DOES CLINICAL SUPERVISION WORK? The Stories of Two Teachers Empowered to Adopt Student-Centred Teaching Strategies in the Classroom Through a Clinical Supervision Intervention.

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This paper reports on an action research study that implemented a clinical supervision intervention with two secondary school teachers in the education district of Victoria in Trinidad and Tobago, to improve their instructional skills in using the Think-pair-share and Jigsaw student-centred teaching strategies in their classrooms. The paper tells the stories of the teachers' transition from resisting - not seeing the need to change from their teacher-centred strategies - to embracing and valuing student-centred strategies they were exposed to during the intervention. The participants had at least ten years' teaching experience but no formal initial teacher preparation for teaching. The data collection instruments used were an interview, a Likert scale teaching survey, a questionnaire, reflective journals and observation. Data were analysed by organising and categorising into themes for each research question and constructing teacher narratives from the data. Results of the study illuminated the tensions and contestations the teachers underwent as they perched on the threshold of becoming a different kind of teacher, and how they made the transition. The results also indicated that clinical supervision can improve teachers' pedagogical and instructional skills, and the use of student-centered teaching strategies can create meaningful learning experiences that can lead to increased student engagement and achievement. The researchers conclude that clinical supervision is an effective professional development mechanism that resonates at the chalkface of education, that is, in the classroom.

Introduction

Millennial learners, 21st century learning, and personalised learning are ubiquitous terms in education today. As the world changes, educators find themselves in a position where they are preparing students for a future and a world which are unknown to them (Schleicher, 2015). The facts of today are not necessarily the facts of tomorrow; the cultural and social issues of today may be replaced by new ones. As such, it is imperative that our students receive an education that empowers them to become critical thinkers, collaborators and innovators. Student-centred rather than teacher-centred teaching methods are more likely to achieve this. Yet, in the researchers' experience, for some educators, there appears to be a real fear to let go of the traditional chalk and talk method of teaching and to embrace more student-centred approaches.

In emphasising the need for innovation in education, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2016), for instance, states that teachers are sometimes perceived as being change resistant, which can negatively impact the quality of education offered. The OECD (2016), however, corrected this misconception, highlighting that teachers are willing to change but may not do so for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons they put forward were that teachers feel that too many changes are top-down, formulated without their consultation, but with them being wholly responsible for the successful implementation. Another reason is a lack of collaboration among teachers themselves which could encourage professional development, and, further, teachers feel that they are not sufficiently skilled to use more innovative methods of teaching.

Rotherham and Willingham (2009) postulated teachers know about student-centered teaching methods and believe that they are effective but do not use them as they may create classroom management problems. Furthermore, they require the teacher to be knowledgeable about a broad range of topics and to be prepared to make in-the-moment decisions as the lesson progresses. Herrmann (2017) added to the debate, stating that teachers view the status quo as more comfortable and less risky, fearing losing competence when they must move from a predictable and comfortable place to embrace newer methods of teaching.

Research has linked student learning and achievement to the quality of teaching received in classrooms (Marzano, 2007; Blomeke, Olsen & Suhl, 2016 & Mckinsey, 2017). If schools want to develop critical thinkers and prepare students for the future, the quality of teaching students are receiving must be their focus. Within the discourse on education in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), the reliance on the teacher-

centred approach has been criticised, as well as the lack of creativity in classrooms, and a preoccupation with the passing of examinations (Warner & Kaur, 2017, De Lisle, Seecharan & Ayodike, 2010 & Edwards, 2007). These challenges must be addressed if we are to adequately prepare our students for the challenges outside of the school environment. The best way to do so is to train our teachers to use newer and more exciting teaching strategies in the classroom. Administrators must then focus on becoming instructional leaders prepared to advance the professional growth of their teachers. It is here that clinical supervision plays a critical role as a mechanism to improve teachers' pedagogical and instructional skills and serves as a corollary to the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

This paper reports on an action research study that examined the role of clinical supervision in helping two teachers to improve their pedagogical skills. It also sought to determine if the clinical supervision intervention helped teachers to enhance their skills in the use of student-centred teaching strategies such as Think-Pair-Share and Jigsaw and, by extension, if the learning experience and student achievement in the classroom improved. The views of the participants are reported through the narratives constructed through their interviews, self-reflective journals and the researchers' journals. Reflective journals in the form of narratives provide powerful prismatic windows into how the teachers construct their knowledge and beliefs of the self-as-teacher (Mahlios, Massengill-Shaw & Barry, 2010).

Background and Situational Context

In T&T, the government continues to increase its investment in the education sector with a view to improving and reforming it. In its National Report on the Development of Education (2008), the Ministry of Education indicated teachers are required to adopt student-centred approaches to teaching and learning; moving away from lecturing to become more of a "guide on the side", using demonstration and infusing Information and Communication Technology in the learning process. Still, despite being professionally trained and acknowledging that they have learnt new and more effective teaching strategies (James, Phillip, Herbert, Augustin, Yamin-Ali, Ali & Rampersad, 2013), many teachers continue to use teacher-centred approaches.

It seems as if it is a culture that is entrenched in their practice. In fact, Jennings (2001) and Melville-Myers (2001) described teaching methods in Trinidad and Tobago as teacher-centred, emphasizing content

and dissemination of knowledge with a reliance on traditional pedagogical practices such as the memorisation of notes with limited opportunities for the development of critical thinking skills. This seems to hold true for some today. At present, there appears to be little change in teaching methods despite technological advances, more tech-savvy students and efforts by the Ministry of Education to revamp the education system. Warner & Kaur (2017) indicate that despite a highly developed secondary school curriculum and continuous encouragement for teachers to receive training, "the traditional modality of teacher-centred instruction continues as the major instructional approach" (p. 194).

At Golden Valley High (pseudonym), the school under study, it is very much the same. The school is in a suburban area in San-Fernando, within the Victoria Education District. Golden Valley High is a government secondary school and is generally perceived as one of the better performing government schools. However, teachers have begun to raise concerns that students are not performing as well as they ought to and at times seem to lack the motivation to do well academically. Students have also voiced their concerns, lamenting that classes are boring and there is no attempt by teachers to use different strategies apart from lecturing or calling notes. One of the most prevalent issues for students is the limited use of ICT by teachers, and the apparent indifference of teachers to improve their methods of delivery.

The researchers observed that at Golden Valley High teachers tend to use more of a teacher-centred rather than a more student-centred approach in the classroom. When questioned about their reasons for using this approach, some teachers indicated that there is no time for group work and students will not learn if other strategies are used. Teachers also mentioned that they are consumed by fears of not covering the syllabus. The prevailing thought is that there is no time to engage in new strategies; one should simply get the material covered so that students can pass the examination. This approach does not provide the type of student experience in the classroom that fosters student engagement and empowerment, particularly in terms of providing the 21st century digital skills that students need to function effectively in the future. If this gap is left unchecked, it can negatively impact student achievement. The researchers felt that it was imperative to do something to improve teachers' pedagogical and instructional skills to successfully enhance academic achievement and promote the development of important learning skills for students. A clinical supervision intervention involving the development of selected student-centered teaching strategies was chosen to fill the gap. As such, the purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which the

implementation of a clinical supervision intervention, focused on developing teachers' skills and practice, using student-centred teaching strategies could improve the learning experience in the classroom for teachers and students and, as a corollary, improve student engagement and motivation.

Clinical supervision was chosen as the intervention as Brennen (2000) states, through clinical supervision, "teachers are able to develop new skills and strategies which will be replicated as needed. As teacher instruction improves, students will become more motivated, classroom management will be improved and a better atmosphere for promoting learning will exist" (para. 14).

In conducting the study, the researchers thought it necessary to verify what teaching strategies were being used by teachers. The first research question, therefore, was: What student-centred teaching strategies are being used by teachers at Golden Valley High during classroom instruction? Interviews were conducted with two teachers from the Business and Languages departments, which revealed teachers were not employing any student-centred teaching strategies, and it was necessary to engage teachers in the clinical supervision process to develop their skills in using selected student-centred strategies, namely, Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share.

This led to the development of the second research question: How have teachers' skills in implementing student-centred strategies such as Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share in the classroom improved as a result of a clinical supervision intervention targeted at developing teachers' skills in these pedagogical and instructional areas? After training teachers to implement new student-centred teaching strategies in the classroom, it was necessary to investigate if the learning environment in their classes changed. The third research question developed was: To what extent has teachers' use of Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share improved the learning experience and student achievement in the classroom?

Literature Review

This study drew on several theoretical and conceptual perspectives to provide an organising framework. These perspectives included, teaching and learning, liminality, clinical supervision, teacher-centred versus student-centred teaching approaches and their effectiveness. Further expositions on these perspectives follow.

The concept of liminality and its role in professional development

Clinical supervision by nature is a form of professional development that is collaborative and occurs over a period of time. It is not a one off. It occurs within the context of a supervisor and supervisee relationship that is created to assist the supervisee in improving and developing his/her practice. The process is, therefore, one in which some transformation is expected to occur in terms of the supervisee's actions and behaviours. The researchers' intent was to capture, in real time and upon reflection, the influence the intervention was having on the teachers, in terms of refinement of their beliefs of teaching, their belief in themselves as teachers, and the transitions, if any, that they were experiencing. The concept of liminality provided a prismatic lens for the researchers/supervisors to conceptualise and interpret the teachers' experiences of uncertainty, instability, tensions, enlightenment and shifts in belief, as the intervention provided a "period of margin" or "liminality" (Turner, 1964, p. 46) that takes place as an individual is on the verge (Batchelor, 2012 & Cook-Sather, 2006) of transitioning from one state to another in a process of "becoming" or "transformation" (Turner, 1964, pp. 46-47). More so, it helped the researchers/supervisors to understand the intersections between the teachers' original status, pre-intervention, their status being sought during and post-intervention.

The teaching and learning process involves an interaction among the teacher, the students, and the content (Marzano, 2007). Students, therefore, must be active participants in the learning process as learners today are no longer content to learn in traditional ways. This means that educators must continuously improve pedagogical practices to ensure that learning takes place. Research shows that the more teachers have pedagogical competence, the greater is the achievement of the students (Marzano, 2007). Teachers are, therefore, challenged with the responsibility of creating an engaging and innovative learning environment. It is critical that they ensure learning takes place in the classroom, and that they employ a variety of strategies to promote student achievement. The challenge for teachers exists in determining the best strategies to employ to meet the needs of students. It is here the concept of following a teacher- or student-centred philosophy emerges. The teacher-centred approach places the teacher at the centre of the classroom. In a student-centred learning environment, the student moves from being passive to an active participant in the learning process and takes greater responsibility for his/her learning.

Teacher-Centred vs Student-Centred Approaches to Learning

The teacher-centred classroom is both conservative and traditional. It places the teacher at the centre of the classroom. A typical teacher-centred classroom is one where there is minimal student interaction, and teacher student interaction, which are essential aspects of effective teaching and learning (Toh, 1994; Yale Centre for Teaching and Learning, 2016). Teachers make all the decisions regarding content taught, methods used and forms of assessment. As teacher talk exceeds student talk, students become passive learners viewed as empty vessels to be filled with the teacher's knowledge. This can negatively impact student growth and interest as emphasis is placed on students knowing and remembering facts presented by the teacher (Duckworth, 2009; Brittney, 2003).

The student-centred approach casts the teacher as a facilitator rather than presenter. It is a direct contrast to the teacher-centred approach and encourages discovery learning and students learning from each other (Weimer, 2002). Student-centred learning environments are rooted in the works of constructivist theorists such as Dewey and Piaget who posit that learners are active participants in creating their own knowledge. Here, the teacher is seen as a facilitator and coach implementing cooperative work in the classroom. Student-centred learning, therefore, dispels the notion that the student is a passive recipient, because both teachers and students share the focus in the classroom. Students are actively learning, taking responsibility for their own learning and are directly involved in the learning process. As such, there is equal interaction between the teacher and students, which can be beneficial in promoting student growth and interest, which are critical in teaching the 21st century learner.

Is Student-Centred Teaching More Effective Than Teacher-Centred Teaching?

The teacher-centred approach is often viewed in a negative light and is criticised for its lack of ingenuity and disregard for the contribution the learner can make. It is seen as authoritarian, lacking vision and encouraging rote memorisation. Despite these criticisms, there are supporters of teacher-centred instruction. In investigating the best approach to use in teaching children to read, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the United States (2000) found solid empirical evidence that teacher-centred approaches are clearly related to improving student reading performance. Similarly, in determining how teachers taught students Mathematics, Morgan (2009) found that teacher-directed activities were the most effective in improving students' academic performance. Student-centred instruction only improved outcomes among students who did not previously exhibit difficulty learning Mathematics.

Bruno (2014) concurs as he regards student-centred teaching as being beneficial for relatively strong students, but often not meeting the needs of students with weaker skills, and that teacher-centred strategies have many advantages. In support of Bruno (2014), Concordia University (2012) cited the classroom remaining orderly, students learning independence and correct information given to students as advantages of the approach.

Supporters of the student-centred approach, however, believe that as the student becomes an active participant in his/her learning, the learning experience can become more meaningful. Among the benefits of this approach are encouraging critical thinking skills, boosting student confidence and more interesting and exciting classes (Sayre, 2013; Wohlfarth, 2008 & Lea 2003). Examples of student-centred strategies are active learning, cooperative learning and inductive teaching and learning. This study focused on the use of two cooperative learning strategies: Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share. Cooperative learning, according to Johnson & Johnson (n.d.), involves students working together in small groups to maximise their own and other students' learning.

Think-Pair-Share is a cooperative discussion strategy developed by Frank Lyman (1981). With this strategy, students are taught to listen to the question, think about the question, to discuss the question in pairs and, finally, to raise hands and share with the total group. Among the benefits of the strategy are increasing students' willingness to share openly in front of the group, bringing out students who never speak in the arena setting, increasing on-task behavior, and decreasing disruptiveness. It also created a safe setting in which almost all students will talk with a partner, increased "wait-time", which could be associated with better recall, and improved the quality of responses made (Lyman, 1981).

Sampsel (2013) and Bamiro (2015) support Lyman's (1981) postulation when they indicated that the use of the strategy positively impacts student participation, class enjoyment, student achievement and the development of higher quality cognitive and problem-solving skills. Student-centred strategies also positively impact the learning experience. Additionally, Walters, Smith, Leinwand, Surr, Stein & Bailey (2014) found that student-centred teaching strategies in Mathematics classes resulted in higher levels of student engagement, an increase in student learning, deeper connections to the subject, higher levels of understanding and higher scores on assessments.

The Jigsaw classroom invented by Aronson (1970) requires teachers to arrange students in groups. Each group member is assigned a different piece of information. Group members with the same information join to discuss, after which they return to their original groups with each

person sharing his/her information. The sharing of information completes the "puzzle" as students form a whole idea of the topic. Azmin (2016) and Hanze and Berger (2007) cite increased student enjoyment of the lesson, improved relationship with peers, higher levels of confidence, autonomy and achievement as some of the benefits of employing Jigsaw in the classroom. While there are numerous benefits of using these cooperative strategies, Baloche and Brody (2017) indicate that the class becoming too noisy, the strategies being time consuming and certain students dominating the class, as potential challenges of using them.

Clinical Supervision as an Intervention

Clinical supervision is one of the techniques used to improve teachers' competencies in classroom instructional practices and, by extension, teacher quality. It was the intervention strategy used in this study to empower teachers to implement the Think-Pair-Share and Jigsaw strategies in their classrooms. The goal of the intervention being reported on was to help the teachers increase student engagement and improve classroom management by using student-centred teaching methods. The researchers felt justified in using clinical supervision as an intervention, because it is a developmental process for which the foremost goal is to help teachers develop skills in using instructional strategies (Acheson & Gall, 1992). In determining the effects of clinical supervision on teacher performance, Veloo, Komuji and Khalid (2013) found the process had positive effects on teaching, including increased teaching quality of teachers and enhanced student understanding. Aldaihani (2017) concurred, stating that clinical supervision allows the teacher to get information on advanced teaching styles, learn to control the classroom environment, deal with students, and prepare and present lessons in an attractive and effective way.

Methodology

The chosen design for the study was action research. According to Mills (2000), action research is the systematic inquiry, conducted by teacher researchers in the teaching or learning environment to gather information about the ways their schools operate and how their students learn. Action research was appropriate for use in this study because the intervention was focused on professional development and improvement of the pedagogical skills of two teachers through clinical supervision (Luttenberg, 2017). It allowed the researchers to work collaboratively with the teachers to identify problems and issues at the classroom level and find ways to make

improvements in their pedagogical and instructional skills. Action research facilitated reflection on and in practice, and, through journaling, allowed practitioners to tell their stories. Deeper expositions on the use of the reflective journal and the role and use of narratives and stories in the study are discussed below.

Data collection methods

Narratives and reflective journal writing

Through the telling of stories, humans keep the memory of their experiences and the history of their communities. At the same time, the narrative mode imposes order on the heterogeneity of experience and, therefore, does not merely reflect it but constructs it (Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 17).

The purpose of the intervention was to develop teachers' pedagogical and instructional skills in the use of student-centred strategies. Knowledge is constructed based on one's epistemology and ontology. As such, the teachers would construct meaning as they experience the intervention and retain and sustain as they see fit. Using the reflective journal was, therefore, a particularly important data collection method, but reporting the findings by using stories not only gave the teachers a voice, but also allowed them to hear their voices. The use of narratives in this way promotes the emergence of what Batchelor (2012) calls the ontological voice or the "voice for being and becoming" (p. 598). The reflective journals provided prismatic windows into the beliefs and self-perceptions of the teachers contextually and developmentally. The reflective journals allowed the teachers to understand craft and to communicate the reasons for their professional decisions and actions to us, the researchers/supervisors.

Other Data Collection Methods and Data Analysis

The research questions determined the data collection methods used in the study. To answer research question one, which asked what student-centred teaching strategies were being used by teachers at Golden Valley High during classroom instruction, a Likert scale survey, and a semi-structured interview, were used to determine the teaching strategies employed by teachers in the classroom. The Likert scale survey was a free classroom teaching style survey developed by the Science Education Resource Centre at Carleton College in the United States of America. There were six items on the survey that examined where a teacher fell in the context of a series of teaching characteristics. The teachers read the characteristics and decided where they fell on the 1-5 scale. After completing the six items, the total score was used to classify teaching

styles according to four classifications available. This survey allowed teachers to determine their teaching styles through a quick and simple format.

A semi-structured interview was also used for determining the teaching strategies used in the classroom. A prepared list of open-ended, semi-structured questions was used in addition to probing questions for clarification. This allowed the researchers to understand the strategies used by the teachers and the reasons why, as well as what challenges were encountered during instruction. Marshall (2006) states despite being time consuming, interviews are useful to help the researcher gain insight and context into a topic and allow respondents to describe what is important to them.

Data collection for research question two, which asked *how have teachers' skills in implementing student-centred strategies such as Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share in the classroom improved as a result of a clinical supervision intervention targeted at developing teachers' skills in these pedagogical and instructional areas*, was done through observation and teacher journals. Journals were critical sources of data, because they chronicled the teachers' progress throughout the clinical supervision process. The method of observation is a part of the clinical supervision process. In this study, the researchers observed the teachers in the classroom delivering lessons to their students. Recording of observations was done through the researchers' field notes in a narrative, descriptive style. The field notes allowed for charting of the teachers' progress throughout the clinical supervision process.

Data collection for research question three, which asked *to what extent has teachers' use of Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share improved the learning experience and student achievement in the classroom*, was done through semi-structured teacher interviews, student questionnaires, and observation. Interviews were semi-structured, which allowed for the researchers to ask probing questions and seek more clarification to properly determine how the use of student-centred strategies improved the learning experience for the teacher and students. The interview and questionnaire were used in addition to observation as both the teachers and students would be given the chance to express the impact they felt student-centred teaching strategies had on them. Student questionnaires were essential, because they were directly affected by what the teachers did in the classroom, and they were the ideal candidates to share information on the effectiveness of teaching strategies. During clinical supervision sessions, the teachers' use of student-centred methods was observed while the researchers made field notes for each session.

Data that addressed each research question from interviews, questionnaires and observation were extracted and summarised into themes using the process of coding (Creswell, 2009). Apart from those data that reflected the findings from the students' questionnaire, data were presented through the narratives constructed for each teacher.

Participants

The main participants in the study were Ms. Grant and Mrs. Martin. Ms. Grant is between 30-40 years of age and has been teaching for twelve years. She teaches Principles of Business and Tourism at the fourth and sixth form levels respectively. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Business Administration and has been teaching at Golden Valley High for the duration of her teaching career. Mrs. Martin is between 30-40 years of age and has been teaching for ten years. She teaches Spanish at the first to third form levels and holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Spanish. She has been teaching at Golden Valley High for approximately two years.

These teachers were selected for several reasons. Firstly, both do not have any formal initial teacher preparation for teaching. Secondly, they frequently spoke with one researcher about their students and strategies that can be implemented in the classroom to improve their performance. Ms. Grant also admitted that she struggles with student engagement in her classes while Mrs. Martin identified that she had challenges with classroom management. These reasons suggested that a clinical supervision intervention was necessary to assist both teachers in improving their pedagogical and instructional skills. The clinical supervision process provided knowledge and practice in using new teaching strategies in the classroom.

Other participants in the study were the students of Ms. Grant's Form Four Principles of Business class which comprised 32 students ranging in ages from 14-16, and Mrs. Martin's Form One Spanish class of 30 students ranging in ages from 12-13. Additionally, the two researchers were participants as they observed, discussed, and evaluated the lessons with the teachers.

Implementation Plan

Prior to the beginning of the intervention, Ms. Grant, Mrs. Martin and one of the researchers met to discuss how the clinical supervision process would work. It was agreed that the intervention would be collaborative in nature, with six sessions for each teacher, targeting various instructional and pedagogical skills to be developed. Resource

material such as a lesson plan template, videos and readings were made available to the teachers via a website created to facilitate the clinical supervision. The use of the website allowed for the development of the 21st Century skills necessary for all learners at all levels of education; that is, curation, communication, collaboration and critical thinking. All materials created and uploaded by participants and researchers were curated and continue to exist online. Participants and researchers used digital tools, such as Padlet, Google Docs and WhatsApp to communicate and collaborate. The discussions and online activities, such as lesson planning and reflection on and in practice, provided opportunities for critical thinking.

The clinical supervision intervention implementing the Think-Pair-Share and Jigsaw strategies followed the three-step process of pre-conference, observation and post-conference. The following occurred during each phase:

• Pre-Conference: The teacher discussed the lesson to be taught and gave details such as the topic, objectives and teacher strategies to deliver the content with the supervisor/s. In addition, focus was placed on what the students would do during the lesson. The supervisee and supervisor/s discussed the specific areas to be observed, and how data would be recorded.

• Observation: As the teacher delivered the lesson, the supervisor/s recorded what took place during the lesson.

• Post-Conference: The supervisor/s encouraged the teacher to reflect on the lesson through Socratic questioning. The supervisor/s gave feedback on observations made, highlighting the strengths of the supervisees and mentioning areas for improvement. Problem areas of the lesson and strategies to address them were discussed.

The clinical supervision intervention was used to develop the teachers' pedagogical and instructional skills by using more student-centred teaching strategies. The goal was to empower Ms. Grant to engage her students through questioning and implementing student-centred strategies in her classroom. The goal for Mrs. Martin, was to improve her classroom management skills through implementing student-centred teaching strategies in her classroom.

Clinical supervision was chosen as the intervention as it sought to ensure the professional development of both teachers. Acheson and Gall (2003) state that clinical supervision provides teachers with objective feedback on the current state of their instruction, diagnoses and solves instructional problems, and the general goal is to improve teachers' classroom instruction.

Discussion and Telling of the Emerging Stories

The stories that chronicle the journeys, intersections and liminality experienced by teachers and students are presented below. The stories are constructed from the various data collected from teachers and students. The researchers make meaning of these data in reference to the literature reviewed, and the understandings that emerge about the individuals involved in the research. The teachers' stories tell a tale of individuals reflecting on their practice as teachers, and confronting their beliefs, philosophies and identities as teachers. They tell how teachers embody liminality as a metacognitive frame to explain and understand the transitioning and reflexivity that they experience during the intervention.

Teachers' Stories: An Examination of Self Before the Intervention

Ms. Grant

"I think I'm a very prepared and thorough teacher. I think maybe at times I am student-centered, but, generally, I think I am teacher-centred. I have always told my students that I am in charge of the classroom, not them. I generally use lecturing as my way of delivering content. When I lecture, I allow the students to take notes and, sometimes, I call out notes for them. I stick with lecturing and notes because we do not have the time for anything else. The students are quiet during the lesson and there are less interruptions because they are busy writing when I call out a note. Also, when I give them the note, I am sure they have the correct information. There are some disadvantages. Sometimes, I can see students are bored or they're falling asleep while I call the note. When I lecture, some boys are always distracted. I've never tried anything new, because I think the students are too indisciplined. With my current strategies, there is no room for talk and unruly behavior, because I keep them busy. I also use these methods, because my teachers taught me like this, and it was effective. I've been teaching for many years now, and I always cover the syllabus and get good results, so I don't see the need for me to change anything. I mean, sometimes I think about trying something different, but I don't think the students are mature enough, and then I keep thinking about how time consuming it would be to try another way. I seem to be doing ok so far."

Mrs.*Martin*

"My teaching style? You know I don't think I've ever been asked that question. I don't think I've even thought about it. Let me see, I think I try to make class exciting, and I'm patient with the students. I teach a foreign language, so I need to be patient because it's something new to them. I'm very easy going, but they know I'm in charge. I'm mostly teacher-centred, because I like being in control of the classroom. Now that I think about it, I just go into the class with the text, and I go over the information with the students. That's a problem, isn't it? The advantage when I give them the information is, I know it's correct. I would

probably say maybe it's boring to hear me speak all the time. I can see students lose focus many times. I tried playing a game once, and it was a disaster! They were too noisy, and I was becoming annoyed. We also took up almost the entire period just trying to get everyone to do what they were supposed to. I can't afford to do anything else, because we have so much work to cover. It's easier to just use the text and go through; it's been working for me so far, so why should I change?"

From their accounts, both teachers described themselves as teacher-centred, emphasizing that they are in control of their classrooms, with Ms. Grant sharing, "*I am in charge of the classroom, not them*" and Mrs. Martin indicating, *"I like being in control of the classroom."* With their emphasis on control of their classrooms, both seemed to suggest that they strongly believed in the teacher's role as the authority in her discipline, disseminating knowledge, with students as passive recipients of this knowledge. The survey results corroborated the teachers' descriptions of themselves, in terms of their classroom teaching style being teacher-centred. In the survey, both described their classrooms as one where they speak for more than 95% of the class, with limited interaction between themselves and students, who rarely do activities and work together.

The teachers seemed to have a negative perception of student-led activities as a teaching strategy, with both believing that only they could give students "correct" information. Ms. Grant shared, "*When I give them the note, I am sure they have the correct information*", and Mrs. Martin indicated the same, "*The advantage when I give them the information is, I know it's correct."* Both teachers acknowledge that as they reflect on their teaching methods, they realise that their methods may be problematic, because they come across as "boring", caused students to "lose focus", be "distracted" and "fall asleep in class". Yet, while the teachers recognise that their methods may not be engaging and motivating, they resist changing them for various reasons. Both mention that using a different method may not allow them to, "cover" the amount of work they must, as advocated by Mrs. Martin, or to "cover" the syllabus as declared by as Ms. Grant. The account of Ms. Grant's showed that she was content to maintain the status quo and culture; because she was taught in that way, she, therefore, taught in that way and, in her opinion, with good results, meaning that students passed their examinations.

In addition, both seem to believe that a student-centred approach fosters "unruly" and "noisy" behavior where the teachers lose control of the classroom. Ms. Grant shared that she had not tried any new strategies, because she thinks the students are too "indisciplined", and she seemed to perceive a quiet and orderly classroom as the only way learning can take

place, because she indicated, "*there is no room for talk and unruly behavior*." Mrs. Martin, too, appeared to share a similar belief. She described her attempt to use a game as a teaching method "disastrous" and time consuming, and she described herself as becoming "annoyed". Their sentiments suggest that there is a real fear of giving up control and rethinking how students ought to learn.

It is interesting that both teachers at this point were in no way concerned about making learning interesting and empowering for the students. It seems that both teachers' philosophy of teaching stemmed from their own experiences of teaching. Implicit in their accounts is a sense that 'if what we've been doing gets passes, why change'. There is a sense in which one cannot fault the teachers, for they have not seen things done another way, and they did not know how it would work differently, and with success. Nevertheless, intuitively both teachers seemed to believe that their methods may not be best for the students.

Their accounts suggest a lack of student-centered strategies employed in the classroom. Both teachers identified lecturing as their primary method of delivery. This confirms Melville-Myers (2001), Edwards (2007), De Lisle (2010) and Warner and Kaur's (2017) research. While the teachers embraced the use of lecturing, and share concerns about trying new strategies, both seemed to defend their use of the strategy by readily admitting that there are disadvantages of employing this as their main strategy, supporting Duckworth's (2009) and Brittney's (2003) postulation that the teacher-centred approach can negatively impact student growth and interest. Despite acknowledging the disadvantages of lecture as their main strategy, and questioning its use, both seemed reluctant to attempt new strategies, and were comfortable to continue to employ this method of delivery. Both teachers expressed a real fear of not completing the syllabus, which corresponded with Edward's (2007) postulation that teachers are limited to traditional methods due to these fears. In addition to this, the fact that their students had been performing while they used the lecture method seemed to be enough reason for both teachers to continue using the method.

Teachers' and Supervisors' Observations: The Clinical Supervision Journey and Lessons Learned (or not) Along the Way

The rich data collected from the teachers' and supervisors' journals, field notes and observations revealed strong themes of increased teacher efficacy, changes in pedagogical approach and a resulting improvement in classroom environment. Excerpts from the teachers' and supervisors' recordings are discussed below.

Ms. Grant

Ms. Grant's clinical supervision journey is an example of an increase in teacher efficacy and growth in confidence, because with each session, she recorded a sense of accomplishment in being able to use the strategies in her lessons. For her first session, Ms. Grant was hesitant to include student-centred teaching strategies in her lesson. She shared that, she was "*afraid of not being able to cover the content of the lesson and was unsure of doing it right*." Despite this, Ms. Grant appeared to be at ease using the Think-Pair-Share strategy as she recorded, "*I will definitely continue to use this strategy; it's simple to use*." Her comfort in using the strategy was noted by her supervisor who also recorded that Ms. Grant showed, "*No problems implementing Think-Pair-Share in the lesson. Teacher* [Ms. Grant] *seemed at ease and confident with the strategy*."

Not only did she experience comfort in using the strategy, but Ms. Grant recorded that using Think-Pair-Share, "*really yielded results and students gave good answers.*" She also noted that *"Student participation was greater"* and *"I noticed improvement with myself as a teacher with regard to questioning."*

In her second session, Ms. Grant was more reflective and willing to admit that lecturing may not always be the best strategy to employ as she shared, *"I realised that maybe lecturing a lot in the lesson was taking up time that could have been spent encouraging students more or having them working together."* By her third session, Ms. Grant stated that, "*Once again I saw improvement in my delivery of the lesson"* and *"students were more participative when answering questions*." Attempting the strategy and finding that it was simple to use seemed to dispel Ms. Grant's early fears of trying a new teaching strategy in her classroom. It was evident that her pleasure in finding the strategy "*simple to use*" began to cause a shift in her belief that the students were "*too indisciplined*" to try a new strategy, because she recorded, "*I am feeling more confident in using this strategy to allow students time to discuss among themselves*." Therefore, practising using the strategy and seeing her students becoming more engaged and giving 'good' answers, engendered a change in Ms. Grant's teaching philosophy, the catalyst for which was using a more student-centred approach. This was reflected in her assertion that "*This is a teacher and student friendly strategy and I am comfortable with it*."

The shift in Ms. Grant's beliefs about a teacher-centred classroom was also noted by her supervisor who by the third session recorded in her journal, *"I was able to see evidence of Ms. Grant's pedagogical skills improving. I noticed growth in her from our last sessions"* and "*From the*

first to this session, the teacher [Ms. Grant] *has minimised her use of lecturing and has been using more student-centred strategies*."

In her pre-intervention interview, Ms. Grant shared, "*I've been teaching many years now, and I always cover the syllabus and get good results, so I don't see the need for me to change anything.*" While Ms. Grant experienced some difficulty in using the Jigsaw, excerpts of her journal show beginnings of a transformation from a teacher rooted in her beliefs that there was no need to try new strategies in the classroom, to one who was willing to embrace change and continue attempting to use new teaching methods. She shared, "*The Jigsaw takes some getting used to; it's not as easy to implement as Think-Pair-Share. I think I tried too much in this session, but I'll improve the next time I use Jigsaw.*" The positive reaction she gained from her students also encouraged Ms. Grant to continue using the strategy as she noted, "*Since I received such a positive response from the class, I will use the Jigsaw activity again.*"

As the clinical supervision process continued, Ms. Grant's skill in using the strategy improved, thus, encouraging her to feel comfortable and more confident in her ability to use the strategy. She records, "*I am enjoying the use of the Jigsaw activity and I think the students are as well. I am comfortable and plan on using it for myself in another lesson. I think I am now confident in my ability to use these strategies in another class.*"

Ms. Grant's supervisor noted that as the clinical supervision process progressed, Ms. Grant continued to grow and experience changes in her pedagogical approach, recording, "*It amazes me how much growth has taken place in Ms. Grant. She continues to make efforts in the area of student engagement.*" This coincides with Ms. Grant's reflections that suggested she was moving from her predictable and comfortable place in teaching, to one of innovation as she shared, "*I will definitely continue to implement both strategies in future lessons, and I am now excited to try other student-centred strategies.*"

It is evident that Ms. Grant's willingness to change her approach in the classroom was as a direct result of seeing her students become more engaged in her classes. She noted, "*Student response and participation in my classes have really improved. Since the students are responding so positively, I will use these activities again.*" In her fifth session, it was even clearer that there is a link between student engagement and teacher efficacy as Ms. Grant recorded, "*I am enjoying the use of the Jigsaw and I think the students are as well. Students are very enthusiastic; it is good to see them enjoying class rather than looking bored. I will continue using these new strategies.*" This was also noted by her supervisor who recorded in the last session, "*Teacher* [Ms. Grant] *is very familiar with the strategy*

and seems to enjoy seeing the students engaged in the activity; teacher's skill has improved."

Ms. Grant's story shows a teacher's progression from one firmly rooted in using the lecture method to one open to exploring new possibilities, using more engaging and empowering student-centred methods. In her last session, Ms. Grant shared, *"I feel a sense of accomplishment from the entire process. I feel satisfied with the teaching techniques I have learnt. They raised my standard as a professional teacher and improved my relationship with my students."* This was also highlighted by her supervisor, who recorded in her last journal entry, "*Teacher* [Ms. Grant] *has embraced the role of SCA in the classroom*" and "*Teacher's* [Ms. Grant's] *skills have grown exponentially in all areas.*"

Mrs. Martin

Like Ms. Grant, Mrs. Martin's clinical supervision journey was a transformative one as she documented her progression from doubting her ability to use the strategies well, to becoming more confident in herself as a teacher. After her first session, Ms. Martin seemed disappointed as she shared, "*Class was noisy at times. I was struggling as I didn't use the strategy well.*" Her supervisor noted there was some difficulty but was sure with practice Mrs. Martin would improve, noting, "*Teacher made an error in using the strategy, and there was some chaos; with practice, will improve.*"

This was noted by Mrs. Martin's third session, with her being more positive, recording, "*I have improved tremendously from the first to this session. I can use this strategy in another class and feel confident about the benefits.*" Her supervisor also noted that there was an improvement in Mrs. Martin's confidence and skill in utilising student-centred strategies, stating, *"Teacher* [Mrs. Grant] *had a better command of the class and was more at ease with the strategy."*

As Mrs. Martin's confidence in her ability to use the strategies improved, her thoughts about using student-centred strategies in the classroom began to change. In her pre-intervention interview, she shared, "*It's easier to just use the text and go through. It's been working for me so far, so why should I change?"* This sentiment changed as the clinical supervision process unfolded. Mrs. Martin noted, "*I see the value of this. Class is getting better. I am getting better. I'm more comfortable and will use the strategy by myself in another class."* Mrs. Martin's comment that she sees the value in using more student-centred strategies indicates that, in terms of liminality, she has moved beyond the intersection, the margin from essentially embracing the teacher-centred approach, to embracing the student-centred approach.

With every clinical supervision session, Mrs. Martin's pedagogical skills and confidence in her ability to include other student-centred strategies in her lessons grew. Seeing evidence of her growth, Mrs. Martin recorded, *"I've grown so much. I don't doubt that class can function with student-centred strategies. Love using the strategy*." Her supervisor observed this, noting, *"Teacher* [Mrs. Martin] *is progressing; uses the strategy seamlessly. Confidence level and skill have increased, and teacher's* [Mrs. Martin's] *skills in using the strategy have improved tremendously. Teacher* [Mrs. Martin] *is also including other SCA strategies in her lesson."*

This boost in confidence in her ability to use the strategies extended to Mrs. Martin's classroom management skills as she noted, *"Class is getting better. I enjoy using the strategy; it's helping me to better manage the class."* With an improvement in her classroom management skills, Mrs. Martin also noted a change in her students' level of engagement. In her pre-intervention interview, Mrs. Martin described students as sometimes "bored" or "losing focus at times". There was a transformation among her students as she noted, *"Students were very involved in the lesson and seem to be enjoying class more."*

At the beginning of Mrs. Martin's story, we saw her resistant to change, comfortable in the belief that what she was doing did not need to change as she said, *"It's been working for me so far, so why should I change?"* Despite this resistance, she seemed to acknowledge that her teaching strategies could have been improved as she questioned her reliance on the textbook and simply reviewing information from it. The clinical supervision process evidently helped Mrs. Grant to reexamine her pedagogical approach. She shared, *"I can use these strategies in another class and feel confident about the benefits. Teaching is more enjoyable using these."*

Mrs. Martin's story shows her evolution from a teacher rooted in her belief that the teacher-centered approach was the only strategy to use in the classroom to one willing to embrace change, because in her last session, she shared, *"I have improved tremendously from the first to this session."* Her supervisor noted this, recording, *"Teacher* [Mrs. Martin] *has embraced the role of SCA in the classroom. Incorporated the strategy in all lessons and used successfully. Teacher's* [Mrs. Martin's] *skills have grown exponentially in classroom management."*

Students' Observations: The Clinical Supervision Journey

Ms. Grant and Mrs. Martin were not the only ones to experience noteworthy changes during the clinical supervision process. 100% of the

students in both classes indicated that their classes had changed due to the clinical supervision exercise in which their teachers engaged. Of the thirty-two students in Ms. Grant's class, twenty-five indicated that they enjoyed participating in the new activities, while eight did not. Mrs. Martin's class of thirty students saw twenty-six of them giving the activities positive reviews, with four indicating that they did not enjoy the new activities. The significant comments of the students highlighted emerging themes such as better class management, increased student engagement, enhanced student understanding, enjoyment of the lesson and improved relationships with peers.

Students indicated that the changes were positive. Ms. Grant's senior students shared sentiments such as, "*Classes are now exciting, and students are more alert;" "Class was more interactive;" "The teacher is more active with the class and does activities;" "Class is less boring, because we don't have to write all the time;" "Students were engaged and excited to see what Miss would do;" "I actually began to like POB, because I was understanding the lesson;*" and *"It has changed for the better; the class is more interactive and fun."*

Mrs. Martin's junior students expressed similar views, saying, "*Class is more interesting and student behaviour is better;" "Students were more obedient, and we had lots of activities which were fun to do;" "The discipline and attitude of the class got better, and we were more involved in the sessions we had;" "We got to speak more in Spanish, and that helped me understand more;" "There were many activities which were fun to do and made learning easier"* and *"The class is definitely not boring; it's interesting!"*

Ms. Grant's students also shared that the activities helped them to learn more in class, stating, *"Explaining to my peers helped me to learn and remember more;" "I remembered more and answered questions correctly;" "They challenged us to think and focus as we weren't only writing;" "I paid attention more because I was responsible for what I learnt and I was teaching someone else;" "Because we had to teach each other and discuss, it helped us to figure out answers to questions and to answer correctly"* and *"I was more focused in class and paid attention more and was able to understand better."*

Mrs. Martin's students shared similar feelings. They indicated, "*Working with someone else helps you to understand better, and we were able to form better sentences and remember vocabulary;" "I understood better so I could have answered questions correctly;" "It was easier to learn because it was more fun, and you had someone to help you remember;" " It was good to practice with my friend; I understood*

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better;" "We got to speak more Spanish and learnt more doing the activities;" and, *"I remembered more because I got to do more in class."*

With regard to improved relationships with peers, Ms. Grant's students shared, *"I enjoyed the activities, because we were helping each other learn and bonding with one another at the same time;" "I interacted with people I don't usually talk to so that was nice. I think for other people too, we kind of made some new friends;" "We bonded with each other and socialized more;"* and, *"I talked to lots of people I don't usually talk to."*

Mrs. Martin's students conveyed similar opinions, saying, "*It is fun working with others and sharing our ideas;" "Cooperation with others was a new thing for me with certain people in the class,"* and, *"It was nice to share with someone before trying to answer in class; it made it easier to talk to others."* Still, some students did indicate that the new strategies posed some problems for them. Referring to the activities used with the new strategies, they stated, "*It became boring after a while, because some people were wasting time,*" and, "*These things took up too much time; some people weren't doing the correct thing.*" Some also shared, "*There were lazy students expecting others to do all the work.*" These students' comments warrant dialogue with the students, and deeper reflection between the teachers and supervisors, to better design activities to make students more engaged and accountable. Nevertheless, this issue of students finding activities being time consuming is one of the challenges raised by Baloche and Brody (2017).

The results of the study were also in accordance with literature which states that student-centred teaching strategies positively impact student participation, class enjoyment, student achievement and student understanding, (Sampsel, 2013; Bamiro, 2015; Walters, Smith, Leinwand, Surr, Stein & Bailey, 2014).

Teachers' Stories: The End of the Journey: A Transformative Process

The teachers' final remarks on the clinical supervision journey are presented and discussed below.

Ms. Grant

"It has made a difference since prior to using these strategies, I believed that the students were not capable of working on their own. I also believed that using other strategies meant I would have to give up control of the class. There has been a great difference in student participation in my classes. I have gone from an unenthusiastic class to one where students are engaged and seem to enjoy what they are learning. For me too, there has been change. I have changed my idea of how a classroom must be. I see that I was too rigid and not willing to adopt new strategies. Now, I am

eager to improve as a teacher. Clinical supervision was responsible for this change because it is through that I learnt about these strategies. I can tell you from our first session to our last, I saw improvement and I enjoyed myself more. There was such a change in the class. I saw more student participation than I ever did; the students gave quality answers and I could see they felt proud of themselves. This made me feel better as a teacher. You know, I used to dread going to that class before, but now I feel that I'm equipped to have classes where they're engaged and learning."

Mrs. Martin

"There has been a change in the class. Before we started, I had difficulty with classroom management. I mean, there is always room for improvement, but I have grown so much. Because of the process, students in the class are on task and focused. Now, they're not listless and bored. I see them working throughout the class. I also have noticed they seem to understand better and class participation has really grown. They are more confident in sharing their answers now. Clinical supervision helped me to write proper lesson plans, to plan my lessons and generally to gain more confidence in myself. I have not had good experiences with clinical supervision before this, so I can say there has been real growth. The class is like a new class. This has done so much for me and my class. We went from a chaotic environment to one where learning was taking place. I am now equipped with the tools to become a better teacher, and I'm open now to improving my practice."

Both Ms. Grant and Mrs. Martin were in high praise of the activities, indicating that they observed an increase in student achievement in their classes. Both teachers made profound statements that clearly exhibited that there was a shift in their beliefs regarding the use of student-centred methods that can be adopted in the classroom. It is evident that both teachers reflected on their practice and experienced a sense of enlightenment throughout the clinical supervision process, as they moved from a sense of uncertainty, to confidence in their ability to implement new teaching methods in their classrooms.

The transformative nature of the clinical supervision process is distinct. For both teachers, the process encouraged them to become reflective practitioners, bringing about a change in their teaching philosophies. For Ms. Grant, it is clear there was willingness to admit that her previous practices were not benefitting her students as she recognised the importance of being open to new methods in her classroom. Mrs. Martin's initial resistance quickly subsided as she saw evidence of the changes that were taking place in her classroom as well as herself.

The growth in teacher efficacy and changes experienced in both classrooms lend support to the notion that, if done properly, clinical supervision helps teachers improve instructional skills, increases teaching quality and has a significant impact on teacher growth (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Veloo, Komuji & Khalid, 2013).

The concept of liminality provided a prismatic lens for the researchers/supervisors to conceptualise and interpret the teachers' experiences of uncertainty, instability, tensions, enlightenment and shifts in beliefs as the intervention provided a "period of margin" or "liminality" (Turner, 1964, p. 46) that takes place as an individual is on the verge (Batchelor, 2012; Cook-Sather, 2006) of transitioning from one state to another in a process of "becoming" or "transformation" (Turner, 1964, pp. 46-47). More so, it helped the researchers/supervisors to understand the intersections between the teachers' original status, pre-intervention, and their status being sought during and post intervention.

Conclusion

The results of this study were profound, cementing the fact that clinical supervision is a valuable tool to employ in the quest to improve teachers' pedagogical and instructional skills. The transformation of both teachers throughout the process solidifies the researchers' belief that devoting time to the clinical supervision process is meaningful and valuable, as a professional development mechanism that can improve teachers' practice. While this study was a small one conducted in one school, the results, which showed, by their own revelations, teachers' change in philosophy and growth in practice, as well as student improvement, are undeniable and appreciated.

The hope that student-centred teaching strategies would improve the learning experience was materialised as students shared increased feelings of engagement and empowerment which resulted in improved understanding of the work for them. The positive reactions of students to the new teaching strategies motivated the teachers to change their perceptions of the student-centred approach to teaching, and have encouraged them to continue using these strategies in future classes. It would be worthwhile to do a further study to see if these teachers have continued to use teacher-centred strategies. A longitudinal study of student achievement as a result of their continued exposure to these strategies would also be useful.

The results of this study can serve as a foundation for further analysis of clinical supervision as an intervention in improving teachers'

pedagogical skills, by working with other teachers at Golden Valley High. The researchers recommend increased collaboration among administration, Heads of Departments and teachers, to review how clinical supervision is conducted at the school. The results of this study can be used to encourage teachers to see clinical supervision as a developmental rather than punitive tool. During this collaboration, teachers should be given the opportunity to discuss their expectations and requirements of the process, so that they can benefit from it. Adequate time should be provided for Heads of Departments to conduct sessions as regularly as possible, and for teachers to engage in proper planning for their lessons to support their growth.

This study shows that continuing professional development, particularly within the school, is necessary to keep teachers abreast of new and effective methods of teaching, and the benefits of implementing them in the classroom. Teachers can be introduced to a variety of student-centred strategies and empowered to implement them in their classes after having been trained how to use them. A key learning from this study is that it is important to engage and empower students to enhance their learning, because they are directly impacted by what the teacher does in the classroom. The results of this study also highlight the value of conducting action research in schools and classrooms.

Notwithstanding the benefits of the intervention, the researchers are mindful that it presents a snapshot of what can occur if the ideal circumstances are created to facilitate clinical supervision-led professional development. This intervention worked because of the process that was implemented, which takes time and competence to execute, particularly from the perspective of the supervisor, who must be inspiring. However, ideal circumstances do not usually obtain in schools, and, as such, more research is needed in the area of clinical supervision and its impact on teacher development and student achievement in the context of schools in Trinidad and Tobago, since clinical supervision has been made mandatory by the Ministry of Education.

A national study that investigates the practice and experience of clinical supervision, and its impact on teacher performance, should be conducted in schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago in the quest to improve teacher and student performance. With an increase in research, empirical data can be shared among administrators and teachers as they seek to improve teaching performance, and aid our teachers in becoming true professionals. The study shows the merits of clinical supervision, as well as student-centred teaching strategies, and indicates that these are

needed as we engage in the quest to improve the quality of education offered to our students.

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