

IS ANYBODY LISTENING?
Stakeholders' Perspectives on the In-Service Diploma in
Education Programme at the School of Education,
The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

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The Diploma in Education (Dip.Ed.) programme at the School of Education of The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine, provides initial training for teachers employed in the secondary school system in Trinidad and Tobago. In keeping with the tenets and stages of fourth generation evaluation research, stakeholders' perspectives were integral to the process of evaluating the Dip.Ed. programme, which was delivered during the period 2004–2009. Through purposive and stratified random sampling, focus group and individual interviews were conducted with three separate groups of stakeholders: principals, heads of departments, and deans from a sample of schools; and Central Administration officers of the Ministry of Education. Teachers who had graduated from the programme during the period were asked to complete a questionnaire. Data were analysed, using the NVIVO qualitative data analysis software, to determine stakeholders' issues, claims, and concerns. This article reports on these selected stakeholders' perspectives on the programme. Preliminary findings reveal the extent to which the current in-service Dip.Ed. programme meets stakeholders' expectations, and the benefits and limitations of the programme. The implications of the findings for teacher education and reform are discussed.

Background

Research suggests that there is a strong relationship between the quality of teaching and student learning and achievement (see, for example, Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goe & Stickler, 2008; James & Pollard, 2006), and that well-educated and trained teachers are major contributors to high-quality education (Barrett et al., 2007; High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, n.d.). In keeping with this thinking, teacher education programmes are meant to provide participants with the knowledge, skills and competencies, and dispositions to perform the

teaching role competently and effectively within the environment in which they function. It is assumed that the teacher training will in turn redound to the benefit of the students by realizing the desired student learning and achievement outcomes.

The Diploma in Education (Dip.Ed.) is an in-service teacher education programme, which is intended to address the training needs of secondary school teachers in Trinidad and Tobago. The Dip.Ed. programme is delivered by the School of Education (SOE) at the St. Augustine Campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI) on behalf of the Ministry of Education (MOE), and is designed to address the professional development needs of teachers at the secondary level. Within the context of teacher education programmes worldwide, the programme is unique in that it provides initial training for secondary school teachers who have been employed by the MOE for at least two years. On average, participants enter the programme with approximately five years teaching experience.

From its inception in 1973, the programme structure comprised four courses: *Educational Foundations*, *Project in the Theory of Education*, *Curriculum Process*, and *The Practice of Education*. These courses were expected to achieve the programme's objectives, which, in essence, represented the expectations of the SOE for the graduates of the programme. Since 2004, the objectives of the programme, as stated in the SOE's *Regulations and Syllabuses* (The University of the West Indies. School of Education [UWI], 2004, p. 63), have been as follows:

1. To encourage teachers to give the greatest attention to past and present practices and future possibilities in the teaching of their subjects.
2. To encourage teachers to read and think about various problems related to the history and practice of education generally and their own subjects in particular.
3. To encourage teachers to think about education as a process involving delicate relationships among teachers and students.
4. To lead teachers to consider the professional implications of the nature of their occupation and to strive for continued professional growth.

During its 37 years of existence, there have been modifications and changes to the content of the programme, strategies for delivery, and the assessment modes. Three of the more significant changes within the past 10 to 15 years have been as follows:

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

1. A greater emphasis than before on reflective practice through the use of autobiography and journal writing.
2. Increased exposure to information and communication technology (ICT), both in lecturers' delivery of aspects of the programme and as a module, *Media in Education*, which aims to prepare the teachers to use ICT in their classrooms.
3. The introduction of a portfolio, which was included as an alternative assessment component of the final teaching practice grade. The portfolio accounts for 25% of the final teaching practice mark, whereas, prior to its introduction, 100% of the final teaching practice mark was based on an assessment of classroom performance.

These changes have been influenced by lecturers' knowledge of contemporary issues in education, the changed environmental context, and the enrolled students' responses to the programme. Students' responses are obtained each academic year during timetabled sessions in August, at the beginning of the programme; and later, at the end of the programme, in May of the following year. In addition, individual lecturers have engaged in case study evaluation as part of their own action research to improve their work (Herbert, 2009a, 2009b; James, 2005, 2009; Morris & Yamin-Ali, 2005-2006; Rampersad & Herbert, 1999, 2005; Yamin-Ali, 2010). However, there has not been a formal evaluation of the programme that takes into account the views of stakeholders in education, with respect to their expectations of the programme and the extent to which the Dip.Ed. programme is meeting those expectations. Some members of the SOE therefore designed a formal evaluation of the Dip.Ed. programme that was delivered during the period 2004–2009, to determine stakeholders' perspectives on the programme and the extent to which stakeholders' expectations were being met, as the first step in evaluating the programme and subsequent reform.

This paper addresses the research question: *What are stakeholders' perspectives on the In-service Diploma in Education programme?* and discusses the implications of stakeholder participation in the process of evaluating this professional development programme. It is hoped that this approach to teacher education and reform would contribute significantly to the work of staff at the SOE as they aim to prepare teachers who would make a positive difference in the lives of students.

Theoretical Framework

Evaluation research has evolved over the past four decades, from theory-based research, in which “the purpose of evaluation research is to measure the effects of a program against the goals it set out to accomplish as a means of contributing to subsequent decision making about the program and improving the future programming” (Weiss, 1972, p. 4); to research described as fourth generation evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In fourth generation evaluation research, the stakeholders’ role has changed from that of merely providing information to the evaluator to one in which they have a significant role in determining the focus of the evaluation as well as the dissemination of results. Stakeholder evaluation can thus be considered as “belonging to the wider family of theoretical approaches, which prefer constructivism to realism and pluralism to a single view of reality” (Vartiainen, 2003, p. 10).

The underlying assumption of such research is that stakeholders can provide invaluable insights, which can allow all parties to emerge more informed and with better understandings about the evaluand, and which can determine the future direction of the research to bring about the changes required to improve the programme.

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature has revealed that teacher education programmes—both pre-service and in-service—have been evaluated to assess their quality vis-à-vis (a) the match between programme objectives and outcomes—a discrepancy model of evaluation (Provus, 1971); (b) the match between programme outcomes and the characteristics of teachers’ work (Tellez, 1996); and (c) programme outcomes and teacher effectiveness (Barrett et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, Newton, & Wei, 2010; Goe & Stickler, 2008; High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, n.d.). Models of programme evaluation also address programme improvement, for example, the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) model (Stufflebeam, 1983). Evaluation studies have been underpinned by traditional positivist approaches to evaluation as well as the newer interpretivist paradigm.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2010), in a study of the Stanford Teacher Education Programme (STEP), found that teachers who had at least one year’s teaching experience before entering the programme, who completed the programme, and then went back to the classroom:

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

- benefitted by demonstrating increased effectiveness in assisting struggling students and planning curriculum;
- valued collaborative teaching and assisting colleagues;
- created opportunities for feedback and reflection on their teaching practice; and
- developed an appreciation for the theoretical perspectives of education in their practice.

This research provided insights on how to educate teachers who entered the programme with experiential learning. These findings are pertinent to the conduct of teacher education at the SOE.

Characteristics of a 'Good' Quality Teacher Education Programme

Mathison (1992) proposes that good in-service teacher education lies in how teaching is perceived, namely, as technology or as craft. Viewed as technology, more efficient and effective teaching is achieved by adopting "sound techniques," such as state-mandated curricula and tests. When viewed as a craft, the knowledge and experience of the teacher influence decisions on how to improve education. This view of teaching-as-craft is seen as a "slow evolutionary change process ... mediated by teachers' experiential learning" (p. 256). Fullan (as cited in Mathison, 1992) proffered that successful in-service programmes hold the teaching-as-craft perspective, in which the teachers' experiential learning is the basis of professional development that occurred over an extended period of time.

The model of teacher training undertaken at the SOE values the experiential learning teachers gained before entering the programme. It therefore promotes the concept of teacher as reflective practitioner (which may be characterized as the teaching-as-craft perspective), but recognizes the competing teaching-as-technology perspective communicated through state-mandated curriculum documents.

Mathison (1992) identified the following characteristics of *good* in-service training, which provide a framework for evaluation:

- *Correct* content—relevance and practicability—that is, the in-service education should be seen as relevant both to the teachers themselves and to the profession
- Good modelling on the part of the providers of the in-service programmes

Shahiba Ali et al.

- A developmental perspective, that is, an approach that supports teachers who come from different school cultures and who have different needs, knowledge, and skills
- Promotion of teacher professionalism by valuing what teachers know
- Provision of institutional support

In sum, Mathison has provided some expectations of (or indicators for) good in-service teacher education programmes, which can serve as a framework for programme evaluation.

Mathison (1992) also proposes that the process of evaluating in-service teacher education should look not just at the immediate impacts of the programme, but also at the long-term effects after completion, for example, changes of teachers' conceptions of teaching and their practice. Also, good evaluations should be open-minded enough to accept variations in individual's experiences of in-service education, as each teacher enters the programme with unique experiences. Good evaluations should be conducted over a long period of time, as change in classrooms and schools is a slow process.

Issues Involved in Programme Evaluation

In a review of literature related to the field of programme evaluation, Coldwell and Simkins (2011) have summarized the interrelated aspects of what they refer to as the "evaluation problem": "*what* should be the focus of evaluation; *how* should these aspects be investigated and *whose* views should count in the evaluation" (p. 144). Further, they indicate that the history of evaluation exhibits a wide range of perspectives regarding who should participate in evaluation and determine its outcomes. These perspectives range from that of those who give the key role in the evaluation to the evaluators themselves (Scriven, 1973, as cited in Coldwell & Simkins, 2011); through those who focus on the importance of commissioners and managers (Stufflebeam, 1983). Others seek to engage a wider range of stakeholders (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1997, as cited in Coldwell & Simkins, 2011); including some who place a particular emphasis on participative processes (Cousins & Earl, 1995; Torres & Preskill, 2001, as cited in Coldwell & Simkins, 2011) or on the engagement of the disempowered (Fetterman, 1996, House, 1991, as cited in Coldwell & Simkins, 2011). An approach to evaluation which seeks to identify and ascertain the views of competing perspectives from stakeholders assumes that the values and interests of stakeholders with a vested interest in the programme being evaluated will contribute to the effective use of evaluation results.

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

In reviewing early approaches to evaluation, Brandon (1998) distinguishes between collaborative and non-collaborative approaches to the evaluation of programmes in which the role of the stakeholders varied. The former approach is meant to engage stakeholders heavily in the evaluation process so as to enhance the validity of evaluation findings. It includes stakeholder-based evaluation (SBE), in which evaluators engage stakeholders at different phases of the evaluation process—in the beginning and ending phases of evaluations. In practical participatory evaluation (PPE), stakeholder involvement takes place throughout all evaluation phases. In education settings, the stakeholders typically involved are administrators, project managers, and curriculum coordinators.

By contrast, in using non-collaborative approaches, stakeholders serve primarily as data sources for the purpose of generating “valid knowledge concerning program functioning and effects” (Cousins & Whitmore, as cited in Brandon, 1998, p. 326). Brandon notes that in subsequent studies on stakeholder participation in evaluation, the distinction between collaborative and non-collaborative evaluations is not always clear.

In exploring the methodological underpinnings of stakeholder evaluation, Vartiainen (2003) makes the following point:

On the one hand, with the increasing versatility of evaluation methods, qualitative methods which emphasize the role of the stakeholders have become much more commonplace. On the other, despite the fact that the methods are becoming more common, discussion concerning the position of stakeholders and the nature of the evaluation information, which they have produced, has received scant attention. (p. 2)

The central issue from the point of view of evaluation research is to recognize and analyse the qualities of each stakeholder and their significance in the evaluation process (Vartiainen, 2003). It is important to identify the characteristics of different stakeholder groups. This provides the evaluator with possibilities to better understand and analyse the information collected in the evaluation process. The stakeholder groups have different kinds of characteristics (Vartiainen, 2003). All stakeholder groups influence each other. From the point of view of the evaluation, it is important to recognize the influence relation between the groups. Despite this, every stakeholder is an independent unit with its own resources, will, and purpose. The characteristics of the groups can vary, but every stakeholder has at least one of the following characteristics: motivation, materialistic or symbolic resources, special

Shahiba Ali et al.

knowledge and skills, and a position of power or authority (Vartiainen, 2003).

In terms of *what* is being evaluated, Coldwell and Simkins (2011) indicate that evaluators have looked to *level models*, in which outcomes of training and development interventions result from a series of levels or interrelated components. Some of these are Stake's (1967, as cited in Coldwell & Simkins, 2011) antecedent-transaction-outcome approach; Stufflebeam's (1983) CIPP framework; and Kirkpatrick's (1998, as cited in Coldwell & Simkins, 2011) four-levels of outcomes for interventions, namely, 1) participants' reaction, 2) participants' learning, 3) participants' behaviour, and 4) desired results. Guskey (2000, as cited in Coldwell & Simkins, 2011) modified Kirkpatrick's model for teachers' professional development by proposing five critical levels of professional development evaluation, which occur in steps: 1) participants' reaction, 2) participants' learning, 3) organizational support and change, 4) participants' use of new knowledge, and 5) student learning outcomes.

For positivists, level models may be considered a "quantitative, unitary, and instrumental approach" (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011, p. 154). Criticisms of these models were mainly aimed at the sequential nature of the levels and accompanying assumptions. As experienced evaluators, Coldwell and Simkins found that level models, located in the positivist tradition, tended not to provide enough detail of the theory or mechanisms underlying the levels of the models and, therefore, were inadequate in explaining why particular outcomes occur in particular contexts. The recognition of the limitations of the positivist approach and the benefits of the participatory and collaborative approach to the evaluation, as outlined above, led to the adoption of Guba and Lincoln's (1989) fourth generation methodology for this study.

Methodology

In reaction to what they considered the limitations of the positivist approach to evaluation in providing in-depth understanding of the social processes in a complex world, Guba and Lincoln (1989) proposed a constructivist evaluation of programmes. They developed the fourth generation evaluation approach to accommodate the multiple realities that often emerge in relation to social phenomena. This approach takes the ontological position that the social world is constructed by those in it and, accordingly, varying perspectives are often contested. Fourth generation evaluation represents a radical shift in undertaking evaluation, from one in which the evaluator determines a priori the questions to be asked to one in which the perspectives of all those involved in the

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

programme being evaluated, that is, the stakeholders, are sought and analysed to guide the evaluation. Fourth generation evaluation methodology adopts a hermeneutic or interpretive approach reflected in a continuum of dialectic, iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis, resulting in a joint construction of a case (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

This fourth generation methodology allows for the exploration of the “created realities” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) of participants within the research context. A synthesis of these realities with other information is employed to arrive at a consensus. The hermeneutic dialectic plays a key role and also allows for the views of the inquirer. The methodology thus enables the empowerment and learning of all participants (Stapeleton, 2003), and allows for the tacit knowledge and the subjective and reflective sharing of participants and researchers. The fourth generation evaluation methodology, grounded as it is in a constructivist paradigm, emphasizes a joint construction of all participants' views and realities through comparison and contrast, differing from the original constructions offered by individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

There are two phases proposed in fourth generation evaluation, namely, discovery and assimilation. The discovery phase represents the evaluator's attempt to describe what is being evaluated and its context; the assimilation phase represents the evaluator's attempt to incorporate new findings into existing construction. The evaluator utilising the fourth generation evaluation approach must:

1. identify the stakeholders;
2. obtain from them their claims, concerns, and issues;
3. provide a context and a methodology for gathering and critiquing these;
4. arrive at consensus within and among groups of stakeholders;
5. have an agenda for negotiation if consensus is not reached;
6. collect and provide information for negotiation;
7. have a forum in which negotiation can take place;
8. prepare a report for stakeholders; and
9. review unresolved concerns, claims, and issues.

In keeping with the principles outlined above, this study adopted a qualitative approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the Dip.Ed. programme by soliciting the perspectives of a range of stakeholders who are directly affected by the programme. It was guided by the principles of fourth generation evaluation, in which stakeholder input was extended

Shahiba Ali et al.

beyond the traditional role as data sources to one that facilitates interaction between and among stakeholders' perspectives. The multiple perspectives in turn guided the process of evaluation.

The research design of this study is emergent, as it continues to be refined and extended in order to allow for future inquiry. As such, the immediate outcome of this research is a case study report, which feeds into an iterative model of programme evaluation.

Participants

The following stakeholders participated in the study—MOE personnel, principals, the middle management of schools (HODs and deans), and teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select three senior officers from Central Administration of the MOE. This sample represented those stakeholders who are in a position of power and authority within the MOE. Ten school principals, who comprised the executive of a principals' association, were also invited to participate in the study. With respect to participants from the middle management of schools, the number of persons selected was based on MacIntosh's (1993) principle. MacIntosh recommends 6–10 persons per focus group, but some researchers have used up to 15 people (Goss & Leinbach, 1996), or as few as four (Kitzinger, 1995).

The SOE group of researchers decided that between 8–10 HODs and 8–10 deans would be asked to participate. Stratified random sampling was therefore used to select two groups of eight schools from each of the eight educational districts, and one HOD and one dean was randomly selected from each of the eight schools comprising the respective groups. Two focus groups of 8–10 persons were then formed within each educational district—one comprising HODs and the other comprising deans. Sixty-seven out of 133 secondary schools were represented and 99 HODs and deans participated. With respect to teacher participants, questionnaires were distributed to all teachers who had participated in the Dip.Ed. programme during the period 2004–2009.

Ethical Issues

Permission was sought from the MOE to conduct the study, that is, to interview the principals, HODS, and deans and to obtain information from the teachers. All participants were apprised in advance of the purpose of the data collection, and their consent was requested for the audio-recording of the interviews. They were also assured that anonymity would be maintained in the reporting and use of the data. In the official letter granting permission for the research, it was suggested

that the district school supervisors be involved in organizing the interviews. Therefore, they worked alongside SOE staff to contact principals and participants, and to determine the venue and time of the interviews.

Data Collection

Focus group interviews, located within the interpretive research paradigm, facilitated the subjective perceptions of individuals and were the primary data collection instrument. Seventeen focus group interviews, each lasting between one to two hours, were conducted to gather data from school principals, deans, and HODs. A convenient location for each focus group interview was selected in order to avoid negative associations with the interview experience. Seven members of SOE staff conducted interviews with HODs and deans at their respective Educational District Offices or other agreed locations, while principals were interviewed at the SOE. During the interviews, the SOE staff adopted a moderating role by facilitating the presentation of perspectives through the control of group interaction and focus (Boddy, 2005; Parker & Tritter, 2006). A semi-structured interview guide was used for all interviews. The questions guided participants to reflect on their expectations of the programme, their experiences, and their perceptions of the impact of the programme. Two individual interviews were held with officials from the Central Administration of the MOE. Interviews with officials from the MOE were conducted at the MOE and at the SOE. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Written questionnaires were designed and distributed to all participating teachers.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis of the transcript data using the NVIVO qualitative data analysis software was conducted to identify categories of perspectives expressed by the selected officers from Central Administration of the MOE, principals, and HODs. Data on the deans' and teachers' perspectives are still to be analysed. The analysis of stakeholders' views represents Step 2 of the fourth generation evaluation methodology, where their claims, concerns, and issues were raised, and areas of consensus within the groups of stakeholders were elucidated.

As part of the fourth generation methodology, this paper will be disseminated to all participants, including staff involved in the delivery of the programme, to facilitate the continuum of dialectic, iteration,

analysis, critique, reiteration, re-analysis, resulting in a joint construction of a case.

Findings

A number of themes emerged from the analysis of data on stakeholders' perspectives on the in-service Dip.Ed. programme. Preliminary findings are based on the analysis of data gleaned from officials of the MOE, principals, and HODs. These themes are organized according to the following broad headings: expectations, benefits, and constraints/limitations.

The findings indicate that there was some variability in expectations among stakeholders, which seemed related to their roles in the education system—as Central Administration official, principal, or HOD—and the philosophies and beliefs that they held about the role and value of teacher professional development and its contribution to the education system. There was general consensus among stakeholders that the programme should impact on (a) pedagogy/classroom practice, (b) relationships among members of staff by facilitating collaboration and collegiality, and (c) the school as an organization. Stakeholders also indicated that there were benefits from participation in the Dip.Ed.; however, the limitations sometimes overshadowed these benefits. The themes are addressed below.

Expectations

Participants expressed the expectations that the programme would impact on teachers' personal and professional development, and would give rise to the ideal teacher in the education sector. While principals (P) and HODs focused more on the former as they related to the classroom setting, the officials from the MOE articulated a holistic view of the role of the trained teacher within the wider education system.

General pedagogical skills. The HODs had expectations for themselves as professionals as well as for the teachers they supervise. The data revealed that they expected that the programme would help teachers to develop content-specific skills and knowledge, as well as general pedagogical skills and classroom management techniques. The HODs, the majority of whom would themselves have been teachers during the programme, expected to become effective teachers who could deliver the curriculum by linking theory with practice. Some participants explained:

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

"...when I went in I thought when I come out I would be a really good teacher. I would deliver the curriculum effectively and, you know, do what you supposed to do." (P 2)

"I actually expected to get exposure to new teaching methods, styles and also some management techniques in the classroom." (HP)

Officials of the MOE also referred to pedagogical knowledge as an expected outcome of the training programme. One official indicated, for example, that:

"The trained teacher is one who operates with a great amount of flexibility in terms of the pedagogical knowledge that the person would have gained." (MOE 3)

Subject specific strategies. Some of the participants anticipated a focus on subject-specific skills and strategies, as is demonstrated in the following comment:

"Because I was doing English, there are certain strategies I was looking forward to doing, especially where essay writing is concerned." (VD)

One participant, although referring to subject-specific skills, focused on what was perceived to be a lack in the programme and said:

"There should be a module to show you, okay, teaching reading in science is not that you are going to teach them the sounds of the letters, the mechanics, but teachers have difficulty in bringing across their content because of children's failing in understanding ... and there are strategies in every area and I think that should be included in the programme." (A)

Classroom performance. In sum, principals and HODs shared similar beliefs about graduates of the programme; for example, they generally expected that there would be a difference in pedagogy which should lead to improvement both in teacher competence and student performance. Some principals explained:

"I expect to see a change in behaviour and practice that you can differentiate between the teacher who is not trained and the teacher who is trained." (P 2)

"I expect to see better performance, new ideas, new strategies, new ways to deal with the students" (R)

Other expectations expressed by the principals included the view that participation in the programme should lead to the development of

Shahiba Ali et al.

leadership skills, collegiality, teamwork, and an overall commitment to the school and the students.

Education as moral purpose. It was striking that the Ministry officials, unlike the other stakeholders, expressed their expectations of the trained graduate who would be committed to attaining the “lofty goals” (MOE 1) of the education system; a broader vision of the teacher than might be held by school personnel. They felt that the graduates of the programme should be moral agents, able to work as a team, and excited and energetic about teaching and learning. In addition, they felt that the teachers should acquire big ideas about the purpose of education and become aware of their significant role in shaping the minds and attitudes of children in the classroom, thus helping them to achieve their highest potential, and facilitating and nurturing student empowerment:

“...to understand the issues, to understand the stage of development that the student is at, to understand that they have to play a role not only in delivering the content, but in shaping the students and the school as well. For student empowerment and development. Those lofty goals.” (MOE 1)

“We are talking about the teacher who is aware of that moral obligation to their charges. We are talking about the teacher who is willing to do whatever is necessary within reason to engage that child, to provide that child with the experiences necessary to come to understand not only the knowledge that you are giving them but whatever is aligned to that knowledge, like the dispositions, the understandings, the relationship between things so we have moved just beyond content.” (MOE 2)

Benefits

The data revealed that there were pedagogical, professional, and personal benefits to be derived from the programme. For the purposes of this paper, *personal* refers to individual or intrapersonal awareness of change of attitudes and dispositions within self, gleaned through introspection, as articulated by the participants. *Professional* is used to refer to any effect that directly impacts one’s career or job-related behaviours.

Some HODs and principals indicated that teachers, for the most part, returned to the classroom better able to deliver the curriculum and manage their classrooms. One principal also noted that the graduates demonstrated a better understanding of how decisions were made, and exhibited an increased willingness to accept administrative decisions.

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

Pedagogical benefits. Most of the benefits derived from the programme were with respect to pedagogical practices. Participants highlighted their developing competencies in managing classroom dynamics, content area delivery, clinical supervision and mentoring, and changes in attitudes and outlook. Understanding classroom dynamics with respect to delivery and engagement of students was summed up by participants in the following statements:

“And it is because of the Dip.Ed., we know what to expect in a lesson, we know the different types of lessons, questioning skills, things like that we know what to look for, how to get the children involved.” (DN)

“So, for me going through the Dip.Ed. programme helped with my self-development, umm, changing my teaching practice in a way that the kids were more comfortable with and more engaged in the lesson than me standing there and lecturing.” (P 1)

Heads of departments, charged with the responsibility of mentoring teachers, noted that teachers could be observed applying what they learnt from the programme:

“I have seen more effort in getting student oriented.” (MM)

Participants also revealed that they improved their questioning techniques:

“I must say that one of the things I learnt much about ...was the idea of questioning. How to question students and things.” (CA)

The programme exposed teachers to multimodal delivery aimed at engaging students in the learning process:

“It made you think that there must be a way that you can reach these students and you are willing to try different approaches. That was really helpful to me.” (DN)

Participants valued the exposure to sessions in which attention was paid to exploring strategies that could be used for infusing technology into teaching. These strategies were later introduced into their classroom practice:

“For me it was all covered. Because we had sessions we do photography ... we did a lot of work in terms of technology and so on.” (T)

“During the Dip.Ed. programme we learn to use music softwareWe use that at my school.” (RP)

Shahiba Ali et al.

Professional benefits. The interviewees felt that teachers attained a broader and deeper professional outlook upon completion of the programme. Generally, HODs and principals attested to a change in knowledge and attitude of the participants, similar to what they themselves had experienced when they participated in the programme. Developing competencies through exposure to the programme gave the participants confidence and validated the teaching practice component of the programme:

“Training gives you confidence. Any training gives you confidence, the Dip.Ed. gives you confidence as a teacher. Is nice feeling to know for sure that what you are doing makes sense.” (P 3)

“When I did it, we did the sociology and the psychology and thing and that helped in my understanding of the students, the society, the background they would have come from and know all about Bernstein and all these people you learn about and things like that. I felt that it was useful.” (P 2)

“We were quite excited with the philosophy and the sociology, etc, and the practical part of it...” (GR)

For participants, one of the challenges was the translation of the theory of education into the practice of education, as there is often a perceived gap between the two. They felt that the programme successfully delivered on this aspect, as expressed by HODs when they were teachers on the programme:

“I really enjoyed the practical part of the Dip.Ed. Going to different schools ...it met my needs in terms of meshing the practical with the theory.” (WL)

“I have been trying a lot of the things they have taught me. I have been trying to get my students to create portfolios; how they arrange their study time. I am trying to work on attitudes.” (WB)

“So I was able to put together practice with the theories that we had to enable me to do a better job in terms of delivery and things like that.” (CA)

One of the most salient benefits of the programme was in the area of development of instructional competencies. Participants referred to their shift in focus from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness—a practice they were engaged in before entering the programme—and their developing ability to design lessons that were aligned with this principle:

“But what I liked and I enjoyed about the programme, we were given so many different opportunities to do lesson planning and so on.

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

Something I used to do before but I was not doing it well. Because most of the times as my lesson plans would be so teacher-centred but after doing the programme and I realized you know what 'it is not about me.'" (VD)

"When you encounter a problem, you realize, okay, something is not working here, you are not reaching the student the way you should, it makes you reflect and look for means of interventions to see if this would work, if that would work." (DN)

They were also more appreciative of how the shift in focus also affected changes in their approaches to assessment:

"And in terms of lesson planning skills, writing objectives, ...using your assessment or tying your assessment to your objective." (AM)

Exposure to content area delivery was seen as valuable to the participants in the programme:

"We dealt with the language within the subject area (maths) and it has to be taught." (WA)

The HODs also highlighted the gains that accrued to entire departments within their schools, both during and subsequent to teachers' participation in the programme:

"I have seen great effort made by persons in my department while they are on the training or finished the training." (MM)

Personal benefits. On a personal level, participants in the Dip.Ed. programme acknowledged a change in their personhood. They themselves appeared to enjoy the way in which elements of the learning process were structured:

"...the field day was like a holiday and excursion. It was really very interesting, very informative, very exciting...." (GR)

They saw themselves becoming more understanding of their students, more willing to listen to them than they were previously inclined to:

"I guess you feel that there is always room for improvement. I try to listen to the students." (DN)

"Now I understand that these children are facing so many different things in their personal lives that sometimes, I just have to make allowances. So Dip.Ed. changed me for that. And I must say, it is a good change." (WBH)

Shahiba Ali et al.

Upon further reflection, participants realized that there was so much more to learn that would redound to the benefit of their students and to themselves as a result in participating in the programme:

“I thought I was a life-long learner. I thought I was open to learning as much as I could, but during the Dip.Ed. programme I realized, wait a minute, I have been reading text books, so had been limiting myself and by extension, my students.” (RP)

It is evident that the principals and the HODs from all educational districts felt that there were aspects of the programme that were beneficial to participants personally and professionally and, hence, by extension the students, the school, and society. However, there were also limitations/constraints associated with the programme.

Constraints and Limitations

In spite of expressions of the benefits described above, the data indicated a mixed reaction to the overall programme. While some expectations were met as indicated by the benefits identified, others were not. For example, the participants mentioned some constraints and limitations of the programme that they felt could be adjusted to improve the programme.

Trainees revert to old practices. Principals and HODs expressed the concern that, at times, teachers did not display the degree of professionalism or commitment that had been evident during their participation in the programme. One principal lamented:

“I am seeing teachers have gone on Dip.Ed. and they come back to school and they return to the old way of doing things. They don’t try and experiment with new things.” (P 1)

Other principals and HODs agreed:

“You find that happening, yes, the teacher has been trained but when they come back to the classroom, it’s like business as usual.” (D)

“To me you are not seeing that transfer taking place.” (P 2)

MOE 1 agreed with the observations described above. However, while the practitioners’ statements seemed to imply individual choice and personal responsibility for the transfer or lack of transfer of knowledge and skills, the MOE 1 participant proffered an explanation that targeted the underlying societal values. She reflects on the underlying competitive nature of the education system, which does not encourage cooperation, collaboration, and collegiality:

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

"We just out to compete against each other and maybe that is the fault of the whole system. It is not a matter of if I could work with you, I have to be better than youBut I think that is why it is difficult when they get back to the school to implement anything, because they think they have to do it by themselves or alone."

Inadequate content and delivery. In terms of the actual content and delivery of the Dip.Ed. programme, HODs felt that some areas were inadequate. In terms of the content of the programme, the-participants' responses revealed that some of the key modules of the programme were too limited. Some of the specific areas of concern were problem solving and critical thinking, technology skills, lesson planning, and assessment. For example, HODs pointed out:

"I am at a point now in my career where everything that you are reading and hearing about education is to have the children get the higher order skills. Teach them about problem solving, teach them about critical thinking even analyzing and to me the Dip.Ed. programme did not do that for me." (P 1)

"What I found is that the Dip. Ed. itself did not prepare me for HOD. It is just as how you are saying in Educational Administration you all did not do anything about curriculum per se.... In other words, if you do Dip.Ed. in Educational Administration, you do not learn about the curriculum part of it. If you do your Dip.Ed. in the curriculum part of it, then you do not learn anything about Educational Administration." (G)

The officials of the MOE also referred to "inadequate delivery." However, the reference was not in relation to specific modules, but rather in terms of the philosophical underpinnings guiding delivery of the programme. For example, based on her own training experiences, MOE 1 spoke about her expectations for experiential learning and for an environment of experimentation and research that would provide a certain excitement and energy that would be contagious:

"Everyday there would be busloads of children either doing dance classes, classes, music classes. We did remedial work with the children from the environment. We had lots of practical spaces... and the entire place was devoted to experiments so it was like a lab. And it was exciting for me And I look at UWI, we don't have that kind of interaction in the same way. I know that we have the school practicals but somehow you know to do the actual work in the lab-type setting, in terms of the children coming in, the students working.... It makes for a very rich kind of experience that makes it

Shahiba Ali et al.

memorable and makes you want to say yes, I read this and this is how you do it and I feel that I can do it too.” (MOE 1)

Inadequate communication. Principals felt that there was inadequate communication between the SOE and the schools concerning the teachers’ progress, and Ministry officials felt that there should be greater collaboration between the MOE and the SOE:

“There is a disconnect between Dip.Ed. and the school so that a teacher might be doing quantitative or qualitative analysis studies and we don’t know. We don’t know what their findings are and of course there are many times when we could benefit from what they did.... All we know is that on Friday they are not there...because they doing Dip.Ed. and we don’t even get feedback.” (P 2)

“What we don’t get from the tutors is what can I do; what is happening with this teacher that I can assist or that I can improve... it’s just between the students and the tutor and it ends there.” (P 1)

“But I would really like to see us work a little bit more closely in terms of providing that support for the University.” (MOE 1)

Time management and workload. The impact of the programme on teachers’ ability to manage time and their workload seemed to be a challenge for some of the participants. One HOD commented:

“Another thing is that the in-service, although it is good, quite often the schools are not able to release people and give them the timetable that would allow them to handle both the stress of Dip.Ed. and teaching at the same time. So I had that problem, where I had a full workload plus I had to do Dip.Ed. and it was really, really stressful.” (P 2)

Discussion and Implications

In general, there was consensus between and among the stakeholders interviewed that the Dip.Ed. programme should improve teachers’ pedagogy and classroom performance. Programme Objective 1 (UWI, 2004) indicates that SOE staff members have similar expectations.

There was also consensus that some teachers do improve, in keeping with some of the benefits identified by Darling-Hammond et al. (2010). These benefits relate to lesson planning, collaboration with colleagues, and understanding the theoretical foundations of education. There was also consensus that some teachers revert to past practices upon completion of the programme (limitations). This latter finding raises the issue of the limited transfer of knowledge and skills from the educational

Stakeholders' Perspectives of the In-Service Dip.Ed.

context—in which the intended outcomes of a continuing professional education programme are outlined—to the practice context where the outcomes are actually realized (Ottoson, 2000). There was also agreement that the actions of those who revert to past practices are significant enough to shape the overall perception that the programme does not have the expected impact on classroom practice, especially among teachers who have not yet had the opportunity to participate in the programme.

Rampersad and Herbert (1999) found that change in classroom practice is not sustained as widely as expected, and this research confirms that, to some extent, this trend continues. Further research on stakeholders' perspectives on what practice after training looks like, along with the development of theories and explanations of trained teachers' practice, are important issues to be pursued. Such research can elucidate the conditions required for use of knowledge and skills introduced in the educational context, and this can lead to a more informed evaluation of the programme and subsequent programme reform.

All categories of stakeholders, namely, principals, HODs, and officers of the MOE, focused on the teachers' work within the classroom context. However, officers from the MOE and some principals also expected outcomes such as "teacher as moral agent," with an understanding of the broad purposes of education and of their role in the society; an outcome that they felt was not being achieved. It was also revealed that there were expectations that there would be regular and meaningful communication between institutions—the MOE and the SOE, and the SOE and schools—and expectations in relation to specific technical issues, such as training for HODs. The implication is that the next step in the research process is negotiation between and among stakeholder groups, including SOE staff, to arrive at consensus regarding the programme goals and objectives.

Any discussion of programme goals will lead to discussions about attainment of goals. It is likely that such discussions could lead to further investigation into stakeholders' perspectives on the *Foundations of Education* course and its role in the programme. Some of the broader perspectives articulated by stakeholders at the levels of Central Administration of the MOE and the principalship reinforce the need for the inclusion of this course, which addresses issues of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and language. There was, however, no explicit reference to the inclusion and value of the course by HODs. Therefore, further investigation into their perspectives on this issue is necessary.

Conclusion

In summary, we have engaged in the discovery phase of fourth generation evaluation and some aspects of assimilation, in which we have described what was evaluated and its context, and we have arrived at shared expectations with respect to some aspects of the programme. However, there are many issues that have not been fully explored and critiqued by stakeholders, including staff at the SOE, who are themselves actually involved in delivering the programme. Some of these issues have been identified by Mathison (1992) as characteristics of good in-service teacher education programmes, for example, content to be delivered, and relevance and practicability, given that teachers revert to past practices. Other issues that require further exploration include programme goals; philosophies underpinning delivery; the more active participation of external stakeholders during the delivery of the programme; communication between the MOE and the SOE, and the SOE and the principalship of the schools from which the teachers come; and issues related to time management and workload of the teachers. The writing and distribution of this paper was therefore a crucial first step in gathering and analysing claims, and for determining the areas of consensus and the opportunities for negotiation within and among groups of stakeholders.

In keeping with the fourth generation evaluation methodology, and given the evolving nature of this kind of research, we have begun Step 3, in which we are gathering and critiquing the claims, concerns, and issues expressed by the other stakeholders. Steps 4–9, leading to the process of negotiation and reviewing unresolved claims, concerns, and issues among stakeholders, will be undertaken, with the aim of providing the best experience for the incoming participants of the programme, and for the education sector as a whole.

The fourth generation methodology requires time and commitment of all parties—who have very demanding work schedules—and a high degree of organizational and communication skills for effective implementation. However, it is only through the involvement of stakeholders in all phases of the process of evaluating the Dip.Ed. programme that the staff at the SOE can build a stronger relationship with stakeholders. Their input, in turn, can help the SOE to more meaningfully understand and address stakeholders' perspectives, as it strives to continually improve its programme offerings.

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Shahiba Ali et al.

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