

ABSTRACT

An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Secondary Education Modernization Programme Science Curriculum in the St. Patrick Educational District –Trinidad and Tobago

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The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the implementation of the SEMP science curriculum by examining how teachers' concerns in the St. Patrick educational district were related to the extent to which the SEMP science curriculum was enacted. Concerns signal feelings of uncertainty and possible resistance. Consequently, teachers' concerns must be addressed. Therefore, analysis and understanding of personal meanings are important. The Concerns Based Adoption Model was the theoretical framework used to guide the study.

While the results provided a better understanding of teacher change in curriculum, it also provided valuable data for facilitating teacher development and school improvement. This study gave a voice to teachers as a means of gaining insights into their individual thoughts and feelings when implementing the SEMP science curriculum. A mixed methods design was used and data was collected through the use of questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. Fifteen teachers (48%) had Stage 0 concerns (Awareness) as their highest stage of concern. These teachers had little involvement with the SEMP science curriculum and were not concerned about making changes in their approach to instruction. Ten teachers (32%) were least concerned about collaborating with other teachers. The findings also indicated that twenty percent of teachers in the St. Patrick educational district were using the SEMP science curriculum as prescribed. An investigation of teacher concerns also provided information on the barriers to the effective implementation of the SEMP science curriculum which included lack of resources and administrative support, high student absenteeism, time constraints and curriculum overload. Recommendations for improvement of the SEMP science curriculum include regular professional development workshops and consultation with teachers, development and distribution of curriculum guides to teachers, regular visits by curriculum officers to schools and clearly written objectives in the SEMP science curriculum to reduce chances of mis-interpretation by teachers. This study can be replicated in other educational districts to determine if similar results are obtained in different settings. The findings can then be compared with the ones from this study to discern elements of similarity that may provide insight into successful implementation of the SEMP science curriculum at a national level.

Keywords: Michele Ramona Roopnarine-Ram; evaluation; implementation; SEMP science curriculum; Concerns Based Adoption Model.