

ABSTRACT

An Evaluation of the Implementation of Aspects of the Revised Jamaican Primary Science Curriculum and Enactment of Professional Development

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Continuous low performance in science, despite millions of dollars being spent on primary science improvement triggered concerns about how the Jamaican Revised Primary Science Curriculum (JRPSC) was implemented. The major purpose of this *QUAL-qual* sequential mixed methods study was to fill the need for evaluative evidence on the process of implementation of the JRPSC so that informed recommendations/decisions for improvements could be made. To this end Part I of the study employed an evaluative case study of implementation of aspects of the JRPSC on the basis of emic viewpoints of those involved with the process. This constituted the major component of this two-part study. Findings of Part I revealed that teachers entered the classroom with a traditional, behaviourist perspective of science education to implement an inquiry-constructivist curriculum. This led to disparities in classroom transactions and thus learning outcomes, between what was intended and what was observed. Part 2 of this study employed Participatory Action Research (PAR) which supplemented the case study and permitted a more up-close view of how factors related to one school and one teacher-participant initiated and facilitated the enactment of on-the-job professional development activities, arising out of the implementation process. PAR methodology provided evidence of the value of on-the-job professional development for change in teacher's practice and the factors that influenced it. It was recommended that policies be in place to support teacher learning on the job - to ensure structured use of common planning time, team teaching; self- and peer observation and assessment, guided by planned observation schedules, rubrics, feedback and supportive school leadership that ensures that professional development becomes an integral part of the school development plan, linked to the school's mission and supported by policies.

Keywords: Joan Saveka James; Stakes Evaluation Framework; curriculum evaluation; curriculum implementation; professional development.