opportunity and space. In addition to being new to the school she was the only Guidance Counsellor appointed to the school, and preparing her annual plans are a different process from the teachers' weekly activities. While she may attend class-based planning on invitation by specific grades, she did not have the privilege, especially at the time of the intervention, to reflect on the activities of the past week and cite challenges or

successes she may have experienced as the instructors did during the school's weekly common planning time. During those sessions at the UWI School of Education, the mix of Guidance Counsellors, Principals and Middle Managers shared what they did that worked, as well as ideas they did not consider.

T appreciated:

that you actually have persons who follow up with you to say hey did you follow through on x, y, z? It keeps you on track to do the things that you said you set out to do because you don't want to go back, and you don't have anything to share.

The power of the follow-up process engenders a sense of accountability within the critical discussion framework and must not be overlooked or underestimated. It allows participants to answer the critical thinking questions: What can you do? Will you do it? When will you do it? And the affirmation: Tell me about it when next we meet. It therefore sets the tone and agenda for consequent sessions.

One oversight to the structured common planning sessions was that RRS was not requested to attend. While it is the practice of the school to have teachers doing their practicum placement participating in the sessions, his position as an untrained volunteer may have caused the oversight. He explained that he would have liked to be in those sessions, as he would have benefitted from the discussion, and more specifically learning from the experience of the other teachers who were trained teaching professionals:

I would personally have liked that the teachers who taught these students on a day to day basis, before my class, to help in the delivery of my lessons. The students could see that they the regular teachers have a different side or a

different way of teaching something. So, I felt that I would have liked the

teachers to work with me more in bringing across the lesson." (RRS)

This signals that school-based educational administrators and staff need to be more alert and

aware of the need for all persons carrying out instruction to benefit from the critical discussion

sessions. For RRS, planning ahead of meeting the students had caused problems - a "wreck" he

believed could have been avoided had he council from the trained teacher:

> Yeah even though it was a new program I think what could have been done
>
> differently is I could get more help in teaching my course. Even though I might
>
> be the only one there who knows Japanese or knows electrical mechanics I would
>
> have liked other persons to help me, other teachers to research about it or even
>
> ask me questions to see how best they could help me, because I was basically on
>
> my own. They had confidence that I could teach it, but there is no reference point
>
> to say if I'm doing a good job or a bad job. So I felt that I would have liked other
>
> persons to help me with that process. (RRS)

While the class teacher had a similar challenge RRS faced, she had a support system

through her colleagues to assist with evaluating past actions to successfully execute new ones

where necessary:

> I would talk to my Principal from time to time, let her know what was happening,
>
> and she would always check in to find out what was going on. I remember the
>
> conversation clearly when I said to my Principal, I don't know how to write a
>
> plan for this group. And I remember her saying do what you're doing and make
>
> a summary, just make notes. And that was what I did. And at no point was I
>
> forced to do anything as I started what we were doing, and things just built on

itself. Gradually we expanded on what we were doing until we had a real

program that we could actually write up on. She was always there with us. (VAL)

Despite the oversight of not having the volunteer in the planning sessions, all instructors felt they

were being supported in some way during the intervention. A common term used by all

instructors was 'check-in'. This was important to each individual, helping to encourage them in

executing the activities although they were aware that it was done for different reasons by

different members of staff. Checking in served as an informal professional assessment of

teacher's ability. There were those who were simply curious about the program, some wanted to

determine the effectiveness of the program, was it working? Were the students' behaviour

actually improving? Was the teacher managing? Was there any possible headway with students

previously taught by specific teachers (vested interest and subconscious comparison of teachers'

ability):

Persons would just stop by to see my boys sewing so I think the boys felt good

because they were the only ones in the school doing that activity. Persons were

taking an interest in them. The conversations would be about what the children

are doing, what they have been doing how it has affected them, what are some

of the changes that I have been noticing. Many of the conversations were usually

along that line because they wanted to know how a particular student or those

who came through that person's class, maybe a year two previously was doing.

So, we would have conversations along those lines, as to whether the child has

shown any improvement, if they've shown interest in a particular area. How well

they had taken on to a skill. (VAL)

In all cases, instructors received and, in some cases, gave each other tangible support that addressed concerns like: What resources were needed? Were those available being effectively utilized? What physical infrastructure, instructional materials, resource persons, funding were available?

> In terms of resources, we got quite a bit from the principal, so we were getting help along the way and from the start right through we were getting help. But some things were required from the students to provide. Where they didn't have it financially, I made provisions for them. (TM)
>
> We had to get the resources so the fact that person's went out to either ask for support or to buy the materials…'Cause I remember the young man who did the foreign language, the Japanese, he was also a student and he was compensated a little. It wasn't a full pay but at least the Principal saw the need for this and, made sure resources were pumped in to get the program running. (T)
>
> The teachers who were working on the intervention program were very supportive. We supported each other where necessary. We asked for help; where other persons needed help, we offered ourselves. And this was to ensure that the program ran smoothly and that all areas that we intended to cover were covered. (MW)

In accordance, TM stated:

> the grade 6 teachers, they would offer help. And I would also offer them help. Every now and then they would pop in to see what was going on, and where we need some strengthening, and where assistance was needed, they would do that.

Being given the opportunity to share progress reports and facilitate the sharing of observation during formal and informal sessions during Staff meetings, meetings with various interest groups-school board, Parent Teachers Association, the students themselves, community members served as a motivating factor for the instructors. They felt appreciated for the work they invested, and appreciated the recognition being received and the confirmation of others:

> I honestly shocked myself 'cause everywhere I go I hear 'Sir', 'Mr. Smith', 'Teacher'. I can't go anywhere in Allman Town and get any peace. But you know it just proves that I did something and that I impacted a child. So even after they have left the school and moved on, they still remember me, and they still even have respect to call me 'Sir'. (RRS)

For VAL, the frequent check-in's and expressions of interest in her class "felt good, 'cause I felt like I was doing something. Persons were taking notice. I was doing something, and I am on the right track, and I need to keep that going you know, that's how I was feeling".

The sentiments were similar for CLW:

> I think it reflected well, apart from persons who would come to say wow, Miss I like that, or they might see me doing something and say something, miss, wonderful job, or they like the smell of that. It made me feel very good as the teacher.

Likewise, for MW: "It made me feel good, even while setting up for the display in the tuck-shop area. Folks were viewing and I would have heard parents commending the work. Yes, it felt really good. I felt good."

The words of MW aptly summarize this section:

It is very important that teachers feel a sense of support from their colleagues -

from each other, and more so when we are engaged in any intervention program

whether it be for behavioural purposes or for academical purposes. It is important

because getting the support will say that we are on the same page. It will say that

we have one common interest at heart. It will say that whatever we achieve we

will achieve together. It will benefit everybody. And we stand to win, we stand

to progress with, stand to support our students together. It is important that

teachers support each other, because when one achieves, all will achieve. We aim

for one common good and we have the stakeholders at heart. And the main

stakeholder that I am talking about is the student, our students. And therefore,

since we have one common goal and one common interest all support garnered

will be necessary and needed and also important for the program or for any

program to be successful.

Given the role of teachers in such a team-based approach to understanding and enacting

curriculum, it is important to understand what teachers need to engage meaningfully in

collaborative teamwork to build and implement curriculum. This is one approach to closing the

curriculum gap and increasing engagement of students which results in both the teacher and the

student benefitting from the learning experience. The instructors at Allman Town Primary School

are very aware that one han' cyaan clap.

Nuh gimmi baskit fi carry watah [Do not give me a basket to carry water]. The

National curriculum, which serves as a guide, contains the facts and basic concepts that teachers

must have a knowledge of. Building on this foundation, they must be able to understand ideas

and concepts, in order to contextualize and apply same in their numerous and varied teaching and learning experiences.

The disparity in the socioeconomic conditions and abilities of students and a perceived wholesale, one size fits all type of education being delivered to all students, and teachers dumbing their voices about their concerns with the curriculum were reminiscent to the days of colonial rule on the island.

> What I liked about the program was that it showed the other variables as to why or what would cause certain results, right, and it kind of showed them that teachers have to go far and beyond sometimes to really get the students to a place where its acceptable. (T)

These variables contributed to the unfair expectations in student achievement outcome, as the instructors believed the standard/control group being used as the benchmark was not a true reflection of all student cohorts at the Primary level education system in Jamaica, neither were the results a true reflection of teachers' competence.

This view was vocalized by VAL:

> Well, while it is good that we have a guideline I really don't think the teachers or students should be limited to what somebody else thinks is the correct thing. Our children are different. They're coming to us from different economic backgrounds. They were socialized differently. It means that they are going to respond differently to the same material. When you send me something and say that I have to teach the child that comes from Uptown the same thing I teach the child that comes from Downtown, and in the same manner, you are really limiting me and limiting what my children can learn.

There were conflicting views on the process of curriculum creation and implementation. One explanation of the process is that:

> The Ministry of Education is the main stakeholder. They would normally meet with teachers and other stakeholders in the education system to write the curriculum and then they would pilot it in schools and from there they will check to see what works and what doesn't work. Then they'll make changes and after they make changes they will implement. So, it isn't just the Ministry who takes it on themselves to do it, but it's actually combined effort of the different stakeholders. (T M)

Although the process seems to take various views and steps into account at the development stage, challenges arise at the execution stage:

> ... it has gotten to the point that although some initial training was done, it is seen that some further training needs to be done. Because now that we have to do performance tasks where test papers used to be done for example, I realize that further training needs to be done for teachers to fully understand the curriculum. (VAL)

In addition to the continued support and training in the use of the NSC that is being requested, another key consideration for teachers' professional development must be focus on teachers as a research practitioner:

> One of the good things about this curriculum is there are certain aspects of it that force you to research. Some areas are not quite on point, might be a little big, but for you to get exactly what you want you have to do further research. And I love that about the curriculum. 'Cause like I said you can look at it as being limited

> but if you have the leeway where you can go research something for yourself
> then there is no limit there. If you do research and you have all of that information
> to work with, it would mean that you understand the curriculum better, you can
> teach it even better. (VAL)

The instructors were cognizant that research skills were a necessity to engage with the NSC, but not all teachers were adept to utilizing it.

Not only did teachers see a need to develop research skills, they also felt that creativity was a requirement in utilizing the national curriculum to address the needs of students for it to be effective. This same creativity was being stifled by the insistence of supervisory officers that they meet national benchmarks:

> Because it's tailored in a particular way that persons have to be very, very
> creative in getting the practical things out and integrating the practical things
> with the content that is required for the students to learn. (TM)

So while it is understood that creativity was necessary, and can in fact provide the flexibility being sought for using the new national curriculum, there is an almost inherent belief that they do not have the permission or authority to be creative and deliver in alternate ways to suit their students. As CLW puts it, "the word autonomy sounds quite strong for teachers to have autonomy over the students. I'm not in full agreement, but then there should be certain things that you should be able to do with them …be flexible as well."

One main objective of the National Standard Curriculum and the PEP examination is for the development of students 'critical thinking ability to guide their creative skills. This in essence is the pathway to develop higher order thinking (HOT) skills illustrated in Bloom's Taxonomy. The question of what a curriculum is, is once again raised, as the expectations of the students and

teachers using the same curriculum need to be aligned. Teachers must also develop critical thinking skills if they are to become the creators. L. Smith (2019), in his bid to highlight one possible weakness in the current primary education level of education in Jamaica, expected that educators must create a people of critical thinkers:

> What the program did was to let me face reality, that the system is what it is, and the curriculum is what it is, and it will not change for me or for anybody else. So, what I did was to adjust my thinking and my methodology because I don't have a class of students where everybody is at the same level. We have mixed ability groups. I have to find ways now to meet the needs of the students and that is where the integration and practical areas came in for them to be engaged. Not just engaged in isolation but linking it with the curriculum and not just for the program. That positively influenced me, not just for my regular class but also my day to day teaching. (TM)

It should be envisaged that one 'action' as a consequence of the critical thinking process is the ability and will to create new content, new methodologies, new assessment strategies, and most importantly new ways of thinking about one's own learning.

The national curriculum seems to be a big basket filled with holes. While it has the potential to transport many things, it is most effective based on the conformity in shape and size for the contents to remain securely in the basket. For the seamless progression, maximum utilization and impactful results of curriculum change, all aspects of the education system must also go through the change process. This includes the "textbooks used, orienting teachers, all areas of lesson planning and delivery, and quite possibly the physical infrastructure of the classroom environment" (Jules 2015).

VAL shared her thoughts on the insufficiency of the curriculum and the matriculation process at the time of the intervention:

…the curriculum is an aspect of the system anyway. I mean we have to work with the curriculum…well we should work with the curriculum we're given. But other times we have to deviate because the needs of the kids that we have sometimes are not met by what is in the curriculum. Hence the programs that we have had to do at grade 6. There's nothing in there that caters to the challenged students or students who really have no hope after they leave here. So we really need the Ministry- looking at the larger picture- they need to put something in place for those children. Gone are the days when children are going to come in at grade 1 and leave at grade 6 the same way they came in. And until the Ministry puts something in place to deal with those kids, we are not going to have a change. We are still going to have those students coming in not being able to sit or pass a formal examination. Because if we follow the route of formal examinations those students would never pass one of the national examinations. So why would you put them in school then? Why do you keep frustrating them year after year and there is nothing for them to do? There's so much that they can do. And when other persons are doing things and they are feeling good about themselves, these little ones have nothing to do because they can only do so much. The children's behaviours and attitudes changed when we got them meaningful things to do. The fact that they were giving their input into something meaningful, changed their whole outlook. They became important. We saw them as being important, we started paying attention to them. We need to start doing that from grade 1 if

we are going to see changes come grade 6. Otherwise we'll just be taking them

in, frustrating ourselves with them, and at the end of the period send them out

the same way they came in.

The instructors found the expectations of the national curriculum unfair and unrealistic. In

retrospect, the creation of their ad hoc curriculum was in fact the result of being creative and

making the most of a frustrating situation. By adjusting their perceptions and taking the bold step

of being creative and exercising autonomy, they had figured out a perfect way of making a

basket a container that can transport water.

T'ink outsida de box [Think outside of the box]. The NSC designed by the Ministry of

Education was developed for the general use by institutions within the island. The intervention

curriculum that was created at the Allman Town Primary School level was catering to the needs

of a specific group of students in a specific cohort, based on the instructors' knowledge of the

students' socio-economic conditions capabilities and academic abilities. The aim was for these

students to "find another way to achieve something without having to stick to academics that will

cause them to be frustrated" (TM). It was this 'frustration' experienced by teachers and students

alike that created a call to action and an ensuing domino effect response to this call by the

instructors at Allman Town Primary:

There was discussion about what I was going to do with those students. Because

not only that class teacher, but other teachers would come to the office to make

a report to say do something about these students because of what they have been

doing and going to other classes and troubling the children. It was necessary. It

was either that or we have some serious accounting to do in terms of talking to

other parents .'Cause it's not like the problem was only in the class but it spilled

outside of that classroom and it was affecting other students, other teachers,

disrupting other classes and stuff like that. (T)

These students' actions were in defiance of the school's motto - "Excellence through

Discipline", the value statement "Discipline, Order, Excellence" and needed to check their

overall behaviour. The threatening experience of students disrupting classes, threatening other

students on the campus and being rude to their former classroom teacher, was compounded by

them not qualifying to sit the national placement examination and failing to meet basic national

benchmarks in Literacy and Numeracy. The entire program in the first year was birthed out of

this disorienting dilemma.

The Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1998) experience occurred on multiple levels for

various instructors during the two years of the intervention. It was most apparent for RRS who

summarized his experience as follows:

I came to Allman Town primary well to volunteer at first and I offered to teach

Japanese, mechanical, electrical and teach chess. This would be my first-time

teaching in any format, so it was very new to me, but I was excited and willing.

Coming through the school system I am what teachers considered as 'slow'

which is a term I really hate. I personally believe that the school system on a

whole shouldn't just cater to one specific child, which is the child that learns

right away. So that leaves a minority of students that are 'slow' and are

struggling, that is why they lash out. Because they cannot keep up.

So, I honestly believe that the curriculum should be cut in two. One that caters

to students who are advanced and one that caters to students who are slow. And

I also believe that teachers should be trained in handling students who are slow

because, from my personal experience, students who are capable and who are advanced and need to be more confident in themselves are being called or being label the slow child. Over the years, throughout my whole academic life I didn't feel that I was capable.

When I just started teaching, I was under the notion that I am going to teach something so I must have my notes ready, my syllabus and all that little stuff. I started teaching and it was a wreck. Some students were interested, however the students that were misbehaving and gave the most trouble weren't paying me any mind. Then I thought to myself, how could I pique their interest? How could I reach them about this topic? Bearing in mind many of the topics are boring if you hear them, but I needed a way to reach them, to meet them halfway. So, I became creative.

I taught them origami which is the art of paper making. I had a class with just making cranes and diamonds and, I started communicating with them individually at first to get to know them. Then I came back again, and I started to express what I'm bringing across at a different level. Let me give you an example: Japanese at first, I just started to teach them and give them hand outs and you know I thought that was the best way. To let them read it and understand. I was totally wrong. When I sat down and understood the different types of students, then I came and said I'm going to make it fun.

That was a way for me to interact with the students and to laugh with them. To ask how they are doing with school. And then the following day I taught them our next topic, and in between each lesson I had a time to let them relax while

they are learning Japanese. But it wasn't a regular class session where they had to sit down and write notes. These were the students that were eager to work with me. I was even surprised because when the class was over and you had to clean up a classroom, I was even surprised that everybody got up and started cleaning. I didn't have to ask anybody to do anything.

When I was finished, I think as a teacher, as an instructor you have to think outside the box to reach that student and you have to make teaching interesting to them so that they can learn. And I think that the students who are, would you say our advanced? You have you have to integrate them as well because you can't leave them out. They are more eager to help those that are considered slow So everybody can come together and be at one level.

RRS had not only gone through a transformative learning experience, he had in fact engaged in critical reflection, and thereby moved through Bloom's Taxonomy from the lower to higher order thinking skills in becoming a more effective instructor.

The instructors were given the liberty by the school's administration to decide what course of action to take, and thereby took ownership of the course development content selection, methodologies and resources, and organized among themselves to get it done:

I was told to engage them in the visual arts. What I did was went ahead and do some research to see what kind of activities I wanted to engage the students in and what would keep them occupied. We didn't want it to cost too much and therefore what I did was collect trashables. Things that we could use without anything costing us too much. So that's basically how I went about choosing what we needed to work with. (MW)

The lady who was teaching the boys how to sew, there were times when she was not able to come in on a regular weekday, and those persons in the sewing group would meet me here on a Saturday morning. But then that wasn't a great disruption as such because there were sometimes when I would have had to be at school on a Saturday. And it really didn't bother me. (VAL)

The instructors engaged in a team-based approach, utilizing the critical thinking and critical discussion techniques during the common planning sessions. They felt encouraged by the results which served as internal and external motivation:

…if we had time then we could do more, we could get more out of the students. But based on the time that we had, I felt good, because there were students who we could point out to say yes, something really happened with these students and the program went well. We saw those students were leaders of the class now, being recognized in graduation, and stuff like that. So, I felt good. I think it kinda gives us hope really to say all is not lost. We just have to think outside of the box, right? (T)

They all stated emphatically that they were not coerced to participate, but "saw the need for the program and willingly jumped on board to assist" (MW) using their areas of competence:

We were not forced, and the students *really* enjoyed it. We even cooked which was new and different. Students really enjoyed it so…It was good. Students enjoyed it; teacher enjoyed it. It was excellent. To be honest with you I chose areas that I liked and that I could manage because I tell TM every day, I am not good at farming I couldn't do anything with plants, they would not grow. So, I wouldn't do anything like that. I did things that I knew I could manage to impart

> to the students. I was more confident in doing that while sharing it with the students. I wouldn't go and do something with the students that I know nothing of. So, I chose something that I know, that I liked, and I know that they would appreciate as well. (CLW)

The explicit trust and belief in their abilities by administration, and the students' response served as added motivation:

> My motivation during the program in 2016 was how the students turn up every day for the different activities, how interested they become every day is like some more level of interest was shown. My motivation was seeing the transformation of the students displaying right in front of my eyes, how they would come and ask me what do I need to do, or Teacher, are we going to do this today, Teacher, when are we going to do that or so on. So, they also propelled me as a teacher. And even when I felt a bit drained like I'm not going to do it, because of how enthusiastic they were about the program, it would have encouraged me to, say alright let's go, let's go guys, let's do this! How enthused they were about the program, how willing they were to participate in the program, motivated me to want to do more and to share more. (MW)

The instructors' actions were now determining the outcome of experiences and vice versa. A change in each clause - attitude, responses and environment led to a change in the other making it hard to identify any line of demarcation:

> Over the years I've found that the students will mimic the teacher to a great extent. So, when they saw that I had become a calmer person probably helped to calm them too. The thing is they started becoming calmer before me. So I don't

know if I learned from them or they learned from me. But I would love to say that we learned from each other.

… And maybe the fact that the students were enjoying it so much, some of it rubbed off. So, we enjoyed it because you know we could see the results being tangible. Changes were taking place We could relate to that and it felt good. We were confident that we were doing something good and the children were benefiting from it. So that set the stage for how we felt. (VAL)

The instructors, like the students, had moved to a place where the classroom "environment was warm" (RRS), they felt supported and cared for by colleagues, they were appreciated by members of the school community to a place of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970):

It brought out the creativity in me. So, I wanted to do it and enjoyed doing it. At the end of it I felt like personal accomplishment. Not just for what I did, but what the entire grade did. I felt good that at the end of a school year we could actually see things that we have accomplished and not just hear that the result is this or the result is that. We could actually see things being done practically. (TM)

I was really excited to be honest 'cause I always try to do new things and teaching was one of those new things. I was not comfortable speaking in public, but to me teaching was a steppingstone to overcome that fear, so I was excited. (RRS)

The combined professional and personal lessons learnt through all the instructors' experience of curriculum creation and implementation is aptly summarized by MW:

I have learned more than anything from the intervention program in 2016 and 2017 that as a teacher, we need to strategize to reach all the students. It has been

cemented in my brain that students learn differently and that whichever way they learn there are strategies that we can develop that will reach them where they are and pull them from where they are to that place that we want them to be.

I also learned that team effort is what makes the dream work. I learned that when we pull on each other we can attack *any* mountain. I learned also that if you need assistance don't just sit down. Ask. You will be surprised to know the number of persons who will be in your corner. I also learned that not because somebody didn't ask doesn't mean that they don't need help, and therefore we should offer ourselves to assist even if somebody doesn't ask us.

Some valuable lessons I have learned also, is not to take anything or anyone for granted. That even when we see some behaviour in our students they are crying out for help and they are crying to us for help. Because they see in us as that figure, that mentor, that person, that they think can help them. Sometimes we ignore but I've learnt to offer myself more to assist where I think persons need assistance.

Would I be a part of a program like that again? Yes! I have learned so much coming out of the program and I think that is something I want to be a part of as long as it's in existence.

Discussion

Teachers at all levels of the education system continuously decry the disconnection between the expectations and the practical delivery of their National curriculum. As was the experience at Allman Town Primary, the existing curriculum gap (Stenhouse, 1975; Klein, 1992), usually manifests as behavioural and learning challenges within student cohorts and high levels of frustration and underperformance of teachers. Teachers are held accountable in both instances. The chasm in the expectation of students meeting a national standard, and the reality that they are drastically below par based on numerous factors, negatively impacts instructors' views on the purpose and relevance of a National curriculum.

Curriculum creation verses curriculum implementation proves problematic in the education sector, as there is always the question of whether schools should be preparing the objectives of the course of study to meet their students' needs or preparing the students to meet the objectives of the course of study. Likewise, one must examine if the objectives and assessment benchmarks are comparable to teachers' ability, style, methodologies, personal educational experiences and work environments. These are variables that form each teaching and learning context in which teachers are expected to perform at optimum (Stenhouse, 1975).

As shown by the instructors at Allman Town Primary School, even in unfavorable situations, teachers, if allowed to critically assess their environment, will develop creative coping mechanisms and find ways to improve their teaching and learning contexts. Reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978) occurs whether they consciously or subconsciously take note of the positive occurrences in their environment. They then focus on making things more effective and successful based on the changes in their attitude to persons, their responses to the situation they find themselves in and creating a collaborative learning environment (Bandura, 1978). This

process is one that has a ripple effect, as changes – whether positive or negative - in one variable will affect another. There is, however more to the process, so that professional and personal growth is experienced, and teachers do not revert to being dependent on their environment to determine their performance. The creative process will require a new learning curve for sustained impact and continuous personal and professional development (Klein, 1992).

As emphasized by MacDonald (1971), as it pertains to curricula, there is no one-size-fits-all fix to all schools. Each school, and each class within any given school has their individual sets of circumstances, ethos and culture impacting implementation, outcome and evaluation. Hence the persons directly involved in treating with their students' specific conditions - teachers - must have the autonomy to do what they think is the best course of action in treating with their students' needs.

This requires exercising their freedom in making changes to what is expected of them in terms of their teaching methodologies and classroom environments. Consideration must be given to what they think is the best course of action with regards to time, availability, resources, pre-existing skills, knowledge and experiences, to deliver the desired results. This is a more effective way of merging expectations with reality, reducing the curriculum gap (Klein, 1992).

Teacher "performance, wellness and engagement" (Deci, 2017) improve in supportive environments. It is incumbent on school Boards of Management or Administrators to create policies within the institution supporting the establishment of safe non-judgemental spaces for all persons, regardless of tenure or position. Mentorship, coaching and peer support when initiated must be sustainable for effectiveness. The teachers at Allman Town Primary must continue to maximize the provision of their Common Planning Time and remain flexible in their non-formal agenda to address issues of concern and the sharing of successful strategies as a team.

Collaborative approaches to curriculum planning and enactment can lead to increase in autonomous motivation.

Note, however, that the support mechanisms that facilitate critical discussion and critical thinking activities for adult learners do not necessarily need to be within the physical institutions, as was the case with the Change from Within Program, located on the campus of the University of the West Indies, and away from the Guidance Counsellor's stressful unrelatable classroom environment on the Allman Town Primary School's compound.

Effective Self-regulated learning (SRL) (Pintrich,1995; Pintrich & De Groot 1990; Zimmerman et al, 2001, 2011; Bembenutty, 2011) stands to benefit from operative critical discussion. Monitoring and regulating cognition during the teaching-learning process, influence responses and actions. If teachers are to monitor their cognitive and affective learning domains (Bloom et al, 1956; Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001) and then objectively reflect on their learning outcomes, they must first be able to identify their assumptions, and the impact these have on their chosen and alternative courses of action. Adult learners must first envision what their learning needs are. From there, they can develop their required learning goals, and envision the actions that are necessary for these goals to be met.

It is imperative, however, to eliminate the assumption that all teachers are born with an innate ability to be critical thinkers and thereby hone the skills to engender critical thinking in their students (Elder & Paul, 2010). This is a skill that is developed. Through practice and application "teachers recognize that skilled critical thinking develops, only when properly cultivated, and only through predictable stages" (Elder & Paul, 2010, p.1). The critical thinking process must have a follow-up component, as an added accountability scaffold keeps all parties bound to the completion of the process.

Teachers can create mitigating solutions to alleviate problems they face with not only their students' learning, but also their own learning. Making the conscious effort to connect curriculum topics to their own real-life experiences can lead to transformative learning. This is especially true when instructors are often placed in the position of teacher and student simultaneously. Learning, Jarvis (1987) writes, rarely occurs "in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives; . . . it is intimately related to that world and affected by it" (p. 11). Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (2009) is based on the premise that "Transformative learning ... is often an intensely threatening experience in which we have to become aware of both the assumptions undergirding our ideas and our emotional responses to the need for change" (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 6–7; see also Mezirow, 2009).

Teachers, upon perceiving the need for change must continuously adjust in all cases their: mindset about the type of students they have; approach to planning; approach to teaching and building relationships with students, parents, colleagues. SRL for the studied instructors, was aligned to Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956; Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001) where the ability of the teacher-learners moved planned activities from knowledge based to the creation and execution of task-related academic skills.

If teachers are to develop and utilize the Higher Order Thinking Skills, it demands that they "consistently initiate and regulate proactively" (Zimmerman et al, 2001). Adult education is dynamic, and so adult teacher-learners' approach to learning must be pliable. Once teachers master this practice, they stand to benefit from having a growth mind-set and this view of intelligence can support an individual's resilience, perseverance and motivation towards learning (Dweck, 2000; Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015). Autonomous motivation (Deci, 2017) among educators tends to produce more favourable results and builds teachers' volition, while controlled

motivation leads to a restriction in their mental, psychological and emotional growth. In most cases, teachers are encouraged to engage in lesson reflection, and it is imperative that place and space be given to the development and assessment of teachers' emotional awareness and mental health regardless of their years of experience in the classroom.

An adult education module focusing on teachers as research practitioners must be one that is on-going, supported by critical discussion, transcending the theoretical domain to being practical application. This is an essential skill that can address curriculum gaps created at the micro level which cause a ripple effect of a professional gap, and like their students, a personal achievement gap for the instructors. The pedagogy of critical thinking (Moon, 2007) must also be explored as possible courses in teacher training institutions, and regular references made to and practice conducted during in-course and in school staff personal and professional development workshops.

Conclusion

The process involved in curriculum creation and implementation at the grade 6 level of the Allman Town Primary School is multifaceted. No one stand-alone theory can truly explain the impact of the participants' learning experiences. It is, rather, a compendium of concepts that are intertwined to various degrees, as for example, Self-regulated theory utilizes components of critical discussion theory. Transformative learning utilizes both Self-regulated and critical discussion theory. Each takes prominence at various stages of the participants'' experiences

Transformative learning occurred at the micro level, identifiable through the experiences of the responses of individual participants. The disruption experienced proved productive for the instructors who had moved from a situation of *we need to* create an alternative way of teaching our students in 2016, to *we want to* infuse creativity to enhance what was done in the previous year in 2017. By subverting a national system, they brought to the fore the intent and purpose of what a postcolonial emancipated education program should look like. They challenged the existing system not to maintain the inherent imperialist view that local teachers could not identify with and therefore could not effectively address the needs of the students in the schools they are assigned.

Note also that, on the macro level, the education system in Jamaica is undergoing various stages of transformative learning, where for example, the present Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examination results in some subjects, and the breakdown of students performance by gender in other local examinations pose a disorienting dilemma for the local Ministry of Education. It is a time of reflection, refocusing, restructuring and replanning to ensure the existing curriculum gap is occluded.

The instructors collectively articulated that during this era of post-independence, with the appropriate standards and evaluation procedures, it is time that consideration be given to the teacher's place in developing and implementing curriculum ideas, influenced by their thoughts of what they want the students to achieve, discussions of curriculum activities or structures and the creation and implementation of teaching activities using available and sourced resources. Once instructors felt autonomous, they willingly embraced the opportunity of creating their curriculum. A result of this is having their cognitive, social and emotional awareness through interaction with the formal and created curriculum being heightened. There were instances during the research interviews where instructors discussed changing their perspectives, based on trying new strategies and seeing desired changes brought about by curriculum development and implementation. This led to learning and development that occurred in relation to Bloom's Taxonomy.

Curriculum change and implementation are ongoing activities not only in the Jamaican education sector. Whether the institutions are public or private, there is a constant turning of the wheels as the results of the National Assessment Program (NAP), which, once evaluated, serve to direct the necessary changes required for future cohorts to meet national standards. While policy makers and their various committees seek to adjust students' learning objectives, they must be aware of the social-psychological needs of adult teacher-learners and the socio-historical context of the history of the existing education systems. The various publics of the teaching profession stand to benefit from the provision of any qualitative report that investigates the specific personal and professional thought processes, conversations and actions that occur among instructors who develop and implement their own ad hoc, yet effective learning program in response to challenges implementing any national curriculum.

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Appendix A

TPCPS 2: CORE Tutorial Certification

PANEL ON RESEARCH ETHICS
Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE

Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith

has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)

Date of Issue: **25 April, 2018**

Appendix B

Participants' Demographic Survey

Thank you for agreeing to complete this demographic survey. For this research project, the researcher is requesting demographic information. Due to the make-up of the research sample and your institution's population, the combined answers to these questions may make an individual person identifiable. The researchers will make every effort to protect your confidentiality. While the researcher would like you to answer all of the questions, you do not have to answer any which cause you discomfort. You may withdraw from this activity at any time. This survey should take less than 5 minutes.

Please check the box that most applies to you.

1. Please indicate if you would like to be identified for this survey: □ No   □ Yes

If yes, by what name would you like to be identified for this survey? _____

2. Gender: □ Male   □ Female

3. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

□ High School

□ Teacher's College Diploma

□ Bachelor's Degree in Education

□ Master's Degree in Education

□ Tertiary level program other than Education: □ 1-year program □ 2- year program □ 3- year program

□ Other   Please state _____

3. What is your age?

□ 18-22   □ 23-27   □ 28-32   □ 33-37   □ 38-42   □ 42-47   □ 48+

3. For how many years have you worked in education? _____

4. What is your present job post in the school? _____

5. What was your job post at the time of the grade 6 intervention in 2016?

_____

6. Did you have other job responsibilities at the time of the grade 6 intervention in 2016?

□ No   □ Yes

If yes, please name them: _____

7. What was your job post at the time of the grade 6 intervention in 2017?

_____

8. Did you have other job responsibilities at the time of the grade 6 intervention in 2017?

□ No   □ Yes

6. If yes, please name them: _____

Appendix C

Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale- Work Domain

 Examples of lead, probing and follow-up interview questions including the work domain basic

psychological needs satisfaction and frustration scale (highlighted in blue) asked by the

researcher.

Questions for Interview #1 Anticipated duration of interview per person: 30 to 45 minutes

Experience verification	Competency	Opinion	Behavioural
Please share with me about the intervention done at the grade 6 level in 2016.	What was your role in that intervention?	Did you feel forced to participate in the intervention? What did you want to have happen? Did you feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things you wanted to undertake? Did it happen? In what ways did you feel supported by the group you worked with on the intervention?	Can you please give me specific examples? How do you know? Please share with me anything that you think could have been done differently? Is there anything specific you have learnt from the experience?

	What are your strongest attributes an instructor?	Did you feel confident that you could do things well during the intervention? Did you feel excluded from the group working on the intervention?	How do you know? Can you please share some examples?

Questions for Interview #2. Anticipated duration of interview: 1.5 - 2 hours
Face to face Focus group sessions

Experience verification	Competency	Opinion	Behavioural
How often did you meet to discuss curriculum matters in 2016?	What was your role in those sessions?	How often would you say is necessary for instructors to meet to discuss curriculum matters? How effectively did the national curriculum support your teaching in 2016? Did you feel pressured to do too many things on your job?	How do you know? What were some of the reasons for you wanting to make adaptions to the national curriculum?
How did you go about making changes to the national curriculum in 2016?	What was your role in using the national curriculum?	What do you think is the purpose of a national curriculum? Did you think you were meeting the expectations	Why is that? Can you please share with me specific examples?

		others in using the national curriculum?	
		In what ways did you feel that your decisions on your job reflected what you really wanted? Did you feel your choices using the national curriculum expressed who you really are? How do you think delivering the national curriculum to students affected your own learning as an instructor?	To what extent could the national curriculum be planned and adapted by you? Can you please give me specific examples? How would you compare that to the effect on your learning using the new curriculum that was created in the intervention?

Questions for Interview #3. Anticipated duration of interview per person: 30 to 45 minutes			
Experience verification	**Competency**	**Opinion**	**Behaviour**
Please share with me about the intervention done at the grade 6 level in 2017.	What was your role in that intervention?	Did you feel forced to participate in the intervention? What did you want to have happen?	Can you please give me specific examples? How do you know?

		Did you feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things you wanted to undertake? Did it happen? In what ways did you feel supported by the group you worked with on the intervention?	Please share with me anything that you think could have been done differently? Is there anything specific you have learnt from the experience?
How did you keep track of the intervention?	What were your strongest attributes an instructor?	Did you feel confident that you could do things well during the intervention? During the intervention did you feel you could successfully complete difficult tasks? Was there anyone who could who assisted you when if needed help? Was there anyone you could	How does it compare to the intervention of 2016? Can you please share specific examples? How would they know if you needed assistance? How would you know if they needed assistance?

		assist when they needed help? In what ways were you able to share your strongest attributes with others? What, if any, are the recommendations you would make to persons involved in education about curriculum development? Is there anything else that you would like to share?	

Appendix D

Interview Protocol Script

Thank you for agreeing meet with me to participate in this interview. While your presence here indicates your willingness to participate, the researcher will ask in this and subsequent sessions, that you verbally indicate your consent to participate when asked to do so. While the researcher would like you to answer all of the questions, you do not have to answer any which cause you discomfort. Participation in this interview is voluntary, and you may withdraw from this activity at any time.

The researcher will record this session using audio visual equipment in order to best capture the information being shared. Please advise the researcher if at any point you begin to feel uncomfortable or if you no longer wish to be recorded or to participate in this interview.

Please say if you would like to be identified for this interview. If yes, please state what name may be used to identify you. (Name: _____). Please advise the researcher if at any point you begin to feel uncomfortable about being identified or if you no longer wish to be identified in this interview.

Please note also that if the interviewer asks a question that causes discomfort at any time, you have the right not to answer: You may also indicate which question or questions which question, or questions are causing your discomfort.

Please note also that you can end the interview or take a break at any time you feel the need to. You may request a copy of the transcript of this interview and you may also outline any concerns you may have once we are through and the transcript is prepared. Are there any questions or concerns at this time? If any questions or concerns arise during this session, then please feel free to raise them with the researcher immediately.

Do you, _____, understand the preceding information,

and freely agree to participate in this interview? _____. Do you understand that you are free

to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw from this interview at any time? _____

Would you would like a copy of this interview transcript? _____

Would you be willing to be contacted in the future for a possible follow-up interview? ___

Appendix E

Approved Thesis Proposal Presentation Report

Dec 6/18 - Finished to C. Hartoo. FR

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

Office of Graduate Studies
Thesis Proposal Presentation Report
(see Policy on reverse)

Student Name: **Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith**   Student ID: ▆▆▆▆▆

Degree Program: **Master of Arts, Lifelong Learning**

Thesis Title: **Production Description: Personal and Professional Learning through Curriculum Creation and Implementation**

Date of Presentation: **Thursday, December 6, 2018**

Outcome of Presentation:
- ☐ Proposal approved subject to minor revisions. [If the thesis is approved subject to minor revisions, the thesis supervisor will sign and forward the report once the revisions are completed.]
- ☐ Proposal approved subject to revisions. [If the thesis is approved subject to revisions, the thesis supervisor and committee members will sign and forward the report once the revisions are completed].
- ☑ Proposal approved.
- ☐ Proposal not approved. Student required to resubmit the proposal for presentation. [Supervisor to submit report of reasons for decision and changes required attached to this form.]
- ☐ Proposal resubmission not approved – grade of "F" to be assigned and copied to the Registrar.

Ethics Clearance Required:
- ☑ Yes [The proposed research may not start until the student receives the Certificate of Ethics Clearance from the University Research Ethics Board. The Certificate will be required to be attached to the thesis defence notification form submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies.]
- ☐ No

Signatures:

Thesis Supervisor:
Dr. Krista Ritchie
Name   Signature   Dec 6, 2018   Date

Thesis Committee Members:
Dr. Cornelia Schneider
Name   Signature   Dec 6, 2018   Date

Name   Signature   Date

Student:
Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith
Name   Signature   December 6, 2018   Date

The completed form will be copied by the Thesis Supervisor to:
Dean of Graduate Studies - Student – Graduate Program Coordinator (to be placed in the student's **file**)
Grades of "F" will be copied to the Registrar.

Use this form effective 1 September 2018

Policy & Procedures for the Presentation and Approval of Thesis Proposals

Thesis Proposal Presentation Report – Policy and Procedures

- **Convocation Deadlines:** Students intending to graduate at an upcoming convocation must successfully complete their thesis defence and have their grade submitted by the last day to register for a course in the Fall or Summer semesters. Students should refer to the Academic Course Add/Drop Dates published in the Graduate Calendar and available online for the current academic dates.

- **Thesis Continuation Fee:** Students for whom a thesis grade has not been submitted by the Office of Graduate Studies following the end date of their initial thesis registration will be automatically registered in a thesis continuation for the following semester. The automatic thesis continuation registration will occur on the last day to register for a course for that semester and will continue for each consecutive semester until the thesis has been successfully defended and the grade submitted (Thesis Release Form) to the Registrar's Office.

All thesis proposals will be subject to an oral presentation by the student.

- The exact format and contents of an acceptable thesis proposal will vary depending on the area of research and method of enquiry proposed.
- Individual programs and supervisors will provide students with information on any specific requirements for thesis proposals and proposal presentations in particular programs.
- Normally the minimum requirements for an acceptable proposal will include:
    - a) a clear statement of the area of enquiry including the specific research question(s) (if appropriate).
    - b) the rationale for the importance/validity of the area of enquiry.
    - c) the method of enquiry proposed.
    - d) a discussion of the relevant literature that provides a context for the proposed thesis.
- The student must demonstrate in the proposal that she has sufficient background in the area of research, has been substantially engaged in the research and made sufficient progress that she is ready to proceed with the thesis.

1) Please refer to the Notification of Thesis Proposal Presentation Form if you have not done so.

2) Normally, the thesis supervisor shall chair the presentation. The procedure for each presentation shall be standard. The student will make a presentation. The Chair will give priority to questions from the Committee. Once the Committee have finished their questions the Chair shall open up the floor to questions and discussion for a reasonable period of time. The deliberations of the Committee shall be in camera.

3) The Committee shall, by majority vote, reach one of the following decisions:
    - a) approve the proposal to proceed to the thesis.
    - b) approve the proposal subject to minor revisions to be approved by the supervisor.
    - c) approve the proposal subject to revisions to be approved by the supervisor and committee.
    - d) not approve the proposal and require that it be resubmitted for presentation.
    - e) not approve a resubmitted proposal and assign a grade of "F".

4) Following the thesis proposal presentation, the supervisor will submit the *Thesis Proposal Presentation Report Form* to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Graduate Program Co-ordinator (to be placed in the student's file) and the student.

5) If the thesis is approved with minor revisions, the thesis supervisor is responsible for ensuring required revisions are made and for approving the proposal prior to submitting the Thesis Proposal Presentation Report. The thesis supervisor will sign the report only once minor revisions are approved.

   If the thesis is approved with revisions, the thesis supervisor and committee members are responsible for ensure the required revisions are made and for approving the proposal prior to submitting the Thesis Proposal Presentation Report. The thesis supervisor and committee members will sign the report only once the revisions are approved.

   Students will have only one opportunity to resubmit a proposal for presentation. Non-approval of the resubmission will result in a grade of "F" in the thesis. The supervisor will notify the Registrar of the grade.

6) If the proposed research requires ethics clearance, a copy of the certificate of ethics clearance from the UREB shall be submitted to the Graduate Program Co-ordinator before the research begins. The Committee will reconsider any changes required by the ethics process. The certificate will be required to be attached to the thesis defence notification form submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Use this form effective 1 September 2018

Appendix F

Formal Request for Permission to Conduct Research on Site

December 21, 2018

Mrs. La-Toya Nesbitt

Acting Principal

Allman Town Primary School

19 Victoria Street

Kingston 4, Jamaica

Dear Mrs. Nesbitt:

This serves as a follow-up and formal request to my email sent to you on April 9, 2018. I am

Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith, a MAEd Graduate Student in the Faculty of Education at the Mount

Saint Vincent University, based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I seek your permission to conduct a

research at the Allman Town Primary School, involving a specific group of instructors for my

study, "Productive Disruption: Personal and Professional Learning through Curriculum Creation

and Implementation".

I will recruit 5 members of the present teaching staff and one former instructor who taught at the

Grade 6 level between 2016 and 2017 by sending them an email with the research consent form

and survey which would like to be returned to me by secured email link. Participation in this

study is voluntary, and there are no incentives to be gained by the participants for participating in this study. I will have all invitations and consent forms distributed by Monday, February 18, 2019, and returned by email by Thursday, February 28, 2019. I will conduct the majority of my research activity using electronic means, for example Skype video calls, What's App, Ring Central etc. I am requesting one on-site, face-to face interview session with participants, where I will also request additional secondary data sources, for example minutes of meetings, logs, lesson plans etc. I will be sure to inform you of the dates of my on-site research activities once these are confirmed.

I will ask participants to advise me of the best time, as agreed with their respective supervisors for them to participate in individual or group interviews on the days of my visit. I will conduct a debriefing presentation to those involved based on their indication that they wish to be informed, as well as to the school and provide to your office a copy of the completed report. A copy of the completed report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education Youth and Information, Jamaica. Please feel free to contact me at kandi-lee.crookssmith@msvu.ca if you have any questions.

 Regards,

Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith

MAEd Candidate

Mount St Vincent University

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study title: Productive Disruption: Personal and Professional Learning through Curriculum

Creation and Implementation

 Principle Investigator:

Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith

MAEd Candidate,

Faculty of Education,

Mount Saint Vincent University

Introduction and Purpose:

In the Jamaican education context, all teachers are expected to use curriculum goals and

objectives set by the Ministry of Education to assess their students' learning in detail but are

rarely required or encouraged to assess their own learning in using the same curriculum. As

curriculum change and implementation are ongoing activities in the Jamaican education system,

this study will extend knowledge and provide a report of the specific personal and professional

thought processes, conversations and actions that occur among instructors who develop and

implement their own learning program in response to challenges implementing the national grade

6 curriculum to a particular group of students.

How will the researchers do the study? What will I be asked to do?

The researcher is collecting data at the Allman Town Primary School in Kingston, Jamaica. Five members of the present teaching staff and one former instructor who taught at the Grade 6 level between 2016 and 2017 are invited to participate. If you are reading this consent form, you have also received a demographic survey by email, that can be accessed using a secured email link. The survey asks for your preferences about whether to remain anonymous or to allow the researcher to name you and to quote you directly. If you choose to participate, you will complete the survey and save it as a Google doc, where it will be only shared with the researcher.

Participation in the study involves completion of a demographic survey that asks you basic questions about yourselves and the specific role you played in the intervention in 2016 and 2017 which should take less than 5 minutes, an individual virtual interview that should take approximately 30-45 minutes, a face-to-face group interview, which will last for approximately one and half to two hours, and an individual virtual interview that should take approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews will be conducted by the researcher, audio and or video-taped and later transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. Virtual interviews will be conducted at your convenience using medium and at times indicated by you. Group interviews will be conducted on the campus at Allman Town Primary School in Kingston, Jamaica.

Please feel free to indicate if you want to be identified, and the identifying information you prefer to share with the researcher if you choose to participate in individual and or group interview sessions. Participants may also indicate their level of comfort with the sessions being recorded using audio and audio-visual devices before, during and after the interview period as well as for the during the study. They will be asked to give consent for recordings to be done at each individual and group sessions.

Based on the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, areas of concern will be raised with the entire group for consensus, with an aim to resolve the matter in the best interest of the individual. Given the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, a unanimous decision for participants to remain anonymous will automatically lead to the institution being deidentified. Please return your survey by Thursday, February 28, 2019.

Potential Harms and Burdens.

There are no expected harms. This study is focused entirely on what you feel comfortable sharing. It is hoped what is learned will be of future benefit to teachers broadly by assisting educational instructors to explore and uncover some of the personal and professional knowledge, skills and attitudes that may be garnered through curriculum development and implementation. Results will be made public through conference presentations, and peer-reviewed academic publication. Based on the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, areas of concern will be raised with the entire group for consensus, with an aim to resolve the matter in the best interest of the individual. Results will be shared in an agreed identifiable/non-identifiable way with the Allman Town Primary School through a presentation and a study summary available for anyone who would like to read it.

Can I withdraw from the study?

You may withdraw from the study at any point. Participation is entirely voluntary. Withdrawal will not affect your work. If you begin to complete the survey and change your mind, simply discard the survey. If you complete the survey and then change your mind, please delete. The surveys can be made anonymous if you so desire. Based on the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, areas of concern will be

raised with the entire group for consensus, with an aim to resolve the matter in the best interest of the individual. Pleas Once you submit your survey into the sealed box, will be included in the data set to be analyzed.

Costs, reimbursements and incentives.

There will be no cost to you to participate in this study. There will be no reimbursement for time spent completing the survey or doing individual and group interviews. There is no potential to profit from or commercialize results of this research.

Mrs. Crooks-Smith greatly appreciates the opportunity to conduct this study. After data collection, she will give the school a thank you card.

How will my privacy be protected?

Any information that is learned about you can be made non-identifiable and anonymous at your request. Based on the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, areas of concern will be raised with the entire group for consensus, with an aim to resolve the matter in the best interest of the individual. Given the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, a unanimous decision for participants to remain anonymous will automatically lead to the institution being deidentified. Paper-based study records will be kept in a locked area at Mount Saint Vincent University for 5 years following publication of the results. Electronic data are stored on password protected, secure MSVU databases and will be deleted 5 years post-publication.

It is highly possible that the data may be re-analyzed at some point in light of future research interests and projects. You will be asked to indicate that you understand this possibility, and

provide consent to this being done, as well as a preferred means of contact to obtain re-consent in your response email.

What if I have study questions or problems?

For questions or concerns, please contact Kandi-Lee Crooks-Smith, kandi-lee.crookssmith@msvu.ca. You may also contact Krista Ritchie, Research Supervisor, Faculty of Education at the Mount Saint Vincent University, at krista.ritchie@masvu.ca or Brenda Gagne, Research Ethics Coordinator at Mount Saint Vincent University at brenda.gagne@msvu.ca.

What are my Research Rights?

Reading this consent form and return of the survey indicates that you have agreed to take part in this research and for your responses and interview sessions to be recorded and saved for purpose of review by the researcher. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities. If you have any questions at any time during or after the study about research in general, you may contact the University Research Ethics Board at brenda.gagne@msvu.ca or visit the Research Ethics Office at Evaristus Room 223A.

How will I be informed of study results?

Results will be shared with participants based on their voluntary indication to the request for this to be done. A report will be prepared specifically for the school and submitted to the office post its presentation. Any peer-reviewed publication of results in an academic journal will be shared with the school. The researcher is also required to share the results with the Ministry of Education Youth and Information, Jamaica.

The school will be identified in the publications with unanimous consent, but it must be noted that given the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of

each participant, a unanimous decision for participants to remain anonymous will automatically

lead to the institution being deidentified.

I, _____ (name; please print clearly), have read the

above information. I freely agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to

refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that my

responses will be kept anonymous based on my request.

_____

Participant's Signature   Date

If: (a) you would like a copy of your interview transcript once it is available (b) you are

interested in information about the study results as a whole and/or (c) if you would be willing to

be contacted again in the future for a possible follow-up interview, please provide contact

information below:

 Check those that apply:

 _____ I would like a copy of my interview transcript

 _____ I would like information about the study results

 _____ I would be willing to be contacted in the future for a possible follow-up interview

 Write your address clearly below. Please also provide your preferred email address.

 Mailing address:

_____

_____

Email address: _____

Appendix H

Issues of Harm and Confidentiality

Prior to the course of study, the prospective participants indicated to their supervisor that they were comfortable with and did not mind being identified in the study. The researcher will have access to the names of the participants based on the nature of the study. Based on the small number of participants, personally identifying information may be deduced from the demographic surveys. If at any time during the interactions or the course of the study a participant becomes uncomfortable with being identified, then all efforts will be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Participants will be asked to indicate on each survey and at each interview session if they would like to be identified, and by what name they would like to be identified. Based on the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, areas of concern will be raised with the entire group for consensus, with an aim to resolve the matter in the best interest of the individual. but it must be noted that given the size of the group, and the possibility of easily identifying the characteristics of each participant, a unanimous decision for participants to remain anonymous will automatically lead to the institution being deidentified.

All research material will be stored in electronic format, using a password secured electronic file on the Mount Saint Vincent University's online database. A copy of all files will also be saved to a portable electronic data card/hard drive that is password protected for redundancy. Hard copies of files related to data collection will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home. The researcher will be the only one with the combination code for the lock.

Volunteer Participants

The volunteers in this study are all adults. Participation will be voluntary. Participants may choose whether or not to complete the surveys. There will be no costs incurred by the participants partaking in the study, nor to complete the surveys as online methods will be used. Participants may also choose whether or not to participate in individual or group sessions. Participants will share with the researcher the best method of contacting them to conduct interviews. They will be informed and reminded before, during and after the interviews and survey activities they may withdraw from the study at any time.

Informed Consent

Participants will receive an introductory letter informing them of the aim of the study, and whether or not they choose to complete questionnaires, surveys or interview sessions is voluntary. They will be asked to sign to, or verbally agree to partake in each session once they are reminded of the protocol. Participants may also indicate their level of comfort with the sessions being recorded using audio and audio-visual devices before, during and after the interview period as well as for the during the study. They will be asked to give consent for recordings to be done at each individual and group sessions.

Issues of Harm

The research is non-invasive and poses minimum risk to human subject participants. It involves the use of non-invasive data collection methods e.g. administration of a demographic survey, individual and focus group interviews. There may be perceived power relationships, as the researcher was a former colleague and supervisor of the participants during and assisted with initiating the intervention being studied. Being aware that this may pose an unconscious bias and conflict of interest:

9.   During the time that the study will be conducted, the researcher will not be in a position of authority over the participants and can make no decisions on any course of action regarding the institution or the individuals during or after the study. There is no authority that may be exercised over the participants professionally or otherwise.

10.   A new supervisory officer has been officially appointed by the Ministry of Education Youth and Information in Jamaica. Given the nature of this study no room is given for the exercising of authority by the researcher, as all participant activities are voluntary.

11.   To maintain the objectivity of the research, Memoing will be done to assist with transparency where concepts derived from narrative data are used as building blocks to construct theoretical arguments, identify specific aspects of excerpts worth exploring, note patterns, significance, or uniqueness, comment on variations and/or interconnection among repeated instances and to pose unanswered questions. It will be used as self-regulatory tool for the researcher to be aware of decisions, interpretations and conclusions and to protect the objectivity of the research.

It will be reiterated that participation in this study is voluntary. Participants are all adults who will be informed that they do not have to answer any questions or participate in any interview sessions which cause them discomfort whether before, during or after the course of the study. It will be explicitly stated that there are no rewards offered for participation in this study. The probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in the aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research, hence the possibility of harm is deemed to be low.

Appendix I

Work Plan

Official field research for this study will be undertaken throughout the Jamaican Easter Term (as of January 2019-April 2019) and Summer Terms (as of May 2019-July 2019) of the current school year. The following table shows a timeline of the research activity already undertaken as of September 2018, and those to be carried out as of January 2019 to August 2019.

Table A1

Outline of Research Activities Over a 12-month Period

	September 2018	October 2018	November 2018	December 2018	January 2019	February 2019	March 2019	April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	July 2019	August 2019
Background reading	■	■	■									
Proposal Writing	■	■	■									
Contact Ministry of Education and School Administrator for inform of intention to conduct research	Prior to September 2018											
Literature Review	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Research methods planning	■	■	■	■	■							
Data collection					■	■	■	■				
Data analysis					■	■	■	■	■	■		
Submit draft of proposal		■	■									
Submit draft of study						■	■					
Discuss conclusions							■	■	■	■		
Further drafts							■	■	■	■	■	
Final meetings										■	■	
Final drafts												■

To ensure the intended study was welcomed and would feasible work, the Director of Schools' Operations in the Ministry of Education, Jamaica, was contact by email requesting the guidelines for conducting research at the Allman Town Primary School. Given the scope of the research being limited to one school, and the researcher's relationship to the school, the researcher was directed to the present Principal of the Allman Town Primary School. The Principal was contacted by email, outlining the intention to conduct the study, the intended focus and the anticipated participants. The Principal confirmed that anticipated participants were willing to participate and had no objections to being named or identified in the study

Once approval is received from the REB, official invitations to participate with ethical considerations will be shared with participants.

Official field research for this study will be undertaken throughout the Jamaican Easter Term (as of January 2019-April 2019) and Summer Terms (as of May 2019-July 2019) of the current school year. The following table shows a timeline of the research activity already undertaken as of September 2018, and those to be carried out as of January 2019 to August 2019.

While it is the intention of the researcher to conduct interviews and discussions via Skype video conferencing or What's App Video calls or voice recording, internet connection costs and availability may delay connection to all parties. If this becomes a persistent challenge, then the researcher may need to do site visits to access the participants. Travel arrangements will then need to be made.