

AN EVALUATION OF EDUCATORS CONCERNS WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NUTRITION COMPONENT OF THE HEALTH AND FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Marisa Dowrich

Project Supervisor: Dr. Isabella Granderson

2011

Background: Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) is a continuous process aimed at ensuring that individuals, through guided learning experiences, acquire attitudes, knowledge, skills and values which would empower them to develop healthy lifestyles and make decisions that would impact positively on themselves, their homes and their communities (Ministry of Education, 2001). The genesis of this programme came out of the first international conference on health promotion, the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion took place in 1986. This conference was one of the first initiatives by Caribbean Ministers Responsible for Health, as a joint framework for health action (Caribbean Charter for Health Promotion, 1993).

Objective: The aim of the study (1) was to identify the concerns, perceptions and attitudes of teachers to the implementation of the eating and fitness component of the Health and Family Life Education Programme among in Primary Schools in the St. George Educational District. (2) To evaluate the six year old innovation, a mixed method approach was used, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data.

Design: The study sought to explore three research questions: What were the concerns, perceptions and attitudes of teachers with regard to teaching the nutrition component of the HFLE curriculum in primary schools, how effective was the training that teachers obtained and what do teachers perceive as the facilitators/barriers to satisfactory classroom implementation of nutrition education. Twenty-one teachers from three schools were randomly selected from each level of the school. A structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview were the instruments used to collect data.

Rseults: The findings of the study revealed that teachers mostly had task and impact concerns. The emergent themes with regard to their concerns were training, time, resources, administrative support, collaboration and parental involvement.

Conclusion: Curriculum change cannot be successful if it's most essential users , (implementers) are not involved, especially since they are the ones expected to effect change. As such, the concerns and perspectives of teachers ought to be of utmost importance where curriculum change is concerned. Successful implementation of HFLE or any other programme however is not solely dependent on the it's implementers but rather includes the environment in which implementers exist.