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Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Integration Process in VAPA

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Abstract

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The study focused on the perceptions of six secondary school teachers regarding the Implementation of curriculum integration in Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) at the lower secondary level. This multi-site case study employed a qualitative design which was used to gather responses through the use of interview questions that sought the views of teachers who deliver the integrated arts curriculum at their schools. The data was carefully analyzed by identifying and selecting codes from the statements which were sorted and grouped into themes for further data analysis and interpretation. A purposive sampling of six (6) teachers was selected for this study from three (3) secondary schools in the Caroni Educational District in Trinidad. The major findings of this study indicated that the teachers' perceptions regarding their information and knowledge of integrative practices impacted on desire and ability to engage in integrative strategies. Recommendations based on the findings in this study and for further research are made, for policy implementation in Trinidad and Tobago with an emphasis on improving teacher quality in the educational process and also on improving VAPA goals in order to achieve higher standards.

Keywords: Teacher Perceptions, Curriculum Integration, Pedagogical Strategies, Visual and Performing Arts

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of contents	iii
Chapter One: Background to the study.....	1
The research issue.....	5
Statement of the problem	10
Purpose of the study	11
Research questions	11
Definition of the key terms	12
Significance of the study	13
Summary	13
Organisation of the paper	14
Chapter Two: Literature Review	15
Educational reform	15
Curriculum implementation	15
Teachers as facilitators of change	19
Theory of Planned Behaviour	22
Influence of teacher perception on curriculum implementation	26
Implementing curriculum	27
Teachers' perceptions and beliefs about integrating VAPA curriculum	31
Summary	34

Chapter Three: Methodology	35
Qualitative Research Design	35
Justification for multi-site, multi-case study.....	37
Context	38
Population and sample	39
Instruments and data collection strategies	41
Data Analysis	45
Ethical considerations	46
Establishing trustworthiness	47
Limitations of the study.....	49
Delimitations of the study	50
Reflections	50
Summary	51
Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings	52
Theme 1: Pedagogical strategies that favour integration in VAPA.....	53
Theme 2: Teachers' perceptions regarding quality of integrated VAPA strategies	55
Theme 3: Teachers' perceptions regarding clarity of integrated VAPA strategies	57
Theme 4: Teachers' perceptions regarding complexity of integrated VAPA methods	58
Theme 5: Teachers' perceptions regarding practicality of integrated VAPA activities.....	59
Theme 6: Concerns regarding information.....	61
Theme 7: Need for professional development.....	62
Theme 8: Collaboration.....	64
Summary.....	65

Chapter Five: Conclusion	66
Summary of research findings	66
Recommendations	70
References	72
Appendices	
Appendix A (Report on NCSE findings)	78
Appendix B (Responses on teaching strategies).....	80
Appendix C (Interview Protocol).....	81
Appendix D (Invitation letter issued to participants).....	84
Appendix E (Transcript of interview with TA1)	85
Appendix F (Reflective Journal Entry)	91
Appendix G (Summary Table – Data Analysis)	92
Appendix H (Data Analysis – Codes).....	93

Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Integration Process in VAPA

Chapter 1

Background to the study

Education acts as an important means of modernization that helps in the diffusion of modern values of equality, freedom and humanism (Bacharach, 1990). To this end, modernization can be referred to as a process of socio-cultural transformation involving institutions such as schools. The formulation of an educational policy must be guided by an underlying objective that is geared toward meeting the “needs of a nation and its diverse population” (Hackett, 2008, p. 1). Thus, reform initiatives proposed by policy makers are intended to ensure that trends are revised to improve the quality of teaching in an effort to generate a learning climate that is reflective of societal needs. Critical to the process of reform is the response of teachers who must have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities if change efforts are to have any chances of being successful.

In 1996 the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago, made attempts to create a learner-centered curriculum design by adopting the report of the National Task Force on Education, locally known as the White Paper. This initiative led to the expansion and modernization of secondary school systems. A comprehensive re-evaluating of curriculum therefore was an essential undertaking by stakeholders of the Ministry of Education that resulted in the introduction of the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP). This initiative focused on promoting educational experiences that catered to students of forms one to

three (lower secondary level) who were to be awarded a National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) at the end of their three years of study (Ministry of Education, 2008).

In discussing the vision for the future of Trinidad and Tobago De Lisle, Seecharan and Ayodike (2010) explain that there is a need for the drafting of new educational policies that promote systems which would result in the design of programmes that focus on “creating an innovative people” (p. 3). This major goal highlights the importance of curricular systems that model structures which provide opportunities for practitioners to engage in exercises that aim toward excellence in education via a seamless and self-renewing education system (De Lisle, Seecharan & Ayodike, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2008). Additionally, in adopting measures that seek to align the structures of a high quality education system with the aim of producing a highly skilled citizenry, one of the requirements of curriculum development and practice would be to use indigenous cultural elements. Incorporating such invaluable experiences, into learning regimes signals an attempt to inspire originality and the development of creative talents through meaningful, student-centered, authentic and contextual classroom engagement.

The SEMP initiative identified six areas as essential learning outcomes to be targeted in all secondary schools of Trinidad and Tobago namely aesthetic expression, citizenship, communication, personal development, problem solving and technological competence. In an effort to transform national thinking as students become competent in acquiring twenty first century skills, curriculum content was categorized into eight core subject groupings. These core curriculum subjects were identified as English Language Arts, Science, Spanish, Social Studies, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, Technology Education and Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA).

VAPA refers to a composite subject that comprises the disciplines of Visual Art and Craft, Music, Drama and Dance. The curriculum guide promotes the inclusion of one major integrated arts activity each term among the various disciplines of the Visual and Performing Arts. This approach has been prescribed by the NCSE syllabus writers in VAPA for students of forms one to three who are expected to participate in at least two of the four disciplines given the availability of teachers in all of the disciplines.

The proposed curriculum in the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) was designed to ensure that students develop competence in four disciplines: Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama. Out of this rationale for the design of the curriculum in VAPA, teachers in the department together with the principal(s) have been encouraged to design and develop programmes of instruction and assessment that would facilitate an integration of concepts taught in the separate disciplines. Integration characterizes the creative work of students as “process or action that has a number of associated qualities” which can be considered open to varied possibility (Goldberg, 2006, p. 52). The process of creating, Goldberg continues, becomes the focus. This type of activity lends itself to increased student awareness that enables the learner to make connections to what they already know. Integration therefore, as promoted by the designers of the NCSE curriculum in VAPA would culminate in active student participation in the preparation, design and execution of a full-scale artistic production that combines elements of Visual Arts, Drama, Music and Dance appropriate to each level for the period of one term

Further, it should be noted that the adoption of this programme provides a novel approach to assessment of students at the NCSE level. The curriculum design, in essence, promotes the use of strategies that encourage continuous assessment at the lower secondary level. Marks are accumulated over the three years and account for sixty percent of a student's final mark in

VAPA; the other forty percent gained from a score attained when students take the national examination at the end of form three. Inclusion of integrated projects therefore, while it accounts for student participation in activities that promote a national “cultural identity, social and historical experience” (Worrell as cited in Harry, 2007, p.5), provides another dimension that features strategies of assessment which are not inherent in traditional tests. This mode of assessment however highlights an intention to deviate from an over-reliance on models of traditionally formative and summative assessment paradigms, typical of Tylerian principles used as principal modes of assessing students (Carr, 1995).

Adopting the principles of integration therefore, encourages the combination of art forms that provide opportunities for students to engage in and explore “expressive connections among the arts” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 24) at each level. Activities are geared towards providing a platform whereby students can, based on the knowledge and skills they have previously acquired, show an ability to respond to and create expressions via a programme or project that highlights all areas of the arts. As students work together with their teachers to participate in a process that culminates in a display of their creativity at an exhibition or a production held at the school, they demonstrate proficiency in at least one of the disciplines in a practical way.

Specific themes or strategies have not been prescribed as this innovation lends itself to a process whereby teachers and principals design a structure for implementation that builds on content taught previously. Described as an interactive model, this pedagogical approach emphasizes the development of creative experiences that grant opportunities to engage the learner with avenues for expression while catering to provide “interaction of individuals and systems with their environment” (Goldberg, 2006; London, 1997, p.325).

Educational planning in this sense can be seen as an application of long term goals that characterize a “rational systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs of students and society” (Coombs as cited in London, 1997, p. 324). Current research indicates that teachers, engaged in the art of planning educational experiences for their students, have concerns, perceptions and preferences regarding curriculum practices in teaching and testing (Fuller, 1970; Fuller & Brown, 1975; Tallerico, 2005; Hall & Hord, 2006; Fullan, 2007).

Participation in implementation efforts therefore, according to London (1997) “involves interaction, interpretation, reflection, and decision making as the planner explicitly attempts to adjust technical concerns to address human requirements” (p. 325). Consequently, their own analysis and assessment regarding the ultimate value of educational plans, determines the level of motivation teachers will exhibit as they become engaged in effectively adopting the practices that are necessary for successful implementation. This seems to suggest that the beliefs, perceptions and experiences of teachers at the planning stage are considered crucial requirements in achieving curriculum goals.

The Research Issue

The concept of “Integrating the Arts” (Ministry of Education, 2008) is seen as a curriculum innovation that manages a process that involves negotiation and flexibility as suggested by Snyder et al. (2002). They highlight value in the process that emerges as school personnel engage in discussion to decide on themes and activities which should form the focus of concentration for the term selected for execution of this component. These implementers are also charged with the responsibility for deciding on instruction and assessment procedures to be

adopted and all other relevant aspects of discourse. The following is taken from the curriculum document that guides the implementation:

It is important that the criteria governing integrating projects remain flexible. Projects may, for example, include all four arts disciplines, and may extend for an entire term and involve an orchestrated performance. Alternatively, a series of projects may be planned, which includes two or three disciplines. A project may take one workshop session. However, all projects should be exploratory in nature: that is, they should involve problem solving, research, experimentation, critical thinking, and risk-taking (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Such principles as defined by the NCSE syllabus in Visual and Performing Arts herald the application of innovative features that would require VAPA teachers to make significant changes to their regularly accepted routines. This adjustment would no doubt depend on a radical shift in methodologies that would govern classroom practice resulting in transforming ideologies on the part of the teacher. Although information on integration was made available to teachers, this approach, based on a constructivist instructional design, has not been satisfactorily implemented in many schools in Trinidad and Tobago since professional development with regards to the approach is seriously lacking. According to Fullan (1992), changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs can result from professional development programmes that are designed to encourage increased levels of competence among educators (Fullan as cited in Guskey, 2002).

International context

Iwai (2003) reports on a United Nations report for the Division of Arts and Cultural Enterprise in UNESCO under the project to promote arts education in school environments in

search of results that reveal “how the arts contribute to education from five viewpoints: aesthetic development; socio-emotional development; socio-cultural development; cognitive development and academic achievement” (p. 2). An interesting feature of this study highlights the nature of the interdisciplinary approach to arts teaching that stimulates students through activities that promote individual interaction in a “more student initiated atmosphere” (p. 4). The values met by the programme’s inclusion on a global level, account for motivated and enthusiastic students who take responsibility for the efforts they make toward learning and achieving improved levels of cognition.

One such innovation in Hong Kong, labeled the “Humanitas Programme” revealed results which indicated that “talking about art work in art appreciation activities improves children’s Chinese writing ability” (p. 12). Higher test scores were also noted among students in California having been exposed to experimental learning through arts-based instruction. Iwai offers data to show a positive correlation between participation in arts education and the holistic development students receive but laments “Although the importance of arts education is gaining increased recognition, it is also true that arts education is continually struggling to establish a secure status in formal curricula, especially in developing countries” (p. 13).

In a survey conducted to determine the main issues associated with arts teaching, Oreck (2004) teachers identified concerns related to curriculum, pedagogy, student motivation and diverse learning styles as hindrances to their practice. In addition, it should be noted that they pointed to a “lack of opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues” (p. 64) as another deterrent in their ability to engage in interdisciplinary arts concepts in their classrooms. In his recommendations, Oreck took the time to promote evidence to suggest that “artistic approaches

aid student learning are more able to justify the time spent on the arts and to articulate its benefits” (p. 66). He further espoused ongoing support and professional development as tools to assist these teachers adhere to the practice of regular use of the arts in their teaching.

In a similar vein, another research attempt documents the process of integrating English language and English literature as a curriculum strategy for secondary schools in Kenya. This study was undertaken by Ann Nyawira Macharia in 2011 to understand the machineries put into effect to manage curriculum implementation (Macharia, 2011). To facilitate the process of integration, the sequenced model was adopted in favor of other integrated models. The sequenced model features an approach where “units are taught separately, but are designed to provide a broad framework for related concepts” (p. 3).

According to Macharia (2011), educators were divided on the issue of the benefits of the integration programme. She pointed out that some teachers even had negative attitudes toward the introduction of an integrated approach and cited challenges as they related to inadequate teaching and learning resources. Due to limited funding “training did not reach the majority of teachers” (p. 5) and as a result, teachers felt incompetent to deliver the curriculum as it was intended.

In discussing the strategies used by teachers “to deal with the challenge of understanding the concept of integration” (Macharia, 2011, p. 68), the researcher highlighted that the majority of participants indicated that they preferred participating in seminars and workshops. These avenues were regarded as opportunities for professional development that would facilitate a better understanding of the process as they tried to manage the challenges they faced. Data collected in the survey conducted for this study also revealed that the teacher-participants valued the knowledge they received through consultation with other colleagues. To a great extent, research into the concept of integration linked with opportunities to attend in-service courses was also mentioned as helpful.

Local context

In 2013, the Ministry of Education implemented efforts to review the national curriculum of secondary schools with an intention to address its effectiveness in providing quality education for students. Responses were elicited through the use of questionnaires which were administered to VAPA teachers. It is useful to note that while a total of one hundred and forty-seven schools were registered for NCSE Level One examinations in 2012, one hundred and twelve schools participated in VAPA examinations that year (Ramsaran, 2013) (Appendix A). A number of questions sought to determine the level to which “assessment procedures (were) aligned with the written and taught curriculum” (Ramsaran, p. 7).

In response to the statement “The VAPA curriculum prepares students to meet the demands of life in the twentieth century”, (Ramsaran, 2013, p.147) fifty-three percent of the respondents agreed. The same number of respondents agreed too, that the VAPA curriculum assists the teacher in preparing students to meet the demands of life in the twentieth century while forty-six concurred that more strategies should be included to help teachers address students’ needs. Additionally, eighty-seven percent admitted that the assessment strategies were directly related to the objectives of the syllabus.

Ironically, the results of the study indicated that seventy-nine percent of teachers observed that the curriculum indicates appropriate strategies that are considered adequate for delivery of the VAPA (Appendix B). When asked however, “Is there an Integrated Arts Activity (Integrated Arts Project) within the VAPA department as outlined in the curriculum? 53.2% of the respondents said ‘YES’ while 40.3% said ‘NO’” (Ramsaran, p. 165). By extension, a clearer indication regarding the reality of the issue is highlighted by the following: “If yes, briefly describes ONE Integrated Arts Project that you have done” (p. 165). According to the study, “Of

the respondents who described their IAP project most were not reflective of the requirements of the syllabus” (p. 165)

In an effort to gauge the participants' views regarding teacher preparedness, items in the questionnaire generated data that indicates:

- sixty-nine percent did not agree that adequate opportunity for training has been provided for curriculum delivery;
- of the training programmes offered, fifty-four percent describe the content as inadequate and suggest that more training is needed.

These expressions of concern coupled with the data that arose from the study suggest that there is limited knowledge of the pedagogical strategies that would support teachers' efforts in the successful implementation of Integrated Projects at the school level.

Statement of the problem

Teachers at a school in North East, Trinidad have expressed difficulties in conceptualizing a design for the integrating of subjects in Visual and Performing Arts. Having shared a close relationship with these stakeholders, the researcher of this study was able to detect that their concerns relate primarily to an inability to agree on a specific model of integration that would suit the context of instruction and assessment relevant to the curriculum needs of the students.

The three schools selected for this research have reportedly been implementing the integrated VAPA curriculum in excess of five years. Scarce literature is available to account for detailed strategies and models which could applied in a local context that reveals a positive

relationship between the implementation of the integrated VAPA curriculum and teacher competency.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative, case study is to explore the perceptions of six teachers from the Caroni educational district regarding the process of integration when teaching VAPA in the Lower Secondary level. At this stage of the research, the integrating process describes a methodology that entails a philosophy of teaching in which content, drawn from several subject areas are, merged to focus on a particular topic or theme (McBrien, Brandt & Cole, 1997) and VAPA refers to a curriculum design of the NCSE syllabus that includes content in four related disciplines (dance, drama, music and visual arts) taught at the lower secondary level in Trinidad and Tobago.

Research Questions

The present study intends to investigate the following research questions:

Over-arching Question:

What are the perceptions of six teachers regarding the implementation of the integrated curriculum in VAPA?

Sub-questions

1. What pedagogical approaches do VAPA teachers adopt to facilitate the implementation of the integrated curriculum?
2. How do teachers feel about implementing an integrated VAPA curriculum?

3. What factors do teachers perceive inhibit them from implementing the integrated VAPA curriculum in the way they would like to?

Definition of Key Terms

Curriculum reform - A reconstitution of curricular objectives, goals, practices and, or materials to replace existing structures (Lingard, 1996). In order to achieve reform Fullan (2007) suggests that resultant changes in beliefs, values, knowledge and skills accompany reform measures.

Curriculum implementation - A process of incorporating the necessary changes to facilitate the adoption of newer curriculum features (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Curriculum Integration - Term used to refer to a particular curriculum design that merges two or more dimensions of curriculum knowledge and concepts, skills, experiences and other characteristic features that constitute curriculum practice (Brandt, 1991).

Teacher perceptions - How teachers make sense of all the information they receive through a conscious awareness of their environment. This form of awareness is subjective to one's prior experience and is influenced by individual beliefs, knowledge and values.

Visual and Performing Arts - "A composite subject comprising the disciplines of Visual Art and Craft, Music, Drama and Dance" (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Significance of the study

Limited documented research into the practices engaged in during implementation of the integrated arts projects at secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago is available. This suggests that there is a dearth of experience among teachers in the area on the local stage. As such, this study will add to a local field of educational literature that focuses on pedagogical issues used as resource to influence policy makers, curriculum planners, educators and teacher trainers as they reflect on the affective elements that accompany changes to educational systems as policy is put into effect.

The timeliness of this research is also of importance as many secondary schools are in the transitioning process of implementing the principles of integration in the arts. In light of this, the present study can be considered especially relevant by assisting change agents as they determine the methodologies to be adopted in the design of in-service workshops to assist in the successful implementation of this programme. The findings of this research will be also used to assist teachers who face difficulties in understanding the strategies to be adopted in the implementing of integrated activities.

Summary

The first chapter served as an introduction to the study. It provides readers with an overview of the study through:

- a description of the background to the issue;
- identification of the purpose of the study; and
- the research questions that the study seeks to answer.

The significance of the study, the theoretical framework and the definition of the key terms used in the study were also explained in this section. Following is a plan for the rest of the study. This plan provides a description of what is entailed in the ensuing chapters.

Organization of the rest of the paper

Chapter two (2) contains a review of the literature that relates to the current study. It provides an in-depth explanation about educational reform, the theoretical framework of this study, curriculum implementation, a description of the core issue of integrating related subjects in Visual and Performing Arts at the secondary level and the roles of teachers who engage in implementation efforts. The review also highlights findings of similar studies in an attempt to compare the prevailing contexts as well as the results obtained with those currently under investigation.

Chapter three (3) provides an account of the research method and procedures which were followed as the phenomenon was being explored. In addition, it serves to explain trustworthy strategies, ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter four (4) highlights the findings of the data in relation to the research questions.

Chapter five (5) provides a summary and discussion that emerge from the findings as well as the implications of the study. It provides recommendations based on the findings with reference to the literature and the possibility of future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review will focus on general findings on the phenomenon of teacher perceptions regarding integration among the arts at secondary schools. Specifically, it presents the issue in relation to what has been done on global levels in the field of education.

Educational Reform

In general terms, one cannot underestimate the effects of specific classroom contexts on implementing educational initiatives typical of the curriculum integration plans in the Visual and Performing Arts. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) describe the major purpose of educational reform as helping schools accomplish curricular objectives more successfully by replacing existing instructional agendas or programmes with improved practices.

Policies that influence educational reform which include improvement on curriculum plans are administered through institutions which carry out the functions of the state in the public interest. Taylor, Rivzgi, Lingard and Henry (1997) propose that curriculum policy is influenced by the ideological beliefs, customs and practices of decision makers as well as the existing economic context in which the innovation is expected to thrive.

Curriculum Implementation

Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) refer to curriculum implementation as a shift from a current or existing programme to a new or modified format. The prescribed alterations are usually accompanied by changes in the knowledge, actions and attitudes of people thereby allowing a process of professional development and growth among participants. It should be noted however that these

changes can only succeed if the “implementers of innovative curricula grasp the nature of the context into which new curricula are to be introduced” (p.299).

Lewin (1951) explained the relationship of two opposing forces that must be managed successfully if desired curriculum change is expected to occur. These driving or restraining forces are directly responsible for the levels of motivation or restraint that accompany change efforts (Lewin as cited in Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Implementers, according to Sarason (1990) who are well-versed with essential curriculum knowledge (learning context, content, pedagogy) as well as “the purpose, the nature, and the real potential benefits of the innovation” are predisposed to initiating curriculum changes as a result of motivational or “driving forces” (Sarason, 1990, p. 27). Debilitating (restraining) forces on the other hand hinder successful implementation efforts. In light of this however, Lewin observed that best results are obtained when the influences of restraining forces are minimized resulting in transition that favours the adoption of innovative plans.

Fullan's (2007) model also provides an empirically grounded theoretical base for understanding the complex nature of curriculum implementation. In an effort to promote the concept of change being regarded as a process rather than an event (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, as cited in Hall & Hord, 2006), Fullan emphasized, “(r)eform is not just putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of classrooms, schools, districts, universities, and so on” (Fullan, 2007, p.7). He further warns that if agencies are to benefit from the involvement of teachers who exhibit attitudes that embody “new commitments, and the excitement and energizing satisfaction of accomplishing something that is important” (p.8), careful attention must be paid to significant details regarding change. Central to the success of any change effort is a clear understanding of the processes involved and why it is necessary to engage in such endeavours. Fullan cautions:

The problem of meaning is one of how those involved in change can come to understand what it is that should change, and how it can be best accomplished, while realizing that the what and how constantly interact with and reshape each other. (p. 9)

It is useful to note that there are various elements of systemic reform that underlie change-oriented processes. One significant element as highlighted by Hall and Hord (2006) signals the establishment of “a coherent system of instructional guidance (knowledge, skills, capacities ... professional development)” (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 46-47) geared toward facilitating attitudinal changes in teachers which undoubtedly result in the adoption of practices that favour implementation efforts. Citing Deutschman, Fullan (2007) observes that “people change their attitudes when they experience new things, which in turn touch their emotions” and influence their perception (Deutschman as cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 42). “Changes in beliefs and understanding” therefore, are considered to be “the foundation of achieving lasting reform” (Fullan, 2007, p. 37).

Following this theory, it is useful to consider the characteristics of clarity, complexity and practicality as demonstrated by Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) as he seeks to explore the principle of changing curriculum practice from the implementer’s perspective. They have pointed to research sources which have documented the responses of participants of in-service professional development programs. From several studies it is evident that these programmes are considered to be most effective when collaborative effort guides the process in an attempt to influence teachers’ perceptions that their endeavours would be beneficial to all stakeholders.

In response to Fullan’s (1991) list of “Factors Affecting Implementation” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 317), reference is made regarding characteristics of any curriculum change effort. In overcoming teachers’ resistance to curriculum changes, Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) recommend “to truly have educational reform (teachers) must have professional development” (p.322).

“Globally, teachers’ roles are changing under the influences of access to information and use of communication technologies ... and increasing diversity of student populations” (Pantic & Wubbels, 2012, p.63). Teacher preparation is seen therefore as a significant feature.

Pantic and Wubbels (2012) examine the role of teacher preparation (professional development) in Serbia. A lack of competence, they contend, results in “much complexity relating to the lack of consensus and clarity about the values” (p. 63) of curriculum innovations. An analysis of these roles is done through an assessment of Fullan’s (1993) characteristics of change with specific reference to *clarity* about the goals and purposes of an innovation, *complexity*– dimensions of difficulty, required skill and possible changes in understandings and perceptions and *quality and practicality* of goals and related tasks. While teacher competence is defined against the adoption of instructional skills as they relate to a “Didaktik” curriculum versus a curriculum design where “goals are pre-defined” (p. 62), its attainment is regarded as one of the desired means through which effective implementation occurs.

According to Pantic and Wubbels (2012) teacher competence is viewed as a combination of four sets of perceptions. These four “domains of competence” (p. 63) include “(1) self-evaluation and professional development, (2) subject matter, pedagogy, and curriculum, (3) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development, and (4) values and child rearing” (p. 63). Generally, it makes sense if these forms of understandings form the basis of professional development programmes in a changing climate as teachers grapple to respond to the demands of improved curricular goals. The researchers here continue to portray the implications of the both approaches to education: the “Didactic curriculum” and the “Curriculum Culture” by highlighting on one hand “a vision of developing extensively the professionalism of the teacher within a rigorous but flexible framework” alongside education systems which emphasize “the executive character of the teaching profession, binding objectives and measurable standards” (Ostinelli as cited in Pantic & Wubbels, p. 64).

At the heart of professional development as depicted in this research study is the relationship of teaching which focuses on “matter and meaning” (Hoppman, 2007, as cited in Pantic & Wubbels, 2012, p.65). Clarity, complexity and practicality of educational encounters, in the realm of professional development, must relate to “content as an educational substance” (p. 65) attention being paid however to meanings as they emerge as students learn. Teacher quality is therefore strongly influenced by an array of personal attributes, knowledge, practical skills and manner. It can be enhanced as teachers clearly understand the nature of the change (clarity), their roles as they become involved in the reform effort (complexity) and the value of the outcomes as they impact on the learner, the school and the society (practicality).

Teachers as Facilitators of Change

According to Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) teachers play a critical role in the change process. A bold claim is justifiably made: “Teachers don’t merely deliver the curriculum” (p. ix). Teaching, in this context is accompanied by critical and reflective response to perceived action. This level of cognition therefore, as the writers suggest, governs classroom practice as it relates to improvement in curriculum delivery. “They (the teachers) develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. ix).

Ornstein & Hunkins, (2004) establish the view that teacher “knowledge and competence” (p. 321) are critical to the continuance of any change effort. Central to the concept of teacher involvement, these theorists promote findings that reveal that teachers are considered the persons possessing the best resources of instructional expertise. In this regard their tasks include “modifying and fine-tuning” (p. 321) curriculum plans to suit the aims, goals and objectives of an institution. In many instances though, professional development programmes are necessary to

promote teacher quality thus providing the implementers with the tools necessary for the efficient delivery of proposed models.

In a discussion regarding several factors that impact on effective incorporation of new curriculum designs at the school level, Murgatroyd (2013) points to the importance of skill as a necessary teacher characteristic. He strongly supports curriculum planning that focuses on professional development. His description of teachers as professionals who occupy leading roles in curriculum change, suggests that their varying levels of competence amounts to the eventual outcome of meaning and sustainable efforts. Investing in activities that promote teacher development ensures that there is a “balance between time in class and time to prepare and innovate” (p. 29) he advises.

Many theorists share Murgatroyd's (2013) position that “teachers ... need time to plan, research and prepare” (p.29) for the implementation of innovations regardless of their size. Harvey (1990), Hargreaves (1997) and Fullan (2007) recommend the establishment of professional learning communities. As the name suggests, collaborative teams with similar goals, objectives and responsibilities interact on matters of importance in a supportive atmosphere to discover effective strategies that could be adopted as curricular practices are implemented. Ornstein and Hunkins (2007) maintain that professional development is regarded as a “driving force” that results in teacher growth. This level of interaction also provides a platform that thrives on relationships built on trust in an attempt to foster a climate that values feedback as participants receive assistance according to their level of need.

The literature continues to highlight theories and proposals that support professional development of educators as meaningful practice. Ball and Cohen(1999), Cohen and Hill (2001),

Oakes et al.(1999), Stigler and Hiebert(1999), Timperleyand Parr (2005), Fullan (1993, 1999) are all cited in Fullan (2007) as evidence that a process that focuses on the reculturing of teachers is critically essential to sustained change efforts. Reculturing is the outcome of changed beliefs, philosophies and habits that minimize complacent attitudes. Fullan continues to justify the promotion of professional development and teacher discourse as central towards improved curriculum structures. He is critical of attempts to engage practicing teachers in “persistent superficial (forms of) teacher learning” (Ball & Cohen; Cohen & Hill, as cited in Fullan, 2006, p. 25) and instead offers advice toward instituting “ongoing ... opportunities for teachers individually or in concert (as in the case of professional learning communities) to deeply acquire new learning concepts and skills” (p. 24) while they participate in “event-based activities involving, for example, professional development sessions” (Fullan, 2007, p. 25).

Additionally, Fullan (2005, 2007) focuses researchers' attention to action-based guidelines in one's effort to increase motivation toward curriculum implementation. “Capacity building” according to him, refers to actions undertaken by individuals that lead to an “increase (in) the collective efficacy of a group to improve student learning through new knowledge” (p. 58). He further emphasizes that, given the knowledge of how people change, it is advisable that capacity building occurs at the early stage of innovation.

Learning in context and learning every day are the keys. Capacity-building experiences develop skills, clarity (as you become more skilled, you become more specifically clear), and motivation. Since these are generated collectively, that is, shared by the group, they become potent new forces for breakthrough improvement. (Fullan, 2007, p. 59)

He reasons also that capacity-building strategies are effective as they provide “concrete experiences that improvement is possible” (p. 59) and in many cases promote the value of highlighting best practices. Careful attention to capacity building has a positive impact on teacher quality as teachers who are equipped with “special qualifications and expertise for carrying out (curriculum) function” (Ben-Peretz, 1991, p. 35) display attitudes that contribute more favourably to curriculum improvement.

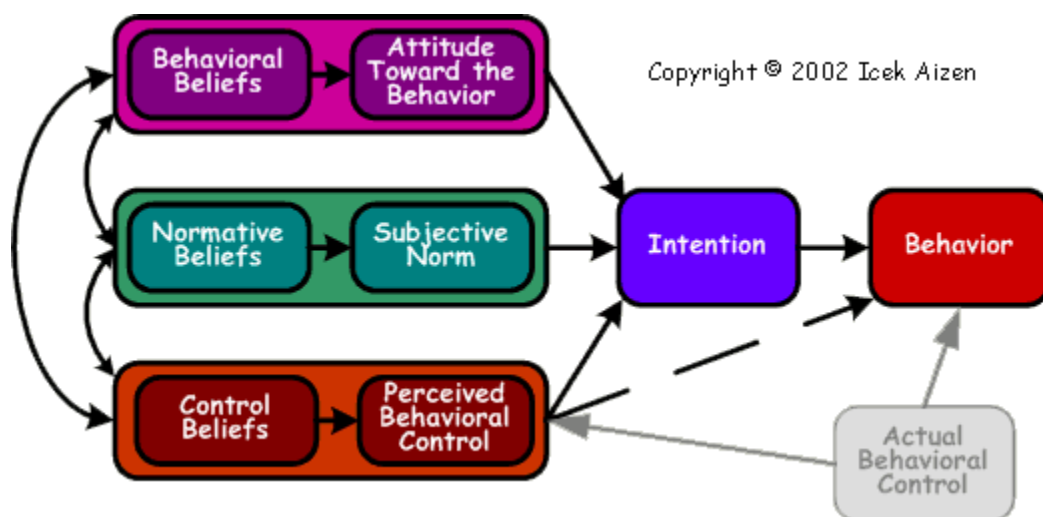
On the other hand, Fullan (2007) provides counsel to change agents cautioning them to be extremely careful of “superficial, episodic reform” which can be mistaken for “meaningful reform” (p. 28). When this type of misunderstanding occurs, severe levels of confusion, frustration and anxiety arise. He contends, “Painful unclarity is experienced when unclear innovations are attempted under conditions that do not support the development of the subjective meaning of the change (p. 29).

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1987, 1991) represents a model used by social psychologists to measure how human actions are guided. This theory, which predicts deliberate behaviour, is based on the premise that human behaviour can be deliberative and planned and suggests that intentions to engage in specific behavioural changes are guided by the interaction of three factors. The three factors to which this psychologist refers are described as “Behavioural Beliefs”, “Normative Beliefs” and “Control Beliefs” (Ajzen as cited in Sutton et al., 2003). Of these three, the component to be used in this study that relates to teacher knowledge and understanding of curriculum and pedagogical practice as they influence instructional quality is control beliefs.

Control beliefs (Ajzen, 1987, 1991) relate to the perceptions that arise due to beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of a required behaviour or action. (Ajzen as cited in Armitage & Conner, 2001). Also bearing the term “Perceived Behavioural Control” the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) highlights this variable in a manner that is reflective of how a stimulus can effect changes in personal or institutional behaviour, intention and attitude. Critical to the element that stimulates a person’s intention to participate in activities that bring about a desired change, is the extent to which a person feels able to enact the behavior. Perceived self-efficacy thus exerts its influence through four major processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes, all of which lead to deliberative behaviours that result in planned action on the part of an individual.

Figure 1



Source:

http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/theory%20clusters/health%20communication/theory_planned_behavior/

An analysis of the control beliefs that affect curriculum decisions is discussed in findings that are derived from a multiple-case study into the way teachers' knowledge impacts on the changes that were required to successfully implement specific systems of instruction. Charalambous and Hill (2012) agree that the interactions of teachers to "deploy and mobilize their personal (knowledge, beliefs)...resources" (p. 443) impact positively or negatively on modes of instruction that determine the outcome of curriculum practice. In an attempt to link "instructional quality to ... teacher knowledge" (p. 445), levels of self-efficacy are examined in light of individual characteristics related to "perspective, habits of mind, and appreciation that matters for effective teaching of the discipline" (Ball et al. as cited in Charalambous & Hill, 2012, p. 445).

In drawing from previous studies on this topic, Charalambous and Hill (2012) refer to Shulman (1986) whom they suggest, has called "for increased attention to ... the association between teacher knowledge and instructional quality" (as cited in Charalambous & Hill, p.446). They further advise that teacher knowledge should be categorized into three constructs, namely, knowledge of "facts and procedures ...models of generalizations, and ... concepts and connections" (Tchoshanov as cited in Charalambous, p. 446); the latter, they claim, has a positive and significant relationship to instructional quality. From a practical standpoint, teacher knowledge, evident in the concepts and conceptions of curriculum tasks, effective pedagogical strategies and learners' characteristics interact to determine control beliefs and self-efficacy levels, pre-determinants of planned behavior (Charalambous & Hill, 2012; Armitage & Conner, 2001).

Additionally, the instructional practices of teachers, as proposed by Charalambous and Hill (2012) should be considered as an analysis of five components: "the richness of ...the

lesson; teachers' capacity to understand, follow, and weave student ideas into instruction; (symbolic) and linguistic precision and clarity in presenting the content; students' contribution to meaning-making and reasoning; and the lesson coherence" Charalambous & Hill, 2012, p. 451). Instructional quality therefore, researched within the context of enactment, highlights teaching as examined in the Charalambous and Hill (2012) report on four case studies conducted in the United States. This research effort focuses on the "dynamic" (p. 449) relationship between the teacher-participant and the curriculum as they attempt to adopt the principles outlined in the US Standards-based curriculum. This interaction of teacher and curriculum portrayed various levels of engagement "in which both are active participants and contributors to instructional outcomes" (p. 449).

The success of reform efforts in educational settings typical of those referred to in the study rely on the consideration of perceived behavioural control as it impacts on the types of changes that are required by individuals (teachers) who embark on the adoption of new projects or programmes. Central to this study is the perception of teachers that their inability to enact the integration practices as proposed by the syllabus are as a result of limited knowledge. Because of this, they express feelings of incompetence regarding instructional strategies commensurate with the recommended integrative methods. Teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning affect the types of learning environments they create and the level of academic progress their students achieve. Low levels of efficacy however, serve as a barrier to successful implementation of improved curriculum plans.

Influence of teacher perception on curriculum implementation

The role the teacher plays in implementing educational changes that signal improvement in scholastic achievement of pupils, must be highly regarded (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Undeniably, teachers are responsible for the implementation of new curricula. It becomes important therefore to understand their concerns as one seeks to evaluate the successful implementation of any initiative to be established as classroom practice. Integration of the arts in secondary schools across the country emphasizes active participation by students under the guidance of “special artistic expertise on the part of the teacher” (Goldberg, 2006, p. 30).

Strategies that promote integration have been regarded as an alternative assessment tool to facilitate the Visual and Performing Arts curriculum in Forms one to three as school personnel adhere to the standards outlined by the NCSE model. This study suggests however that teachers possess a limited understanding of the strategies that may be applied and how to effectively use them. If VAPA teachers are to adhere to the laudable 21st century goals outlined by the NCSE syllabus, procedures in the implementing of principles of integrating among the disciplines must be clear.

Hall and Hord (2006) list four sets of personal factors that serve to highlight various perceptions and concerns that accompany change efforts. Several categories of individual concerns are grouped into (1) unrelated, (2) self, (3) task or (4) impact concerns which justifiably relate to various levels based on an individual's focus as change effort is applied. These categories of concern invariably represent a framework that describes affective aspects of change in terms of how people feel about doing something new or different. In this study two groups - task and impact concerns which form the basis of teacher perception will be examined in relation to their influence on curriculum implementation.

Task and impact concerns, as the names suggest are associated with the types of perceptions that emanate from experiences gained when teachers become intimately involved with activities that signal curriculum reform. Reform practices, typical of integrating the VAPA curriculum at the secondary school level call for careful management of strategies and plans as teachers execute their respective roles. Their concerns undoubtedly are centred on efficiently designing a model that fulfils current standards and practices as well as ensuring that the criteria developed can apply to future goals. In order to establish correct practices among themselves in direct response to the concerns they share, teachers in most instances collaborate “with others regarding the [most effective] use of the innovation” (Hall & Hord, p. 140). As teachers focus on the innovation’s impact on students, they begin to reflect on their practices and on changes in student learning.

Integrating Curriculum

“Integrated curriculum is the blending of several or all content areas around a theme, a problem or a project” (Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000, p.13). Nagel (1994), Banks (1994) and Owston (1997) suggest that integrated teaching and learning activities auger well for (a) delivering curriculum objectives to a diverse group of learners within an educational setting; (b) developing skills of learners; and (c) permitting and empowering students to become active learners (Nagel, Banks and Owston as quoted in Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000).

Morris (2003) recommends curriculum integration as one of the best ways to make an observable link between classroom knowledge and real-life experiences. Educational researchers have interpreted the principle of curriculum integration in several ways and use defining terms such as interwoven, connected, thematic, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, correlated, linked

and holistic (Fogarty, 2009, p. 3). Integration, apart from offering numerous benefits to student learning, in a real sense opens up possibilities for teacher collaboration.

In planning for an integrated curriculum educators are advised to cautiously design a plan of action that would facilitate the implementation of simple integration proposals first. Jacobs (1991) reasons that, based on extensive field work, implementation should begin with action research. During each phase she recommends the active involvement of teachers as a means of engendering practices that lead to “meaningful curriculum reform” (p.28). She maintains “One of the reasons ... schools are succeeding is that they’re collections of adult cooperative learners. They have a sense of community. Teachers feel a part of the school decision-making process” (Jacobs as cited in Brandt, 1991, p. 26).

Many curriculum specialists view arts instruction as a major contributor that caters to the attainment of idealistic educational goals. The goals being referred to here relate to aesthetic development, socio-emotional development, socio-cultural development, cognitive development and academic achievement in students.

Implementers of the SPECTRA+ programme, (Schools, Parents, Educators, Children, Teachers, Rediscover the Arts+) an art education initiative model which aims to provide instruction in music, drama, dance and art, have assessed the benefits of arts integration as it impacts on the development of participants. Highlighting a positive trend in the development of socio-emotional skills among students, a study, conducted to assess the effectiveness of an interdisciplinary arts programme in two schools in New Jersey in the United States, presents findings that reveal “students showed better attitudes of self-expression, trust, self-acceptance, acceptance of others, self-awareness and empowerment” (Iwai, 2003, p. 3). Iwai (2003), in an analysis of the advantages to be derived from an integrated arts design, presents data that

suggests that curriculum goals referred to earlier (aesthetic development, socio-emotional development, socio-cultural development, cognitive development and academic achievement) are attainable through arts “experiences that cultivate a positive attitude toward themselves and others ... through trial and error and greater success in other academic fields” (p. 13).

Sources of educational literature expose several integration models teachers can use once the decision is made to integrate. Interdisciplinary curriculum innovations, through which students learn to make connections among various subjects, apply the characteristic features of four of the models commonly researched. The models that favour integration among several disciplines need to be applied through coordinated planning between teachers of different subjects (Fogarty, 1991; Morris, 2003). Generally, these models are referred to as:

the sequenced model- a form of integration through which a broad framework is used to rearrange and sequence topics or units of study being taught separately but presented in a parallel manner to connect related content among the disciplines;

the shared model - overlapping concepts evident in different disciplines are combined as team members organize elements that are common. Teachers, in applying the features of this model, engage in preliminary planning that involves identifying ‘priorities’. This is done in an effort to determine major classroom objectives regarding development of a set of key concepts, skills and attitudes that are congruent among the separate disciplines;

the webbed model - a curricular approach that relies on teachers’ planning around a chosen theme(s). Various subjects can be integrated in this way as focus is placed on pre-determined concepts, topics or categories that are central to a theme through which subject matter is presented;

the threaded model- focus is placed on developing various types of classroom skills among students. Teachers who ascribe to this model, plan integration activities specifically geared toward (1) helping students develop a selected set of “thinking skills, social skills, study skills, graphic organizers, or (skills in the use of) technology”, (2) applying “a multiple intelligence approach to learning” - all skillfully “infused into existing content” (Fogarty, 1991, pp. 63-64);

the integrated model- learning experiences across numerous disciplines are weaved together around concepts, designs, patterns, attitudes and skills that overlap. Similar to the shared model, interdisciplinary topics are introduced as a means of providing a holistic approach to classroom learning.

Brophy and Alleman (1991), question the effectiveness of curriculum integration strategies that may not be fully consistent with the underlying goals and aims of integrating. They highlight several instances where a lack of expertise, usually required for the efficient integration of knowledge and skills into meaningful classroom experiences, resulted in compromising content at the expense of activities that trivialized the integrity of a teaching unit. This suggests that once curricular integration is not fully conceptualized at the planning phase, many misrepresentations may emerge as classroom practice. Careful consideration must therefore be paid to ensuring that integration does not constitute conceptual vagueness, exaggeration and over simplification of subject matter (Sarason, 1990).

Teachers' Perceptions and Beliefs about Integrating VAPA Curriculum

Terri Lynn Suraco (2006) reports on her experiences of integrating among the arts having been exposed to the benefits and pedagogical strategies related to the process. She credits her training in the skill of classroom integration to classes she attended while pursuing a secondary art education methods course. As a student teacher, her placement afforded her the opportunity to further develop the theories she learnt previously through practice and active participation in the classroom under the mentorship of “a teacher whose whole art curriculum integrated with the social studies curriculum” (p. 70). Additional experiences led her to decide that she would adopt a professional approach: construct learning experiences by using classroom dialogue and inquiry. She hails the strategies that favour integration as integral to the task of helping students recognize “Big Ideas (those ideas which relate to student needs and interests), Key Concepts (major teaching points) and Essential Questions (based on general or specific concepts in a lesson unit)” (p.13).

Suraco (2006) acknowledges that successful integration plans depends on “the art educator, general classroom teachers and administrators collaborating to create a curriculum designed in a new and exciting way” (p. 13). Collaboration offers opportunity for in-service professional development and reflection. She also shares the experience of other participants who through their engagement in an integration programme reportedly found collaboration to be a vital element during the process. Their deliberations focused on the following:

What ways are most effective for educators to share ideas?

How do teams work well to accomplish goals that individuals find difficult to achieve by themselves?

What responsibilities do educators have to reach out to their students, colleagues and communities? (Carpenter as cited in Suraco, 2006, p. 13).

In espousing the role of a stimulating integrated art curriculum Suraco (2006) maintains that the professional goal of any educator or administrator should be “to encourage the life long learning and creative expression” of students and “to encourage critical pedagogy in all our educational environments” (p. 21).

In an investigation of strategies considered to be best suited to integrating instruction and learning experiences for teaching creative arts subjects, Yolisa Nompula (2012) explores the experiences of educators from nine provinces in South Africa and reports on their perceptions. One of the research aims of her study focused on pedagogy as an area linked to effective implementation of curricula. Arts integration, she advises, promotes experiential learning in the classroom and utilizes concrete experiences as advocated by Kolb's (1984) learning cycle: “reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation” (Kolb as cited in Nompula, 2012, p. 294). Learning experiences of this type however, depend on educators who possess competency (skills and aptitude) to determine and shape the pedagogy to be used.

The results of this study, based on a grounded theory design revealed that teachers agreed that the project method, discussion method and discovery method, elements of an integrated design offer opportunity for student enrichment via student/learner centered classrooms. In spite of having theoretical knowledge however, collected data showed that most teachers expressed having limited practical knowledge of useful approaches that would assist them in applying and sustaining integration principles over an extended period of time. In creating effective learning environments that support arts integration and subsequently raise levels of efficacy, 34% of

teacher-respondents expressed concern that subject advisors should visit schools to provide guidance.

Oreck (2004) supports the finding of Torrance (1970), Smith (1966) and Starko (1995) who suggest that “creativity and creative self image”, critical elements of teacher competence, “can be developed and nurtured to a great extent through professional development” (p. 56). He points to a study that examined the perceptions held by teachers who participated in an arts based professional development programme.

The main purpose of this study was to attempt to “strengthen the link between professional development and teaching practices in the arts” (Oreck, p. 56). While teachers reveal that they believe integrated arts lessons offer considerable value to students’ aesthetic, cognitive and skill development, “responses (also) suggest that teachers perceived that they have a relatively high level of support and autonomy to try new, innovative, and creative approaches in their classrooms (mean support score = 3.98 out of 5)” (p. 60).

In spite of the high degree of support they received, teachers who participated in the survey “expressed the need for additional techniques and knowledge to make connections” (Oreck, p. 63) across the disciplines and with other academic areas. While he advocates regular use of integrative skills to gain confidence and teaching efficacy, he blames lack of training in pedagogy for their hesitation to adapt and alter existing curriculum plans. In this regard this author recommends professional development as a component that can positively influence results in a curriculum that focuses on “arts-inclusive pedagogy” (p. 65). He justifiably concludes:

The inner resources of teachers; their attitudes toward art, creativity, and innovation;

their commitment to personal growth; and their educational and life values all need nurturing within the school and in professional development programs. The arts, Dewey (1934) contended, can be a model of the kind of experiences we most value in education. Now, more than ever, teachers need support and training to make all teaching more artistic. (Oreck, 2004, p. 67)

Summary

This chapter presented a review of the literature related to the current study as preliminary answers were being sought to the three research questions. The topics explored were: educational reform; curriculum implementation; teachers as facilitators of change; theory of planned behavior; influence of teacher perception on curriculum implementation; integrating curriculum; and teacher perception and beliefs about integrating VAPA curriculum. The following chapter describes the methodology to be used.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter illustrates the methods and procedures employed in the data collection and analysis of research that attempts to investigate teachers' perceptions of the challenges they encountered while implementing the VAPA curriculum using an integrated approach. The researcher is of the view that qualitative methods were most applicable as these methods embrace the perspective of the interpreters of this curriculum initiative. Data will consist of interviews held with teachers of three schools who have gained insight regarding the processes of implementation of the program at their respective schools. The methods used for data analysis and data collection will be discussed and limitations, delimitations and ethical considerations of the research will also be mentioned.

Qualitative Research Design

Education requires the support of a wide cross-section of stakeholders whose interests are particularly relevant. A major component of this group consists of teachers who are called upon to test the validity of emerging programmes in the classroom. It is important therefore, if student interest and motivation is to be maintained, that an exploration into the concerns of this group of implementers be undertaken. Undoubtedly, their experiences may uncover trends that can be considered applicable to the context of secondary schooling in Trinidad and Tobago.

The aim of this study was to gain insights into teachers' views and experiences while implementing the innovation in their schools. This type of research, according to Marshall and Rossman (2011) reveals perspectives that are personal and subjective. Evident in this type of discourse are insights that reflect participants' views that are "pragmatic, interpretive, and

grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 2). The qualitative approach was therefore chosen for this study as it afforded the researcher an opportunity to capture the complex nature of the issue surrounding VAPA teachers’ implementation of the curriculum innovation under study. This was done through the process of obtaining a rich, thick description of the teachers’ personal experiences during their efforts at implementation of integrated projects. In so doing, the researcher relied on the “voices and interpretations of informants through extensive quotes” and presented “themes that reflect words used ... evidence of different perspectives on each theme” (Creswell, 1998, p. 76).

It is important to note that the notion of subjectivity is central to studies of this type. Hence, a constructivist paradigm underpinned the study. Constructivists maintain that truth is relative as it is highly dependent on one’s perspective. This paradigm recognizes the importance of a subjective creation of meaning built upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Searle, 1995 as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). One major advantage of using this approach was that it afforded opportunities for the researcher and the participants to engage in close collaboration while participants related their views (Merriam, 1998). The researcher on the other hand, performed the task of constructing a “complex, holistic picture” by analyzing expressions and reporting the “detailed views of informants” while the study was being conducted “ in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p.15).

Justification for multi-site, case study approach

The collection of data in qualitative research is ongoing. The researcher, by observing people, events and occurrences conducts in-depth interviews with selected participants to ascertain their perspectives regarding the phenomenon of interest (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Creswell (2007) outlined five (5) approaches to data collection via the qualitative paradigm: phenomenology, ethnography, narrative research, grounded theory and case study. For the purposes of collecting data for this research, the case study was deemed the most suitable method of inquiry as the researcher was afforded the opportunity to regard contextual conditions which were significant to the issues being explored (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Case studies are also regarded as a preferred design for practical fields of study such as curriculum design and implementation as it has been “proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). The case study approach provides ample opportunity to investigate teachers’ perceptions of reality as they attempt to accurately describe the phenomenon under scrutiny and voice their concerns. In this way, a holistic view of the participants’ feelings, concerns, perceptions and experiences will be gained within the context of a natural setting (Lichtman, 2010). This data can assist in understanding the type of strategies that can be applied as a means of developing appropriate interventions (Yin, 2003).

Patton (1990); Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) contend that multiple case studies provide a purposive sample that creates the potential for generalizability of findings. Including multiple sites also serves to increase the scope of the investigation and the degrees of freedom (Bonoma 1985; Eisenhardt 1989; Miles & Huberman 1994; Parkhe 1993; Patton 1990). Experts in the fields of research hold the view that multiple case studies are generally regarded as valuable since a more rigorous and complete approach is applied than single case study research

due to the triangulation of evidence (also see Neuman 1994; Stake 1994; Yin 1994).

Triangulation of data in the context of multiple case studies can provide differing research sites and data sources that satisfy the generation and verification of theories (Denzin 1978; Deshpande 1983; Patton 1990).

Creswell (2007) also supports the case study approach as beneficial to this type of study by describing this approach as an exploration of a “bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). For the purposes of this study, given that it served to examine teachers concerns, the strategy selected was a collective or multiple case study that applied to the contexts of three bounded systems. This “strategy” served as “a kind of road map, a proposed plan for undertaking a systematic exploration of the phenomenon of interest”: the challenges faced by teachers during the implementation of a curriculum innovation in a local setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 94).

Context

This research was conducted in three non-denominational secondary schools in the Caroni educational district in Trinidad. Secondary schools cater to providing the instructional and holistic development of adolescents whose ages range from eleven to eighteen years. The curriculum offerings available to all students at the lower secondary level, forms one to three, adhere to the standards outlined by the National Curriculum for Secondary Education (NCSE). The schools involved in this study were government institutions comprised of student bodies that reflect diverse ethnic and religious groups that constitute our society. All schools instruct

students in three of the four areas of the Visual and Performing Arts offered at NCSE level and have prepared students in the relevant subject areas for CSEC examinations.

Population and sample

Merriam (1998) confirms that one of the first tasks in qualitative research is to identify the case and the bounded system or unit of analysis to be studied. Because this study focused on VAPA integration in one (1) educational district in Trinidad and Tobago, the unit of analysis was defined as teachers participating in this implementation. Consequently, purposeful sampling, a technique described by Creswell (2005) and Patton (2002) was utilized to select the participants of this study.

The aim of purposeful sampling is a non-random method of sampling that allows the researcher to discover and understand issues of paramount importance from the perspective of the participant (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) however, purposive sampling is a strategy to choose small groups or individuals who are considered to be knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest. This method was therefore used in selecting teachers for the interviews. Two VAPA teachers who teach at the lower secondary level of each of the three (3) secondary schools were selected to participate in the study. Thus a total of six (6) teachers, two (2) per school were chosen. Three (3) of the participants were specialist music teachers, of the other three, two were specialist visual arts teachers and one taught both dance and drama.

Table 1 below shows a profile of the participants regarding gender, age range, level of education and years of teaching at the lower secondary level.

Table 1: Profile of participants

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS					
Schools	Participants	Gender	Age Range	Level of education	Years of teaching at lower secondary level
A	1	Female	40-49	Master	20
	2	Female	30-39	Master	16
B	1	Male	30-39	Master	16
	2	Female	30-39	Dip Ed	15
C	1	Female	40-49	Dip Ed	17
	2	Male	40-49	Bachelor	16

All schools were selected prior to data collection. Three (3) non-denominational secondary schools in the Caroni Educational District in Trinidad were chosen for this study. These schools were selected based on an informal survey of teachers who reported that they participated in integrated VAPA projects during discussions at a workshop held recently. Three

schools were deliberately chosen because it was thought that a multi-case, mixed-methods design favoured the complex nature of the issue. This facility also proved valuable as the researcher wanted to obtain information from more than one source to improve the robustness of findings (Merriam, 1998; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014; Yin, 2003). Teachers in each school stood alone as a case, or unit of analysis, in and of itself. The criterion for participation was that the teachers must have engaged in VAPA integration for more than five years.

Instruments and Data Collection Strategies

Data collection involves “a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions” (Creswell, 2007, P.118). The idea for this study came as a result of a need to gain insight into the experiences gained from current practices during integration among visual and performing subject areas. The ontological issue addresses the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. To this end the emic (insider’s) view of the participants was considered tantamount to the principal goal of understanding the issue based on the “meanings and views of the people in the group being studied” (Johnson & Christensen, 2013, p. 393).

In an attempt to interpret and report the diverse views of multiple realities, the researcher as the key instrument regarded the process as one that was highly dependent on the axiological assumption that the participants’ values and opinions gained through specific experiences was the basis of the research. Thus, the researcher played an instrumental role in transcribing and interpreting the data generated from the respondents into meaningful information. Creswell advises, “Qualitative research is a form of inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of

what they see, hear, and understand. The researchers' interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context, and prior understandings" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39).

Johnson and Christensen (2013) describe the interview as "an interpersonal encounter" (p. 198). Kvale and Beinkmann (2009) refer to the relationship between interviewer and interviewee as a partnership in which they regard the interviewer as having a responsibility to extract "knowledge out of a subject's (participant's) pure experiences" (Kvale & Brinkmann as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 144).

In the early stages of this work, focus group interviews were considered the best method for gathering data from the participants. "A focus group", as explained by Johnson and Christensen (2012) "is composed of 6 to 12 participants who are purposively selected". This type of interview is considered beneficial "because they can provide the kind of information of interest to the researcher" (p. 205). Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook (2009) provide a list of benefits of focus groups. Some of these include:

- Obtaining general background information about a topic of interest;
- Stimulating new ideas and creative concepts diagnosing the potential for problems with a new program;
- Generating impressions of products, programs, services, institutions, or other objects of interest (as cited in Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p.204).

Because the issue of time became problematic in scheduling sessions to meet the required constraints of group members, the researcher resorted to conducting one-on-one, face to face, semi-structured interviews.

Best and Khan (2006) highlight the value of applying interviews as a data collection method when qualitative research is being conducted. The interview, they suggest, allows for

sufficient probing and interrogation of the issue at hand as in-depth explanations are pursued. “Through the interview technique the researcher may stimulate the subject’s insight into his or her own experiences, thereby exploring significant areas not anticipated in the original plan of the investigation” (Best & Khan, 2006, p. 335).

In this study, in an attempt to answer the research question: “What are teacher’s perceptions regarding implementing and adopting the design of integration?” the researcher engaged participants via semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured, guided or focused interviews are considered to be more flexible than structured interviews as thoughts, feelings and experiences of the participants are unearthed (Berg, 2009). Berg further purports that the semi-structured interview, although comprised of a set of “pre-determined questions and/or special topics” may allow the interviewer the privilege to digress even to the extent of incorporating “unscheduled probes” in an attempt to follow “the subjects' lead in order to uncover fully their (practices) ... their beliefs ... and the value they placed” on the issue being investigated (Berg, 2009, p. 71).

In keeping with the approaches already discussed, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the participants. An interview guide was used to carry out the interviews. All the questions constructed by the researcher and were reviewed to ensure they were able to elicit the type of responses that provided answers to the research questions. A pilot test was undertaken after which, necessary adjustments were made so that the final interview protocol which comprised of twenty-seven open-ended questions was created and used (Appendix C).

Establishing rapport with the participants as advised by Fraenkel & Wallen (2006) and Morgan (1998) encouraged the teacher participants to feel comfortable to engage in discourse. A letter, inviting the selected participants to be participants was hand delivered to them (Appendix D) and schedules were set based on their convenience. These interviews, which were held at the

participants' schools at various times of day to suit individual convenience, allowed the researcher to gain in-depth responses. Interview sessions lasted approximately forty-five minutes each and were audio taped using a hand-held voice recorder. This device facilitated transcription of the data within a reasonable time frame afterward.

Although guiding questions were asked, additional items were formulated as checks were made to clarify any unclear issues that may have emerged, and most importantly to probe interviewees as a means of encouraging them to divulge ideas and views that were considered pertinent. Conducting the interview with each participant also helped me to understand the true nature of the phenomenon under study as it pertained to their personal experiences (de Marrais & Lapan 2004). Once the data was transcribed, each participant was asked to examine the material to verify the accuracy of the details (Stake, 1995) (Appendix E).

The mechanisms of a good qualitative report rely justifiably on several sources of data. To this end the researcher kept a reflective journal (Appendix F) that chronicled thoughts, observations, insights and impressions of the interviews as they were experienced (Stake, 2010). The practice of journal writing, according to Lyons (2010), encourages the art of "self-awareness, interpersonal understanding, critical analysis ... as a means of allowing the researcher to recall seemingly meaningless details; which may assume greater meaning upon reflection" (p. 361). Guba and Lincoln (1989) regard this type of note taking as an extremely valuable form of data collection as it provides both a descriptive and reflective record of events that serves to crystallize the researcher's experiences during the entire research process (see also Keeves & Lakomski, 1999). Marshall and Rossman (2011) also promote its use and application. They reveal that they consider it necessary that there is evidence of an established bond between researcher and participants. It is therefore advised that the former exhibits "presence in the lives of the participants invited to be part of the study" as this is considered to be "fundamental to the paradigm" (p. 59) of qualitative research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis can be described as a process of organizing and reducing large amounts of data into a story line based on the interpretation of recorded findings (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Patton, 1987). Merriam (1998) refers to this procedure as a series of complex actions that require continuous movements between data and concepts, description and interpretation. This process, as this study was employed, served to bring order, structure and meaning to the recorded mass of data gathered through interviews and journal entries. A wide range of procedures are recommended after the data has been gathered.

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) reported on a three-tiered process to be applied while analysing data. The three steps, namely, data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verification were applied to the data sourced through the interviews and journal pages. Data reduction refers to the process of decision making as choices are made regarding “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming” (p.12) concepts that emerged from the data set and related to the research issue (Appendix G). In an effort to condense the data, transcripts and journal entries were thoroughly scoured for emerging units of analysis to form pattern codes from which themes were formed (Appendix H).

Content analysis, a strategy employed by researchers to interpret collected forms of data to be used as text for the purpose of reporting (Miles & Huberman, 1994), was undertaken as the researcher sought to learn about each individual case. In so doing tasks included transcribing audio-taped interviews at the end of each session, examining the data to determine the codes that emanated from the responses, generating a description of the participants and developing themes to be represented in the qualitative narrative report to establish relationships and patterns to provide clear meanings of collected data (Appendix G).

The second stage, displaying the data, brings further organisation of data as information is assembled to facilitate the conclusions that may be gathered. In this study, the display of data was

typical of a combination of “case-oriented and variable-oriented strategies” (Miles et al., p.103). This type of integration allowed for a clearer analysis of data. Information in some instances was presented by applying theoretical frameworks to cases which were explored in depth by placing the focus firstly on one case, then examining successive cases to determine if observable patterns match. In other situations, guided by the variable-oriented design, “themes that cut across cases” (p. 103) were highlighted. Pseudonyms, used in the reporting of data to conceal the identity of the respondents were used as references to statements made by the participants.

Research conclusions were drawn and verified lastly and were developed by paying close attention to the implications derived from a thorough scrutiny of the patterns and themes. As the data from interviews and transcripts were carefully assessed over a period of time, the researcher became very familiar with the content. The conclusions therefore, were based on an intention to portray the issue in a dependable, reliable, compelling and significant manner. As a result therefore, the researcher paid high regard to objectively reporting the findings in a “clear, coherent and ... unified” (Charmaz and Eisner as cited in Miles et al., p. 313) fashion.

Merriam (1998) posits “the right way to analyse data in a qualitative research is to do it simultaneously with data collection” (p. 162). Analysis therefore took place while data was being gathered, and where uncertainty arose, clarification was sought through one-legged interviews. This inductive approach ensured that common themes emerged with analysis of the data present.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers usually encounter a number of ethical issues that arise at various stages of the research process regardless of the method used. These issues must be carefully considered during data collection, data analysis and data sharing. “Treatment of research participants”, caution Johnson and Christensen (2012) “is the most important and fundamental issue that researchers confront” (p. 103). Research experts Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Merriam

(1998) and Creswell (1998) identified guidelines that, if applied, would assist in maintaining the ethical standards of qualitative studies. The following guidelines were regarded as they comprise a list of professional issues that were applied:

- The researcher must appear to have policies in place that would protect the anonymity of the participants who have agreed to participate in this study at all stages;
- The researcher must respect the rights and interests of all participants;
- Information that relates to the researcher's personal experiences should only be shared if it is necessary to do so;
- Data must be presented as accurately as possible. Incorrect statements or opinions are to be considered a violation of ethical research;
- A promise to share only the information agreed upon must be kept at all times;
- There must be no attempt to deceive any participant regarding the nature and the purpose of the study in any way.

The researcher was mindful of an obligation to regard the above requirements. In light of the confidential nature to be applied to this type of research, participants were encouraged to select their aliases which were used in the data analysis.

Establishing trustworthiness

The four criteria suggested by Guba (1981) were adhered in an effort to continually assess the merit and trustworthiness of the report. "Guba's model is based on the identification of four aspects of trustworthiness that are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative studies: (a) truth value, (b) applicability, (c) consistency, and (d) neutrality" (Guba as cited in Krefting, 1991, p. 215).

'Truth value' (credibility) was maintained by applying several strategies in an attempt to represent the multiple realities of the respondents adequately and present accurate descriptions of the experiences relayed (Krefting, 1991, p. 216). The strategies adopted ensured that the researcher made provision for participant feedback and triangulation of data.

Participant feedback (member checking) informed the validity of the data collected and transcribed as a means of ensuring that the interpretations and conclusions gathered were in keeping with the views expressed. This approach can serve to "clear up areas of miscommunication" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 266-267). Occasionally, comments, probes or questions were taken back to the participants for review to establish accuracy of findings. This step was undertaken as transcribed data evidence, which formed the basis for the findings were interrogated to establish the intended views of each participant in an attempt to eliminate researcher's bias and support interpretive validity.

In keeping with the ethics applied to qualitative research, and in an effort to maximize the internal validity of this research study, a reflective journal was kept as a means of triangulating data obtained from the interviews. Every effort was made to establish links with the theories that applied to this study. This journal was useful to me as it helped me to appraise my impressions of my role in the process of data collection and the perceptions I formed during the course of this study. It also helped me to recognize patterns that surfaced as the data was collected (Guba, 1981). Reflexivity "involves self-awareness and critical self-reflection by the researcher on his or her potential biases and predispositions as these may affect the research process and conclusions" (Johnson and Christensen, 2012, p. 266).

'Applicability' (transferability) of the findings relies on the perspectives and considerations of the reader. Guba proposes that research meets the criterion of transferability or

'fittingness' "when the findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts" (Guba, 1981, as cited in Krefting, 1991, p. 216). In keeping with this paradigm, all efforts were made to provide detailed information through the use of rich, thick descriptions of the case which affords the reader the opportunity to apply the insights and interpretations to comparable situations (Creswell, 2007).

'Consistency' (dependability) measures employed in the conduct of this research, ensured that if the study were to be replicated using the same type of participants in similar contexts, the findings would be replicated (Krefting, 1991). In order to establish issues of dependability, the researcher sought an independent audit of field notes by enlisting the assistance a peer (Patton, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

'Neutrality' in qualitative research refers to the degree in which findings are unaffected by biases researchers may hold regarding an issue. Objectivity here is regarded as a fundamental concern to this type of study as the researcher is seen as "scientifically distant" (Krefting, 1991, p. 217) and is neither influenced by nor an influence to the results therein.

Limitations of the Study

The conditions that are beyond the control of the researcher are considered as limitations. Although the research study can provide information generally regarded and beneficial to educators and policy makers, these restrictions must be acknowledged.

An investigation into teachers' perceptions was limited to their experiences while integrating the Visual and Performing Arts curriculum. Time constraints also arose as a limitation as difficulties were experienced in attempting to schedule interviews based on the teachers' availability within the timeframe to conduct the study. It should be noted too that the qualitative researcher as the instrument of data collection and analysis comes to the field with a

set of prior experiences that can strongly influence interpretations of participants' accounts (Geelan, 2003). Thus the occurrence of biases may be viewed as a further limitation of the study.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was restricted to six (6) non-denominational secondary school teachers within one educational district. While the researcher is convinced that the sample size produced sufficient data one should also observe that the findings cannot be applied to any other school in Trinidad and Tobago or to any other group of stakeholders as curriculum contexts may differ.

Reflections

Engaging in qualitative research proved to be a tremendous task that provided me with the opportunity to gain insight into specific aspects of educational research. The topic which was conceptualised in September 2013 became my focus as I began to peruse documents for information on the issue, hold discussions with VAPA educators and curriculum officers to develop a sense regarding the nature of the issue. For almost four months, even though I was aware of the main focus of the research, I spent most of the time trying to narrow the issue in an effort to place concentration on an aspect I consider to be highly significant.

In January however, a conceptual framework was brought into focus and thus began the complex tasks of firstly, presenting the background of my study to my research supervisor, who provided me with guidance on further narrowing the topic and paying close attention to the most salient aspects. In the ensuing months I attempted to apply the concepts regarding the methodology in a manner that would suit the purpose of my study so that I could elicit rich, thick data. Constructing the literature review however proved to be more challenging than I first

imagined. Long hours were spent reviewing its content trying to make sure the theories that would serve to support and justify the research issue were brought to the fore.

Honestly, I must admit that the literature that featured the advice of qualitative researchers and theorists that guided my research assisted me as I tried to refine my interviewing skills to accomplish my data collecting tasks. When however, I found myself having to rearrange schedules when respondents had to attend to critical matters, I thought the effort was an unending one of twisting uncertainties. The process however tested my resilience but I endured and kept focused on the requirements of the task.

My final submission however, reflects the outcome of my deliberation and diligent efforts which demonstrates changes in my understanding of roles and of my nature with respect to assuming them in a responsible and devoted manner.

Summary

The methodology used in the study was outlined in this chapter. The researcher was afforded the opportunity to gather and present a rich, thick description of the participant's opinions as they engaged in integration efforts through the use of a qualitative research design. The study involved six participants who were purposively selected. Two instruments, interview and journal entries were used to collect data. A thematic analysis was applied to the data and resulting findings were presented in a narrative form. Peer review and member checks were also undertaken to ensure that credibility was maintained. Analysis of the findings from the study will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative multi-site case study was to investigate teacher perceptions of the curriculum integration process in Visual and Performing Arts, a core area of the secondary school curriculum. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, it is useful to note that following the interviewing session, each transcript was read and as themes emerged, they were noted and coded. In the selection of the themes however, the researcher was mindful of her role to substantially present the documented information in a way to represent the themes in a meaningful manner in keeping with the purpose of the study and its conceptual framework. Adjustments of themes therefore, were made as necessary. Some text was allocated to more than one of the themes at this stage.

This chapter presents a report on the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study with reference to the following research questions:

1. What pedagogical approaches do teachers adopt to facilitate the implementation of the integrated curriculum?
2. How do teachers feel about implementing an integrated VAPA curriculum?
3. What factors do teachers perceive inhibit them from implementing the integrated VAPA curriculum in the way they would like to?

The subsequent findings highlight the perceptions of six teachers' regarding the implementation of the integrated curriculum in VAPA and are presented in a thick narrative format with accompanying verbatim responses. This is being done in an attempt to illustrate the

opinions of the respondents in an accurate manner. My personal journal also afforded the opportunity to triangulate the data.

Research Question 1: What pedagogical approaches do teachers adopt to facilitate the implementation of the integrated curriculum?

Pedagogical strategies that favour integration in VAPA (Appendix D)

All six participants were able to highlight the approaches they applied to achieve their instructional goals. They all expressed that there is immense value when student activity is linked to authentic experiences that can be used to generate meaningful expression. The students, they suggested, benefit even when art practitioners visit to discuss their own lived experiences. Faced with the reality of other factors such as time, resources and physical space these teachers asserted the view that they try to apply pedagogy in ways they deem relevant. An analysis of their responses indicates however, that several strategies are employed to cater for authentic tasks in instruction and assessment. The following excerpts represent the perceptions of the sample:

TA1: "I relate most of the content to practical work. When students enter the classroom they must try implementing the theories for each session. Practical activity is a part of every double period. In addition the VAPA teachers arrange a field trip so that students can have personal encounters with the persons and ask questions or examine materials and equipment related to the skills involved in an arts-based field".

TA2: "differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, thematic model, immersed in the environment- field trips"

TB1: “Our department follows plans from a standardized arrangement. At the beginning of each term Schemes of Work for forms one to three are planned with one major activity designed around the project-based, thematic model. Every term students can choose to do a practical or research related activity in the first two years but in form three they must do both.

“... during the term I tease students’ imagination by incorporating problem solving approaches”.

TB2: “The project-based approach works best as students are exposed to information from the perspective of all three disciplines taught at our school. In this way they are more motivated to present one Festival Project for their assignment because they can choose an option that focuses on any one of the disciplines. Many times they choose the option they like most or they may want to try an option that would reinforce a skill they think they need to develop”.

TC1: “Team-based learning (TBL) students are actively engaged in active learning and critical thinking. The whole idea of the strategy is to get students engaged in talking and using the knowledge they learnt to solve problems. Use of themes and big ideas driven by essential questions to frame the investigation of topics.

In considering the planning of the curriculum it is designed around a big idea, theme, or question first; then, decide what projects, skills, or materials will support meaningful investigation and expression”.

TC2: “Problem solving methods can work most of the time”.

“We ask the students to group themselves and assign a major project that can give them exposure in the arts in a real way. I guess that sums up cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, activity-based learning while they develop skills by imitating what they have been exposed to or they find out about skills they need to use”.

Research Question 2: How do teachers feel about implementing an integrated VAPA curriculum?

Teachers' Perceptions regarding quality of integrated VAPA curriculum experiences

Based on the responses from participants' interviews benefits can be linked to both teachers and students. Participants' focus however was centered on the range of advantages that could be gained by students who are exposed to the approaches by way of instruction and assessment. The ensuing quotations indicate their views regarding the benefits of integration in VAPA:

- “In a very subtle way, students can be assigned responsibility for tasks based on their ability or to develop particular skills”
- “It can positively impact on preparing students for form four”.
- “Teaching tasks are made easier because teams can work together to create an integrated project”.
- “The art of fusing concepts together from the separate disciplines means that students can share knowledge with each other based on their individual strengths”.
- “Students have gained an appreciation and holistic view of the arts . . . they are dependent on each other from a production and skills based perspective”.

- “One major advantage is that students see how the arts can come together to create exciting experiences. I use the term ‘in living color’ when I integrate and students respond by adding dimensions to release their creativity. All their ideas are incorporated in our classroom endeavors so that makes them get a sense that their expressions are worthwhile”.
- “Students (can) gain skills in materials that emphasize their thinking about ideas across media... gain familiarity with multiple ways of representing and thinking through a specific theme or concept”.
- “Students see the tasks as meaningful. I enjoy the interaction”.

Quality with regards to an evaluation of the programme offered was questioned by two of the participants who hinted that they felt that the programme did not meet the required standards of integrating. The following were their concerns and an assessment of their perceptions brings into focus the findings of the Ramsaran (2013) report which suggested that based on data related to the survey of VAPA teachers many Integrated Arts Projects did not represent a correct interpretation of the intended design:

- “The way it is done in my school there is not much of integration in terms of the teaching as the subjects are still taught separately, only now the marks are joined. The major project, a dramatic presentation though, allows students to participate in an activity that uses all the art forms. There they participate in an integrated concept and marks are awarded accordingly”.
- “True integration is only possible if the curriculum is designed for that, putting on a show at the end of the term does not validate the integration process, most of the times the

Visual Arts teachers will work on the decorations with the help of a few students, the instrument does not allow for the process of integration to occur at each level. It has no proper evaluation or assessment systems in place”.

Teachers' perceptions regarding clarity of integrated VAPA strategies

In an attempt to gauge teacher perceptions regarding their ability to implement the curriculum design, the question was asked “Do you consider yourself to be qualified to implement this aspect of the curriculum?” All participants affirmed that their skills afforded them the advantage to make recommendations regarding the strategies to be used. The following responses attested to this:

- “Not initially but as I participated in the efforts at our school, did some research to see what was happening in other parts of the world, my confidence grew”.
- “I describe myself as a lifelong learner but I am qualified to see where things can be improved along the way”.
- “apart from my training and qualifications in teacher education, my experiences in all the art forms are quite extensive at the level of performing”
- “... not formally trained but what we are doing works to suit our situation. It is strictly based on an experimental approach”
- “General teacher training, although the strategies did not specifically relate to integration gave me a fair idea of how to function”;

Teachers' perceptions regarding complexity of integrated VAPA methodologies

With regards to the challenge of integrating most respondents had disparaging remarks with regards to the levels of external support they received for their initiatives. They however acknowledged the roles played by their administrators and other colleagues and credited their personal motivation and resourcefulness for the impact of their efforts and their own competence. One of the participants even used a metaphor in highlighting the uniqueness of her experiences. The use of the metaphor “in effect, making allusions to an important environmental setting” (Miles, Huberman & Saldena, 2014, p. 281) acknowledges the reality of her perceptions. Statements expressed revealed:

- “Information regarding the initiative came at a staff meeting when our principal gave a breakdown of the pilot project in SEMP in its early years” . . . “principal tried his best to assist and encourage but he seemed as though he was also in the process of now trying to figure out what structures to put in place”.
- “Our principal noted that it had to be done”.
- “The onus is on the self-motivated, resourceful and administration-supported teacher to create avenues for knowledge” . . . “Everyone in the department still operate *in their own silos* (use of metaphor)”
- “I was forced to match the syllabus goals with my own knowledge of integration . . . There were no major challenges”
- ”Information regarding the initiative came from our Head of Department. She relayed her understanding at the time of the SEMP approach and even confessed that she needed time to assess what teachers were required to do.”

- “I think there was a workshop that lasted a week sometime in 1994. The Canadian facilitators tried to explain the goals of the NCSE programme”.

Research Question 3: What factors do teachers perceive inhibit them from implementing the integrated VAPA curriculum in the way they would like to?

Teachers' perceptions regarding practicality of integrated VAPA activities

While the participants all rated integration as a preferred method of implementation and related the strategies they found to be most useful, other points of view appeared to question the practicality of the strategies when combined with other factors. Although the responses varied noticeably among the participants with respect to the other factors that impacted on successful implementation of the programmes at their schools their utterances signal weaknesses in being forced to adapt the model in significant areas.

This suggests that major areas of integration may be overlooked. These areas included inadequate time tabling, overloaded curriculum objectives, lack of skilled personnel, overcrowded classrooms and limited resources. All these inadequacies invariably thwart ambitious plans to implement in a satisfactory manner. The comments of these three participants reveal their frustration:

- “However these methods (referring to strategies employed for the purpose of integrating), while they serve their purpose are only used in some activities, not all. When the term is disrupted and we have to prepare students for exams at the end of the term”.

- “The transition at my school is incomplete as we are still awaiting a dance tutor . . . Most resources are in place but we are yet to get a dance teacher to complete the programme”.

- “Very disturbed at the reality of the projections . . . no measures are in place for teachers to really practice and expand the strategies for overall development of students. Imagine in order to refine the talent here we have to keep students after school. Where is the time to refine student skills?”

The responses above suggest that teachers are forced to improvise on several levels, yet they are concerned that standards are being compromised as they yield to accommodate weak systems symbolic of inadequate support structures that place restrictions on time, and resources. To this end, one participant, who appeared slightly agitated as he recollected his past experiences, questioned the significance of the integrated approach as traditional methods still dominate the said VAPA curriculum. This necessitates, in his view, a recall of other strategies that are inherent in assessment practices in particular. Referring to the summative examination at the end of form three which requires students to participate in a practical and written examination that accounts for forty percent of the final NCSE mark TC2 shared:

- “The integrated approach should not have to end in a paper and pencil test”.

Concerns regarding information

While all the respondents showed a high degree of confidence in their capacity to contribute significantly to the implementation at their schools, the research shows that they invariably pointed to various sources of knowledge. Interestingly though, only one participant (TB2) gave credit to external sources through participation in the Diploma in Education at the University of the West Indies and workshops hosted by the Ministry of Education. The workshops, she said, were held during the early stages of implementation efforts in Trinidad and Tobago. In her opinion, they covered basic areas and through research she was able to influence members of her department to work towards creating a design that was an adaptation of the required models presented at the workshop.

On the other hand, teachers recalled their initial efforts but their sentiments reflect that there has always been a desire for a more comprehensive, formal approach. Four of the respondents, TA1, TA2, TB1, TC2, described their early experiences:

- “Luckily for us our school subscribes to educational journals, we spent some time reading on approaches used by schools in foreign countries ... studied what could work here and through discussions on a department level we tried to introduce strategies a little at a time. Over the years we tried newer versions, narrowed down some ideas and expanded on others”.
- “The principal at the time invested in books and sourced journals that helped us design models that could have been applied to our classes. It took us a long time - we delayed but felt confident to try the strategies we thought were convenient for us to use”.

- “Through sparse workshops ... information was given in a haphazard manner, it seems as though the presenters were still guessing and they couldn't answer our questions. Several of my colleagues have been hoping for something more substantial”.
- “Every term we review our old plans. Our department took the lead from one teacher who showed some eagerness to start. We worked her ideas, experimented on some of our own and at times I came across something on the internet that caught my interest”.

Need for professional development

As it pertains to improved curriculum delivery through the use of integrated methods, several teachers highlighted the need for practices to be standardized. While they were appreciative of the freedom that permits school personnel to make plans relevant to their own contexts, one participant expressed the need for a “fair measure of guidelines that could be used to streamline our practices”. His concerns were made in light of a lack of confidence in their efforts with regards to approval being granted if a knowledgeable expert were to offer an assessment to their current practice. He continued:

- “At times I am unsure if the way we integrate meets with the expectations of the curriculum officers. What if when they observe our practices they are not consistent with the intended objectives of the programme?”

Other participants are of the belief that “a series of” workshops to promote professional development in integrating skills among VAPA teachers are long overdue. There was an overwhelming call for regular ongoing participation at forums designed for teachers to meet and collaborate on issues which, as their responses suggest, will assist in increasing the levels of

motivation among participating teachers. Two out of the six teachers strongly supported this claim:

- “We are voicing our concerns to ministry personnel when they visit our schools, yet our issues are being ignored. Every year we are invited to attend workshops that focus on standardization of the NCSE practical examinations . . . nothing that concerns the integrated curriculum. It seems that the focus is on the exam, not on procedures to improve classroom practice”.
- “A series of workshops need to be implemented to ensure that schools are on the same page. I understand the need for schools to design programmes with unique content but in a real sense rubrics are never given. Teachers are expected to create their own. What standards do we observe on the national level?”

The professional development strategies outlined by the participating teachers did not only revolve around formally planned workshops. Other forms of interventions mentioned included site-based visits by external parties to offer monitoring and support through discussion with the relevant practitioners. This they recommend should aim at providing feedback to alleviate their problems. One of the interviewees, when asked to identify avenues through which information could be provided to facilitate adoption of the programme succinctly highlighted this need:

- “It would benefit us if curriculum officers visit departments from time to time to dialogue. Many of our frustrations could be addressed here. Maybe they have it all figured out, but I feel as though we are guessing sometimes. I believe that their ideas would help us as we discuss and share problems encountered and successes, immediate feedback and resolutions”.

Collaboration as a form of inquiry and improved practice can mitigate factors that inhibit implementation

Based on information gathered from the interviews it is evident that in spite of a lack of supportive structures to facilitate the adoption of the integration, teachers engage in a range of efforts to implement a programme they believe is of immense value to students. One of the major ways they suggested it was done is through collaboration among department members and in some cases with the schools' administration. Collaboration, as revealed by the participants helps in providing enlightenment to the process when goals and procedures of implementing seem to be unclear. At different times during the interviews, the issue of teamwork was highlighted. Two statements which strongly support these views are mentioned here:

- "We worked together to come up with strategies for effective handling of the integration plans. At times we shared up tasks- each teacher explored an area to be fused into a theme or project. When a teacher had concerns or problems especially anything that had to do with students' reaction to a classroom method, we discussed different ideas that would suit the students' interests".
- "I remember going to my HOD telling her that I was uncomfortable with the programme. The next day she brought several handouts that had details of a similar programme that we were using and she distributed them. We discussed the methods in each of them and it helped clear the confusion in my mind."

Furthermore, the teachers regarded collaboration as an effective way to regenerate ideas as integration plans unfolded in their respective environments. As mentioned earlier, "we tried to introduce strategies a little at a time" (TA1), innovative practices that accompanied the change

effort were introduced gradually. In an attempt to override the factors that would undoubtedly inhibit them from integrating the arts disciplines, they rallied to ensure that the goals of implementing were achieved. Successive endeavors expanded as staff worked together to review methodologies they considered to be most suitable. Based on their stories one gets the impression that there was an intense desire to improve on efforts along the way and working alone would have limited their progress, hence the need for collaboration. Toward the end of our discussion, TB2 remarked:

- “It is comforting to know that we (VAPA teachers at the school) are all in this together. Several times through group efforts we can spot things that can make our instruction better for the kids . . . keep them interested or set assignments that are manageable for them”.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present an analysis of the findings of the data collected during the interviews. This analysis concentrated on generating a report regarding the themes that emerged as participants gave detailed accounts of their experiences while they engaged in practices aligned to integrating in VAPA. It should be noted as well that the resulting themes were identified as the researcher tried to assess teacher perception in response to the research questions that guided the study. The following chapter presents a discussion on the basis of the findings and concludes by providing recommendations for additional research.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings that relate to the research questions. The discussions will address insights from the literature review presented in chapter two, the conceptual framework on which the study was built, my own experiences as an educator as well as relevant readings and information that pertain to the issue. This summary will end with conclusions and recommendations linked to each finding.

Summary of Research Findings

The researcher is of the firm belief that the narrative style of the report is best suited to the data analysis that supports the purpose of the study.

Overarching research question:

What are the perceptions of six teachers regarding the implementation of the integrated curriculum in VAPA?

Overall the study revealed that the perceptions of the teachers related to themes on (i) *pedagogical strategies that favour integration in VAPA; (ii) teachers' perceptions regarding (a) quality; (b) clarity (c) complexity (d) practicality of integrated VAPA curriculum experiences; (iii) concerns regarding information; (iv) need for professional development to raise competence levels; and (v) collaboration as a form of inquiry and improved practice to mitigate factors that inhibit implementation.* These areas were of particular concern as they were seen to be integral to the concerns and beliefs that prompted their continued efforts.

Pedagogical strategies that favour integration in VAPA

When asked to comment on the various strategies these educators used to implement integrated activities in their schools their responses indicated that a considerable amount of research accompanied the challenge of discovering a range of appropriate child centred approaches. This proved to be important as they attempted to satisfy task and impact concerns in keeping with the nature of the changes that were required (Hall & Hord, 2006). In an analysis of the perceived advantages to be gained from an integrated design, the literature review offered several reasons for adopting the model. In keeping with these major goals, it is useful to note that as the analysis of the data suggests, teachers adhere to the principles of the project-based approach, differentiated instruction and cooperative learning among other strategies while ensuring that adequate arrangements are made to facilitate meaningful student engagement.

Teachers' perceptions regarding (a) quality; (b) clarity (c) complexity (d) practicality of integrated VAPA curriculum experiences

It is interesting to note that these teachers tended to link quality of educational outcomes with a broad view of incorporating perceptions regarding students, themselves and the nature and benefits of the programme instituted in their environments. To this end, emphasis is placed on teacher quality as an essential consideration. In this regard their statements reflect their intentions to equip themselves with skills that empower them to build individual capacity. This is done through motivated efforts in developing skills that are considered to be useful and applicable to promoting the highest possible standards.

In spite of their best efforts, as the data provided by the Ramsaran (2013) report on needs assessment reveals, the efforts of these practitioners reflect variable designs. This is due to a lack

of clarity in regards to the significance of the programme or any notion of a preferred design promoted by experts linked to the Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Capacity building therefore becomes the focus of their integrating plans as they seek clarity in direct response to increase the driving forces as recommended by Lewin (1951) that result in successful change efforts. When commenting on levels of complexity and practicality regarding the implementation of the integrated VAPA curriculum however, the group shared mixed views. One recurrent theme though highlighted the need for a synthesized approach that would favour an adherence to a national standard. This was evident through divergent ideas that expressed the reality that these teachers who currently implement the integrated curriculum felt that external support was non-existent. With respect to limited contact with curriculum specialists attached to the Ministry of Education, participants used phrases together with more direct statements such as “the onus is on the self-motivated, resourceful . . . teacher” as indicators that they felt they were forced to work on their own.

Concerns regarding information

Generally, this analysis highlights the struggles teachers face as they embark on making the initiative a meaningful one. With regard to information on current strategies and examples of best practices, each of the participants alluded to sourcing data from internet sites or journal articles but imply that they find these methods inadequate especially as the vignettes presented via these sources relate to foreign contexts.

Need for professional development

A careful application of the theory of planned behaviour is relevant as it seeks to explain the need for control beliefs evident in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the significant roles teachers assume when they attempt to engage in change efforts that ultimately reforms their practices (Sutton et al., 2003). The data provided in this study substantiates the need for professional development and comes against a reality of concerns regarding feelings of potential inadequacy regarding, as Pantic and Wubbels (2012) suggest, pedagogical skill, content or an interpretation of curriculum goals.

Fullan and Hargreaves, (1992) and Fullan (2007) express the immense value of ongoing professional development as a panacea for improved levels of perceived self-efficacy. Oreck (2004) expounds the relationship formed between heightened indications of creativity and teacher competence and suggests that these factors are more consistently harnessed when teachers are provided with professional development that is considered to be instructive. In the wake of implementing the goals of the integrated curriculum formal and informal professional development programmes represent a robust attempt to eradicate misguided plans that constitutes efforts that create frustration on the part of the teacher (Fullan, 2007).

Collaboration

Of the many factors that impede implementation efforts, the absence of collaboration can be regarded as a breeding ground for the propagation of a series of obstacles or restraining forces as suggested by Lewin (1951). Consequently, these participants relate their perceptions of engaging in collaborative efforts in light of the support they receive through networking. Their sentiments closely resemble Suraco's (2006) admonition that a great deal of reflection and

determination is achieved through teachers collaborating at various levels. Collaborative inquiry, she projects, encourages positive teacher characteristics such as life-long learning goals, critical thinking that strongly influences pedagogy, and professional advancement.

As such, as the corresponding data suggests, teachers advance their efforts through their reliance on each other in spite of inhibiting factors which include in some areas severe lack of resources. Their commitment to the goal of creating effective integration plans to suit their varying contexts justifies their willingness to work together as Hargreaves (1992) promotes, by informally creating bonds typical of collaborative teams that foster professional relationships.

Recommendations

According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) curriculum reform depends on a series of changes in the beliefs, knowledge and attitudes of educators. Fullan (2007) also adopts this view and further contends that teacher involvement that impacts on change efforts must reflect renewed commitments geared toward creating the structures that govern lasting reform measures. It is critical therefore that one understands the impact of teacher perceptions that accompany curriculum implementation plans. The perceptions of teachers, the main implementers of curriculum plans are therefore central to the goal of instituting curriculum improvement as the major goal of educational reform.

In order to attain effective implementation of the integrated VAPA curriculum, the following recommendations based on the findings of this study include:

- While teachers should be considered the designers of curriculum experiences, they should be supplied with clear statements of aims and purposes;

- On-going professional development courses that cater to developing pedagogical skills in a contextually rich and diverse environment;
- Opportunities for regular dialogue should take place in schools (within departments) in the presence of curriculum specialists with the principal aim being that of placing focus on the needs and peculiarities of each school;
- Teacher exchange programmes should be encouraged not only between schools, but inter-departmental arrangements should facilitate the exchange from time to time;
- Team planning and team teaching to foster the development of professional learning communities.

Within the context of this study, it is also suggested that ongoing research be attempted that places significant development of integrated arts activities at the lower secondary level in Trinidad and Tobago.

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Appendix A

National Performance (2012)

The Division of Education Research and Evaluation (DERE) report 2012 on the NCSE level 1 indicated that of the 147 registered secondary schools, 45% (66) of the schools wrote eight subjects while 8% (11) wrote five subjects.

Number of Subjects at Schools for which students were registered (2012)

Number of Schools	Number of Subjects
Registered for NCSE	
1	4
11	5
19	6
50	7
66	8

Final Curriculum Review Needs Assessment Report (p. 18)

Ramsaran (2013)

The following table shows the number of schools participating in the NCSE level 1 examinations in 2012.

Subject	No. of Schools/ 2012
Language Arts	142
Mathematics	141
Physical Education	125
Integrated Science	140
Social Studies	139
Spanish	141
Technologr Education	72
Visual and Performing Arts	112

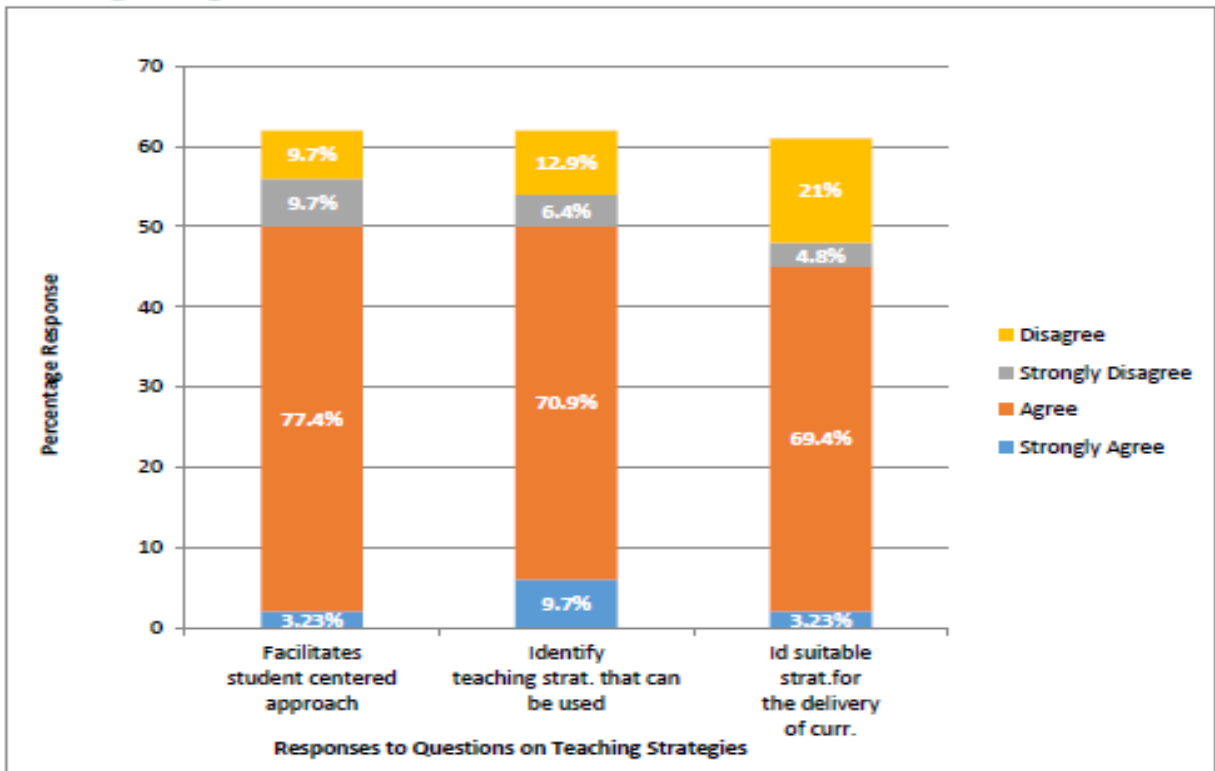
Final Curriculum Review Needs Assessment Report (p. 19)

Ramsaran (2013)

Appendix B

Responses to Questions on Teaching Strategies by VAPA Teachers

Teaching Strategies



Final Curriculum Review Needs Assessment Report (p. 154)

Ramsaran (2013)

APPENDIX C

Schedule of Interview Questions

Within the context of this research, the word “curriculum” refers to the SEMP Visual and Performing Arts Curricula implemented at the lower secondary level (forms one to three) at secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

The following questions are being used to facilitate the study.

Research Questions

The present study intends to investigate the following research questions:

Overarching Question:

What are the perceptions of six teachers regarding the implementation of the integrated curriculum in VAPA?

- How long have you taught at the lower secondary level?
- How well are you familiar with the goals of the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP)?

- How did you receive information about the curriculum initiative?
- Do you feel that you were sufficiently informed about the curriculum initiative before it was implemented and adopted at your school?
- Can you identify any other means whereby the information would have been more effective?
- When was the last time you received an update regarding current implementation requirements / strategies / models?

- How would you describe your feelings about implementing the initiative with the knowledge and information you have?
- What role did the administrative staff at the school play in making the transition to implement the curriculum?
- From where did most of your support come when you tried to implement the initiative in the early stages?
- In your experience, what type of support would you term as being the most effective?
- What would you describe as your major challenge(s) over the years as you sought to implement the integrated arts projects?

What pedagogical approaches do teachers adopt to facilitate the implementation of the integrated curriculum?

- Which pedagogical strategies do you recommend as being most relevant to the implementation of the integrated arts curriculum in Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)?
- How has your role changed with the advent of the integrated curricula in VAPA?
- Can you identify differences in the methods you use to teach now as compared with how you taught previously?
- In what ways has implementing and adopting the programme been beneficial to you or the students at the school?
- How would you describe your planning and preparation routines since implementing this new curriculum?
- Do you consider yourself to be qualified to implement this aspect of the curriculum?
- Are there noticeable advantages to teaching in an integrated manner?
- Are there any thoughts or concerns that you would like to share regarding your general view of the initiative?
- Is there anything you specifically dislike?

How do teachers feel about implementing an integrated VAPA curriculum?

- In your opinion, did you receive all the support that was required for the transition?
- Were you invited to any workshops by the Ministry of Education to familiarize yourself with the principles of integration?
- Were you invited to any workshops by the Ministry of Education to familiarize yourself with the standards by which projects should be assessed at the various levels?

What factors do teachers perceive inhibit the implementation of the integrated curriculum in the way they would like to?

- How would you rate your department's initiative?
- What contributes to this measure / lack of success?
- What do you consider would be the requirements of a more successful initiative?
- What advice would you give to teachers / schools who have hesitated in adopting this initiative?

Appendix D

Letter to Teacher Participants

April 19th, 2014.

Dear Teacher,

As part of the Master of Education (M.Ed.) programme, which I am currently pursuing at the University of the West Indies, I am required to complete a Research Project focusing on a topic of interest in the field of education. As such, I have chosen to investigate “Teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum integration process”.

This project entails in-depth interviews with several teachers presently enrolled at the school, in order to elicit teachers’ direct experiences and views of concern regarding the process of designing and executing the Integrated Projects, a requirement of the NCSE syllabus. This letter is a request for volunteers for the study. As a participant in the study you will be required to take part in one such interview, which will be conducted via email.

As a volunteer, please do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study at any time. You are assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality if you choose to participate in the study.

Moreover, you can withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.

The expected benefits associated with your participation are the opportunity for you to gain insight into how research occurs at the tertiary level and also to be a part of a qualitative research study that will seek to expand knowledge in the field of Teacher Education.

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Denise Pritchard

M.Ed. student

School of Education

UWI, St. Augustine

APPENDIX E

Transcript of Interviews held with TA1

Overarching Question:

What are the perceptions of six teachers regarding the implementation of the integrated curriculum in VAPA?

- How long have you taught at the lower secondary level?

TA:- 20 years

- How well are you familiar with the goals of the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP)?

TA:- Very Well

- How did you receive information about the curriculum initiative?

TA1:- My principal informed us at a staff meeting

- Do you feel that you were sufficiently informed about the curriculum initiative before it was implemented and adopted at your school?

TA1:- Not initially, I felt we weren't given sufficient information to feel comfortable about it. Even at this stage I have never heard of information being presented to teachers. The only information I received came from our own insight and what we may have read.

- Can you identify any other means whereby the information would have been more effective?

TA1:- Initially it was a case of we had to do it because it was initiated by the Ministry of Education. Its significance should have been detailed with its implementation. The Ministry should have held a series of teacher workshops to train/guide us through the implementation as well as to obtain our feedback.

- How would you describe your feelings about implementing the initiative with the knowledge and information you have?

TA1:- I am more comfortable now but still look for ways to improve the standard and make our cultural practices appealing to our group of students.

- What role did the administrative staff at the school play in making the transition to implement the curriculum?

TA1:- Informing staff that it had to be done- we tried to introduce strategies a little at a time.

- From where did most of your support come when you tried to implement the initiative in the early stages?

TA1:- The Principal tried his best to assist and encourage but he seemed as though he was also in the process of now trying to figure out what structures to put in place.

- In your experience, what type of support would you term as being the most effective?

TA1:- Support in terms of education as to the significance of the programme. Support from the curriculum development unit on a weekly basis following a series of meetings and workshops.

- What would you describe as your major challenge(s) over the years as you sought to the integrated arts projects?

TA1:- That is a difficult question. Ahm, let me see. Sometimes you tell yourself that the children may be interested in this or that and they are not so I like to ask them for suggestions. Sometimes their ideas lead into extravagant details but we find ways to make them work. That is with those who show an interest. You know (name of school) the parents only want to hear about book so the students have the same idea.

What pedagogical approaches do teachers adopt to facilitate the implementation of the integrated curriculum?

- Which pedagogical strategies do you recommend as being most relevant to the implementation of the integrated arts curriculum in Visual and Performing Arts?

TA1: I relate most of the content to practical work. When students enter the classroom they must try implementing the theories for each session. Practical activity is a part of every double period. In addition the VAPA teachers arrange a field trip so that students can have personal encounters with the persons and ask questions or examine materials and equipment related to the skills involved in an arts-based field.

- How has your role changed with the advent of the integrated curricula in VAPA?

TA1:- My role did not change

- Can you identify differences in the methods you use to teach now as compared with how you taught previously?

TA1:- I really did not have to change much of my teaching style, maybe I did a little more practical?

- In what ways has implementing and adopting the programme been beneficial to you or the students at the school?

TA1:- In some cases the scores of students who are weak in one area will benefit because of the fusion of all areas

- How would you describe your planning and preparation routines since implementing this new curriculum?

TA1:- The way it is done at my school there is not much of an integration in terms of teaching as the subjects are still taught separately, only now the marks are joined. The major project, a dramatic presentation though, allows students to participate in an activity that uses all the art forms. There they participate in an integrated concept and marks are awarded accordingly.

- How did members of the department come up with the strategies to be used? Was there a guide or model?

TA1:- We worked together to come up with strategies for effective handling of the integration plans. At times we shared up tasks- each teacher explored an area to be fused into a theme or project. When a teacher had concerns or problems especially anything that had to do with students' reaction to a classroom method, we discussed different ideas that would suit the students' interests.

- How was information gathered and shared regarding the strategies that suited the goals of the curriculum and the vision of the teaching staff (VAPA) for:

Teaching?

TA1:- Internet, journals, magazines, insight (chuckle)

- And for determining topics / themes to be addressed at the various levels?

TA1:- (with a sigh) From time to time different forms of inspiration

- Do you consider yourself to be qualified to implement this aspect of the curriculum?

TA1:- Yes but not initially but as I participated in the efforts at our school, did some research to see what was happening in other parts of the world, my confidence grew That doesn't say I wouldn't like to know what the ministry wants from exactly.

- Are there noticeable advantages to teaching in an integrated manner?

TA1:- In a very subtle way, students can be assigned responsibility for tasks based on their ability or to develop particular skills.

- Are there any thoughts or concerns that you would like to share regarding your general view of the initiative?

TA1:- My general view is that students should somehow be made to understand that preparing for an exam is not the only way education can have value. They must feel free to participate and show their creativity in art classes. I guess the bottom line is that is one aspect of mental development.

- Are you referring to the assessments that measure competence displayed during the projects?

TA1:- Not really, I mean when they have to work on their own it's like they show no interest because there is no book in front of them.

- Let me commend your department for their initiative but let me ask is there anything you specifically dislike?

TA1: The lack of enthusiasm on the part of some of the students; they do not see the active learning as important.

- Is there anything you specifically dislike about the goals and design of the integrated projects or the method of implementing?

TA1:- Not really.

How do teachers feel about implementing an integrated VAPA curriculum in the way they would like to?

- In your opinion, did you receive all the support that was required for the transition?

TA1:- The transition at my school is incomplete as we are still awaiting a dance tutor. That in itself shows that the integration is still not complete. Most resources are in place but we are yet to get a dance teacher to complete the programme.

- Were you invited to any workshops by the Ministry of Education to familiarize yourself with the principles of integration?

TA1:- Not that I can recall.

- Were you invited to any workshops by the Ministry of Education to familiarize yourself with the standards by which projects should be assessed at the various levels?

TA1:- Yes a very long time ago.

What factors do teachers perceive inhibit the implementation of the integrated curriculum?

- How would you rate your department's initiative?

TA1:- Very Good

- What contributes to this measure/lack of success?

TA1:- I will not say that at my school there is a general lack of success, but students will do better if they can really understand the importance of the programme. Luckily for us our school subscribes to educational journals, we spent some time reading on approaches used by schools in foreign countries ... studied what could work here and through discussions on a department level we tried to introduce strategies a little at a time. Over the years we tried newer versions, narrowed down some ideas and expanded on others.

- What do you consider would be the requirements of a more successful initiative?

TA1:- I am of the opinion that most students do not see the importance of the programme and generally lack enthusiasm. They should therefore, be sensitized about its place in the curriculum.

- What advice would you give to teachers / schools who have hesitated in adopting this initiative?

TA1:- It can positively impact on preparing students for form 4.

- Thank you for your time and I wish your department all the best in future attempts.

Appendix F

Transcript of Reflective Journal Entry

Validity of the theoretical framework (theory of planned behaviour) – May 20th 2014.

In collecting data for this research I have reflected several times on Ajzen's (1975) theory of planned behaviour. The principles behind this theory suggest that a person's judgment and perceptions regarding the nature of a task invariably impacts on their level of Perceived behavioural control". The qualitative nature of this research effort has provided enlightenment for me and has been causing me to reflect on my own control beliefs regarding VAPA Integrated Arts Projects. Today's interaction with teachers from School B was indeed interesting and thought provoking as well. These teachers with basic information regarding the nature of the programme charted a plan of action that involved research, collaboration and a willingness to adopt a plan that was considered "alien" when compared with the teaching of separate disciplines.

Understanding the meaningfulness of their effort shown through their sustained practice made me aware of the subjective nature of reality, particularly in light of the control beliefs that makes on sensitive to the forces that must be applied when any change effort is being considered. This form of meta-cognition takes place at various stages in our lives when we face decisions regarding the implementation of new practices. Change, in retrospect is anticipated if one however sees the need for newer structures to be implemented and if the control beliefs are somehow aligned with feelings of confidence. One therefore, in order to prepare for inevitable change should engage in critical thinking to assess all factors that relate to the process that impacts on a successful effort.

My interactions with these teachers helped me to interpret what the issue of change and the adoption of new programmes mean to them.

Appendix G

Summary Table – Data Analysis

	RESEARCH QUESTIONS:		
	1. What they know about IAP	2. How they feel about IAP	3. What do they do or see the need for
TA1	Limited information No formal training in integration strategies	Approaches offer benefits to students Allows for differentiation of tasks Caters to individual student interests and needs Students who exhibit weakness in one area can benefit from marks from more proficient disciplines Wants to see students more enthusiastic	More practical work Teachers assign tasks for their classes Marks are accumulated Create situated learning experiences- field trips, choral work, dramatic presentations Provide options for students to perform in the classroom Provide options for students to showcase for school Intervention and feedback by curriculum specialists
TA2	Attended workshop held in 1994 Did a lot of research	Confident Programme has benefits for students The design is easy to use Would like to participate in professional development	More practical work Marks are accumulated Create situated learning experiences- field trips, choral work, dramatic presentations
TB1	Limited information No previous knowledge to make applications	Disturbed Unclear about integrated strategies	Performed research to explore teaching strategies Teacher creativity Design tasks based on

	No recollection of strategies discussed at workshops held many years ago	<p>Confident with content</p> <p>Self-motivated</p> <p>Students gain an appreciation of the arts</p> <p>Students work better in teams</p> <p>Develops skills in students</p> <p>Supported by administration and teachers in department</p> <p>Need for collaboration</p>	<p>individual interpretation</p> <p>Design tasks based on shared understandings within department</p> <p>Make adaptations as necessary to suit teacher/department goals as necessary</p> <p>Plan project-based teaching units to incorporate art disciplines</p> <p>Engage students in problem solving</p> <p>Visits by curriculum officers</p> <p>Feedback from visits by curriculum personnel</p> <p>Collaboration with teachers from other schools</p>
TB2	<p>Formal training from DipEd. (VAPA)</p> <p>Conducted internet-based research</p>	<p>Comfortable</p> <p>Self-motivated</p> <p>Supported by administration and teachers in department</p> <p>Confident that approach has benefits to student engagement</p> <p>Students appreciate value of the arts</p>	<p>Conducted individual research</p> <p>More practical work</p> <p>Discussion held around a theme that covers several disciplines</p> <p>Create resources including text resources and software</p> <p>Appropriate assessment instrument</p>