

# **The University of Sheffield**

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## *DEDICATED*

This work is dedicated to my immediate family especially my children, Monifa, Mobafa, Moriba, Mokeba and Malaika and my husband Clyde. Thanks for your love, support, encouragement and above all for being there for me.

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## ABSTRACT

This participatory case study makes an in-depth investigation of one of the oldest junior secondary schools in south Trinidad. Prior to the historical intervention of the JSS system the majority of the school's rural catchment population never had access to secondary school education. As a result, the taken-for-granted notion that emerged was that the students who attended the school were prospective failures. This research therefore attempts to find out if there is a relationship between the Form Three JSS students' perceptions and statements of the reasons for their success or failure and their teachers' expectations about their academic achievement generally and especially in English Language.

The students' perceptions were ascertained from a randomly selected sample of 300 Form Three students/graduates who made ascriptions to a causal attribution questionnaire on the immediate receipt of their 14+ English Language Examination results. Their statements were determined through observations, role-play, vignettes, exit questionnaires, interviews of 4 groups of 12 students and interviews of a further stratified selected sub-sample of 6 students, one male and one female who represented the range of successful, average and low academic achievement levels and who provided more in-depth study.

The teachers' expectations were revealed through observation of their interactions and engagement with the students, interviews and a questionnaire about their expectations.

Frequency values, correlation and triangulation of the teachers' expectations and students' responses, statements and perceptions were made

The findings were robust. The students, especially those with average to good academic potentials perceived that the teachers significantly impacted negatively on their performance. The perceptions of the students who failed revealed significant relationships with their inability/perception of their grades received and double awarded significant relationships with their difficulty of the task and their lack of effort expended to which the teachers acquiesced with the latter. However, the students said that the teachers showed no concern and interest in them. They were often late, uncooperative, not helpful, biased and boring. 64.5% of the teachers admitted that they never helped the students. They also felt that the students were difficult to teach and that they would most likely fall into trouble with the law. The teachers had very low expectations for the students' academic future.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CIC</b>	- College of the Immaculate Conception / St. Mary's College
<b>CM</b>	-Canadian Mission
<b>CXC</b>	- Caribbean Examination Council
<b>EFA</b>	- Education for All
<b>GCE</b>	- General Certificate of Education, London/Cambridge
<b>If</b>	- Incentive Value of Failure
<b>JSS</b>	- Junior Secondary School
<b>QRC</b>	- Queens' Royal College
<b>LOC</b>	- Locus of Control
<b>Maf</b>	- Motive to avoid failure
<b>MI</b>	- Multiple Intelligences
<b>Ms</b>	- Motive of Success
<b>Pf</b>	- Probability of failure
<b>Ps</b>	- Probability of Success
<b>PNM</b>	- Peoples National Movement
<b>UNC</b>	- United National Congress
<b>UNESCO</b>	- United Nations Educational Scientific Education Organisation
<b>SWOT</b>	- Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
<b>TAT</b>	- Thematic Apperception Test
<b>YTEPP</b>	- Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme
<b>Liming</b>	- Spending time idly around
<b>Mannish</b>	- Acting older than one's ages

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

My many years as an educator and more recently as a researcher have convinced me that a major factor, though not the only contributing one to the existing pathetic academic situation at the junior secondary schools - JSS, is the teachers' expectations for and about the students' academic achievement. Some teachers in the system have very low levels of expectations about the students' academic competence and therefore they do not give as much as they should to ensure that the nations' children are well- motivated and encouraged to excel. The teachers' failure to become proactively engaged in ensuring success for all students may not be obvious as it is often excused by the existence of other mitigating factors. However, after years of interacting with junior secondary school students as teacher, Dean, Vice Principal, Principal and Manager at other para-educational institutions, and now as a Curriculum Officer, I have become more than passionately curious to hear from both the students and the teachers in a structured manner to what extent their statements, perceptions, feelings and opinions impact on each other.

Reflecting on that long and multi-faceted career of over forty five years as an educator has brought me to the realisation that my interest, active involvement and experiences gained have positioned me to investigate and make suggestions to implement corrective measures to reverse some of the institutional in-built

weaknesses that impact on the students' achievement levels in the junior secondary school - JSS- system.

The introduction of the JSS system was the first major attempt at effecting education change in the post colonial and post independence era of Trinidad and Tobago. The system was envisaged as the answer for 'education for all' and the vehicle to break the stranglehold of elitism and the exclusion of the masses from the secondary school system. It was also to become the vehicle to prepare the masses of students for industrialization and self-determination.

My interest and involvement in the JSS system has been closely intertwined with my profession as an educator. The JSS system was introduced as part of the Government's Five Year Education Plan, 1968-1973. It is more than coincidence that my own calling as a trained educator and graduate of the nation's only pre-service teachers' college, Mausica, began at the time of its inception 1968. Since then, my career has been charted by the evolution of this system of education in Trinidad and Tobago.

During the early period of my vocation, as a very young primary school teacher, I established some principles which impacted on my own expectations and effectiveness. Firstly, I have always loved teaching and have accepted it as my chosen career. Secondly, I decided that to be successful at my vocation I needed to be trained. Before entering the classroom, for two years, 1966-1968, I was schooled in the rudiments of good teaching methods and strategies at the Mausica Teachers' College. Thirdly, after college, my first posting was at a

primary school in South Oropouche, a forgotten country village in the south-western region of Trinidad. There, the unshod feet and lice-infested hair of many diseased students betrayed the poverty that existed. I was exposed to all the levels of the primary school system from reception, junior, senior to post-primary or school leaving. Fourthly, from my inception as a young teacher I had set principles that guided me always to ensure that every child who left my class was able to read and write at the prescribed level and was also actively involved in some extra-curricular fun-filled activity. Thus, fifthly, as a young teacher, and more so now, I believe that more sustained learning takes place outside of the classroom setting. Therefore at my first and later at my other primary school posting in North Trinidad I introduced Girl-Guides, literary and hiking clubs as part of my philosophical position. Later, at the secondary school level Inter-School Christian Fellowship, Drama, Chorale and Public Speaking, Poetry, Creative Writing, and Debating were other extra-curricular activities I used to enhance students' learning and their enjoyment of the educative process.

My actual involvement in the junior secondary school system began in 1971 when I was selected and trained as one of the pilot teachers to begin working in the JSS system in Trinidad and Tobago. When the training ended in 1973, I was posted at one of the first junior secondary schools opened in south-eastern Trinidad. For that first year the teachers and students worked together as a team and the students' academic performance levels were excellent. The students, like almost all students, were eager to learn and the newly trained young teachers gave of their best. The level of teacher expectation about the students'



academic achievement was high and intense. Initially, only approximately 600 students were enrolled so the class sizes were small. The school's physical structure was new, the equipment was modern and fully operational and the environment generally conducive to learning. Both students and teachers interacted and engaged well within agreed boundaries. Many of these early graduates are among the top professionals of the country's workforce today.

This romance with teaching was short-lived. The following year I was transferred to a traditional government, grammar school in which there were Advanced Level classes. This school was located in a totally different region even deeper south-west than my first assignment. Through my leadership, the school became actively involved in Secondary Schools Drama Festivals, Inter-School Christian Fellowship and the Trintoc National debates. For the first time, a student in that part of the country won an Island Scholarship. Today, that young man is one of the leading gynaecologists in this country. Undoubtedly, it was at that school that my love and care for secondary school students matured.

After two years there, the school underwent a culture-shock and a drastic change in tone. Even its name was changed. The school became a senior comprehensive school in order to accommodate the first intake of over 600 Form Three junior secondary school graduates who had sat the first-ever 14+ Examinations. It was at this juncture where I was both the Head of the English Department and the Female Dean for these new graduates that I first observed the magnitude of the impact of teachers' expectations, both the positive as well

as the negative on the students' academic performance. The effects of teacher expectation or lack thereof, of teacher stereo-typing, of the lack of teacher and class engagements, of teacher unwillingness and/or inability to motivate students were all manifested in varying degrees and practices. The two groups, the junior secondary school graduates and those teachers who functioned in that school system before their arrival, operated from different perspectives. The fallout from the massive implantation of that large number of students from a different type of school background and a different academic orientation resulted in a display of an awesomely adverse and strongly negative level of teacher expectation, with an attendant negative peer pressure from the existing, 'home-grown' students. The initial reactions of the junior secondary school students were retaliation and aggression quickly followed by open deviance and a total breakdown in discipline. The culture, morale and tone of the school were re-shaped permanently. The school never regained its pristine glory. The after-shocks of this astronomical change remained indelible. Its rippling after-effects have predicated and continued to affect the lives of all future junior secondary school students and graduates.

Subsequently, I was transferred to other secondary and senior comprehensive schools where the scope of my interest broadened and my involvement in curriculum development in English began. At successive intervals, I became the Head of the English Departments at three very large comprehensive and composite schools. But at each institution I interfaced with junior secondary school graduates who had to compensate with super-human effort to become

ready to sit the Caribbean Examination Council - CXC - secondary school leaving examinations in English Language.

In order to assist the teachers and ultimately the students, I was instrumental in founding and remained for (12) years the Secretary/Treasurer of the National English Teachers' Association. This body was formed in 1978, at the introduction of the Regional Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). Its major achievements were to prepare and provide instructional materials to assist teachers in the delivery of the CXC English Language and English Literature Curricula.

When I returned to the JSS system as the Vice Principal and later the Principal of the JSS under review, my interest in ascertaining how the students felt and perceived themselves and their teachers when they had to operate under such conditions of persistent failure, intensified.

During my posting in Administration at the JSS under review I was seconded as the first Regional Manager, South, to a para-governmental educational institution, the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme - YTEPP. In order to compensate for the inefficiencies in the education system, many young persons between the ages of 14-25, especially JSS graduates were trained there in the development of special vocational skills. They were also provided with remedial help to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, together with programmes to enhance their career opportunities, their work ethics and attitudinal behaviours.

It was as a result of functioning from the different vantage points at these two administrative positions that I was able to observe and opine on the malpractices and ill-effects of poor foundational teaching techniques on thousands of students. The many wasted years of students' exposure to improper and inadequate academic teaching strategies were very evident. These, combined with no teacher expectation for success, the lack of positive teacher effects, low/no teacher engagement, little teacher motivation from as early as pre-school and/or infant level, may have provided the platform for the present phenomenon of thousands of students being semi - or almost illiterate. By the time these students arrive at the junior secondary school the damage is already done. In order to help improve their academic attainment levels, these students require an immersion into astronomically sophisticated yet very sensitive remedial structures to correct their deficiencies.

I currently work as a Curriculum Officer attached to the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago and specifically assigned to English Language and the Visual and Performing Arts with particular responsibility for Drama and Dance. My duties vary. I write, implement and monitor the delivery of the Curriculum in both the areas of Language Arts and its necessary component of Reading and Drama at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Additionally, Curriculum Officers are required to assess the suitability of the applicants who desire to teach in their subject areas. Curriculum Officers also train teachers and conduct in-house workshops at individual schools, or in the eight educational districts and nationally. Added to those duties, I am also directly responsible for overseeing the performance of 20 Curriculum Facilitators who assist in the

monitoring and the delivery of the Curriculum in the eight educational districts, mainly at the primary school level.

As a Curriculum Officer, I am now better positioned to assess the structural weaknesses of the education system and to take corrective measures to address the problems that plague the JSS system. Quite recently, in the course of my duties, I was afforded an opportunity to introduce new subjects into the existing JSS system and curriculum. These changes can redound to the production of a more meaningful school curriculum for the junior secondary school students. I was the sole representative of the Curriculum Development Division on a Government Ministerial Team Working Committee that was assigned to convert a different junior secondary school in the northern region of south Trinidad, from operating the shift system to becoming an all-day school. My recommendations for curriculum change and curriculum offerings were accepted and implemented. The implementation of the new changes and structures are being closely monitored.

All those exposures and experiences have now propelled me to desire to hear from both the JSS students' and teachers about their feelings and expectations about their successes and failures generally and specifically in English Language.

In this research the school under the microscope is the one in which I worked in the Administration for over twelve years. During that period, each year 1800 students and over 70 teachers passed through the corridors of this institution.

However, for this 2001 Form Three graduating class, what they said and their causal attributions and perceptions of the factors that would have impacted on their academic achievement levels and their future anticipated performance to succeed were investigated. Their responses are to be assessed in relation to the observations and expressed expectations of their teachers about and for their success.

## **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The chosen methodology incorporates both the quantitative theory testing and the qualitative action-school-based insider participatory research approach which will triangulate data and findings in order to determine the extent of the relationship between the significant key factors and the players.

Using the causal attribution and exit questionnaires for the students and expectation questionnaires for the teachers, together with the researcher's observation, structured and unstructured interviews and personal records of both the students and teachers, and the students' role-play and vignettes, this research will attempt to show the relationship, if any, between what the Form Three junior secondary school students of 2001 said and perceived about their performance generally and at English Language in particular and their teachers' expectations about their success or failure. For further validation, personal in-depth interviews with a representative six students, three males and three females will be conducted. These students represent the varying levels of student academic ability, high, average and low.

The data obtained will be identified and analysed from three perspectives –

- what the students said - their statements
- what the students felt - their perceptions of their success or failure, and
- what the teachers themselves said about their expectations about the students' potential for successful academic achievement.

The information sourced from the students and teachers will be correlated in order to strengthen the comparison and triangulate the data. These findings will be instrumental in highlighting and focusing the educators' attention on corrective prescriptions.

## **THE KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

As a consequence, *the main questions of this research are:*

- to what extent is there a relationship between the students' statements and perceptions of their success or failure generally and specifically in English Language and their teachers' expectations about their academic achievement?
- What corrective curricula and teaching strategies should be adopted to address the relationship, if established?

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The ultimate purpose of this study is to arrive at a prescriptive, corrective strategy to modify the perceptions of each group, the teachers and the students.

This is crucial since each group must positively impact the other if a clear way forward is the desired option. Therefore, the findings ought to be instrumental

in informing the emergence of a more meaningful and differentiated curriculum and social remedial measures.

From reports and observations at the school, the students' reactions and levels of discipline tended to be always affected by who their teacher was. There were those male students who were considered the rebels and whose behaviour caused some of the teachers to shut down their classes and refuse to report to duty. Yet these boys were never disrespectful, were never late and never missed some teachers' classes. As a matter of fact, they attempted to perform successfully and to complete the tasks given to them by these teachers. Still they were completely different students in other teachers' classes. Did this attitude and difference in behaviour bear any significance to the pupils' perceptions of their teachers and the effect of their teachers' expectations about them? Teacher expectations, efficacy, attitudes, levels of engagement, friendliness, approachability, ethnicity, social class or religion, how significant are these? The variables may be many but only the students decide.

It is my view that the daily reports of student violence, indiscipline, adverse classroom relationships and non-existent teacher-pupil engagements could be minimised and/or eliminated completely, if the underlying rationale for these hiccups and maladjustments were analysed and if corrective curriculum and other strategies were appropriately applied, in a timely and orderly fashion. In essence, the performance of the system that was allowed to gallop downhill until there is now a national outcry for its total abolition could have been



averted if the adverse perceptions and expectations about the students' interests, capability and potentials were dealt with sooner.

In the final analysis, apart from the students' statements and expressed opinions, if the students also identify and accept that their revealed attributions and ascriptions for their failure rest heavily on their individual ability levels or any other stable uncontrollable cause over which they have no control, such as the effects of the teacher or the difficulty of the task, then, they will possess an internal defeatist sense of hopelessness. If they say that their attributions for their failure are placed on external, controllable causes such as effort expended, then, there is hope for them to initiate for themselves that internal determination to make a positive change in their academic performance. On the other hand, if the students perceive that the external, uncontrollable, stable factor of teacher effect which can be translated into low teacher expectation for their success is the most significant factor which affects their level of performance, then that situation is critical, debilitating and can lead them to become extremely hopeless.

Additionally, if the teachers indicate that they are culpable and their expectations and engagement significantly negatively impact on the students' performance, then, according to the literature, the existence of such situations may lead to the emergence of counter-productive, lower standards of achievement. The students may also tend to adopt postures of learned helplessness and utter frustration at their academic performance. If on the other hand, the teachers indicate that the students' performance is not directly

affected by their expectations but by the students' themselves, then the remedial action to be adopted should involve a whole school change in strategy to improve educational standards and students' desire to seek help. In the final analysis, apart from the other mitigating political, cultural, ethnic, societal and domestic factors, in my view the onus remains on the teacher to improve classroom engagements and the students' sense of self and desire for autonomy and mastery.

To accomplish this is not as simple as it sounds. Forceful yet gentle coercion and re-orientation of the mind-sets of all the stakeholders – the church, the teachers, students, parents, and administration – will be necessary to implement the required turnaround.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It would be naïve to assume that the systemic and engrained problems in the JSS system can be totally resolved through the outcome of this research. Furthermore, the outcome may not be accepted by all the stakeholders, as the demands for remediation may need a total revamping of a system.

The research is embedded in the post-colonial era when for the first time a new independent Government attempted to implement educational change amidst opposition from the church, parents and teachers. Therefore, for me this bold step has automatically generated challenges of performing a research in uncharted areas where the evidence provided to substantiate claims need to be

anecdotal, oral and unknown to the mainstream academic traditions, though some are connected to the problems inherent to insider, participatory research (Louisy, 1997).

Additionally this participatory research attempts to marry the traditional quantitative and the qualitative and/or ethnographic stance of collating the data, researching the field and analysing the findings. There is little precedence for this dual approach but the causal attribution theory has been frequently tested as a valid medium to ascertain students' perceptions and ascriptions for their performance in academic and other situations. Interestingly though, researchers have made links with the said causal attribution theory and the assessment of teacher expectation (Craig- Janes, 1999). But it is also critical that the students' stories, role play and expressions be assessed and validated in the context and structures of the concept of modernity to ensure that they do not remain marginalised but their voices are truly heard and new knowledge unearthed.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS**

The ensuing chapters will discuss the literature which pertains to the motivational and psychological effects of the teacher on the students' attainment, perceptions and attributions. The history and rationale which precluded the demand for and emergence of the JSS system with the necessity for specially trained teachers will be discussed. In addition, the capacity and ability of the present Curriculum Development Division to effect meaningful change to create corrective measures will be assessed.

The rationale for the chosen methodology which incorporates both the quantitative and a qualitative case-study, participatory school-based research approach which will triangulate data and findings will be explained. These findings will be analysed and the results ought to be instrumental in re-directing the focus of the educators on the specific corrective strategies.

Thus the discourse in each chapter is outlined as follows. The thesis is divided into four sections. **PART ONE** comprises four chapters. *CHAPTER I* gives a historical overview of the junior secondary school system as it is contextualised in the history and educational policy of Trinidad and Tobago, a new emerging post colonial nation, which is implementing education change in an existing structurally dual education system. *CHAPTER II* examines the impact of the post colonial education system on the relationships and processes of the cultural capital, power, gender, racism/ethnicity, socialization, privatization and marketization. *CHAPTER III* focuses on the evolution of the Causal Attribution theory as it is influenced by other theories of reinforcement and expectancy as these impinge on the psychology of learning and motivation which affect students' willingness to attain success and/or avoid failure. *CHAPTER IV* addresses Curriculum issues in the light of the dual nature of the subject, English Language. It also looks at the effects of teacher expectation, as students attempt to overcome the challenges encountered to attain mastery at the JSS 'standardised' 14+ English Examination and maintain high levels of literacy.

**PART TWO** comprises three chapters *CHAPTER V* gives a rationale for the

adopted Methodology. *CHAPTER VI* discusses the data collection process and the analytical techniques used. *CHAPTER VII* meets the school with its idiosyncrasies, its story, its staff, students, culture and activities.

**PART THREE** analyses the findings in four chapters. *CHAPTER VIII* states all the findings in the following manner.

- Firstly, the students' statements revealed through observations, their vignettes, role-play, structured and unstructured interviews of the groups of students and especially of the 6 student representatives.
- Secondly, the students' perceptions of the causal factor that impact on their success and failure and their causal attribution pattern.
- Thirdly, the teachers' expectations ascertained through observations, interviews and the responses to their expectation questionnaire.

*CHAPTER IX* analyses the findings using the Literature and explanations in relation to what the students said. *CHAPTER X* determines what the students perceived and their causal attribution patterns according to the Literature. *CHAPTER XI* analyses and compares the findings of the teachers' expectations about the students' present and future potentials for success

**PART FOUR** comprises of three chapters which revisit the curriculum.

*CHAPTER XII* envisions a renewed curriculum through a re-constituted Curriculum Development Division. Some solutions are provided to enhance the teachers' low levels of expectations and provide some appropriate teaching and learning strategies are suggested. *CHAPTER XIII* proposes an appropriate rationale for a differentiated curriculum for the future perspective JSS system.

*CHAPTER XIV* draws conclusion, makes recommendations and summarises all the major issues and significant outcomes.

**PART ONE**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

# CHAPTER 1

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL - JSS - EDUCATION SYSTEM IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

### INTRODUCTION

The most southerly island of the Caribbean archipelago, the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has a highly cosmopolitan population because of the legacy of its plantation history, in which peoples from many different civilizations were transported to its shores to form a plantation society (Beckford, 1976). This population comprises of the indigenous Amerindian peoples, the Europeans, the African, Indians, Chinese, Syrians and a growing mixed group of mulattos and douglas. As a consequence, from the inception of the education system in the colonial era, race, colour, gender, religion and class were important cleavages that marked its development.

By 1962, the year of political independence, in order to eradicate the effects of the colonial era on the education system three noteworthy features had to be addressed to foster nation building and to meet the aspirations of the masses of the population in which Africans and Indians comprised the majority. These features were the control of the church over the education system; the unequal access of the masses to a secondary school education and the unsuitability of the curriculum to cater for the varying abilities, especially in the light of the new economic and industrialization thrust.

Several attempts had been made by successive governments to eliminate the

existence of these characteristics of elitism, inequality and irrelevance from the education system. In 1971, the junior secondary school – JSS system was introduced as one of the first such attempt in the post colonial era. The JSS system was conceptualized as a practical, educational change strategy to attain *free secondary school education for all* and by extension quell those three daunting ills that had persistently plagued the expansion and growth of the education system generally. Thus the junior secondary school system was conceived, not only as a panacea, but as one of the main goals and major achievement of the political party then in power, the Peoples National Movement - PNM. The White Paper on Education Policy at that time stated-

The rationale for the system was to provide free secondary school education for all students up to the age of fourteen years  
(Five Year Development Plan, 1968-1973, p.1)

The plan was that all students from the age of eleven years would go directly from the primary school to the junior secondary school to be exposed to the new broad-based academic and technical curriculum. At the age of fourteen, only those students who were totally academically oriented would go on to the existing, prestigious grammar schools. The others would continue their education at the senior comprehensive and/or trade schools, where they would develop their skills in the technical and craft areas. The objective was that in the long run, the latter group of students would become competent craftsmen and artisans who would become employed in the emerging manufacturing and industrial sectors of the economy.

The other subtle, underlying premise was that the JSS system would serve to



shatter the stranglehold which the religious bodies, especially the Catholic Church, held on the education system. Since the colonial era governments had attempted, without total success, to establish a state-run system of education for the masses. With the introduction of the JSS system, the then Government appeared to have succeeded, at least so it seemed. Thus, the innovative, JSS system was advanced as the solution for education change. In addition, it was designed to cater to the growing demand for secondary education which prior to 1962 had become the promised expectations of the majority of the population (Maurice Report, 1959).

This chapter makes a critical historical review of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago, from 1498 to 2001. Special attention will be paid to the efforts made to eradicate the control of the church, provide education for all and prepare a curriculum suitable for the needs of the masses of students, to make them productive citizens. The following historical underpinnings and contentious issues of cultural capital, power relationships, racism and ethnicity, gender and the processes of socialization, privatization and marketization which have impacted on the development of the education system will also be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Historically, in Trinidad and Tobago there were three major eras of educational transformation from the arrival of the Spaniards in 1498 to the present time. The first occurred during 1498-1839. The second was during the period 1840 to 1950 and the third was the post 1950 era.

## 1498 - 1839

In this first period, the Spanish who arrived in 1498, after initially plundering the indigenous Amerindians, began forging an education system for all through the Roman Catholic Church and its missions. Their aim was to make the masses barely literate and teach them to be submissive, devout citizens. However, this process was hampered by the factors of class, religion, gender, inequity of access and unsuitability and irrelevance of the curriculum.

The rapid expansion of the population through migration and the settlement of the French immigrants in 1790 fostered the growth of the resident planter class population and facilitated the development of trade and shipping (Campbell, 1992). But, this population expansion led to the increased demand for education facilities for the children of the planter class. Ironically, the commission to satisfy this need strengthened the influence of the Roman Catholic Church as the sole provider of quality education and this resulted in the beginning of the dual system of education which was unjustly laid.

Children of the Amerindians and the enslaved African were exposed to a different type of education if any, from children of the Colonisers. The curriculum for the children of the enslaved was virtually non-existent and wherever provided it could not be considered as education but was aimed at making the masses devout Catholic citizens. Then the British came in 1797.

Initially, the British made no thrust to develop an equitable and inclusive education system for the masses. Later, the British attempted to channel

religious education from Catholicism to Anglicanism. Then they became engaged in several inconsistent twists and movements to wrest the education system out of the hands of the two dominant religious bodies, diffuse the exclusive tendency of providing education only for the rich and move education into the hands of the State. Under successive governors, the influence of the State in the existing education system grew, but control by the religious bodies still remained evident. Governor Ralph Woodford, 1814-1828, recognized schooling and/or education as a main contributor towards the peaceful and orderly existence of a society. He therefore encouraged the British Government to build more State schools for the growing slave population, but ironically he was also sympathetic to the Roman Catholic religion, and the large and prosperous plantocracy (Brereton, 1981).

### **1840 – 1950**

In this post-emancipation era, the British continued the drive for education of the masses, especially after the abolition of enslavement of the Africans in 1838. Concurrently, the ruling class had expanded. It was composed of British officials, planters, professionals, and the white Creoles who were born on the island from the French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese or German settlers. It is not difficult then to understand that socially, politically, educationally and religiously there were constant battles and intrigues amongst these groups for superiority. The Roman Catholic Church with its long-established tradition and underpinnings of the education system continued to remain dominant and perpetuated the ills in the dual education system. Class, gender, race,

inequalities of access and unsuitability of the curriculum for the masses remained highlighted.

The Colonial Government was not disposed to expend funds to education in the colonies which were designed to generate funds for the metropolitan country. However, in the 1840s, the British Government openly shifted its support to the minority Anglican school. This decision led to deepened resentment and resultant competition in the education system between the two major religious groups. To counteract this, between 1849 and 1851, the Governor, Lord Harris founded 54 state-run primary schools that were totally secular in nature and controlled by wardens, an inspector and a board. These schools had no religious affiliation. They were funded by taxes paid in each district. However, this system proved to be unsuccessful because of insufficient funds to manage the schools and the parents' disapproval of the lack of religion in the school system. Meanwhile, the number of schools built by the Roman Catholic Church continued to grow in quantity and in student in-take. They were better organized and well managed. A fitting question was what made this phenomenon possible? And, did any of this expansion help to solve the inherent ills of the education system?

In 1857, another religious body entered the education system. Through the influence of Rev. John Morton, the Canadian Presbyterian Missionaries established – CMI - primary schools for the children of the East Indian indentured labourers. After 1870, these schools received state aid and continued to function in their original indigenous mould. This mould fostered not only

inequity and inequality of access and unsuitability of the curriculum but separation and non-acceptance of others because of class, race, religion, and gender. The issue of gender was especially pronounced in the initial period when the Presbyterian schools were established and to a much lesser extent afterwards.

The same underlying rationale of religious dominance and inequity was transferred to and practised in the secondary school education system, which up to 1857 was accessible only to the upper and middle classes. However, that year, under Governor Arthur Gordon, the Queen's Collegiate School, which later became known as, Queen's Royal College, (QRC) was established in Port-of-Spain. The College was managed by the government and offered secular education at very high fees. The majority of its pupils were males from illustrious Protestant families of the upper and upper middle class. The Catholics soon afterwards established a similar secondary school, the College of the Immaculate Conception – CIC, often called, St. Mary's College, not too far away from the QRC, in the heart of the city. Its student clientele was the upper-class Roman Catholic males.

In the 1850's, the provision of school places, for males only, while not being male chauvinistic and anti-feminist was also traditional, cultural, historical and accepted as the norm. Females were never initially considered for secondary school exposure. However, around this period, in an act to break the traditional gender imbalance, the Roman Catholic Church began the St. Joseph Convent School for girls in Port-of-Spain. Also in the 1850s, began the establishment

of public primary schools, which offered children of African descent an opportunity to earn a living through teaching, once they had successfully completed the school system. It was, through the efforts of these teachers that there emerged an educated African middle class which sought upward mobility for their children, who later became successful candidates for the more prestigious schools (Brereton, 1981).

The dynamics of 'power', whether political, social, economic, religious or educational, were so complex that the power relationships even dominated interactions without and within the classroom. Nevertheless, it was under Governor Arthur Gordon, in 1870, that the dual system of education was formally adopted and accepted, primarily in the areas of financial support, equality of access and suitability of the curriculum. Both state and denominational primary schools received financial aid from the government, but they would compete on stated terms for government additional grants. Additionally, the Education Ordinance of 1890 allowed the government to establish schools where the churches had not. In 1901-1902 school fees were abolished. The government had to continue to inject more funds into all schools until it later discontinued grants for buildings and apparatus, especially in the denominational schools.

The awarding of College Exhibition and scholarships for free secondary schooling began in 1872 by government and denominational schools, but this initiated further competition and rivalry in the education system. The Keenan Report of 1869 has often been viewed as a conspiracy of the Catholic Church to

gain power over the education system, yet it noted teachers' frustration and government's inability to maintain the standards set by the church. However, Government continued to strive for greater control over the education system and constantly sought measures to make large inputs into it.

In spite of these efforts the major tenet of the academic curriculum was to propagate continued dependence on the educators / the colonials. To accomplish this feat, systems of discrimination, streaming and rationalising were practised. The selection of subject choices, the combinations of subjects taught, the content and information disseminated which were not locally-oriented, the appropriateness of the teaching methods and approaches, all contributed to 'the relation of domination and exploitation', called schooling (Apple, 1996). In view of all of the aforementioned, this era best epitomises all the ills and negative effects of that domination and exploitation of the education system by religion and politics, as demonstrated through 'savage inequalities,' of access and gross unsuitability of the Curriculum to meet the need of the masses, according to Kazol (1991).

By the mid-1900, there was that period in Trinidad, when those who wanted to become educated but could not gain access to the traditional schools, paid for an education by attending a number of private institutions. Some of these institutions claimed affiliation to the prestigious local and foreign schools and parents were asked to pay exorbitant fees. In those days, many of the intellectuals of African descent earned their education through this route of

paying to attend private secondary schools in order to attain upward mobility and employment.

Despite the introduction of many systems, including the recognised Ward schools which were supervised by inspectors and school boards, by the 1930s, the Government recognised its inability to maintain well-managed schools. Eventually, in an act of hopelessness, the Government withdrew its equal financial support and re-introduced the 50 per cent assistance and apparatus grants to all denominational schools. This resulted in the re-establishment of financial inequalities within the management of the education system.

However, by 1940 the Moyne Commission was expected to provide public support for the metropolitan financial assistance to the colonies in their times of financial stringency (Johnson, 1987, p.290). Additionally, other denominations, including the Hindus and Muslims, sought and obtained permission to construct and establish schools. Such decisions provided the platforms for the continuation of the duality and the conflict between church and state. More importantly, the rationale for such decisions was made not merely for religious reasons but was taken to ensure that the status-quo was maintained. The masses, primarily the descendants of freed African and indentured Indian immigrants, continued to be taught to be meek, orderly, devout citizenry who can claim ascendancy and mobility up the social and academic ladder only through education. Therefore, in reality the underpinnings of race, class, gender and religion remained dominant and the inequities, inequalities and



inaccessibility to quality education and curricula for the masses were securely entrenched.

## **1951 - 2001**

By early 1950, there emerged a charismatic political leader, who in 1956, not only swept the electorate off its feet but also challenged the status quo and the church's approach to education. The Right Honourable, Doctor Eric Eustace Williams, a scholar and political giant, championed the cause of 'Free Education for All'. Within one year of his being elected as Premier and then later on as the Prime Minister, Dr. Williams increased the number of national scholarships for free entry into secondary schools from 4 to 24. He himself was an Island Scholarship winner who had suffered the indignity of not being recognised and not rightly granted a scholarship at his first attempt primarily because of class and race issues. He, as well as several of the eminent black male intellectuals had bitterly experienced the inequities and the inaccessibility to a free education because of the divisive tendencies of the education system. As a result, he was determined to remedy it.

Before his assumption of office in 1956, there existed a deficient educational structure in which the Ordinances and Regulations of 1930 which were somewhat modified in 1951 were still not enacted to upgrade the primary school teacher status and unify the teaching aspect of the education system. Within two years of his leadership, the education system had already made some radical innovations which were inspired by the vision of a national education system operating in a cosmopolitan society (Williams, 1967). There

were soon instituted regulations and ordinances which stressed an integrated school system, which approved the unification of the status of the primary and secondary school teachers, unification of the teaching service and the registration of all teachers. The Education Bill of 1960, Clause 7 clearly stated:-

“No person shall be refused admission to any public school on account of the religious persuasion, race, social status or language of such a person or of his parents”

The Education Bill, 1960 also made provision for the modernization of the curriculum and the adoption of the Working Party reports and the UNESCO/ILO 1966 Committee's recommendation to expand the education system, make a curriculum shift from reliance only on the academic to the technical, vocational and agricultural.

By 1961, Dr. Williams had already initiated plans to change the College Exhibition, the secondary school entrance examination, which was based on the British model. He introduced a less rigorous but yet detailed 11+ Examinations which was commonly referred to as the Common Entrance examination. By 1962, the year of the nation's Independence, the numbers of students receiving scholarships and gaining free entry into secondary school had tripled from twenty-four to seventy two, even though the secondary schools total enrolment was merely 15,000 against 187,000 pupils at the primary school level waiting for admission.

The Government's increase of free places in the secondary school system was

under attack because of the slow pace of the fulfilment of political promises.

The Education Act of 1965 heralded the presentation of the 15 year Draft Education Plan. By 1967, the first Draft of the Education Plan of 1968 – 1973 was approved. There the plan for the implementation of the JSS system was fully ratified and incorporated with its principal objectives being:-

1. Elimination of the Common Entrance Examination in 15 years
2. The introduction of a new school, the junior secondary school with a three year course of general training principally as a substitute for the colonial anachronism of the all age post primary school for pupils over 12.
3. To cope with the problem of numbers, in the context of a high capital cost ( a million dollars for a school), the introduction of a double shift system in the junior secondary schools
4. The conversion of the existing secondary schools, Government or denominational, either by lopping off the lower forms and converting them into senior secondary schools, or by removing the higher forms and converting them into junior secondary schools.
5. The organisation of a national system of planned teacher training, including university training to staff the schools thus eliminating the need for denominational teachers training colleges

Subsequently, Cabinet gave an additional emphasis to the plan in the direction of an education system that was more relevant to the economy by adding

- (1) Sixteen vocational schools in the first instance and two farm schools to accommodate the non-literary minded graduates of the three year course at the junior secondary schools who were not transferred to the senior secondary school
- (2) The composite school combining junior secondary, senior secondary and even vocational; for small, remote, isolated areas .....(Williams 1967)

By 1970, along with other social factors the PNM promise of free secondary education was becoming very critical because it had not yet materialised. Additionally, in that same year, against the backdrop of social unrest, with its street demonstrations, strikes, an attempted coup and the Black Power uprising which rocked the country and vibrated throughout the world, the young and some older primary school teachers became involved in the creation of a new

approach to teaching. Expansive training and re-tooling sessions were conducted. The aim was to produce specialist teachers who would be the ones to implement the modernized, tightly compacted progressive curriculum. The teachers were trained in the new technical and craft areas, such as Metal Work, Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Home Economics and Agriculture, together with the traditional academic subjects of English, Mathematics and Spanish. Certification was granted. Then these newly trained teachers were released to prepare all the 11+ year-old primary school graduates, who were the new entrants into the double shift secondary school system.

One of the main purposes of the Government's introduction of the system was to ensure that the students attained academic and technical excellence at a secondary school, without the rigours of the greatly feared secondary school selection and placement examination, the Common Entrance. Additionally, for the first time, an opportunity was given for all the masses of students to attend secondary school and be exposed to a curriculum which was relevant to their needs and met the future demands of the society.

As a prelude to this education thrust, the government had introduced its first Five-Year Education Plan – 1968-1973. It was within this plan, that the educational framers and planners of the Government delineated the philosophy and scope of the JSS system. This tiered system was modelled on the existing comprehensive school system of the United Kingdom. The two-shift system catered for free secondary school education for the masses up to fourteen years, or from Forms One to Three, on - a morning shift from 7:20 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

and an evening shift from 12:25 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. An underlying rationale for this two-tiered education system was the maximum use of the plant.

It was hoped that the unpopular and still demanding secondary school entrance examination, the Common Entrance examination would be completely phased out. All students, once they were over eleven years and ready for secondary schooling would be sent to the junior secondary school located closest to their residence. Additionally, the much debated co-educational (co-ed) system was accepted and institutionalized. All students would be exposed to a pre-technician and skills-based education system. The subjects to be taught were not only the academic, even though there was the mandatory core of such subjects as - English Language, Mathematics and General Science. Spanish was included because of the nation's proximity to Venezuela. Also introduced were Social Studies, a new subject, which combined the teaching of History, Geography and Civics. The curriculum mandated that students of both sexes be exposed to Home Economics and Industrial Arts. The latter was further divided into Technical Drawing, Metal Work and Woodwork. Other subjects on the curriculum included Art and Craft, Music, Agricultural Science and Physical Education for both sexes.

This system was therefore conceptualised as Government's response, determination and intention to address not only the issues of accessibility to secondary school education by all, but also to break with tradition and stigmas and to resolve the ills of the denial of students' entry into secondary school because of race, gender, economic status, class and religion. In addition, there

was a concerted attempt to make the curriculum not only accessible but more suited and adapted to the needs of the students to make them employable and marketable for the country's new proposed wave of industrialization. Thus the 20 junior secondary schools were scattered throughout Trinidad and in Tobago in remote but well-populated areas where most of the students there would never have obtained a secondary education otherwise. The Government was also deeply concerned with the improvement of the literacy levels especially in Reading.

However, from the inception of the system there was some scepticism and much concern. The various stakeholders were apprehensive that their interests would not be truly served. The teachers, parents, businessmen, religious leaders and ministry officials, all made their voices heard, often negatively. However, the students for whom the system was designed were eager and happy to attend the junior secondary school. It is now lived experience how the system has unfolded and continues to impact on the education and academic landscape of the nation.

Most significantly, the teachers who were initially chosen to deliver this system had to be trained, experienced and qualified primary school teachers who were highly recommended by their principals. These teachers underwent an intensive one-year further training programme in their elective subject areas. They were certified, given an upgraded salary and then placed into the spanking new school buildings with these eager students. At the onset, the system worked well; at least for the first three years. Teacher morale and motivation levels

were high. All teachers were eager to implement the new techniques acquired. I was part of that entire process. For the initial year of the JSS system, I was assigned as a specialist English teacher in south Trinidad, at a different junior secondary school from the one being assessed.

However, as the system unfolded certain problems including negative political manoeuvres arose. The greatest objection came firstly from the parents who soon realized that their expectations about secondary schooling were not being met. The secondary school system to which their children were being exposed was completely different from the traditional grammar-typed, existing, religious secondary schools. In addition, because of the half-day nature of the system, their children's contact sessions with their teachers were drastically shortened. The parents' expectation of school as 'a holding bay' was shattered. Their children had an excessive amount of free time and, especially for those parents who had to leave their children unsupervised during their free half-day period, this became a horrendous nightmare. In fact, some of these children became heavily involved in dissident activities.

Thus, the parents agitated against their children's half-day attendance at school and the lack of organized supervision after their school session ended. The anticipated support system to cater for the students after or before their shift session never materialized. Initially, the parents, community and church groups were requested to organize themselves and ensure that parental supervision and alternative, inter-active, para-school systems were operational when students were not at school. But from the start this support system was not insisted on by

the parents even though it was very necessary and important. Instead, the parents were instigated to become very vocal in demanding that their children write the secondary school General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination, Cambridge or London as was done in the existing church secondary schools and the newly built government secondary schools. The Church also agitated against its loss of control in the selection of its Form One entrants since this resulted in their reduced control over the education system.

The eventual compromise brokered led to the emergence of a worsened form of duality in the education system. The decision taken was that all students would not be sent to the junior secondary schools as initially intended. The dreaded Common Entrance examination, and the selection and elimination processes for entry into secondary schools were maintained. Additionally, through the provisions of the Concordat (1960), certain students were granted guaranteed places in the traditional church grammar schools.

The Concordat is a binding arrangement with the state and the church that the principals of church schools would be allowed to select 20% of their student Form One intake from any position on the list of successful candidates. This selection takes place not on the basis of academic achievement or merit but because the individuals are parishioners, benefactors of the church or just individuals whom the principals wished to favour, within limits. This option and privilege still exist. This concession stands out as a most significant masterstroke by the church to ensure that the existence and dominance of the elitist system remains in tact and that the status quo of inequality of access is



upheld. Once the Concordat was enforced, the principals of the church schools were first allowed to make their 20% selection of their first Formers. Afterwards, a fraction of the truly deserving intellectual students could be placed, presumably on merit, in the traditional church grammar schools. As a result, many brilliant students were overlooked and denied access to their 'first choice' schools for which they were eminently qualified.

Yet another adverse compromise was made. On completion of the three-year course of study at the junior secondary school, all Form Three students would be placed for two years in an all day senior comprehensive secondary school. However, those who had performed exceptionally well or who had been favoured by the principals of the 'church' schools obtained placement there to continue their education and perpetuate the discrimination. Nevertheless, wherever the students were placed they were all expected to face the rigours of the existing grammar-school type academic programme and write the same General Certificate Examination (GCE) later changed to Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) examination, within the same limited time-frame, of five years, as is expected of those students who were initially assigned directly to the established, traditional, religious, grammar schools. This remained an impractical and unrealistic demand on many of those students who had not been prepared for that level of work in the first three years of their secondary school life.

Fortunately, the senior comprehensive schools also provided pre-technician and craft components for those students who were definitely unable to cope with

the traditional subjects. It was again proven that the level of sophistication and academic acumen needed to operate successfully at the theoretical and to a lesser extent at the practical levels were still too demanding for many of these students' academic attainment levels because many of them did not meet the standard of the exit National Examination. Unfortunately, at present, the system that was introduced in 1973 is still operating and the vicious cycle of the challenges and ills of the education system remain unchanged.

The White Paper of 1996-2001 which was prepared by the then ousted People's National Movement (PNM) Government had planned a modernized vision for sustained and meaningful secondary school education for all. It was projected as a policy for inclusion, dispensing with mainstreaming, and catering to the needs of all students. The United National Congress (UNC) government of 1996 to 2001 implemented only some of the tenets of the White Paper, under the caption of *Universal Secondary Education (USE)*, as part of their election strategy. They also pledged to and abolished in 2001 the Common Entrance, the selection and placement secondary school entrance examination.

In the election year of 2000, the (UNC) government placed all students into secondary schools regardless of their performance at the Common Entrance and their readiness for secondary school. There was no commensurate teacher preparedness and training. In addition, in 2001, the Common Entrance Examination was replaced, primarily in name only, by the Secondary Education Assessment (SEA) Examination. These decisions were, and still are, fraught with tremendous adverse effects and outcomes. Students' grave inability to

read and their lack of interest in secondary school education were evidenced by gross indiscipline and violence, especially at the junior and secondary schools in which the masses of students were placed. This placement pattern was determined, firstly by the traditional, prestige, church schools creaming off those whom they desired because of the provisions of the Concordat. Then, there was another allocation because of placement on a merit list dependent on the primary schools which the students attended and not merely by academic excellence. Finally there was zoning, that is, placement to schools in the nearest geographical proximity to the students' homes (Jules, 1994).

## **CONCLUSION**

The history of the education system and the rationale for the JSS system remain a challenge for the government. Still existing are the underlying principles and plans for free and inclusive secondary school education for all students under the age of 14. Additionally, there is the desire for the students to be well-taught by teachers who will implement a curriculum which caters to their needs and that of the society. The reality is that despite the changes in the education system the fore-going objectives have not been attained primarily because of the system's inherent dual structure, the nature of the providers of the curriculum, the expectations of the delivers/the teachers and the presence of cultural, socio-economic and political forces which should underpin but still negate each decision to change. Added to these, there remains a struggle against several contending issues of power, dominance and elitism and the forces of culture, racism, ethnicity, and the processes of socialization, privatization and mercerization which challenge a smooth transition.

# **CHAPTER 11**

## **THE POST COLONIAL LEGACY IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite marked historical changes there remained the socio-economic, cultural and political rationales which underpinned each decision for educational change. The education system in the pre - and post - colonial eras provided the avenue for many hidden benefits and facilities. It was one of the main vehicles for the transmission of culture and a major platform for social mobility. It also facilitated the attainment of social acceptability and the promise of economic freedom. However, acquiring these benefits was contingent on becoming familiar with the culture of the educated and becoming sensitive to the existing cultural capital which determined the societal norms and values. Thus this chapter attempts to highlight the relevance of cultural capital and other social relationships and economic forces that impacted on the post colonial secondary school education in Trinidad and Tobago.

### **CULTURAL FORCES – CULTURAL CAPITAL**

Louis Althusser (1971) noted that schools by their very nature are designed to perpetuate 'capitalist hegemony' or cultural domination. But, Bourdieu (1977) contended that cultural capital plays an important role in social reproduction. Ringer (1995) concurred with Bourdieu on the significance of cultural capital and he argued that as national education systems become more complex they inadvertently become more centrally involved in perpetuating social hierarchies that lead to the development of social reproduction.

Hasley, Heath and Ridge (1980) in their publication, '*Origins and Destinations*' initially disagreed strongly with the position adopted by Bourdieu, who maintained that the vehicle for stability and/or mobility in any society depended on the ownership of the cultural capital, the bureaucracy and the liberal and/or technical professions. Hasley (1978) and subsequently Hasley *et al* (1980) posited that educational institutions, including the family, were the 'active agent of cultural evolution and social selection'. Later, however, these sociologists having done detailed research on the family, class and education institutions as they impact on life histories concluded that the education systems do not cater for a 'meritocratic society'. They noted too that within the upper social classes lies all the embodiment of the cultural capital. They have since confirmed Bourdieu's stated position which incidentally is applicable in the other Caribbean islands as well as in Trinidad and Tobago. This position indicated that the cultural, social and economic traditions strongly favour and is dominated by those of the upper class. The cultural capital is stored and rests largely with those of the middle and upper educated social class, including teachers, administrators and other professionals and this has been one of the major factors in the perpetuation of elitism in the education system.

In most western societies whose populations were transported to their various locations, the phenomena of racism, plurality of culture, gender and class are major concerns. These entities are critical, since according to Lloyd Best (1981), the peoples who live in these newly settled areas tend to see themselves as transient and as such, second-class citizens. They have been transported there from the various mother countries of the East such as, Africa, India, China and

Europe. Some five hundred centuries later the offspring of these original migrants are still plagued by the original problems of race, gender, class, geographical locations, socio-economic, political and cultural constraints.

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A possible strategy for the marriage of all the various cultures is based on Bourdieu's (1977) views of *habitus*, the organized relationship between the material and symbolic resources of the society. These are intended to produce a fusion between the sets of cultural practices and products to lead ultimately to the development of a *cultural cycle*. Under consideration here are the social and cultural norms and may I add religious practices which were brought and are performed repeatedly with the objective of ensuring permanence in the social and cultural fabric of the new society. Indubitably, over time these separate cultures would merge and new social structures would develop. These would then be internalized through the process of socialization and social practice and the reproduction may then become engrained into the psyche of the society.

Thus, whereas the historical and chronological facts previously delineated revealed educational plans which on the surface highlighted the efforts of the church and the state to educate the masses, the attainment of this goal was always elusive and contingent on the socio-cultural patterns which were formed based on underlying, hidden agendas. Any transformation of the education system therefore, must include the existing cultural and sociological patterns, common sense and knowledge about what is happening at all levels of society, upper class, middle class and grass-roots. Also included should be a rethinking of the

curriculum, revisiting the bureaucracy, refocusing attention on the existing structural, social and cultural problems of student drop-out, gender concerns, such as male under-achievement and race/ ethnicity issues.

Another important contentious factor of cultural domination is the insistence on the use of the 'standard' English Language for social acceptability. Michael Apple (1996) worked in Asian, African-American and Latin-American environments and saw first-hand how the use of the Standard English Language was able to destroy those societies by denigrating the use of the non-standard English. The approach for acceptability through the language became a 'subtle (and not-so-subtle) re-enforcement of separatism, elitism, racism and the re-articulation of patterns of cultural domination. The devastating effects are not often visible either to the students, teachers or the community. However, there are some who strongly believe that these demands to display mastery of the Standard English were immensely destructive both to the students' sense of self-worth and to the peoples' cultures and histories that needed to be cherished and nurtured. As a consequence, Apple concluded that in many of our institutions the human drama of individuals with a lost sense of self-worth is now taking centre stage and spreading negatively all over the landscape of the education system.

Perhaps, one can now empathise with the continued de-motivating, adverse effect of cultural domination on the students in the JSS system under review, especially when one remembers that originally these schools were built in remote communities where students had never before been provided an opportunity for

secondary school education. Therefore, heading the list of influences from outside was the fully equipped, new, technical secondary school experience, followed by a new national curriculum to be taught by estranged middle-class teachers with new cultures and dialects whose expectations demanded that the students should adopt and adapt easily and well to the traditional requirements of schooling *per se*, and at the same time suppress their own natural behaviours in order to forge a new but not totally traditional, secondary school student identity. It should not be surprising that these types of demands and levels of acceptance must have created severe challenges for the students, who obviously had to devise novel methods of coping with the ordeals of this new system. Ironically though, what later became evident was that the sustained delivery of the modernized curriculum in all areas especially in the novel technical and vocational components was never realised, and the promised dream of acculturation became skewed. Still, no one cared that the students had to forge their own identity.

## **POWER**

A revisit to the evolution of the history of education in Trinidad and Tobago and a rewrite of the hidden rationale for its existence will show that nothing really changed from the original intent. The contending adverse factors still existed, such as the perpetuation of the ideological educational legacy of power and domination as practised by the colonisers.

The exercise of power and authority which went beyond consensus and was not



determined by economic control alone continued to plague the education system. In the school setting, from their positions of power a few individuals, including teachers and administrators, attempted to gain levels of satisfaction and pleasure over the collective will and consent of those over whom they exercised control, in spite of the continued renegotiation of the limits of power. This type of abuse of renegotiated positions invariably leads to conflict, between those of the dominant group who use the resources of the State at their command to impose their interest by force, especially when those enforcers are not competently sound and therefore not good deliverers.

This type of exercise of power gains legitimisation through the creation of needs that do not really exist but are perceived and felt by those who desperately desire to arise from their own failures and feelings of inadequacies or from circumstances over which they have no control. Inevitably, this situation will ultimately result in the polarisation of peoples into groups of the powerful versus the powerless. In a school setting, these power struggles continue and are repeated at various levels – the State versus the Church or vice versa, or the education system versus the school, or the administration versus the teachers and/or the teachers' union or the teachers versus the students (Foucault, 1980).

## **RACE, RACISM, ETHNICITY, CLASS**

Other closely aligned factors that dominated the education system for the entire period are the concepts of race/ethnicity, racism and class. These issues are highlighted once there are the perceptions of continued and overt dominance of one group over another.

Miles (1989) argued that racism is not a simple concept nor is it merely a historical and cultural duplication. It is sometimes really the individuals' response to their inherent ideologies and cultural indoctrinations which tend to surface whenever they attempt to relate to others of different ethnic origins. Troyna (1993) also pointed out that racism is a pre-eminently socio-historical concept. Thus, the original, embedded past contextual framework of perceiving the actions of the homogenous groups of individuals as being racially motivated whenever they interact with others of different ethnicities is constantly being re-constituted, sometimes in contradiction and at other times covertly in acquiescence to the pre-conceived accepted norm. Especially in the school setting, every new impression and reaction is re-articulated in order to make sense of the taken-for-granted interactions and relationships. Thus Troyna (1993) cautioned that perceived acts of racism should be examined in their historical and local context.

Troyna (1993); Hargreaves (1994), and Rizvi (1995) explored the presence of subtle and overt institutionalized racism in the education process. Troyna (1993) contends that institutional racism exists as a distinct entity that cannot be easily eradicated or dealt with merely in terms of multi-culturalism as James Lynch (1987) had earlier suggested, or through prejudice reduction. Institutional discrimination is evident in several ways, such as, through subject choices offered, streaming, teacher assigned to teach the class, teachers' delivery of the subject matter, teacher assignments given and teacher in-class arrangements. Troyna (1993) points out that this type of racism can become endemic to the system and can only be uprooted when there is a determined sympathetic understanding of all cultures (Swann Report, 1985).

On the other hand, Fazal Rizvi (1995) perceives racism in education as a structural relationship which is based on the subordination of one group by another. He contends that racism has very little to do with the beliefs, characteristics, stereotyping and labelling of any or all persons who belong to the homogeneous group. Pettman and Chambers (1987) had also noted that institutional racism is really any pattern of organized social arrangement which facilitates the distribution of social goods and/or services, including power and information which tend to systematically and regularly take advantage of some ethnic racial grouping over another.

In the Caribbean, the racial divide is not only the more internationally popular white versus black concerns or the ill-fate of the minority, neither is it determined only because of stereotyping. Historically in the Caribbean, racism existed because of the legacy of the Plantation economy and later extended to segregation and biases based on shades of skin colour that arise from the emergent mulatto class, that is, the off-spring of black and white unions/marriages/arrangements. In Trinidad and Tobago today this racial divide has been further extended and has recently emerged between the two major ethnic groupings, of African and Indian descendants.

Additionally, this factor of racism is also succinctly intertwined with the notions of colour, social class and upward mobility. In the education system, the distinctions in the class structure are also clandestinely preserved through the preferences and privileges provided in the Concordat (1960) agreements which tend to cater especially to those of the upper echelon and the wealthy power-

brokers who have the economic resources. As a result, the off-spring of the upper classes continue to gain easy access and indeed to demand the school places at the more prominent, traditional, religious schools, at the denial of some of the more academically inclined students from the masses. The children of the upper classes continue to be exposed to easier access to scholarships, and to a more structured curriculum which is taught by teachers who are supposed to be more committed because of the strict closely-monitored system under which they function. The status quo of elitism and upper-class tradition is maintained, intact.

De Lepervanche (1984) has indicated that education *per se* will not lead to the removal of prejudice and discrimination or to the presence of inequality of opportunity. As long as racism is a product of the broader institutional factors then it cannot just go away merely by encouraging cultural and ethnic tolerance in the classroom. The only educational change that can eradicate the scourge of racism is a change in the nature of the institutions and factors which foster it. These include the schools, the parliament, the judiciary and the broader social and economic factors that tend to perpetuate this scourge.

Troyna and Carrington (1990) suggest that it may be virtually impossible to find an educational structure that is not responsive to the concerns of the individuals in its charge, but the quest for an education structure that is anti-racist and that provides equal opportunities for all students will only be achieved if it is confronted on all fronts - politically, socially, historically and locally by the intervention of the authorities in education. These authorities should support a politically informed strategic intervention, with academic and educative

initiatives that can be implemented by teachers who are open, mature and capable.

## **GENDER**

In the not too distant past, gender discriminations were critical and robustly highlighted. Fine (1992) championed the cause against gender distinctions and for the recognition and inclusion of more females in the education process. In Trinidad, girls were not allowed access to the secondary school education system until 1857 when the first secondary school for girls was built. By the 1900's provision was made for many more separate, single sexed schools at both the primary and secondary levels. However, a different curriculum, one which was not competitive with that of the males, was prepared for them.

In today's society more girls are found in schools than boys. Whether at single sexed or at co-educational institutions the girls are in the forefront of academic excellence. They are also gate-crashing into traditionally held male-dominated fields, such as Engineering and Mathematics, and are succeeding exceptionally well. Such developments confirm Bourdieu's (1977) position which noted that the emergence of the cultural cycle has produced a socio-cultural gender tendency, where the education system has become more effective in creating success for the female rather than the male. This phenomenon presently exists in the JSS education system in the form of the chronic under achievement of the males, with the attendant massive male failure rate, much dissident behaviour leading ultimately to male high attrition or drop-out rates ( Kutnick and Jules, 1999).

## **EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AND THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS**

One of the functions of schooling is to foster the socialization process. Education and socialization share a common purpose in realising permanent behavioural change in individuals. Schools therefore, need to become actively involved in the socialization process to ensure that students learn to live with each other in a community. But schools also have a responsibility to assist the students and their parents in their upward thrust for mobility as they are equipped to provide the preparatory groundwork for students' life-long careers and to lay the foundation for their employability. These are major critical steps in the students' development of a sense of responsibility and positive self-concept.

Perhaps, the period between 1959 to present could be considered as the era when the purpose of secondary school education was addressed. The flurry of rapid educational changes also meant constantly reformulating the social and ideological role of education. In his analysis of the social histories of educational change, Goodson (2001) defined this period in the British colonies not only as the expansionist period but also as one which was characterised by internal change, 'agency'. Thus, he also felt that internal changes which tended to operate through the political forces were more effective within the school setting in order to promote permanent effective change. In his socialization change theory model which charted the impact of the expansion of the education system as the change agent, Goodson (2001) categorised the changes in three stages.

He defined the first stage as the 'Intervention' or change formulation process. Here operates the initiating processes which propel changes to the curriculum.

New secondary school subjects emerge out of a conglomeration of ideas which are birth in the rich climate of many opinions or from some great individual intellectual stimuli. In 1956, in Trinidad and Tobago, the stimulus for educational change was the first Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Dr. Eric Williams and his Cabinet. That period also signalled massive expansion of educational facilities, educational policies and opportunities. There was a rapid geometric multiplication of students' access to secondary school education which coincided with the political movement towards independence in 1962.

To Goodson (2001) the second phase is the Implementation or 'change implementation strategy'. People recognized the new intellectual idea as it unfolded to become an identity (Ben-David and Collins, 1966). As mentioned before, by 1970, this intervention of that process of implementing change led to the realization of the new junior secondary school system and later the senior comprehensive school system, with its additional technical and vocational component. Funding was accessed from the World Bank, the lending agency which acted as the 'legislation' or 'change policy establishment' which was programmed to extend the scope and impact of the change but which was subtly put in place as the symbolic representative to control and dictate the expansion externally for the post neo-colonial masters.

The third and final stage of 'Mythologization', or permanent change" should follow quickly as the interventions and implementations become institutionalized.

However, unfortunately, in Trinidad and Tobago for the JSS system, the education change process did not and could not adopt the Goodson model exactly. Even from the first stage the responses of the masses to educational change did not necessarily follow the pattern of internalization. The initiation of the education remodelling did not totally conform to the change theory model of Goodson (1999). In fact, the education and national planners operated solely from the perspective of the Ministry of Planning and Development. Their main thrust and area of concentration targeted the public service and labour interests, rather than the teaching service and curriculum demands. That apart, when through the political initiative the planners and the framers of the JSS system should have finally arrived at the second and third stages of 'Implementation' and 'Mythologization' they encountered serious stumbling blocks.

At the first stage that initial buy-in of the teachers was perhaps attained because of personal interest and opportunity for financial benefits rather than for genuine commitment. Many of us teachers became part of the new JSS system for selfish motives - prestige and upward professional mobility. However, the most telling setback of the change process was not the 'legislation', or the support and close monitoring of the external constituencies and their policies (Meyer, 1977). Instead, it was at the point when the final stage was anticipated and 'Mythologization' and/or the taken-for-granted acceptance of the permanent policy change with the placement of the graduating students into the prestige schools should have been finalized, that the adverse reaction and outcry arose. The change process was stymied. Alas, the parents initially, followed by the community, the church and the said teachers revolted against the new system.



More significantly the technical practitioners who were taken on board as teachers were unable to deliver the theory of the syllabuses, and many of them returned to their former, more lucrative world of work. They were not interested in seeing the junior secondary school system function as it had been conceptualized.

Goodson (1999) also proposed an additional stage to the educational change process, 'the external change'. At this fourth stage, there is an expected synthesis and a working out of relationships that should have occurred and had been experienced in the initial internal stage. On that occasion, the mandates should become more forceful. However, in the Trinidad scenario, this stage was arrived at earlier than Goodson's chronological period suggested.

Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) contend that there is yet another stage to effective educational change management. This stage is termed the 'personal'. At this stage it is necessary to obtain the buy-in and dedication from the individual teachers who must understand and perceive their active involvement and role in the change as a rewarding adjunct to their professional development and commitment to the reform. There must be this support and expectation from the teachers, especially the new teachers who must be made to feel empowered to take ownership of the projects. In the JSS system this too failed. Therefore, in the final analysis the education change process of the JSS system did not realize its main intention which continues to be firstly, the eradication of the unequal access to secondary school education for all and secondly, the establishment of suitable curriculum offerings that cater to the students' needs. To these may I now add,

thirdly, the continued training of a cadre of committed teachers to implement the change process, so that society could have JSS graduates who are employable, productive citizens.

Pam Christie (1997) reflected on the attempts of the new ANC government of South Africa to change their education system to become inclusive and to achieve equity, majority rights and commitment of all the stakeholders. She painfully pointed out that the evidence suggested that the new education policies had resulted in the production of complex contradictory forces. The lessons to be learnt are that educational changes sometimes tend to bring about contradictory consequences, which appear to strengthen the former positions of the historically privileged in the society. Therefore, on many occasions in an education change scenario, the attempts to change the education system to become more inclusive of the historically disadvantaged and marginalised do not necessarily produce the desired outcome.

Christie's conclusions aptly fit the Trinidad and Tobago situation with its radical introduction, thirty years ago, of the educational change to the JSS system which was anticipated to eliminate exclusivity. Instead, the emergence gave rise to the national acceptance and dominance of the co-education system and its attendant virtues and ills. Through it has led to the expansion of the education system, which sadly has eventually turned on itself and has widened the academic achievement chasm. Perhaps the statements and perceptions of the Form Three JSS graduates under review may provide insights and answers.

## **EDUCATION CHANGE, PRIVATIZATION, MARKETIZATION**

It must be remembered that in the mid-1900s, the parents of the intellectuals of African descent, who wanted to become educated but could not gain access to the traditional church grammar schools, had to pay exorbitant fees for an education at a number of private institutions. In those days through this route, many poor intellectuals earned their education, attained upward mobility and obtained employment. In 2000, the State under the UNC regime introduced a resurgence of the privatization of the school system. On this occasion, the State paid private institutions to house poor students at many questionable locations in order that the government's political mandate concerning their new education policy change could be attained. Universal Secondary Education (USE) was facilitated though not completely realized through privatization of the education system in reverse.

In the forefront of the introduction of this attempt at privatisation of the education system was the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP). This was another International Monetary Fund –IMF initiative which again became the medium chosen to effect education change and which had all the colonial tendencies. Apart from that, one of the hidden agendas of the then political directorate was to adopt the notion of marketing education as a business.

Apple (1996) proposed a structure of educational reform which must be carefully wrought within a social, non - political context and which would embrace the entire education system as a major public asset. He perceived education as one of the largest industries in any modern economy and perhaps one of the largest

public undertakings. In his book on education reform, '*Cultural Politics in Education*', he offered a powerful analysis and a compelling suggestion to the current debate on marketization as the best proposal for educational change. The big question then was who gets the greatest benefit? He suggested a re-ordering of the distribution of the access and equity in education to be based on achievements and outcomes. Apple predicted that the negative fall-outs might be possessive individualism and authoritarian populism rather than social injustice for the students.

There are those who posit the view that marketization and privatization could lead to an increase in competition, expansion of the economy and freedom of choice. Geoff Whitty (1997) cautioned against the dangers of the growing neo-liberals' concept of privatization and marketization, which have led to the movement away from public-provided systems of state education towards individual schools competing for clients in the market place. Whilst seeming to respond to the critics he accepts that the public school system can be an impersonal, over-bureaucratic welfare state which provides and dominates the major aspects of the education decision making process. However, he points out that whilst on the surface in a stratified society, the atomized decision making may formally appear to give everyone equal opportunities, in reality it may actually reduce the possibilities of the collective struggles that might help those who are less able to help themselves. Whitty (1997) also noted that the spread of the neo-liberals' economic models, when coupled with the neo-conservatives' models to regulate and control the state will not provide the schemas through which active citizenship and social justice can be pursued. Instead such

economic and regulatory reforms will provide the ideal conditions for exacerbating existing inequalities.

Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren (2001) put it this way - competition, mobility, getting access to information, dealing with bureaucracies and providing adequate health and food for one's children are not always resources that every family possesses in equal amounts. Thus, the transfer of major aspects of the education process from public to private realms undermines the scope and potentially intensifies the disadvantaged or the marginalised groups.

Freire (1974) suggests that education change generally and especially privatization and marketization have become the unreflective acceptance of the authoritative policy makers who enshrine to be accepted unquestioningly certain interpretations of social and cultural life and obscure the others. Friere (1990) also notes that the existing dual nature of the education system favours the advancement of the advantaged and the dominant groups in the society and exacerbates the right of the marginalized or the disadvantaged, subordinate groups. Therefore, all the trends and popular proposals that exist presently towards national curricula, national testing, privatization and especially marketization, which connect schools more directly to an exploitative economy will have negative effects and fallout in predictable ways.

Connell (1993) envisioned that the education system was likely to become very important as a public asset, which would not only distribute the current social

assets, but would also shape the evolution of society and determine its levels of justice. He recognized that organised knowledge and the existence of the information highway would become increasingly crucial driving forces within the economic production sector and in the expansion and control of the social and other markets. Thus, Connell contends that because teaching is a 'morale trade' which has a particular type of morality, so that if the school systems consistently deal unjustly with many of its pupils, then those pupils are not the only ones that suffer. In fact, according to Connell (1993), 'the quality of education for all the others is degraded'.

In addition, Connell (1993) asserts that the whole process of elitism, exclusion and stigmatization in the school system is maintained when there are proclaimed glamourised, reward systems for the talented and gifted instead of programmes for tougher standards, stricter discipline, for streaming and tracking. He maintained that even though the reward system was a powerful determinant of the students' future life chances concurrently such programmes of rewards were an affront to the equal provision of the education system. Whenever one child is privileged over another then that privileged person receives a corrupted education and is given both a social and economic advantage over the less gifted. In other words to him, the notion of equality of education opportunities becomes null and void whenever there exists the dichotomy of heaping extreme praise on those who have earned scholarships and awards when juxtaposed to them are the larger masses of students who may never rise to such heights of academic acclaim for scholarship or any other form of recognition. In such situations it

should not be surprising that the latter group of students unwittingly display their desire for recognition by being defiant and disruptive.

As a consequence, Connell (1993) pointed out that an educational change policy must have a social vision which focuses on the social reality and therefore must include counselling programmes that must pay attention to the openly publicized needs of the masses rather than merely concentrate on too many meritorious educational programmes, which tend to have deep-seated hidden after-effects. In agreement, other researchers contend that in the education system there exists much social injustice, dominance and power displays by superiors and those in authority. Schooling and the education system should provide the channels and the processes to empower the marginalized and the oppressed in the society, to work against their present oppressive situation as they strive to achieve self-determination as all work towards a more just social order (Lenzo 1991).

Freire (1972) suggests that individuals can attain these heights of self-determination when they arrive at a position of 'conscientisation' or critical consciousness / praxis, where it is believed that individuals can ultimately find emancipation and a total change. Paulo Freire (1970/1972) whilst working with the totally marginalized people of Brazil discovered that the change process observed a three stage climb from being naïve, magical then to critical consciousness/praxis, during its movement from theory-practice and reflection-action. Even though this concept is almost akin to an early Marxist view on conscientiousness, it has been criticised by Berger et al (1974), as being another

phase of domination of a superior culture over a subordinate one. Nevertheless, Roberts (1996) contends that it is only at the level of 'conscientisation' that individuals can be led to be re-constituted. They can then critically reflect upon their own reality; act and change both themselves and the world around them; reflect again and change as the cycle of transformation continues. Unfortunately, these levels of 'conscientisation' were not attained in the hearts and minds of many of those who formulated and were the deliverers of the educational change process for the JSS system, even though the schools were deliberately located in the remote areas, which were under-developed. In reality little transformation has taken place and the same levels of inequalities, dominance and subjugation continue and the students are no closer to freedom and mastery.

## **CONCLUSION**

Therefore, in spite of all the attempts of successive governments at educational change and the enthusiasm displayed initially at the introduction of the junior secondary system – JSS, without the buy-in of all the stakeholders there has been little or no transformation of that post-independence education change process. Recent graduates of the JSS system still have to wrestle with all the same ills of the colonial era where schooling did not provide a meaningful education. Originally, it was intended to make students subservient and functionally literate through their exposure to an irrelevant curriculum and teachers who were merely authority brokers, as this present group of JSS graduates under review may divulge. In fact, they may discover when their history is told that they too



suffered from the same or other forms of imperialism and were also re-colonised even though, theirs was differently packaged (Smith, 1999).

The students, like most indigenous peoples, are concerned that even though 30 years have past and in spite of a few successes too many of them have operated and still live in situations of persistent failure which is exacerbated by society's perception and stigmatization of them and of the JSS system. The failure of the teachers, the curriculum and other significant persons in the system to capitalise and make the paradigm shifts to ensure that the JSS students' wealth of human cultural capital is no longer left untapped but rather is assimilated into the pool to enrich our society is tragic and bewildering. The students graduate yet remain unemployable and demotivated to accept their rightful places in and out of school. Instead social injustices are heaped upon them and no one seems to care about their situation, their perceptions of racism, their teachers' low expectations about their academic future and the ensuing power plays which have pervaded their entire socialization process into the JSS system. Their strong points are not adequately rewarded and they are left out of the economic market place because of their deficiencies in technical and language/literacy skills. How can they become productive and how can they be motivated to make that quantum leap and change?

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE IMPACT OF THE THEORIES OF MOTIVATION, LEARNING AND MASTERY ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the value of motivation in affecting students' learning in spite of educational changes. It also concentrates on the importance of assisting students to attain mastery in spite of the emotional and psychological forces which strongly influence them. The theories of motivation are reviewed from a historical perspective, primarily to assist this researcher to make comparisons, draw similarities and highlight differences between the reactions and ascriptions of not only the JSS students but students who function in situations of persistent failure worldwide with its attendant psychological pressures, in various subject areas.

This research hopes that through the application of the Causal Attribution theoretical framework to investigate thoroughly the JSS students' situation in order to gain insight into their perceptions and causal attribution patterns for their success and failure. In addition, through what the students say and perceive their dispositional relationship can be established with the other variables of gender, race, ethnicity, geographical locations and the like. Finally, expectancy, reinforcement, generalised beliefs, rewards, self-determination, mastery and other psychological concepts that impact on achievement motivation will be discussed.

As a result, this chapter takes a closer look at the theories and factors which influence students' learning and their motivation to approach or avoid academic achievement in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of these JSS students' statements and perceptions of the factors which have affected their performance. The investigation ought to provide insights into the students' and teachers' psychological and motivational control or lack thereof, of these forces which tend to affect students' learning and achievement related behaviour for mastery.

### **MOTIVATION AND LEARNING – Their Differences, Their Similarities**

Psychologists and theorists have spent much time and effort in their quest to understand and explain the underlying principles of reinforcement, rewards, generalised beliefs, expectancy and other factors of motivation and learning which drive individuals to strive for and extend their capacities to achieve success. This desire/motivation continues in spite of the varying nature of the society, of the environment and of the complexity of human beings, who are not only physical but also spiritual, social, moral, cultural, ethical, philosophical and psychological.

There is the ongoing argument that motivation and learning are interrelated though some have posited that learning and motivation exist independently (Mc Nally and Passow, 1960). The literature strongly suggests that learning and motivation are dependent on each other and this dependence can shape students'

achievement, academic performance, attributions for success and failure, interest in school, overall behavioural changes and social attitudes (Ausubel, 1963).

Learning is a conscious act that requires students to desire to expend effort, much thought and attention to acquire knowledge and skills to achieve success.

Motivation is an illusive, hypothetical, psychological concept, sometimes considered as a generic term, defined by the Oxford dictionary as, 'that which causes a person to act in a particular way or that which stimulates the interest of a person in a particular activity'.

In his book, 'Motivation and Emotion', Young (1958) noted that the concept of motivation is broad. In their attempt to narrow it, psychologists have often singled out one aspect out of a complex process of determinants. However, Young (1958) purports that the two most important determinants are the energetic or the energy levels and the regulation and/or direction of all the determinants of human and animal activity. On the other hand Handy (1990) termed motivation as the release of the 'e'- excitement, effort, enthusiasm and energy. He contends that the more these factors mix and interact, the more successful and fun-filled learning can be.

Therefore, in assessing whether there is a relationship and/or association between learning and motivation, it has to be noted that learning is often inferred to have taken place when a permanent change occurs in one's behaviour as a result of practice in a given situation. Motivation tends to energise and activate that initial

behaviour but it is temporary and reversible and can increase or decrease rapidly in any situation despite practice. Therefore, motivation levels can vary from moment to moment but changes as a result of learning are gradual, cumulative and persistent. On the other hand, learning is conceptualised as possessing the ability for habit forming and knowledge acquisition. Motivation is the energiser, the activator of these habits into actual performance. Therefore combined, learning and motivation form an unbeatable basis to determine, regulate and direct performance and in the long-run, achievement.

In other words, performance occurs whenever varying degrees of learning and motivation are present. The same level of performance may result from different combinations of the factors of learning and motivation. Thus, poor performance may result either because of a lack of learning or a lack of motivation. However, if it can be determined that poor performance is the result of a learning factor, then, this is more difficult to correct, as it requires much time and practice to remedy such a situation. Nevertheless, motivational factors can change rapidly and are sustained with interest.

In spite of the afore-mentioned degrees of interrelatedness, Mc Nally and Passow (1960) have suggested that motivation has no 'direct' effect upon learning and that learning does not depend on it. These researchers contend that:

In a real sense, it can be said that children learn only that which they want to learn. We have far to go in devising a curriculum and methods consonant with this fact. How best can we capitalise the needs and interests that children bring with them to school? (Mc Nally and Passow, 1960, p.16).

In endorsement Ausubel 1963 wrote-

Frequently the best way of motivating an unmotivated pupil is to ignore his motivational state for the time being and concentrate on teaching him as effectively as possible. Much to his surprise and to his teacher's he will learn despite his lack of motivation; and from this satisfaction of learning, he will characteristically develop the motivation to learn more'. (Ausubel, 1963, p 462)

According to these views, motivation appears to be playing a secondary role to learning, but does it really? What is to be noted is the need for the presence of an underlying drive and energy to learn may not be absolutely present initially, as is often articulated, but its existence is necessary for maintaining sustained interest in attaining achievement. There is the implication that if a student's motivation to learn is absent at the beginning of the teaching process it may be developed later if facilitated and fostered by an enriched and successful learning experience. The question is, how, what or who initiates that experience? This is more than a rhetorical question. It gets to the root of the concern of this research which attempts to ascertain the impact of the teacher's expectations in this process. Firstly, whether the effect and/or expectation of the teacher as perceived by the student interferes with his/her learning and/or motivation to learn, and, secondly, the extent to which the teacher's expectation of the student's capacity for success impacts on the teacher's desire and energy to motivate the student to learn.

Rudolph Dreikurs (1968) argues that it is possible to get along with children and guide them without insight into their psychological dynamics and their levels of motivation. He proposes that because children may possess a multiplicity of motives and interests, in a large classroom setting it may be difficult for the teacher to identify each specific need, interest and drive. However, in spite of that difficulty, he is adamant that it is possible to teach children effectively and have them learn and succeed without understanding everything about them.

On the other hand, the students' perceptions of their levels of performance and achievement at school may or may not be intricately linked only to their motivation to learn and their energy and drive to want to succeed. What is often suggested is that, either consciously or unconsciously, whatever position they may adopt, neither learning nor motivation can operate in isolation. The students' capacity to succeed is affected by several internal, psychoanalytical forces, such as their needs, interests, drives, satisfaction, attitudes, expectancies, values, fears and aggression. In addition, there are external variables which include but are not limited to the teacher, the home and other school effects. In order to delimit the number of variables and make the measurement of the factors subject specific, focused and immediate, this research has targeted the causal attribution theory with all its main factors to highlight the students' perceptions of the main factors, including teacher effects and teacher expectations about their learning and performance.

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORIES WHICH IMPACT MOTIVATION AND LEARNING**

The early, major theory of motivation highlighted the psychoanalytical. Here, it is depicted that primarily the repressed concerns, dreams and thoughts struggle to find an outlet through conscious manifestations. Sigmund Freud, building on Darwin's theory, proposed that the unconscious mind is responsible for the processing of all behaviour. Freud maintained that the conscious mind only manifests one-tenth of its knowledge and information. And if, according to George Herbart, the mind is not a 'tabula raza', then there exists a wealth of

information in a repressed state stored in the unconscious. According to Freudian theory the mind is tripartite. The Id - the unconscious reservoir of the instinctive urges which are irrational and self-assertive; the Ego - the conscious mind that provides the outlet for the unconscious and the Super Ego - the external, the conscience. All factors always tend to impact on the Id and unconsciously on the Ego to quicken responses. However, it was felt then that the nervous energy which helps the mind in its processing comes from the 'libido' the sex drive. Human beings therefore, are greatly controlled by these unconscious actions which are formulated during childhood and remain repressed, unfulfilled, and yet desirous of satisfaction.

Support for this theory was given by Adler and Jung (1912), who agreed with the existence of the conscious and unconscious mind and the significance of sex, but Adler stressed more individual differences and the personal response to the environment. Adler highlighted the 'ego', the conscious mind, and Jung the 'libido', as the motivation force. They explored the ill-effect of repressions and pent-up desires on the child and highlighted the emotional neurosis and energy released. They rationalised that this release may form the basis for that passion for superiority that some individuals display. In extreme situations the individuals may become either obdurate/destructive or shy and withdrawn. However, it is to be noted that repression is not suppression which is the conscious control of undesirable impulses, feelings and experiences, neither is it inhibition which is the conscious and deliberate shying away from an activity or a situation. Repression is explained as-



the process of complete exclusion of consciousness of impulses, experiences and feelings which are psychologically disturbing because they arouse a sense of guilt or anxiety. Kundu and Tutoo (2000).

As espoused in that psychoanalytical theory, some of the overtly undesirable forms of behaviour in school may have a very sound and plausible explanation in the students' notions of guilt and anxiety. For instance, individuals who openly display sexual exhibitions or are inordinately sexually active at a young age may be expressing a need for some psychological help to re-direct their focus.

Additionally the individual's passionate desire for superiority and power may have resulted from a childhood repression and lack of a loving home and family environment. Another individual who is beleaguered with feelings of inferiority may work extremely hard at compensating for that limitation by over-extending him/herself. The extremely stubborn or aggressive students who break/skip class and show no interest in school may be saying by their actions that they hate their parents or their parent substitutes – the teachers, who are in fact, *loco in parentis*. The shy and withdrawn students may be revealing that they are grappling with different psychological problems. Whereas those pampered and spoilt in their infancy may as adults display a desire to want to command people to compensate for their lack of early development along normal lines. The theory also extends its recognition of the process of socialization as it impacts on motivation to energise and direct the individual's behaviour.

Other theorists built on William James' (1890) notions of 'instinct' as identified in his 'Principles of Psychology'. 'Instinct' and later 'instinctiveness' revealed

the individuals' tendency to act so as to bring about a certain outcome without foreknowledge and without prior training in that particular area. The individual therefore automatically tends to make decisions from two instincts - from the instinct for Life, which considers preservation and reproduction, or from the Death instinct which considers destruction and aggression. It is to be noted that only through the power of the mind and through the theories that suggest the functioning of the brain and its significance to brain-based learning can these decisions be regulated and controlled. The effectiveness of the selection is also determined by the energy levels of motivation present to make the distinction and provide the environment for learning. Later theorists have added factors such as individual satisfaction and gratification of their needs.

More importantly, in the relationship between learning and motivation for success have emerged two broad categories and/or groups of theories which represent different schools of thought. One group of psychologists developed the study of behaviour formation (learning). Among these were the forerunners; psychologists in the persons of Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike and others. Their concern about motivation was minimal as they sought to explain how habits are formed out of learning experiences.

The other group of psychologists explored the conditions which appeared to energise behaviour and other interests, which were directly related to motivation and indirectly to learning. They viewed behaviour as innate and resistant to easy modification and therefore a deterrent to the child's ability to function under the control of the school system. Behaviours that were favourable and acceptable

were called adaptive behaviours. These were considered as learned behaviours and were therefore not instincts. Bothersome and unfavourable behaviours, which were synonymous with learned helplessness and low levels of self-esteem, were called maladaptive, according to Armstrong et al (1996). These types of behaviour were considered as instinctive – natural and unlearned. Some took the position that there was only one method of dealing with these types of behaviour – punishment, until they disappeared. Those who adopted this view sanctioned the use of thwarting and/or punishment to ensure learning or until the deviant individuals learned to change their behaviour to meet the acceptable standard. No provision was made for creative forms of correction or coercion.

However, capitalising on brain-based theories, a twentieth century approach to learning is the use of all the Multiple Intelligences – MI. Howard Gardner (1989) devised that learning is enhanced and even assured if all the intelligences of spatial, musical, inter-personal, intra-personal, bodily kinaesthetic, spiritual/existential and the traditional linguistic and logical mathematical were used as teaching/learning strategies. Thus, in any learning environment where gaps exist in students' understanding and internalisation of what is taught, learning is guaranteed if over time, the possible range of multi-intelligences is used.

Furthermore, emerging out of the early group of psychologist's notions about motivation arose several concepts upon which post-modern theories of achievement – motivation, motivation-orientation and learning are founded. As an upshot, there emerged different and varied explanations about the mechanism and factors used to determine the consequence of motivation on human

behaviour. Some of these motivational concepts, styles and factors that impinge on achievement and performance are reinforcement, frequency of expectancy and beliefs, locus of control, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, mastery, self-determination, self-worth, learned helplessness, motivation enhancement and causal attributions factors for success and failure.

In recent times, the 'affect' or the 'affective domain' has become a significant entity in the theories of motivation, and it is singled out as that aspect which highlights and gives direction to behaviours which can be learned (Atkinson, McClelland, Helen Peak, Clarke and Roby 1949). Building on the Freudian view, these theorists have identified the affective as pivotal to individuals' need for achieving success. This need affects, organises, directs and energises their behaviour. Psychologists such as McClelland, Atkinson, Clarke and Lovell (1953) highlight the responsiveness of motivation to the imagination and to the arousal of emotions and feelings either acquired and/or learned through pleasure or pain but which underlie learned expectations for reward and/or punishment. As a result, motivation responds when individuals build up within a tension that has the ability to organise or disorganise their behaviour (McClelland, 1961). These tendencies impact on the individuals' **approach or avoidance** of the learning situation, because of such factors as fear, timidity, aggression and excitability that can be generated and learned.

The theory of Reinforcement provides a major explanation for the students' tendencies to **approach or avoid** learning situations. Reinforcement has

remained a central concept in the expansion of educational psychology and educational theories, perhaps because of its simple, world-wide application and appeal. Its significance is established because reinforcement per-se, whether negative or positive, is present in every taken-for granted interaction, from the giving of praise, reward, tokens to punishment, stereotyping or to the making of generalisations and/or stimuli conditioning. In the final analysis, reinforcement continues to affect behaviour for periods long after the initial contact is gone and dependent on the degree to which it is contingent on other factors. As a result, theories of reinforcement have furnished the platform on which several social and cognitive theories of education have been built.

Three of the main early proponents of the cognitive motivational theory based on reinforcement are Atkinson (1964), Rotter (1966, 1975) and Weiner (1971, 1974, 1979, 1985, 1986). These theorists were primarily concerned with achievement, achievement motivation and other achievement-related behaviours, even though each adopted distinct positions. Atkinson proposed the expectancy X value theory, which focused on students' expectations for success and their achievement related values. Rotter devised the social learning theory while Weiner's theory was concerned with the individual's beliefs and attributions about the causes of their achievement outcomes. These theorists laid the foundation for much of the continuing research on the effects of all aspects of motivation on achievement and achievement-related behaviours. Other researchers such as Pintrich and Schrauben (1992) felt that the value of the outcome reinforced the motivation that lead to increased cognitive engagement and learning. Entwistle (1988) zeroed in on the different types of motivation.

Others have chosen to highlight specific and varying areas of the broad spectrum of these foundational concepts.

## **FREQUENCY AND EXPECTANCY CONCERNS**

Atkinson (1964) postulated that any achievement-related activity is assumed to elicit both positive (hope for success) and negative (fear of failure) affective anticipations. His main concerns were to predict whether and why an individual would **approach or avoid** an achievement task. As a result, his theory is that before achievement-related behaviour is confirmed and carried out the individual develops conflict between his/her tendency to approach or avoid a task. This conflict between these tendencies is strengthened or weakened by the individual's unconscious, stable differences in values and his/her conscious situational factor of expectations about the likelihood of accomplishing the task. Atkinson (1964) juxtaposed these reactions in two motives.

His 'motive for success', (Ms) is based on a Freudian view that the operation of motivation as affecting the unconscious, the Id, can be measured by the projective, Thematic Apperception Test, (TAT), in which individuals' achievement-striving tendencies are self-determined and reinforced dependent on their description of ambiguous pictures. References to accomplishments, achievement concerns, goals and expressions of achievement-related effects are recognised as projected achievement tendencies. On the other hand, the converse occurs when the individuals' 'motive to avoid failure', (Maf)' is measured in the TAT and is revealed as the individuals' capacity to experience anxiety and shame in failure. These are conceptualised as the unconscious, stable factors that veer

individuals away from achievement tasks. Not surprisingly, Atkinson's proposals have not held up well in empirical tests and the findings have been inconsistent (Crandall, 1963, 1969; V.C. Crandall et al, 1965). However, the presence of anxiety and shame in failure and the increased expressions of self-worth and belief in oneself in success remain very important variables in students' motivation for failure and success.

Additionally, Atkinson also noted that his 'motive for success' (MS) tended to direct individuals towards achievement of the tasks, according to 'their perceived probability of success' (Ps) or the incentive value of success, which determined their expectations to feel proud on attaining success. The individuals who expect to succeed on a task believe that their probability for success is very high and they are more likely to approach the task than those who are less certain of their chances for success. The amount of pride anticipated is proportional to the expectations of the individuals and that of the others for and about their success. Greater levels of pride and higher incentive values are experienced following success at a difficult task at which individuals had a low probability of success than conversely. Contrastingly, the 'motive to avoid failure' indicates the anticipation of shame, that results in the students' perceptions of the probability of failure (Pf) and the incentive value of that failure (If). Shame is believed to be greatest following failure on very easy tasks that had a high probability of success and least following failure on very difficult tasks.

Supported by some studies, Atkinson himself has indicated that children tend to need and foster a strong achievement motive, whether in early independence

training, according to (Winterbottom, 1958), or in situations of high expectations, (Rosen and D'Andrade, 1959). Additionally, Atkinson also contends that emotional displays associated with expectation of pride in accomplishment and/or shame in situations of failure develop early in childhood and impinge on achievement-related behaviours. He also noted that individual differences based on the stable motives can be traced to parents' child-rearing behaviours. That is, children whose parents (and significant others) who encourage them to display achievement efforts and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate their ability and competence tend to perform relatively higher in their motive to achieve success. In contrast, children whose parents and significant others punish or ignore their achievement efforts tend to develop a strong motive to avoid failure. As a consequence, although Atkinson assumed that the motives to strive for success and avoid failure are unconscious, he also added that in achievement situations, individuals are also impacted on by their conscious belief about the particular situation.

As a result, Atkinson's model can only with moderate accuracy predict individuals' engagements in achievement tasks, the difficulty level of the tasks they will choose, their level of aspiration or willingness to take risks and their persistence in completing a difficult task (Weiner, 1980). However, there are several problems and difficulties that are experienced and can be used to measure these variables even in controlled laboratory situations. For instance, the incentive values of success and failure are fully determined by the probability of success regardless of the importance of the task. That apart, Atkinson's inclusion of the motivational factors of expectations and values in the study of



achievement behaviour have provided valuable information for classroom practice and have prepared the foundation for future cognitive theorists to perfect studies on achievement-related issues.

On the other hand, Rotter (1966, 1975) purported that thoughts mediate achievement behaviour. He was concerned about the effect that rewards have on the reinforcement of achievement behaviour. Like Atkinson, he assumed that reinforcement of expectancies, whether specific or generalised and the values of the reinforcement determine the behaviour. However, he differed from the social cognitive theorists who contend that reinforcement through frequency of any behaviour depends upon the rewards received for that behaviour in the past. Instead, Rotter (1966, 1975) contended that the individuals' belief in their input into the value of the reward itself is what will reinforce and increase the frequency of the behaviour. Conversely, if the individuals do not believe that the rewards which they receive are caused through their own initiative they will not expect a reward for a similar action in the future. For instance, in situations where rewards are given consistently for study to attain high grades, an individual will associate study with the reward and would strive frequently with much effort to attain high grades to gain that valued reward. However, if the distribution of the reward is inconsistent and cannot be attributed to study then the individual will not often expend such effort.

In addition, Rotter expanded on the factor of value to the reinforcement value.

This he did by linking not only the individuals' probability of success but also added their needs and other emotional and psychological associations, with other

existing forms of reinforcements that can range from rumours to generalised expectancies based on past experiences. This concept he termed 'locus of control', (LOC), which is based on what the individuals' regard as their contingency of reinforcement with respect to their generalised beliefs. Therefore, to him, students' efforts to attain an A grade may be determined contingent on their expectation that their hard work and effort will result in their obtaining that valued reinforcement. However, these expectancies are based on subjective perceptions and notions of the probability that the behaviour will be reinforced.

Like Weiner (1979); Lefcourt (1976); Weisz and Stipez (1982) and Rotter (1966, 1975) believed that the Internal Locus of Control refers to beliefs that the outcomes or events are contingent on one's own behaviour or a permanent characteristic, like ability. External Locus of Control is caused by factors and events outside of the person's control, like luck, chance, fate, or biased significant others, such as, parents, teachers, peers. Here Rotter deviated from Atkinson who focused only on the individuals' expectations for rewards. Instead, Rotter focused on the individuals' beliefs and/or perceptions about what caused them to receive the reward and the implications that these beliefs have on their future expectations. For once beliefs are developed they are difficult to change. Generalised beliefs and /or perceptions may override any single attempt to change a particular situation.

In the classroom setting, students who have had repeated experiences with failure regardless of the amount of effort they have expended, tend to develop the belief that success is not contingent on effort. It is difficult for these students to change

this pattern of belief in spite of what the teacher says, even if small increments of success are being experienced. Additionally, in a classroom in which teachers are not generous with the awarding of grades and the generalised belief is that grades are not tied to skill or mastery, the students may perceive rewards as not being related to their performance. As a result, in that classroom if the students are under-performing they may operationalise the concept of contingency reinforcement and use factors of external locus of control to explain their low performance. In other words, they maintain their generalised beliefs and perceptions about their academic ability but blame factors over which they have no control for their low levels of achievement and poor performance. Building on Rotter's conceptualisation of locus of control, recent studies have made further distinctions and refinements on its significance to individuals' present and future achievement and achievement – related behaviours.

Weisz and Stipek (1982), Skinner, Chapman and Baltes (1988, 1990) and Skinner (1990) have made distinctions in perceptions of control into categories of contingency and competence. Here contingency is conceptualised as the beliefs about whether the outcome is causally dependent on variations in the individual's behaviours or characteristics. On the other hand, competence is hinged to one's belief about one's ability to perform successfully. Obtaining the desired outcome is contingent on that belief. These researchers believed that to have control over the outcome, both of the conditions, competence and contingency have to be present. If either condition is absent, then control is not possible.

Weis (1986) further pointed out that contingency alone is needed to determine individuals' perceptions of their responsibility for their action and/or behaviour.

This notion she argues, impacts heavily on children who often believe that rewards and/or grades are contingent on their achievement behaviour but who tend to feel incompetent and unwilling to demonstrate the demanded behaviour on which the reward is contingent, such as, expend effort to learn and answer correctly. In other words, they often feel that they lack the competence and/or ability to accept the responsibility to earn the accessible reward, which is only available, contingent on their demonstrated behaviour. This notion of contingency has been used as the explanation for children's vulnerability in taking blame unto themselves for things over which they have no control. Perhaps that explains why Weisz (1979) and his colleagues (Rothbaum et al., 1982) suggested the introduction of primary and secondary factors of control in order to bring in line and accommodate the individuals' existing realities with their own desires.

Additionally, Skinner, Chapman and Baltes (1988) have argued that the perception of control involves 'means-ends beliefs' and 'agency beliefs'. The former, 'means-ends', considered whether an individual's potential ability has the effective means to bring about positive performance outcomes or to avoid negative results - the ends. In other words, they are concerned about whether having high ability alone can cause positive performance outcomes. The latter, 'agency beliefs' considered the extent to which individuals believe that they have and/or possess the means (wherewithal) to access high ability levels. They also conceptualised a measure with subscales for control, agency, and means-ends beliefs regarding school performance. Coincidentally, their five types of means to achieve success or avoid failure are effort, ability, powerful others, luck and

unknown causes. Additionally, other studies by Nicholls (1984) and Elliot and Dweck (1988) have demonstrated consistently that students' perceptions of their own ability have affected their motivational styles and by extension their expectancy of success. The questions to be asked are what types of perceptions would the JSS students reveal?

## **CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS**

The afore-mentioned theorists provided a chronological backdrop for the evolution of the Causal Attribution theory. Weiner (1971, 1974) building on and refining Rotter's concept of locus of control, and Heider's theory of attribution developed a causal attribution theory in which there are significant departures from the social learning theory. One such major deviation is attribution theorists' assumption that humans are motivated primarily to understand themselves and the world around them, to...“attain a cognitive mastery of the causal structure of [the] environment’ (Kelley, 1967, p. 193).

The Causal Attribution Theory has been repeatedly identified in the literature as a most appropriate measure of students' perception for their success and failure. It has been espoused as an excellent medium to identify and define the means by which individuals explain their behaviour and by extension the factors which influence their learning and performance. The researcher can be provided with answers to questions whether the particular behaviour or outcome can be best explained by some innate ability, by some personality trait or disposition or by some external characteristic of the particular situation in which the person may be located.

Heider (1944, 1958) first introduced the theory of attribution. Attribution theorists assume that individuals naturally want to understand why events occur, especially, when the outcome is important or unexpected. These perceptions of the causes of achievement outcomes were so visualized that the long term result of any cause and effect relationship is represented by a combination of psychological and cognitive factors which when fused, directly involve the actor, the act and the outcome. Therefore, the innovator of the concept of attribution, Heider (1944, 1958a) defined attribution as

A generalized causality or connection between the actor and the act and the outcome. The inter-relationship is so unique that the integration involves both the cognitive and perceptual units, which adopt similar gestalt factors as cause and effect units. (Heider, 1958a, p. 110)

Weiner (1971, 1974), who was initially interested in achievement motivation constructs, expanded on the theory of attribution by adding the notion of causal attribution in which individuals made attributions/ascriptions to the factors of ability, effort, task difficulty and luck to determine their perception of their achievement outcome at a particular task or subject domain at a specific point in time. He defined his concept as-

The utilisation of the individual's perceptions in order to delimit the multiplicity of causes which impinge on any group of individuals' levels of achievement whether that group looks at itself or at any other group (Weiner, 1974, p. 61)

Weiner (1974, 1979) noted and later refined the theory to show that the specific causal attributions are less important as determinants of achievement behaviour than the underlying dimensions of the attributions. These causal dimensions are in fact elaborations and refinement of Rotter's locus of control, specifically the

internal and external dimensions. Using the attribution's four major factors of ability, effort, task difficulty, luck and those added later, (the powerful others), home and teacher effects, Weiner then further re-classified these factors into locus, controllability and stability. These added dimensions created the facility for more specific behavioural predictions based on the beliefs about the factors that cause the reinforcement of the achievement - outcome of either success and/or failure. Thus Weiner (1974) conceptualized the Causal Attribution Theory, as operating within a framework which has the potential to use students' immediate perception of the causes of their success/failure. Weiner contended that all achievement outcomes must be viewed as either a success or a failure. Thus the individual's perception of the underlying factors, which cause his/her outcome, would determine the causal attributions he/she would make. This notion of causality and the selection of causes per se became some of the areas of concern expressed about the theory.

Weiner (1974) also observed that four (4) basic perceptual causes - ability, effort, task difficulty and luck - were repeatedly identified as attributional factors, which directly affected students' success and failure. Teacher effects and home environments were occasionally mentioned, and then later added significantly through the researches of Legette (1993) and Vispoel and Austin (1995). The latter identified the teacher and some critical students' interests as additional attributional causes for students' success and failure in their research on student perception for achievement in Music. Additionally, in establishing its facility as an open-ended measure of causal attribution, Chapman and Lawes (1987)

utilized free response attributions for outcomes in the School Certificate English Examination, a major external subject-based assessment in New Zealand secondary schools. As a result this open-ended characteristic allowed for deeper insight into students' perceptions.

Weiner (1974, 1979) further noted that ascriptions to all the afore-mentioned factors tended to fall into specific patterns. When analysed, these patterns reveal direct links to one's ability, one's self-concept and one's willingness to improve with positive re-training. Weiner categorised the interplay between the four basic factors in his three-dimensional framework of LOCUS, CONTROL AND STABILITY. These dimensions are instructive in identifying the individuals' causal attribution patterns with regard to their ability, gender, geographic environment, socio-economic levels, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds.

By LOCUS, Weiner intended to pinpoint the position or location of causality that the individual specified. In other words, he was concerned with whether, to the individual, the perceptual causes identified could be accounted for either by internal or external factors. Weiner contended that the individual's acceptance of the responsibility for his successes or failures would be internal, when ascriptions were made to his own ability levels and to his own effort expended. Weiner envisaged that the individual's causal attribution to external factors, such as task difficulty, luck, home and teacher effect would occur in situations where the individual has not accepted the responsibility for his/her failure but has placed same on factors outside of him/herself.



Weiner's second dimension, **CONTROLLABILITY** refers to those factors over which the individual can exert influence. Effort expended is one factor over which the individual has much control. Over the other factors, such as ability, aptitude, luck, and task difficulty, teacher effect, the individual can exert little or no influence or control. This notion of control is extremely critical to further expansion of the Causal Attribution Theory in the area of attribution re-training and remedial work. It is also especially critical in assisting the student to become motivated to attain mastery.

Weiner interpreted his third notion of **STABILITY** as the temporal nature of the cause. Stable factors are those which are fixed and not easily changed, such as the individual's ability levels or the nature and difficulty of the task and/or the significant other. Unstable factors, such as effort and luck, vary from situation to situation and from occasion to occasion.

Weiner, like his predecessors, also added the two antecedents, consensus and consistency, which affect perceptions of the cause of achievement outcomes. For him, consensus locates the attribution according to how well everyone else performs. Consistency can be associated with the stability dimension and zeroes in on outcomes that are consistent with past results.

However, unlike Rotter, Weiner does not emphasize generalised beliefs that develop with experience in achievement setting and are assumed to hold

regardless of the situational factors or changes therein. Even though he admits that the individual can and does at times make attributions to stable factors, he envisages that the individual would remain responsive as he/she would make judgement on the basis of the information in the current achievement situation.

To him, what is significant is that attributions for success and failure can affect students' perceptions about their success and/or failure outcomes, their persistence at a task and their goal-setting.

The following Table 1 is a representation of Weiner's dimensional framework.

**TABLE 1- WEINER'S THREE DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK**

DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTIONS/DEFINITIONS	FACTORS AFFECTED
<b>LOCUS</b>	INTERNAL FACTORS	ABILITY, EFFORT
	EXTERNAL FACTORS	TASK DIFFICULTY, LUCK TEACHER EFFECT
<b>CONTROLLABILITY</b>	EXERT MUCH INFLUENCE	EFFORT
	EXERT NO INFLUENCE / CONTROL	ABILITY, LUCK, TASK DIFFICULTY, TEACHER EFFECT
<b>STABILITY</b>	STABLE FACTORS	TASK DIFFICULTY ABILITY TEACHER EFFECT
	UNSTABLE FACTORS	EFFORT, LUCK

Additionally, Weiner (1974, 1979) had intended that each of his causal dimensions should be uniquely associated not only with specific academic

outcomes, but with psychological consequences. The two dimensions of LOCUS and CONTROL are so instrumental in making the incisive liaison between the academic and the psychological, that some researchers address them as a unit, 'locus of control'. Weiner's dimension of locus was most directly aligned to the individual's level of self-concept. Controllability was closely associated with the individual's academic achievement outcome. His dimension of stability gave the researcher insight into the individual's anticipated expectations of future success/failure in similar academic settings, as Table 2 indicates.

**TABLE 2 - WEINER'S DIMENSIONAL INTERPLAY WITH FACTORS**

DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTIONS/DEFINITIONS	FACTORS AFFECTED
<b>LOCUS</b>	INTERNAL FACTORS	SELF-ESTEEM/SELF WORTH
	EXTERNAL FACTORS	LEARNED HELPLESSNESS
<b>CONTROLLABILITY</b>	INFLUENCE – EFFORT	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
	NO INFLUENCE –ABILITY, TEACHER EFFECT, TASK DIFFICULTY	PERSISTENT FAILURE
<b>STABILITY</b>	STABLE –ABILITY, TASK DIFFICULTY, TEACHER EFFECT	FUTURE EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS - HOPELESS
	UNSTABLE - EFFORT	HOPEFUL

It is anticipated that in situations of success, the high achiever's causal attribution patterns would tend to indicate an internalization of responsibility and use of

control factors over which he/she has much influence. Thus, the high achiever would attribute success to ability (locus) and to the great degree of effort, which he/she has exerted (control). This pattern of attribution identifies an individual who is demonstrating ego-enhancing tendencies, and increased levels of self-concept.

The converse ought to be true and should occur in situations of failure. The low achiever would tend to externalize the responsibility for failure. Lack of control and stability would be most operative. The individual would tend to claim that failure resulted because the task was too difficult or the teachers' effect and explanations were not adequate (locus) or that he did not apply himself sufficiently or exert much effort (control). This resultant causal attribution pattern would be ego-defensive. The self-concept and achievement levels of these individuals should be significantly lowered and may be so reduced that it may lead them to become totally frustrated or completely withdrawn.

Weiner's theory has become entrenched as one of the social and psychological instruments most suited for assessing an individual's achievement-related behaviour. The individual or group of individuals/the researched, would arrive at an explanation for their observed and reported behaviour and /or outcome after the performance of an act or an academic task. However, closely aligned to the causal attributions made are the inferences that can also be deduced about the dispositional properties of the actor, the environment and the conclusions drawn from the perceptions and the assessment of the effects of these interactions. The

patterns which emerge when analysed will give deep insight into the individuals' emotional and psychological well-being as well as provide meaningful rationale for their success and failure and future hope for positive changes in outcome.

## **CRITICISMS**

The original theoretical framework has been tested and tried, criticized and applauded, accepted and refined, as researchers worldwide vigorously explored all its dimensions. Weiner and Brown (1984) reviewed and reassessed the theory in the light of conflicts and criticisms. Their findings have reconfirmed that the theoretical framework of causal attribution is an appropriate and valid instrument to assess achievement-related behaviour.

That the Causal Attribution Theory has dominated socio - psychological research, since 1944, did not go unchallenged. The critics claimed that attribution studies were primarily devoted to causal explanations given for the actions of ordinary people. They also claimed that attributions were common-sense ways of answering 'why' questions. They challenged its claim to be able to conduct scientific inquiry based on the understanding of causal explanations given for the actions of ordinary people in everyday life. They sought answers to the nature and relevance of attribution to issues such as common-sense responses, cause and effect relationships, the notion of causality, and its significance when juxtaposed against Kelley's ANOVA and Mc Arthur's schema (Kelley, 1973).

The concern about the purpose of the Causal Attribution Theory was the first issue addressed. Two advocates, Kelley and Michela (1980) asserted that the main purpose of the theory was merely to assign causal explanations to events

performed by ordinary people. Other causal attribution theorists, Bar-Tal (1982) and Marsh (1984) did not agree with such a delimiting scope of the theory's purpose. However, after their own researches, the detractors confirmed that the theory's main purpose was to use individuals' perception of the possible causes for an outcome and then to allow these said individuals and/or any other homogenous group an opportunity to use these factors in making attributions about their performance outcomes.

Critics, such as Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) and Anderson (1974) expressed concern about the causal interpretation of attributions. They raised the issue of the existence of unknown causes to which an effect may be attributed. Other critics, Kruglanski (1979) and Lalljee (1981) were concerned that even if the meaning of attribution was confined to unknown causes, or if an effect was assigned to a known event which was eventually interpreted as a cause, they felt that, when the question 'why' was asked, the result might lead to a variety of responses all of which might be considered as genuine explanations without necessarily being causal attribution. But eventually Kruglanski (1979) recanted. In putting forward his own arguments about the distinctions between causes and reasons, he confirmed that explanations might differ in similar ways to scientific explanations. Therefore, regardless of the critics, the Causal Attribution theory continues to remain one of the major determinants of students' perceptions and responsive reactions to their motivational and psychological levels.

Since then, researchers have repeated and endorsed the ability of the theory to analyse successfully students' perception of their performance through the use of

the causal attribution factors. Many researchers, like Frank Van Overwalle and Machteld De Metsenaere (1989) of the University of Brussels, have focused on the theory's ability to be used as a motivation builder and re-training strategy. Others, Borkowski, Weyhing and Carr (1988) examined the effects of attribution re-training on strategy-based reading comprehension in learning-disabled students. Perry and Penner (1990) endorsed the theory's ability for attribution re-training but also discovered that the re-training tended to lead to an improvement primarily on the external factors with specific regard to individuals' performance on tests.

In situations of failure, once students were given new insights which were not negatively entrenched and linked to their ability but were controllable, the individuals would change their pattern of attribution. This perspective ought to invariably culminate in a change in the individuals' future expectation for success because of the acceptance and belief that primarily through their efforts something can be done to overcome their learning difficulty. Therefore, when the Causal Attribution Theory is applied to the JSS students to ascertain their perceptions of their success/failure the results ought to be informative. In spite of the prevailing circumstance, if the students make attributions to the causal controllable factors, there is hope and the possibility of reversing their current distressing situation.

## **LEARNED-HELPLESSNESS**

As an indication of the effect on the affective domain, Dweck (1965) asserted that learning to be afraid or helpless in an academic setting can be acquired and

transferred from that situation to another. After being told continuously that one is incapable of doing something, one eventually accepts that as the truth about oneself and one learns to act and respond accordingly. This condition is referred to as 'learned helplessness' as identified by Seligman (1975) and Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale (1978).

This theoretical position is recognised by the detrimental effects on a person's well-being, self-esteem and motivation levels, especially when individuals persistently function in situations of failure which negatively reinforce their inability to succeed. For example, if a student attributes failure at his/her examination to the stable, uncontrollable factor of low ability, then on the next occasion to perform the said task he/she will display reactions such as, avoidance to try, reduction of confidence, lack of desire and interest, and little or no hope to attain success. This situation worsens at every successive attempt which may result in continued failure. At the completion of each such occasion the individual is propelled to display reduced interest to overcome the learning difficulty. If thwarted or belittled especially by his/her significant other - parent, teacher or even sibling - the individual may ultimately withdraw completely from the task. At this stage the individual's behaviour reflects the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' syndrome. In addition, these acquired complexes can retard improvement and the individual may develop other syndromes and difficulties like anxiety. In extreme situations, these symptoms are manifested as constant conflict, frustration and stress.

The literature has revealed that even from infancy, students can remain more



persistently engaged at the accomplishment of a task especially after success and praise for performance on each increasingly more difficult task (Kiestler, 1938). Failure to achieve brings about a decrease in the level of aspiration. What is painful is that responses and emotional reactions to successes and failures become engrained at an early age, and individuals remain faithful to these reactions and maladaptive generalised beliefs and perceptions about themselves, even at a later stage. These negative, persistent responses are also ultimately manifested as learned-helplessness (Dweck, 1965, 1975). At this stage that behaviour is most difficult to correct and/or eradicate and often leaves a permanently adverse scar on the individual's desire to want to change and become motivated to achieve.

As an immediate corollary, dependent on one's environmental conditions and sometimes on the desire to engender change, punishment and/or reward are used. However, these tend to cause an individual to develop such tendencies as fear, timidity, aggressiveness and excitability. The reactions to fear, distrust and learned-helplessness can seriously influence one's behaviour so negatively that any modicum of positive outcomes will be restricted dependent on the individual's levels of frustration and tolerance.

Recent studies on learned helplessness reveal that there can be a shift to learned hopefulness if there is an attribution programme which targets the root causes of these maladaptive causal beliefs. Thus the replacement of attributions from the stable, uncontrollable, internal factor of low ability to the controllable, unstable internal factor of effort is sufficient strategy to increase student motivation and

expectation for future success and reduce the existence of learned helplessness (Craske, 1988).

## **INTERNAL /INTRINSIC - EXTERNAL/EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION**

The depth of the relationship between motivation and its intrinsic/internal or extrinsic/external value of rewards cannot be fully mediated. Theorists who purport the value of intrinsic motivation contend that in situations of learning-related activities external reinforcements are not necessary and may become contra-effective and undermine the individuals' intrinsic desire to want to learn.

This position was adopted because cognitive theorists believe that human beings in a learning environment will learn best when they see themselves as learning because they want to rather than because they have to learn. Deci (1971) and Lepper, Greene and Nisbett (1973) demonstrated that offering extrinsic rewards to students to accomplish a task actually undermined their intrinsic motivation to want to learn in a sustainable manner. They discovered that when the initial extrinsic offerings are withdrawn students lose interest in the task. Learning and striving to accomplish are not sustained. Instead the students' performance levels fall much lower than before the initial offering. This reaction is contrary to the expectations of the proponents of the reinforcement theory.

External motivation suggests that the individual's desire to succeed comes from rewards, recognition, awards, grades, punishment and the conditions of work or study, that is, from factors which are outside of his/her control. They should not

be group awards which are difficult to assess but they could include non-academic attainments which leave the most meaningful permanent impressions. External rewards are often interpreted subjectively; evaluated according to standards and expectancy; and assessed dependent on the individuals' understanding of the concepts of equity and equitable comparison. A reward model must therefore consider three factors, the validity and power of the goal, the connectedness or instrumentality of the behaviour to the goal and the amount of the reward in relation to the effort being expended.

Therefore the theorists contend that an extrinsic reward which is made contingent on an achievement-related behaviour will increase the frequency of that behaviour and if the reward is withdrawn the behaviour should continue. However, if the reward is withdrawn and the behaviour decreases it should return to at least the baseline or its former level before the reward was given but not below that level. In reality, the extrinsic motivators, however insignificant, invariably are perceived to be controlling the relationship between the sustained achievement levels and the achievement – related process, sometimes in very subtle ways. In the long run, the effectiveness of the reward will be compromised, and the intrinsic interest and motivation value to be gained will be undermined (Deci and Ryan, 1985 and Morgan, 1984).

However, intrinsic motivation theorists assume that this reversal of the effect of rewards when withdrawn is directly related to the individual's cognitive processes and the individual's self-attributions. The reward when given is

perceived as the reason for engaging in the activity and therefore when withdrawn the individuals cease being interested in the activity or become 'turned off', even though they may have been intrinsically motivated to complete the activity before the reward was given. This effect is known as the 'discounting principle', which argues that once a possible explanation for an individual's behaviour is established and salient all other explanations become discounted or null and void. Therefore, in spite of the fact that intrinsic motivation or that inward self-regulating drive may have been present initially, because the significant factor to motivate the initiative is now the extrinsic reward then the intrinsic value becomes inconsequential.

Cognitive evaluation theorists believe that intrinsic motivation is propelled in proportion to the degree to which individuals interpret and perceive their behaviour and their engagement in a task as being voluntary and autonomous rather than as being controlled by any significant other, rewards, special favours and attention, intra-psychic forces, guilt or fear. They also maintain that the effect of rewards occurs at deeper levels than thoughts and lasts for longer periods, before, during and long after the engagement with the task has ended. As a direct result of this deep and long-term effect, Deci and Ryan (1985) have claimed that rewards cause individuals to feel a sense of being controlled and this interferes with their autonomy and feelings of self-determination. As a result, individuals tend to shift their focus or location of causality and 'locus of control', from being internal to external for their self-preservation (Ryan and Connell, 1989; and Ryan and Stiller, 1991).

## **MASTERY AND SELF-DETERMINATION**

Consequently, the use and function of rewards have come under close scrutiny as they tend to affect mastery and self-determination. Deci (1971), Lepper (1981) and Bandura (1982b) have noted that rewards can either be determined as controllers of behaviour in the form of incentives to gain engagement in a task or as providers of information about mastery at the task. The former produces negative effects as the individual shifts the responsibility for becoming involved from him/her and this undermines the sustained intrinsic value of motivation and learning. In the latter situation, the relationship of rewards to mastery is a more effective determinant of achievement behaviours, dependent on the positive or negative nature of the information with regards to the individual's levels of competence.

To foster intrinsic motivation towards mastery, rewards should be given based on the individuals achieving a specific level of mastery/excellence and then be praised or awarded dependent on the feedback information about their success. This type of reward tends to be a direct performance - contingent award which in the long run leads the individuals to self-determination, especially if the feedback remains only positive and is contingent on high levels of competence (Skinner, 1990).

Praise, with its positive competence feedback component is an effective intrinsic motivator once the controlling function of praise is not emphasized, even in its most subtle form. Additionally, the students' history of obtaining rewards and awards may also positively influence their intrinsic motivation and their desire to

attain mastery of their performance. This type of mastery orientation is characterised by having the individuals focus upon learning per se and not upon the outcome and rewards. Then the intrinsic value of learning is perceived as worthwhile and the individuals establish and gain control of their own learning and attainment process (Dweck, 1991). Mastery oriented, motivated students will seek ways to overcome their learning difficulties as failure may provide a stepping stone and opportunity to strive to overcome the obstacle (Dweck, 1986 and Dweck and Legette, 1986).

On the other hand, rewards given to gain engagement, compliance or as a result of close monitoring are often perceived as mechanisms of control and are therefore ultimately ineffective (Ryan, 1982). In addition, if these rewards or even comments on the awards are construed as an interpretation of the individuals' level of intelligence or competence - 'ego-orientation', then that can interfere with the individuals' internal control and motivation levels. As a result, they may apply factors to protect their self-worth and self-esteem and therefore the effect of that reward is undermined (Ryan, 1982).

Brophy (1987b) also contends that varying levels of competition can have the same debilitating effect of undermining sustained mastery, except in a situation of the whole class involvement. Here, each individual perceives him/herself as having an equal chance of excelling because the emphasis for the reward is on what is being learned rather than who wins. Thus according to Anderman and Maehr (1994), there is a need for teachers and schools to address seriously the manner in which the taken-for-granted school and classroom daily environments,

engagements and occurrences influence the development of factors which work against mastery.

In spite of the foregoing factors which negate sustained intrinsic motivation that leads to mastery, some individuals can and do work untiringly at uninteresting academic pursuits without being positively reinforced because they are deemed to have internalised achievement values or they possess high levels of internal motivation. By internal motivation it is suggested that individuals possess an innate, increasingly forceful need to fulfil their potential and continue their self-development. These individuals' expressions of internal motivation are often referred to as self-identification, which is recognised as either one's ego, self-concept or core values and manifested through one's words and/or actions.

This process is also termed as self-regulation and can be used to explain why in the same academic setting there exists varying individual differences of approach to the task. Explanations of these differences are varied but they are often determined by the degree of difficulty of the task and the challenge it poses to the students. The literature contends that only those for whom the task is moderately challenging will the intrinsic level of self-regulated motivation be sustained.

Another critical factor of internal motivation is self-determination which affects the decisions that the individuals make about their self-expressions and their behaviour. These values are learned especially from parents and home and are inculcated in early childhood when morals and values must be taught and learnt. These values must then become internalised and are evidenced by the child's

compliance or non-compliance or there will be 'introjected' regulation through coercion or control. At times, salient rewards or severe punishment are administered to foster self-determination. However, eventually there ought to be voluntary acceptance without coercion to attain self-regulation.

Thus, the process of socialization at home remains an important criterion. Academic reinforcement at home and its continuation at school through teacher effect and teacher expectation, especially at an early age, provides the foundation for mastery at the task later and the platform for continued intrinsic motivation (Brophy, 1987c). Age differences, (Stipek, 1984a, b), choice of task and evaluation based on grades alone (Adler et al, 1984) tend to affect students' self-confidence. Additionally, lack of needed help from teachers to remedy weak areas and/or unpleasant past experiences in academic environments, in which the constant functioning in situations of persistent failure can cause the individuals to withdraw enthusiasm to protect their competence/ability levels.

## **AFFILIATIVE EXPRESSIONS**

Yet another major aspect of internal motivation is the affiliative expression. That is, in order for individuals to gain identification with the group they will transcend their personal needs/desires to go beyond 'self' and the range of human experiences just to be considered as an integral part of their social milieu. Therefore, in social and other voluntary organisations and especially in schools, the value of collectivity, becomes incorporated into the individual's psyche, or own value system and/or self-determination. Often in a school setting, the goals of the group activate the desires of the individual, who eventually translates the



group goals to be his/her own personal self-goals. That individual who is thus motivated acts as though he/she is directed by a mission and shows deep levels of commitment to the group. This type of commitment is evident with the male students and their peers or in their in-groups or gangs. Unfortunately, the teacher effect and the dictates of the school rules rarely motivate such levels of commitment and dedication.

In spite of all the previously discussed categories of internal motivation and self-determination for achievement, each individual will eventually forge a different pattern of internalising motivation which can be noted, stipulated and identified. Therefore, the patterns of internalisation of core values, affiliative expressions, self-identification self-regulation and self-determination have great potential for the individual's internalisation of the goals of the school system and the activation of his/her behaviour which is not prescribed by specific boundaries and roles. Rokeach (1973) noted,

The functions served by a person's values are to guide him with a comprehensive set of standards to guide action, justification, judgements and comparisons of self and others and to serve the needs for adjustment, ego-defence and self-actualization. All these diverse functions converge into a single overriding, master function, namely, to help maintain and enhance one's total conception of oneself. (Rokeach, 1973 p.216)

The individual gains that satisfaction when his/her self-image and cherished generalised beliefs are enhanced. This can be through intrinsic reward which is not the social recognition for academic or non-academic attainment or any monetary advantage gained but it is really the establishment of one's self-identity and the confirmation of one's notion of the type of person that one sees oneself to be. The expression of values not only lends clarity to one's self-concept but it

marries and brings closer the self-image to the individual's aspirations. It satisfies the individual's need not only to know, 'who I am', but also to realise that 'I am the type of person that I want to be', and not merely a 'wannabe', or a copy of someone else (Rokeach, 1973).

The satisfaction of this internal self need is a precursor to the internalisation of the goals of an organisation or school. Therefore it is not easily attained except the induction began during childhood or through the effective socialization process of the school especially when the goals and objectives of the school match those of the individuals within the system. The onus is on the organization/the teacher to make school and learning attractive so that the students' emotional attachment may be established. This is attainable once the school has an attractive, creative image, or if the school is involved in things that are dramatic and/or adventurous. To create these impressions will depend greatly on the leadership/principal and the members of the staff. Therefore, the imaginative leader tends to develop an attractive climate and atmosphere for the school through new conceptualisations of the school's vision and mission.

Notwithstanding, intrinsic motivation is more desirable and in some ways more accessible and impacting than the external. The ultimate goal is to attain and access learning without rewards or punishment but as an innate, attainable, self-determined right. This is possible through the reduction of the presence of factors over which there is no control in the presentation of the task (Benware and Deci, 1984). The task itself should be relevant and meaningful to the students. In

addition the system of evaluation should not be limited to grades alone but should include some performance -oriented activities.

## **ENHANCEMENT OF MOTIVATION**

Positive reinforcers help to create environments in which learning is possible. Several approaches have been recommended to enhance motivation but the major direct approach is to encourage students to attain self-regulation. This facility is instrumental in motivating students to draw on their internal, inner fortitude and strength to plan and take responsibility for their actions and to monitor their future development. In other words, the development of autonomy and self-determination is critical.

Increasing students' choice and responsibility for their own learning is paramount in fostering that thrust towards independence. Matheny and Edwards (1974) in their study noted that the students' perception of their locus of control over their academic outcomes increased mostly in the classes in which their own strategies were applied. These strategies should give students flexibility and responsibility in the selection of their deadlines for completing their assignments. In addition students are allowed to mark and score their individual work and use individual conferences to evaluate their written work. Additionally, the teachers draw up contracts with students to determine long-range assignments and set up student learning centres.

Other teaching strategies recommended by Meece et al (1989) that can be

implemented to increase choice and enhance intrinsic motivation are that the students should select their work partners, choose the materials to be used and determine how to complete their activities. Critical to attaining this enhanced motivation are feedback and minimisation of students' dependence on teachers. Even in situations where students are physically challenged, the granting of help and support to complete tasks should be limited as the students need the space to develop and gain independence. It may be better to have students complete shoddy work by themselves and then gain the feelings of accomplishment in having completed the task.

Care should be taken not to associate autonomy and free classroom atmosphere with uninhibited *laissez-faire* freedom. Additionally, the use of peer encouragement strategies can lead to the development of origins and pawns in the classroom setting. Origins are those students who are responsible, assertive and display a deep sense of internal 'locus of control'. On the other hand, pawns are reactive and display a very weak sense of personal causation for the control of their action. DeCharms (1976, 1984, 1987) identified the existence of pawns and origins in the classroom setting and he termed the phenomena the personal causation approach. He claims that more learning and a greater sense of intrinsic motivation occur in classroom environments which allow the students to operate either as pawns or origins, rather than have all the students act as pawns. Students ought to be allowed some voluntary choice and control over learning. Students are spurred on to believe that they can become involved in the activities of their choice. DeCharms (1976, 1984) also extended the invitation to the teachers to implement the programme and give the students the freedom and the

responsibility which they need to be encouraged to set their own goals and work out the programme to have these goals realised.

The Adaptive Learning Environment Model (ALEM) is another programme devised to foster personal responsibility and autonomy in students. Wang (1976, 1988) devised the programme which used a mastery-based approach which allowed students to determine their own task and work at their own pace. The students select exploratory learning tasks in drama, art, music and creative writing along with other basic skills. Studies revealed that students can manage their own learning and in so doing produce better results when they have greater control over their own learning.

Horwitz (1979) attempted to measure the achievement gains that can be attained in an open and conventional classroom. The findings revealed that generally the open classroom approach generated the greater number of positive self-assertive students, who displayed the greatest sense of creativity. For a few students, the traditional classroom was more effective but generally attainment of autonomy and free choice, not laissez-faire, are recommended to foster greater intrinsic motivation and sustainable learning.

Deci et al (1981) and Rogers (1967) urged teachers and even parents to create an environment that is non-threatening and secure and which provides students with the facilities to cater to all their basic needs including love and belonging. Children need to feel that in spite of their possible limitations they can find unconditional acceptance and love regardless of their performance. Working in a

healthy, creative environment will help them to cultivate and promote an atmosphere of acceptance in which they will feel motivated to attempt challenging tasks which previously they would have avoided. In this open caring environment the students' fears, guilt and other problems will be pushed below the threshold of their consciousness as they are allowed to build hope and try again - to move forward.

The teachers on the other hand may shy away from accepting this responsibility of re-creating a learning environment. They often blame their poor performance on the students' problems with their motivation to achieve. The literature has indicated however that even those students whose teachers may have identified them as highly successful achievers may in fact have motivational problems. These students can often be recognized as those for whom the teachers always note 'can do better' or 'performing below potential'. These students underestimate their actual levels of performance, set low standards, give up easily and spend less persistent time on any difficult task as indicated by (Phillip, 1984). Teachers therefore need to observe their students, note their performance on a variety of academic and non-academic tasks and assist them to become intrinsically motivated to attain mastery.

## **PERFORMANCE OR TASK ORIENTATIONS TO MOTIVATION AND LEARNING**

Performance is not always an end product of effort and motivation and therefore by itself is not always a good criterion of motivation. Maehr (1984) pointed out five behavioral patterns that can be used to identify varying levels of motivation

which are related to learning. These include, the direction of the students' attention, the activity which accompanies the selection and involvement in any task; the persistency and length of time devoted to the task; the intensity or activity level/devotion; the 'continuing motivation' or the tenacity to continue plodding away and improving themselves on their own, without external incentives; and finally, as an outcome of the foregoing, higher performance levels.

Notwithstanding that one student may work diligently to achieve success in English whereas another may prefer to constantly break the English class, yet the behaviour of each of these students is directed and initiated not only by their motivation levels but by their different goals and goal-orientation. The goal of the former student based on his motivational level is to learn, perhaps to please the teacher or for other external rewards. However, the latter student may be motivated because of different goals, such as, to be popular. Wentzel (1989, 1991) attempted to rank a set of twelve goals which high schools students seek to achieve while in class. 'Making or keeping friends' ranked the highest by the students who were average performers. The low achievers ranked 'having fun' as their highest goal second to 'making and keeping friends'. Only the high achievers ranked 'learning' first, or even significant.

Recent motivation theorists have done considerable research which focused on students' intrinsic or extrinsic goals which they set for themselves to determine their reasons for engaging in achievement tasks. These theorists opine that the benefit to be gained from working on an academic task vary according to the

reason for which the task was engaged. Therefore a student may choose 'mastery or learning or task goals' if he enjoys the task or he envisages his own personal skills development. He therefore becomes occupied with the task because of the task itself and this is true motivation to learn, so contends Brophy (1986, 1987b). This approach tends to develop the students' self-worth, Omelich and Covington (1984). When however a student becomes motivated to perform a task because of external factors, such as, good grades or even popularity, then the engagement with the task is a means to another end – that is - achievement of some unrelated goal often termed 'ego or performance goals'. Ames and Archer, (1998), Nicholls (1984) have noted that students whose performance of a task is motivated by performance goals are often preoccupied with competition and using others as a basis for comparison. They are constantly seeking approval and attempting to demonstrate their intelligence levels/ ability.

Students who function from the position of task-orientation tend to show a greater use of cognitive learning and effective problem-solving techniques. These students tend to use more active 'metacognitive strategies' such as reviewing materials not understood, asking questions as they work and making connections between current and past problems, suggested, Meece, Blumenfeld and Hoyle (1988). In addition, Ames and Archer (1988) found that the more the classroom environment supports and fosters mastery rather than performance orientations, the more likely it is that students will practice positive learning strategies which will facilitate continued learning and increase motivation to want to learn. Activities such as planning, organizing materials, setting goals and utilizing skills



to discriminate and understand the important from the unimportant become the accepted standard for continued achievement motivation.

Accordingly Dweck (1986) noted that in achievement setting several different implications affect how students' behave and how their performance outcomes should be assessed, evaluated and interpreted based on their responses and their rationale for adopting learning or performance goals (Dweck and Elliot, (1983); Dweck and Leggette (1988); Lepper (1988); Nicholls, Cobb, Yackel, Wood, and Wheatley (1990).

In Dweck's theoretical analysis, whether students have high or low ability, their determined goals for learning will cause them always to seek challenges and challenging tasks that provide opportunities to develop new competencies. They will work along with and accept their teacher as a resource person and guide to their learning process rather than see their teachers as merely evaluators. They are risk-takers and will accept the challenge to perform difficult tasks that will promote skill and personal development. In periods of difficulty they will change their strategy and redouble their effort expended to attain desired levels of competence and mastery. Their focus will always be on completing the task that they want to master. They are task-oriented. They become engrossed in the flow of the events and will not stop until there is successful completion regardless of their level of self-confidence.

According to Dweck (1986) the converse occurs in situations in which students rely on performance goals. These students do not work along with the teacher but see them as the judge or punisher rather than as a resource. They assess their

competence and accomplishment based on what others say and other external factors rather than on their own understanding and personal academic improvements and mastery. Even if they are high achievers they will choose simple tasks which will not challenge their own competence levels. If they encounter any learning difficulties they will use evasive and avoidance strategies to circumvent that difficulty. They are more interested in appearing to be competent and intelligent rather than in true learning and therefore they attempt to use defensive and shortcut methods to obtain learning as Nicholls (1984) asserts. Therefore performance-oriented students seek to perform tasks that would not challenge them or teach them anything new. Their focus is on themselves, and on their external evaluators who for them are their immediate circle of friends, their 'in crowd', to whom they 'suck up' or from whom they draw energy. Such a reaction is often termed 'ego-orientation'.

Students who tend to be ego-performance-oriented tend to use superficial methods of involvement and engagement with the task. They tend to copy, guess, cheat, skip or omit questions and generally never extend themselves to go beyond that which is necessary. This attitude prevents them from expending effort in effective problem solving. In the face of challenges or academic difficulty and when the situation becomes exacerbated they tend to become withdrawn and shy because of low self-concept or little self-confidence. The debilitating effect is not as evident when students have high levels of self-confidence, even though, their performance is also affected by their perception of the task but the students who have low perception of their ability /competence give the worst performance. It

may be vital to determine if because of their poor performance, this concept is operative in the case of the JSS students under review.

## **SCHOOL EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION**

In their study on causal attribution Bar-Tal (1978, 1982) contended that school effects, which include school culture, climate and tone, play a significant role on the attributions of students for their success and failure. Teacher effect - teacher expectation, teacher control and close autocratic monitoring of student activities can create negative student responses to study or to become involved in school activities (Deci, Nezlek and Sheinman, 1981). This type of teacher effects, when they become entrenched, may lead to the stifling of student initiative, identification and self-determination.

Doyle (1983) claims that students assess their work in school as 'an exchange of performance for grades,' (p. 181). He contends that it is because of this perception of school as being examination oriented that students, by their non-involvement in extra-curricular activities prove that external evaluations are the greatest stumbling blocks to their enjoyment of school. The reward system acts as a disincentive to performance, especially if tasks are considered difficult and too challenging. Students' attention spans are short. They select work below their potential and obtain grades that are not true reflections of their ability. Additionally, some students are maladjusted and may skip classes or otherwise become disruptive. As a consequence, many students deny themselves the opportunity to work at their highest potential and gain mastery of challenging tasks. These adopted positions will invariably produce a rippling effect on

students' possible expectations for heightened self-confidence, self-esteem and heights of excellence. Ames and Ames (1990); Maehr and Stalling (1972) all contend that the variable factor of task difficulty is a serious deterrent to school work for many students as they demand higher order thinking skills.

Doyle (1983) identified four different types of tasks which are used in school. The first is memory, recall or learning by rote and routine and the second is procedural such as taking notes. These two are tolerable to most students. However, the third tasks of comprehension and that of giving opinion, two main components in the subject, English Language, demand of students the skills of analysis and synthesis as identified in Bloom's (1977) taxonomy. For students who perceive themselves as failures, the higher order level of functioning that is demanded poses a serious challenge. More importantly the students conceive failure at these tasks as a direct result of their intellectual ability levels. They are prepared at all cost to prevent themselves from being perceived as failures so they make attributions of failure to unstable factors and/or those with external loci of control.

A possible solution to this challenge is to provide tasks which are most meaningful and specifically tailored towards the students' needs. In introducing new topics the teachers' objective should be to make the topic more specific, practical and applicable to real life situations (Stigler and Stevenson, 1991). The given assignments and instructions should also be so designed to tap into and capitalize on the students' interests. Especially in the area of English where high illiteracy rates are experienced in schools the literature suggests that reading

material should focus on high interest topics, be current, up-to-date and vocabulary specific. Role play, vignettes and practicum are recommended for alternative teaching instruction. Team teaching and theme teaching across the curriculum should be implemented.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Innovation and shifts to teacher involvement in extra-curricular activities can also enhance the morale of the school and boost the students' pride in their accomplishments. Students come alive on the playing fields or in areas in which they feel passion and energy. However, in the classrooms they are listless, bored and disruptive. During a school frolic or 'dollar jam' – an inexpensive party held in school - the students work and collaborate in joyful abandonment. There is no need for any heavy supervision because their energies are being used up as they become involved in a passionate activity. The educators of the students of this new century must hear what these students are saying. Without changing their present teaching modes to being vibrant and meaningful, the school climate will continue to be non-productive and desirable levels of academic achievement will not be attained.

It is therefore necessary for each individual teacher and school to understand the need to work towards building academic institutions in which new norms are set. These should include involving the students in creative, sporting, cultural team building activities. Such activities will help to empower the students not only to manage their own differences and conflicts but also to become individuals who will be positive contributors, realising their potentials and redirecting their

energy for good. In order to motivate groups to move towards these noble ideals of working as a team to generate positive attributes and effort there must be a deep understanding of all the actors/players. Their needs, strengths and weaknesses must all be identified and a climate for development created.

## **GENDER AND MOTIVATION**

The literature is replete with researches which are geared towards giving females a voice (Fine, 1992). In the present day JSS school setting, girls tend to outnumber the boys and to perform better academically. Children at the kindergarten stage are not affected by distinctions in performance. They are generally all made to feel that they are smart and progressing at an even pace. Performance strongly linked to effort and pleasing the significant other is what truly matters then. The child is not yet able to differentiate between levels of ability and effort (Stipez, 1984a).

However, as children get older teachers tend to highlight the differences in performance, not only through grades attained but also through teachers' comments and their emotional reaction to students' presentations. These reactions differ significantly between the sexes. In the early years, boys are less harshly treated for their academic weaknesses and levels of incompetence, whereas girls are more severely stigmatized. As a consequence girls are more likely to make attributions to lack of competence and ability for failure.

By the time students reach the JSS level, the whole class social feedback disappears as the differentiation in competence becomes more prominent as

grade point averages and individual reports with grades take centre stage (Blumenfeld et al, 1988; Nicholls, 1978). It is established that boys experience more learning difficulties than girls and consequently they tend to develop more maladaptive learning styles (Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1978). Therefore, boys who find that they are failing develop more creative strategies to protect their self concept and self-image than girls. They make more attributions to lack of effort and other controllable factors rather than to their ability or incompetence. In class, they become disruptive or deviant. They spend more energy on avoiding failure by 'looking dumb' rather than on attempting to bridge the gap and learn. They make overt signs of obstinate refusal to exert effort or show interest in school. They are frequently absent, and minimize participation in academic achievement related activities. At times, they may even pretend that they are expending effort in class, (Covington, Spratt and Omelich, 1980)

Girls on the other hand, in their demonstration of avoidance of failure are likely to make attributions to their lack of ability or to other stable factors, such as task difficulty. Therefore in subjects such as Mathematics and Science which are more gender specific, girls have deliberately shied away from them and have ascribed their failure in these subjects to their incompetence. However, the literature revealed that only in Spelling was there no difference in boys' and girls' perception of the cause for their achievement outcome (Stipez, 1984c).

Girls differ from boys in their emotional response to situations and in their reactions to the emotions of others directed to them. In the classroom setting girls are more prone to overstate and take blame for their actions. Additionally, in

academic settings, they are more likely to respond by making attributions to the stable factors of ability, whenever teachers' overt or covert emotional reactions of pity or anger are directed to their performance and achievement levels. In situations when their teachers' or parents' anger are directed at their under achievement the girls will attribute blame to task difficulty or their incompetence and often completely refuse to participate in any challenging task. On the other hand, the boys will announce up-front, that they are going to attempt the difficult task but will be placing little effort on the particular task only because they recognize it as difficult. By saying that, they psyche themselves and others to expect failure and so inevitably attribute their inability to complete the task to their lack of effort expended rather than at their own lack of ability.

Additionally, in instances where the students need to rely on pity, the emotional response between the sexes differs. Girls interpret having to rely on pity as a direct indication of their lack of competence. More girls than boys are deeply affected in their attributions to lack of ability. Girls show greater tendencies to learned helplessness. In the area of expectations for an improved academic future, more girls than boys seem to display the tendency to hold more generalised beliefs about themselves based on the past experiences of their parents' and teachers' expectations for their success. Once they believe that they are expected to be successful they tend to display an inordinate desire to succeed or they over-extend themselves by 'over-striving to remain at the top of the class' (Covington and Beery, 1976).



## CONCLUSIONS

The motivation process is at the very essence of one's achievement and is therefore, integrally associated and related to the learning processes and its sustainability. Therefore, whatever the underlying factors, motivation and especially achievement motivation remain dynamic, purposeful, energetic and meaningful processes which are instrumental in understanding human and/or animal behaviour. As such, in spite of the complexity of the human nature, motivation effectively controls behaviour. Therefore, no activity, conflict or achievement that one may experience can be satisfactorily accomplished or resolved if it is not charged with motivation. Achievement motivation has at its disposal a variety of factors, drives, interests, expectancies, needs, generalised and reinforced beliefs together with responsiveness to internal and external forces which ultimately affect one's locus of control, stability and ultimately one's attributional patterns for determining one's perceptions for success or failure.

It is therefore my considered view that in order to achieve there has to be the energy/force/drive that is translated into effort to accomplish that which one believes, desires and dreams about and has the capacity to attain. If obstacles to the successful attainment of ones' goals are present, then the individuals may unconsciously resort to self- protection and self-preservation of mind, emotions, feelings and beliefs. This reaction is in fact responsiveness to some aspect of motivation. As a result, motivation plays an integral part in an individuals' level of achievement and learning. Thus when misunderstood internal, suppressed and repressed psychological pressures, generalised beliefs and perceptions combined with oppressive external factors of home, teacher effects, short-lived external

rewards, and/or punishment tend to impact negatively on the students' achievement levels and their desire to learn.

These theories are relevant in assessing the JSS school system if only to determine whether these students are so unique that they respond differently to all the emotional and psychological pressures common to students globally. Having said that, it is possible that the students' historical antecedents from which they have emerged out of a post-emancipation colonial legacy might cause their responses and worldview to differ. However, in the absence of that heritage of assessing the emotions and psychological responses of our students and teachers in established local psychological theory then the existing concepts have to be applied and the JSS students would be pioneers in attempting to determine the extent to which any of these theories and causal attribution factors are operative because of their teachers' lack of expectation about their academic performance then and in the future.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **CURRICULUM ISSUES - 14+ ENGLISH LANGUAGE - TEACHER EXPECTATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In seeking to determine the extent to which the expectations of the teachers have impacted on the students' performance and achievement outcomes generally, and specifically in English at the school under review, it is necessary to clarify the concepts of the curriculum, the subject English and teacher expectations. As a result, this chapter seeks to make a critical assessment of these three concepts and all the contentious issues which cause them to impact on the JSS students attaining high achievement levels. Thus, whereas the previous chapter explored the internal factors which impinge on the students' motivation to learn and attain mastery, this chapter will address the external forces, namely, the irrelevance of the curriculum, the difficulty of the task, English and the effect of the teachers and their expectations, demonstrated through their interactions, engagements and delivery strategies. Together these form powerful negative contributors to the JSS students' levels of achievement.

#### **THE CURRICULUM**

John Quicke (1999) lamented that since the post-war period in England and despite the many extensive reforms in the education system, the 'curriculum itself' has never been addressed. He therefore noted that if curriculum issues remain neglected, in spite of reforms which include 'education for all' policies, the education system will continue to be divisive and unjust. His lament and

words of caution are applicable to Trinidad and Tobago especially with regard to the junior secondary school system whose curriculum is ignored in spite of the recent innovations of the Ministry of Education, Secondary Education Modernisation Programme - SEMP, and the Universal Secondary Education - USE projects.

Kelly (1988) wrote that a curriculum should be a systematic, broad-based, community-driven, arrangement of subject matter, experiences and activities within the course offerings of a school. It is meant to include essential learning outcomes that concentrate on the academic, non-academic and the aesthetic, and should be constructed to focus on the individual students, community needs and market demands. The curriculum should also be flexible, encompassing a range of subjects, experiences and knowledge skills in a modular structure (Tomlinson 1995). Barrow (1976) indicated that what is especially important is that the curriculum should be multi-cultural and pluralistic. In a similar fashion the Trinidad and Tobago, Secondary Education Modernised Programme (SEMP) curriculum of 1998 included concepts of being learner-friendly, community-driven and all inclusive, with six (6) essential learning outcomes, namely, aesthetic expressions, communication, citizenship, personal development, problem solving and technological competence.

However, the curriculum which was introduced to the JSS system met none of the above stated requirements (The Education Plan 1968-1973). Even though that curriculum was introduced as modernised, yet the philosophical underpinning was merely to provide all students with a secondary school education to the age

of 14. Added to that, the students were supposed to be exposed to a broad-based, technical and quasi-academic curriculum, which after three years would be discriminating enough to select those who were eligible for a purely traditional education and those who would best function in the technical and craft areas. However, the curriculum to accomplish these goals was implemented as a top-down, national curriculum with a fixed programme of work, set textbooks and a fixed time-table which must be displayed in the Principal's outer office. The structure instituted was very rigid. All junior secondary school principals and staff had to conform, especially because the international demands and conditionality of the World Bank financial regulations had to be applied. Interestingly though, thirty years later, in most of the junior secondary schools, including the one under review, the curriculum is no closer to the Kelly's (1988) proposition. Instead the time-tables, national curricula and programmes of work are still adhered to rigidly.

In the early days of the JSS system, if any change was desired in the Curriculum, approval was first required from the Permanent Secretary and/or the Minister of Education. Within recent times, in order to implement any variations to the existing model, the supervisors of the Ministry of Education need to authorise the change. Nonetheless, the success of any such change depends very heavily on the strength, creativity and management skills of the school's administration. Based on my experience and those of other administrators who attempted to be radical, it must be stated that the greatest resistance to putting any change into operation came from the older teachers who had grown in the system and were always averse to change.

Goodson (1994) commenting on the effectiveness of a National Curriculum pointed out that such a curriculum is usually grounded in the existing political, social and historical organisation of knowledge. These facets are generally disproportionately skewed to favour the elite and exclude the majority, who unfortunately are often from the lower class. As a result, he, like so many other educators criticised the existence of National Curricula which tended to be top-down and unsuited to the localised needs of the students. According to Bernstein (1975) and Apple (1996) the historical perspective has revealed that such curricula are developed from a platform of elitism, exclusion, class and gender distinctions, inequalities of access and unsuitability to cater for the needs of all the students.

Deardeen (1981) also pointed out that it was not appropriate to plan a curriculum only according to distinct subject areas. He argued that any such curriculum was meaningless unless there was some prior commitment made by the deliverer/teacher to ensure that the ingredients articulated and the philosophical principles espoused were conceptualised so that the curriculum delivered is balanced.

Nevertheless, before the launch of the JSS system the teachers were especially nominated and recommended based on their qualifications and teaching performance at the primary school level. The chosen teachers were trained by personnel from the World Bank and the supervisory staff of the Ministry of Education. At these training sessions held at two centres, one in the north and the other in the south of Trinidad, the teachers were indoctrinated into the new

demands, strategies and techniques of their subject areas of choice based on their teachers' college qualifications and subject elective. They were promised an upgrade in their status and salary. On the opening of the junior secondary schools, these teachers were assigned to impart their newly acquired information only in their single subject area.

At all the junior secondary schools the subject areas offered were and still are English Language, Mathematics, Spanish, Social Studies, Agricultural Science, General Science, Art and Craft, Music, Home Economics, Physical Education and Industrial Arts which comprises three subjects Technical Drawing, Woodwork and Metal Work. Subject rooms were also allotted and the work to be covered was pre-determined. Nevertheless, through these new subject syllabuses coupled with the super-imposed teaching methods in the delivery of content and classroom control, these newly trained teachers were expected to motivate the students to learn and effect changes in their behaviour to meet the demands of the national educational goals.

It must be noted that the teachers of the technical and craft areas were wooed from their other lucrative jobs to facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum. As a consequence, they were not trained in the rudiments of teaching and as a result, their commitment to the task and their ability to deliver the theory of the lessons were from very early inadequate.

Additionally, one point needs to be re-emphasized. Most of the student attendees at the junior secondary schools were never and would never have been eligible to

meet the requirements of the traditional grammar-type secondary schools. But the trained teachers were equipped for the task and the transformation in the classroom began alongside heated objections from some parents and the church. Nonetheless, the Government at that time had fulfilled its political agenda in implementing a system which was inclusive of all students.

Arguably, that first cohort of teachers was trained, prepared and the curriculum issues were addressed, but unfortunately, only one such training session was conducted. From as early as the second intake of new teachers up to the present time there has been no training provided either for the pioneers and/or for successive new teacher entrants into the system. This means that none of the new intake of teachers who subsequently entered the system was ever instructed or prepared to handle their subject areas and the pupils. No orientation courses were given to these new teachers to explain the peculiarities of the students or to bring their expectations and perceptions in line with the national goals.

Although it was intended to be spacious and conducive to learning, the physical lay-out of the school seemed to have contributed to the divisive nature of the JSS system. The school was divided into blocks of buildings with specially identified subject area locations. According to Bernstein (1975), this type of national subject structured curriculum lends itself to the creation of a 'collection' of specific subject blocks which allows for the reification of strong subject boundaries. Nick Tate (2000), the chief executive of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority, QCA, underscored the limitations of implementing a subject-oriented National Curriculum, strongly advised a paradigm shift from



subject disciplines to curriculum areas which zero in on first principles, because, ultimately the former approaches lead to the emergence of teaching styles which are highly ritualised, hierarchical, and lacking in meaningful teacher-learner engagements.

Sadly, this specific subject approach to learning coupled with the distinct separate physical setting has resulted in little or no benefit for the students in terms of their social and personal development. Opportunities for integration and infusion even at the staff level are almost impossible because the teachers remain cloistered in their subject rooms and specific areas whilst the students move and sometimes roam. The nature of the shift system further exacerbates the isolation and separation of the staff and students. More time and effort are spent on inter-shift rivalry rather than on concentrating on the core business of teaching and motivating students to learn.

Based on the experiences of those societies with a national curriculum, for example South Africa, the literature has highlighted the failure of these curricula to facilitate students' personal independence, autonomy, self-determination and self-regulation (Christie, 1994, 1997). Instead its presence has bolstered elitism, systematically disadvantaged certain groups and restricted choice and action which are the hallmark of a democratic community (Gewitz *et al*, 1995). Thus, such a curriculum has not been able to elicit any genuine commitment from the students, or from the teachers and the society. Therefore, the students never become involved or committed to the task mainly because its present relevance was blurred. As a consequence, the students perceived no immediate social or

cultural benefit from their engagement with either the teacher or the subject and they often sought alternative means for self-fulfilment.

Added to all of the afore-mentioned, the students at the end of their junior secondary school education receive no meaningful academic certification. The only secondary school leaving certification is not granted at the present JSS system but at the senior comprehensive school. Therefore, many of the students consider the period of waiting for that reality of obtaining certification to be so distant that it becomes almost meaningless for them to strive to stay on course whilst at this lower secondary school level.

Therefore, it is questionable whether such a national curriculum can ever meet the ever-changing needs of these twenty first century students. The reality is that the majority of the students attending junior secondary schools have not benefited from that curriculum and as a result they have become and will continue to remain the most marginalised group in the society. Unfortunately, this state of marginalization is perpetuated because the anticipated outcomes to be derived from the JSS system did not materialise. Instead, the duality of the education system remained entrenched and even widened. This is evidenced by student outcome. Some students of the JSS system are responsible for the perpetration of the violent and petty crimes in the country because they do not form part of the productive main-stream sector of the society.

Even more tragic is the fact that there is perennial reinforcement of the ills of the system. Many of the teachers who initially started the system are still classroom

teachers, in the same school, in the same subject area, thirty years later. I have observed that without re-training and re-tooling many of these teachers have continued to teach the same warmed over, outdated notes and information to these twenty first century students. Such attitudes and practices on the part of the teachers tend to have a negative impact on their expectations and effectiveness in motivating these students to mastery. As a consequence, little or no innovations are introduced into the pedagogy and teaching styles of these teachers and the students remain demotivated.

Quicke (1999) conceptualised school as a democratic learning society in which the curriculum should equip students for life and living within their own environment. For him, education must cater to develop students to become productive citizens who will operate positively in a learning environment. To accomplish this, the students as well as the teachers have to identify and realise their own potentials, and choose the necessary techniques and strategies to equip them to operate and function in this very complex world. Tate (2000) was adamant that all students should be grounded in societal, cultural and ethical values and given an opportunity to determine their personal value system. As a consequence, many aspects of the students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development must be recognised as crucial to informing the curriculum.

Quicke (1999) also noted that the education for the modern democratic society is one which should provide all students with equal opportunities to realise their potentials as individuals. He and others like, Hall and Jacques (1989) and Lash (1994) specifically highlighted a modern curriculum which provided for

reflexivity – the process which allows individuals, groups and organizations to examine critically their rationales and values and where necessary, deliberately reorder and reinvent their identities and structures. Additionally, he felt that a meaningful curriculum should be person centred and community driven. Extremely critical were the adaptations to changing family values and whole group collaborations. Issues of cultural pluralism, racism and gender concerns were considered essential to the reconstruction of a curriculum for life.

### **THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT DIVISION – CDD**

The Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education as it exists today was non-existent at the inception of the JSS system. In fact, the CDD emerged as an after-thought many years later. What was in place then was a system in which School Supervisors were neither directly in charge of the Curriculum nor of the monitoring of teachers' delivery. By 1978 there were two Curriculum Officers assigned to implement, monitor and work on all the English curricula in the Education system - primary, secondary and even tertiary. The CXC syllabus for the secondary schools was coming on stream and therefore all their energies were directed to that area. Monitoring of the delivery of the JSS curriculum was neglected. At present that incredible anomaly still exists. There is no Curriculum Officer specifically assigned to monitor and assess the teaching and learning strategies adopted at the junior secondary schools.

The CDD has little supervisory or serious monitoring capacity and does not oversee and make direct input into the functioning of the JSS system. Emphasis is placed on the primary schools, hence the introduction of Curriculum

Facilitators in each subject area to assist in monitoring and in providing support at the primary level. However, over the years the JSS Principals, who are supposed to be the master teachers, as part of their job specification, are expected to monitor the curricula delivered in their schools. This duty is one of their many functions which include firstly, ensuring the security and safety of the students and then the staff as well as the maintenance of the plant. Indubitably, they become so involved in the day to day operations of the two shift - schools in which there is a large student population of approximately 1,800, and a staff of over 70 teachers, that little, if any attention is paid to the monitoring of the curricula.

Coincidentally, modern thought on curriculum monitoring and design is moving toward site-based management. As a consequence, the principals are now considered as the persons, *de jure* and *de facto*, directly responsible for the successful realization of the education goals and direction of their schools. The Curriculum, especially one that is instrumental in orienting and motivating students' to learn, is the most important vehicle through which they can attain and sustain high levels of academic achievement at their school. John Dewey (1932) insisted that the school administration was responsible to balance all the varied elements in the school's social environment and still see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the social group in which he was born and be able to come into contact with a broader environment.

The mandate is clear. In order to achieve the desired paradigm shift, the curriculum is expected to be more integrated and expansive rather than being

merely restricted to single subject orientations and dated content. One has to consider whether the principals' and teachers' interpretations of their requirements for a suitable and accessible curriculum will cater for the specific needs of each particular student.

The concern then is who should design the curriculum? Should the teachers have a major input? Teachers tend to resent the implementation of a curriculum which excludes their voice. The students and their needs have to be also considered. In addition, the other members of the community including the business executives should be heard. For who benefits from a well-balanced curriculum? All stakeholders do.

Unfortunately, in the development of the political agenda to meet the demand for 'education for all' both locally and internationally the practice appears to be that the most important aspect that will successfully drive that initiative, the curriculum, is woefully undervalued. Unwittingly the well-intentioned political system has led to the perpetuation of the elitist system. Educational work and schooling remain disconnected from the students' needs and realities and eventually school emerges *sans* relevance and *sans* soul. Hence the reasons that changes in the education system are ineffective and educational goals are not totally realised. Instead, the system continues to be divisive, unjust and to function with all its in-built inequalities.

The constructivist approach to curriculum design allows the planners and framers the opportunity and time to observe the students and then design a curriculum

whose content and practical units cater to the students' needs (von Glasserfeld, 1995). An alternative to the existing system is the creation of enriched classroom environments which are endowed with access to reader-friendly, high interest materials and books. Add to that, creative and artistic projects which require the utilisation of all the students' multiple intelligences as designated by Howard Gardner (1989), together with friendly, approachable teachers whose roles are merely to facilitate and guide the student-learning process and success may be more quickly organised. Emerging out of these culturally relevant, family and community collaborations should emerge curricula which are constructivist in their evolution and most practical and relevant to the students' needs.

#### **14 + ENGLISH LANGUAGE – ITS DOUBLE-EDGED REALITY**

This research investigated generally and specifically the expectations of the teachers as they interacted with the students to assist them to attain mastery in English Language. The 14+ English Language Junior Secondary School Leaving Examination is a National Examination with a criterion reference norm established for all junior secondary schools students in their third form. This examination is the national benchmark to ascertain students' performance at the subject and is a measure and determinant for their future placement at the traditional grammar or the government secondary or the senior comprehensive schools. It is therefore, an important assessment for the students' future academic and career paths. Determination of achievement levels is of extreme concern to the educator. The literature has established and justified that such national tests can be identified as standardised achievement and attainment criteria, in lieu of

the Intelligence Quotient, IQ tests of Binet (1904). Thus, for the purposes of this study, academic achievement means success at a passing grade of 55 at the National 14+ Examination in English Language.

The desire to become proficient and to attain success at English Language poses an obstacle that low achieving students may find difficult to surmount and therein lays the double-edged reality. Standard English is the official language spoken in Trinidad and Tobago. It is however not the major or first form of natural language communication. Thus, ironically, even though, Trinidad and Tobago is perceived as an English speaking nation, in fact, the vernacular and the Trinidad Standard non-English forms are the dominant modes of communication. Standard English forms are rarely used in our daily exchanges. Our dialects and commonly used expressions differ from region to region, family to family, among the ages, groups and between ethnic classifications. What is even more poignant is that the same word may have different interpretations for the different groupings. In addition, the same expressions may mean absolutely different things to the various groupings and to members of the same group even though there is a basic core of English sounding commonality of expressions. Thus, Standard English is a foreign language in Trinidad and Tobago. In 1997, a local English professor at the University of the West Indies, Merle Hodge showed the grammatical and syntactical differences between Caribbean English Creole and Standard English. A simple example she gave of a typical sentence using the areas of the past tense and pluralization is, '*She gone to feed the pig and them.*' In Standard English the sentence should be, '*She has gone to feed the pigs.*'



Lawrence Carrington (1968), a linguist, also highlighted the syntactical structure of the Caribbean English Creole.

The picture becomes even grimmer when one considers how language is acquired. In his social cognitive view, Vygotsky (1978) examined the role of language in learning. He contends that cognition and acquisition of language develop because of social interaction. He indicated that language is acquired when the child is immersed in the language, syntax and dialect of his significant others, his parents initially in their daily discourse, as the child learns to complete tasks and discuss the processing thereof through his/her involvement and shared responsibility. Language and literature are a continuous dialogue, therefore, the more exposure and interaction the child obtains with the vocabulary and syntax of the language the deeper will be the assimilation thereof. Vygotsky (1978) also reiterated that even though cognitive development and comprehension tend to lag behind the recognition of words, yet that initial acquaintance with the language is a dynamic social process in which enriched discourse forces the development of higher - order cognitive skills. Thus with continued contact and engagement with the discussion of the task the experiences gained about the use of language can lead to the accumulation of culturally acquired knowledge. For Vygotsky (1978) the child's use of language represents the child's actual level of cognitive development, and the impact of his/her socialization process.

However, in the case of students who live in remote country areas whose engagement with the tasks and the subsequent dialect/language structures and syntax are predominantly '*creole or dialect*', their facility to communicate in the

Standard is limited. The child may have had the exposure to some tasks but may experience difficulty in naturally writing and comprehending the dialogue in the Standard. Ironically, Joseph (1980, 1996) in her research in junior secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago discovered that the students felt highly offended when teachers switched language codes to use the *creole/dialect* or the vernacular when questioning or explaining any subject matter. Her study revealed that the students felt that the teachers were 'laughing at them' whenever they used the vernacular in an effort to create a less formal learning environment. Yet, La Guerre (1974), a socio-political activist, contended that the children of the two main ethnic groupings, the Africans and Indians interpreted the switched codes and use of the creole differently.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of the double - edged reality of the subject that is English Language causes one to focus on the child's acquisition of the mother tongue which is a derivative of the Standard. The reality poses serious problems for literacy and mastery of the language. Though similar, there are acute differences in structure, spelling and interpretation which create a grave difficulty to creole speakers who can communicate orally and be understood at any level but whose reading and writing skills remain deficient and unacceptable even at the barest minimum to the standard. This problem with the many levels of illiteracy is very critical at the school under review. Unfortunately there are some secondary school students who cannot recognise the letters of the alphabet even though they have been in school since the age of 5. Before the year 2000, some of these students entered secondary school at the age of 16 or when they were deemed ready. Sadly now, many of the older entrants have not yet attained a

reading age of 5. These need a teacher and a school environment which will immerse them into the structures of the language if they are to become proficient in the Standard.

As an examiner in English and a former Head of several Departments of English, I can testify to the existence of this double-edged relationship with the Standard English. The truth is that many students are either poor readers or non-readers. The upshot is that these students may find it difficult to make the adjustments necessary to attain high levels of performance in the skills demanded in the English Language examination. Yet the English Language results are used as a measure and bench-mark of the students' academic ability. Therefore, failure at this subject has serious implications not only for in-school assessment but for job applications and future life-long careers. Still, the explanations commonly given by teachers and other educators for the students' failure and inability to perform and handle this disconnect, range from the students' lack of motivation, low self-esteem, poor academic foundation, learned helplessness and lack of parental guidance to their abject laziness.

The demands of the English Language 14+ Examination paper are many and varied. Firstly, the students have to write an essay/short story. Within recent times the students are given the option to compose a 'rap', 'dub' or poem, instead of only prose. Secondly, they are expected to respond to questions based on their reading of a Comprehension passage which is aimed at the reading age of a 12 year old. The questions on the passage vary in difficulty and responses range from those which elicit surface meaning and understanding, to those which

require the use of inferential and analytical skills. Bloom (1977) in his taxonomy alluded to the fact that demands for these skills are very exacting and require a high level of academic ability and sophistication. Thus many educators view mastery at Comprehension as critical to analysing an individual's cognitive development. Thirdly, the students are asked to respond to comprehension questions based on a poem. Fourthly, there is the section on the Grammar of the Language which requires responses to multiple-choice questions on spelling; vocabulary, tense, sentence construction and structure. Finally, English Literature is examined separately and the students are expected to respond appropriately to questions related to characterization, style, plot and theme which are based on several texts and novels which they should have studied during their three years and especially in their third year.

Thus, students who are not well-prepared for this examination and who are lacking in the basic skills of reading, writing and especially comprehending will experience extreme difficulty in attaining success at this examination. When varied aspects of Mathematics and English are compared Galloway et al (1994) identified that Comprehension tended to promote more frustration and learned helplessness. Therefore, many of these students may eventually develop the learned helplessness syndrome (Dweck, 1986), maladaptive motivational tendencies (Armstrong *et al*, 1996), overt expression of gross frustration and/or an open show of lack of interest in the subject. The students' level of success or failure at the 14+ English Language Form Three Examination at the school under review will soon be disclosed. Their causal attributions and perceptions about the results will further inform this study.

Coincidentally, according to Au (1986/2001), Garvey and Caramazza (1974), Brown and Fish (1985) and Semin and Fielder (1989) language becomes critical in arriving at attributions. Their concern in the attribution process is that language is used as methodology to arrive at perceptions and Language is a school subject. Thus the double-edged reality of English Language for the JSS students deepens. In signalling the significance of language and language structures post modern theorists noted that language should not be considered only as a mode for reflexive meaning but also as a form of knowledge that can be separated from discourses and the texts as they both work within the culture. Therefore language per se has meaning and constitutes a system which governs what can be known and what can be communicated, and it demands that each individual accepts the responsibility to master it (Chomsky, 1979). Thus for the students who are existing in the situation of persistent failure striving to gain that mastery may continue to frustrate them.

A possible solution to the dilemma is to encourage teachers to use the most effective teaching methods including debates, drama, dialogue, practical activities to provide students with experiences in the appropriate use of the language both orally and written. Also the curriculum has to be adapted to suit these students' needs so that they will be able to gain incremental mastery, firstly at their areas of weakness and then fully at the double-edged task. The question is how easily can the curriculum be adjusted and who will make the adjustments? If these changes are not made speedily then the curriculum and the deliverers, the teachers, may be held accountable for the students' dilemma.

## **TEACHER EXPECTATION**

**'the teachers' estimate of a child's level of performance within a classroom'  
(Saracho,1991, p.27)**

**Good teachers will use the most effective teaching methods to facilitate learning and maintain high standards of quality education. This is a fundamental priority of the education system and when put into effect can become the criterion by which teachers' level of expectation and their standards of delivery of the curriculum are measured. This section re-assesses the significance of teachers' expectations and its importance to teachers' maintenance of high quality standards of performance of their duties to effect students' high levels of performance.**

**Teacher expectations are the beliefs that a teacher and/or a student hold for the student's future success in a learning situation. Thus, Craig-Janes (1999) indicates that there is a direct causal relationship between the teachers' expectations and the students' academic achievement outcome. But, according to Rotter (1975) notions of expectancy are contingent on one's generalised beliefs which are usually formed early in life and once formed are difficult to reverse. Therefore, once students and/or teachers locate their attributions to a stable, uncontrollable factor, like student's lack of ability, then they have automatically indicated that their expectation for success in the future is minimal. Additionally, these expectations for success or failure can be affected by past occurrences and histories of events that existed then and have persisted, as in situations of constant failure where future anticipations for success have almost become non-existent. Furthermore, contingent on these expectations are the**

reciprocal responses that highlight its significance. High levels of expectation should produce high levels of success and vice versa, low levels of expectation should produce low levels of success. However, this direct type of causation, though it exists has been criticised by some who argue that its practice raises serious ethical concerns.

Within recent times the argument for the direct causation of teacher expectation versus student successful academic achievement has been expanded. The notion now points out that more important than the teachers' stated expectation is the manner in which the teacher consciously or unconsciously manipulates and differentiates the classroom environment to impact on students' academic achievement. Thus, teacher expectations and teacher perceptions are very critical to the interactions, engagements and the relationships which exist in the classroom. They also affect the students' overall levels of performance, students' motivation to learn and their discipline.

In the classroom setting, there is a great deal of inter-relations between opinions, actions, attitudes and feelings of teachers and students. Therefore, for classroom teaching to be successful, it is necessary that these relationships are congenial and workable. The accomplishment of workable relationships depends to a large extent on the relationships that are developed between the teacher and the students, the teacher and administration, the teacher and the parent and the school/teacher and the community.

These inter-relationships are determined by the perceptions that both the teachers

and the students have of each other. However, these perceptions are not just how each see and construe the other. They are really an 'active process' of taking notice of a subjectively meaningful phenomenon, which exists, but is only noticed whenever one attempts to give meaning to any action which one perceives as being out of the taken-for-granted (Nash, 1973). These expectations are almost often based on the teacher's covert or expressed expectations of the pupil's performance and the students' fulfilment of that expectation and vice-versa. But more importantly these expectations impact on classroom organization, students' behaviour and on the pattern of interactions in the classroom. These expectations and perceptions can be so potent that it is important to identify how they are arrived at and the criteria or framework used to determine their existence.

One such criterion is through the interactions, engagements and inter-relations in a classroom. Nash (1973) and the symbolic interactionists have suggested that people interact with each other primarily through symbols and words, which-

are the guides to action that members of a society follow; the direct guides (norms), the guides to actions we ought to do (ideals) and the subjective guides to individual action (attitudes). These symbols are meaningful so far as men are able (most of the time) to predict each other's behaviour and to gauge their own according to the expectation they believe others have of them (p.41)

These interactions gain meaning and importance because of the notions of predictability and the interpretation of the beliefs that the significant other holds. These are very important in analysing the entire issue of teacher expectation as they impact on the morals, norms, ideals and attitudes of the students. Indubitably, teachers demonstrate their preferences and expectations in



predictable ways dependent on the student's social class, ability levels and/or the teachers' schema of reference and their opinions of the students. Teachers' use of language changes, dependent on the social standing of the child addressed; or the differences may be noted in the types of questions asked. Other biases may also become evident. In retaliation, the students who are treated less favourably either respond with deviance or withdrawal, with anger or frustration, with learned helplessness or with self-fulfilled and/or self-resigned actions fulfilling the teachers' expectations.

The manifestations of these effects are closely aligned to the cultural and social interaction that pervades the learning environment. The entire process of socialization, acculturation and assimilation of others' religions, customs and traditions are quite significant and relevant to the notions of teacher expectation. Nash (1973) purports that in any given culture, people in their social relationships act within the taken-for-granted framework of what things and events are considered relevant to that culture and to themselves. Their interaction takes place within the context of a set of background expectancies shared by one another. Importantly though, the theory is concerned about the understanding of the SELF in that situation. This concern about SELF is critical, because, whatever a person believes about him/herself will form part of his/her motivational structure and generalised belief system which is engrained from infancy and determines the person's unconscious self-concept and self-image.

Therefore according to Nash (1973), in any setting when the players interface

with each other, the social interaction will be present as a person acts towards another with the expectation that the other will listen and respond. This interaction is deemed successful when each person correctly perceives the other's expectations and motivational context for taking an action. In such situations, the self-perceptions are highly important and relevant to one's well-being and to the innate reactions to things past, present and future. In such a setting, the individuals will unconsciously form the nexus for understanding their actions and the implications for any problems that may be caused because of the existing social interaction. Additionally, they are socially provided with the ability to reflect on the reality of the situation. According to Shultz (1977), in such a setting, whenever there is a reaction, the other person attempts to determine motive, either 'in order to' or 'because', and these become the significant contributors to understanding the reason for the action.

Brookover (1965), Brookover *et al* (1965, 1979) and Hargreaves (1972) in their studies compared the relationship between teacher expectations and the students' self-concept, social class and their ability levels. In the study of Brookover *et al* (1965) the children tended to value their self-image and acceptance by their peers above the teachers' expectations of their ability level. Conversely, Hargreaves' (1972) case-study indicated that teachers' expectations of the children's ability were more important than their self-concept. Whatever position is adopted the teachers' expectations impacted on the students' performance levels.

Mac Intyre *et al* (1996) felt that unfortunately, most of the teachers' perceptual frames of reference come from their own social background and their own

individual view of the world. When compared and combined with the existing or non-existing social fabric, teachers' own peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, their administrative and school cultural framework tend to mould them to put certain issues on the front burner of their repertoire of items and this can paint a truly sad and depressing picture for the JSS students. The perceived and too often accepted taken-for-granted schema of a teacher to notice uniforms, homework, school bags, excuses, and to determine levels of discipline or indiscipline are all contingent on the culture of the school coupled with the type of school and the teacher's own idiosyncrasies and sense of relevance. These provide a large focus of operation in which much valued time for positive engagement is lost. Mac Intyre, Morrison and Sutherland (1996) concluded that the teachers' perceptual frames or the way in which they and those of their own social group construct their own reality are directly related to their social background and their perceived notion of their students and their own social class.

In listening to teachers, Becker (1952) found that their schema appeared in opposing pairs, such as desirable and undesirable, or happy and unhappy. She also noted that the priority that many teachers used in arriving at their perception of the students are oftentimes based on the students' flexibility, dependability, discipline, maintenance of school image, fear of and/or respect for authority. But, Becker (1952) also showed that teachers' expectations differed. Teachers develop different generally expected attitudes and perceptions of pupils according to their different social class and the fact that they reside in upper-class locations. However, Goodacre (1968) identified teachers' perceptions of the students' social class to be often wrong and misdirected, as they are usually determined by

insignificant variables, such as, the students' conversation, their clothing and other belongings.

Hallworth (1962) also attempted to gain insight into the teachers' perceptions and expectations. He found that they differed according to individual teachers and their concept of the students' maturity, especially in the areas of extraversion, reliability and conscientiousness. These areas are further highlighted according to the types of schools that the students attend, whether, traditional grammar type or junior secondary. In his survey of students from both types of school, Burstall (1970) concluded that students with the low scores came from the latter type of school, where there were teachers with unfavourable attitudes and whose teaching styles were pedestrian and apathetic. Pidgeon (1970) supported that former claim in his study when he pointed out that the students who did the first phase of his test while attending the lower-class school and were then transferred to the traditional/secondary type schools, revealed better scores than even the most intelligent of those who remained at the original school. These transferred students continued to excel even one year later. This type of situation is exacerbated in the JSS system where the teachers have very little interactions with the students, they own and control the classroom space whilst the students are migratory and society has low perceptions of the school type. Thus, the impact of the individual teacher's expectation would tend to be more negative and oftentimes more predictable.

Additionally, teachers also reveal their expectations by the attitudes they display during classroom and social interaction with their students. Jackson and

Lahadernell (1969) noted that teachers' interactions with their students are three-fold. Firstly it is *Instructional* concentrating on the curriculum and school-work-related tasks. Secondly, it is *Managerial* which entails giving of directions and rules and thirdly, it is *Prohibitory*, or dealing with disciplinary matters. In the average classroom the instructional interactions are most frequent. However, there is a striking relationship between low teacher expectations of students and classes in which disciplinary and /or prohibitory class interaction is high. Unfortunately these occurrences are generally higher in classrooms of boys but prevalent in classes in the JSS system.

Garner and Bing (1973) and Silberman (1969) clustered teachers' expectations into groupings based on the teachers' interaction according to their attachments to the students. Those to whom they feel most attached or the pets are frequently praised, considered well disciplined and they in turn seek the teacher's help more frequently on their instructional/school task matters. Those in the favoured or concerned group are less accurate with their school work; they are more inclined to guess but are sought out by the teacher more frequently even though they are given less praise and more criticism. Those to whom the teachers are indifferent are more passive and silent; they seek the teachers' help less and are not often called upon. The final grouping, the rejected are often loud and restless. They seek out the teachers frequently and have many disciplinary contacts. These results were not very conclusive as it was difficult to identify which predicated the other. Did the teachers' expectations give rise to the pupils' corresponding reaction, which eventually manifested itself as the self-fulfilling prophecy first coined by Merton (1948)? However, Silberman (1993) was careful to note that

teachers take great pains to mask overt demonstrations of favouritism or excessive rejection and to suppress these extreme actions, which can be construed as being contrived perhaps because of the obvious moral ill-effects (Coleman Report, 1973).

However, in a classroom setting where other overt or sometimes covert dynamics of power relations and social class distinctions take centre stage, these natural expected social interaction relationships do not exist. Instead, psychologists Robert Rosenthal and Leonora Jacobson (1968) contend that each of the reactions of the teacher and the student are so contingent on the other, that they give rise to two effects. The one named after Rosenthal is the '*Rosenthal effect*'. Here, teachers' expectations about pupils' performance can be so effective that when communicated to them, their performance outcomes can be affected. The corollary to this is the effect named after Jacobson, the '*self-fulfilling prophecy*', also called the '*Pygmalion effect*', in which the students unconsciously fulfil their teachers' expectations.

Kolb and Jussim (1994), in refining the notion of self-fulfilling prophecies explained that they occur when teachers induce students to perform at levels which are consistent with their erroneous expectations of them. Anderson *et al* (1988) had previously pointed out that the erroneous expectations are not always negative. For instance, if teachers lead children to believe that they are brilliant and they create an atmosphere for them to succeed, then, those teachers' expectations are likely to be fulfilled. The operative suggestion is not just the expectation *per se* but how the future interactions and engagements are set up to

ensure that what was expected will come true. In other words the operatives are - (1) how the expectations are communicated and (2) the differential treatment given to endorse the expectation so that the students are influenced to react and behave in a certain manner to cause the expectation to become a reality (Weinstein, 1995)

Beez (1968) found significant results when he tested the Pygmalion effect on pre-school head-starters on a simple word learning tasks. His analysis of the taped recording of the teaching sessions revealed that two-thirds of the teachers of the unfavourable found their task too difficult and they spent more time in explaining and giving examples as opposed to those who taught the favoured. These found their work interesting and rewarding. Generally the teachers felt that the boys were less able to read than the girls. Working class children are viewed with less expectancy than those of middle and upper class (Pidgeon, 1970). Beez (1968) revealed that according to the Pygmalion effect teachers display varying expectations and attitudes towards students dependent on their ability levels, their social class and their school type. Teachers tend to favour students whom they consider to be brilliant. They tend to communicate, interact and become more involved with students whom they have identified as bloomers. Teachers show more interest in these bloomers' performance and use greater motivational techniques and strategies to enhance their learning. In response these students react favourably to the teachers' expectations. They make rapid and significant strides in their performance. This type of transactional interactive relationship and expectation lead to the reinforcement of both the teachers' and students'

correct attitude and behaviour which result in students' increased motivation to learn and enhanced self-concept.

Taken to another level, Kolb and Jussim (1994) noted the existence of a perceptual bias which suggests that the expectations of the teacher affect the evaluation that the teachers make of the students' performance outcomes. This perceptual bias is akin to some attribution theorists' views of the language discourse used by teachers that affect the daily exchanges in the classroom. In addition, closely aligned to the perceptual bias is the sustaining bias. Here teachers' expectations of the students' outcome are such that the teacher expects the student continuously to maintain previously displayed methods and levels of behaving and/or performing. According to Saracho (1991) and Anderson et al (1988) once formed the teacher expects the students' behaviour to be static or to remain unchanged.

Additionally, the manner in which teachers differentiate their classrooms with separate seating arrangements for high and low performing students often show teacher expectation and favouritism. To these, the students tend to respond with much hostility. Good and Brophy (1970) in their study in determining teacher differentiation according to streaming and achievement concluded that teachers invariably favoured the better performing students, demanded more and gave them more praise. The boys received more interaction than the girls but this was always more negative and prohibitory/disciplinary. Only in classrooms where there was no streaming or overt separation was there less discrimination in teacher expectation between the high and low achievers.



Silberman (1993) stressed that teacher's comments, whether given directly or indirectly held serious implications for the students' and their peers' reactions based on their perceptions of the teachers' expectations and the students respond accordingly. Joseph (1980) in her study of teachers' questioning in the secondary schools in Trinidad also pointed out that the teachers' intonations and comments and even variations in voice were perceived as negative by the students on the lower end of the performance scale.

Teacher expectation varies also along mixed racial groupings. Troyna (1993), Hargreaves (1998) and Rizvi (1995) highlighted the existence of overt and covert acts of racism as being institutionalised. Teachers were observed according to six basic categories, to assess their interaction between the white and non-white students. These areas were, teacher attention to students' statements, encouragement of students to make statements and to perform, elaboration, ignoring, praise and criticism. The results of that study revealed that the non-whites were generally encouraged to speak less and therefore did not perform well. They were praised less and criticized more than even the poorly performing whites. The gifted non-whites were the most ignored and they were at the bottom of the authorization scale of interaction, even after the non-gifted non-whites. This reversal of expectation directed towards the gifted non-whites/blacks is often criticized but has continued. In Trinidad and Tobago this racial divide is between the two major ethnic groups, Africans and Indians. De lapervanche (1984) indicated that education *per se* will not lead to the removal of this type of prejudice. As long as racism is part of the broader institutional factor then it can

only go away by maintaining cultural ethnic tolerance and respect for all in all classrooms.

Differences in the school curricula, teachers' attitude, teachers' expectations and their teaching styles have been posited as reasons for the variance in students' performance. Teacher expectation and students' perception can be equated in a classroom where the climate and atmosphere are created by the overall characteristic tone and mood set by both the teacher and the students. The classroom setting must provide opportunity for open, free language discourse and expressions so critical to the progress of students with poor literacy skills.

What is evident is that there exists a great deal of research to support the premise that teacher expectation impacts on student achievement levels not only as a direct causation but as a manifestation of the manner in which teachers interact and engage with their students based on their expectations held. Studies done by Gottfredson (1995), Hall (1993), Lee-Corbin (1994) Taylor and Reeves (1993) and Kolb and Jussim (1994) to mention a few, and others previously discussed have indicated that teachers tend to interact with or call on students that they perceive as pets or bloomers or who will give the correct response (Taylor, 1993). Teachers show interest in the high performers (Saracho, 1991).

In addition, once teachers' pre-conceived reasons and/or perceptions for students' failure are influenced by their expectations about the students' future academic attainment, then the students will develop their own 'active process' of responding to their teachers' expectations (Nash, 1974), once their causal

attribution pattern for failure impact on their ability levels and /or other stable, uncontrollable factors. In fact, the students will demonstrate behaviour which can be described as being ego-defensive.

Kurtz and Schneider (1990) noted that complementary to the expectancy theory teachers can influence student's cognitive development through the transmission of perceived expectations that operate in conjunction with the students' transmitted attributions for their achievement. As a result, students who attribute failure to their lack of ability and are convinced that they are functioning in an uncontrollable, stable situation and if the teacher in turn does not call on them to perform, but, instead puts them out of the class; in such a situation the teacher's actions will communicate to the students that the teacher's expectations of their success is low because of their inability and as a consequence they are meted out little attention.

Craig-Janes (1999) insists that the new causal attribution pattern of INTENTIONALITY will become operative when students' poor performance is equated with poor teaching strategies which result because of the lack of teacher expectation. Kurtz and Schneider (1990) maintain that the teachers' lack of expectation will be demonstrated in the quantum of help, praise and/or criticism that the teachers provide for the students. In this scenario, also significant are the degree and /or levels of intimacy and power sharing which the teachers are willing to accept (Grant and Rothenberg, 1986). Invariably, students with perceived low ability are given less autonomy when it comes to working on tasks. Tollefson (1988) concluded that the cycle of frustration and negative

reactions will continue. Even in situations where the students make attributions to their need to expend more effort, the teachers may remain unwilling to help because their sustained expectancy bias of the students' poor performance is conceived as the students' lack of interest in their work. In fact, the students may have been driven to become angry, then totally frustrated and later withdrawn.

In such a classroom setting the teacher will not assist the whole class of students to think positively and critically and will also not assist the students in their desire to learn and study. Such behaviour on the part of teachers is contingent on their expectations based on their perceptions of the students' performance.

Some indicators of teachers' high expectations for students with high ability levels and low expectations for students' with low ability levels are suggested and adapted from Craig-Janes (1999) and expressed in the '**Teacher Expectation Table**'. These displays of teacher expectation or lack thereof are tabulated accordingly overleaf in **Table 3:-**

**TABLE 3: TEACHERS' HIGH AND LOW EXPECTATIONS**

<b>Teachers with high expectations for students with high ability</b>	<b>Teachers with low expectations for students with low with low ability</b>
1. provide honest feedback on students' response.	give less honest and contingent feedback but more gratuitous.
2. elaborate on their own response.	accept their responses but go on to some – thing else
3. use clues to help them to arrive at the correct answers.	reject their responses and call on somebody else
4. encourage students to provide much more open contribution	call for very brief and controlled contribution
5. respect them as individuals with diverse needs and interests.	have less respect for them as individuals with diverse need and interests
6. treat them with warmth.	treat them with less warmth
7. Praise any of their efforts and assist them with their responses.	fail to praise their strong effort but criticise their weak efforts
8. encourage them to initiate interaction.	discourage students from initiating interaction
9. give them freedom to express their feelings.	control their behaviour
10. provide them with opportunities to achieve during group time.	provide them with little opportunity to achieve during group time(ignored or criticised)
11. permit students to reflect on their own responses.	provide them with little opportunity to respond to questions or for reflection

According to the Table 3 therefore, the teachers who hold high expectations for their students will demonstrate high standards of delivery and provide a high quality of output in order for their students to attain successful levels of achievement. These teachers give their students honest, elaborate feedback and provide challenging tasks of varying levels of difficulty. In addition, they grant the students help, information, time and opportunity for them to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills to improve their performance. They will cater for the students' needs with love, concern, open-heartedness and they will ensure that the students are allowed freedom of speech and expressions and are exposed to every innovative strategy, group work and time for genuine reflection.

Conversely, the teachers whose expectations are low or non-existent will be pretentious to their students and give them less than honest feedback or they may

just ignore their responses and move on to other areas. The teachers show very little interest, concern or respect for these students or for their other achievements. They never give them praise for their other skills and talents but continually criticise and embarrass them for their academic weaknesses. They discouraged them from interacting with other students even in group work as they are often bandied as being indisciplined and deviant.

In the area of group work the distinctions between teachers' expectations are magnified. Students for whom teachers have high levels of expectation will be assigned to the high ability groupings and given tasks that require analytical skills, and will be given enough time to complete their tasks. Whereas those for whom expectations are low will be given low ability projects and meaningless tasks to be completed within limited time. These students will not be given autonomy in selecting assignments nor will they be properly evaluated. In order to arrive at mastery the aim should be for all students to become independent learners and thinkers who are able to transfer skills and techniques from one situation to another. Striving for mastery as well as attaining the motivation for independent learning can be achieved if students are encouraged to take responsibility and become accountable for their learning. To accomplish this, the teacher should set up activities and structures in which the students play an active role. Inevitably then, their desire to learn will increase as the level and quality of work is sufficiently challenging but enjoyable and suited to their needs and interest levels (Mc Nally and Passow, 1960 and Driekeurs 1968)

## **CONCLUSION**

It is therefore critical that for an investigation into the extent to which the students say and perceive that their existence in a situation of persistent failure is contingent on their teachers' expectations, it is imperative to understand the teachers' role in motivating the students to relate and interact in a meaningful manner to a delivered curriculum that is relevant and suited to the needs of their students. This literature review attempted to focus on the contentious issues that have been addressed globally and are directly related to teacher expectation and curriculum delivery as they impact on students' motivation to succeed in their historical, cultural and societal setting.

## **PART TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY – METHODS - ANALYSIS**



# CHAPTER V

## METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

The axis of any methodology is its conception of reality and causal effect which provides the foundation for the production and justification of new knowledge, (Bryceson et al, 1994 p.75)

Clough and Barton (1995) asserted that the task of the researcher is to describe, analyse, test, evaluate and assess, through investigations, that which is rule-bound, publicly testable and should give access to some final and provisional truth. But, to accomplish this task depends not only on the researcher's prevailing ontological and epistemological stance, but more so on the methodology chosen.

The goal of this study is to investigate to what extent there is a relationship between the students' statements and perceptions of their success or failure and their teachers' expectations about their academic achievement generally but specifically in English Language. The new knowledge that is unearthed will be instrumental in informing remedial strategies and classroom and curriculum changes.

It is therefore the intention of this chapter to establish the methodological approaches, delineate the methods used and discuss the analytical techniques applied to assess the relationship, if any, between what the students said and perceived in determining the impact of the teachers' expectations about their achievements as they function in the situations of persistent failure.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Usher (1997) noted that the researcher's epistemology is a commitment to a particular way of understanding the world and acting within it through the research. He also contended that there was no means of conducting research which is neutral and self-validating. Thus, any method chosen to undertake the conduct of the research should be dependent on its location in a disciplinary paradigm and research tradition. Additionally, the researcher's ontological assumptions will inform his/her epistemology that will invariably affect the choice of methodology.

Becker (1970) indicated that methodology was too important to be left only to the methodologists, or to those who debate its application. Thus, Becker (1970) contended that methodologists are not inclined to see their debates about methodology as being relevant to values, epistemology and the need to have appropriate conditions for the application of a methodology. On the other hand, Brown (1977) argued that methodological considerations start from the selection of an enquiry. Thus, the aim of methodology is to throw light on the limitations as well as the resources; clarify suppositions and consequences; uncover and justify taken-for-granted assumptions; venture generalisations for the success of techniques; suggest new applications and locate the claims of the research. In other words, "all methodology has an underlying philosophy, with a method of abstraction and a method of investigation," (Bryceson et al, 1994, p.75). Mannheim (1929) suggested that that system of philosophy and abstraction forms the basis of one's ideologies which develop from the 'collective consciousnesses' of a group or class. Ideas and concepts are

systematically motivated because of one's desire to maintain the status-quo, in spite of any intentional or unintentional distortions of the reality. Thus it is paramount that great care should be taken in the selection of a methodology.

Thus guided the methodology applied in this thesis is informed by ontological and epistemological considerations. In spite of the socio-political, ethical and moral considerations the philosophical position maintained in this research is designed to unearth the reality for the students, the teachers, the curriculum and the nation in its setting, with an aim to arrive at the truth and knowledge which will provide solutions, equity, emancipation and a way forward. I also believe that all students can learn and succeed if the support, assistance and environment are created for them to become critical thinkers and problem solvers. Ultimately, given the relevant curriculum and the appropriate teaching strategies each child can succeed and attain mastery.

## **PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH APPROACH (PRA)**

In order to arrive at knowledge about the problem that affects the students achievement levels at the junior secondary school under review, and also investigate whether the impact of the teachers' expectations in that situation can be tested and validated, my chosen methodology is an insider case-study participatory approach, with all the privileges of its *ad hoc* facilities including the use of a range of quantitative and qualitative measures. The Participatory Research Approach, PRA, uses participant observation and scientific techniques to arrive at knowledge. The literature provides for this admixture through the process of *triangulation*, which is very significant, both in data

collection and in analysis, for *confirmation* (Denzin, 1970) and *completeness* (Jick, 1983). Additionally, these facilities afford more opportunity to relate to the subjects and gather voluminous data.

The PRA in educational research aims at informing value-laden, taken-for-granted educational judgements and discusses what is worthwhile and beneficial to improve education *per se*. It provides an avenue for the education process to be assessed through the researched and all the stakeholders. It possesses the capacity and potential to analyse the knowledge generated. Therefore, the PRA envisages itself as perhaps the best way to conduct a research investigation and move a community forward with the fullest, active inclusion of the entire community.

Historically, the accepted approaches to conduct research were either the scientific paradigm or the subjective. The former used a theoretical framework and/or tests of hypotheses through replication and adopted quantitative techniques to analyse the data (Borg and Gall, 1989). The other approach, the interpretive, ethnographic and subjective conducted its research using qualitative techniques (Finch, 1986). Thus, the social sciences' researches from Descartes to Plato and Bacon, in spite of their mathematical and scientific biases, adopted the philosophical posturing that rational human thought can provide the basis for all human endeavours to create knowledge and arrive at truth. Later, Adam Smith (1723-1790) and Karl Marx (1818-1883) applied deductive arguments while Weber (1949) felt that scientific methods can be applied in their attempts to understand their societies. Yet, according to

Bryceson *et al* (1994) the PRA has to be developed within the social context of the environment in which the research is being conducted. This allows the researcher to investigate thoroughly the problems of the research field – both at the level of the individual and the institution. It also facilitates self-reflection, reflexivity and self-reflexivity, which are critical to one's methodology and epistemological concerns (Anderson, 1989).

Reflexivity is an attempt to take a second look, re-assess and ponder upon the phenomenon. It also acknowledges the ideological, historical and other power dominant forms of the research enquiry. In so doing, several issues and relationships are raised and assessed. Yet the dominant mode of the research is to identify and understand the individuals as they exist and come to terms with their lived situation. Gadamer (1988) recommended that an interpretative process ought to emerge which he felt, should be closely aligned to the everyday human understanding of how an individual attempts to make sense of his/her world. Gadamer (1988) also highlighted the need for reflexivity, insight and intuitive consciousness which should be reflective of the total reality.

Self-reflection, according to Shackloch and Smyth (1998), is the constraining condition and the key to the empowerment, the capacity of the research and the fulfilment of its agenda. In the final analysis, the researcher should employ his subjective human attributes in order to extend his/her understanding of the researched with an aim to 'unlock the door to the inherent human thrust for an undefined freedom'. This type of freedom is termed emancipatory. In other words, it is my view that the researcher is involved in a social research that is

directed towards the subjects, the nation, and the marginalised, with an aim to provide equity and emancipation in their personal and social development.

Self-reflexivity is very critical. It involves lying bare and re-assessing what has been considered as knowledge (Lather, 1992). Many students function in situations of persistent failure, without hope of real solutions. When these students identify their causal perceptions, re-assess and mediate their thoughts and actions, they will become empowered to address their shortcomings by expediting their willingness to seek help and accept remedial solutions.

The literature confirms that this period of reflexivity and especially of self-reflexivity is crucial in any research enquiry (Levinson, 1996, 1998). Anderson (1991) has also argued that reflexivity is essential in keeping research findings creative for generating ideas and for preventing the research data from becoming poured into a pre-determined theoretical mould. On the other hand, Ruby (1980) describes reflexivity as the constant revelation of the role of beliefs and values held by the researcher in the selection of a research methodology which will produce knowledge in the research account-

being reflexive means that the producer deliberately, intentionally reveals to his audience the underlying epistemological assumptions which caused him to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, to seek answers to those questions in a particular way and finally to present his findings in a particular way. (Ruby, 1980, p.157 )

Ruby (1980) maintained that to be reflexive in research is part of being honest and ethically mature in the research practice. According to Carspecken and Mac Gillivry (1998) in Shackloch and Symth (1998) reflexivity in research is

critical and important to address honestly and openly all issues, including those concerning the validation of the research findings. It is an attempt to identify, rectify and yet acknowledge limitations in carrying out research. To them, such limitations include obstacles to the location, theoretical context subjects, processes, data collection, analysis and accounting for the construction of knowledge that takes place in the real world and not apart from it.

Richardson (1994) pointed out that the researcher and the researched are 'socially situated'. There is therefore, no privileged view of getting at truth and knowledge in the generation of research questions and the processing of the researched accounts. However, according to Ruby (1980) part of the contractual arrangement to produce a '*critically framed research*' is an acceptance of the historically embedded roles of the researcher, the researched, the research methodology, the research account and the disclosure of the process and the product which exists in and evolves out of the research. Symth and Shackloch (1998) argue that invariably there are tensions produced in the research process. However, as the researcher and the researched dialogue with the problem, the difficulties encountered in the field work will provide stories, vignettes and information that will motivate the researcher to hear and listen attentively to all the voices.

Additionally, in so doing the researcher can be assisted by the teachers who can become the best participants because they are the professionals in the classroom and the persons who are expected to implement any proposed change and to ensure its success. Therefore to guarantee that all that is critically

espoused as theory can be translated into practice by the major stakeholder, the teacher, it is important that the teacher becomes a researcher involved in resolving the problems in his/her situation and attempting to arrive at practical and workable solutions (Stenhouse, 1975 and Schwab, 1969). Then the teacher and also the community will become critical participants in the research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

Fine (1994), in arguing for this type of qualitative approach to research stressed her concept of '*working the hyphen*'. She conceives of the metaphor, the '*hyphen*', as the other significant person, juxtaposed but separate to the self. They are joined in everyday life, in a taken-for-granted situation but different in personal identities. Fine (1994) contends that this '*hyphen*' - the other - works out itself through messy stories and vignettes. Questions about methods, methodology, ethics and even epistemology are identified as the researcher's manner of speaking of, and for, the other, as they are assessed in terms of how well the researcher is able to occlude his/her own perceptions and bury the contradictions which arise when examining the self-other interactions.

Prior to and in contradiction to Fine's (1994) approach of working the '*hyphen*', Weis (1986) had delineated methodology based upon strategies of reflection. She conceived that her approach would assist the researcher to alter consciously his/her view of the social world and so break free of preconceptions. Weis suggested that there was a need for more mixed panels of different backgrounds involved in the management of a research to reduce dominance of the researcher's perceptions. This will allow the researcher to lay



aside some of the traditional rigid values of organising research. He will then be free to take on the perceptions, attitudes and perspectives of the 'other' in order to develop an empathy with the informant and also to look beyond the obvious and pay attention to the irrelevant happenings. Fine and Weis (1998) termed this phenomenon '*voyeurism*'. They posit this concept as a method of confronting the wrongs of field work, the collection of data therefrom and the dilemmas that these bring with them.

Some of these dilemmas are most pronounced in the studies of the marginalised where according to Rizvi (1993), based on the theory of Gramsci (1971), the dominant group, in most cases the researcher, controls and to some extent commands the active consent of the researched community because of 'structures of feelings'. These are the taken-for-granted assumptions, ideas and values that structure communication between members of a particular community to give it its qualitative coherence. This type of structure is evident in conducting and presenting interviews where at the heart of these interactions lie what Foucault (1980) termed an 'indeterminate ambiguity' and a 'wild profusion' (Denzin, 1994 and Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Added to that, the language of the interviewee when repeated in its natural authentic voice to represent their cultures and to bring understanding to their normal way of living, when juxtaposed with the academic demands of writing up the data makes the voice sound naïve and simple (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998a). It is not to be construed that all the interviewees are powerless and that they do not employ strategies such as 'misinterpretation and misunderstanding'

to protect their, Self, and as such they become active participants in the interaction (Scheurich, 1997). Nevertheless, there is sometimes the need for 'translation' into academic language (Standing 1998). Therefore, the respondents' views cannot always be simply presented without the researcher becoming involved in the process of carefully and systematically creating ordered packets of meaning from a swirl of uncertainties (Denzin, 1994). It is therefore mandatory that the researcher in handling, re-ordering and reconstituting the data is not influenced by his/her values, beliefs and priorities, nor does he/she sanitise the data but the researchers' presence in the research process is clear (Scheurich, 1997). In addition, the researchers' portrayal and emphasis of the individual characters do make them nuances or over-emphasized (Coffey, 1996).

As an upshot, some of the literature suggests that for participatory research to be conclusive the fieldwork must be developed within a framework, which does not militate against large sample groups and the revelation of statistical, socio-economic, computerised outcomes. The participatory approach prefers in-depth, insider study and analysis of a few participants, as the study of *participant behaviour* highly recommends. Here the researcher conducts unstructured interviews, and keeps close contact with key informants. However, the strength of the PRA approach is highlighted as it can also adopt a large quantitative framework to collect and analyse the data. Indubitably, this *ad hoc* nature of the PRA allows an opening for the collection and inclusion of large sums of quantitative data, which can act as an objective counterfoil and yet an integral confirmation to the subjective. This *ad hoc* facility allows the

researcher, consciously or unconsciously, to assimilate that which seems best from the existing styles. It is this capacity that underscores the rationale for adopting it as the chosen methodology.

## EMANCIPATORY

Freire (1972, 1974) helped to popularize this concept of *conscientisation* or *critical consciousness/praxis*, which aimed at liberating individuals to transform themselves and their own world/environment. He adopted a strategy for liberating the oppressed peoples in Brazil. In spite of its acclaim, criticism of such an approach was made by Berger et al (1974), who viewed the effort as another phase of power domination of a superior culture over a subordinate. On the other hand, Roberts (1966) insisted that research aimed at *conscientisation* leads an individual to be re-constituted. These individuals critically reflect upon their own reality; act and then change both themselves and the world around them; reflect again and change as the cycle of transformation continues.

In spite of that, the PRA is often maligned as not being a methodology. Instead, it is perceived of as just an approach which operates *beyond the boundaries of mere data gathering techniques*. The researcher is expected to be sensitive and identify with the struggles of the researched. There must always be dialogue. The research ought to be problem-centred with a clear knowledge of the existing conditions which underlie the problem so that transformation and resolution can be attained. The literature terms this type of transformation and change, emancipatory. Oliver (1992) argued that this sort of change requires a *facilitating of a politics of the possible* which confronts social oppression at

whatever level it occurs. Oliver's concern for emancipatory research evolved out of his interest in 'disability studies' and his relationship with, and struggle for professionals and others in authority to listen to the specially-abled and allow them to have a voice (Barton, 1998).

But, active PRA also agonized about being merely idealistic as well as pragmatic, rather than empirical. Swantz (1977) asserted that the notion of idealism resides in the philosophy of the humanness of the researcher, and it is demonstrated by his/her concern for and identity with the oppressed. As a result, the PRA allows the researcher the leeway not only to be rigidly objective but also to be entirely open-ended, insider and inter-subjective, while obtaining empirical data. Also the presence of the dynamics of power and authority in the relationship between the researcher and the researched is important when attempting to be truly emancipatory (Barton, 1998).

This ability of the PRA to be empirical, pragmatic and yet idealistic is highlighted in this research. In order to establish validity and still be critical, open and objective I will use a variety of data collection methods to identify the students' perceptions of their academic performance in English Language and to ascertain the teachers' expectations for their performance outcomes. Empirical evidence will emerge. However, unlike Bourdieu's (1984) assertion these outcomes will prove to be more than merely a written academic report. The outcomes will be practical and critical and will demonstrate the underlying purpose of all research – the creation of knowledge. Thus the adoption of the PRA will allow the researcher to assess critically the role and impact of the

curriculum and the teachers and permit the researcher to derive practical answers and solutions to the everyday, taken-for-granted problems. From these solutions, remedies and guided values, principles, truth and knowledge will emanate. Oquist (1977) explained that that knowledge is not an end in itself but it is a means to an end of lack of control over the situation. Furthermore generalizations can be made to similar situations

This new knowledge may provide the solutions that may warrant political intervention and/or a national response. Undeniably, education has a role to play in the re-shaping of the society. Swantz (1977) defined the boundaries of political activism by calling for the inclusion of all stakeholders (the poor, the middle class, the student, the government worker and the politicians) into communication with one another within the present political structures and to use their given rights to demand more say and become aware of their situations. On the other hand, Kassam's (1977) anthropocentric approach attempted to synthesize the individual's potentials and needs within the national development goals. For him, political activism in education becomes defined at two levels within the national objectives – at the level of the individuals and their self-esteem and at their level of intrinsic motivation. Kassam (1977) tried to exemplify and demonstrate his passion for humanity through his research on literacy evaluation in Tanzania. Nevertheless, regardless of the position adopted political awareness and political activism will be major concerns in any attempt to arrive at solutions after the students' perceived causal attribution patterns are identified. The significance of other contentious variables of gender, ethnicity/race, and socio-economic factors can also be manipulated.

The last aspect of the PRA is its ability to be incorporated into an action research /case-study (Winter, 1982 and Cohen and Manion, 1992), which allows the researcher to collect voluminous amount of data and to examine the phenomenon in its natural setting (Yin, 1994). According to Bassey (1999, p.41), a case-study allows the researcher to focus on the understanding and evaluation of the education process. Bassey advised that the research can be recorded as a story-telling case study, or be written up either as a theory-seeking or as a theory-testing study. This thesis adopts both the story-telling and the theory-testing facilities. In addition, this methodological approach will also provide the platform for change management, even though the increments of change may be minimal or considered meaningful only to those who are directly involved (Hammersley, 1993).

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE APPROACH**

It would be naïve to disregard the limitations that may exist in adopting this methodology. In considering such an approach especially from the position of an '*insider informant*' Adelman (1979) identified some critical problems which can emerge when conducting research in an area in which one is quite familiar. These include being sensitive to confidential information and being misunderstood while collecting data. Three pioneers of *insider* studies, Martin Trow (1976) and Partlett and Hamilton (1971) lamented then that the impact of anthropological research tradition of direct observation and qualitative studies was not yet as strong and not yet accepted as valid and reliable. However, in Trinidad and Tobago the value and worth of 'insider information' in qualitative studies are presently accepted at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad.

Burns (1975), and Weis (1990) and Weis and Fine (1996) to mention some researchers have also affirmed the consequences of doing fieldwork, collecting data and being a participant observer in one's own environment/culture. Foremost amongst their list of concerns are the effects on social value and epistemology. Few have outlined the necessary conditions that should be applied in conducting this type of research. However, to counteract the limitations in some situations the researcher often seeks to separate him/herself from the field and act independently. Yet another position suggested is to become involved in the 'deliberate dialogue' and so allow little room for the negotiation of meaning between the respondent and the researcher (Larson, 1997). Another solution is to conduct 'repeated interviews' and to keep in touch with the respondents (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998a). Nevertheless, in the areas of access to and the release of information, the researcher needs to conform to the existing procedures in the establishment.

Perhaps one of the greatest limitations is that the chosen research methodology invariably forms part of the on-going debate between the empirical approach to education research versus the narrative approach in coming to terms with an understanding of education practice and in arriving at comprehensive holistic solutions to the education problem. Wittgenstein (1963) and others held the view that only the narrative approach was meaningful. However, in education research it is crucial to arrive at change at the individual and collective levels (Bridges et al, 1997).

'For teacher and the researcher alike understanding would be limited if it lost sight of the particularity and the diversity of practice .... Understanding these practices cannot be achieved solely through the specialized concepts the

researcher shares with his colleagues, but must involve ways of speaking internal to the classroom and the subjects ....' (Standish, 1995, p.156-157).

Therefore, to determine that one should only adopt one approach, either the factual versus the conceptual or the inductive versus the deductive to arrive at truth may be too restrictive and limited. According to Hammersley (1992) elements of both approaches are present in each research methodology as both in the long run attempt to determine meaning and reason for the behaviour of the researched in their particular cultural and social setting. Thus, the use of the causal analytical approach will provide antecedents to predict the consequences and provide causes and meaning to understand the particular situation. As the PRA incorporates the narrative it ensures that the researcher and the research work together in order to gain deeper insights into the situation and this will ultimately hold a higher promise of effective implementation of the solution. As such the interpretive-causal distinction is more useful (Smeyers & Verhesschen, 2001).

On account of all the afore-mentioned properties of the PRA and the action-oriented case-study facilities, I propose that this methodology is best-suited to conduct the research of the JSS students and their teachers. This combined methodological approach, which is both participatory and an action/case study, when triangulated, will allow the scope for the accomplishment of my objectives. This scope permits me the facility, as the principal and insider researcher of the research field, my school, which I hope to investigate creatively (Minkins, 1997).



Resistance and fear of revealing one's true feeling and having them recorded were initially exhibited by two teachers, who coincidentally, were the school's established, well-known critics. However, when they recognised its merits, they too became involved in the research activities. The students were always open and accommodating as they were accustomed to discussing all their concerns with me as the principal. The knowledge which will emanate will also assist me in arriving at an in-depth solution to the besetting problems of low teacher expectation and the ineffective teaching of English Language and the curriculum in general at the JSS under review.

Operating in this manner frees one from the problem that Becker (1967) referred to as *cultural shock* and 'contamination by the culture'. It also removes one from the dangers of the sanitization of the information. To further counteract these adverse effects, it is mandatory for the researcher to take some time away from the research field for reflection and self-reflexivity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite its limitations, the PRA encompasses all the properties necessary to conduct in-depth, insider research in schools. Its properties include the ability to collect and analyse empirical data. It possesses the facility to adopt the dual approaches of being quantitative and/or theory testing of large samples as well as being qualitative or anthropological/ethnographic in its fieldwork. More importantly, its ad hoc facilities enable it to work successfully with other research methods including a case study, to highlight its ability to cater for insider information. It also allows the researcher to be reflexive and reflective.

# CHAPTER VI

## DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

As an insider, using action-oriented, participatory research which applied the quantitative and qualitative research traditions, I have taken the liberty to use the gamut of relevant available research tools and methods to assist me in my data collection and arrival at new knowledge. This chapter will identify the data collected and the approaches and methods used to analyse that data.

### DATA COLLECTION

The goal of this study is to assess to what extent there is a relationship between the students' statements and perceptions of their success or failure and their teachers' expectations about their academic achievement generally but specifically in English Language. The new knowledge that is unearthed will be instrumental in assisting me to arrive at remedial strategies and to implement significant classroom and curriculum changes.

The chosen methodological framework provided the best opportunity to be an insider informant who could become actively engaged with the participants. My research field was the junior secondary school where I was the principal. However, it was only through following established procedures I gained access to information, to the relevant school records and other pertinent empirical data.

Nevertheless, this privilege of easier access carries with it serious implications

for confidentiality and other ethical concerns, such as ensuring that I had the consent of the students under consideration. It is interesting that even though Debbie Epstein (1988) sought the consent of her students/subjects, she still felt that such a request was not entirely necessary and that the entire concept of '*informed consent*' is flawed and applied inconsistently. She also argued that the aim of the critical ethnographer is to become an integral part of the environment without disturbance or adverse effect to the '*local culture*'. As a result, she felt strongly and I concur with the sentiments expressed, that anonymity and/or some delayed disclosure for collating some of the data may afford the researcher the freedom and ability to collect genuine, spontaneous responses and detailed information. Nevertheless, it is important that the researched must be informed of the reason for collecting the data.

Furthermore, the researcher's stance as an insider is strongly endorsed by the literature. Mike Oliver (1992) speaking from his own experience stated that he believed that the insider perspectives are essential. They assist both the researcher and the researched in grappling with their social phenomena. Additionally, the insider recognises how the existing power structures operate, and is therefore very instructive in helping those who lack both the power and the strength to function within the system.

In addition, the determination of the methods to be adopted is not only impacted by the methodological stance but also by the quantum and quality of data to be collected in order to investigate fully the situation (Scott, 1998). Ball (1985) and Arskey and Knights (1999) argue for the use of interviews whilst

Schultz (1967) and others highlight social accounts, whereas Hammersley (1992) contend that regardless of the method adopted they all have contrasting strengths and weaknesses in their application to arrive at authentic data.

## **MEASURES**

For this research the following measures were used:

1. Participant observation of students and teachers,
2. Dramatization / role-play by students about classroom experiences they enjoyed and disliked,
3. Vignettes, based on some students' life stories and experiences,
4. Unstructured interviews with 4 groups of 12 students,
5. A six-question exit questionnaire given to the groups of students [Appendix iii]
6. In-depth interviews with a stratified sample of six key students whose grades ranged along the continuum from excellent to average to low. Three pairs of students - one male and one female – were arranged as follows:
  - Two students, one male and one female who received very low grades and have also been identified by the teachers and deans as extremely deviant. They were always in trouble, sometimes with the law and were key class-breakers
  - Two students, one male and one female who obtained an unsuccessful but relatively good grade and also attained positive and negative recognition in other extra-curricular activities
  - Two students, one male and one female, who have succeeded. One of whom is passive and the other an active contributor to school life
7. Open-ended questionnaire adapted from Bartal et al (1982) based on the Causal Attribution Theory and approved by my Supervisor Professor Derrick Armstrong to ascertain the causal perceptions and attributions of the success and failure in English Language of the randomly selected sample of

three hundred of the five hundred and twenty Form Three JSS students at the school under review. [Appendix i]

8. Causal attributions/perceptions derived from the students' attributions to the variables of gender, age, religion/ethnicity, geographical location.
9. Causal attribution patterns based on the inter-play of Weiner's dimensions.
10. Teacher expectations established through ascertaining the teachers' perceptions, engagements and interactions with the students through the following-
  - Participant Observation
  - Unstructured interviews with several teachers from all departments.
  - Structured interviews with the six (6) first time and two experienced teachers in English Language.
11. Open-ended questionnaire to ascertain the level of teacher expectation and perception [Appendix ii]
12. Triangulation to syncretise the admixture of data collected and the outcomes.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The following represent details of the actual implementation of the methods, measures and the rationale for their use and implementation -

1. Participant Observation was continuously conducted on all the Form Three students of the graduating class of 2001. Some English class sessions were visited both in the presence and absence of the teachers. It is the stipulation of the Ministry of Education that principals sit in some teaching sessions, and this regulation provided the uninhibited opportunity to make observations of both the teachers and the students in the classroom setting. Additionally, in my capacity as the principal many of the students either on their own volition or by coercion often reported to me on various issues. Those matters ranged

from lack of performance in their school work or for extra-curricular activity, or seeking permission to hold an activity, or from deviance to excellence.

2. A group of 15 vociferous students of Form 5 Group 4 was complaining about an incident that took place in class with their English teacher, Ms. Jay. This group of students was asked to dramatize what took place by preparing and performing a skit based on their likes and dislikes about the incident. One student volunteered to be the teacher and the others performed the roles of various types of students in the classroom. This performance was also recorded. Through this medium, I was able to capture some of the other actual classroom experiences. More importantly, that dramatization afforded me an opportunity to identify some of the major school issues which impacted on the students' success and failure and to hold discussions with the students at another level to resolve them.

The literature endorses the use of role-play. John Swain (1995) whilst conducting research using dramatization in a school setting cited the Principal, George Goode who described his emotions as *counselling and cathartic*. Thus, the productions of such a short dramatization assisted both the researcher and the researched in assessing their perceptions of the situation and of each other. After the engagement the students were then able to view the role of the principal differently. He/she is no longer seen as operating from a position of power and authority but as a possible change agent who is positioned, willing and humble enough to listen, seek answers and solutions to many of the concerns of these marginalised students.

3. Four groups of 12 students each were interviewed, either as a whole class or as mixed groups. The conversations were informal but centred mainly on their opinions about their JSS experiences and their study habits both at home and at school. Later, when they graduated from the JSS to their new senior secondary schools, the researcher again interviewed the same groups of students. On these occasions, the questions were directed to ascertain their comparisons between their experiences, behaviour and attitude towards their studies at present as opposed to when they were at the JSS.

The power of the interview remains a potent force to find out what the person is thinking. The interviewer accesses the perspective of the interviewee (Patton, 1980/1990 and Arksey and Knights, 1999). These interviews were recorded.

4. The exit questionnaire [Appendix iii] sought to have the students mentioned above to state how they felt about leaving their present school and their junior secondary school. They were asked to state who helped them and what help was given. They also indicated their future plans.
5. Vignettes, narratives and lived stories are appropriate and meaningful when used in assessing persons who function with disabilities including 'learning difficulties and deficiencies', as the stories lend some insight into the experiences and realities of their lives (Bruner, 1987; and Gergen and Gergen, 1988). The lived stories related were borne out of very deep personal and emotional situations.

6. Six students were selected based on their 14+ Junior Secondary School Leaving Examination results, and their teachers' assessment of their discipline and their contributions towards life at the school. Determining the most appropriate representation for the various categories was quite a task. Almost the bulk of the male student population fitted into the lowest category based on poor academic performance, coupled with mal-adaptive behaviours which were demonstrated through class breaking and other forms of deviance. The male student who was selected by the dean to represent the lowest group was the ringleader of the deviant boys who performed extremely badly at their schoolwork. The converse occurred at the upper end of the performance level. There were more girls and very few boys from whom to make the selection. The female student who was finally chosen placed first in the examination, amongst the student population of 520. The chosen male performed the best amongst the 230 boys.

7. The ability of the Causal Attribution Theory to ascertain and establish the causal perceptions of a wide range of persons, and especially students, has been often replicated. The theory, developed on the enunciations of Heider (1958) and later Weiner (1971, 1974) provides another avenue for the inclusion of all the students, *nothing about us without us*. Its quantitative theoretical approach to research allows for the use and assessment of a large sample. In this research, 300 Form Three students were investigated. Furthermore, in deference to the critics (Lalljee, 1981; Kruglanski, 1979; Michela and Kelley, 1980), and to its former delimitation of the immediate causal responses to only the four basic factors – ability, effort, task difficulty



and luck, there now exists the recognition and inclusion of a broader base of factors namely, teacher effect and home effect (Legette, 1993 and Vispoel and Austin, 1995). In addition, the facility to be subject-specific in eliciting students' perceptions (Marsh, 1990), and to use open-ended questions in administration of the questionnaire (Chapman and Lawes, 1987) allowed the students the avenue to express themselves freely on their perceptions of their success or failure in English. The latter facility highlights the Theory's provision for the use of the self-reflexive, ethnographic approach to research. These flexibilities of the theory to accommodate all these areas account for its continued world-wide replications.

The adoption and application of the Causal Attribution Theory to these JSS students will add to the many replications worldwide. The outcomes if significant may add to the store of knowledge and provide direction for remediation for both the students and their teachers.

Three hundred students were randomly selected and seated in different classrooms. For the first time each student was individually given his/her grade that he/she had attained at the 14+ Examination in English. Simultaneously the Causal Attribution questionnaire was handed to the student who was asked to respond immediately to the questionnaire. This demand for immediacy of response is the crucial factor used to arrive at the students' immediate, spontaneous causal perceptions of their successes and/or failures in English Language. The data was statistically analysed by the Statistical department at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Department. Correlations were

used to determine the significant relationships between the students' responses to the afore-mentioned causal factors of ability, task difficulty, effort, luck, home effect and teacher effects.

8. The students' perceptions of the significant relationships between the other variables of their age, gender, geographic locations/social class, religion/ethnicity and their responses to the causal attribution questionnaire were obtained.

9. The students' causal attribution patterns unfolded based on the emerged significant relationships which were assessed according to Weiner's dimensional framework

10. The teachers' expectations and perceptions of the students' ability and performance outcomes were integral to the research. These were determined from the following-

- observation of teachers delivery of lessons and their in and out of class engagements and interactions with the students,
- interviews with the 6 inexperienced and 2 experienced teachers of English
- unstructured interviews and discussions with teachers
- the teachers' expectation questionnaire

11. The teachers' expectation questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and approved by her supervisor, Professor Armstrong. The responses obtained were used to identify the teachers'

expectations for their students' success as demonstrated by their generalised beliefs of the students' potential for success, their own preparedness, engagement, interactions and willingness to help the students.

12. Triangulation was used at all levels of this research process - at data collection, for the choice of the theoretical approach, but more importantly, for analysis of the data. Denzin (1970) posited that there can be multiple triangulations or different types of strategies which can be combined to investigate data. In this research, data triangulation permits the use of a research design which allows for the collection of a diverse set of sources to explore the same phenomenon. Triangulation can then occur across the levels of the individuals, small groups and collectively in large groups. The theoretical approach also allows the researcher to approach the research questions from various theoretical positions in order to test each proposition of the data in an effort to determine relevance and significance.

Critics of this feature, such as Fielding and Fielding (1986) felt that triangulation was not necessarily a utopian approach to analysing data. Later however, Mason (1994) endorsed its use and identified its ability to short-circuit a range of other problems that may emerge. In the end the former researchers, Fielding and Fielding (1986) conceded that the facility may provide a wider range and more in-depth analysis though it may not necessarily be the most instrumental. On the other hand, Blaikie (1991) noted the inappropriateness of combining methods with different epistemological and ontological assumptions. He maintained that some relevant aspects of research,

such as the objectives may not be highlighted. Silverman (1993) argued for a permanent inclusion of the total social context and reality which, Parry (1992) had previously recommended. He had applied all the various methods of data collection and theoretical approaches and was satisfied with the application of triangulation as a strategy.

Great care was taken to ensure, by concealing under confidential cover, that sensitive disclosures were treated with complete confidentiality. The interviews of the individual teachers and students were conducted privately and the records and tapes filed separately. The true identity of the informants was preserved through the change of names, even though, through the factual descriptions someone who is familiar with the environment may attempt to decipher the persons' identity. All ethical considerations were exercised, such as seeking permission to conduct the interview, informing the interviewees of the purpose of the inquiry, and providing them with feedback.

The outcomes were not sanitized, but are a true representation and reflection of both the students' statements and perceptions and the teachers' expectations. The attribution patterns determined may in fact mirror those that would obtain in all the junior secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. That apart, the overarching accomplishment is that the voice of the many thousands of students who continuously function in a system of persistent failure will vibrate through the academic corridors with such a magnitude of force that remedial systems and measures must be set up to assist them.

## **METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

A phenomenon cannot be understood on its own. It has to be continually embedded and viewed in the wider context. There has to be a continuous engagement and/or an ongoing conversation between the elements, the factors, the critique and the analysis of the new perspectives. As a result, the analysis of the findings cannot be completed in isolation. According to Harvey (1990) all the contending forces, the historical, the cultural, the social, the political and the structural contexts must be addressed.

The literature sends conflicting signals in its weighting of the use and analysis of theory testing approaches. Some analysts, like Robert Cox (1980) who share Harvey's position posit the view that a theory provides a framework for inquiry and for analysis of the outcome. Foley (1995), on the other hand, is concerned with the theory's process of deconstruction and re-construction. But Harvey (1990) views analysis through theory as being more than an abstract concept which is located, fixed and central only to the interrogation of situations. Instead he highlights the lived reality of the analysis in order to develop a new synthesis, a new truth. Therefore, he sees the use of theory and any other form of inquiry as an avenue to allow the researcher to become engaged in a constant questioning and building up of interpretations of the theory through repeated ongoing analysis, until a coherent alternative re-construction of the account is created. As a consequence, critical theory should not be limited to responding to surface issues but it is eclectic and conscious of the structures through which the exercise of political and other forms of power can be legitimised.

In support of Harvey (1990), Weigman (1995/1999) recognised the use of theory in all relationships. At that specific time and because data tend to be theory driven, the theory may provide the best focus on the issue, but there ought to remain an avenue for constant dialogue. Anderson (1989) surmised that the adoption of a theoretical stance to conduct and analyse the data can be delimiting and deny the generation of creativity in the analysis. He felt that research which is poured into a theoretical mould must of necessity be 'locked in' and must constantly search for valid and reliable alternatives and examine why all the dominant ideas are lost. Ultimately, even if the position taken is validated by the evidence, the results may remain tenable until further research deconstructs it. Nevertheless, the outcomes do not always challenge all the taken for granted, historical and structural constructs which may remain hidden and/or masked.

Thus, Lather (1988a, 1992) also contends that critical research demands the emergence of critical frames which can be adopted in a meaningful manner when assessing and analysing the situations of the feminine, the oppressed, the marginalised and the colonised and/or decolonised. It must be noted in the analysis of the findings that what is worthwhile saying or testing can never be stated definitively, but only as a consequence of being connected to some inquiry or conversation which began in response to a researcher's singular assertion (Sharlock and Symth, 1998).

Goodman (1993) attempted to merge ethnography with a theoretical framework in his project. Initiated by Frye (1983), Goodman (1993) identified the purpose

of his research as being more than pedagogical, as it was able to say something clearly enough and intelligibly enough so that it could be understood, thought about and acted upon. With moorings in symbolic interactionism, the researcher attempted to interpret and represent his/her interpretation of the participant's understanding of their words, actions, symbols and experiences. Sharp and Green (1975) and Willis (1977) also showed that critical ethnography has the potential to gain insight into complex relationships between the human agency and the social structures. However, Lather (1986, 1988a) claimed that a distinctive feature of critical ethnography is its 'openly ideological stance'. This gives the critical ethnographers the ability and privilege to comment and reflect on their own ideologies.

According to Rorty (1982), the purpose of identifying the ideological stance goes beyond the mere identification of truth and the discovery of knowledge. It develops the research into a unique social discourse, which magnifies social reality as part of a 'complex tapestry of interconnected conversations'. These discourses are underlain by a set of conventions which provide a sense of identity and purpose. These conventions also include the geographical location/place of the social reality as well as the participants' attributes of race, class, gender, occupation and experiences. According to Luke (1995) the style of communication used is very critical to understanding the social reality in its broadest, historical, social and cultural context (McCulloch and Richardson, 2001).

Another key area to the analysis of the findings is reflexivity. Being reflective

is more than just adopting a different vital posture when recounting incidents or 'telling a story' or relating an experience. In fact each account is a manifestation of the researchers' struggle with their own epistemology as they look for truth, reality and new knowledge in that situation (Shacloch and Symth, 1998). But, the struggle intensifies not only in the rationalising of the chosen methodology but also in the ethical, social and political issues which surface. In addition, the individuals' realisation of their personal changes may affect their understanding of the phenomenon, and may become more poignant because of the relationships which have developed between the researched and the researcher. These changes and relationships are also most significant when issues of validation must be openly and honestly addressed especially in qualitative research in educational and social settings.

Nevertheless, Habermas (1971) noted that reflexivity provides the medium for the emancipatory and cognitive interests of the researcher to be realised and exposed to ideological changes. The researcher through the critical knowledge of the research process will be now empowered to recognise and transform the constraints which were implicit in the research process. Anderson (1989) also identified that reflexivity is crucial in keeping the research findings open and creative.

This study has taken into consideration all these serious comments and implications raised and mentioned. It has also considered Tripp's (1992) assertions that outcomes can become 'metamorphosed into rigid dogmas'. Instead as she proposed, this research will attempt to ensure that the range of



options for analysing the data is utilised. Geertz (1983) asserts that because of the existence of blurred genres, the researcher has the flexibility to borrow from various disciplines, including what Anderson (1989) considered as the emerging hybrid which some referred to as critical ethnography. The latter, critical ethnography is an inevitable uneasy alliance between the theory - driven approaches and those that desire to assess critically the phenomenon.

## **ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES**

Therefore this study by utilising the PRA approach has applied both the theory testing approach which had an open-ended facility and the critical ethnographic stance. The analytical techniques that emerged out of these methods are as follows:-

- The data collected from the Causal Attribution questionnaire which provided the theoretical framework had to be analysed manually and statistically. This theory- testing measure was also open-ended and provided free responses.
- The data was tabulated according to the different variables which included gender, age, religion/ethnicity, geographical locations, and the causal factors of effort, ability, task difficulty, luck, home effects, teacher effects and the open-ended measures of likes and dislikes.
- The measures of values and frequency of occurrence were applied.
- The data was further statistically analysed by making correlations and comparisons to arrive at the significantly relevant factors which in fact revealed the students' perception about their performance
- The causal attribution patterns were analysed through Weiner's

dimensions.

- All other questionnaires were analysed based on frequency of occurrence.
- All the interviews were conducted in privacy. The interviews of the teachers were conducted either alone in their class-rooms or in the principal's office. The tapes were listened to and were analysed according to frequency of responses and tabulated according to the key words and responses.
- Observation of the staff was on-going but on special occasions incidents were recorded.
- Triangulation of the data collected and between the measures of analysis were applied to identify commonality of occurrences and differences of interpretations between the students' statements, perceptions and the teachers' expectations
- The responses from the students' interviewed and their exit questionnaire were analysed according to frequency of responses to the particular question.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research is grounded in the methodological approach of the PRA and its ad hoc facility. Thus this insider action/case study have used all the measures and analytical tools available to find out to what extent there is a relationship between students' statements and perception of their success or failure and their teachers' expectations about their academic achievements generally and specifically in English Language.

The researcher was informed by Tripp's principle of making relevant decisions on monitoring and describing the effects, of using one's experience and insider information to evaluate, clarify and improve the situation through all forms of critical inquiry and then use the concept of triangulation to finally analyse all the outcomes. In the final analysis, whether through the implementation of the theory or through the collection of empirical data through interviews, vignettes, and participant observation the voice of the students will be heard. I will not be offended by the issues raised or the vivid portrayals revealed. Instead, I will remain cognizant of the changing nature of the phenomenon that is being investigated, and therefore accept that nothing is static.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SCHOOL, THE PEOPLE

The school, located in deep-south Trinidad, prides itself in being one of the oldest junior secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. It was opened in September, 1973, and since its inception, the school has struggled to forge an acceptable image of excellence. It was one of the earlier junior secondary schools which started, albeit on schedule but operated not at its present location. For about two terms in its first year of its existence the teachers and students shared the campus of another junior secondary school. Even though this was an inconvenience, the members of staff who were present in those early days said that that initial period helped them in their bonding.

However, the story is often told that their spanking new school was built on a cemetery. Additionally, that first set of teachers often recalled that during the first years of its existence there, the school was brought to the attention of the national community when it was discovered that many of the students acted strangely and appeared to display suicidal tendencies for no apparent reason. These incidents were recorded in the school's Log Book and the Trinidad Guardian newspapers which reported that the students would scream and attempt to throw themselves over the railings. The staff had to turn to the church and to a Pentecostal pastor for spiritual intervention. That was effective. The school and the children settled after that. However, whenever the present students reacted to any unusual incident the older teachers would tend to make reference to those early days and draw similarities to those patterns of

behaviour. Therefore, as a result from the very inception of the school's existence the first teachers viewed the students as being strange 'spiritual' beings whose reactions were abnormal and out of control.

Yet, the school caters for all of the secondary school students in the deep, south-central areas of the island of Trinidad and therefore attracts distinct populations from different catchment areas. This situation exists because prior to the JSS, there were only two other secondary schools in the area. One of the schools is a traditional grammar Presbyterian Church school and the other is a government assisted secondary school which was built specifically for the children of the ex-patriots who worked in the oilfields. Therefore, historically the masses of families in the area do not have a cultural tradition of attending secondary school.

The school is located on a large campus of over 5 acres. There are ten academic subjects taught but four subject areas are gender - specific. Only the boys pursue the courses in the Industrial Arts whereas only the girls do Home Economics, although within recent times the boys have been requesting to pursue that subject. The main academic block which houses the subjects of English, Mathematics, and Spanish lie to the extreme end of the property near an open field. The students find opportunity to slip away at the back of this building whenever they seek a place to misbehave. The other areas for socialization for the students are in the locker and toilet areas. The other academic silos are the Social Studies and Home Economics block and the Industrial Arts block where the three subjects for the boys are taught - Metal

work, Wood work and Technical Drawing. The other major area is the school's open auditorium which houses the school's cafeteria. This open area provides the major, internal covered space for students' interaction. Here all the school assemblies and in-door sporting activities are held. Adjacent to this area are the rooms for Music and Physical Education.

The school operates a double shift system which is manned by the one Principal whose authority spans both shifts. His/her working hours are flexible but must include spending at least two days on an entire shift and some period every day on each shift. He/she is responsible for ensuring the safety and security of all students first and then the teachers, for implementing all government policies, for decision-making, for making certain that student discipline is impeccable, for maintaining the school plant and also ensuring the accurate delivery of the curriculum. However, the day-to-day operations of each shift are managed by a Vice-Principal who is virtually in charge of his/her shift as he/she manages the 31 teachers and 900 students under his/her span of control. It therefore takes a strong principal to co-ordinate both streams to ensure that there is cohesion between the shifts and proper co-ordination of all school activities. Historically, a strong rivalry exists between the shifts to the extent that congeniality and good relationships between the students and staff on each shift become a challenge. As a matter of fact the shifts invariably tend to operate at variance and the gap widens dependent on the vice principal leadership on the shift and the capabilities of the principal.

The students of the Morning Shift come from the far-flung outlying country

areas, such as Erina, Buenos Ayres on the sea-front, Rancho Quemado, Los Iros, Penal, Mome Diable, Southeoro, Avocat, Rousillac and sometimes as far south west as Point Fortin and as far north as Sanando and Marabella. The perception is that these students, especially those from the very poor country areas, tend to be quieter, more docile, less academically inclined and less disruptive in behaviour as they depict the true village life (Herskovits and Herskovits 1947). Many of these students are attending secondary school only because of the intervention of the JSS system.

The students from the Afternoon Shift hail from the district town of Simaria and its immediate environs and from the other neighbouring town of Fyzobad. These students should not be considered as the traditional urban kids although in reality they display many of the tendencies and inclinations of inner city students. They tend to be more robust, aggressive, more alert academically and more culturally and artistically inclined. Many of them are the products of the best primary schools in the St. Patrick educational district. Many of them and their parents feel that they should have been placed in the more traditional grammar schools located in or out of the educational district.

Similarly, the teachers who are assigned to the various shifts are different. The teachers who are older, more inflexible and resistant to change are largely the members of the Morning Shift staff. As a consequence, the mood and tone on that Shift is totally different from that of the Evening Shift. There, the teachers are younger, inexperienced, more sociable, more flexible to change and more transient. In addition, the older teachers, especially those who were in the

school from its inception had initially loved the school but they experienced difficulties with the former principal with whom I worked as a young vice principal.

This gentleman was the principal for the period, 1983 to September 1995. The tone of the school then was full of contention and there were frequent visits to the school by the supervisors to quell the feelings of disaffection between the staff and the administration. During that period, no practical work was done and the teachers were de-motivated. The teachers were often absent or frequently holding emergency staff and teachers' union meetings. In spite of several fund raisers and large Government injection of funds for repairs and maintenance, the physical appearance of the school was depressing, all the machines were non-functioning and teacher morale was low. The school was often shut down and the media called in to cover internal problems, such as, an issue with the principal, or a student becoming disruptive or being disrespectful to a teacher, or students having an altercation or for even lack of water on the plant. Inevitably the students suffered; yet some teachers capitalised on the situation.

The distinct and overt displays of teacher disaffection slowly changed during the period when I served as the Principal, October 1995 to February 1998, long before the entry of the 2001 students of the study. Before I was assigned to the school even as the Vice Principal and later as Principal, the school was virtually unknown except for the initial afore-mentioned and other negative reports. The older teachers were reluctant to expose the students to the world outside. Even



though some pockets of resistance remained they were slowly converted. During that period I re-established practical work, re-furbished all laboratories, restored electricity to the compound and repaired all broken machines and machinery. The school's furniture and other minor equipment were either upgraded or replaced. The staff's feelings about themselves changed and they expressed their appreciation.

The school began to participate and excel in extra-curricular activities and the students and teachers began settling down. Even though some of the students were not naturally academically inclined they possessed natural talents in sports, especially in football, cricket and athletics. I started to source opportunities for some of these students to be able to excel and gain national recognition. Especially for the footballers, the traditional football playing schools accepted them into their prestigious corridors, by the transfer entry route. Some excelled in this area. The girls excelled in the area of folk, national and ethnic dance and drama. Thus, many students, primarily from the afternoon shift have won laurels for the school.

During my tenure as Principal, the students competed in several national festivals and competitions and attained the top places or at least were recognised. Twice, in 1996 and 1997 we became the National Secondary Schools under 14 Football Champions, defeating at that level, all the top football playing schools in Trinidad and Tobago. In 1997, we were the south zone under 14 cricket champions and our boys and girls excelled at the secondary schools national sports. We also contested, placed in the finals and

cupped the Best Actress Award at the National Secondary Schools Drama competitions. On two successive occasions, 1996 and 1997 the school also won the Chorale Speaking trophy at the National San Fest competitions. Perhaps one of our most prized accomplishments was receiving the trophy for having placed tenth at our first attempt at the first National and Regional Royal Bank Star Class, Young Leaders Competition. The students also participated in Social Studies and Science quizzes and attained first place in several categories at the National Flour Mills Agricultural competitions.

Unmistakably, the students, the parents, some teachers, and I as Administrator, enjoyed participating in competitions. We won trophies at the Junior Calypso and Parang singing competitions. Our students formed the core members of the Petrotrin Cadet Music Band. The school is a member of the national Inter School Christian Fellowship - ISCF and also manages one of the several clubs sponsored by UNESCO – The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation. As a result of our contribution in the latter, an extremely poor student and I, the researcher as the Principal, were given the opportunity to represent the nation at the UNESCO, World Youth Forum in Paris, France in 1998. Another student was sent to Illinois, USA on a music camp.

However from February 1998 to December 2000 the school worked under a different principal who reminded the staff of the former principal with whom they were displeased. Feelings of disaffection and contention again surfaced. The staff withheld its labour. There were long arduous staff-meetings, much name-calling and finger-pointing and general disquiet. This leader was mean

and dictatorial. He did not appreciate the efforts of those who had previously worked to improve the situation at the school. He attempted to divide the staff into separate cliques to crush those persons whom he did not favour. He was approaching his retirement and was full of venom at the system which he felt had wronged him.

Unfortunately, the Form Three students under review were students at the school for the period September 1998 to July 2001. They therefore spent most of their stay at the school under the control/supervision of the afore-mentioned principal. Additionally during that said period several changes were being implemented into the school system by the government then in power. In 2000, all students gained entry into secondary schools because of the government electioneering policy of Universal Secondary Education, USE. But almost simultaneously, the teachers lost the right to use corporal punishment and as a result they had lost in their classroom their symbol of power and authority which some often abused. Inevitably, the teachers' disaffections and wrangling worsened and affected the students because, what took place in the staff-room often spilled over into the classroom. The students' deviance and disruptive behaviour escalated with every major upset expressed by the teachers. By the... time the teachers began to resettle and return to normalcy the students' high levels of deviance had become engrained and had taken a new direction. Also during those interim years there appeared to be a shift in the types of students' misdemeanours which became endemic to students from certain localities. Some of the difficulties and conflicts that began in the local communities were

brought into, continued and settled at the school. As a result, the level of school violence escalated during that period.

Academically, many of the students operated at significantly lower levels of literacy and this affected the national image of the school. Historically, the students in the educational district which the school services tended to perform at the lowest levels of all the educational districts at the entry examination to secondary school, both previously at the Common Entrance and now at the SEA examinations. At least 15% of these students, when they entered the secondary school system in 1998 were unable to read even at the pre-primary level. Previous to 1998, a system was put in place to assist the weak students but throughout the life of these Form Three graduates of 2001 no system or organised help was forth-coming to bring re-dress to their literacy deficiencies.

Lewis (1953) in defining illiteracy contended that the lowest level of effective functional literacy is the ability to read a simple paragraph in a popular newspaper at a level of fluency. Sad to say, much more than 15% of these Form Three graduates operated at even lower levels of literacy and needed special attention to identify their specific areas of weakness. Nevertheless, all these students were sent to secondary schools because of the political decisions of the then UNC Government. Previously, almost all the students, even those from remote country areas who were not quite prepared for secondary school, but who wrote the then 11+ Common Entrance Placement Examination in the St. Patrick Educational Division secured a place at this junior secondary school under review and were invariably placed on the Morning Shift. With the advent

of the new Secondary Assessment Examination [SEA], which now guarantees students' placement at secondary school the phenomenon has become ensconced. This action has created more negative implications for the quality of students that were received and continue to be received as Form One entrants. Their levels of literacy and numeracy are extremely low and there is a need for immediate intervention.

As a consequence, these students do not improve or benefit from their time spent at school, not only because of their low academic ability, but primarily because they cannot cope with the inflexible methods of teachings. The very nature of the type of school demands that the students become conditioned to a bell like Pavlov's dog and then walk around from teachers' classroom to classroom at the end of every 40-45 minutes. These factors contribute to creating students who are restless, have short attention spans and are unable to focus on study during school-time. This constant movement provides an avenue for students to slip away and get lost in the migration/chaos. This type of behaviour is most evident in the students who lack the internal autonomy to be responsible and are therefore not self-regulating. As the Administrator and a former Head of several English Departments, I have implemented, amid much opposition, several measures to assist these students to learn to sit and study. What invariably happened was that the extremely restless were lost, a few were helped but some of the students who needed specialist care became so frustrated at the lack of teacher concern that they turned out to be more delinquent and may have even become habitual class-breakers. Eventually, for

some their levels of absenteeism became extremely high and they eventually dropped out of school.

The ripple effect of that was that the teachers too became frustrated and demoralized, although in many cases there was none. Their efforts were not producing the levels of anticipated satisfaction. Especially for those teachers who have served several generations of weak students, the long - term effect is gross frustration, low morale, teacher burnout syndrome and finally apathy.

It was only during the last two terms of the Form Three students' stay at the school that the problems and feelings of disaffection of the staff with Administration changed. I was again installed as the principal and began the process of restoration. This time the work was easier, the staff after their recent harsh experiences were more responsive and appreciative of my efforts and positive contributions. For the graduating Form Three students of 2001 the impact of the change was not forth-coming.

That apart, the future for these students appeared grim. The major employers who would attract these students are the Oil Company of Petrotrin and other subsidiary drilling companies. Over the past decades these employers demanded the qualities of the physical strength and robustness of those living in close proximity to the fields to be considered for employment in the drilling and setting up of rigs. Today, the employers are demanding different qualities from the ideal graduate and entrant to their employ. With the advent of technology and the promise of national recognition for employer's

contributions in Sports and other social graces, the employers are now seeking entrants who are multi-skilled and multi-talented.

Thus, the ideal graduate from the JSS system, and by extension all new employees, must show less reliance on robustness but must now possess the attributes of being innovative, a critical thinker, a problem solver, a team player, technologically competent and literate, spiritually aware, well-adjusted socially, having high self-esteem, being morally upright, being self motivated, adaptable to global living, environmentally conscious and the like. The bulk of JSS graduates would therefore be unable to obtain employment.

The acquisition of these qualities depends on positive and creative home, teacher and school effects. The parents, the curriculum and moral values which are taught and implemented at school must work in tandem to develop the ideal citizen for the twenty-first century. In other words the culture and the tone of the school must play a major part in the creation of a well-rounded student and individual. The question then is, are the teachers holding such high expectations for these graduates which in turn will affect the students' perceptions about their success and/or failure at their school-leaving .14+

Examination?

**PART THREE**

**THE FINDINGS**

**AND**

**ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS**



# CHAPTER VIII

## THE FINDINGS –

The goal of this study is to assess/investigate to what extent there is a relationship between the students' perceptions of their success or failure and their teachers' expectations about their academic achievement generally but specifically in English Language

### INTRODUCTION

This section of the research paper will identify the outcomes of each method used, through the measures of frequency tables, values, the coefficient correlations and other comparisons and relationships. Afterwards cross analyses through triangulation of the derived data will be highlighted.

Many of the findings were quite significant. When triangulated these findings in their separate and combined ways validated, reinforced and confirmed each other. The findings that materialised were the students' statements, especially those of the six representatives, their demonstrated dispositional behaviours and their perceptions of the causal attributions factors which impacted on their academic performance, especially in English. The teachers' expectations based on their responses to the teacher expectation questionnaire were identified. Also of importance were the students' vignettes about the teachers' in-class interactions, and highlights of all the observations and interviews.

In this chapter therefore, the findings based on each measure used are identified to determine the extent of the relationship between the students' statements and perceptions about their success and failure when correlated with their teachers'

expectations about their performance during their JSS experience. Firstly, the findings from all the measures related to the students will be stated. Then, those identified by the teachers will be itemised. Finally all the findings will be triangulated.

## **PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS OF THE STUDENTS**

As an insider, the information gleaned was voluminous. There was much evidence to indicate that generally the students loved their school and the freedom which they enjoyed there, in spite of any incidence of indiscipline and other challenges. The school records indicate that the students were generally respectful to their teachers. From my observation as the Principal/researcher, those who tended to be openly deviant comprised a mere 3.5% of the school population, a hard-core of twelve young men and three young ladies out of a Form Three student body of 520.

However, when interviewed these deviant students, in particular, and some others informed me that they had little and in some cases no interaction or engagements with several teachers, including their English teacher. These allegations were investigated initially through observation and then through dialogue. Apart from the traditional reasons proffered of teacher tardiness/'often late', teacher frequent absenteeism and teacher vacancy, the other stated reasons were quite significant . The students felt and said that at their first offence when the teacher said, "*get out of my class and do not come back*", they complied totally with that teacher's request. After that occasion, there was never any opportunity given or invitation made to them by the

teacher, to return to the class/classroom, which is owned, controlled and managed by the teacher. Therefore, to them that strong statement of rejection to leave and not return was their signal to never go back to that teacher's class. As a result they stayed away from all the classes of that teacher and/or any session in which that teacher was involved.

The teachers when interviewed on that issue of rejection posited that their intention was never for the student's permanent withdrawal from the class. But the departure of the disruptive students from their class often resulted in their being better able to maintain class-control. As a result, they never felt inclined to invite the students back to their classes or to engage them in any further sessions. As a matter of fact, they continued to put students out of their classes for the slightest infraction – for not doing home work; speaking to the teacher with what the teacher interpreted as a bad attitude; being rude; giggling; 'sucking of the teeth'; putting hands on hips, 'akimbo'; or even standing in a particular posture.

The records of the school log indicate that on several occasions, whole classes and/or large portions of the class were taken to the Dean's or Principal's office for reprimand, resulting in a lack of teacher interaction, loss of precious teacher student contact hours and too much time spent in dealing with complaints levelled at each party. The well-behaved and the more academically inclined students were grossly disadvantaged on these occasions. Often when they were unwittingly and unwillingly drawn into the circuitous disputes they were the ones who were most disgusted at the teachers as the findings of the students'

causal attribution corroborates. The students who attained average to good grades indicted a significant relationship between their causal attribution pattern and the teacher effect. In other words these students were most severely affected by the reactions and expectations of the teachers.

A typical day at the school showed that several classes of students were often left unsupervised. Form 5: Group 2, a special ability class, often complained that they had no teacher interaction for many entire days, mainly because of teacher absenteeism. This scenario was often repeated for students of other groups who do not care to complain. Throughout one month of constant observation, 8 of the 16 Form 5 classes had no contact with four subject teachers because of teacher absenteeism alone.

## **ROLE -PLAY AND DRAMATIZATION**

The group of 15 students in their portrayal on life in Form 5: Group 4 highlighted some of the teachers' demonstrated habits which they did not like or appreciated. These included teachers being often late, showing favouritism, exhibiting racial tendencies, teaching boring lessons, being often absent, not correcting assignments, not having a happy class, not explaining the work well, being rough and not showing the students any respect. In their role-play, the English teacher, Ms. Jay, was portrayed as a pretty young lady who always made the students feel unwanted in her class through her insulting remarks and hurtful comments. She had little interaction with the students and was especially harsh to those who displeased her, as a student had done.

It must be noted that at the school under review, all the eight teachers of English Language are females. Since its inception, the school has had only one male English teacher who was then acting as the Vice Principal of the Evening Shift. Coincidentally, all but two of the student performers in the role-play were females. Yet the female teacher had impacted negatively on the female students. What was worse was that in several instances and on diverse occasions the male students were more aggressive and disruptive in the classes of the female teachers. A few male students opted not to attend these female teachers' classes. Yet these very boys showed great respect for their male teachers and the subjects which they taught.

Arising out of the information shared, the need was identified for greater interaction with the students to obtain their explanations and rationale for executing such harsh judgements against their teachers. As a consequence, through that classroom scenario, for the first time, many of the student participants were able to see and obtain a different view of their behaviour and its detrimental effect. After they demonstrated and vented their disgust there was a period of open discussion about how the situations could have been handled differently.

### **VIGNETTES BASED ON SOME STUDENTS' LIFE-STORIES**

The stories which the students told about their experiences at home and school were informative and sometimes extremely confidential. Many of them revealed detailed information on physical and sexual abuse. In more than two instances relatives were subpoenaed and sentenced for these actions. Based on

the information given, which had to be further corroborated, as the Principal I have to inform the relevant Probation Officers who will further investigate before turning the matter over to the police, who have subpoenaed me on both occasions.

The stories also revealed serious life tragedies of loss of parents, other siblings and friends. A couple of the male students revealed their experiences when they migrated and the pressures they underwent to settle in foreign schools. Many discussed the ill-effect of conflicts and separation in the home. A female student spoke about the trauma of living with a parent who is alcoholic. The teachers also formed the topic of some of these stories, which revealed reasons for the students' likes, dislikes and perceptions created about individual teachers' expectations about their performance. The students also stated that the teachers often misunderstood their in-class reactions and behaviour when they were experiencing their personal trauma. As a result most teachers never helped them in their domestic challenges.

## **UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH GROUPS OF STUDENTS**

Prior to the students' departure to the senior comprehensive schools, in July 2001, I held four major exit interviews with groups of students who represented the various groupings in the school, the deviant, the religious, the quiet and outspoken of each shift. The discussions were on a wide range of issues. These included their choice of a career path, their opinions about their teachers; their opinions about the subject, English Language; their opinions about the

help/assistance given to them by their teachers and parents in their studies, their parents' responses to their performance, and their opinions about the school in general, their interests in sports, their future plans, and others.

To be able to elicit much information from the students was only possible because the researcher had established an open, non-threatening, congenial atmosphere between the students and herself. This generous helping of openness and congeniality, but not familiarity, created the platform to foster the free flow of dialogue and interaction. As the researcher operating under the identity of administrator/friend, I was provided with the channels to be privy to most of the pertinent and often hidden bits of information about the respondents to be ever unearthed. Therefore, most of the students did not feel inhibited to respond as they had been afforded the opportunity to share their opinions openly with me on countless other occasions, often times in very embarrassing situations. They therefore had the assurance that their personal information would continue to be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality.

As a result of these open interactions, the greatest challenge I experienced was to be misunderstood by the teachers, who often stated that I favoured and accepted the students' stories and opinions over theirs. They also complained that I spent too much time listening to the students and investigating their concerns. Another interesting development was that the students were willing to accept instruction and any reprimand from me in good faith. Unconsciously they became my most willing informants on the teachers' private in-class activities and actions. I never used such information against the teacher.

After these students graduated in October 2001, I visited them at their new senior comprehensive schools. Again I held 2 sessions of large group discussions with most of the same students on some of the same issues discussed before and on other issues like their opinions about their new school and their comparison between their new teachers and those at the junior secondary school. Their collective and individual opinions were also sought on the level of difficulty that they were encountering on the tasks in English Language at the higher level. These sessions were recorded.

In response the students indicated that they tended to prefer their life at the junior secondary school. However, they felt that even though their present teachers were more aloof and strict they taught them harder/ more difficult work which was more meaningful. From early their new teachers seriously and sternly informed them that the onus of learning was each individual's sole responsibility. Several of them felt that they were doing and coping quite well in their new environment and they were determined to do their best. More importantly, there was no leeway for disruptive behaviour as the Deans and even the security officers were more vigilant yet they showed more concern even though they enforced harsher penalties once a rule was violated.

These students also responded to and confirmed their opinions in the exit questionnaires, whose outcomes were tabulated and shown in **Table 4 overleaf**



**TABLE 4- BREAKDOWN OF STUDENTS' OPINIONS RE-EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE**

<b>Feelings at leaving JSS</b>	<b>Differences in Feelings</b>	<b>Differences bet. schools</b>	<b>Most helpful person</b>	<b>What did they do?</b>	<b>Future Expectation</b>
77% - Sad to miss and leave friends	33%- More sad to leave JSS and friends	45% - JSS was much more fun	60%- stated their parents, and family members. 2% identified their father.	Encouraged, helped, cared talk, showed the need for Education	40% - To continue my Education
8% - Sad to miss school	33% - Glad to leave school and face society	35% - Serious meaningful study and CXC examinations	12%- Friends	Talked me out of bad ways and to become useful	30% - Get a job, family-Police, life-guard welder
4%-Will miss teachers	27% - Grown up and serious	15%- Much more preparation for life	16% - Specially named teachers	Encouraged, helped me to believe in me with extra lessons	10% - achieve goals and be successful
10% - Happy to leave	4% - Didn't care much for JSS	3%-Whole day school, stricter	10% - Teachers	Taught me the lessons	10% - To become a teacher
1% confused	3% - No difference	2% -From class to class no movement	2% - Myself	Built confidence in myself to succeed	10% - no plans

### **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH SIX SELECTED STUDENTS**

The stratified sample of six students was selected with the teachers' assistance.

Those chosen were one pair, of a male and a female student who represented the three performance levels along the continuum - those who performed very badly, those who performed slightly better and those whose grades were good.

Their opinions though taken individually echoed those expressed by the groups.

It is interesting to note that whereas in the very low performance levels there were several male students from whom to choose, at the upper end of the grades continuum, this was not so. There were only two males who performed at the success level. Determining which student should be placed in the sample required more than a flip of a coin. It therefore became necessary to obtain teachers' assistance and involvement in the selection of the students. Subsequently, the researcher conducted structured interviews with the selected participants at their new schools. All names were changed to mask the students' real identity but the stories and descriptions are verifiable, based on the school records of the Deans, the principal and some of the significant others cited.

The students at the lowest end of the academic continuum had a school record of class breaking, using obscene language, being dissident and in most classes uncooperative. But the male student at the upper echelon had also displayed some of these characteristics to a lesser degree and less frequently. Some of his personal challenges had been occasioned under different circumstances. Further in-depth information from these interviews revealed the following about the two student representatives for those at the lowest levels.

**Meet the selected female student, *Kimfa*.** According to her teachers, Kimfa was not aggressively deviant, but she skipped class frequently. She was very easily distracted. She preferred to spend her day outside of the classroom with the young men, '*liming*', although she was never in any really serious trouble. Her name was often called as a key witness or informant, whenever deviant incidents occurred, especially those involving threats of fights and painful

gossips. Her involvement in these types of situations caused her to lose too much class time and student-teacher contact.

Her parents had to be called in to the school for discussions on numerous occasions. After several many futile attempts it was revealed that she did not live with either of them. She never met her father and her mother lived abroad. She lived with an ailing grandmother. One of her aunts usually represented her parents, and often lamented that Kimfa did not like to stay at home. She had a penchant for the company of her peers who showed no interest in school work. She was also very popular with her in school clique who was always ready to jump to her defence. Her relatives were tired of her behaviour and often threatened her with corporal punishment but unfortunately this seemed only to strengthen her resolve to stray. It did nothing to kindle her interest in her school work.

Her teachers had very little record of her attendance in class and she did not seem to care that she was often recorded late or absent, even though she was always regular and punctual in school. Her grades remained consistently low and often there was no grade awarded. Yet she was quite intelligent.

When she was interviewed later at her new composite school she testified that she was now enjoying school and she was now doing meaningful work. She therefore felt that her present teachers were much better than those at the junior secondary school and she was studying her work and obviously skipping class less. Her accomplices in that act of class-breaking were now assigned to

different schools. She now had a totally different group of friends and had to cope with the overpowering nature of the new school environment. It was therefore not surprising that she admitted that she felt intimidated.

When asked what advice she would give her past teachers she said that the JSS teachers should allow students to be free to speak their minds. Teachers should allow students the opportunities to express their own opinions. The teachers should also encourage the children to work harder by giving them meaningful projects to complete.

At the moment she had no boyfriends and was studying harder and hoping to succeed. She wished that all teachers, parents and guardians treated all their kids equitably, giving them the same amount of love, hope and confidence in themselves to succeed.

**The male counterpart at the lowest grade level is *Kenwin*.** The Dean's records indicated that *Kenwin* was of the average age as most of the other students, but, he was the leader of the group of dissident students. Yet, he was very gentle and very selective of the teachers whom he obeyed and whose classes he attended. An extremely good athlete, he was always well-groomed and loved dancing. The young ladies gravitated to him and there had been occasional scuffles between the girls over who had an intimate relationship with him at the same time. He was well-known to the deans and even the police as he was frequently in trouble. From a single-parent home he was the last child and only boy of five children.

Whenever he was in trouble, which often ranged from being found with cigarettes, to attempting to burn down a tree in the school yard, to bullying the younger students or to just being disruptive, his mother was called in for discussions. Obviously, she was embarrassed and had no logical explanations for her son's behaviour. She claimed that her son was a totally different person, a loving and helpful child at home. A visit to his home confirmed that he was well-loved by his sisters who provided him with all his physical and safety needs.

During a personal conversation with him, one would discover that he was quite mannerly, affable, and helpful. His peers always defended him and covered for him whenever he was identified as the person responsible for any act of delinquency. Some teachers, especially the females, wanted nothing to do with him. They would put him out of their class for the slightest misdemeanour. Whenever they could they requested that he should be suspended from school. Needless to state, he was in fact often suspended and therefore lost several in-class contact hours.

When he was interviewed at his new senior comprehensive school he informed me that he was enjoying school and all his new subject areas. He claimed that he was trying to change his ways and improve on his behaviour. He indicated that the teachers were very strict and the deans and security officers were always patrolling the corridors. Nevertheless, before the end of the first term there, he was suspended from school on suspicion of theft. He never officially returned to school because of fear of serious reprisal and lack of follow-up. In

his report, his new Dean chastised him for being often in trouble. In spite of his suspension he was often seen on the school compound although he never attempted to enter a class. Eventually he dropped out of school.

The students at the middle/average level performed much better academically but still their grades fell quite below the acceptable standard.

Meet *Kelly* a talkative, intelligent, daring, out-spoken and very helpful student. She loved drama and was the school's best actress. She won several prizes/awards for her performance including the most outstanding national actress award. She lived with her parents and a grandmother all of whom were highly protective of her.

Kelly was well-loved by her peers who supported her in her extra-curricular activities. She felt that life at the junior secondary school was much more fun than in her new environment where the teachers were stricter. She, like the others, admitted that the level of work at the new school was higher, more difficult and more complicated. Her examples given were the poems and the long written essays, but she noted that she had covered some of that type of work before at the JSS level. Still, she pointed out that the present teachers explained the work better. She also added that she received more support from her mother at the present stage, especially when very important decisions had to be made. She enjoyed the practical subjects and loved typing and the electronic media.

About the discipline of her peers, she felt that some were making a great effort

to improve and settle down to their studies. She felt that if some of the students would adopt a changed attitude towards their work then they ought to learn even more and obtain better grades. She claimed that she had no boyfriends especially as her personal maxim was 'books before boys'

Her opinion was that her junior secondary school teachers had a great impact on the students' lives and should therefore be more effective in helping the students to foster a love for the school. However, her advice to her former teachers was that they should allow the students to act out their stories and be able to understand and express their own emotions. As a result, she recommended that those teachers should use drama in the classroom. She also suggested that they should use the open spaces and go out-of-doors since students need to have fun. It was also Kelly's opinion that classes should not be so boring with teachers expecting students to just sit and listen to them talk all day. Also teachers should not have favourites and they should share the information with all students and not be racially-biased. She concluded by saying that she was missing her old school.

**The male counterpart is *Kanand*.** All his teachers and his parents said that he was a young man who was completely deviant and prone to violence. Whenever his school bag was searched there was always a weapon lodged in it. He was often in fights and often suspended from school for many long periods. Kanand controlled his own circle of friends who obeyed his every wish. They skipped their classes, performed acts of vandalism and stole from the homes and shops nearby. He was a perfect non-contributor, who was often suspended

and was well-known to the police. He was very surprised at the relatively good 14+ grade that he received because he always performed very badly. Often there was no mark assigned to him.

On many occasions his parents had to be contacted and summoned for discussions. His mother was the proprietor of a dry-goods shop. She admitted that she was tired, distraught and did not know what to do next. She and her husband had given the baby Kanand to his grandmother, and so he did not grow up with them. Now that he was older he seemed to have resented that decision and in his own way he was displaying anger with the world. He had a younger sister who also attended the school and she was embarrassed whenever the teachers complained about him. She was totally different in behaviour and attitude towards her school work. Whereas Kanand was often untidy and unkempt in dress and his school-bag contained anything but books, she was well-groomed and attentive in class.

The teachers adopted a hands-off attitude towards him and the members of his clique. He was frequently sent out of class. There were days when he did absolutely no school work. He always arrived very early at school and was the first to bolt out of the class and through the school gate sometimes even before the official dismissal time of the school day. Often he played pranks and sometimes misinformed all the students around giving 'some spurious reason' for an early dismissal from school. Many believed him and attempted to follow him and leave the compound early.



When interviewed at his new school I was surprised to see Kanand. He was very tidily dressed and was very happy to be interviewed. He claimed that he had now settled down. He was no longer breaking class. He was now living at home with his parents and he informed me that he had a girlfriend. Some of his former associates were placed at his school but several of them were sent to a different secondary school.

When questioned about his school work, he felt that 'it was no trouble'. He was coping with it, even in the difficult areas. He liked his new teachers who were also pleased with him and were patient. He enjoyed the challenge of the studies and felt the lessons were now meaningful. When asked for advice for his former JSS teachers, he laughed and said, "Miss, they have to understand the students and learn to like we". He felt that the teachers spent too much time quarrelling about themselves and their needs and not sufficient time and effort spent on getting to know and help the students to overcome their weaknesses.

The female student who scored the highest mark was extremely quiet, pretty, soft-spoken and very reserved. *Keisha* operated within a small circle of two friends whom she knew since primary school. She was an exemplary student, always punctual and present, well-behaved, did all her home work well and was well-loved by all her teachers. Even though she was selected to be a school prefect, she was not given the role, because the committee of teachers and deans for prefect selection felt that she was too quiet and fragile for the task. Her parents, especially her father, often visited the school to request a transfer for his daughter to another school environment which he felt was

perhaps more suited to her temperament and potential. Efforts were made to source the transfer but all attempts proved futile. One is not quite certain if this could have been the reason for Keisha's uninvolved position in the goings-on at school. Now that she was placed at her new school her parents were much happier and more accepting of her placement and performance.

When interviewed at the school of choice Keisha said that she was coping extremely well with all her studies. She was still at the head of the class. She felt that the teachers at her new school explained things better and seemed to show less interest in the students' personalities but were more concerned about their performance in their subject areas. As a consequence, more students were performing better and becoming less deviant. She also reported that more teachers and deans were visible on the corridors. She related that even though the rules of both schools were similar, in the new school teachers worked together and were much stricter about enforcing them. Her advice to her teachers at the junior secondary school was to make the work more challenging and meaningful and spend some time counselling the students to find out what pressures they were under-going.

**The male student, *Kurtis*, who scored the highest grade for the boys - This grade was considerably lower than the highest grade scored by his female counterpart, Keisha. In many ways, Kurtis was a totally different character from Keisha, and indeed from many other students. Kurtis was the oldest boy in the school. He was a late developer who was extremely tall, strong and well-built, an athlete par- excellent and the school's top footballer, a talented**

musician, especially on the drums and also one of the school's dramatists. Initially he was not interested in school and spent his time 'liming' in the school hall. All the female students gravitated to him. As a result of all his other legitimate activities he invariably missed a great deal of classroom sessions.

His parents were separated but his father often visited both the home and the school to check on the performance of Kurtis and his other male sibling. On that particular visit, the father indicated that he felt that Kurtis was not being as respectful to his mother as he should. In response to his attitude and as a corrective measure, the father threatened to take him away from his mother's home and have him live with him in an area far removed from his other siblings and friends. He apparently threw a tantrum at home when that original suggestion was brokered. The father left the home but was still determined to carry out his threat, hence his visit to the school that day. Unaware of the aforementioned preamble, the father attempted to find out the procedure to effect a transfer for his son to attend a school comparable to the present school, but located in the neighbourhood in which he lived. As the Principal, I assisted the father and facilitated the paper-work by contacting the other school Principal and the Ministry and virtually finalised the transfer.

After the procedure was completed the researcher/principal called the young man to inform him of the transfer and to wish him farewell. His reaction was frightening. Kurtis doubled over in spasms, started vomiting, and retching, and writhing in pain. He banged his head against the wall and continually shouted

that he did not want to go and live with his father. After much effort and pleading I calmed him down and a compromise was reached. He promised to change his behaviour, increase his efforts at his studies so that his performance would improve. If there were no change in his performance and attitude there was going to be no recourse but to send him to live with his father. Needless to state, this incident marked the beginning of a serious turn around in the life of Kurtis and in the relationship between him and his father. They have since become close friends and they share a much better friendship.

More importantly, this was a defining moment for me in my role as Principal/researcher as it provided an opportunity to recognise when to make timely and critical interventions in the lives of the students and to use these situations to inform others. I also became more self-reflexive. My resolve to help the marginalised students was strengthened as I felt a sense of release that I had the opportunity to not only help a student academically but also to assist a family emotionally.

Prior to this incident and to a much lesser extent afterwards Kurtis and his teachers did not have a good relationship in the classroom. Some felt that he was too '*mannish*' as he was very out-spoken. Others felt that he was too rude and had a bad attitude which often resulted in his being put out of class as his English teacher did often. However, whenever the teachers needed the assistance of a stern, big student to command the other students' attention Kurtis' services were always sought, yet, he was never considered for the position of a school prefect. Kurtis' many extra-curricula activities resulted in

his frequent absence from class. No teacher ever took time off to help him make-up for loss contact hours. No teacher ever gave him extra lessons, but when he won laurels for the school he was hailed as an achiever, even then, very briefly.

At his new school, when asked what advice he would give to his former teachers, he quickly retorted that they should show more love and care for the students. They must attempt to understand the problems of the students and not be so uncaring. He, however, stated that he enjoyed his life at the junior secondary school, but he felt that he was doing much better at his new school, in all subjects including English, which was more meaningful and challenging. Also Kurtis was playing football at the '*Inter-col*' (inter-colleges) national level. He did extremely well, scored several goals and brought victory to his new school, in football, athletics, drama and music. He became a school prefect, was well-loved by his new teachers and did extremely well academically.

**Table 5** overleaf attempts to capture these six students' responses to the structured questions.

**TABLE 5- BREAKDOWN OF SPECIALLY SELECTED STUDENTS'**

**OPINIONS**

STUDENT	GRADE	PERSONALITIES	OPINIONS of PAST TEACHERS	OPINIONS PRESENT TEACHERS	ADVICE	PRESENT STATUS
KIMFA	Very low	Easily led, class breaker, always involved in all delinquent incidents	Not caring or concerned. Lessons not interesting	Work more meaningful and enjoyable	Allow students free speech. Be patient.	Enjoying English, in class more regularly
KENWIN	Very low	Disruptive, leader of the dissidents, loved by his peers, an athlete	Uncaring, had little to do with him, did not try to understand	More strict, more interested in the subject areas	Love and talk to the students	Suspended dropped out of school
KELLY	Fair	Very talkative and out-going. Dramatist and best actress	Some boring racially-biased classes, some were fun. No interaction bet. teacher and students	They should use drama and make classes more interesting. Use out-doors and open spaces	Allow students to act out their own stories and emotions	Doing well in academic. Still acting and leading her group and school
KANAND	Fair	Out-going, prone to violence. Deviant class breaker, gang leader	The work not hard enough to challenge one to learn. Teachers not caring.	Very strict but you understand what they are teaching	Make the work more fun and give more variety of activities	Settled and concentrates on studies. Has new friends.
KEISHA	Very good	Quiet, reserved, well-liked and respected by teachers and students	Good, helpful, concerned but the work was not challenging	Strict but the work is meaningful and enjoyable	Treat all students fairly and make the work interesting	Performing excellently. A school prefect and at the top of her class.
KURTIS	Good	Multi- skilled very talented in sports and music. Older than most students. Often called upon to assist the teachers in maintaining discipline of other students.	They never tried to understand the problems of their students. Yet JSS. was fun	Strict but more concerned about the student succeeding in their studies and in life	Get to know the pupils. Be interested in all their activities not only subjects	Still very active in all sport. Doing very well in his studies. Many good prospects for his future

Their stories and experiences when juxtaposed with the students Causal Attribution patterns for their successes and failures and correlated and triangulated with the teachers' expressed expectations ought to provide a framework not only for new insight into the teaching of English and other subjects but provide a platform on which to make changes to attitudes, expectations and curriculum.

**THE CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION RESPONSES**

Three hundred (300) randomly selected students were requested to respond to the Causal Attribution questionnaire, immediately after they were given their individual results of their 14+ English Language Examinations. Their responses

were therefore based on the immediacy of their feelings about their performance at the examination.

There were 36 questions in the Causal attribution Questionnaire, in addition to two open-ended questions. The questions were structured so that the numbered questions referred to specific factors thus–

Questions	- 1 - 7	- Effort
	- 8 -14	- Ability
	- 15 - 21	- Task difficulty
	- 22 - 29	- Luck
	- 30	- Students' perception of grade received
	- 31 - 33	- Teacher effects
	- 34 – 36	- Home effects
Open-ended responses		- Likes
Open-ended responses		- Dislikes

The students' overall responses to the questions were tabulated to determine the impact of these causal factors of ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, teacher effect and home effect in addition to their perceptions of their grades received. Their responses were broken-down into three categories - Agree, Disagree and No response. The following Table 6 overleaf represents the students' frequency distribution of their responses to the various causal factors:-

**TABLE 6 – BREAKDOWN OF FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE FACTORS OF THE CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION QUESTIONNAIRE**

FACTORS	Ability	Effort	Task Difficulty	Luck	Teacher Effect	Home Effect	Grade Perception
AGREE	222	230	149	216	117	162	101
DISAGREE	77	70	150	83	182	138	192
NO RESPONSE	1	-	1	1	1	-	9

Based on the frequency of the responses the students have indicated that the factors of effort, ability and luck had very significant positive impact on their performance. Teacher effect and their perception of the grade that they received made significant negative effect on their performance. Task difficulty is an important factor which obtained evenly balanced responses even though more skewed to its adverse effect. Home effect was not as significantly positively recognised.

These causal factors and the variables of gender, religion/ethnicity, age, and geographic locations were statistically correlated to assess if any other significant relationships could be established. Afterward Weiner's Dimensional Framework was applied to determine the students' causal attribution patterns. The students' qualitative, open-ended responses to their likes and dislikes about English Language were also assessed and tabulated. The findings are delineated and discussed accordingly:-

## **GENDER**

The demographic information about the sample revealed that there were 117 or 39% males and 183 or 61% females. Within recent times, there are more girls than boys in co-educational institutions, in spite of the attempts by the placement selection committee to ensure that equal numbers of boys and girls are placed in these co-ed institutions. Also, the data indicated that the performance of the girls surpassed that of the boys. That apart, the responses of the girls to the causal attribution questionnaire differed though not significantly.



## RELIGION

Out of the nine religious groupings, as shown in the Frequency Table (*See Appendix v - Table A*), 29% of the respondents were Roman Catholics. The next largest religious group of respondents was the 20% Hindus who were predominantly East-Indian. The Pentecostals followed closely with 18%. The Presbyterians comprised 9% and the Muslims were approximately 4%. These two groupings in the school population were also predominantly East-Indians. This breakdown according to religious groupings was used unscientifically to provide information on ethnicity. Based on the above statistics, the East-Indian population was over 33% of the population of the sample. The other two-thirds were of African and mixed races (dougla) extracts. No significant relationship was established between the students' religion / ethnicity and their causal attribution.

## AGE

The ages of the students ranged from 14 to 17 years. There were 42 or 14% respondents who were 14 years old and 172 or 57% of them who were 15 years. This means that 214 or 71% of the respondents fell well within the acceptable age limit. However, 73 or 24% were already 16 years old and were therefore above the outer limits of the age range. Additionally, another 13 or 4% were over-aged at 17 years and these grossly exceeded the acceptable age-limit for students at this school level as shown in (*Appendix vi - Table B*). However, the findings revealed no significant differences between the students' performance and their responses to the Causal Attribution factors and their age.

## **GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS**

The majority of the students who responded resided in the two main feeder towns of Fyzobad, with 96 or 32% and Simaria, 79 or 27%, closely followed by the area, deep south, in the oil rich belt, Palosico, Los Bajos and Santa Flo, Rancho 26.3%. The far flung areas to the north, La Rosan, Sanando, to Southeoro; Penol to the south west and the furthest southern coastal areas of Erina accounted for about 15.0% of the sample's population. However, no significant relationship was established between the students' performance and their geographical location.

## **STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Along a performance continuum, the students' overall academic performance in the 14+ English Language Examination, 2001 showed that –

- At the upper end, only 0.6% of the students obtained over 70% of the total possible marks.
- At the lower end 14% of the students made twenty marks and lower
- 93% of the respondents failed the examination. They did not obtain a passing grade of 55 out of 100.
- Just 30% of the students made 25% of the total possible marks
- 69% of the students made fewer than 40 marks out of 100 marks.

Therefore, using the three ranges of high, medium and low, the percentages of students which fall in these ranges are

- low            0 - 35            - 60%
- medium      36 - 55           - 33%
- high           56 - 75           - 7%

Just over twenty nine percent (29.7%) of the students obtained less than 25% of the total possible marks. However, 93% of the respondents failed the examination, that is, they obtained less than 50% of the total possible marks. The lowest grade was 9 and the highest grade was 75. The students' Overall Frequency Table highlights the actual grade received and the number and percentage of students who received the respective grade values (*Appendix vii-Table C.*)

## **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS**

The students' own perception of their academic outcomes showed that 63% or 190 students placed a value of 2 out of the range of 1- 3 on their actual grade received (*Appendix viii-Table D.*)

The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between the students' actual grades which they received and their perception of that grade/performance, especially at the low levels – or in situations of failure. These findings have revealed that the students' academic performance impacted significantly on their perception of their grades received, or their inability, especially by those who performed very badly.

## **STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION FACTORS**

Additionally, the Frequency, Value distributions and relationships of the students' responses to the other causal factors of ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, teacher effect and home effect were assessed to determine levels of

significance. The causal factors which were identified as significant were used to establish the students' causal attribution patterns. The following findings show the responsiveness of the students' reactions to establish significant relationships and/or differences to the causal factors.

## **ABILITY**

The students' responsiveness to the ability factor revealed that the highest frequency of respondents was 104 or 35%, at a value of 8. However, no significant relationship was revealed between their grades received and the factor of ability *per se*, but rather on their perception of the grade received which invariably revealed their inability, there was a significant relationship.

## **EFFORT**

The students recorded a double awarded level of significant relationships between their academic grade/performance and their effort expended, especially by those students who performed at the lowest level.

However, these said students placed a more evenly distributed value on the factor effort. There was a pattern of clustering between the values of 8, 9 and 10. Thus, 66 students or 22% gave a value of 8. The highest frequency of responses was 88 or 29% with a value of 9 and 62 or 21% placed a value of 10.

## **TASK DIFFICULTY**

The students determined their value of the task English at a low level of 10, but the frequency distribution was widespread and trailed off at a value of 23. The

heaviest clustering was between the values of 12 to 15, with the highest frequency level of 77 or 26% at a value of 13. *(See Appendix xi - Table E).*

However, the students indicated a significant relationship between the difficulty of the task and their performance. Thus the students identified as significant, the difference between their academic performance and the difficulty they experienced with the subject, English Language. It is to be noted that there was also a double weighting of the level of significance by those who performed badly at the lowest level.

## **LUCK**

Seventy two percent of the students made attributions to factor, luck for impacting on their performance in the examination whereas 28% did not. In spite of the popularity of the students' appeal to luck, based on the ANOVA there was no significant relationship revealed between luck and the students' academic outcome. Nevertheless, the spread of values placed on luck ranged from 7 to 19, with the highest frequency value of 10 made by 107 or 36% of the population of the sample.

## **HOME EFFECT**

There was no significant relationship established between Home Effects and the students' academic performance based on their grades received, although the students placed a high value on Home Effect. Approximately, 162 respondents or 54% affirmed that their home environments had an effect on their performance, whereas 138 or 46% did not. The values placed were restricted to an intense range from 3 to 7. The value of 5 received the highest

frequency of 122 or 41%. However, 77 or 26% of the respondents placed a value of 3 whereas 85 or 28% of those who responded placed a high value of 4 (*See Appendix x – Table F*).

## TEACHER EFFECT

The students placed much value on the effect of the teacher as indicated by the narrow spread of the range of values from 3 to 6, coupled with intense frequencies. The highest frequency of 122 or 41% was at a value level of 6. The values of 3, 4 and 5 revealed frequencies of 60 or 20%, 57 or 10% and 58 or 19% respectively.

More importantly, significant differences were recorded in the relationship between Teacher Effect and the students' academic performance as established by their grades attained, especially by those students who performed at the average to good level.

Thus far, the students have identified significant relationships between their grades received at the established criterion for the assessment of their academic performance, the 14+ English Examination and the causal attribution factors of effort expended, the task difficulty, the teacher effect and their own perception of their academic performance. This latter perception bears significant relationship to the students' perception of their own ability. It is therefore interesting to note that significant differences for all the causal factors occurred at the lowest triangle or at the level where the students exist in persistent failure, except for the students' response to their teacher effect which is

significant at the level of students whose performance ranged from average to good. Task difficulty and effort were given double recognition of significance for their relationship to the students' performance at the lowest level.

## **STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ON LIKES AND DISLIKES**

In their responses, firstly 119 or 40% of the students indicated that they liked the subject English for its usefulness and importance to their academic and career development. The other reasons proffered were secondly that English was easy and understandable. Thirdly it was helpful in speech, reading, and writing and fourthly it was extremely necessary to obtain employment. Additionally, their love for the subject was affected by their love for the teacher. Some students identified English as their best subject. About 61 or 20% of the students gave no written response. Table 7, provides a breakdown of the students' responses to the open-ended question why they liked the subject, English Language.

***TABLE 7: STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION ABOUT THEIR LIKES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE***

<b>ACTUAL RESPONSES TO LIKING to ENGLISH</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
Useful, important and interesting	119	40%	Most significant
No written response	61	20%	Very important
Easy, uncomplicated and understandable	33	11%	
Great to develop their speech	25	8%	
Necessary to get a job	20	7%	
Their best subject	17	6%	
Useful in helping them to read	10	4%	
Like my teacher	13	4%	To be noted
Useful in developing writing skills	12	3%	

The reasons submitted for disliking the subject were also very informative. 180 students or 60% gave no reason for disliking the subject. However, over 40 or 13% of the students stated that the subject was too difficult. The second highest

reason given was that there was no teacher to teach them the subject and there was often no class to go to. Others noted that the teachers' delivery and teaching of the subject was ineffective. Some stated that the subject demanded what they did not like to do, that is, too much reading. Many opined that they did not like to write essays therefore they did not like the subject, as well as they did not like the teacher, as Table 8 shows-

**TABLE 8: BREAKDOWN OF THE STUDENTS' REASONS GIVEN FOR DISLIKING ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

ACTUAL RESPONSES TO DISLIKING ENGLISH	Frequency	%	REMARKS
No written response	180	60%	Very important
Too difficult	40	13%	Most significant
No Teacher – no class	21	7%	Very significant
Disliked writing essays	18	6%	
Too much reading	13	4%	
Do not like my teacher	13	4%	To be noted
Teaching not good	12	4%	
Too much writing	5	2%	

The afore-mentioned findings represent the student's perception, feelings and opinions about their success and especially their failure at the subject, English. They perceived the task of English as being useful and important but significantly doubly difficult. Through their perception of the grades they received they significantly but subtly identified their inability. They, and especially the students who performed between average to good, highlighted the effect of the teacher as being very significant to their perceptions of their academic outcome, to their grades and to their love for the subject, English. They recognized as doubly significant their lack of effort expended. In identifying their dislike for the subject they noted the difficulty of the subject, their dislike for the teacher, the effect of the teachers' absenteeism and



therefore lack of teacher interaction and teachers' lack of relevant, meaningful, enjoyable presentation of the subject.

## **STUDENTS' CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION PATTERNS**

The students' causal attribution patterns were determined through the interplay of those causal attribution factors which the students identified as significant and the dimensions highlighted by Weiner's (1971, 1974) in his dimensional framework. Therefore, the causal factors of effort, task difficulty, teacher effect and their perception of their ability which were acknowledged as significant by the students were assessed by Weiner's dimensions of Locus, Controllability and Stability to determine the students' causal attribution patterns. According to the literature, the relationships which emerged would give insight into the students' emotional and psychological well being and their expectations for their future success or failure. Therefore, the manner in which these significant factors of effort, ability, task difficulty and the effect of the teacher are internalised or externalised will result in causal attribution patterns which are either 'ego-defensive' or 'ego-enhancing'.

In the Dimension of LOCUS, the students by their very significant attributions to their effort and ability have internalised the causes for their failure and as a consequence their emotional and psychological well-being have been impaired. Their self-worth and self-esteem are affected to the extent that they operate at levels of learned helplessness with its attendant ills of anxiety, frustration and

open displays of deviance. But more severely, by additionally making ascriptions to the external factors of teacher effect and task difficulty the students are also attempting to protect their SELF and their self-esteem and to be 'ego-defensive' in their causal attribution pattern.

In the category of CONTROLLABILITY, the findings also indicate that the students have clearly recognised the significance of effort in their quest to attain academic excellence. However, the factors over which they have no control - the task, their own inability and the teacher have also significantly, heavily impacted upon by their perception of their academic achievement which forces them to malfunction in the environment of persistent failure. Continued existence in that situation can lead to the perpetuation of despair and hopelessness. Greater expenditure of effort can lead to remediation

Under the dimension of STABILITY through their significant ascriptions to stable causal factors of ability, task difficulty and teacher effect the students have confirmed an 'ego-defensive' causal attribution pattern which affected their expectations for future anticipation for success. In making attributions to the unstable factor of effort they held out a ray of hope with the only possibility of an 'ego-enhancing' effect but yet negatively.

**Table 9** overleaf captures the impact of the inter-play of the students' significant factors with Weiner's dimensions to determine their causal attribution pattern which were unique as they were both ego-defensive and ego-enhancing.

**TABLE 9: STUDENTS' CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION PATTERNS**

DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTIONS/DEFINITIONS	FACTORS AFFECTED
<b>LOCUS</b>	<u>INTERNAL FACTORS</u> <i>ABILITY, EFFORT</i>	<b>SELF-ESTEEM</b> <b>SELF WORTH</b> <u><i>ego-enhancing</i></u>
	<u>EXTERNAL FACTORS</u> <i>TASK DIFFICULTY</i> <i>TEACHER EXPECTATION</i>	<b>LEARNED HELPLESSNESS</b>  <u><i>ego-defensive</i></u>
<b>CONTROLLABILITY</b>	<u>INFLUENCE –</u> <i>EFFORT</i>	<b>ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT</b> <u><i>ego-enhancing</i></u>
	<u>NO INFLUENCE –</u> <i>ABILITY, TEACHER EFFECT,</i> <i>TASK involvedness</i>	<b>PERSISTENT FAILURE</b> <u><i>ego-defensive</i></u>
<b>STABILITY</b>	<u>STABLE -</u> <i>ABILITY,</i> <i>TEACHER EFFECT</i> <i>TASK DIFFICULTY</i>	<b>NO FUTURE EXPECTATION</b> <b>FOR SUCCESS</b> <u><i>ego-defensive</i></u>
	<u>UNSTABLE –</u> <i>EFFORT</i>	<b>HOPE FOR THE FUTURE</b> <u><i>ego-enhancing</i></u>

## TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

The teachers' expectations were determined based on observations and interviews about their interactions and engagement with the students and on

their responses to the teacher expectation questionnaire. The findings revealed that the teachers' engagements with the students were almost non-existent, and they did not hold high expectations for their students' future academic performance.

## **TEACHER OBSERVATION**

An interesting example of this type of disassociation was highlighted in an incident with an extremely strict male teacher whom the students feared. Students generally attended his class promptly, but once they fell out of his favour they were put out of his class for all the time, never to return. His classroom was always neat and well-arranged. Even when one walked on the corridor outside his classroom a stony silence was felt. However, that day a student angered him and he retaliated. Soon afterwards he came to the Principal's office to complain. As the Principal, I returned with him to his classroom to investigate the matter and then decided to sit in for the remainder of his lesson. I was dismayed. This senior, well-respected teacher of Agriculture was presenting to the students some warmed over notes that they were expected to copy verbatim off the blackboard. As a result of some past bad experiences with a former Principal he never takes his students to the Agricultural field for practical work. These students who could barely read or write were expected to copy and learn the notes without practical demonstrations.

This custom of not exposing students to practical work was a common habit of many senior teachers who had taken the decision to withhold their labour by

not doing any practical work because of the severe conflicts they experienced with former principals. The first former Principal was posted at the school for over fifteen years and during that period he and the teachers were always at loggerheads; the students suffered. The Principal who was in charge during a period of the research also had unpleasant relationships with the staff. Thus, the teachers spent too much time settling their own issues instead of teaching the students. Unfortunately the young teachers who came to the school during those times were indoctrinated into the culture of antagonism and were forced to take sides either against the Principal or against the teachers.

Additionally, the teachers operated within the confines of the Ministry's Regulations. Each teacher took the maximum number of days leave possible for the year - 28 days. In addition to these, there were the numerous official and religious holidays. Thus, when the days of teacher absenteeism were counted the teacher -student contact hours were minimal. Coincidentally, added to that there were also several teacher vacancies in key subject areas.

Thus, many of the teachers became uncaring and lacked commitment. It was an extremely uphill task to get those teachers to work. In the interim, there was little teacher interaction with the students and low/no expectation from both the teachers and students for the latter's academic achievement. What was worse was that this malaise pervaded the entire teaching staff especially the teachers of English Language.

## RESPONSES TO TEACHER EXPECTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Of the possible fifty-five teachers of the full staff complement of sixty, there were five vacancies, only 31 responded including the eight teachers of English.

The teachers made very important comments which gave me insight into their own perceptions and expectations about the students' academic performance.

A breakdown of the number of teachers who responded according to their Shifts and Subject Departments is revealed in the following Table 10 below:

**TABLE 10 – BREAKDOWN OF TEACHING STAFF INTO SUBJECT DEPARTMENTS AND SHIFTS**

Subject Departments	No who responded	No of Teachers in Department	No responding on AM shift	No responding on PM Shift
English Language	8	8	4	4
Mathematics	6	8	2	4
Spanish	4	6	2	2
Social Studies	4	6	2	2
Home Economics	3	6	1	2
Agriculture Science	3	4	1	2
Physical Education	2	4	1	1
General Science	-	6	-	-
Music	-	2	-	-
Art and Craft	1	4	1	-
Industrial Arts	-	6	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>

The teachers from both shifts responded even though there was a 5% better response from the teachers of the Evening, (PM) Shift. Of significance are the subject areas in which there was no response and the reasons given for their omission. There was no Music teacher on the Evening Shift. The teachers of the General Science and Industrial Arts were absent, for varying periods.

## GENDER OF TEACHERS

The breakdown of the distribution of the gender of the staff according to subject areas was very revealing as Table 11 below indicates:

**TABLE 11: DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF ACCORDING TO GENDER AND SUBJECT AREAS**

Subject Areas	No. who responded	MALES	FEMALES	No who did not respond	MALES	FEMALES
English Language	8	NR	8	-	-	-
Mathematics	6	1	5	2	1	Abs
Spanish	4	NR	4	2	-	2
Social Studies	4	-	4	2	2	
Home Economics	3	NR	3	3	-	3
Agriculture Science	3	2	1	1	-	1
Physical Education	2	1	1	2	Abs	Abs
General Science	-	-	-	6	3	2 - Abs
Music	-	-	-	2	1	1
Art and Craft	1	1	-	3	2	Abs
Industrial Arts	-	-	NR	6	6	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>

*Kindly note:* NR- no teacher of that gender/sex teaches that subject  
Abs- a teacher is missing, there is a vacancy

It must be noted that the staff was more heavily skewed towards the females 63.3% to 31.6% males or a ratio of 2 to 1 in favour of the females. In fact, the teachers of the four main academic subjects, English, Spanish, General Science and Mathematics were primarily all females. There was one male Mathematics teacher. Other subjects because of their nature were taught by all males, as in the case of Industrial Arts, which included - Woodwork, Metal Work and Technical Drawing. This situation had serious implications for the discipline especially of the male students who attended a large co-educational institution and were only exposed to a male teacher for three 40 - 45 minute periods or less each week.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF BY AGE AND YEARS OF SERVICE**

The Tables 12 and 13 which follow show the data based on the teachers' responses according to their ages, years of service and their subject areas.

It must be noted that no male teacher under the age of 30 years responded. However, the nine female teachers who responded were under 30 years. Four of these were from the English Department. At least 15% of the staff that responded was under 30 years old. Interestingly, however, most of the respondents including the two males fell within the 41-50 age-group which represented most of the experienced teachers. Those teachers who fell into the category of over 51 years were at the school since its inception. They were all females who became the custodians of the school culture.

**Table 12** overleaf points out the details.



**TABLE 12: STAFF DISTRIBUTION BY AGE**

SUBJECT AREAS	No of respondents	25-30		31-40		41-50		Over 51		NO Response	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
English Language	8	-	4	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-
Mathematics	6	-	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spanish	4	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	-
Social Studies	4	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-
Home Economics	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
Agriculture Science	3	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Physical Education	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
General Science	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Music	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Art and Craft	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Industrial Arts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	-	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	-	<b>3</b>	-	-

Table 13 that follows, attempts to show the relationship between the teachers' gender and their years of service.

**TABLE 13: STAFF DISTRIBUTION BY YEARS OF SERVICE**

SUBJECTS	Respondents	Under 5		5-10		11- 19		20-30		Over 30	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
English Language	8	-	2	-	4	-	2	-	-	-	-
Mathematics	6	-	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spanish	4	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1
Social Studies	4	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Home Economics	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1
Agriculture Science	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Physical Education	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
General Science	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Music	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Art and Craft	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Industrial Arts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>

There was a significant relationship between the ages of the responding teachers and their years of service. Only three of the respondents had given over thirty years of service. It is clear that members of the staff were quite young and to some extent inexperienced as 59% had less than ten years experience as a teacher. Additionally 22.5% of the teachers who were all female had less than five years experience.

## **TEACHER RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE – STUDENTS DIFFICULT TO TEACH**

The teachers at the school under review were 100% unanimous in their perception that it was difficult to teach the JSS students. However, they differed in their responses to the frequency and intensity of difficulty as over two-thirds or 67% of them felt that the students were not always difficult. The students' levels of difficulty varied and existed more intensely at sometimes, but instances were not specified.

What was very informative was the range of reasons that the teachers articulated for the students' presumed high levels of slow-wittedness. Some of the 28 reasons postulated can be broken up into five categories, according to the teachers' perceptions of the students as, those who:-

- made heavy demands on the teachers to become motivated, dedicated and committed to helping them improve, in spite of their indiscipline and their range of academic abilities,
- lacked ability and were openly unprepared or incapable of making a difference to their situation,
- displayed levels of gross students' indiscipline and should be ostracised,
- demonstrated the effects of students with low self-esteem,
- suggested through their behaviour and /or problems that their parents, the system or the society should be blamed.

### **TEACHERS' ASSISTANCE/HELP GIVEN TO STUDENTS:**

On the issue of giving help to students, 37.5% of the teachers of English indicated that they had never given any help to students. The remaining 62.5%

of the teachers indicated that they have helped students but they were evenly divided on whether they helped them often or sometimes.

The teachers proffered the following comments and reasons for their helping or not helping students. Those who did not and never helped a student defended their positions by stating that the students were unsure of themselves and did not know what help they wanted. Others stated that the students were immature. Additionally, some teachers indicated that the students were soon going to leave the school and only in their new school situations would they need help.

On the other hand those who definitely affirmed that they had given students help stated that they had done so for the following reasons:-

- to give help in the choice of a career to a small percentage of students
- to give assistance in some subject areas
- to help the students identify the subject content problem areas
- to source information for the students
- to provide students with ideas
- to demonstrate related skills
- to highlight the importance of the subject
- to provide information on the usefulness of the subject in the world of work
- to provide guidance and help that are not available at home for the students
- to help students who lacked motivation and ambition to get them to change their attitudes towards their work

The teachers who indicated that they had helped students sometimes identified that there were specifically targeted areas and occasions in which they assisted, such as

- during the break period to help some students solve specific needs
- during sessions in which the students showed that they were interested

## **STUDENTS SEEKING TEACHERS' HELP**

Indubitably, students have never approached the same 37.5% English teachers for any help. When interviewed, only the teachers of the Home Economics Department said definitely that students regularly came to them for help. There were only female teachers and students in that department. The teachers of the Home Economics Department highlighted that the students felt free to share their secrets and problems with them because of the relationship and rapport which they established during practical or whenever they are supposed to be doing practical classes – cooking and home management.

The evidence suggests that the students approached those teachers primarily for school-related problems. Very few students sought the teachers' help for their domestic problems. Some teachers said that they felt inadequate, lacking in confidence and competence to discuss the students' problems when they came to them for help. Ironically, many of the students who sought the teachers' help for domestic problems made that decision because they felt that the teachers were more equipped to understand their situation and give them better advice than their peers. Thus a few students felt secure discussing with an even fewer number of teachers their problems of incest, verbal and sexual abuses. However, in situations of such a sensitive nature the students very rarely freely divulged information. Still even the trouble-makers and those who seek help from their peers sometimes privately seek some teacher's advice.

## **STUDENTS' POTENTIAL TO GET INTO TROUBLE WITH THE LAW**

Four of the English teachers, all of the Home Economic teachers, the two older Spanish teachers and two Social Studies teachers all voiced confidence in the students. They felt that the students did not display the potential to get into trouble with the law. These teachers primarily taught the girls who were overtly less likely to get into trouble with the law. In other words, 35.5% of the teacher respondents, all of whom were females, held positive perceptions of the students and their ability to live straightforward and upright lives. However, the majority of teacher respondents, 64.5% felt that the students displayed the potential which will get them into trouble with the law.

The reasons given by those who believed in the virtues of the students, especially the girls, felt that they were less aggressive and more law-abiding, even though they were aware that the girls sometimes got into fights. They felt that once the students did not choose wrong friends and continued to be submissive to authority they would maintain their standards of integrity.

Conversely those who shared the position that the students had the potential to fall into the hands of the law later on in life cited the following - the school system, societal pressures, students' indiscipline, students' helplessness - as the basis for their conclusions.

These indicators are further delineated thus-

#### **A. The present school system**

- The failure of the present school system, the curriculum and administration to place much emphasis on total school discipline of both the teachers and the students. As a result there are some forms of student indiscipline which if not corrected can later affect an increased number of students

## **B. Societal Pressures**

- Several socio-economic challenges exist in the students' backgrounds. Some of these cited were, abandonment by parents, broken homes, poverty, lack of love, affection and spirituality
- Parent absenteeism, especially that of the fathers
- The influence of their environment and neighbourhood
- Students are intent on following the sensational.
- The criminal influence that already exists in the society and home environment

## **C. Student indiscipline**

- Students' exhibition of overly aggressive behaviour for very trivial matters
- Students' tendencies to flout simple rules

## **D. Student helplessness**

- Lack of a cohesive family unit to which the students can belong
- Students' sense of hopelessness and helplessness
- Improper guidance for the students when they leave school
- The trouble makers do not understand reasoning and they prefer to be influenced by their peers rather than to change.

## **TEACHERS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

All the teachers made several recommendations for the future. The following listing was drawn up based on the frequency of suggestions. The most frequently mentioned recommendation was deshifting. The other suggestions pinpointed requests for the Ministry and Curriculum to reduce emphasis on the academic, address student literacy problems and teacher and school in-house arrangements to increase the level of hands-on practical work. The recommendations were-

### ***1. At the Ministry Level***

- Deshift the junior secondary schools
- Improve school facilities
- Send students to secondary school only when they are academically and emotionally ready for that level of education
- Train qualified young individuals who have a passion for remedial teaching to assist the students

- Desist from employing the older, burnt-out teachers as remedial teachers
- Stamp out indiscipline, of both students and teachers
- Host elaborate as well as in-depth discussions on career guidance.

## ***2. At the Curriculum Level***

- Modify the Curriculum. It is too broad-based and complex to suit the present ability levels of all the students
- Make several of the existing subjects on the Curriculum optional
- Provide a real alternative to formal education.

## ***3. At the School and Teacher level***

- Devise meaningful in-class sessions for students' free time
- Establish areas in and out of the school where the students can be trained in hands-on practical subjects
- Restructure the time-table, so that teachers can have more double-periods. This will increase the teaching time provided per subject and will allow the teachers more time to interact with the students, to share and encourage group work.
- Have more oral and fewer written examinations
- Stamp out indiscipline of both students and teachers, but especially, students' indiscipline and encourage industry and a healthy competitive spirit
- Ensure that the existing House System works or revamp it and establish an effective system to facilitate internal rivalry and competition which will foster team spirit and unity.
- Conduct several assembly sessions to instil values and morals
- Have a mandatory evening prayer.

## **TRIANGULATION**

The findings were triangulated in the following manner. A table of comparison was established between what the students said - their statements – determined through the observations, interviews, vignettes and role-play and what they felt - their perceptions – of the significant factors that impacted them and their causal attribution patterns. These were assessed in relation to the teachers' expectations according to their interactions and engagements with the students. As a result the following were established-



## **TEACHER EXPECTATIONS/ TEACHER EFFECT**

The findings revealed that the students have indicated in their responses to the causal attribution questionnaire that the teacher had a significant impact on their academic attainment levels. Significantly a relationship was also established between the students' perception of their grades received and their performance, their inability. The students have also said that the teachers did not show them concern and help or provide them with meaningful work. Some teachers themselves have indicated that they have never given students any help and therefore had no real engagement with the students. Other teachers have indicated that they have helped students sometimes but generally there is little evidence to indicate a total commitment to ensuring that the students perform well. As a result the evidence suggested low teacher expectation for their students' academic performance and these have been correlated and triangulated accordingly.

## **STUDENTS' EFFORTS**

The students have also indicated that their effort expended bears a significant double awarded relationship to their grades and their performance. The teachers too, have noted that the students need to have more discipline. They need to settle down, to apply themselves and to put more effort into their studies in spite of the fact that they have not been given much help by them.

## **TASK DIFFICULTY**

The students have acknowledged the usefulness of the task yet they have indicated that the task was significantly difficult and they experienced some

grave difficulty in excelling. This difficulty has been identified by the teachers as the 'students' lack of readiness for secondary school' and 'their inability to read and write'. Additionally, the teachers have held the parents, the society, the system, the curriculum and the students' inability to excel accountable for the existence and lack of resolution for this grave situation.

## **FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

With regard to their future aspirations, the students have made significant attributions to their willingness to expend more effort and to their low ability levels. But ascriptions to low ability usually signal students' functioning in despair and hopelessness. However, for those students who have said and have demonstrated their intent to try harder there is hope for success. The teachers have also expressed little confidence in the students' improved academic performance because of their initial lack of readiness for secondary school and their inability to cope with the difficulty of the task. Additionally the majority of teachers feel that the students have the potential to end up in the hands of the law.

When triangulated, the data suggest that for many of the students they appear to be fighting against the odds. But as always hope must burn eternal in the human heart. They can and will make it if they try and if given the proper support.

**Table 14** shows the triangulated comparison of all the outcomes according to specific areas/ factors and or variables raised.

**TABLE 14: TRIANGULATION - WHAT THE STUDENTS SAID - THEIR STATEMENTS: WHAT THE STUDENTS PERCEIVED- THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND THEIR TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS**

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>STUDENTS' STATEMENTS</b>	<b>STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS</b>	<b>TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS</b>
Teacher interaction and engagement	No teacher interaction and engagement, instead - teachers put, sent, brought students out of class frequently	Teacher absenteeism and dislike for the teacher. Teacher effect was a significant negative causal factor	Teachers admitted to putting students out of class but denied sinister intention. Evidence suggests little teacher interaction.
Teacher expectations	Teachers did not show an interest in all students' acquisition of mastery in academic performance	The students especially those with average to good potentials for success felt the significant effect of the lack of teachers' expectation	Teachers' expectation low for the students based on their perceptions of the their inability and their own schemas about the type of school, the society and system
Teacher Concern	Teachers needed to show more love, concern and understanding for their students. They were too busy quarrelling about their own issues	Students have perceived the low grades they received as significant and in direct causation to their teachers' failure to motivate them	Students' inability and lack of interest have forced teachers to show little concern for their academic advancement. The parents need to be more involved.
Teacher favouritism and racism	Teachers rejected and ignored many but showed interest in a few selected students of their own ethnicity and shared the information with them only.	Students showed no significant relationship to the variable of ethnicity /racism	Students were always breaking class and when out of class they missed out on vital information
Boring classes	Classes were boring and not relevant and meaningful. Teachers need to take the students out-of-doors and make the classes more enjoyable. At the new school work is more difficult but much more meaningful.	The students in their response to the open-ended questions noted that the teaching was not good and the task was too difficult	Teachers have been guilty of giving students warmed over notes and not exciting the students, perhaps because of their lack of training and their own historical schemas of not wanting to do practicals
Giving students help	Hundreds of students have never approached a teacher for help on any issue. Teachers never helped students who were involved in extra-curricular activities to get extra lessons or make up classes.	Students needed all the help that they could have especially for their Studies	37% of the teachers have never given students help in their academic and/or non-school related problems or in their domestic issues. Some teachers felt that students only needed help in English at their new school

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>STUDENTS' STATEMENTS</b>	<b>STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS</b>	<b>TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS</b>
The importance of English	Students recognised the importance, need and usefulness of English to their future careers even though they experienced challenges in reading and writing	Students gave English double awarded significance because of the difficulty of the task.	Students were unable to excel because of their challenges but teachers know the importance of the subject to the students' academic future and careers
Dislike for English	Hates essays and reading. Dislikes boring classes	Students noted that in spite of the effort expended the task was too difficult.	Some teachers except the two older ones did not attempt to make the school work meaningful
Causal factor of Effort	Students admitted that they needed to expend more effort to improve their performance. .	Students have awarded effort with double significance. In so doing they have indicated their willingness to become successful and accept remedial measures.	Teachers admitted that the students needed to settle down, become more disciplined and put more effort into their studies
Task Difficulty	Students made significant attributions to the task and its difficulty. Externalised responsibility from Self.	The difficulty of the task was doubly awarded as significant. The students externalised the responsibility in order to protect their self-esteem	Teachers felt that if the students applied themselves to the task then the task ought not be so difficult.
Students' ability and perception	Their perception of their lack of ability was very significant.	Students identified their lack of ability as significant and by so doing have signalled lowered self-esteem with its attendant syndromes of learned helplessness and/or anxiety, shame and frustration at the situation	Teacher attributed the students' failure to their inability
<b>VARIABLES</b> Gender	Females are performing better than males	No significant relationship to their gender	Only female teachers of English. Some of them are challenged by the male students
Age	Most students were about the acceptable age limit. Only three students were outside the range	No significant relationship	There were more inexperienced, young untrained teachers. The older teachers were the custodians of the school culture
Ethnicity	Ethnic composition of the student body, 2/3 Africans and mixed 1/3 Indians.	No significant relationship.	Teachers of English 7/8 Indians whilst 1/8 Africans
Geographic locations	More students of the Evening Shift come from the nearby towns whilst the Morning Shift students resided in the far flung areas	Geographic locations was not a significant variable	Most of the teachers were from outside the school environment and live in the cities. They were the repository of the cultural capital

FACTORS	STUDENTS' STATEMENTS	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS	TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS
Future Expectations	Students recognised their inability and were determined to make amends at their new school	With attributions to effort expended signalled students' intentions to have remedial help and have a more hopeful future	Teachers felt that students were difficult to teach and 64% said that especially the males were most likely to fall into trouble with the Law
Future	Students felt that they could perform well in English now that they were in a new environment. They were prepared to apply themselves to their studies and seek help when necessary	Causal patterns both ego-defensive and yet ego-enhancing signals that the students are attempting to mask their true Self as they see the need for assurance and help to establish their self-worth.	Teachers said that the students needed motivated dedicated teachers to help them. The range of ability levels in one class made teaching difficult. Student indiscipline, inability made teacher expectations low for their future success
Improvements	Students requested more out-door activities and meaningful task to meet their needs. More teacher help, recognition and concern	Emphasis on more effort expended which should translate into better grades.	Deshifting. Reduced emphasis on academic studies for the students and addressing the literacy problems. More improved facilities, longer periods and trained qualified new remedial teachers