

ABSTRACT

The unfolding: Phenomenological perspectives of a group of grade four inner city primary school boys engaged in a Jamaican Arts-based Multi-method Instructional Network (JAMIN)

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The ability to read, write, view, think, speak and listen in an inter-connected way, and to apply these skills in different contexts, is integral to human existence. Synonymous with this trend, is the growing concern among educators, policymakers and researchers about the underachievement of Jamaican primary school boys in their literacy development. This study focused on the perceptions of a group of inner-city grade four boys who engaged in a Jamaican Arts-based Multi-method Instructional Network (JAMIN), a literacy programme that was gradually designed for them and implemented over one school year. The boys attended an inner-city primary school in East Kingston. This study utilized a multi-method approach, but was grounded in heuristic phenomenological principles. The findings are complex and multi-layered. However, the boys clearly voiced six strong perceptions of their learning. Firstly, they viewed reading as fundamental to their success in different areas of their lives. Secondly, some of the boys expressed dislike and fear of writing. Thirdly, the boys indicated that emotions play an important role in their literacy development. In addition, gender-related issues influenced the boys' literacy learning. Finally, motivational factors played a major role in the boys' active participation in their learning. Although there were some instances when all of the boys responded to different aspects of the programme in similar ways, it was clear that they had special preferences and interests and made their own choices based on their learning styles, their personalities and the contexts of their learning. In essence, the boys, like all human beings are complex beings who crave love, support and an *I care* attitude from those who are granted the great privilege to teach them literacy skills, and in doing so, transform their lives.

Keywords: Jamaica arts-based; inter-connected literacy learning; multi-method; child-based, gradually designed curriculum, reflective practice, students' perceptions of their learning; multiple ways of knowing; multiple factors; multiple identities; creativity; cultural relevance; cultural continuity, literacy across the curriculum; engagement, inter-disciplinary, network