

MASS MEDIA AND THE DIFFUSION OF CURRICULUM INNOVATIONS

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Patricia Worrell

It is imperative that curriculum planners understand how the mass media operate when they are used to disseminate information about innovations. Three press reports of a proposed curriculum innovation, the introduction of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), were subjected to critical discourse analysis, within a framework proposed by Fairclough (1992). The study, which focused on intertextuality in the reports, sought to understand how meanings were constructed about the examination, and about the identities and relationships of participants involved in discussions about the examinations. The study also sought to identify ideological perspectives reflected in the reports. It was found that these reports of the public discussions minimized unequal relations of power and conflicting ideologies in the education system, and represented the educational community as united in its rejection of the examination. The findings suggest that strategies for diffusion of curriculum innovations should acknowledge that while the print media constitute effective channels for communicating information, in constructing their representations of reality they may also help to create resistance to change.

Introduction

It is imperative that curriculum planners understand how the mass media operate when they are used to disseminate information about proposed curriculum innovations, and to place discussion about such innovations on the public agenda. Studies in the diffusion of innovations

(Rogers 1995; Valente & Rogers 1995) have established the mass media as essential to the success of the diffusion process, especially when information about innovations must be rapidly provided to large numbers of stakeholders.

The countries of the Caribbean, which are now taking part in the global trend towards education reform, must therefore be prepared to use the mass media as a resource in the diffusion process. However, the development of strategies for diffusion of curriculum innovations through the mass media must first take into account the complex structures and strategies used in media representations of reality. It must also consider the role such representations may play in constructing understandings about proposed innovations, and about existing relationships among the many participants taking part in the implementation of a curriculum innovation. Diffusion strategies must also factor in the role played by the media in re-producing and re-forming dominant world-views which impact on how proposed curriculum reforms are received within the societies where they are introduced.

Effective exploitation of the media is even more important when, as Gift (1996) claims has often been the case in Trinidad and Tobago, curriculum planners have adopted top-down models of curriculum development. This has resulted in the marginalization, during the development process, of many persons and institutions whose support is critical to the acceptance of curriculum innovations. In these cases, the different branches of the mass media become the principal source from which stakeholders learn about proposed innovations, and the primary means for shaping stakeholders' responses to them.

This paper reports on a study conducted in order to arrive at an understanding of how the print media in Trinidad and Tobago represented the final phase of public meetings on the proposed introduction of the Caribbean Examination Council's (CXC) new examination, the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Certificate (CAPE). The meetings were mounted by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with CXC. These meetings actually served two purposes: 1) they were considered by CXC to be important for the diffusion process, and 2) they provided the Government of Trinidad and Tobago with

information about how the public would feel about any decision to adopt the innovation. The meetings were held in Trinidad and Tobago between April and May 1997, and three were reported in the daily newspapers in Trinidad and Tobago: the *Trinidad Guardian*, the *Trinidad Express*, and the *Newsday*. This study focuses on those reports of the public meetings that were published in the *Trinidad Guardian*, the country's oldest daily newspaper.

The reports in all three daily newspapers represented public responses to the innovation as being largely negative. However, this study made no attempt to establish the effects of the mass media reports on the state's eventual decision not to adopt CAPE in Trinidad and Tobago at that time. Rather, the purpose of the study, which subjected the texts of the *Guardian* news reports to critical discourse analysis, was to identify dimensions of discourse practice represented within the texts of the reports. It was also to explore how, through those dimensions of discourse practice, understandings about the examination itself, and about the relationships that existed among participants and institutions who were involved in the public discussions about the examination, were constructed within the texts of the news reports. The study also attempted to identify ideological positions reflected within the reports.

It was felt that such an analysis of the texts was a necessary first step towards understanding print media representations of curriculum innovations, and public responses to them. It was felt, too, that the understandings gained through the study could establish future directions for research, and would also shed light on factors that curriculum implementers in the Caribbean might take into account in devising strategies for using the print media as a channel for the diffusion of curriculum innovations.

The general applicability of the understandings gained must, however, be weighed in light of the fact that, because of the detailed attention to text that critical discourse analysis demands, it was not possible to analyze more than a few texts. However, the three texts analyzed did constitute the entire body of reports on the public discussions in the *Trinidad Guardian*.

Theoretical Contextualization

Curriculum ideology and assessment innovations

Kelly (1999) argues that proposals and processes for developing innovative curricula, or elements of curricula, reflect ideologies of education, knowledge, humanity, and society, which may conflict with dominant ideologies in a society. One such element of curriculum is assessment. Kelly describes the power exerted by assessment within the curriculum, noting that: "it has long been accepted as a fact of secondary school life that the curriculum, especially in the upper school, is geared almost totally to the demands of external public examinations" (p. 129). Kelly points out that assessment provisions exert political power in that they can be used as a mechanism to change and control the curriculum. Eisner (1993) also identifies the gatekeeping function of assessment as a source of power, since assessment becomes a device to select pupils for different levels and types of schooling.

Kelly (1999) identifies three major curriculum ideologies which can be discerned today, and which can also shape responses to assessment proposals: 1) a "humanist" perspective on curriculum as content and education as transmission; 2) an "efficacy" perspective, which views curriculum as product and education as instrumental; and 3) a "developmental" perspective, which views curriculum as process and education as development. This last ideological position described by Kelly displays characteristics that are sometimes typified as "progressive." In addition, Kliebard (1986) has identified a "social meliorist" perspective that sees curriculum as emancipatory, and education as facilitative of social change.

Miller (1999) has identified yet another dimension of ideology that must be factored into many major attempts at developing curriculum innovations in the Caribbean today. Miller notes that the new wave of education reform in the Caribbean reflects a democratic perspective, which, he argues, was a necessary consequence of the constitutional democratization of internal political power in all Commonwealth Caribbean countries. He points out that "in order to build a nation, all of its nationals had to have access to educational opportunity at all levels of the system on an equal basis" (p. 293).

Because assessment serves such important functions in any society, proposed changes in assessment procedures almost inevitably position different participants in the education process in different ideological spaces. Thus, a significant challenge faces curriculum planners who must devise strategies for effective diffusion of innovations in assessment within the curricula of Caribbean countries.

Diffusion of innovations theory: The role of communication

The most widely recognized source for diffusion of innovations theory is Everett Rogers (1995). Diffusion theory addresses how innovative ideas, products, and social practices spread within a society, or from one society to another. Rogers defines an innovation as an "idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (p. 11). He defines "diffusion" as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels, over time, among the members of a social system. Rogers describes communication channels as the means whereby messages get from one individual to another (p. 17). He identifies two main communication channels that must be used in the diffusion of innovations: the mass media and interpersonal channels. Rogers claims that mass media channels are more rapid and efficient in providing initial information about innovations, and are more useful in the case of innovations targeted to large populations. He suggests, on the other hand, that interpersonal channels are more effective for changing attitudes. According to Rogers, successful diffusion demands that strategists pay attention not only to the innovation, but also to the communicative channels existing in the society, and to the social systems.

For both Rogers (1995) and Fullan (1991), effective communication is viewed as a two-way process more than a means by which information about innovations is simply imparted to an audience through given channels, with the expectation that the audience will be persuaded to take action. Rogers argues that even in directed change programmes, where one-way communication is utilized to change the innovation behaviours of clients, a great deal of two-way communication takes place between agents and clients. He advises, however, that the two-way flow of communication should incorporate communications about the innovation by opinion leaders from the society where the innovation is

to be introduced. For Rogers, these opinion leaders are not necessarily the most innovative persons in the society. They are, however, the ones recognized for their technical competence, social accessibility, and conformity to the system's norms.

Finally, for effective diffusion, Rogers proposes that communication about an innovation should focus on the following five essential characteristics of an innovation which, research suggests, enhance the rate and effectiveness of diffusion: 1) the relative advantage of the innovation over the idea it supersedes, 2) the compatibility of the idea with existing values and past experiences, 3) the level of complexity or ease with which the innovation can be understood, 4) the degree to which it can be implemented on an experimental basis, and 5) the extent to which the results of the innovation are visible to others.

Mass media discourse: Constructing social reality

Media theory presents conflicting accounts of how media achieve their effects. However, it is now widely accepted that the mass media function as more than simple channels for communicating information about an innovation. In their representations of the innovation, the mass media themselves play a significant role in the construction of social knowledge about it (Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1995).

Fairclough (1995a) notes that media discourses constitute special kinds of language use and of social practice formed by institutions, with rules, conventions, and positioning of agents. Like Fairclough, Entman (1989) has identified rules and conventions that govern the framing of news. He speaks of the persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation; and of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse. These, according to Entman, "call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements" (p. 55). Fairclough (1989) also describes the relationship between media discourse and society as dialectic. He claims that, "as well as being determined by social structures, discourse has effects upon social structures, and contributes to the achievement of social continuity and social change" (p. 37). Critical analysis of media discourse seeks to make these media attributes transparent.

Critical discourse analysis

This study was conducted within a framework for critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (1992). Fairclough describes critical approaches to discourse analysis as both describing discursive practices and showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies. He notes the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief (p. 12). Fairclough defines "discourse" as a form of social practice using language which is constrained by, and constitutive of, social structures. He argues that discourses represent the knowledge schemes of language users, and constitute, reproduce, and transform social institutions and social relations. He proposes that each discourse is part of a discursive order in a certain institution or certain areas of society in which cultural hegemony is inherent.

Fairclough (1992) cites Gramsci (1971) in describing hegemony as the power over society of one class. Hegemony, according to Fairclough, "is about constructing alliances and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes through concessions or through ideological means to win their consent" (p. 92). He notes that the conventions which are employed in linguistic interactions, and of which people are generally not conscious, reflect embedded ideological assumptions about the world, and he argues that those conventions legitimize existing social relations and differences of power, "simply through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take those relations and power differences for granted" (1989, p. 2). Fairclough notes, however, that discourse is not inherently ideological, but becomes ideologically invested within different social and institutional settings.

Fairclough (1992) describes three dimensions of critical analysis: analysis of texts (discursive products), analysis of the production and interpretation of texts (discursive practice), and analysis of social practices and contexts. The analysis of texts focuses on four elements: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and textual structures. The analysis of discursive practice focuses on a central concept in Fairclough's model, and the one that is critical to this study—the concept of intertextuality. In Fairclough's model, intertextual analysis aims to show how texts are

constituted through mixtures of configurations of different genres and discourses.

Fairclough's (1992) analysis of intertextuality entails "an emphasis upon the heterogeneity of texts, and a mode of analysis which highlights the diverse and often contradictory elements and threads which go to make up a text" (p. 104). Fairclough (1995b) claims that intertextual analysis offers persons who study how media reports are received a textual basis for answering questions about what social resources and experiences are drawn upon in the production, reception and interpretation of media texts. Fairclough here draws upon Foucault's (1972) concept of intertextuality. Foucault has argued that "there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualise others" (p. 98). Fairclough notes that texts vary a great deal in their degree of heterogeneity, in the extent to which heterogeneous elements are integrated, and so in the extent to which their heterogeneity is evident in the surface of the text. He identifies the following dimensions of intertextuality as important in building a framework for discourse analysis: manifest intertextuality, interdiscursivity, textual transformations, and coherence, which influences how texts constitute social identities.

According to Fairclough (1992), manifest intertextuality exists when specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text. Interdiscursivity entails the constitution of a discourse type (in this study, the news report) through a combination of elements of various orders of discourse such as genres and styles. In the case of textual transformations, Fairclough describes how institutions may also have associated with them "intertextual chains," series of types of texts in which members of the series are transformed into one or more of the others in regular and predictable ways. He describes, for example, how a politician's speech may be translated into a media text, and then into other texts that paraphrase the media text, elaborate on it, and respond to it. He argues that intertextuality contributes to the "constitution of subjects through texts" (p. 133). Fairclough notes that in order to navigate the already complex process of text interpretation, which is made even more complicated by intertextuality, interpreters of the text (readers or listeners) have to find ways of making its diverse elements into a coherent whole. He proposes that the process of attaining

coherence contributes to the constitution of these subjects' identities and to their transformation over time.

The third dimension of critical analysis, the analysis of social practice and concepts, relates the analysis of text, and of discursive practice, to the analysis of the institutional, social, and cultural contexts of the text. Fairclough (1992) describes three major stages in conducting critical discourse analysis: 1) description of features of the text, 2) interpretation of the relationship between the text and interactions between participants within the situation, and 3) explanation of the relationship between these interactions and social contexts.

The Curriculum Innovation: The Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations

Historical background

From as far back as 1979, CXC had received a mandate from Ministers of Education of participating countries of the region to design a post-secondary examination suited to the developmental needs of the region. Stakeholders recognized that the Cambridge Advanced (A) Level examinations, which dominated the educational scene as providers of post-secondary certification, suffered from a number of weaknesses. Educators at both the secondary and tertiary levels claimed that students emerging from A Level programmes often lacked the skills that would be helpful to them in later life, either in their academic careers or in the world of work. Students also claimed that the A Level programmes then offered by the Cambridge and London Examinations Syndicates did not meet their needs and interests adequately. In addition, all groups agreed that they would like syllabuses whose content more clearly reflected Caribbean concerns and Caribbean cultural experiences.

Another matter for concern was the fact that a number of students not provided for within A Level programmes often moved into technical and vocational programmes of dubious quality offered by institutions outside the formal education system. This made it difficult for students to plan programmes of study with a clear understanding of how, or if, they would articulate with other programmes offered at the tertiary level. This also often resulted in a waste of human and material

resources, as students found themselves with useless certification within these programmes that made it very difficult for them to proceed along career paths they had selected.

When, therefore, CXC undertook to develop a new system of post-secondary examinations (which it later christened "CAPE"--the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations), it did so in response to an acknowledged need, one of the characteristics of a proposed curriculum change which Fullan (1991) suggests is important for later acceptance of the change proposed. An examination of the design of the examination reflects the Council's awareness of the needs identified; at the same time, it indicates what would be challenging about the proposed innovation.

Features of the innovation

The design of CAPE, as discussed in CXC's scheme document (1995) included a number of innovative features. The first was that subjects were structured as units and modules. This structural arrangement was intended to address one of the important concerns of educators and students alike--the desirability of a programme that would allow students flexibility in planning a course of study with as much depth and breadth as their own plans and interests dictated. The second feature was that syllabuses developed within CAPE now included a significant Caribbean content, which allowed students to acquire the central concepts and skills of their chosen disciplines using subject matter that reflected the Caribbean region's cultural identity, social and historical experience, and developmental concerns.

Thirdly, in CAPE, proposed new approaches to assessment allowed CXC to certify students as having a wider range of skills and abilities than were acknowledged within the traditional approaches to assessment then employed at this level. The scheme document (1995, par. 13.2) noted, for example, that the examination provides for various forms of performance assessment, including on-the-job assessment in the technical and vocational areas. The assessment approach also includes a significant component of internal assessment, which is central to CXC's philosophy of assessment. While this component had already been introduced in CXC's secondary examination, it was not a feature of the

Cambridge A Level examinations. It was, therefore, an innovation to students at this level of the system. It was also an innovation to those teachers who primarily taught A Level examination classes.

All of these elements meant that many sixth form teachers involved in the new programme would be required to make significant shifts in their practice. For example, the use of ongoing performance assessment; the new configurations of subjects, with the resultant demands for new designs of instructional materials, and the need for team teaching in interdisciplinary projects were all elements of a complex set of changes which the new examinations demanded. Also demanded was an initial shift in the perceptual framework of the world of knowledge as defined and legitimized by the syllabuses of the Cambridge and London Examinations Syndicates.

The Social and Institutional Context

Challenges to existing relationships of power and dominance

Apart from the changes within the post-secondary curriculum demanded by CAPE, there were other even more deep-rooted social changes that had to also take place if the examination were to be successfully adopted and implemented in Trinidad and Tobago. For one thing, the introduction of CAPE constituted a challenge to existing hierarchies of power among secondary schools in the country. This was partly because of the importance of the post-secondary examinations in Trinidad and Tobago. For instance, admission to the university in Trinidad and Tobago, as throughout the Caribbean, is a benefit granted only to a few. Thomas (2001) argues that university education is still "fundamentally elitist. . . addressed to a few, and not to the masses" (p. 728). A primary means of meeting requirements for acceptance into The University of the West Indies (UWI), or for employment, is still performance in the A Level examinations that students sit at the end of their career in the sixth form.

The result of this is that a hierarchy has been perpetuated among the over 100 secondary schools in the country. A study conducted by the Centre for Ethnic Studies (1994) found that schools which consistently guarantee good A Level performance continue to hold a high place in the

esteem of the people of the country. As a result, the opinions of educators in these schools on educational issues still exert considerable sway in informing education policy decisions. Most of the schools that have maintained high prestige are among the 30-odd government-assisted, denominational schools in the country. The role of these schools as near guarantors of a good A Level Certificate might not be as secure if a whole new set of examinations, with new content and new conventions by which excellent performance may be defined, were to be instituted. The good performance of the students for whom staff of these schools hold themselves responsible might be endangered as the schools adjusted themselves to the demands of a new examination.

The examination also sought to remove existing hierarchies among subjects. CAPE, as the scheme document (1995, par. 1.4 [c]) explicitly states, represents a continuation of the Council's efforts to remove the stigma still attached, in many countries of the Caribbean, to programmes that highlight technical and vocational subjects. The 1994 report by the Centre for Ethnic Studies indicated that, in Trinidad, enrolment in these subject areas is still often interpreted as a sign of inability to deal with the intellectual demands of "more rigorous" academic subjects. CAPE's scheme document (par. 1.1) proposed to include both academic and non-academic subjects under the same umbrella for certification. This approach appeared to agree in principle with proposals for a more open education system, which would allow students to move freely from one curriculum and ability track to the next, as put forward in the *Trinidad and Tobago Education Policy Paper (1993-2003)* (Trinidad and Tobago, 1994). Nevertheless, it ran contrary to existing values held by many people in the society with regard to the relative merit and importance of different types of subjects, especially at this level of the education system.

The development and dissemination of the innovation

The Council had utilized a research and development approach to planning and developing CAPE, canvassing the needs of stakeholders at the start of the process, and investigating current approaches to curriculum development and assessment before developing the scheme document, which outlined the conceptual framework for the exams. It had called in the services of a foreign consultant of established

reputation, whose expertise would inform the process of development. The Council had also established an iterative process of collaboration and consultation with representatives of some of the post-secondary institutions that would be receiving students who emerged from CAPE programmes. At the start of the process, comments had also been invited from educators in the secondary system as to what would constitute necessary elements of such an examination; the comments of the Faculties of Education of UWI were also sought.

In appointing panels to develop CAPE syllabuses, the Council also adopted a policy of including sixth form teachers and teachers from community colleges in the region, as well as representatives of the regional universities and curriculum specialists as members of each panel. It may thus be argued that before going to the wider public, CXC had used numerous strategies recognized in the literature (Weiler, 1983) to establish consensus and legitimize the proposed reform in the eyes of stakeholders.

With the project fully underway, CXC next sought to include the wider community of educators and educational administrators in the collaborative process. In doing so, the Council sought to further bolster the perceived legitimacy of the proposed reform in the eyes of stakeholders by what London (1997) has termed "symbolic action." That is to say, that in communicating information about an innovation, positive symbols, such as the labelling of a proposed curriculum as "new" would be used to bolster perceptions of the legitimacy of attempts by persons in authority to change the existing curriculum.

During March-April, 1996, a number of regional meetings were held with educators who represented sixth form schools and community colleges throughout the Caribbean. One such meeting was held in Trinidad. In November 1996, the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago mounted a national symposium to discuss CAPE, and CXC requested that its representatives be part of this activity. Finally, in April 1997, a number of public meetings were held within various education districts in Trinidad and Tobago to discuss the examinations, which were due to be piloted in 1998.

The representatives of the media institutions in the country were invited to all these meetings, since this was now seen as the most effective means of getting information to the wider public about the exams. At each of these meetings, CXC representatives made presentations and distributed the scheme document to participants. The presentations emphasized the rationale for the plan, outlining needs which persons canvassed had identified; touched on the perceived weaknesses of the existing exam and the principles which had governed choices made in developing the examination; and identified the structural elements proposed in the scheme document to deal with these issues. During each of these presentations, too, participants were told of CXC's plans for establishing equivalence of CAPE courses with A Level courses in the United Kingdom.

At these meetings, CXC representatives also sought to persuade educators of the legitimacy of the process by emphasizing the ongoing process of collaboration to shape the examination. They pointed out that the process of collaboration was continuing even at these meetings. As the former Chairman of the Council repeatedly said, the proposal was still in the last stages of refinement, to which the participants were invited to contribute. Nothing was "written in stone."

Therefore, the major field of action during this period was the positive representation of CXC and of CAPE in public opinion and in the media. Different genres were employed to serve this purpose. The scheme document, interviews with CXC representatives and press releases were all utilized. Each is worthy of study. How the discussions were represented, as utterances were placed in relation to other utterances within and among the texts of the news reports in the print media, however, is instructive as an example of how mass media represent reality, with implications for how those representations may help to subvert the agendas of individuals and institutions who hope to use the media to promote their own diffusion of innovation objectives.

Methodology

This study analyzed the discourse practices evident in the news reports--the practices used in the production and interpretation of texts. The report focuses especially on the role of intertextuality as a feature of

news reports in one daily newspaper, the *Trinidad Guardian*, about what the media termed "the public consultations" on CXC's new Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination.

There are three daily newspapers in Trinidad and Tobago, the *Trinidad Guardian*, *The Trinidad Express*, and the *Newsday*. The sample purposively selected for analysis consisted of the three reports on the public meetings held in 1997 that were published in the *Trinidad Guardian*. In all, there were nine reports of the public response to the proposed examination in the news media--four in the *Guardian*; four in the *Express*, including one feature story; and one story in *Newsday*. The reports in the *Trinidad Guardian* were chosen because, while it has since suffered a significant decline in readership, as the oldest existing daily newspaper in Trinidad and Tobago it was for a long time the main source of information on public issues for a substantial section of the literate population in that country (Lent, 1990).

One of the four *Guardian* reports, "National Debate on CXC - Job," which alluded briefly to the public consultations, was not included in the study because the focus of that report was primarily on the remarks about the Council's existing Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination, which were made by a candidate in a by-election being held at that time in Tobago. The candidate used the election platform to denounce CXC and to call for a debate on the existing examination's weaknesses. The proposed CAPE examination was, however, mentioned in passing, with advice to the people of Tobago to "reject any hasty involvement in CXC 'A' Level" (National debate, 1997).

It must be acknowledged that even this brief reference would contribute to the intertextual chain in the media discourse about the examinations. However, the researcher elected to focus on how intertextuality was manifested in texts that reported directly on the proceedings at the actual public consultations mounted to determine, and to shape, public sentiment on CAPE. It was felt that the reports of these meetings were more likely to be the ones read by stakeholders, who were becoming aware of the proposal that CAPE be introduced, for information about the examination itself, and about its implications for the society.

In the case of each of the three news reports, the entire text, including the headlines, was analyzed. Each report was coded to identify manifestations of the dimensions of intertextuality identified by Fairclough (1992): manifest intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and textual transformation. Each text was also analyzed in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and textual structure. The researcher then essayed an interpretation of the relationship between the texts and those participants identified in the news reports, as well as the community of readers of the news reports. Finally, an explanation was sought of the relationship between the interactions as represented in the text and the social context.

The reports

The first report on the consultations appeared on page 3 of *The Guardian* on April 29th 1997. The headline read: "Bid to introduce CAPE exam: No guinea pigs - principals." The article demonstrated manifest intertextuality in making direct and indirect representations of the contributions made by speakers at the first meeting that was held in the north of the island in April. The negation in the headline, "No guinea pigs," could have represented either a declarative statement that there were no guinea pigs in this exam or, what the text below suggested, that a demand had been made that students should not be made guinea pigs in the Council's attempts to introduce CAPE. The text of the report, however, helped to make it clear that the headline had the illocutionary force of a prohibition against what was presented as a presupposition--that students would be made guinea pigs if the exam were introduced. Thus the headline represents the supposed speakers of the remark--principals--as powerful figures in the "consultation" process, in a position to make demands of a regional examining body, and of their employer, the Ministry of Education.

Furthermore, the absence of a modifier for "principals" represents all principals as making this demand. In fact, an examination of the text of the actual report makes it clear that there was only one principal who made the remark, and that it was couched more in the form of a request: "if it is to be introduced, please do not make our students guinea pigs of this examination." The "guinea pig" metaphor is imported from the language of scientific experimentation, and serves to represent the

examination as potentially dehumanizing and victimizing to students. Therefore, the composite producers of this report--the reporter and, possibly, the editor who is responsible for devising headlines for stories in the newspaper--have foregrounded one element of one principal's presentation in the headline--the request that students not be made guinea pigs. That request has been represented as voicing the unanimous sentiments of all principals, and has been transformed from a request into an unmodified command.

Quotations from three of the principals who spoke at the consultations were selected for inclusion within the major part of this report. Two of the three principals selected were heads of assisted secondary schools--the group that includes the great majority of the so-called "prestige schools" in Trinidad and Tobago. One of these principals was head of one of the most prestigious of these schools. The principal whose request is paraphrased in the headline was not the head of a prestigious school, yet by representing his request as coming from all principals, an alliance of the principals, with his as the dominant voice is implied.

Clearly, this is an inversion of the actual relationships among educational institutions in the country (Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994). It has the force of presenting the opposition to the examination as a democratic movement. All the same, it is the principal of one of the most prestigious among the prestigious schools in the country--referred to by name--whose statement discounting the Council's competence to develop a new examination is inserted verbatim into the text. He is quoted as saying that, "such a venture [the development of the examination] should be undertaken by a competent body. And there is no doubt that CXC has not proven itself as a competent examining body."

The words of the joint composers of the report are used mainly to introduce the excerpts from the presentations made by the principals. It is noteworthy that the vocabulary employed in those introductions represents the responses of principals to the examination in terms that suggest they all perceive it as a crisis. Principals in the report "sounded a warning," and "predicted a 'nightmare.'" The scare quotes introduced into the text with the reference to the term "nightmare" give it the added

force of a direct response to the examination, apparently made by all principals.

It must be noted that no direct quotations, or even paraphrased statements, represent the voices of other participants at this first public consultation—teachers, students, or parents. They are entirely omitted in the representation of the meeting as established by this first report. It is also noteworthy that the quotations selected reflect emotionally charged, negative responses to the examination. More analytical responses are also reported that refer to “concerns” of unnamed participants about “leakage of examination papers, late results, . . . lack of infrastructure and resources.” Several nominalizations are employed here; for instance, it is not reported that people leaked papers, but that there were “leakages”; not that resources were not provided—implying a choice of behaviour on the part of the Ministry—but that there was “a lack.” These nominalizations help to obscure agency in these cases, and to naturalize the problems as simply being in existence. This tended to construct a representation of “reality” that suggested that the weaknesses identified reflected a permanent and inevitable order of things.

The second report was positioned further back in the paper on page 7 of the *Trinidad Guardian* of May 1st 1997. It was published after the second consultation was held in the south of the country. The report is headed, “Hold strain on CAPE exam – Bro Michael.” The headline in this report is in the imperative mode. It takes the form of a command—whether directed to the Ministry, to the Council, or to both is again not made clear. In this case, however, the command is attributed to one man, the principal of a highly prestigious school in the south of the country. The command is expressed as an idiomatic expression, “Hold strain,” which is characteristic of the English Creole spoken by most Trinidadians. The expression reflects a highly informal style, typical of casual conversation, which has been inserted into the more formal text of a news report.

Attribution for the headline is somewhat ambiguous, however. While it purports to be the reported speech of the principal identified, reference to his actual words, as represented in the body of the report, reveals that he expressed the sentiment in a much more formal manner. “You have to give us time,” he is reported as actually having said. “You have to prove yourself over again. . . .give us a chance, give yourselves a chance, and

let us think about maybe the year 2000." Not only do the speaker's actual words reflect a use of English rather than the English Creole; they also reflect deliberate rhetorical choices, as in, for example, the parallelism and repetition of, "Give us a chance, give yourselves a chance." The structure of the clause, "let *us* [italics added] think about maybe the year 2000," demonstrates what Brown and Levinson (1987) describe as a politeness phenomenon: the speaker attempts to show solidarity with the persons to whom the request is addressed. This is a strategy that may be employed to mitigate a face-threatening act--the attempt to force the audience to accede to the speaker's wishes by issuance of the command. In addition, the modification, "maybe the year 2000," also creates a verbal hedge, which modifies yet another dimension of the command--the specification of a time frame in which the audience is expected to accede to the request.

However, none of these modifications and none of the attributes of formality are visible in the headline. Instead, the headline, which is a paraphrase by the composers of the report of the speaker's rejection of the immediate adoption of the examination, establishes the speaker as being in dominant relationship to the persons and the institutions he is addressing, the representatives of CXC and the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education. However, it also establishes him as a man of the people in his use of the Creole. Thus the headline is double-voiced. The composer of the headline text--either the reporter or, more likely, the editor of the news report--appears to have imported the principal's thought into the headline, but to have imposed the writer's own voice upon it, creating in the process a different identity for the speaker from that reflected in his own words.

The body of the report reflects a high level of manifest intertextuality. The discourse of the lead paragraph is represented as being produced by the composers of the report, but six of the remaining eight paragraphs represent apparently verbatim excerpts from Brother Michael's presentation. The last two paragraphs of the text report the words of the CXC representative, a former Chairman of the Council, in indirect speech. Again, in this report the participants identified are the principal who speaks, the representative of the Council, and the "Ministry of Education" to whom, the lead paragraph suggests, the speaker's words were actually directed: the lead sentence represents "southern

educators" as having "advised the Ministry of Education to wait until the turn of the century." As with the first sample, the words of students and other stakeholders are not represented. Significant transformations occur within the body of the text. In the lead paragraph, "southern educators" are represented as requesting the delay in the implementation of the examination. As indicated, later in the body of the text it is revealed that only one man actually articulated this request.

By the second paragraph of the report, however, the person who actually made the request is identified as the speaker. Now, however, he is described as speaking not on behalf of southern educators alone, but "on behalf of the country's principals." It is not clear, however, that this is an officially appointed task of the speaker, or one that he has chosen to assume. Rather, it appears to have been shaped for him by the composers of the report. Nonetheless, to the reader of the text, Brother Michael has been reconstructed as the spokesperson for the group, and, for the purposes of the diffusion process, as a powerful opinion leader among important stakeholders in the implementation process. An interesting feature of the representation of this speaker's opinions is his invocation of the progressivist ideology. He appears to distance himself from "the majority of people" who may have criticized the proposed examination. He says that they "seem to be ignorant, uninformed and lacking progressiveness." In contrast, he claims, "we have no problem with what has been proposed."

In its structure, this section of the text of the text constitutes a claim that unlike "the majority of people," the principals with whom he has allied himself and who are requesting that the implementation of the examination be delayed are not ignorant, uninformed, or unprogressive. A conflict between the democratic persona ascribed him in the headline and the more elitist sentiments expressed here becomes evident. Through these sentiments, however, he represents himself as a credible spokesperson when, immediately after describing the proposal for the examination as "excellent," he says that it cannot be implemented because of "lack of sufficient machinery. There is lack of sufficient personnel." The content of his speech here seems to focus far more on the machinery that will be needed to administer the examination if it is to run smoothly and achieve social efficacy, than on any progressivist ideals with regard to the philosophy and practice of assessment

proposed within the scheme document. For instance, at no time is he represented as assessing the examination's potential for meeting the developmental needs of students.

The CXC representative's voice is heard in the last two paragraphs, explaining that "CAPE would not be forced on any school." An editorial decision, however, places his words in a section of the text that, within the generic conventions of a news report, signals that they are not as important as the content of the text that has preceded them--which is the representation of a powerful opinion leader, Brother Michael, describing the examination as impractical.

The final report on the consultation was published in the *Trinidad Guardian* on May 13th. It is the only report that is constituted primarily of the words of a CXC representative. However, it appears on page 9 of the paper--again, a positioning that within newspaper conventions minimizes its importance as news. The headline reads, "CAPE, a grassroots exam for the people." That headline appears to summarize the information contained in the lead paragraph--a declarative statement that "The Caribbean Examination Council's Advanced Proficiency Examination has been developed not as an external examination to be imposed on the Caribbean people, but as a grassroots examination which comes from the people." Who "the people" are is not made clear, however, except that readers' social experience of texts outside of the body of this report may suggest that the phrase is usually employed to refer to the mass of people, in opposition to some existing elite. This is not explicitly stated, however, and it is not clear that the speaker whose words are paraphrased within the text of the news report, the CXC Registrar, is the one who has actually made the claim expressed in the headline, since the lead paragraph where it is stated is simply followed by the identification of a speaker, and quotations from her speech. The reader is left to infer that the CXC Registrar has actually typified the examination in this manner.

The lead paragraph, which was composed in this case, while again double-voiced, reflects a world-view that acknowledges democratization as an important attribute of the proposed curricular reform. It is followed by paraphrases of excerpts from her speech, which further represent the Registrar as embracing an ideological position that

supports the examination as a tool for Caribbean integration. She is represented as having told "a large crowd of students and teachers. . . that the Council is a creation of Caribbean governments." She is represented as saying that "it is important that we have a common understanding of each other and this education."

In counterpoint to the Registrar, who is explicitly identified, unidentified speakers, whether students or teachers the report does not make clear, are reported as expressing the same concerns that have appeared in the texts of the two former reports: "Some of the major concerns voiced at the meeting were: the choice between CAPE and A levels, employment opportunities in the future; and what security would be put in place to ensure that there are no leaks to outside sources." The Registrar's voice has clearly been interposed into the text as dominant, but these reported concerns reflect an ideology opposed to that which she proposes, insisting that what is important is not the Caribbean philosophy or the grassroots orientation of the examination, but its social efficacy.

The Chief Education Officer's words are reported in the final paragraph of the text. He too appears to embrace the social efficacy ideology. He is represented as commenting on what he identifies as the purpose of education-- to produce "skilled young people" needed to "move the Caribbean forward in its development."

Discussion

The three texts analyzed reflect complex relationships of dominance and subjection, and make transparent the struggles for power and conflicting ideologies within the educational community as constructed within the text. The speakers whose actual words are interposed within the texts of the report are almost all persons of excellent social standing--the principals of prestige schools, the CXC Registrar and former Chairman, the Chief Education Officer.

In the one instance where a speaker is identified as a principal from a less prestigious school, the text of the report represents him as being in alliance with principals of some of the most prestigious schools in the country. Students' voices are never explicitly identified in these reports, nor are teachers, as opposed to administrators. The discourse thus helps

to legitimize the hierarchies of power within the educational community, by taking them for granted and reproducing them within the structure of the report.

The report seems to reflect a thrust towards democratization in the change from the formal reporting of news to a more conversational approach, and even to paraphrasing more formal speeches. A principal of a highly prestigious school is positioned as spokesperson for an apparently homogeneous body of students and educators, speaking in the language of the "grassroots" people. This is very far from being the case in a system where some schools and principals are privileged over others. Yet, when this person speaks, all other voices are silenced as he, who takes to himself attributes of the progressive thinker, condemns the examination as impractical, and requests that it be delayed.

This inversion within the texts of real social relationships within the educational community, therefore, has the ultimate effect of validating a single point of view, which is that of the dominant group within the educational community. The examination, within the discourse of the three news reports, is attributed qualities that are predominantly negative, if assessed in the light of the characteristics of innovations proposed by Rogers (1995) as being essential for effective diffusion. It is presupposed, first, to be of poorer quality than the existing Cambridge A Level examination. The examining body responsible is represented as incompetent and callous. The proposal for the examination is discounted as impractical. Finally, the idea of the examination as a "grassroots examination" or as a "Caribbean examination" is not represented as compatible with the predominant value for social efficacy, which is reflected in the majority of voices that have been inserted into the text of the news reports. The issue of the examination's responsiveness to student needs is never addressed within the texts of these reports.

Implications for curriculum planners

Important issues emerge from this study that are important to curriculum planners and researchers in the field. Most important, perhaps, is the danger of the assumption by some planners that the mass media can be counted on either to represent a curriculum innovation as unproblematic, or to provide information about the innovation in terms

of "objective reality." In fact, as this analysis has indicated, it is almost inevitable that elements of ideological conflict *will* be inherent in the media discourse. Yet, the analysis also suggests that planners should be prepared to have representations of their innovations in the mass media framed in terms that legitimize the maintenance of the educational and social status quo, and perpetuate dominant ideologies. This is again almost inevitable, given that the voices most likely to be recorded in media representations are often those of persons and institutions already entrenched within powerful positions in the society, and in the education system where it is proposed to introduce the innovation.

There is a clear need, consequently, for planners to be proactive in devising strategies in which their own agenda is clearly defined. Informed judgements, based on research into the pre-existing knowledge, attitudes and practices of stakeholders in the community, must be made in planning messages about innovations which are to be disseminated to the public, and in choosing the channels for communicating those messages. Messages must be crafted differently and communicated through diverse channels if they are to reach different groups effectively. Planners need to acknowledge that different sub-groups within a society may have preferred channels of information, and that different groups may have different opinion leaders. Opinion leaders should also be identified early in the curriculum development process, and should be made part of a process of collaborative strategy planning, so that they can present informed alternative representations of identified innovations to those that may be reflected in mass media which have been colonized by dominant groups in the society.

The findings of the study also suggest that persons responsible for diffusion of curriculum innovations in developing countries should also be able to utilize other communications media, such as calypsoes and folk theatre, for instance, which exist as part of the popular culture and which may have some power to establish resistance to the messages of the mass media, given that the mass media themselves may well be possible sources of resistance to change.

Another communication channel that diffusion strategists may want to utilize is the Internet. The advantages here are threefold: 1) the Internet has the power to reach an even larger number of persons rapidly than,

say, a newspaper; 2) the Internet makes it easy for strategists to craft their own messages and to exert greater control over them than they would have with newspapers, radio, or television; and 3) the Internet has possibilities for ongoing feedback--the two-way flow of communication advocated by Rogers (1995) as being best for effective diffusion. Therefore, this technology can potentially merge the advantages of the mass media and interpersonal communication as advocated by Rogers.

However, it will also be necessary to conduct other studies that will attempt to understand manifestations of intertextuality across media, and within other branches of the media, as they shape the media's representations of reality. Research might also be conducted on the effects of such media representations on people who are the targets of communication campaigns to promote the diffusion of curriculum innovations.

Conclusion

The mass media may be considered indispensable in the process of making information about any proposed large-scale curriculum innovation available today. In fact, given the expenditure of human and financial resources on any curriculum development process, they may even be considered central to the establishment by curriculum planners of provision for public accountability. However, planners also need to recognize that the careful planning of the media strategy is as important a part of the diffusion process as any other. As part of that process, planners must take into account the possibility that mass media representations may indeed provide information about an innovation, but may represent it in such a way as to promote resistance to the change. Strategies developed to disseminate information, then, should put in place possible responses to deal with this eventuality. In the absence of such an informed planning process, attempts to initiate important curriculum changes may never come to fruition.

References

- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- CAPE, A grassroots exam for the people. (1997, May 13). *Trinidad Guardian*, p. 9.
- Caribbean Examinations Council. (1995). *The post-CSEC examinations: Scheme document*. Bridgetown: Author.
- Centre for Ethnic Studies, UWI, St. Augustine. (1994). *A study of the secondary school population in Trinidad and Tobago: Placement patterns and practices*. St. Augustine: Author.
- Centre for Ethnic Studies, UWI, St. Augustine. (1995). *Ethnicity and the media in Trinidad and Tobago*. St. Augustine: Author.
- Eisner, E. W. (1993). Reshaping assessment in education: Some criteria in search of practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 25 (3), 219-233.
- Entman, R. (1989). *Democracy without citizens: Media and the decay of American politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995a). *Media discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (1995b). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of languages*. London: Longman.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Pantheon.
- Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Gift, E. (1996). Responsive curriculum for small developing Caribbean states. *Caribbean Journal of Education*, 18 (2), 151-178.
- Hold strain on CAPE exam – Bro. Michael. (1997, May 1). *Trinidad Guardian*, p. 7.
- Kelly, A. V. (1999). *The curriculum: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). London: Paul Chapman.
- Kliebard, H. M. (1986). *The struggle for the American curriculum: 1893-1958*. Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Lent, J. (1990). *Mass communications in the Caribbean*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.
- London, N. A. (1997). A national strategy for systems-wide curriculum improvement in Trinidad and Tobago. In D. W. Chapman, L. Mahlck, and A. Smulders (Eds.), *From planning to action: government initiatives for improving school level practice* (pp. 133-146.). Paris: UNESCO.
- Mandol, N. (1997, April 29). Bid to introduce CAPE exam: No guinea pigs – Principals. *Trinidad Guardian*, p. 8.
- Miller, E. (1999). Education reform in the Commonwealth Caribbean: An assessment. In E. Miller (Ed.), *Educational reform in the Commonwealth Caribbean* (pp. 291-315). Washington, DC: Organization of American States.
- National debate on CXC – Job. (1997, May 2). *Trinidad Guardian*, p. 7.
- Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations*. New York, NY: Frec Press.
- Thomas, C. (2001). Evolution of the university system in the English speaking Caribbean (pp. 726-731). In C. Barrow & R. Reddock (Eds.), *Caribbean sociology: Introductory readings*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.

- Trinidad and Tobago. National Task Force on Education. (1994). Education policy paper (1993-2003) (White paper). Port of Spain: Ministry of Education.
- Valente, T. W., & Rogers, E. M. (1995). The origins and development of the diffusion of innovations paradigm as an example of scientific growth. *Science communication* 16 (3), 242-273.
- Weiler, H. N. (1983). Legalization, expertise, and participation: Strategies of compensatory legitimation in educational policy. *Comparative Education Review*, 27 (2): 259-277.

Tracey Hall is a Senior Research Scientist and Instructional Designer at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), USA, where she is involved with the National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum as Curriculum Director. At CAST, she works on various projects including the integration of assessment with instructional design, professional development, and the CAST National Consortium. She is currently serving as a consultant to the Central Guidance Unit, Trinidad and Tobago.

Timothy J. Runge is a certified school psychologist working for the Allegheny County District in Pennsylvania. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Wilkes University and a doctoral candidate in school psychology at the Pennsylvania State University. His research interests include phenomenological awareness, early literacy skills, and curriculum-based assessment.

Krishna Seenuarinesingh is a Lecturer at the School of Education, UWL, St. Augustine, Trinidad. He taught English at a secondary school for 17 years before assuming his present post. His research interests are in literacy, reading motivation, and the application of speech act theory to school culture analysis.

Angela Shirley is a Lecturer in Statistics in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, UWL, St. Augustine. Prior to this, she served for three years at the School of Education, UWL, St.