

Teachers' Experiences in Implementing a Curriculum Change in one Primary School

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## IMPLEMENTING PCR: INVESTIGATING TEACHERS

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Abbreviations

B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education

C2005: Curriculum 2005

CAC: Continuous Assessment Component

CARICOM: Caribbean Community

CBAM: Concerns-Based Adoption Model

CREDI: Catholic Religious Educational Development Institute

DO: District Official

ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education

eCAL: eConnect and Learn

ELA: English Language Arts

GPA: Grade Point Average

HFLE: Human and Family Life Education

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IC: Innovation Configuration

JCPE: Junior Cycle Physical Examination

LoU: Levels of Use



MOE: Ministry Of Education

NCSE: National Certificate Secondary Education

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OJT: On the Job Trainee

PCR: Primary Curriculum Rewrite

PTA: Parent-Teacher Association

RCLRC: Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre

RNCS: Revised National Curriculum Statement

SEA: Secondary Entrance Examination

SoC: Stages of Concern

TTUTA: Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

VAPA: Visual And Performing Arts

VCCE: Values Character and Citizenship Education

URP: Unemployment Relief Programme

UTT: University of Trinidad and Tobago

WHO: World Health Organisation

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## Abstract

This paper reports on the findings of a study on teachers' experiences on the implementation of the Primary Curriculum Rewrite in a school in the southern district. Teachers do not seem to be doing as required by the Ministry of Education. This has led the researcher to examine conditions that influence the implementation of a curriculum change. The Theoretical Framework for the study was the interpretivist paradigm using a constructivist format. A qualitative phenomenological study design was utilized, over a six month period, using semi structured focus group interviews, field notes, observations and document analysis. Analysis was guided by Fullan's (2001) model of change.

## Chapter One

### Teachers' Experiences in Implementing a Curriculum Change in one Primary School

#### Introduction

#### Background to the problem or issue

The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2011-2015 has as its priority, expanding access to quality learning. A key initiative proposed is improving the quality of schooling through a revised curriculum that makes provision for different learning styles of boys and girls. In conjunction with this proposal is the provision of in-service training and development programmes for teachers to strengthen and create competent, dynamic and knowledgeable resource bases in schools. Other initiatives such as Education Policy Paper (1993-2003), Education For All (Dakar, 2000), the National Model for Education in Trinidad and Tobago, and Trinidad and Tobago Seamless Education System have highlighted the need for sustainable educational change. As a result of government's thrust towards excellence in education, significant investments were made in introducing a *Thematic Integrated National Primary School Curriculum Guide 2013* from Infants to Standard One.

The Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR) is a modernised curriculum that focuses on developing higher order skills and values in students. The curriculum was officially introduced in all primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago in September 2013. The intent of primary reform is to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century learner, an ideal child, who fulfils all his or her potential. It is designed for early diagnosis of challenges with targeted interventions for improved student performance. PCR changes the way we teach and assess, thus, preparing children with the knowledge, skills and disposition to optimise their own development. It seeks to support students throughout the

process of acquiring, developing and mastering skills and knowledge, through brain based learning and performance based activities, not fail them. All students must develop mastery skills which are critical for overall development, through a systematic, integrated, learner-centred approach.

The most significant change is the adoption of an intra-disciplinary, theme based approach (See Figure 1, Integrated PCR Thematic Curriculum). The major shift occurs where students will not exclusively experience subjects as discrete but within themes (Table 1, PCR Themes) which are contextualized and coherently organized and linked to real life situations, integrating nine subject areas (Figure 2, Concept Map).

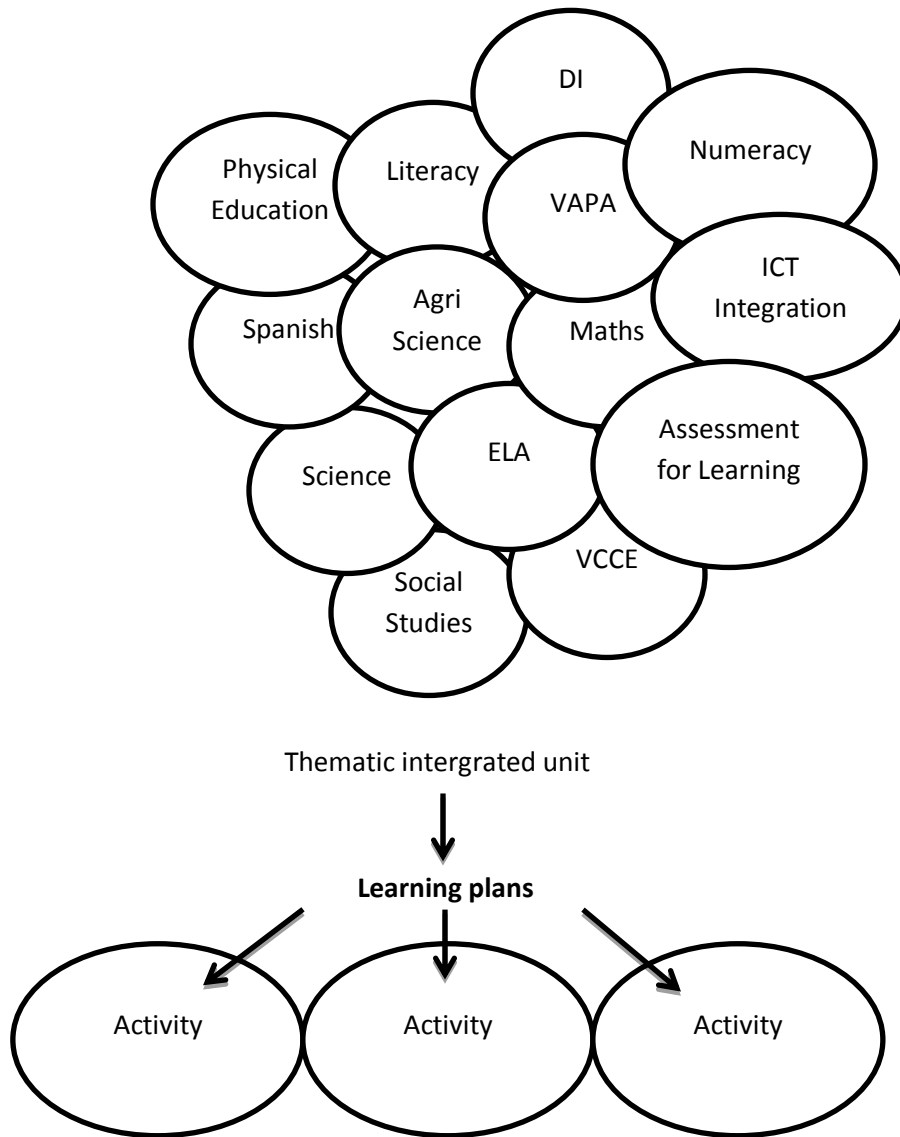


Figure 1 Integrated PCR thematic curriculum.

Source: MOE PCR Teacher Guide

*PCR Themes*

Table 1

<b>Infants 1</b>	<b>Infants 2</b>	<b>Standard 1</b>	<b>Standard 2</b>	<b>Standard 3</b>	<b>Standard 4</b>	<b>Standard 5</b>
Me and my world	My sense of belonging	My Country : The People and Culture of Trinidad and Tobago	My Country : The Environment of Trinidad and Tobago	Our Region The Caribbean	A World of Change	Pulling it all together; Projects and Subject Learning Becoming a global citizen

Source: MOE PCR Teacher guide

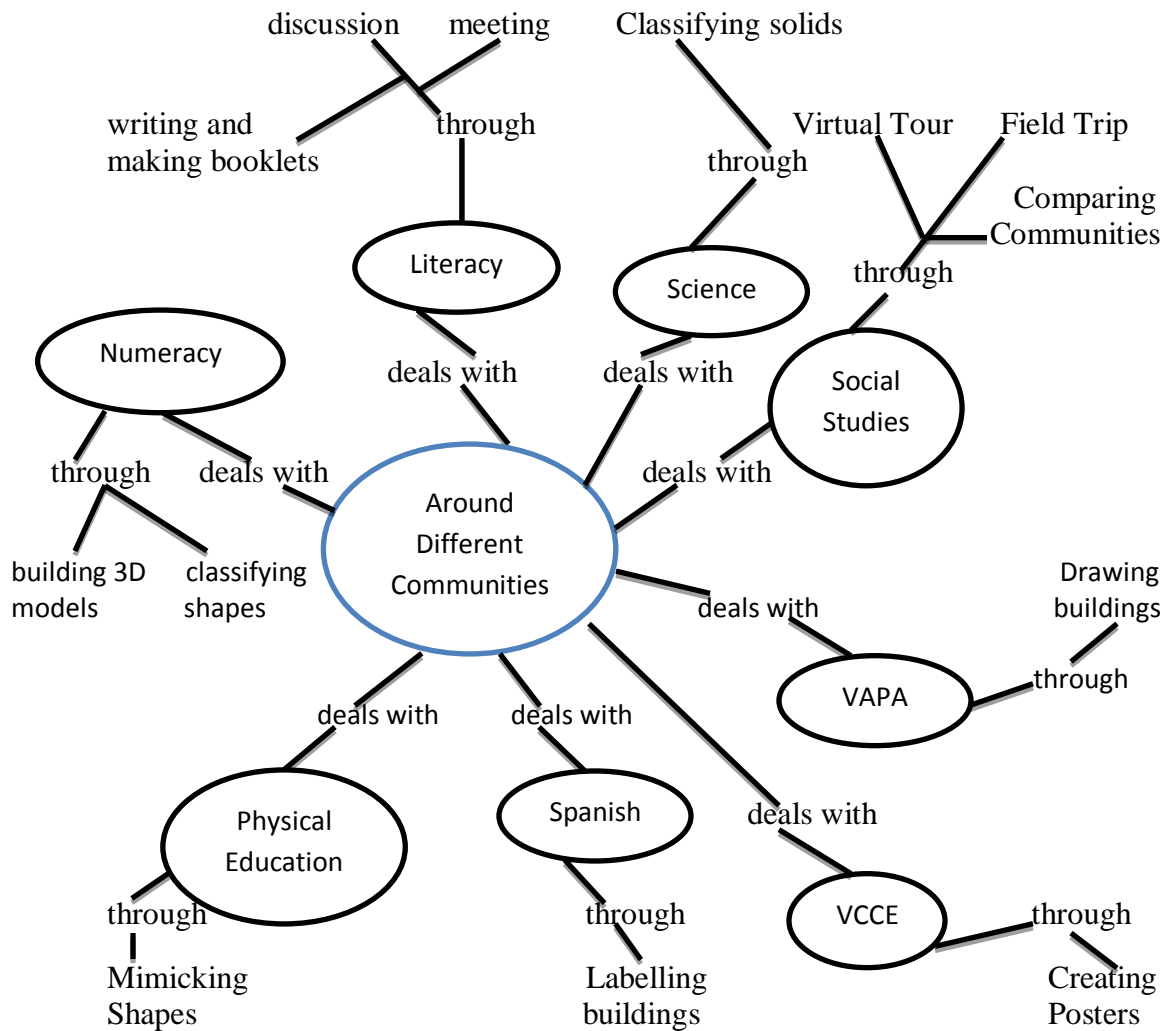


Figure 2 A concept map.

Source MOE PCR Teacher Guide

Pupils at primary schools will benefit greatly from renewed efforts to rewrite the curriculum. The Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR) seeks to establish promotion by attainment rather than by age and class. It is grounded in sound research and evaluation to create a new curriculum contextually appropriate for the primary school child. In this way, caring, respectable

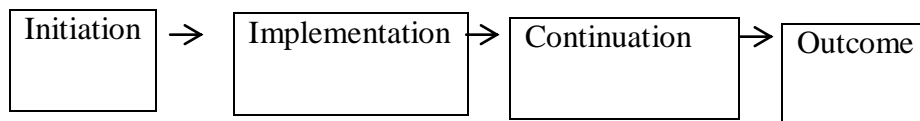


and socially conscious citizenry, equipped with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are nurtured from primary school. It allows for a continuous, seamless, coherent transition from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to Infants and the next level, through productive and meaningful life experiences. PCR contributes to the holistic development of the child as stated in the MOEs value outcomes in the Strategic Plan 2011 to 2015 (MOE, 2011).

This researcher is interested in examining the extent to which a gap exists between the idea of a Ministry of Education centrally produced curriculum and the realities of its implementation (Stenhouse, 1975). The literature shows a gap (as stated) and this researcher is interested in researching it.

### **Literature on primary school curriculum experiences**

In this study a universal overview of teachers' experiences in implementation of a curriculum change is valued. This section highlights experiences in implementing a curriculum change from Finland; Republic of Ireland; Quebec, Canada; some members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) including Trinidad and Tobago. In the global and local contexts, the focus of curriculum change is on educational aims and pedagogical elements (see Figure 3, The change process).



*Figure 3:* A simplified version of the change process (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

It is well known that change is complex, time-consuming, iterative, fragmented, and continuous and overloaded (Fullan, 2004). The study recognises that within communities there is not always a shared understanding of change and the reality of change (Fullan, 1999, 2003). It acknowledges that change may occur either because it is imposed on us through deliberate reform, or because persons voluntarily participate in or initiate change when dissatisfied, intolerant or inconsistent in a current situation (Fullan, 2001). Change involves changing the culture of the organization and changing the context in which persons in the organization operate. In the case of school change, it focuses on external accountability and internal school development and planning. Consideration should be given on how the system promotes change and the impact that leadership has on impetus for change. Fullan (2004) explains that change is inherently complex and that solutions occur when there are purposeful interactions among people so that they naturally influence each other. (Fullan, 2004). This researcher contends that teachers will be better able to face the challenges of implementing the new primary school curriculum by examining positive and negative conditions to implementation of the new curriculum change in their school.

Many countries around the world experience both positive and negative conditions in the implementation process. In Finland, curriculum reform began in 1994 and 1998 and continued to present time (Vitikka, Krokfors & Hurmerinta, 2012 as cited in Niemo, Toom & Kalliomemi, 2012). Local authorities were given autonomy to reorganise schools through school based decision making, national testing and thematic reviews, thus minimizing differences in local implementation (Finnish National Board of Education, 2011). Currently, the national core curriculum is a framework for making local, context driven curricula. In Finland's curriculum rewrite there are no major examinations.

In Quebec, Canada, educational reform began in the 1980s (Henchey, 2011). Currently, the new elementary school curriculum places emphasis on Mathematics and Language. It is the formal introduction of cross-curricular programs which seeks to develop the integration and transfer of knowledge to include themes and competencies similar to Trinidad and Tobago's PCR. Successful implementation in Finland, Republic of Ireland and Quebec, Canada is built on teacher commitment; active, voluntary involvement in implementation processes; a sense of ownership and positive attitudes to work.

Additionally, the perception before the revamped primary curriculum of the Republic of Ireland (2003), Junior Cycle Physical Education (JCPE) and CARICOM (2004) Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) was that these were non-academic subjects (Halbert & Mac Phail, 2010; UNICEF, 2006, 2009). There were no formal government recognition of JCPE and HFLE. In the rewrite JCPE is for certification and HFLE now includes life skills using active, participatory or experiential learning (UNICEF, 2006, 2009; United Nations, 1998; WHO, 1997). Continuous training and building teacher capacity were barriers in successful implementation.

### **Another new curriculum innovation**

In Trinidad and Tobago, the implementation of Continuous Assessment Component (CAC) in Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) commenced in the academic year 2012 -2013. It entails revamping of the Standards Four and Five curricula to include nine subject areas which will contribute to 20% of pupils' marks in 2013 to gain entry into secondary school. From 2013 -2015 and onwards, the CAC will contribute 40% to SEA (MOE, 2013). Within CARICOM countries funding, technological support and teacher training have supported implementation. In

Trinidad and Tobago, there was monitoring from teacher training to the classroom to ensure adherence to the implementation process.

Teachers experienced challenges in implementation because of this imposed change. Limited resources to sustain projects; adequate, available and relevant training; rapidity of implementation; school culture and an overcrowded curriculum were factors that hindered successful implementation. Findings in a research paper on CAC done in partial fulfilment for an M. Ed. Project at The University of the West Indies 2012-2013 by Ramoutar- Bhawan suggest that an inequitable distribution of resources caused uneven implementation of resources for CAC.

### **Other CARICOM country that had a curriculum revamp at primary level**

Jamaica has done a complete revamp of the national school curriculum to increase quality and relevance of skills education. The strategy is to introduce a national curriculum from grade 7-9 to regulate the type of education in different schools. Education in Jamaica is highly stratified and unbalanced (Dahlman, Routti & Antilla, eds, 2006; Knight & Rapley, 2007).

### **Curriculum change in Trinidad and Tobago**

Teachers are aware of the implementation of the *eConnect and Learn (eCAL)* programme policy implemented by the MOE (2010) in secondary schools for Form One students. The problems with implementation were ad hoc rather than continuous and well planned training for parents, teachers and students. Teachers engaged in a two day workshop and or one week training with Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) and did not feel competent to teach and integrate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Those teachers did not train others within the school, that is, there was no training of

the trainers. Rapidity of change and infrastructural issues impacted implementation and after three years there was an absence of consultations. The main facilitator of change in education is that since 2010, every Form One student in all secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago received laptops after having secured a place at a secondary school.

### **Statement of the problem**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has been training primary school teachers from Infants to standard One, since June 2013 on the PCR, using a cascade type model (MOE, 2013). The duration of Phase I was two weeks and dealt with workshops on how to integrate nine subject areas in the primary school curriculum. Training in Phase II entailed one day weekly sessions from September to October, 2013. Implementation of PCR commenced in September 2013 in all primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

The problem is Infants and Standard One teachers who received training do not seem to be implementing the new curriculum as presented to them in the PCR training. There seemed to be a tendency to go back to what was done before. The teachers are struggling with implementing the PCR. This is a disadvantage to pupils and impacts student learning. This researcher is concerned that pupils at the school are not short-changed and are on par with all pupils in Trinidad and Tobago.

As school principal, I have observed during class checks, that teachers are not using an integrated approach in enacting the curriculum in the classroom, thereby not implementing the revised curriculum. Teachers are using the old Record and Evaluation books with slots for specific subject areas when the nine subjects now taught have been integrated. Their timetables have not changed from solid subjects to a more flexible one with themes and core skills (Table 2,

Sample timetable). Specific subject areas are being taught in twenty and twenty five minute sessions. Additionally, the new report books, depicting grade skills, were not used at the end of the term.

*Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR)*

Table 2

*Sample Time Table:*

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Theme	Core Skills	Core Skills	Theme	Theme
	Theme	Theme		
	Core Skills	Theme	Theme	
Core Skills	Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme
		Core Skills		

On enquiry, colleagues have the same concerns of teacher resistance. This research on PCR is new and nobody is studying it. Literature is not exactly the same and points to issues that teachers experience. I want to know if it is the same with the teachers at my school. Hall and Hord (2001) and Ornstein and Hunkins(2004) posit that change is a process that takes time for

teachers to understand new knowledge and grow because teachers experience inertia and complacency and want to remain steeped in their traditional ways.

This researcher is interested in understanding why teachers are resisting change, whether or not they need more training to better understand the process of integration or if they are prejudiced towards a curriculum change (PCR). Also, it may be that they have knowledge about what to do and are not doing it. This is supported by teacher observation over a period of time. The attitude, behaviour and feelings that teachers exhibit towards the new primary school curriculum are of grave concern to this researcher because it affects effective enactment of the curriculum and student learning. This researcher is interested in studying the role, views and attitudes of Infants and Standard One teachers on implementation of the PCR. This researcher also wants to find out what occurred in training that may have contributed to resistance in implementing a new curriculum. An investigation would be undertaken to find out teachers' experiences of implementing the curriculum change through the PCR.

### **Research questions**

**Overarching question.** 1. How do the experiences of teachers about the PCR influence its implementation in a school in South Trinidad?

**Sub-questions:** (a) What are teachers' experiences of the PCR?

(b) To what extent does this experience influence its implementation?

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore teachers' experiences on implementation of a curriculum change at a primary school in south Trinidad.

Teachers are not implementing the new thematic integrated curriculum with fidelity. This issue needs to be explored because there is a necessity to study teachers' perceptions and identify factors that positively or negatively influence implementation of PCR. This allows the researcher to gain insights into the teachers' resistance to implementation of the curriculum, which cannot be easily measured and hear the voices of those teachers who may not speak out (Creswell, 2013). This researcher needs a detailed understanding of this issue because it affects students' educational development. This information will be very useful because it would clarify teachers' perceptions of barriers that hinder the implementation of a curriculum change. Additionally, it will generate new understanding that can be used by all educators (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The framework used would be the interpretivist paradigm using the constructivist framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

### **Significance of the study**

This study intends to examine teachers' experiences as they begin to adapt their practice for implementation of a curriculum change. This study will provide information on the implementation process in our local context that could assist stakeholders in implementing a curriculum change. It would generate new understandings for colleagues. The study of the PCR is new and other principals and educators may want to know. It would expand the discourse on implementation and allow for open discussions with other teachers within and outside the school community. Stakeholders may better understand factors that facilitate and inhibit implementation of a curriculum change. The strategies can be used to influence school policies and practices on implementation in the future. As such, school administrators use results to guide policy making related to teacher training, professional development and preparedness to implement the curriculum. In building teacher capacity, there will be greater opportunities for



student achievement. Recommendations from this study will assist MOE with valuable information for the future. This study is relatively new; therefore it has the potential to contribute to literature on implementation of new innovations.

### **Definition of key terms**

Implementation is the process of putting into practice an idea, program or set of activities and structures that are new to people who are attempting or expected to change (Fullan, 1991, p. 65).

Curriculum change refers to any conscious deliberate attempt to bring about change in the curriculum of a school system (Patterson & Czajkowski, 1979).

### **Organization of the paper**

This chapter introduced the study by providing a full account of the issue that gave rise to the study, background of the problem, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study and definition of key terms throughout the paper. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature that connects the gaps, what seem to be lacking and the literature in the area of teachers' experiences of a curriculum change. Chapter 3 presents a description of research methodology and justification for the study research method and procedures followed during the course of study. Additionally, there are the ethical considerations, trustworthiness of the research, delimitations and limitations. Chapter 4 includes data collection and discussion of presentation of findings. Chapter 5 concludes the study and provides interpretations, discussions and recommendations based on the findings.

The following chapter examines literatures that are pertinent to the study. A review of literature would help connect the gaps and highlight what tend to be lacking. The literature relates to the area of teachers' experiences of a curriculum change.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature related to implementation of a curriculum change. Literature specific to teachers' experiences of a Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR) is scarce. A search of literature has revealed limited research on teachers' experiences on PCR because it is relatively new. However, literature on implementing a new curriculum is readily available. The researcher is of the opinion that although all the literature is not directly related to the topic under investigation, the issues addressed in these studies are similar to teachers' experiences, globally, in implementing a new curriculum; therefore, the literature is relevant.

Making sense of curriculum change leads teachers to finding ways to translate and become familiar with texts in the classroom. According to Ball (2010, 2012) and Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) curriculum policy is alive and changes occur in the classroom. Teachers as deliverers, testers and technicians interpret in their own terms. They bring their values, experiences, histories and own purposes to bear on the implementation process. The point is, parts of the curriculum may be contested, rejected, left out ignored or modified (Looney, 2001; Durlak & DuPre, 2008). They compare old knowledge against new knowledge. Teachers may feel battered and seduced for change but they are also suspicious and professionally committed.

Furthermore, there may be a struggle in interpretation and change may be subjective. Rizvi and Kemmis (1987) contend that these shape what emerges and a new curriculum is not simply received and implemented. Ball (1990) and Bowe et al., (1992) note that there is a policy reconceptualization that goes on, a continuous policy cycle, the context of influence, public policy discourse; the context of text production, individual texts; and context of practice.

In the discourse of educational reform, it is not a linear process. If curriculum is seen in a unitary way, beyond text and discourse (Ball, 1994) and product and process (Taylor, Fazal, Lingard & Henry, 1997) then we may be able to close the gap that Stenhouse (1975) indicated exists between MOEs ideas and what actually happens in the classroom.

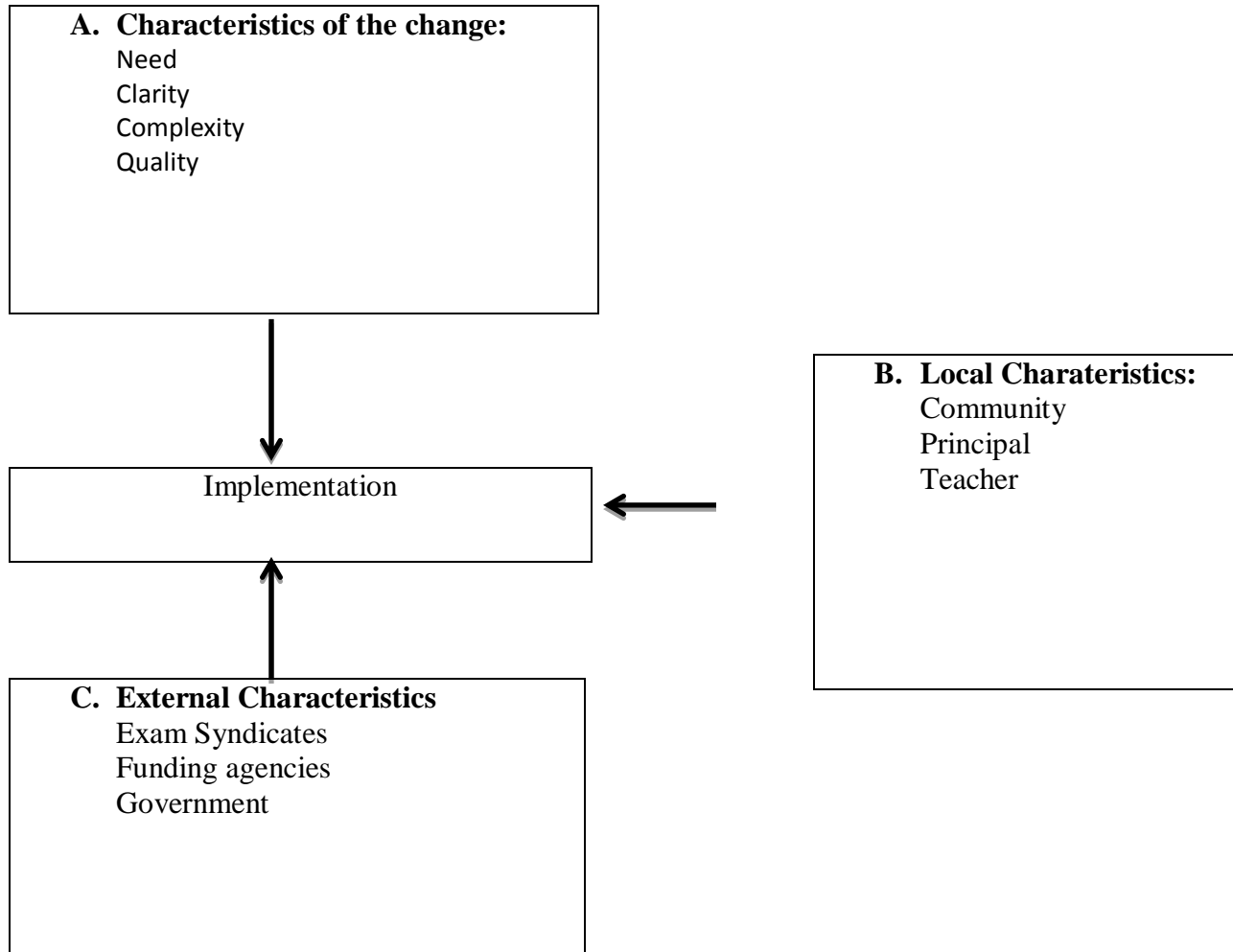
Several models of educational change have been used to conceptualize and facilitate the change process. The Concerns- Based Adoption Model (CBAM) stresses that change cannot happen unless teachers change. Therefore, the framework for the change process is based on Stages of Concerns (SoC), Levels of Use (LoU) and Innovation Configuration (IC). It deals with the role of teachers' concerns, how they feel and their concerns at different stages of implementation process.

Rogers' (2003) model focuses on the diffusion of an innovation. Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels, over a period of time among members of a social system (the school system). It is how messages or ideas that are perceived to be new are spread.

Fullan's (2001) model seeks to address a number of factors that facilitate implementation of a curriculum change. Such factors are the characteristics of change, the local school, the school district and external factors. All these factors must work together to bring about effective change.

Other models include Zaltman and Duncan's (1997) model which looks specifically at the cause of resistance to change. Ely's (1990) model addresses changes in the environment to facilitate effective implementation. Reigeluth and Garfinkle's (1994) model focuses on changes in the education system. All these models have been successfully tried and tested over time.

Fullan's (2001) Educational Change Model (Figure, 4) was chosen because unique to this model is the involvement of human participants in the change process. Fullan's (1991, 2001) model present guidelines for resisting, coping or leading change. Fullan's (2001) Theoretical framework comprises of nine critical and interactive factors that affect implementation, three dimensions of change and three phases of change. Fullan (2001) states that the characteristics of the change itself, in our situation the curriculum change, affect the process of implementation. The assumptions of Fullan's (2001) model is that successful implementation is influenced by the nature of the proposed curriculum change, the characteristics of change, the perceived need, clarity, complexity and quality (contextual suitability and practicability). Other factors (local and external) provide further constraints to the change; the organisation itself, that is, principal, teachers and pupils and its organisational characteristics, the culture, structures and assessment procedures. Additionally, government and governmental agencies and the quality of the relationship between central and local personnel supported by resource and training.



*Figure 4:* The Fullan educational change model (Interactive factors affecting implementation) (Fullan, 2001).

Teachers are change agents (Ellsworth, 2001). If teachers from Infants to Standard One perceive that there is a need for solutions the change proposes, then there is a better chance of successful implementation. Studies done in Quebec, Canada by Henchey (2011) indicate teachers determined the organisation of programmes and activities in the rewrite. Teachers felt there was a need for change. In the initial stages, teachers were clear about what they were expected to do. They were encouraged and supported by resources and evaluative structures.

The amount of new skills, altered beliefs and different materials required before adopting a curriculum change is complex. Complex changes demand more and should be broken down into concrete and incremental parts (Fullan, 2001).

Teachers are perceived to be implementers of change (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, Fullan, 2007). Implementation and change require that teachers adjust their personal habits or alter teaching behaviours and attitudes. Individual teacher's attitude towards change itself contributes towards the innovation and the quality and direction of change. It involves a mental shift to move from a current programme to a new programme, restructuring the old and replacing with the new, consistent with research done on HFLE in CARICOM and JCPE in Turkey (UNICEF, 2006, 2009; Halbert & Mac Phail, 2010). It also entails re-learning, reskilling, teacher training and support and sufficient time to assimilate new curricula (Fullan, 1994). The quality of working relationships, collegiality, trust, support and job satisfaction is strongly related to successful implementation (Altricher, 2005; Boyd, 1992; Keltchtermans, 2006; Shah, 2011).

Active support from the school district and the attitude of district officials are essential if change is meant to be successful. They must provide in-service training, mentoring and expert consultations to school districts through realistic time plans and resourcing for sustainable change (Marable & Raimondi, 2007). These were barriers in implementing eCAL in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T).

Fullan's (2001) contends there are three dimensions in force in implementing any new curriculum, new and revised instructional materials should be available, new strategies to enhance learners and an alteration of beliefs, in essence, how individuals perceive what has to be done. He notes change is complex and multidimensional. Teachers may choose to implement

part or all of these. Teachers have not yet fully implemented the PCR although it was mandated by the MOE.

Within the ambit of the school the role of the principal is that of initiator and facilitator of change (Fullan, 2007, 2008). Principals are in a position to influence structures necessary for change, to work collaboratively with staff in building school culture and climate. Their level of commitment helps to nurture the necessary conditions conducive to success. Some leadership functions are obtaining resources, shielding the project from outside interference, encouraging staff members and adapting procedures to the need of the innovation at an early stage in the reform process to facilitate educational change (Firestone & Corbette, 1988).

The relationship between central government, districts and schools through funding, resource support and closer monitoring have directly influenced implementation as evidenced with CAC in SEA. When there is a lack of role clarity, unclear expectations, lack of interpersonal communication and non-support of external agencies, these inhibit implementation (Fullan, 1994).

In the secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, there were Information and Communication Technology (ICT) labs, now with the implementation of *eCAL*, there is one- to-one laptops for each child and infused technology. All resources are not available, there are no wifi connections and internet in class and problems with electrical power. In relation to CAC in SEA, many primary schools do not have an ICT lab to upload results of assessments. Consequently, more training should be made available on integration, use of software and lesson planning.



Global economic competitiveness indicates knowledge has become the competitive advantage of industrialized nations in the global economy. Global interdependence acknowledges our interdependent global needs and responsibilities and that should guide our educational reforms (O'Sullivan, 1999). To prepare students for global challenges, quality learning through excellence in education should be defined as meeting the requirements of both paradigms, including the study of major global change- economic, technological, cultural, ecological, political and humanitarian. Trinidad and Tobago's education system has been responding to global change.

### **Primary school curriculum implementation experiences**

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2001, 2003) on the Republic of Ireland and Finland curriculum change, Finland produced the most literate students that are most prepared to face challenges and hardships of a globalized world economy. The Republic of Ireland, too, is considered the best system in the world, providing holistic education and well-rounded efficient graduates.

A study was conducted in South Africa by Jansen and Taylor (2003) on the education system, developed by the bureaucratic arm of the National Department of Education and implemented by a provincial department in South Africa in 29,000 schools. The Curriculum 2005 (C 2005) is a more formative based; integrated curriculum geared towards reform of the education sector away from high stakes examinations. Integration is a means of integrating across eight Learning Areas, transferring knowledge to real life situations and moving away from one subject disciplines, similar to that of Trinidad and Tobago's curriculum change.

In this study, what South Africa has done is to actively involve program organisers in transmitting this new concept to schools. It was impractical to directly train all teachers. A core of trainers at the higher level were trained and passed on that knowledge to various levels of the education system until groups of teachers were reached with knowledge of the new curriculum. A cascade type training that closely parallels our own. Another strategy was to involve the teachers' union, 'SADTU' as allies. In Trinidad and Tobago, there is the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association (TTUTA).

C 2005 is a progressivist curriculum based on a constructivist epistemology (Taylor & Vinevold, 1999). Teachers expressed feeling overwhelmed and confused, underscored by the fear of under specification of basic training skills and anxiety that students will not acquire concepts necessary for promotion. Although the curriculum was under heavy criticism for complexity of language, discrepancies in resources, teacher capacity, lack of confident and competent teachers and lack of solid learning material base (Jansen and Christie, 1999), in formulating C2005, several strategies were used that Trinidad and Tobago can consider. Chief among them was reviewing the curriculum through stakeholder consultations in forming the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). This resulted in a more accessible, simple, streamlined curriculum framework with core values of equity, accountability, social honour and multilingualism.

Fullan (1991, 1993, 1999) uses the concept of deep change to impact reform of an education system. Deep change meant changing the assumptions, goals and beliefs that exist to focus on social change. It calls for active involvement in the change process. Sarason (1990) states that we must understand the meaning of what pertains in school, the behaviour of individuals and the program of work and go in depth, not just look at the surface. The studies

suggest that a deeper understanding of curriculum reform and inserting it into daily routines of what goes on in the school and class was not sustained. Equity, quality and efficacy did not impact or penetrate the daily functions of schools. However, the researcher found that gains were experienced in the external behaviours of teachers rather than in the subject knowledge among learners. Although strategic actions taken in implementation were flawed, significant advances were made in the schooling sector.

To further shed light on teachers' experiences on implementation of curriculum reforms in South Africa a study was conducted on how District Officials (DO) assumptions influence the nature of support they give teachers and teachers' resistance to the change. It focused on how Dos influence communication and work rapport. According to Rogers (2003) diffusion of an innovation, sharing and creating information to reach a common understanding is crucial to implementation and this was not done in this study conducted by Jansen (2003).

Jansen (2003) argues that non-implementation of reforms result from policy- making and planning that does not accommodate a policy implementation plan. Data used in this study conducted in South Africa by Jansen (2003) focused on the relationship between professional development and teachers' classroom needs. Participants were primary Science teachers (grades 1-6) from 39 schools with more five years' experience in an age range of 30-60 years. The new curriculum RNCS was being taught for four years in a field study sampled school.

Questionnaires were completed by 90% of the teachers who participated in in-depth 50-60 minutes semi-structured interviews. Fourteen volunteers were used from schools that also completed questionnaires. The researcher used this method to highlight concerns by teachers about professional development and triangulate claims during the interview. Four District Officials were also interviewed for 50-80 minutes because the researcher wanted to delve into

participants' deep thoughts and behaviours to get specific details (Bantwini & King-McKenzie, 2011; Boyce & Neale, 2006). Data coding and analysis followed an iterative process.

The researcher found that teachers were resisting change because of a lack of planned professional development; assistance and support by officials; on-going training and collaboration with the district. Findings also revealed that the time frame to orient was crucial and teachers expressed the need for follow-up support and clarity of the new curriculum in order to understand it well. Additionally, lack of understanding of new teaching approaches and methods were the missing ingredients to implementation.

Consequently, the researcher found that the major issue of teacher resistance to C2005 and the RNCS was complacency of teachers with teachers refusing to leave their comfort zones. They felt teachers were pretentious and did not want to learn and were not interested in doing so. Further, both novices and veterans alike were resisting change in the classroom implementation of RNCS. Also, the lack of evidence of implementation was used to measure learning from the workshops. The extent of teacher learning is in the actual implementation of the revised curriculum. It was not only being attentive in workshops but it is a process that takes time and is not a one-off event.

Hall and Hord (2006) posit that change is a process, not a one-time event. Locally, two day workshops or one week NESC training for eCAL and two weeks for CAC and PCR teacher training cannot be sufficient. Change is a process in which people move as they grow and become skilled and competent in new ways over time. The process takes three to five years. Failure to address these key aspects of change can prevent achieving successful implementation.

In the study, involving C2005 in South Africa, there was residual training for teachers who were absent. Those who had already undergone training were also attending workshops. The teachers cited lack of understanding of the complexities of the new curriculum and not knowing what to teach. They felt they were not getting support because visits were not made to classrooms to get a first-hand view of implementation. The officials claimed a careless attitude towards training was the reason for all the difficulties. They seemed not to understand why teachers were struggling with a curriculum that was easy and not overloaded.

The findings in this study indicate that teachers did not understand the new curriculum and were not allowed to voice their grievances. The only professional culture was the workshop approach. Teachers' resistance must be clearly examined before it can be understood. Teacher training and teacher learning is not the same.

Fullan and Miles (1992), Sikes (1992) and Zimmerman (2006) view teacher resistance as a misrepresentation of the change process. They argue that those who are in charge of reform are the ones who slow the process because of several difficulties. Individuals faced with a new phenomenon of curriculum change need to assess change and explore all the possibilities and even how it influences their self-interest. (Fullan, 2001).

However, Giroux (1983) contends that notions of change are attributed to the complex ways in which people confront issues in their own lives and what keep them from advancing. Resistance to curriculum change should be treated with urgency because teachers tend to lose their confidence and sense of direction and consequently experience confusion and alienation. It is easier to keep things as they are because they see change as more work without administrative support (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004; Harvey, 1990).

Loucks, Horsley, Hewson, Love and Stiles (1998) argue that change requires teachers to change their understanding and relearn things differently to what they had known before. This creates a struggle that results in a decrease in commitment, dedication and productivity. The findings are consistent with existing literature on mismatch with curriculum policy and what happens in the classroom (Dailey, 2010). They indicate that teachers need administrative support to close the gaps between what the Ministry wants and the realities of classroom implementation. Failure to support will result in teachers' refusal to change.

### **Teachers' reflections of a curriculum change**

Notwithstanding teacher resistance to change, there are instances of successful implementation of curriculum change. In Turkey, Eraslan (2013) conducted a study examining Turkish Mathematics teachers' reflection on implementation of a new elementary Mathematics curriculum for grades 6-8 in a pilot school in the fall of 2007. The researcher found that all Mathematics teachers claimed ownership, were in favour of implementation and did not resist change because they felt that students would enjoy it and that made teaching easier. There was early teacher buy-in to promote a sense of belonging. They found the innovation to be culturally appropriate (Carless, 2011). However, the researcher found that lack of initial training and in-service training were barriers to implementation.

The primary idea behind this curriculum reform is the change from a subject centred to a student centred model with a constructivist approach, similar to that done in Trinidad and Tobago (MOE, 2013). The curriculum was piloted in 120 schools in nine cities in Turkey between 2004-2005. The vision is that students will use Mathematics in their lives, solve

problems, share solutions and ideas and enjoy learning. One notable feature was observations of classroom instructions three times a week.

This study done in Turkey addressed the assessment needs of teachers by investigating their views of the new curriculum. It included recording, collecting field notes, semi-structured interviews, written artefacts such as worksheets, completed student assignment and one legged interviews during school breaks. Two males and one female teachers with experience ranging from 26-28 years were selected to participate. The school is one of the pilot schools in which Mathematics has been gradually implemented year by year since 2005.

Findings in the study show that the actual training period was too short and teachers did not receive enough pre-training prior to full implementation. They also felt that there should be continuous professional development relevant to the needs of the curriculum change. Other research studies reported data on lack of initial and in-service teacher training (Birgin, Tutak & Turkdogan, 2009; Gooya, 2007; Halat, 2007; Jita & Vandeyar, 2006; Keles, 2009; Malderez & Wedell, 2007; Manouchehvi & Goodman, 2000). These show that teachers needed guidance and support on decisions, strategies, activities and alternative assessment. The researcher found that all three teachers indicated that National Norm Reference Test impacted on the effective implementation of the new curriculum.

The researcher found that teachers in this study had a positive perception of the new curriculum and favoured its educational value in elementary schools. According to Hill (1991) teachers must first believe in what they do and claim ownership before investing time and effort into learning and practicing new ideas. Consistent with existing literature on implementation in some CARICOM states (UNICEF, 2006, 2009) with HFLE, Bulut (2007); Duru and Korkmaz

(2010); Halat (2007); Keles (2009) note that to be able to successfully implement a new curriculum, financial support for restructuring schools, sufficient curriculum material projects, computers and internet access should be provided to make the workload more manageable. The study identifies success of an implementation lies with teachers' perception of change.

Furthermore, a study done by Carless and Harfitt (2009) is embedded in the implementation of an innovation in secondary education. The analysis is based on the English Language component of the curriculum and used three perspectives, technological, political and cultural. (House, 1979, 1981; House & McQuallan, 2005). The shift to encourage higher order thinking skills in class created a dialogic classroom talk (Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

Its implementation changed the view of teacher as imparter of knowledge to one of facilitator. Students who were normally reticent participated actively in class. Students aged 10-12 years old engaged in the change process and heard their voices using focus group interviews. The reform was designed to develop creativity in students and use the language to promote authentic learning. The researcher found that students wanted English material to be more creative. Lack of student motivation was always seen as a challenge.

Additionally, a longitudinal study conducted by Adamson and Tong (2008) in Hong Kong on Task Based Learning (TBL) in 1999 English Language syllabus in secondary school and 2006 curriculum for junior secondary designed to replace grammar focused teacher centred approaches lasted two years. The study focused on teachers' perceptions of TBL and support provided by leadership.

The researcher found that individual teachers enacted the curriculum based on whether or not they found it was worthwhile or not. Also, strong leadership is essential in causing the



innovation to wither or become diffused. The study was done in Schools 1, 2 and 3. The researcher found that in School 1 there was a vibrant school culture. Teachers returned from in-service training and with the support from the principal, trained other teachers and implementation was highly successful. But in Schools 2 and 3 teachers had negative attitudes, had problems with concepts in TBL training, lacked confidence and did not receive assistance from principals. Classroom observation showed little change in pedagogy, environment and activities.

In School 1, teachers struggled to understand and grappled with ideas and techniques using an iterative approach. Through dialogue, they worked towards a common goal as they transferred knowledge and skills into something they could use. It was found that collegiality influenced meaningful change (Shah, 2011).

The findings indicate that how change is managed by school leadership is crucial in implementing reforms. Fullan and Steeglbauer (1991) contend that teacher capacity must be built, alongside coping with change, openness to change and making change an integral part of the working environment.

In addition, studies done in the Caribbean by Barrow & Delisle (2010) on teachers' concerns about Secondary Education Modernization Project (SEMP) Science curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) indicate that teachers have adjusted in a satisfactory manner to the affective demands of curriculum change process (Rakes & Casey, 2002). The aim of SEMP in 1990 was to renew and expand the secondary education system using a phased approach to implementation. Some challenges were limited physical infrastructure and trained personnel.

Three focus group interviews, with participants from twenty four schools each across varying districts in T&T were chosen to pilot the new curriculum. Twenty four teachers who had been implementing the curriculum over five years were asked eight key questions. The framework used was Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) framework (Hall & Hord, 2001).

Findings indicate that teachers' concerns were that the new curriculum was overloaded, not sufficiently integrated and different. They felt challenged by the lack of their own Science content knowledge and assumptions of their proficiency. They sought knowledge on the format of the curriculum, model lesson plans and new science materials. The researchers found that teachers did not know how to integrate topics and basically did not know what to do. They felt they needed administrative support, basic training, more initial training and sufficient time to implement successfully. One strategy that can be used is finding consensus (Rakes & Casey, 2002) by bringing teachers together to discuss best practices.

Hall & Hord (2001) have identified how people act or behave with change. The first step into determining if any new curriculum is making a difference is to determine if the curriculum is being used. The study suggests a reorientation of the science teachers to the curriculum.

## **Conclusion**

Internationally, regionally and locally curriculum reform literature highlights a number of factors that impact implementation of new instructional objectives. Despite varying contexts, among most frequently cited factors are, teachers' beliefs about change; training and background of teachers; lack of professional support; insufficient applicable material and physical facilities and time (Halbert & MacPhail, 2010; Henchey, 2011; Vitikka et al., as cited in

Niemo et al. 2012; Unicef 2006, 2009). Studies of curriculum change have indicated that teachers' beliefs and understandings of proposed changes play a significant role in implementation (Carless, 1998, 2003; Thompson, 1984; & Vandengerghe, 2002).

This literature review focused on several studies conducted in South Africa, Turkey, Hong Kong and the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago. Although these studies were designed differently, and were culturally different and engaged various participants, common themes emerged. In all the studies, with the exception of that conducted in Hong Kong by Adamson and Tong (2008), inadequate training was featured as a great concern. In-service, initial and continuous training on curriculum content were cited as strategies teachers required because of claims of not knowing what to teach. Other concerns were administrative support, orientation to new curriculum and time to implement.

The study conducted in Hong Kong revealed that school culture, collegiality, mentoring and principal support influenced successful implementation. Other factors are sharing best practices, regular classroom visits, active involvement of key stakeholders and student creativity.

Recommendations for continuous follow-up training and administrative support were a common thread throughout all the studies. The following chapter seeks to examine the qualitative paradigm and research design used in this study.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Justification for using the Qualitative paradigm**

This chapter describes the qualitative research tradition and phenomenological research design used in the study. It deals with issues of credibility, trustworthiness, validity and reliability. It coordinates the sampling procedure, data collection and analysis to answer the research questions.

The qualitative research tradition that I think most suitable is the phenomenological tradition (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). This researcher used a small sample of four teachers to find out how the implementation of PCR has affected them. Qualitative research stresses a phenomenological model in which multiple realities are rooted in the subjects' realities (McMillan, 2012). Because of the emergent nature of qualitative inquiry, it means that hard and fast decisions cannot be made from the beginning. According to Patton (1990) the researcher has to interpret the issue in relation to how it can be carried out at each stage. He further contends that in interpreting meaning a diversity of perspectives and clarity of voice will show the meaning each participant ascribe to the implementation of the new curriculum. A qualitative approach focuses on the individual's subjective responses and allows the researcher to explore individual perspectives in some depth (Creswell 2012, 2013).

The credibility of the researcher to the primary users of the findings will be enhanced because it minimizes manipulation of the study. This researcher wanted to hear their stories on what the PCR means to them, the difficulties they may be experiencing, the strategies that help them, how they think about it, what they are doing about it, and if their experiences so far are

worthwhile. This in-depth and detailed analysis of the phenomenological study reduces generalizability and credibility rests on the skills and competence and rigour of this researcher (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). This type of inductive approach to research, that permits the researcher to delve into fundamental aspects of personal concerns of participants, can only be achieved through qualitative research.

Qualitative research often takes place in naturally occurring situations (Hatch, 2002; McMillan, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). This researcher collected data in the field at the site where teachers experience the issue under study, implementing a new curriculum. This researcher gathered up to date information by actually talking to teachers directly, observing how they behave and act within the school context in face to face interactions. It is based on an understanding of verbal narratives. Data was collected using multiple sources such as verbal descriptions, observations, interviews, field notes and documents.

The reasons for conducting a qualitative study are to clarify, describe and interpret the experiences of teachers and to capture the experiences as perceived by the teachers (Polkinghorne, 1989; 2005). This was done primarily through semi-structured focus groups interviews to build rapport between the knower and the known, using a purposeful sample. Other data are relevant because reality is subjective and entails understanding through the experience of the participant (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005; Creswell, 2007). This researcher observed over a period of time, jotting field notes. A variety of techniques were used to better understand the meaning of the phenomenon by collecting data and framing the results.

The methods used encompassed observations, semi-structured open-ended interviewing, review of artefacts, and direct data collecting. The process focused on the experiences of each teacher and recognized that these experiences bear a relationship with the issue of teachers' perspectives of a curriculum change.

The researcher is the instrument in a qualitative study. This researcher directed the inquiry and is knowledgeable interpreter, responsible for changes in direction of the inquiry. A holistic account was reported using rich, thick, verbatim narrative. In qualitative research, a complex picture of the issue that was under study is developed to give this researcher a clearer understanding of the reasons why teachers are responding to implementing the curriculum in the way they did.

This integrated approach means change from traditional teaching to discovery learning or constructivism or multiple intelligences. The teacher is now the guide on the side for problem solving. It impinges on the philosophical base of pragmatism, embracing appropriate experiences that transmit culture and preparation for change. The educational philosophy which the new curriculum is predicated on is progressivism. It deals with active and relevant learning, not passive acceptance. It is knowledge based with teacher seen as facilitator, making proper use of resources (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

### **Assumptions in qualitative research**

Philosophical assumptions are made when undertaking a qualitative study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These assumptions have been noted as the guiding philosophy behind qualitative research. These beliefs have been referred to as paradigms (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Mertens, 2010), epistemologies and axiologies; ontologies and methodologies.

It adheres to the epistemological assumption of intentionality and places this researcher in a place and position to distinguish the knower from the known, the researcher and teacher and the knowledge gathered (Creswell, 2013). It emerges out of a relationship with teachers, through observations and interviews, to build a rapport so that the researcher could find out what is on their minds, how they come to know. In creating a trusting relationship, subjective evidence is gathered based on teachers' experiences on the implementation of a new curriculum. This is how knowledge is known, through the subjective experiences of teachers. The study was conducted in a primary school. This would help in the understanding of what teachers are saying. The more time spent in the "field" getting to know the teachers, the more this researcher got to know what they knew and felt from first-hand knowledge (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In this way, reading non-verbal cues such as body language and gestures, nuances of facial expressions and tone of voice of teachers became familiar and shortened the "distance" or "objective separateness" between this researcher and the four teachers (Guba and Lincoln (1988) as cited in Creswell, 2013). This researcher relied heavily on quotes as evidence from the teachers.

This researcher brings her own values and biases to the research. As principal leader I come with my own conceptions of implementation in the classroom from observations of class checks and clinical supervision. This axiological assumption characterizes qualitative research. It guides the research through the values and value judgement of both this researcher and the teachers (ethic and emic view) (Creswell, 1998). I admit that this researcher has her own biases as well as value laden nature of information from peer reviewed journal articles on teachers' perceptions that shape the narrative. They exist in this study. The stories voiced represent my interpretation and presentation as much as the teachers under study.

This study embraces the ontological perception of the multiple realities and shared meanings of the four teachers (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). When studying teachers the intention is to report multiple realities. This researcher wanted to capture multiple truths constructed by teachers' perspectives because this researcher wanted to understand it from their reality. It cannot be one or more than one, but different realities. Multiple perspectives of one teacher as well as multiple perspectives of all four teachers were used. This researcher used multiple forms of evidence in themes, using the actual words of different students and presenting different perspectives on teachers' experiences on implementation of a curriculum change.

### **Justification for a phenomenological study**

This study used a phenomenological approach to investigate teachers' experiences on the implementation of the PCR. Phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon, in this instance, the implementation process (Finlay 2005, 2008). In a phenomenological study the researcher aims to provide rich, textured descriptive of lived experiences. It gives the researcher greater insights into the meaning of individual and collective lived experiences of teachers at Elegant Primary school (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology is an inquiry approach that seeks to clarify, explore and understand people's experiences, especially how they feel and the meaning they give to events and issues. (Creswell, 2008; McMillan, 2012; McMillan & Schumacker, 2010). It would be best suited for this study.

The reasons for conducting a phenomenological study are to describe and interpret the experiences of teachers and capture the essence of their experiences (Wertz, 2005). The process focuses on the experiences of each teacher and recognizes that these experiences bear a relationship with the phenomenon, the implementation process. In such a study, there are



multiple ways of interpreting the same experience or event. The meaning of the experience to each participant is what is used in primary data (McMillan, 2012).

The focus is on conscious human experiences, understanding the participant voice (Jackson & Mazzei, 2009). As a result there is a search for vital structure in the meanings given by participants. Phenomenology seeks to delve into types of experiences and the meaning ascribed to lived experiences of teachers. This means that the researcher needs to bracket any preconceived ideas to draw out and fully understand the meanings given by teachers, allowing them to tell their stories (Creswell, 2013; Hasserl, 1931, 1970; Maxwell, 2005; Van Manen, 1990). The study was conducted in a single primary school in the Victoria Education District.

Phenomenology as a research method is characterised as inductive and emergent, shaped by this researcher's experience in collecting and analysing data (McMillan, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This researcher explored a holistic understanding about teachers' perceptions of a new curriculum, over time. In analysing, this researcher sought to develop a detailed understanding of the positives and negatives teachers encountered in implementation and the reasons for their resistance to change. It is within this unit that a sample of teachers were selected.

### **Site**

The focus of the study is a rural Roman Catholic primary school in the Victoria Education District. It was established in 1977 with a capacity of two hundred and eighty five students. Presently, the student population is two hundred and six students. The staff is predominantly female. The teaching staff consists of four male and eight female teachers and the ancillary staff of three females and one male. There are also four female and one male On the

Job Trainees (OJTs) and one security guard. Additionally, there are two women attached to the school's greenhouse and four female labourers with the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP).

The school was chosen for many reasons, mainly for ease of access for this researcher, having taught at the institution for fifteen years (1993-2007), and presently is the principal since 2011. The school was selected because there are several teachers with varying backgrounds, possessing special aptitudes and skills and certified in various disciplines. Two teachers are proficient in Physical Education (PE); three in Art & Craft; two in Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA); two in music and one in Spanish. The teachers who are required to teach the new curriculum possess more than five years teaching experience. In 2013 the MOE mandated that all teachers from Infants to Standard One be trained in twice weekly workshops on the PCR.

### **Sample**

Purposive sampling was utilized to select one teacher from Infants One and Two (both females) and two from Standard One (1 male and 1 female). Those participants provide the richest information and possess the characteristics of most interest to this researcher because they come from similar backgrounds, as they are all trained teachers (Best & Kahn, 2006). In targeting this specific group, this researcher wanted to access a particular subset of people who would generate relevant and in-depth data to address the research questions. According to Patton (1990, 2002) in qualitative research, research sites and participants are chosen following a strategy called purposive sampling. It is a strategy used to gain insights in a study and help manage trade-off between the need for in-depth information and generalizability.

### **Participants**

Pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality and anonymity in the presentation of data.

Jenna, aged 55 years, with thirty eight years of experience at the Infant level, possesses a teaching diploma and is presently pursuing an undergraduate Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) Degree at the Catholic Religious Educational Development Institute (CREDI). She also obtained basic and advanced training in computer literacy. She is passionate about using the thematic integrated approach and has done an elective in Art and Craft. She teaches an Infant Year One class.

Lynette is a young 28 year old teacher with five years teaching experience at the infant level, possesses a Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) degree in primary education from the UTT in 2013. She specialized in ECCE and has a special aptitude for physical education, computer technology and Visual And Performing Arts (VAPA). She has been a coordinator attached to the Ministry of Sports for the past five years. She teaches an Infant Year Two class.

Rachel is 38 years old and teaches the Standard One class. She graduated in 2008 and possesses a B.Ed. in Primary Education from the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). She has 20 years teaching experience in the junior department. She has special interest in Science and VAPA. She teaches the Standard One class.

Kevin is a UTT graduate (2008) with nine years teaching experience and is 29 years old. He is young and vibrant and well qualified in music. He is a member of a music band “Moments” and brings this musical experience to the school and community. He teaches the Standard One class.

### **Data collection strategies**

The methods for data collection used in this study were semi-structured focus group interviews and observations. The purpose of an interview is to understand the experiences of others better, to get to their individual story that cannot be known through direct observation (Patton, 1990). In this study, an interview protocol with open ended questions was established (Appendix A) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview in a focus group had been selected because it provided the researcher with accurate information. It was a good way to measure perceptions and observe body language of the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It was flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview, (Patton, 1990) and these probes elicited in-depth responses. It provided reliable, comparative, qualitative data that was easy to record. A major positive of the interview was that it was not rigid and interviewees felt more comfortable, seated in a circle with this researcher. The interview was audiotaped in a quiet air conditioned library from 3:15p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

Observations were utilized to get the teachers in their comfort zones, free from pressure, in their natural environment (Agrosino, 2001; Spradley, 1980). It helped the researcher better prepare for the interview and a truer indication of personality was given because teachers were unaware of being observed. When participants know they are observed they behave in a particular way (Hawthorne's effect). It eliminates bias when the instrument used is a checklist.

Documents were used as a source of data collection and in triangulation of data (Priori, 2003). Documents were analysed to augment evidence and for corroboration from other sources, for example, detecting the differences between timetables. Documents allowed this researcher to peruse the data as many times as possible, enabling corroboration.

Field notes were undertaken to try to get a truer perspective of teachers. It allowed this researcher to quietly record and observe, taking jottings to translate at a later time (Sanjek, 1990). Field notes can be subjective to memory and possible conscious and unconscious biases of the researcher (Muihall, 2003).

### **Data analysis**

The process of analysing is an attempt to make meaning out of the data by interpreting what was observed and said. This researcher had chosen to utilise inductive content analysis and analysed data from interviews, field notes, observations and document analysis (Bernard 1991, 1996; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This process entailed open coding, creating categories and abstraction. The abstraction process allowed this researcher to extract and compare meanings from different sources to better understand and know (Polit & Beck, 2004).

This researcher listened to an audiotaped version of the interview many times, writing expressions that stood out for later use, before transcribing the data. The transcriptions were read in its entirety several times to become immersed in the details, as this researcher attempted to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into several parts (Agar, 1980; Polit & Beck, 2004). In some instances there were no responses to questions by participants and this researcher relied on non-verbal communication, body language and gestures, to derive meaning. Notes were written in the margins of transcripts and field notes to help this researcher in the initial process of exploring a database. This researcher looked over field notes from interviews, interview transcriptions, audio images, so that this researcher can “see” what participants said.

In focusing the analysis, this researcher organised the interview data by question and purpose of the study (Merriam, 1998, 2009) to look across all respondents and their answers

(Appendix B). In focusing the analysis of the interview, this researcher organised the data in order to identify similarities and differences. Data collected from all sources were then organised and analysed as a whole.

This researcher reflected on the larger thoughts presented in the data and formed initial categories to summarise and bring meaning to the text. These emerging categories were few in number, about 10 (See Appendix C) and this researcher looked for multiple forms of evidence to support each (Stake, 2010). The next step entailed describing and classifying the data to form codes, assigning abbreviated codes of a few letters and placing them next to the themes and ideas that were found (Appendix D). These helped to organise the data into categories. This researcher looked for stories in the context of teachers' experiences of the PCR. This researcher built detailed descriptions and developed themes to help in interpretation of the literature later on. Detailed descriptions meant this researcher described what was seen. This detail is provided "in situ," that is within the context of the setting of teachers, school and situation (Creswell, 2013).

Afterwards, this researcher engaged in the process of coding, that is, aggregating the visual data into smaller categories of information while searching for evidence from the code from different databases used in this study (Appendix E). Then descriptive labels were assigned to codes. This researcher developed a short list of tentative codes (about 25) to reduce and combine them into seven themes (List in Appendix F).

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that researchers may want to make preliminary counts of data to determine how frequently a particular theme occurs in the database as an indicator of particular interest in the code (Sample in Appendix G). Code names emerged, some

were “in vivo codes” and others from what this researcher composed because they seemed to best describe the information. Themes were formed by separating the list of categories and placing them together to reconstruct the text into a “family” (Appendix H). This researcher examined the instances of silence in the transcripts noting what was excluded by the participants. Also metaphors were examined as a source of multiple meaning. Themes and connections were used to explain the findings.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethics promotes the aims of research such as knowledge, truth and avoidance of error, and identifies falsifying or misrepresenting research data. Ethical norms help build public support and moral and social values. It promotes values in collaborative work, trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness (authorship, copyright and intellectual property) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fine, Weis, Wessen & Wong, 2000 as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Creswell (2007) stresses that because ethical issues are anticipated and do surface during a qualitative research, good practices should always be incorporated into the research study. All research using people involve some element of risk and raises questions about the ethics of the process. According to Best and Kahn (2006) ethics is about right or wrong, good or bad, proper or improper. All researchers ought to follow ethical principles. Ethical guidelines or rules were established to protect human subjects. The issue of ethics is of great concern to this researcher and would be followed for mutual protection (Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002).

Permission was sought from the School Supervisor s I, II and III of the Education District to conduct a study at primary school (Appendix I). Oral permission was granted before

the study commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> January of 2014 (Appendix J). The study is expected to be completed and handed in by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014, as shown in the timeline (Appendix K). Participants were formally invited to participate in the study and informed of the purpose of the study. At a recent staff meeting, all teachers were informed about the nature of the study. Formal letters were given out one week before data collection and teachers were informed of their right to confidentiality, anonymity and freedom to withdraw at any time during the process (sample provided in Appendix L).

The qualitative research in a good study is ethical. It means that it does not involve simply seeking and obtaining the permission of administrators and teachers but that the researcher is aware of all ethical issues throughout all phases of the research study (Mertens, 2010; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009).

### **Rigour in qualitative research**

This researcher employed rigorous data collection procedures collecting data from multiple sources. Standards call for greater clarity and transparency which equals greater rigour (Anfara & Mertz, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This researcher collected multiple forms of data, adequately summarized (in tabular form) and spent adequate time in the field (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The researcher conducted multiple levels of data analysis from narrower codes and themes to broader interrelated themes to more abstract dimensions. Rigour means also, the researcher validated the accuracy of the account using one or more procedures for validation. To establish rigour in the research there is a need to satisfy these four criterion, credibility, trustworthiness, validity and reliability.

### **Credibility of the research**



The credibility of this study was established as it is confined to primary school X and in one area, Infants to Standard One. This researcher is familiar with the culture of the school. Peer review was sought to get another perspective. Feedback and questioning were welcomed from Jordianne (pseudonym) on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 to help refine existing data on the literature review and challenge assumptions that were previously held by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). These findings were further addressed through member checks by taking the data and transcriptions back to Kevin, Jenna, Rachel and Lynette on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2014. Inconsistencies were highlighted and checked for clarity, accuracy and verification and all the necessary changes were made promptly (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2000 as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

### **Trustworthiness of the research**

Credibility established trustworthiness in the study and promoted confidence that the phenomenon under study was accurately recorded (Guba & Lincoln, 2000 as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Maxwell, 2005). Triangulation using multiple sources of data was utilized as observations with interviewing, field notes and document analysis were combined in this study. Triangulation improved rigour of analysis by assessing integrity of inferences made by the teachers (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Lincoln, 1995). There was data verification as all teachers were able to scrutinise the findings to ensure compatibility.

Iterative questioning was also employed, probing to elicit detailed accounts of teachers' experiences. This backward and forward movement was done to establish clarity of meaning, implicit and explicit explanations and interactions among participants.

Additionally, adoption of a phenomenological research method was well utilized in qualitative research to reflect varying situations. Reflective commentary is subjective and monitors developing constructions in conversations. As a result, rich, thick descriptions of a phenomenon under study conveyed the real situation as it happened and promoted credibility. It allowed the reader to glean a better understanding of the phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Shenton, 2004). Examination of previous research findings that related to existing body of knowledge on experiences of the implementation of a curriculum change were used as a valuable source of comparison (Silverman, 2007).

### **Validity**

Validity is that quality of the instrument that ensured it measured what it is supposed to measure. Validity is the truth (Best & Kahn, 2006). It can be interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the phenomenon to which it refers (Hammersley, 1990). The preliminary findings were reviewed by all teachers in the study and refined as the need arose. The use of comparative data method of analysis involved teachers inspecting, and comparing parts (Glaser and Strauss as cited in Silverman (2007). Using tactics to help ascertain honesty in participants by reassuring confidence, establishing rapport and ensuring that participants can withdraw at any time established trustworthiness.

### **Reliability**

Reliability and validity are essential to effective data collection. Reliability is the degree to which an instrument is consistently measuring what it is supposed to measure (Best & Kahn, 2006). To ensure reliability this researcher conducted an audit trail by which others were able to judge the process (Holloway & Wheeler, 2009). The data was assigned to the same category by

different observers and the same observer on different occasions. This procedure was consistently documented by this researcher.

These criteria can be used to establish rigour in qualitative research. Rejection of rigour impacts on the robustness of qualitative research (Tobin & Begley, 2003). Credibility of the researcher with respect to rigour and confirmability of research is important to ensure the findings of the research resulted from the teachers' views.

### **Delimitations**

The study was delimited as the data was collected from a small sample of four teachers in one primary school. The findings are limited because it would not be applicable on a national scale and the PCR is new.

### **Limitations**

There were limitations associated with this study because the researcher is the principal at the school and this may inhibit participants. It is perceived that teachers may not be candid knowing that the principal is the interviewer and may say things that they feel this researcher wants to hear. Participants may withhold information that is crucial to my study. There may also be feelings of researcher bias.

In presenting the methodology and data analysis it is useful to describe the commonality of experiences of the phenomenon, the implementation process. A focus group semi structured interview was established with the four participants. The interview session was conducted in the comfort of an air conditioned library. The interview commenced at 3:15p.m. and ended at 4:00p.m. The following chapter presents the data collection and findings of the study.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Collection and Presentation of Findings**

This chapter examines teachers' experiences of the Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR) and the extent to which this experience influenced its implementation. This chapter will inform the reader on the data collected as well as the findings obtained and will report on data collected from interviews, observations, field notes and document analysis. Pseudonyms have been given to all participants and the school. In this study the data were analysed and categories formed and themes identified to answer the research questions. Research sub- question (a) was used to focus the interview:- What are teachers' experiences of PCR? Sub-question (b) was used to guide observations, field notes and document analysis: - To what extent does this experience influence its implementation?

#### **Interviews**

The research question that was the focus of the interview was sub- question (a):- What are teachers' experiences of PCR?

Interviews were undertaken to get the essential meaning of teachers' experiences of the implementation process (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 1990). An interview protocol with 14 main questions and 29 probes was utilised. The transcribed data were sorted by highlighting, coding and categorising according to their similarities and differences and organized into themes.

Seven major themes were revealed:

(a) Positive comments

(b) Resistance to the Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR)

(c) Experiences on implementing PCR

(d) Lowered self-efficacy

(e) Availability of resources

(f) Criticism of the MOE training

(g) Support for new curriculum

Figure four depicts data from the interview, field notes, observations and documents clustered into common themes so that similar units are grouped together into first order and then second order themes (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis & Sparks, 2001). Figure five shows the abstraction process using content characteristic words (Dey, 1993; Polit & Beck, 2004).

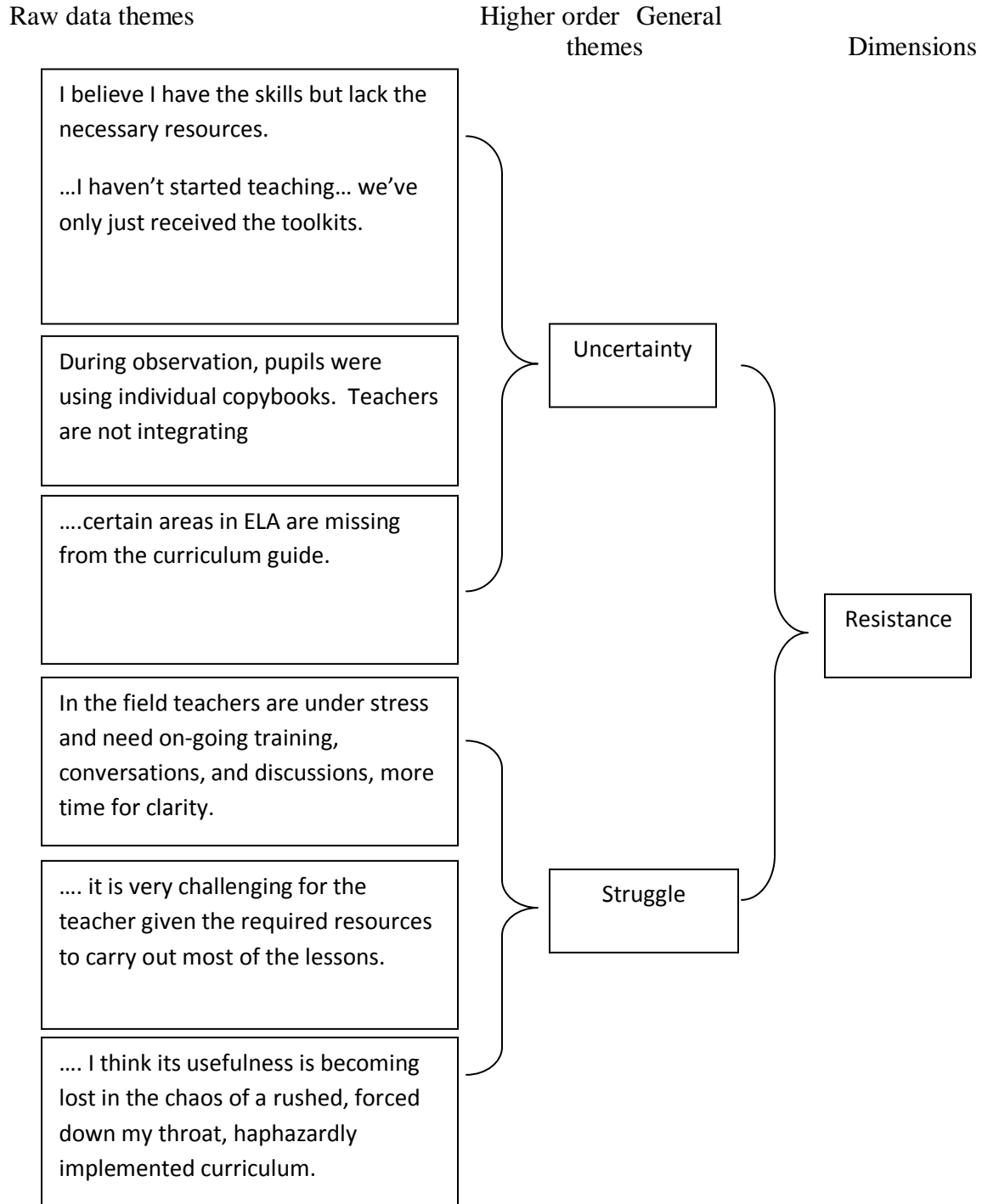


Figure 4 First and second order themes.

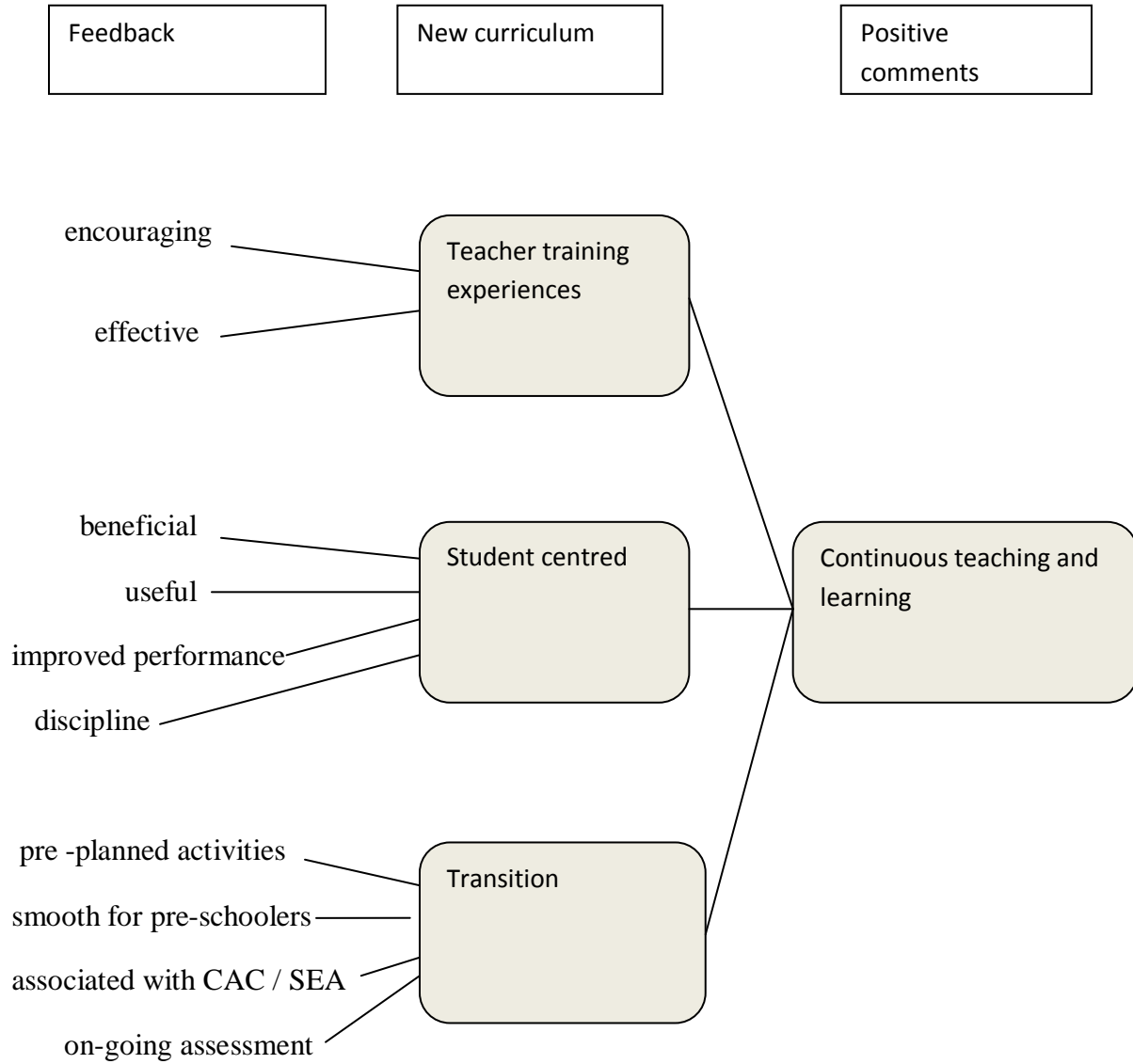


Figure five The Abstraction process.

**Positive comments.** In examining the data from the interview many positive comments were attributed to the PCR. Three participants thought that it catered to all learners by providing equal opportunities for all. All participants felt the new curriculum was beneficial and useful because there was a move away from the traditional mode of teaching toward performance based tasks that are fun filled and interactive. There were also positive responses about training sessions.

Kevin noted:

I welcome the new curriculum. This new approach seeks to emphasize more on learning activities more than chalk and talk. Learning activities encompasses multiple subjects without the teachers saying what subject is being done whereas before all subjects were done solely individually.

Jenna agreed when she added:

I feel it is an interesting approach to teaching and learning and can be successful if implemented properly. It includes or caters to all levels of learning. Children who are slow, gifted and implements timely assessment and feedback.

She expounded:

Yes. I think it is useful. Integration can help students make connections across the curriculum, making meaning more relevant and meaningful. It can help foster interest in the understanding of subjects like learning Maths through dance and drama.

She further added:



This is beneficial in the sense that pupils will already be exposed to these areas of the curriculum that is associated with CAC and SEA. This could ensure continuous teaching and learning across the different levels and the curriculum. The different disciplines involved can encourage each child to learn thus improving performance or discipline.

To further probes on the benefits to school Lynette had this to say:

Teachers have pre-planned activities to work with. For pre-schoolers entering the primary system, the transition is smoother with this curriculum. Children who are not academics could have a chance at developing and using their strengths.

Rachel was a bit sceptical when she intoned:

It may be beneficial to school, however, the necessary resources to implement the new curriculum is required. Time and proper training are key factors.

All participants were regular and punctual and felt the length of the sessions were adequate.

Rachel said:

Workshops were held from about eight thirty in the morning to two thirty, sometimes three o'clock in some cases. The length of the workshops was sufficient.

Kevin added:

Yes. I attended all the workshops. The first full week was in one place. The others I decided to go to Enterprise Government.

Jenna stated:

The workshops were helpful in that we were introduced to the new curriculum. We were given an opportunity to experience some of the aspects of the new curriculum through demonstrations by facilitators and other teachers. The workshop also was a meeting place for fellow teachers who were able to share similar concerns.

She added:

The training sessions were effective up to a point. It was very encouraging and interesting.

Lynette interjected:

The first round of training was very encouraging. The facilitators used a combination of methods to describe the new curriculum and its expectations. Dance, drama and I think PE were the most memorable, since teachers present were participants from the onset of those training sessions and not just bystanders, listening to another presentation.

**Resistance to the PCR.** Although some positive feelings were expressed, all participants were resistant to PCR and were struggling with change. They felt diverse classrooms that required differentiated instructions; inadequate resources and the rushed implementation of the PCR, inhibited implementation. To answer the question: How do you feel about PCR? This researcher thinks the struggle is encapsulated in Lynette's experiences when she revealed:

My feelings are mixed about PCR. The thematic/integrated approach has its rightful place in the system, as it attempts to cater to all children with varying abilities, at levels.

However, it is the same varying abilities and levels together with cultures and backgrounds that cause my disequilibrium.

Lynette was adamant when she emphasized:

The idea in itself is biased toward some pupils whose preferences, true abilities and learning style may not be met in an all-inclusive setting where individual teachers struggle to meet the many diverse needs of his or her classroom.

Rachel enjoined:

I am very uncomfortable with this new curriculum. I don't know how to begin planning for this. I don't have the time or desire to re-plan a new scheme when in my opinion the old scheme works just fine. Additionally, this curriculum does not seem attainable given the required resources for some of these lessons.

Jenna quietly added:

No. Sufficient time was not given to prepare for the implementation of the PCR. A new approach and a new curriculum and not given time to become familiar with all that is involved can make one feel not confident enough to implement.

**Experiences on implementing the new curriculum.** Additionally, a few questions were asked on what teachers knew before and some of the changes they had to make. This researcher was interested in finding out whether or not they knew what to do and were not doing it, or if teachers simply did not know what to do. I found that teachers knew the process of integration but were not integrating the PCR.

Lynette commented:

Given the present scenario I think its usefulness will become and is becoming lost in the chaos of a rushed, forced down my throat, haphazardly implemented curriculum.

She further added:

Individual copybooks are not used as often. Many less often used classroom management strategies have to be used. More on-going, less traditional forms of assessments had to be implemented, as well as increased record keeping and research.

Jenna noted:

Some changes I had to make in teaching were, not knowing what subject to write, using less books for writing. I did not fully understand how to record and evaluate, it takes more time. I also had to ensure that I include the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) and Values Character and Citizenship Education (VCCE) while trying to vary my teaching to teach every child and placing emphasis on some. I had to review my assessment strategies and try to source resources.

Kevin 'sheepishly' intoned:

I haven't started teaching the new curriculum since we are already in the second term of school and we've have only just received the instructional toolkit from MOE that contains all lesson plans.

In answering the question on if there was a need for a curriculum change two teachers felt it was necessary while the other two had this to say:

Rachel said:

I do not think it was necessary to implement a new curriculum. I think this was forced on teachers hastily. In my opinion, a few pilot schools should have been chosen and this curriculum implemented first before forcing this on teachers.

Lynette added:

I do not think it is necessary for a new curriculum, but rather amendments to the old in a systematic and or relative basis.

**Lowered self-efficacy.** Three teachers spoke about experiencing struggle, self-doubt, lack of confidence and knowledge even after attending the PCR training sessions.

Lynette shared:

Still struggling to complete content from term one.

She added:

I previously thought the thematic/ integrated approach would be an easy way to teach. I have realised that after completing a Bachelor of Education degree, specialisation in ECCE, it is more difficult than it seems.

Jenna said:

It is affecting how I deliver the curriculum. I am constantly asking myself what do I focus on, the theme?, the subject?. I am not clear anymore on what to teach, when and how much of a subject to focus on.

She further intoned:

I was more confident before training. Since the integration process in this format was new to me, given the timeframe to get familiar with and implement same, I am less confident after training.

Rachel lamented:

I am negatively affected by this new curriculum because I used to be a confident teacher in the classroom. I now constantly question and doubt myself. I find as though I am not teaching. I have no guidance.

**Availability of resources.** The need for resource to empower teachers to implement the curriculum content pervaded the interview. All teachers seemed to be resisting change because of lack of technical support and adequate resources provided by the MOE. The availability of human and material resources was repeatedly mentioned as inhibitors that influenced successful implementation.

Jenna said:

Material resources are never adequate. There is always a need for resources, especially with this new curriculum, where emphasis is on a hands-on approach. When you want pupils to be involved in discovering things for themselves, to be using Art and Craft, Drama, Dance, Language, you must have access to materials, instruments, books and manipulatives.

She further added:

Coaches attached to my school, if there are any, have not visited. There has been no input from coaches to date assisting in implementation.

Rachel also expressed her frustration about her inability to enact the curriculum in class. In her opinion, after all the promises she still had no material.

Rachel vehemently responded:

I don't need information on resources, I need resources! We were promised resources, schemes, records and evaluations in which we simply tick the appropriate section and that has not happened. How am I supposed to carry out this new curriculum when I receive term one's material three weeks before the close of the school term in term one?

She added:

As I said, personally they are inadequate and in most cases non-existent. I am certainly not dipping into my shallow pockets to provide resources.

Kevin stated:

I believe I have the skills to implement but lack the necessary resources. For example, a new scheme of work and resources necessary for each lesson.

**Criticism of MOEs Training.**

Phase I -Training for Standard One: 6/6/13-12/6/13 (one week)

Phase I –Training, Infants I and II: 13/6/13- 20/6/13 (one week) / Phase II September - October

Table 3

*Teacher Training Schedule for PCR*

WEEK NO.	DATE	SUBJECT	CLASSES	PCR		V1 Naparima Boy's College	V2 San F'do Central	V3 La Romain High
1	Mon. 16 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	PCR RESIDUAL	INF. 1&2, STD 1	PCR	RCLRC	Fraternity A	Fraternity B	
	Tue. 17 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	PCR RESIDUAL	INF.1&2 STD 1	PCR		Fraternity C	Fraternity D	
	Wed. 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	PCR RESIDUAL	INF.1&2 STD 1	PCR		Fraternity E	Fraternity F	
	Fri. 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	NUMERACY/ LITERACY	INF.1	PCR		Fraternity A & D	Fraternity B & E	Fraternity C&F
2	Mon.23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept.	NUMERACY/ LITERACY	INF.2	PCR	RCLRC	Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&E	Fraternity C&F
	Thur. 26 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	NUMERACY/ LITERACY	STD 1	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&E	Fraternity C&D
3	Tue. 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct.	PHYSICAL EDN.	INF.1	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
	Wed. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct.	PHYSICAL EDN.	STD1	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
	Fri. 4 <sup>th</sup> October	PHYSICAL EDN.	INF.2	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
4	Mon. 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	DRAMA/ VISUAL ARTS	INF.1	PCR	RCLRC	Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
	Tue. 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	DRAMA/ VISUAL ARTS	STD.1	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
	Thur. 10 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	DRAMA/ VISUAL ARTS	INF.2	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
5	Mon. 14 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	MUSIC/ DANCE	STD1	PCR	RCLRC	Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
	Tue. 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	MUSIC/ DANCE	INF.2	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F
	Thur. 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	MUSIC/ DANCE	INF.1	PCR		Fraternity A&D	Fraternity B&D	Fraternity C&F





**Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
*Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre*

**PRIMARY CURRICULUM RE-WRITE  
SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP**

**MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013**  
**TUESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013**  
**THURSDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013**

**DANCE**

**Agenda**

~ Registration

~ Introduction

~ Exploration of Movement Concepts

~ Closure

When questioned on the nature of the training, teachers openly voiced their discontent of the training process. Two teachers spoke out about their lack of confidence to teach after training. All teachers strongly expressed feelings of dissatisfaction and candidly spoke about their experiences in training.

Kevin stated:

The training was just one week. Infant lesson plans were demonstrated even though I teach standards one. Yes, continuous training is needed.

Lynette commented:

No, one session could ever be enough to teach an unskilled dancer how to teach dance to his or her charges.

Jenna said:

In training we were given the concept of the new approach and what it would look like. The different areas of subjects were discussed. One of the key pieces of information was that it would be an easier format in that teachers would just have to deliver the curriculum since all would be prepared regarding schemes, lesson plans, even resources.

We were shown how some of the sessions would look like, the use of power point, projectors, resources, etc. ....until you get back to your classroom and realise that you need more. Yes, continuous training or some form of support during the process would be needed.

Rachel commented:

In my opinion things were not done in depth. This made me question the preparedness of my lectures. I got the impression that they wanted me to return to my school and somehow know what to do based on little or no relevant information.

Lynette added:

The second round of training was generally one way. I generally left with little new understanding as facilitators read from power point presentations and attempted to explain. Training was filled with concerns raised about implementation in the real classroom.

All teachers felt they did not receive sufficient training. To the probes on length of sessions, facilitator feedback and relevance of content Jenna had this to say:

Jenna:

The workshop sessions were mostly one-way sessions. The facilitators give you the information. Questions were encouraged, some of which the facilitators could not answer.

She noted:

The workshops did not convince me that this new curriculum could be implemented successfully and effectively in the timeframe given. Also, clarification on how to document children's work, especially where parents are concerned.

Rachel added:

I did not receive positive or relevant feedback from my facilitators. My facilitators did not seem to have enough relevant information to address my questions and concerns

adequately. I found the lectures to be mostly empty and in no way did it equip me to deliver the new curriculum.

On the question regarding experiences in training, all teachers felt that in-service, on-going, continuous training was needed. They felt that rapidity of implementation, too little time between training and implementation; gaps in teaching and rate of diffusion left them vulnerable and inhibited implementation.

Kevin reiterated:

No, I do not have sufficient time to prepare for implementation.

Jenna stated:

Not much feedback was given by facilitators. Although workshops were done to facilitate the new curriculum, one day workshops could not be satisfactory for proper understanding and implementation. The new document does not give one the scope of the new curriculum but it needs to be studied carefully in its new format. If it is not understood it can be confusing.

When asked about their attitude and thoughts towards the workshop, all teachers thought that content in the workshops were repeated and showed some resentment. Rachel had this to say:

I had an open mind but was turned off when the same first year examples and information were used. I thought that since this was rushed the lecturers themselves could not do better because they themselves did not know what to do. They did not seem to have much information on anything and their response to most questions posed were hopefully

this and hopefully that. I would not receive a definite answer on anything. This turned me off and I thought I was just warming the chair and occupying space.

**Support for new curriculum.** All teachers stated that collegial support was limited. Teachers' non-response, body language, facial expressions and gestures indicated their resentful feelings about the support they received at school. They felt that there should be more support from administration; school leadership and colleagues to facilitate implementation.

Jenna pointed out:

At the most, colleagues are supportive, however they are at the same stage as I am and so are not able to offer effective help and support.

Jenna further emphasized:

There has been some collaboration from colleagues. They are experiencing difficulty in implementing and so have not been very fruitful.

Jenna added:

Administration has relayed all materials and updates as they come in. We were given the curriculum guide, the teachers' guide and instructional toolkit.

When asked about collegial support, Lynette enjoined:

Lend available resources when requested and offer suggestions.

She further stated:

Provides moral support and resources as far as possible.

Rachel noted:

They (colleagues) have not supported me in implementation. Everyone seems to be having difficulty implementing it themselves so they are not equipped to assist me.

She further stated:

I attempted to collaborate with the other Standard One teacher but he seemed to have just as much difficulty as me in understanding the document, so that was unsuccessful.

She further reiterated:

Administration gave me the toolkit for this term and some reading material.

I received no support from other teachers in the school community.

Two participants spoke about new developments in society impacting on a change in education. Jenna alluded that the breakdown in simple family life warranted a change or new approach to education and that parent education was a key aspect to change. This researcher reflected on the support from parents thus far.

Initially, 60% of the parents supported the implementation of the PCR with reservations. One meeting with parents did not satisfy all their needs for information on the PCR. They were also given e-mail addresses [newprimcurr@gmail.com](mailto:newprimcurr@gmail.com) and <http://ow.ly/omBbE> and there were still many concerns. They were concerned about the use of one copy book, National Test (2014) in Standard One and the new report cards that did not have separate subjects. It was very difficult to get their full support. This researcher saw the need to renew teacher and parent conferencing by class, every third Thursday from March to June, from 1:30p.m. to 3:00 p.m., to educate

parents about the integrated process through demonstration lessons and the use of interim report books.

As a consequence, absent fathers expressed the need for clarity on issues about the impact of the PCR on examinations, pedagogical content and performance based assessments. A separate workshop was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2014 entitled “Especially For Dads” to help address those concerns.

This led to the involvement of the executive arm of the PTA becoming involved, with two parents attending consultations on education at the Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre (RCLRC) in April. They have returned and held discussions with the wider parent body. Presently, about 70% of the parents are giving full support to the implementation of the PCR. Thirty percent of the parents are still reluctant and as such a request was made for a one day session for all parents and those of the neighbouring school, on a date to be fixed by the curriculum division. Also, the school has gotten a Literacy and Numeracy coach this term. These long awaited resource personnel have led to renewed teachers and parents interest in the PCR.

Overall, teachers experienced self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy and disenchantment. There were incidents of reflection during the interview that was evident by bouts of silence and facial expressions that showed an internal struggle to be open and candid.

**Research sub-question (b):**

To what extent does this experience influence its implementation?

Some aspects of teachers' experiences of the PCR were not resolved. This researcher used question two to guide the study through observations of teachers, taking field notes and perusing related documents.

### **Observations**

Observation is one of the key tools used for collecting data in a qualitative research. It is used to establish greater rapport with the teachers being observed in the study. Using the five senses, with an instrument, this researcher watched the physical setting, teachers, conversations, interactions and activities during the observation (Agrosino, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Checklists were used as the instrument for "Five-minute Walk Through" (Appendix, M); class checks (Appendix, N) and clinical supervision (Appendix, O).

This researcher, during daily "Five-minute Walk Through," sessions, looked at the physical environment of the classrooms in the Infant and Standard One classes. In Kevin's classroom there were disorganized shelves, dirty fans, grimy desks and high pupil absenteeism. Pupils showed little interest in class work. During curriculum delivery, eye contact was limited (McCroskey, Richmond & McCroskey, 2006).

In enacting the curriculum in an Infant Two class, Lynette mostly sits in her chair. During a class check this researcher discovered that pupils were not using individual subject copybooks and had problems recognizing letter sounds and blends. She still used the traditional mode of teaching. This researcher also discovered teachers were using Record and Evaluation books and old time tables.

During clinical supervision, this researcher observed transitions between tasks were quickly done without elaborations. Instructions were also given through explanations, then



demonstrations. Additionally, teachers were resistant when asked to use resources to teach concepts.

In Rachel's classroom the pupils do not come close to the teacher because she does not wish it. It is only in Jenna's classroom that interaction and constructive noise occur. The pupils used drawing books to begin writing and then progressed to one copybook for thematic integration. Laughter and dramatized and contrived experiences were also evident. Overall, teachers experienced difficulties with the PCR and were struggling to implement it.

### **Field notes**

Field notes were used to try to understand the true perspectives of teachers. It allowed observing and recording in an unobtrusive manner. This researcher translated jottings or scratched notes into field notes (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Sanjek, 1990).

At a monthly staff meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, Kevin shared on his experiences with implementing the PCR. He insisted that he was under stress and needed on-going training, resources and more time to successfully implement the new curriculum. His major concern was that the toolkits were received late and had gaps. He felt he needed conversations and discussions for clarity and that was not happening. He indicated that there should be modelling, piloting or field testing of the PCR. Rachel added that everything in the workshop was focused on the First Year class and not Standard One.

Furthermore, at a parents' meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, Lynette, in her attempt to apprise parents of the new PCR vehemently exclaimed that pupils and teachers were being used as 'guinea pigs.' The reaction of the parent body (40%) was that they needed more information on PCR. A parent workshop was subsequently planned with Curriculum Division

for all parents on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2014. A workshop was held with the curriculum division for teachers from this and three neighbouring schools on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2014. This researcher contends that teachers are anxious and fearful and lacked the confidence to implement the PCR. This is captured in Lynette's comment.

Lynette commented: I fear some children are placed at a disadvantage.

### **Document Analysis**

Documents are read as objective statements of fact. It is symbolic evidence and strengthens the credibility of the study (Priori, 2003). Policy documents used to implement PCR are the Interim Teacher's Guide, Instructional Toolkit and Curriculum Guide, 2013 (MOE, 2013). The teacher's guide is divided into five sections with section two, the main section, presented in five considerations. They are Literacy, Numeracy, and Differentiated Instruction, Assessment for Learning and Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The instructional toolkit for each level has mainly two sections, the Integrated Learning Plans and Core Skills Learning Plans. The curriculum guide for each level comprises of Content, Skills, Dispositions, Outcomes and Elaborations. All were utilized in the study including worksheets for daily plans, teachers' lesson plans, teachers' notes, pupils' copybooks and class portfolios. They were perused for alignment with the guides.

On examination of Lynette's work plan she complained that certain areas in English Language Arts (ELA) were missing in the Infants Two curriculum guide page 23:

14.1.1/14.2.1/14.3. There are no listings of blends, only skills are stated. Teachers select blends applicable to the needs and themes in the given month or theme. Nothing is missing. In

comparing the changes between the old ELA syllabus and the new ELA curriculum guide

Lynette said:

It (the curriculum guide) attempts to integrate subject areas to make learning more meaningful. Layout has changed as content is generally not segmented.

In Standard One National Test the pupil can use that skill for pronunciation in the Standard One guide, page 21: 7.1.1/7.2.1/7.2.2 based on that particular level. In the ELA curriculum guide for Standard One, there are different sections like Phonics, Vocabulary and Phonemic Awareness (Pg. 19, 6.2.1(2, 3, 4, 5)). There is a spiral listing of skills that pupils must master those skills before moving on. Kevin and Rachel were teaching lessons through memorization and practice and drill. In Kevin's class, Standard One, a lesson done in the past tense was not reflected in Creative Writing.

Kevin noted:

What I was taught about the thematic approach is totally different. Subjects were taught separately based on a theme.

Also, Themes are distributed by terms and this researcher checked the yearly unit in the instructional toolkit to see how teachers take phonics, reading and comprehension and combined the activities, questions and assessments. They were uncertain how to do this. It was not done in a satisfactory manner. In the English Language Arts (ELA) stand-alone units, each unit has a core competency but there are linkages for oral comprehension, media and writing. Only Jenna demonstrated this and in her class pupils had ELA exercise books with integration of skills for easy reinforcement.

She said:

All children can learn and it can be done in the same classroom. Given the format of the new curriculum and the integration process and differentiated learning with proper implementation, I can now believe this can happen.

The inexperienced teacher like Lynette had problems knowing where to start and claimed that she felt like a “guinea pig.” The core units in the instructional toolkit assure that teachers cover all outcomes for seven subject areas for each level they are dealing with. The Mathematics and English are not fully covered because of the quantity and sheer size.

Lynette stated:

Incorporating more than one concept from various areas will make learning more meaningful and is intended to shorten time spent teaching concepts as standalone.

The rationale for developing the scheme of work at the beginning of the term is for accountability. In the curriculum guide, instead of nine schemes of work there is one scheme with nine areas and skills next to them. Teachers had one scheme of work for each subject for the term.

A snapshot for one week shows columns which tell the theme or stand-alone the teacher is using and what percentage, the assessment type and other general information with brief examples for example, portfolio. It clearly demonstrates to the principal the skills teachers are covering in a week. For example, the theme “I am special” in Infants One, the teacher covered three skills, oral communication, English Language and Spanish (subject area) and this

is reflected in the activities. Therefore, in the five outcomes areas Jenna covered only three and removed two outcomes because the activities pointed to achieving only two outcomes.

However, as checks and balances are done using daily plans, there must be comments in the remarks column. This is to ascertain if objectives were achieved or there is a need to revisit because of no foundational skills. Teachers must submit five daily plans for the week. This is different from one Record and Evaluation book. The daily plan is forecast. This researcher was given Record and Evaluation books.

Jenna lamented:

I need help with skills...recording and assessing pupil's progress recording and evaluating my weekly and daily plans...

In the curriculum guides the areas are divided into content (what students must know), skills (what students must do), disposition (what students must be), and elaboration (breakdown of assessment). Elaboration is very important in formative and especially summative assessment. In Standard One curriculum guide, for example, 9.2.4 – 9 represents the section, 2 represents the column and 4 represents the number of skills, content in the particular column. Whatever the numbers refer to, you go to the exact number and match. The numbers are straight across in the elaboration column because teachers must know the skills and column for tracking content, skill, disposition and outcome. This is very important when planning assessment. Not at all times are the elaboration aligned with the skills. It is used for cross checking. For example, at the end of Standard One, the minimum standard may be for pupils to write a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. These skills are taken from the guide, if more is requested then teachers can subdivide skills.

Kevin indicated:

The documents are not all easy to read and understand.

Draft report books are now accompanied by a rubric (Appendix, P). Teachers are expected to take the rubric and apply it to give pupils a grade. For example, based on the rubric, the teacher goes to the report and ticks off discriminative listening. Based on the average score on discriminative listening, depending on where the pupil falls, 90%, Grade 5, on a scale of 1-5, is given. Everything is matched. The new report books are matched, within strands, skills and sub-skills. This can be filled out formatively and teachers do not have to wait until the end of term. This Grade Point Average (GPA) system was taken from the United States of America. Teachers at Elegant primary have not used the new report cards (Appendix P).

Overall, the data suggest teachers have been struggling and are resisting implementation of the PCR. They have had negative experiences in training, no resources and limited administrative support and these have influenced their implementation. Copies of draft and interim documents were sent from the MOE after initial training and at intervals during implementation. However, after seeing the advantages of the PCR teachers have made considerable efforts to work together by class to make weekly plans and share best practices. The following Chapter Five seeks to interpret the findings and make recommendations based on these findings.

## **Chapter Five: Interpretation/ Findings/ Recommendations**

### **Interpretation of findings and discussions**

This chapter seeks to interpret the findings of the study and make recommendations. Based on literature on the data, it appears that teachers are struggling with change. The enquiry focused on teachers' experiences of the PCR and how these facilitated or hindered implementation of a curriculum change.

The overarching question which directed the study was:

How do teachers' experiences about the PCR curriculum change influence the implementation process in Elegant primary school?

The sub-questions which focused the study were:

- (a) What are teachers' experiences of PCR?
- (b) To what extent does this experience influence its implementation?

Based on the data collected and analysed, the findings can be summarised accordingly:

The first research sub-question that was operationalized is, What are teachers' experiences of the PCR?

The MOE facilitated the adoption of the PCR through direct funding and professional development exercises. This researcher found that all participants in this study felt training in assessment and lesson planning were inadequate in equipping them to successfully integrate subjects. They expressed feeling overwhelmed and confused. All teachers would have appreciated continuous training.

The findings in this study are consistent in many ways with existing literature on teachers' experiences on a curriculum change. Several notable patterns emerged, namely, the degree of resistance and expertise of teachers. Teachers in Standard One expressed difficulty in understanding the integrative process and how the curriculum should be enacted. All teachers understood the integration process but were still resisting change. The Standard One teachers lamented that there was dissonance with respect to the content and relevance of workshop sessions. They were being trained for first year when they were actually teaching Standard One. They lacked the necessary skills to teach VAPA and how to integrate it with Mathematics and Language. Studies done in South Africa by Jansen (2003) found that teachers were resisting change because of lack of planned professional development. Giroux (1983) posits that resistance to change can be lack of participation; lack of lesson planning or lack of on-going skill training.

The findings in this study suggest the reality was that workshop days were inadequate and sessions too short to make any real change in building teacher capacity and efficacy. Teachers experienced frustration by the nature of the training which entailed more explanations than demonstrations. They wanted mentoring, in-service training and professional development that were culturally relevant (Carless, 2011; Marable & Raimondi, 2007) Findings in a study in South Africa by Jansen and Taylor (2003) showed teachers experienced a cascade type training that closely parallels our own, a sort of training the trainer. What they experienced that we did not experience is meaningful review of the curriculum involving stakeholders. Hall & Hord (2006) posit that change is a process that takes time and involves team work.

Findings from interview data indicate that teachers knew the integration process and were not doing it. Teachers did not claim ownership of the PCR. A study conducted in Turkey



by Eraslan (2013) found that a facilitator to curriculum change is teacher ownership. Fullan (2001) and Hill (1991) note that teachers must feel that there is a need to change before investing effort for change to occur. Lynette felt that there was no need for a new curriculum but rather amendments to the old in a systematic and or relative basis.

Teachers' attitudes to the PCR impacted negatively on the implementation process. This researcher found that complacency, and an overall feeling of detachment and disenchantment pervaded teachers' attitude towards implementing change. Existing literature on teachers' experiences in implementation in South Africa and some CARICOM states (Jensen, 2003; UNICEF, 2006, 2009) suggests that success is identified with perceptions of change. This feeling of inertia is noted by Sarason (1990) as cited in Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) when he contends that the largest inhibitor to change is myopia. Teachers may want to keep things as they are and actually believe that there is no need to change (Fullan, 2007; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004).

The second research question that was operationalized is, to what extent does PCR experience influence its implementation?

Based on the findings in this study from field notes, the four teachers experienced feelings of anxiety, stress, fear and incompetence to teach. Literature suggests that even after training teachers lacked the confidence to teach. Their self-efficacy was eroded and they expressed feelings of confusion while they questioned their proficiency. Findings are consistent with a study conducted in Quebec, Canada by Henchey (2011) that indicated teachers needed more time between training and implementing and time to integrate new knowledge with old to

successfully implement the curriculum. (Loucks, Horsley, Hewson, Love and Stiles (1998) posit that teachers need time to relearn and reskill.

Consistent with existing literature on change, it was found in this study that rapidity of change inhibited implementation. The MOE's intention was to implement a curriculum change with fidelity. However, the findings from observations suggest that because of the many challenges experienced some adaptations had to be considered in implementation of PCR because all teachers were struggling with imposed change. Studies conducted in Finland (Finland National Board of Education, 2011) showed teachers were given autonomy to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of students. Bowe et al. (1992) and Rizvi and Kemmis (1987) posit curriculum policy as living. They contend that change as an issue takes place not so much from government agencies but from the deviations that happen at school (Stenhouse, 1975).

Furthermore, all teachers expounded on the lack of resources, during observation and interviews as inhibiting factors during implementation of the curriculum. Findings indicate that there were no Literacy and Numeracy coaches and no material resources for VAPA. Findings suggest that teachers were not reading PCR documents. Studies done locally on *eCAL* indicate that lack of resources and uneven distributions of resources were barriers to implementation. This is consistent with what Fullan (1994) refers to on funding, resource support and sustainability to commitment.

Findings indicate that another challenge voiced by teachers was limited support by administration and colleagues. PCR was implemented using a top down Power-Coercive strategy. In this study it was found that there was no collaboration among staff pertaining to PCR and the staff lacked collegiality. Teachers in Infants to Standard One felt they were left on

their own to implement the change without help from school leadership. Studies done by Adamson and Yin (2008) indicate that strong leadership and a bottom up approach influenced successful implementation. Additionally, Delisle and Barrow (2010) indicate that a challenge to implementation of an imposed change is lack of trained personnel in the field. Literature also reveals collegiality and sharing best practices are facilitators to implementation (Rakes & Casey, 2002; Shah, 2011).

Findings in this study, through observations, indicate that teachers negatively used non-verbal communication in attempting to implement the curriculum. The physical environment, the use of space (proxemics), eye contact (oculesics), body movements and gestures (kinesics) are non-verbal factors that affect the teaching and learning process. These are important in classroom communication (McCroskey et.al., 2006).

Findings in the literature when analysing documents indicate that teachers in this study did not make any change in teaching styles, assessments, using rubrics or evaluation. Transferability of knowledge from document to planning and teaching and from workshop sessions to enactment of the curriculum was limited. Studies conducted in Turkey between 2004 and 2005 (Eraslan, 2013) show three times weekly monitoring of class room instruction facilitated implementing of a curriculum change, which we did not have. Consistent with the literature on deep change Fullan (1999) suggests new and updated instructional material is a dimension of change.

This researcher found that gaps do exist between initiation and implementation of PCR. Factors that gravely affected teachers were length and relevance of training sessions and rate of implementation. Teachers needed more time between training and implementation. They are

resisting change because they lacked the confidence required to teach new skills because of inadequate resources and lack of on-going continuous training which they felt they needed to clear misconceptions. They have struggled with content design, lack of sustained administrative support and a need for professional development activities.

Based on the findings in literature, Finland (Vitikka et al., 2012) has a local context driven curriculum and Quebec, Canada (Henchey, 2011) employs teachers in writing their own programmes to suit their needs. Perhaps locally, teachers should be given greater autonomy in curriculum planning.

## **Conclusion**

### **Recap of study**

The Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR) from Infants to Standard One was developed in Trinidad and Tobago in 2013. The PCR was instituted in response to the need to develop life skills at the primary level derived from nine subject areas. Pupils at the school are expected to acquire these skills through integrative learning processes in real life situations, without competition. However, the teachers at Elegant Primary school were resisting change.

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' experiences on implementing a curriculum change. Using a qualitative phenomenological study design, guided by Fullan's (2001) change model, the study addressed the question: How do teachers' experiences about the PCR curriculum change influence its implementation?

Sub-questions operationalized to provide further insights were:-

(a) What are teachers' experiences of PCR?

(b) To what extent does this experience influence its implementation?

The purposive sampling strategy was employed and four teachers were selected to participate in focus group semi-structured interview sessions, in their natural environment. During these sessions, all protocols were observed to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. Teachers' perspectives were audio-taped, transcribed, coded and then analysed. The analysis and interpretation of data were communicated in a rich thick narrative format.

### **Summary of findings**

The findings of this study were generated from interpretation of data gathered from observations, field notes, interviews and document analysis. The findings of the study reveal teachers have issues with their proficiency which is as a direct result of inadequate training, lack of support and availability of resources in implementing PCR. Also, teachers' experiences of the PCR in training indicate a top down, centralised, power-coercive model that led to resistance to change.

Teachers' perceptions at Elegant Primary school have shown that there are positives about the PCR and few factors that facilitated the implementation, such as MOE funding and the provision of draft documents and many conditions that hindered implementation. Taken together findings from the literature indicate that project funding, a bottom up approach, mentoring, modelling, building teacher capacity, an enabling school culture and continuous training are facilitators to effective implementation. In this study factors that were found as barriers to effective implementation were resistance to change, lack of resources, inadequate training, lack of leadership qualities, teacher characteristics, poor staff collegiality, rapidity of implementation and lack of professional development.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, I make the following recommendations:

- All teachers should be provided with continuous professional development sessions on the PCR. These should include practical teaching sessions in Visual And Performing Arts to develop confidence and competence. Attention should also be paid to formative and summative assessment and performance based tasks.
- Teachers from Infants to Standard One should be encouraged to participate in on-going, continuous training sessions to include integration skills and time management skills. The new timetable comprises themes and core skills, and this flexibility raises concerns about time demands.
- To address the experiences of Standard One teachers, workshops relevant to their needs in content areas should be conducted to develop teacher confidence. More information on integration, stand- alone and topics that are left out is required to facilitate ease of implementation.
- School administrators should attend orientation workshops on the PCR to better understand the curriculum change. In that way they would provide optimal support to teachers and strengthen school leadership. Regular visits to classrooms would also provide much needed support.
- To sustain and promote a collegial staff, the school administrator should initiate internal structures that encourage teamwork and collaboration. This can also include visiting other schools for networking and sharing best practices.

All teachers voiced their frustration about the lack of resources. Resources, both physical and human should be promptly sent to all schools so that teachers can implement the new curriculum.

- To improve stakeholder involvement and parental support for the PCR, the Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) can be used as a forum for sensitizing, consulting and educating parents and other well-wishers (NGOs). Core aspects of the PCR such as the integrative process, change in timetabling and report cards can be addressed.

This researcher found that gaps do exist between initiation and implementation of the PCR in the classroom. Factors that gravely affected teachers were length and relevance of training sessions, inadequate resources and rate of implementation. Teachers were resisting change because they simply needed more time between training and implementation to become familiar with the integrated thematic approach to fully claim ownership and build self-efficacy. They lacked the knowledge and confidence required to teach new skills. They needed on-going continuous training to clear misconceptions, share best practices and master new pedagogy and content. They have struggled with content design, lack of sustained administrative support and a need for professional development activities.

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## Appendix A

## Interview Protocol

1. How do you feel about new PCR?
2. Do you think such an innovation is useful for student learning? Explain your response if yes or no.
3. Why do you think it is necessary to implement a new curriculum?  
  
    PROBE: How is this beneficial to school?  
    PROBE: How is it different to from what we had before?
4. What is the process of integration?
5. What are some changes you had to make in teaching?  
  
    PROBE: Did any of your beliefs change? How?
6. What more information do you need on use of resources?  
  
    PROBE: Are material resources adequate? Explain your response.  
  
    PROBE: Are they distributed in a timely manner? How often?  
  
    PROBE: In what ways do coaches attached to your school assist in implementation?
7. Do you need help with skills to implement a new curriculum? If so, where, in what area?  
  
    PROBE: To what extent is PCR affecting how you are accustomed to doing things in the classroom?  
  
    PROBE: Do you have sufficient time to prepare for implementation of PCR?
8. Describe what occurred in training?  
  
    PROBE: Do you need continuous training?  
  
    PROBE: How many workshops were held?

PROBE: How many days did you attend? Were you regular, punctual, arrived late, left early?

PROBE: What was the length of time of workshops? Was it sufficient?

PROBE: Explain about the workshop sessions? Were they one way sessions?

PROBE: Did you receive feedback from facilitators? Do you find that the content is relevant?

9. What about the training process, are you satisfied with the new documents?

PROBE: Are the documents easy to understand? What about new assessment strategies?

PROBE: What is the nature of this assignment given?

PROBE: What do you feel you did not get at the workshop?

PROBE: What aspects of the workshop you did not understand?

PROBE: Are you more confident before or after the training?

PROBE: Suggest ways that you think the workshops were helpful?

PROBE: Did you attend all the workshops? At the same venue?

PROBE: What about your attitude towards the workshops, what do you think of them?

10. To what extent is the new structure aligned to teaching practice?

PROBE: How far apart is it or how close? Did it change too much?

PROBE: Are the things learnt in B.E.D. aligned with new curriculum? What about the practicum courses you did?

11. Are you satisfied with the training process?

PROBE: Do you think poor training is impeding implementation?

PROBE: Do you think that more training is needed? If yes, how much more, if no, explain.

12. What are the concepts, skills that are integrated?

13. What are some of the things to your mind that hinder you from successfully implementing a new curriculum?

14. How have colleagues at infant and junior levels supported you in implementation?

PROBE: Has there been collaboration from colleagues?

PROBE: How has administration supported you?

PROBE: What support from others teachers in the school community did you receive?

## Appendix B

Sample Categories from interview questions

Questions

Categories

Responses to the question were sorted into:

1. How do you feel about PCR?	Struggle (St)
2 Do you think such an innovation is useful for student learning? Explain your response if yes or no.	Imposed change (IC), rate of implementation (ROI)
3. Why do you think it is necessary to implement a new curriculum?	New assessment(NA)



Appendix C

List of Categories:

Feelings of uncertainty

Rushed nature of training

Inadequate resources

Negative and positive experiences of PCR

Feedback

Teacher capacity

Lack of confidence and knowledge

Rapidity of implementation

Lack of support

Negative and positive conditions

Appendix D

Table showing emerging themes

Research sub-question 1- What are teachers' experiences of PCR?

Interview Questions	Participant 1 J		Participant 2 K		Participant 3 L		Participant 4 R	
	+ve	-ve	+ve	-ve	+ve	-ve	+ve	-ve
1) Resistance	III	-	I	I	I	II	I	II
2) Resistance	III	-	II	-	I	IIIIII	I	IIIIII
3) Resistance	III	II	II	-	IIIIIIII	II	IIII	IIIIII
4) Implement	III	-	II	-	III	-	III	-
5) Implement	-	IIIIIIIIII	-	II	I	IIII	III	IIIIII
6) Resources	-	III	-	III	-	III	-	III
7) Implement	-	IIII	I	II	-	III	-	IIIIII
8) Training	IIII	IIIIIIIIII	II	IIIIIIII	III	IIII	III	IIIIIIII
9) Training	III	IIIIIIIIII	III	III	III	IIII	III	IIIIIIIIII
10) Training	IIII	I	-	II	II	III	I	I
11) Training	I	IIIIII	-	III	I	I	-	IIII
12) Training	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	I
13) Implement	-	IIII	-	II	-	IIIIIIII	-	III
14) Support	II	II	I	-	III	-	I	III

Appendix E

Research sub-questions-(a) what are teachers’ experiences of PCR?

(b) To what extent does this experience influence its implementation?

Table showing categories and codes derived from the Data

Research sub-question (a)	Research sub-question (b)
Resistance (R)	Resistance-Environment (E), Regularity(R),Traditional Mode (TM), Struggle (Str), Stress(S)
Implementing Experiences (IE)	Implementing Experiences (IE)
Availability of Resources (AR)	
Training (T)	
School Support (SS)	

Appendix F

Possible Themes: Analysis of interview.

Codes	Emerging Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Mixed feeling”</li> <li>• “Cause my disequilibrium”</li> <li>• Struggle to understand</li> <li>• Discomforted</li> <li>• Still struggling with content</li> </ul>	Resistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No promised coach</li> <li>• Cannot buy resources</li> <li>• Insufficient resources</li> <li>• Promise of scheme, lesson plans and curriculum guides</li> </ul>	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Can be useful”</li> <li>• Equal opportunities for all</li> <li>• “Attempts to cater to all”</li> <li>• “Effective to a point”</li> <li>• Encouraging workshops</li> <li>• Beneficial curriculum</li> </ul>	Positive comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rushed nature of training</li> <li>• One way training</li> <li>• Training irrelevant to needs</li> <li>• Insufficient training</li> </ul>	Criticism of training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Negatively affected”</li> <li>• “Feel working by guess”</li> <li>• Expressing self- doubt</li> <li>• Lacks confidence</li> <li>• Feeling confused</li> </ul>	Lowered self-efficacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “ Chaos of a rushed , forced down my throat”</li> <li>• “forced on teachers hastily”</li> <li>• Rapidity of implementation</li> </ul>	Implementing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts at collaboration</li> <li>• Everyone experiencing difficulties</li> <li>• Minimal administrative support</li> </ul>	Support

## Appendix G

Labelling data from interview

Categories: Training (Trg), Struggle (Str) Formative Assessment (FA)

Resources (R), Implementing Experiences (IE), Feedback (F'bdbk)

Interview question (8)

**T:** The first round of training was very encouraging.

The facilitators used a combination of methods to describe the new curriculum and its expectations. The second round of training was generally one way. I generally left with little new understanding as facilitators read from PowerPoint presentations and attempted to explain. Dance, drama and I think PE were the most memorable, since the teachers present were participants from the onset of those training session and not just by standers, listening to another presentation. Training was filled with concerns raised about implementation in the real classroom.

**R:** How many workshops were held?

**T:** Not sure, about 10.

**R:** How many days did you attended? Were you regular, punctual, arrived late, left early?

**T:** Attended all. Stayed from beginning to end, except for Art and Craft, I could not stand another PowerPoint presentation at 2:30 in the afternoon.

**R:** What was the length of time of the workshops? Was it sufficient?

**T:** From 8:30 to 2:30 or 3:00 on a few days. No; one session could never be enough to teach an unskilled dancer how to teach dance to his/her charges.

**R:** Explain about the workshop sessions. Were they one way sessions?

**T:** (Shrugs shoulder)

**R:** Did you receive feedback from facilitators?  
Do you find that the content is relevant?

**T:** Some, Some.

Training adequate (Trg)

Facilitator knowledge (F'dbk)

"one way" (Trg)

Lack of knowledge (IE)

"Facilitators read" (Trg)

Technology (R)

Active Participation (Trg)

Concerns about PCR (Trg)

Class Implementation (IE)

Uncertain (Trg)

Regular (Trg)

PCR experience (Str)

Sufficient time (Trg)

Skills (Trg)

Did not code

Half-hearted feelings (Str)

Appendix H

CODED INTERVIEW SESSION

Coding key

Resistance-	purple
Resources-	blue
Training-	orange
Implementing-	green
Support-	red
Positive-	grey
Efficacy-	dark green

Identifying themes

R: Q 1-How do you feel about PCR?

**Participant 1:** I am very uncomfortable with this new curriculum. I don't know how to begin planning for this. I don't have the time or desire to re-plan a new scheme when in my opinion the old one works just fine. Additionally, this curriculum does not seem attainable given the **required resources for some lessons**.

**Participant 2:** My feelings are mixed. The thematic integrated approach has its benefits and its rightful place in the system, as it attempts to cater to all children with varying abilities, at various levels. However, it is the same varying abilities and levels together with cultures and background that cause my disequilibrium.

**Participant 3:** It is an interesting approach to teaching and can be successful if implemented properly. It includes or caters to all levels of learning. Children, who are slow, gifted and implements timely assessment and feedback.

**Participant 4:** I welcome the new curriculum but **more training is needed to be done** and resources given out before implementing.

Categories
Discomfort/ "don't know how"
resistant/no time/no belief in success/ <b>no available resources</b>
Struggle /may be beneficial/know how but not doing it/"cater to all"
Cause disequilibrium/
"an interesting approach"
Doubt/stress
Inclusive/"welcome"
Formative assessment
Welcome with reservations / don't want to change

Appendix I

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

FROM: SUPERVISOR 1

.....EDUCATION DIVISION

SAN FERNANDO

TO: Ann Bahadoorsingh

PRINCIPAL PRIMARY

████████████████████

Date: 15/01/14

Subject: Permission to Conduct Research Study at the School.

---

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct your research pertaining to fulfilment of your requirements for your Master in Education degree programme.

.....

Supervisor 1

## Appendix J

## REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY AT THE SCHOOL

5<sup>th</sup> May, 2014.

Mr. [REDACTED]

School Supervisor 1

..... Education District.

Dear Sir,

I am presently reading for the Masters in Education (M. Ed.) with a concentration in curriculum at the University of the West Indies. As part fulfilment for this degree, I am required to conduct original research into a matter of concern and write a report. I have selected an area of interest to me and other stakeholders in the field, "Teachers' experiences of the implementation of a curriculum change." Consequently, I am seeking your permission and support in conducting this investigation.

Yours respectfully,

Ann Bahadoorsingh.



Appendix K

	JANUARY 2014	FEBUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY 31st
Identifying sample population					
Collection and preparation of background info					
Literature review					
Data collection					
Data analysis					
Interpretation of data					
Final write-up					
Submission					

Appendix L

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

.....Primary School

.....

.....

Dear Colleagues,

As you are aware I am completing a Master’s in Education programme at the University of the West Indies. I am required to conduct original research in any field in education as partial fulfilment. The research topic is Teachers ‘experiences on the implementation of a curriculum change in one primary school in an educational district in South Trinidad.

As a participant you will be required to share experiences you have had in implementing PCR at the school. This would be conducted in one focus interview session after school at a time convenient to you. I assure you that the findings of this interview will be kept confidential and your anonymity would be maintained. Additionally, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Yours respectfully,

Ann Bahadoorsingh.

Appendix M

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

“Five-Minute Observation Form”

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic/Area: \_\_\_\_\_

No. in Class: \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Performance: \_\_\_\_\_

*In the box next to each General Feature indicate +, -, or NA.*

*Check the circle next to each observed area.*

- Instructor models instructional tasks when appropriate.**
  - Demonstrates the task (e.g., uses think aloud)
  - Proceeds in step-by-step fashion
  - Limits language to demonstration of skill
  - Makes eye contact with students, speaks clearly while modeling skill

- Instructor provides explicit instruction.**
  - Sets the purpose for the instruction
  - Identifies the important details of the concept being taught
  - Provides instructions that have only one interpretation
  - Makes connection to previously-learned material

- Instructor engages students in meaningful interactions with language during lesson.**
  - Provides and elicits background information
  - Emphasizes distinctive features of new concepts
  - Uses visuals and manipulatives to teach content as necessary
  - Makes relationships among concepts overt
  - Engages students in discourse around new concepts
  - Elaborates on student responses

- Instructor provides multiple opportunities for students to practise instructional tasks.**
  - Provides more than one opportunity to practise each new skill
  - Provides opportunities for practice after each step in instruction
  - Elicits group responses when feasible
  - Provides extra practice based on accuracy of student responses

- Instructor encourages student effort.**
  - Provides feedback during and after task completion
  - Provides specific feedback about student's accuracy and/or effort
  - Majority of feedback is positive
  - Celebrates or displays examples of student success in \_\_\_\_\_ e.g. reading

- Students are engaged in the lesson during teacher-led instruction.**
  - Gains student attention before initiating instruction
  - Paces lesson to maintain attention
  - Maintains close proximity to students
  - Transitions quickly between tasks
  - Intervenes with off-task students to maintain their focus

- Students are engaged in the lesson during independent work.**
  - Independent work routines and procedures previously taught
  - Models task before allowing students to work independently
  - Checks for student understanding of the task(s)
  - Students use previously-learned strategies or routines when they come to a task they don't understand
  - Independent work is completed with high level of accuracy

- Students are successful completing activities at a high criterion level of performance.**
  - Elicits a high percentage of accurate responses from group
  - Elicits a high percentage of accurate responses from individuals
  - Holds same standard of accuracy for high performers and low performers

<b>Subject Focus Example</b>				
<b>Reading:</b>	Phonemic Awareness <input type="checkbox"/>	Phonics <input type="checkbox"/>	Fluency <input type="checkbox"/>	Comprehension <input type="checkbox"/>
	Vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Skills/Concepts:</b> -----				
<b>Comments:</b>				
<b>Signatures:</b> -----				
	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>&amp;</b>	<b>Observer</b>	

Adapted from: <http://opi.mt.gov/pub/RTI/EssentialComponents/Fidelity/Reading/Resources/Five-Minute%20Observation%20Form.pdf> by Quality Assurance Unit – CEBM - GVC- Project Manager

Appendix N

VICTORIA EDUCATION DISTRICT  
 PRINCIPAL CLASS CHECK

SCHOOL

NAME OF TEACHER

NO IN CLASS

NO PRESENT

DATE OF CLASS CHECK

AREAS	REMARKS
CLASS REGISTER/ TIMETABLE	
DAILY PLAN	
CURRICULUM GUIDE	
APPEARANCE OF CLASSROOM	
TEACHING/LEARNING AIDS	
PUPIL'S EXERCISE BOOK	
INDIVIDUAL PUPILS RECORD	

TEST RESULTS- WEEKLY/ FORTNIGHTLY/ MONTHLY/TERMLY

STATE WHAT USE HAS THE TEACHER MADE FOR THESE TESTS.....

COMMENTS ON ABOVE.....

A CURRICULUM CHECK /SUBJECT AREA.....PERCENTAGE GAINED.....

FINDINGS/  
 RECOMMENDATIONS.....

NO. OF CHECKS FOR THE MONTH.....

PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE OF CLASS TEACHER

DATE

DATE

Appendix O

Pre- conferencing (A –Strongest) - (E – Weakest)

	DESCRIPTION	A	B	C	D	E
A	Rapport between supervisor and supervisee					
B	Clarity about the general area of study					
C	Clarity about the purpose and functions of classroom observation					
D	Clear indication of the purpose and nature of the follow-up conferences to be held after classroom observation					
E	The programme is comprehensive enough to meet the needs of all students					
F	The materials to be presented are appropriate to the interests and abilities of the students					
G	The objectives of the programme clearly stated and operationally defined					
H	There is subject matter articulation between class levels and correlation among the various subject areas of the curriculum					
I	The instructional strategies are learner centred and consistent with the objectives of the programme					

CONFERENCING (A – strongest) - (E – Weakest)

	DESCRIPTION	A	B	C	D	E
A	There is a running time- log to provide relevant information					
B	There is strategic positioning to maximize observation of students					
C	There is appropriate shifting of focus					
D	There is appropriateness of observation schedule/ recording of data					
E	Effective classroom organization is well structured					
F	Lesson presentation is clear and developmental					
G	There is adequate use of resources					
H	There is comprehensiveness of objectives (cognitive – affective)					
I	There is higher order skill development ( problem-solving, critical thinking)					
J	There is effective time management					
K	Teacher deportment is adequate					
L	There are motivational techniques to enhance student learning					
M	Variety of evaluation techniques is consistent					
N	Teaching strategies are varied and learner centred					

POST CONFERENCING- (A – Strongest) - (E- Weakest)

	DESCRIPTION	A	B	C	D	E
A	There is a better understanding on the part of the participants in the conference of the classroom situation and the reasons for those perceptions					
B	The area of focus ( per- observation) is restated					
C	The data collected with the teacher are shared					
D	The shared data represent an accurate reflection of what took place					
E	Most recurring patterns (teacher and student ) are identified					
F	There is mutual agreement on the accuracy of patterns identified					
G	There is a summary on the patterns identified					
H	The objectives of the lesson(s) was reviewed and restated (clarity, relevance, attainable performance criteria)					
I	There was collaborative assessment of each pattern in terms of sound instructional practices and in the context of the lesson observed					
J	Collaborative strategies/ recommendations were established for future instructions and improvements					
K	Periodic arrangements are made to monitor and review progress in attempting to improve the classroom situation					
L	There is collaborative agreement to establish when a follow-up observation will take place					

Appendix P

**REPORT BOOK**

Students are awarded a score of 1-5 based on the following criteria:

DESCRIPTOR	MAKES ATTEMPT	EMERGENT	SATISFACTORY	COMPETENT	SUPERIOR
SCORE	1-29%	30-59%	60-74%	74-89%	90-100%
STUDENT PROFILE	Student is making an attempt but has not yet met expectation and needs immediate intervention	This student has shown the capacity to meet expectations but needs explicit support in some areas	This student has shown a general capacity to meet expectations though some support may still be required	This student consistently meets expectations and sometimes exceeds them	This student generally exceeds expectations and can meet the demands of additional challenges suitable to the level
MARK AWARDED	1	2	3	4	5

The student report provides comprehensive feedback on performance and guides the specific support needed by the student. For each subject, specific areas of performance are reported. For further clarity, skills are listed with check boxes for each of the three terms e.g.    . Teachers will tick for each term the specific skills being taught and assessed. Parents will then be guided as to the specific areas in which the child needs support.

Student progress in general competencies is also reported. Rubric is provided for standard assessment of these.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Demonstrates appropriate oral communication [*discriminative listening*  *etiquette courtesies*  *nonverbal communication*  *Standard English communication*  ]

Demonstrates appropriate reading skills [*phonemic*  *phonological awareness*  *alphabetic principle*  *vocabulary*  *fluency*  *comprehension*  ]

Demonstrates literary appreciation [*response*  *expression*  *creativity*  ]

Demonstrates appropriate writing skills [*language use*  *content selection*  ]